

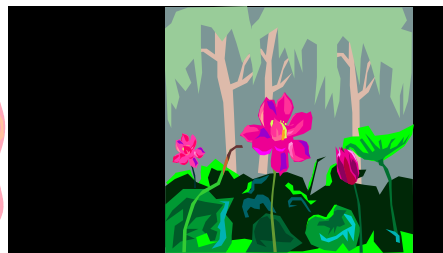
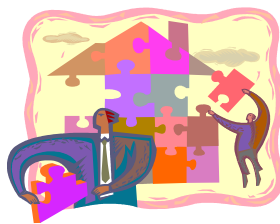
**THE NORTHERN  
PLAINS CONFERENCE  
UNITED CHURCH OF  
CHRIST**

**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 FOR  
MAY 2011**



**As I Look At It**

At a recent West Central Regional Meeting, Jerry Paul, the president and CEO of the Deaconess Foundation made a comment that I found enlightening. He said, "Health is not contagious, sickness is contagious, health we have to work at".

So often we go along thinking that if we do nothing to hurt something everything should work out fine. Many times I have worked with a couple that is having marital difficulty only to discover that at some point in the relationship one or both of them have stopped working at making it strong. They thought that their marriage would simply flow along, smoothly with little or no effort on their part. I remember the husband who speaking of his wife said, "She should know I love her, I told her so 5 years ago, if it had changed I would have let her know" (famous last words). We take for granted that that which is healthy stays healthy. Our bodies, once healthy will not stay that way if we do not exercise, and eat healthy food. In a relatively short period of time weakness and illness will come in. Not only will sickness enter our bodies but it will spread to areas that were not sick. We have to work at being healthy.

The same could be said for the church and for our faith. A healthy congregation does not happen without work. Work on the part of the members, the pastor, and yes possibly even the Conference. One healthy event does not create a healthy church; it does not even create other healthy events unless effort and prayer is present to help those who participated in the event and those outside who were touched by it grow so everyone can take part in other healthy events. God's Spirit is a renewing life giving force, but we have to help others experience that spirit. It can take years to enable one who out of fear has built walls that keep all, even God; out, to remove just a few blocks so that Divine Spirit can bring new life. All that while, we need to remain present, allowing God's Spirit to flow through us searching for a way to enter. Health takes work.

The work that health takes is that of the faithful servant hood to which God

is calling us. It is the work of caring for the forgotten, understanding the confusing, and being a channel of a holy vision. It is the work of embracing hope in the face of despair. It is the work of calling on faith to overcome fear.

We can do all the right things and something can go dreadfully wrong. Just as health in our bodies is not a guarantee, so health in our congregations cannot be assumed. But we can be assured that the God that calls life into being continues as a source of healing, to create. The God, who never leaves, never stops working for our good health. Our bodies never stop striving for health. Until the very last breath is gone our bodies seek health. So God's Spirit continues to work within each of us that in our faith lives we might strive for health. In the same way that searching, life embracing Divine Spirit continues to work in our congregations that beyond the argument, beyond the confusion, beyond the fear we might find health. Let us not take God's Spirit for granted, but join it as a partner, as we strive for healthy congregations. Let us be about the hard faithful work that brings health. Namaste Wade



### *The 2011 New Earth*

#### *Summer Camp Experience*

With the melting snow all around us it is time to think summer camp. This year we have moved our camp program to Camp of the Cross in Garrison ND. The sign up forms are now online at the conference website [www.npcucc.org](http://www.npcucc.org) for you to download. If you would like hardcopies of the application sent to

your church let us know. To save some paper we did not put the health forms in the applications. You will need to go to the Camp of the Cross website <http://www.campofthecross.com/documents/healthformforweb.pdf> and print the health form file. For more info on summer camp contact Rev. Carleton Borden: [revcarletonborden@gmail.com](mailto:revcarletonborden@gmail.com) / 701-840-5104.

### **Summer Camp 2011 is coming!**

We are happy to report that Reverend Tammy Toepke-Floyd is returning as our young youth's Camp Dean, and we are happy to announce that Reverend Marilyn Levine is going to be our older youth's Camp Dean. Reverend Leola Allen and Ernie Conley will be returning also as our Arts and Crafts Team, along with assistance from Kathy Holmes. Registrations are already starting to arrive, and it looks like it will be a summer experience to remember. Applications are available on our Northern Plains Conference website ([www.npcucc.org](http://www.npcucc.org)) and we hope to see you this coming July at Camp of the Cross in Garrison, North Dakota.



### **Summer Camp Registration:**

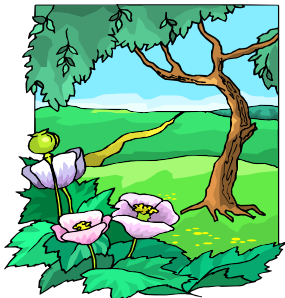
On the [npcucc.org](http://npcucc.org) website under the Church News tab there is the registration

form for the Summer Camp Experience, July 24-July 28, 2011. The location of the Camp Experience is at Camp of the Cross for ages 8-18.



### **Camp of the Cross Sunday**

The Northern Plains Conference is now a "Constituent Partner" of Camp of the Cross. This means that we are more than mere customers renting the facility periodically we are partners in that ministry. The end result is that Northern Plains Conference will receive a reduced rate for camp and retreat usage, which our pastors can go to Camp of the Cross for personal retreat for little or no cost. It also means that we have agreed to take a special camp offering once a year. The date for this special offering is **May 1<sup>st</sup>**. All Northern Plains Conference congregations are invited to support the youth and outdoor ministry of the Conference by receiving a special offering that Sunday. We would invite you to please send the receipts to the Northern Plains Conference labeled "Camp Offering." A special bulletin insert has been sent via email to all congregations and is available on the Northern Plains Conference Web Site, [www.npcucc.org](http://www.npcucc.org), under the Church New tab. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the Conference Office.



### **Voices From The Prairie: Zion United Church of Christ Comes to the Rescue:**



The community of Medina knows where to go when there is a threatening tornado or severe summer storm. They head for the Fellowship Hall adjoining the Zion United Church of Christ. It is a concrete bunker with a reinforced concrete and steel flat roof built in the 1950's as the basement for the new church that never got built on top (it is now covered with a slanted roof to keep it from leaking). The small red sign above the doors of the Fellowship Hall boldly states "STORM SHELTER" as officially designated by the City of Medina.

So when travelers on Interstate 94 were blinded by a blizzard with 65 mph winds, they stopped in Medina at the local CENEX gas station, and found the two Medina motels already full. Pastor Karl Limvere got the call to see if the stranded motorists could stay at the community's "Storm Shelter." The travelers trickled in. By the early evening, 53 persons had converged to

the fellowship hall. The travelers included college students, two pregnant women, and children from one to teenage and senior citizens. One guest had traveled the furthest distance to Medina, all the way from Sri Lanka. Pastor Karl's wife, Jean, organized food for supper, brought over DVD's for entertainment, and as many blankets as she could muster, and made sure the storm guests were as comfortable as possible. Nearby church members pitched in as well. The sample Church World Service blankets got real use that night. The church's recent experiment with its Food Share shelf provided an assurance that nobody would go hungry. The travelers scattered throughout the church to the classrooms, sanctuary, and even the furnace room, sleeping on pew cushions and even the pews in the sanctuary for the night.

In the morning, Jean pulled out the grills and began making pancakes. When she ran out of pancake mix, one of the young men said he always stocked pancake mix in his car, because it was a quick and cheap meal on the road. Like the story of stone soup, he shared and there was enough. By Saturday mid-morning the weather had cleared enough so that the Red Cross came out with coffee and snacks, and bread, cheese and meat which became grilled ham and cheese sandwiches. One of the guests, who was in a car that had been rear-ended in the blinding snowstorm was checked over by Medina EMTs and as a precautionary

measure transported to the Jamestown Hospital by ambulance. When the roads cleared Jean drove the other family members to Jamestown.

By the wee hours of the morning, the Highway Patrol and emergency crews had directed another 259 travelers to the Public School in Medina. Some were also housed in private homes, the Legion Hall, and the English Lutheran Church. Overnight the stranded motorists had more than doubled Medina's census population of 325. When the Interstate had been cleared and was reopened early Saturday afternoon the travelers got back on the highway taking with them a story of real small town rural hospitality

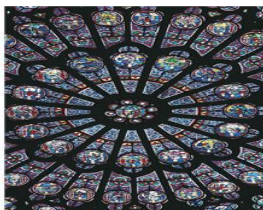
At Sunday morning worship Pastor Karl shared a large thank you note, wonderfully decorated and signed by the overnight storm guests. So whether it is winter or summer, the Zion UCC now has another bit of proof that it lives up to the advertising on the church's highway sign, "Your Community Shelter in Every Storm. Written by Karl Limvere, pastor of Zion UCC in Medina, North Dakota."



### **AWARE Available in TWO Versions:**

Starting with the December 2010 issue, 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 that as before, will be 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. This version will serve Congregations that send out the AWARE via email.



### Congregations Seeking A Pastor:

The following churches are seeking new pastoral leadership:

**New Horizon Parish** (near Lakota)  
**Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ in Fargo** (currently with a hold on profiles),  
and  
**United Church of Christ in Bismarck.**



### Disaster Clean up and Recovery

It is spring in North Dakota . . . floods, snow and rain with signs of spring coming soon. The people of North Dakota are resilient. That doesn't mean however, that we should not be looking out for our neighbor and helping one another through difficult times with our time, talents and tithes. It is a great time for churches and

congregations to step up and offer shelter, support and help.

One of the strange phenomena's of flooding around the state is that it doesn't seem to happen all at the same time. Some communities haven't been affected at all; others are moving into clean up and recovery, while other communities are just beginning to experience flooding. This year the overland flooding has been especially difficult for those on rural farmsteads surrounded by water. Places like Fargo, Grand Forks, Valley City and other communities are well prepared from past experience. The people in the Devils Lake Basin are waiting for their 18<sup>th</sup> in a row Presidential Disaster Declaration!

So what can we do now??? We can be a listening ear to those who are suffering and living with daily discomfort, fear and uncertainty. We can keep an eye out for those who are the most vulnerable in our communities and Conference. We can put together groups from our churches that are willing to help out in their local community and to travel to other communities to help with preparation, clean up and recovery. We can remember that for many the effects of the disaster will last well beyond the actual flooding.

One of the best ways that we can help is with our dollars to support the ecumenical efforts for fair and equitable sharing of donated monies and materials through unmet needs committees and North Dakota Long Term Recovery. A month ago Conference Council approved an appeal to the Northern Plains Conference churches asking for contributions from the churches. There is still time to offer support. Please send your donations to the Conference or national church.

If you have questions, need support and want to help others, please

call me 701-430-0727 or email me at [ethelindholt@gmail.com](mailto:ethelindholt@gmail.com). Lindy Holt, Disaster Ministries Coordinator.



### **Northern Plains Conference /South Dakota Conference talk of Union:**

Conversations continue following a positive vote by both the Northern Plains Conference Council and the South Dakota Conference Board, around the vision of a union between the two historic Conferences. These discussions will be a part of the Annual Meeting June 3 – 5 in Fargo as we have time for discussion and a vote on continuing the search for ways to work together in the future. At the present time the discussion is not talking about dissolving either Conference and forming a new one, but rather the union of the existing Conferences by which certain functions would be shared and others would remain independent. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Conference Office.



### **Medallion Award**

Each year at the Annual Meeting we recognize Northern Plains Conference members who distinguish themselves in service by presenting them with a Medallion Award. The Medallion Award is to honor deserving lay persons and ministers who have

served in the Conference in some capacity. The Award is intended to recognize members of the Conference who have served voluntarily for a sustained duration in one or more of these areas: and local church, Regional and/or National Synod instrumentalities and Local Church, Local Church and Community.

Medallion Award Nomination forms and background information can be found on the Northern Plains Conference Web Site, [www.npcucc.org](http://www.npcucc.org) and typing “medallion award” into the search box. If you have difficulty or need a nomination form sent to you, please contact the Conference Office.

All Medallion Award Nomination forms are to be sent to the Conference Office



### **The NPC Nominating Committee is hard at work**

As the Annual meeting approaches, various activities kick into high gear. That is certainly true of the NPC nominating committee. They are underway calling prospective nominees for office and inviting many to consider seeking a second term. If you are contacted by a member of the nominating committee, please give prayerful thought to serving through an office in the Northern Plains Conference.



**Sisters in Christ welcome special guests to the Northern Plains Conference.**

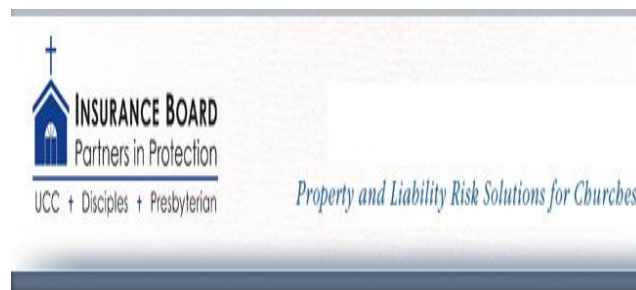
Two special guests are on their way to the Northern Plains Conference to share in the activities of the Women's Ministry of the Northern Plains Conference (Sisters in Christ, Women's Ministry Committee). Barbara Baylor, minister for health care justice will be the speaker for the Women's Luncheon at the Annual Meeting as well as a workshop leader. Charlene J. Smith, Minister for Evangelism and Vitality will be the presenter for the Women's Retreat to be held at the Abbey in Richardton, September 16 – 18. All Northern Plains Conference women are invited to make plans to share in these special times. We look forward to the message each will bring as we continue to share with our National Partners in that ministry to which we all are called, the discipleship of Jesus the Christ.



**Northern Plains Conference members are invited to share in the installation of Richard Wyman as pastor for First Congregational UCC in Reeder:**

All Northern Plains Conference UCC members and pastors are invited to

share in the installation service for Richard Wyman as the pastor of the First Congregational UCC of Reeder. Richard is the recently called licensed pastor who serves this small membership South Western North Dakota Congregation. The service is May 15, 2011 at 9:30 a.m. mountain time.



**UCC INSURANCE BOARD**

The Insurance Board (IB) is a non-profit corporation owned by the 38 Conferences of the United Church of Christ. It is literally our insurance facility. The IB administers a property and liability insurance program serving churches of the UCC, Disciples of Christ, and Presbyterian Church USA. It has served the needs of participating denominations now for 25 years, and has weathered the test of time.

The IB only uses insurance companies with the very high insurance company financial ratings. It only utilizes carriers with AM Best ratings of A (Class XV) which are nearly the highest available. What this means to policyholders is there are billions of dollars in state-regulated reserves to pay claims.

We are blessed with coverage plans unequalled in the church insurance marketplace. Over 3603 churches and related entities participate as of March 31,

2011 with more joining constantly. Those 3603 insured represent \$ 9.7 billion of insured values.

The IB is on very solid financial footing as you will discover when reviewing the 2010 annual report which will literally be hot off the press at our annual meeting in June. Please look in your convention bag for information on the IB and its annual report. Premiums are competitive and coupled with unequaled coverage and demonstrated superior claim service make the IB program one all conference members

should seriously consider at the next opportunity.

For information about the Insurance Board, click here: [www.insuranceboard.org](http://www.insuranceboard.org)

For any questions about the program or and how to join, please contact our Northern Plains Conference agent:

Evan Mandigo

1200 East Highland Acres Road

Bismarck, N.D. 58501

701-222-1943

701-471-0937 Cell

701-751-0813 Fax

### The Calendar for May

| Date | Time            | Event                    | Location       |
|------|-----------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| 5/2  | -----           | NCC Clean Air Gathering  | Washington, DC |
| 5/3  | -----           | NCC Clean Air Gathering  | Washington, DC |
| 5/4  | -----           | NCC Clean Air Gathering  | Washington, DC |
| 5/5  | 4:00 pm (ct)    | NDCC Board               | Stanley        |
| 5/5  | 6:00 pm (ct)    | NDCC Dinner              | Stanley        |
| 5/6  | 5:30 pm (ct)    | Multiple Paths Gathering | Valley City    |
| 5/7  | 9:00 am (ct)    | Multiple Paths Gathering | Valley City    |
| 5/10 | 10:00 am (ct)   | MV Cluster               | -----          |
| 5/11 | 12:00 Noon (ct) | Ft. Berthold Cluster     | New Town       |
| 5/14 | 10:00 am (ct)   | CHYS Howasta             | Bismarck       |

|      |               |                                           |                |
|------|---------------|-------------------------------------------|----------------|
|      |               | Lunch                                     |                |
| 5/14 | 11:00 am (mt) | ALWL #5                                   | Dickinson      |
| 5/15 | 9:30 am (mt)  | Installation Service<br>for Richard Wyman | Reeder         |
| 5/17 | 3:00 pm (ct)  | NPC/SDC talk                              | Medina         |
| 5/18 | 9:00 am (ct)  | NPC/SDC talk                              | Medina         |
| 5/18 | 10:00 am (ct) | Social Media<br>Webinar                   | -----          |
| 5/19 | 10:00 am (ct) | Fargo Cluster                             | -----          |
| 5/20 | 2:00 pm (ct)  | Prairie Hospitality<br>Face to Face       | Hankinson      |
| 5/21 | 9:00 am (ct)  | Prairie Hospitality<br>Face to Face       | Hankinson      |
| 5/22 | -----         | CM shares in<br>worship                   | Bismarck       |
| 5/22 | 7:00 pm (et)  | HRC Clergy Call                           | Washington, DC |
| 5/23 | 9:00 am (et)  | HRC Clergy Call                           | Washington, DC |
| 5/24 | 9:00 am (et)  | HRC Clergy Call                           | Washington, DC |
| 5/26 | 11:00 am (ct) | Minot Cluster                             | -----          |
| 5/27 | 11:00 am (ct) | Central Cluster                           | -----          |
| 5/30 | -----         | Memorial Day                              | -----          |
|      |               |                                           |                |