

The Northern Plains Conference
United Church of Christ A Monthly
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AWARE
newsletter supporting
the building of community in the
multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-
lingual, multi-national community
of faith.

October 2010

As I Look At It:

We must be living in one of the most fear laden times the world has ever known. Our days seem to be lived out in a veritable lattice work of fear. We have fear of being attacked, fear of losing our jobs, fear of the rising costs will have on us, fear of getting sick, fear of those who look or act differently than we do, and the list goes on and on. It is as if tomorrow is not the Promised Land in which we find the presence of God but a threat filled night mare through which we must migrate. We live a life that is haunted by fear, and chased by the images of what might happen.

The impact of all this fear is that we spend most of our lives reacting to what has gone on around us in days past rather than facing the challenges and opportunities of the coming day. We find ourselves tilting at the windmills of the past instead of following the dream of the future. This transforms our lives from a pilgrimage into a reaction. This often leaves us imprisoned by the possibilities we envision instead of empowered by the potential we see in the life that unfolds before us. Our lives are robbed of the hope that is so necessary. Our fears drain our energy, limit our vision and cut us off from vital relationships with God and with our brothers and sisters who share with us the human pilgrimage.

During a recent Cluster meeting, I was reminded that of all the messages our Redeemer shared with followers and disciples was the one he told them most often was "Fear Not". Jesus understood the devastating effect fear has on our understanding of the world around us. Jesus knew how our fear altered our perception of the reality with which we live. Therefore Jesus calls on all of us to "Fear Not".

The call is to replace our fears with our faith. Instead of being fearful of the world around us, let us be faithful in our response. Let us look at our world through the lenses of our faith, that we might see not only the challenges that are about us but also the Spirit of God that is alive in each of us and present with us in the events of every day. Let us allow our faith to give us hope. May our faith be a source of strength. After all does tomorrow not look a lot more manageable when we approach it in partnership with the God of Creation? All too often we see ourselves facing the world equipped only with the strengths and abilities that God has given to us, and we forget that we never take a step without the living presence of God taking that step with us. We forget that we do not live alone but in the company of others for who Christ has died and with whom the living presence of the Resurrected Christ abides. Life was never meant to be a solo journey but rather a partnership with the God of all life and our brothers and sisters in the human family. The bond that we share is our mutual dependence on that God for our survival. We share the bond of hope with all as we journey into God's future in partnership with our Creator and Redeemer.

Let us hear Jesus' words, "Fear Not". May we allow our faith to be the bridges over the valleys of fear that are all about us.

Namaste
Wade

"Come, let us sing for joy to God; let us shout aloud..." Psalm 95



The Northern Plains 2010 Fall Youth Rally is coming soon:

We want your youth to be part of this year's Fall Youth Rally which will occur during the Annual North Dakota Teachers Convention, October 21st to 23rd to be held at the United Church of Christ in Wishek, North Dakota. All youth from grades 6 and up are invited to come and experience this unique event. The 2010 Fall Youth Rally has many things to offer our young people. We have an internationally renowned musician coming to jam with us. We are going to do tie dye t-

shirts, we hope to have a craft project to make your own drum to take home and so much more. We have a bus and bus driver that will do a run around western and central North Dakota, if your youth needs transportation; please contact the Conference Office to register for the bus. Sign up forms have been mailed to your church, your minister and are also available online at www.npcucc.org. The Rally begins at 3:00 p.m. (ct) and concludes at 1:00 p.m. (ct). If you have any questions, please contact the Conference Co-Adjunct Youth Minister, Rev. Carl Borden at 701-840-5104 or email your questions to: congregational.ucc.valleycity@gmail.com.

Congregations Seek a Pastor:

Mayville Congregational, Fargo, Plymouth, New Horizon Parish (near Lakota).

Conference Highlights:

Let us celebrate two gatherings that have taken place during the past month. First was the Shaping Prairie Hospitality Workshop which was the first in a series of seven gatherings (five of them will be on WebEx), that will focus on hospitality among churches of all sizes of the Prairie. We have to date, seven congregations involved and are open to inviting more. By all standards, the session was an outstanding opportunity to discuss church growth in communities large and small. Any who were not at the workshop in Jamestown, but would be interested in participating in the program are invited to contact the Conference Office to begin working through the introductory power point presentation. Then the following week, September 17-19, the women of the NPC gathered for the yearly Retreat at Camp of the Cross. The gathering was a great time for all to celebrate their relationship with one another and to rejoice in the glory of God’s abiding presence. In spite of snow, freezing rain, and sleet, the group gathered for good food, good fellowship, interesting discussions on the topic of Mary, in the Bible, an enthusiastic story teller, and an outstanding time for all.

East Timor Update:

Jim Moos and Rachel Patrie of the Bismarck UCC visited East Timor in July. While there, they participated in a variety of meetings and events with our Timorese church partners. Of particular interest to the Northern Plains Conference is the village school our churches helped establish. It is going well, with three classes in attendance and plans for expansion. Unfortunately, unseasonable torrential rains washed the road to the school away, which made a visit impossible. Many thanks to everyone in the Conference who has generously supported the school in the past-we continue to need your help in the future! For more information, contact Jim Moos at 701-223-2915.

The Calendar for October:

Date	Time	Event	Location
10/1-10/7	-----	CM on vacation	-----
10/7	12:00 Noon	Progressive Faith Network	Bismarck
10/8	5:30 p.m. (ct)	Yankton College Class “The Church in the Electronic Age”	Bismarck
10/9	8:30 a.m. (ct)	Yankton College class	Bismarck
10/10	-----	CM shares in worship	Grand Forks
10/15	7:00 p.m. (ct) unless otherwise stated	Conference Committees	Carrington
10/16	9:00 a.m. (ct)	Conference Council	Carrington
10/17	-----	Children’s Sabbath	-----
10/17	-----	CM shares in worship	New Town and Parshall Memorial
10/18	11:00 a.m. (ct)	Central Cluster	-----
10/19	11:00 a.m. (ct)	Minot Cluster	Parshall UCC
10/20	10:00 a.m. (ct)	Missouri Valley Cluster	Pierce/Scranton
10/21	10:00 a.m. (ct)	Fargo Cluster	Congregational/Moorhead
10/21	3:00 p.m. (ct)	Fall Youth Rally	Wishek
10/22	-----	Fall Youth Rally	Wishek
10/23	Concludes at 1:00 p.m. (ct)	Fall Youth Rally	Wishek
10/25	5:30 p.m. (ct)	West Central Regional CM gathering	Schuyler, NE
10/26	-----	West Central gathering	Schuyler, NE
10/27	-----	West Central gathering	Schuyler, NE
10/28	-----	West Central gathering	Schuyler, NE
10/29	12:00 Noon	Ft. Berthold Cluster	New Town

The Church World Service Needs Disaster Kits:

Due to the many disasters that are taking place within this country and around the world during this time of the year, the Church World Service is in need of various kits. There is a special need for the School Kits, Hygiene Kits, Baby Kits, and the Emergency Clean-Up Kits. Collecting and assembling these kits is an excellent project for the various groups within a congregation (Sunday School, Youth, Women, Men, Couples groups or Sunday Worship). You will find the list of items for each of these kits as well as instructions for packing and shipping on the NPC Web Site www.npcucc.org under the “Church News” heading. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call the Conference Office.

October 17th Is Children’s Sabbath:

NPC Congregations are invited to join in lifting up the special needs of our children. The Children’s Sabbath is an opportunity for all people of faith to celebrate the wonder of a child in their midst and to stand together for the health and well being of that child. Information and resources for this special time can be found on the Children’s Defense Fund Web Site (you can Google it). If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Conference Office.