

**NORTHERN PLAINS CONFERENCE
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

A monthly newsletter supporting the building of community in the multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-national community of faith



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AWARE 2011



AS I LOOK AT IT:

An unofficial theme for the 2011 Annual Meeting of the Northern Plains Conference United Church of Christ, could have been, “The Times They Are A Changin’”. For during this meeting, we as a body embraced change. We talked at length about changes that have to take place in our finances and beyond that, changes that go to the very heart of how we are structured. We are looking at these changes as part of the process by which we claim our future. I have to say that I commend the Conference Council and the Northern Plains Conference members that attended the Annual Meeting for the steps they took. For change by its very nature is frightening. Those who would call us to change, which includes yours truly, have a responsibility to keep in focus not only where they are going but from where they have come.

Change is not just trying something different for the sake of trying something different. Faithful change is allowing God’s Spirit to guide us into new areas, ever mindful of the Spiritual foundation upon which we stand. Change needs to be grounded in who we truly are, if our vision is to be more than a leaf being blown on the wind of public opinion. I believe that one of the most clear examples of who we as people of faith truly are is captured in Matthew 22:37-39 which reads;

And he said to him, *You shall love the Lord your*

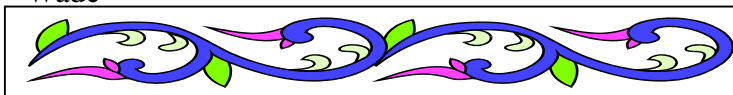
*God with all your heart,
and with all your soul,
and with your entire mind.
This is the great and
first commandment. And
a second is like it, You
shall love your neighbor as yourself.*

What we do, whatever change we embrace, must never lose sight of the call to love God, neighbor and self, for if our lives are so anchored we cannot go very far astray. This Great Commandment is not only the foundation upon which we as people of faith stand it is also the vision towards we strive.

I believe that the faith foundation of Matthew 22:37-39 is a source of solid grounding upon which we can stand and a clear vision towards which we can strive as we look at both the finances and the structure of the Northern Plains Conference. For both our finances and our structure are the ways that we express the faith that we hold. Both are the ways that we translate the words of Holy Scripture into the acts of a dedicated life. It is indeed in this translation that we find the test of faithful change.

As we move forward, down the road of change, let us do so with our eyes on the foundation and vision of faith to which Jesus the Christ guides us. For the times they are a changing.

Namaste
Wade





2011 Annual Meeting Report:

The 2011 Annual Meeting at Fargo First, was a “Good Ol’ Time” and so much more. Thanks to the efforts of so many the 48th Annual Meeting of the Northern Plains Conference United Church of Christ was truly a good gathering of friends. There was ample time for conversation, getting reacquainted and remembering past times. During the meeting several important pieces of business were dealt with. We talked about the budget and issued a call to the Congregations to help with the immediate short fall that we might go into the coming year with greater financial strength. More will be coming to the Conference as a result of those discussions in the coming months. One of the cost cutting measures will be to move the Conference Office in to the home of Peg and Wade Schemmel. We want to thank Bismarck UCC for being our home these past years. A full slate of officers was elected, and I would invite you to check the “Leaders Guide” which can be found on the NPC web site www.npcucc.org under Resources and “Church News”. There was a significant discussion of the proposed union with the South Dakota Conference. This Union calls on the two Conferences to begin to merge certain parts of their life. Current discussion has focused on a sharing of programs, (what happens in one Conference the other Conference is invited to attend). For example an invitation will be issued to the South Dakota Conference to share in the Women’s Retreat at the Abbey at Richardton September 16 – 18. We are also talking about having a common Conference Office for the two Conferences and about

having one Conference Minister. Modern innovations in technology and the use of cyber communications make such ideas possible. Both the Northern Plains Conference and the South Dakota Conference voted on the same resolution which calls for the process of exploring Union between the Conferences to continue. In both cases the resolution received a unanimous vote. We have two meetings currently scheduled to continue exploring the possibility of a Union between NPC and SDC. The meetings are a budget gathering where we would start to crunch the numbers for our joint life, and the second is a planning meeting where we would continue to expand the broad vision. One of the ramifications of the Union Conversation is that the 2012 Annual Meeting for both Conferences will be held June 1 – 3 in Aberdeen, South Dakota. I would invite you to stay in touch for more interesting and exciting developments in this developing area.



NPC Grants Medallion Award for 2011:

The Medallion Award is given by the Church and Ministry Committee of the Northern Plains Conference to persons in the Conference who have distinguished themselves in service locally, Conference Wide and Nationally. The recipient this year is Peg Schemmel. In the giving of the award the committee highlighted Peg’s work in the Conference above and beyond her duties as Conference Office Administrator, and her work in the National Church setting. Congratulations to Peg and thanks for the good work.



The Hospitality Resolution from the 48th Annual Meeting:

The Hospitality Resolution that was presented at the 48th Annual Meeting which was written by Ron Hildahl, pastor of the Salem UCC, New Salem, is on the NPCUCC website under the tab of Church News”. It is an enjoyable recap of the Annual Meeting.



Voices from the Prairie:

Thinking about water, here are some images and memories that come to mind: Sitting along the gentle, babbling Little Turkey River as a child, witnessing the powerful and overwhelming surge of water at Niagara Falls. Floating on a meandering Minnesota river on an inner tube with friends or being in awe of the crashing ocean waves on the rocks beneath a lighthouse in Maine. Watching children joyfully run through the water sprinkler in the backyard or enjoying a refreshing glass of water quenching one’s thirst. The soothing sound of a spring shower as the rain gently falls on the roof or felling the dog spray you as he shakes off the river water.

You can just as easily come up with your own list of water images. Water is life

giving. It nourishes and cleanses our bodies. Water is necessary for plant growth. Water is a wonderful outlet for recreation, everything from fishing, swimming, boating and so on.

Just like everything in life, too much of anything can be destructive and harmful. We know all about the life giving and refreshing uses of water. But we also know and witness the destructive forces of water throughout our region of the country. We have witnessed flooding on Devils Lake for years as well as the Red River Valley. Other river systems have been affected such as the Mouse, Souris, Little Missouri, Sheyenne, and Missouri, to name a few. The overabundance of water can have devastating effects showing no partiality: rich or poor, heavily or sparsely populated areas, homes or farmland. Words cannot begin to express the angst, heartache, and helplessness that come from recent flooding.



As Christians, water is a vital, life giving source for one’s spirit. One’s spirit needs to be nourished and renewed with the life giving waters of holy baptism. The water in conjunction with God’s Word and the Holy Spirit cleanses us from sin, renews us and invites us into the family of God. When we feel out of control and overwhelmed by the waters of life; tap into the waters of baptism which reminds us that we are claimed as a child of God, refreshed and renewed for ministry in Christ’s name.

Rev. Ron Hildahl, pastor of Salem UCC, New Salem.



Deep snow has been removed from the roadway on the Montana side of the Beartooth Pass on Thursday, June 2, 2001:

http://www.bismarcktribune.com/news/state-and-regional/article_c008f1ec-9072-11e0-b322-001cc4c03286.html

And we wonder why we have flooding???
News from Lindy Holt, Disaster Ministries Coordinator

Pastor Vern Bader from the Jamestown UCC recently preached a sermon about faith being a “verb” and not a “noun”. So faith is not an object, but something that we are called to participate in actively as a verb. As we are all aware by local, national and international media, weather patterns have been particularly devastating this year. The needs are great and our response and help is essential! Monies that we send to national appeals help us here in North Dakota. Recently money from the National Disaster Ministries was given to set up events in Devils Lake. You and your church can make a money contribution through your church, the Northern Plains Conference UCC and on the national church website www.ucc.org to help our friends, neighbors and strangers.

Living our faith means that we are called to help our neighbors near and far with our time, talents and money. I want to challenge churches to form work groups that can travel to places like Williston, Minot,

Bismarck, Valley City, Jamestown and the Red River Valley here in our state as we get ready for cleanup and rebuilding. If your group is willing to travel there are also many other opportunities for a life changing mission experience around the country and around the world. Please don't delay. Now is the time to get your team together! Please give me a call so that I can help you schedule and find a place to help. Keep in mind that many younger people, and people of all ages for that matter, who may not be seen in our churches on Sunday mornings are committed to helping others. What a great way to get people connected to our churches in new ways! Please contact me at 701-430-0727 or ethelindholt@gmail.com.



News from CUE Seminaries:Seminary Graduation:

In May, Chicago, United, and Eden Seminaries celebrated the graduation of 115 students. These students will serve in many capacities across the country and around the world. We rejoice with them as they begin a new phase of their ministry in the world.

CUE Seminaries Video

Many of you were able to view the CUE Seminaries Video during recent Conference Annual Meetings. The video highlights and celebrates the work of Chicago, United, and Eden Seminaries. The

video can be shown during Church Committee Meetings, Seminary Sunday worship services, at new clergy gatherings, at Association Meetings, or in other settings. It is 5:50 long and available on DVD at no cost. Soon, it will also be available to view directly on the CUE website: www.cueseminaries.org. If you would like to view the video, you can view it at this link: <http://vimeo.com/23274342>. If it asks you for password, the password is cue (lowercase). You will need Flash player to play it. If you need to get Flash, here is a link: <http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/> To obtain a DVD copy, please contact Kiely Todd Roska, CUE Development Coordinator: kiely@cueseminaries.org or 651-255-6121

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Celebrate Theological Education!
Seminary Sunday: February 27, 2011
Higher Education Sunday: October 30, 2011



AWARE Available in TWO Versions:

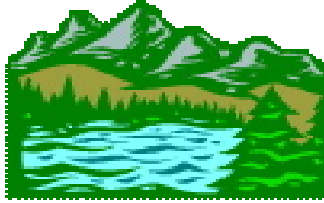
The Northern Plains Conference AWARE will come in two versions. Please let the Conference Office know how this works for you. There will be one version held to two pages, and may have a smaller print size to accommodate that limitation. This is especially helpful to Congregations that mail it out via the US mail. Then, there will be a second version of the AWARE which will be an expanded version and sporting a larger font and photos. This

version will serve Congregations that send out the AWARE via email. Please inform the Conference Office at 701-255-1104, which version works for your Congregation most efficiently.



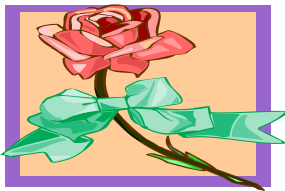
NPC Representatives to National Boards are named:

During the General Synod which will be taking place in Tampa, Florida, July 1 – 5 we will be electing representatives from the Conferences to the National Offices. As we have been well represented in the past, we will continue to have strong representation from the following; Ron Hildahl will represent the NPC on the Executive Council, Darlene Perkins will represent NPC on the Justice and Witness Board of Directors, Evan Mandigo will represent NPC on the Office of General Ministries Board, Stephen Holmes will represent NPC on the Wider Church Ministries Board of Directors and Tammy Toepke Floyd will represent the NPC on the Local Church Ministries Board. We congratulate these NPC members on their new areas of service and look forward to supporting them and hearing from them about the ministries they are a part of.



Summer Camp Registration:

On the npcucc.org website under the Church News tab there is the registration form for the Summer Camp Experience, July 24-July 28, 2011. The location of the Camp Experience is at Camp of the Cross outside of Garrison, North Dakota. This camp is for ages 8-18. Come and have a great summer experience in a beautiful setting alongside of Lake Sakakawea. Many new and exciting camp experiences are planned for all participants. If you have any questions, please contact the Conference Office at 701-255-1104 or Carleton Borden at 701-845-1977 or his cell phone of 701-840-5104.



All NPC Congregations and their members are invited to celebrate with the Pierce Congregational United Church of Christ:

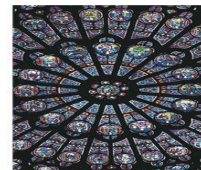
as they give thanks to God for 100 years of praise and celebration in Jesus' name. The service of celebration will take place on July 24th beginning with worship at 11:00 am (mt). Let us join the members of this Rural South Western North Dakota Congregation and their pastor Mary

Peterson for this special time of praise and rejoicing.



Support your NPC General Synod Delegation as it "Rocks in the UCC":

During the General Synod your NPC delegation will have their opportunity to "Rock in the UCC. That is using rocking chairs. They are currently receiving donations from you, their members, and friends. You can send you donations to the Conference Office in the name of any of the NPC General Synod Delegation. The delegates are: Patrick Hope, Karen Hartman, Stephen Holmes, Carleton Borden Dorothy (Darcy) Borden, Peg Schemmel and Wade Schemmel. Please send donations to the Conference Office by June 27th so that the money can be turned into a check and taken to the meeting. You are invited to send your donations to the Conference Office in the name of any of the delegation. The money raised with go towards the New and Renewing Church Endowment Fund. This money enables the Local Church Ministries Board to continue to provide financial support to churches with vision, goals and excitement for ministry.



Congregations Seeking A Pastor:

The following churches are seeking new pastoral leadership:

- Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ in Fargo** (currently with a hold on profiles), and
- United Church of Christ in Bismarck.**



July Calendar



Date	Time	Event	Location
7/1	-----	General Synod 28	Tampa
7/2	-----	GS 28	Tampa
7/3	-----	GS 28	Tampa
7/4	-----	GS 28	Tampa
7/4	-----	4 th of July	-----
7/5	-----	GS 28	Tampa
7/7	-----	Vacation	-----
7/8	-----	Vacation	-----
7/9	-----	Vacation	-----
7/10	-----	Vacation	-----
7/11	-----	Travel	-----
7/14	1:00 pm (ct)	Financial Planning for Union Planning	Fargo/First
7/24	11:00 am (mt)	100 th Anniversary celebration	Pierce Congregational UCC
7/24	-----	NPC Youth Camp	Camp of the Cross near Garrison
7/25	-----	NPC Youth Camp	Camp of the Cross near Garrison
7/26	-----	NPC Youth Camp	Camp of the Cross
7/27	-----	NPC Youth Camp	Camp of the Cross
7/28	-----	NPC Youth Camp	Camp of the Cross

