

# Light of the Northern Plains

Presbytery of the Northern Plains

June 2017

## PRAYER JOYS/CONCERNS

Laurie Elhard, Administrator of Communications and Finance, will be having surgery on June 1 and will be on medical leave till sometime in July. Please keep her in your prayer during this time of recovery.

Please lift up in prayer those displaced from their homes by natural disasters in the United States and all over the world, those in need of basic supplies, and those who are working to offer assistance. Pray that conditions improve so that delivery of much needed relief supplies can reach their distribution points.

Please pray that God's love will work through us, our churches, our communities, and our world for peace, compassion, and justice for all.

For remembering our baptism in everything we say and do; for our leaders; for pastors who are facing health problems; for the unity of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Please hold our Chogoria partners in your prayers.

*If you or someone from your congregations would like a prayer concern/joy to be sent out to the Presbytery, please contact the office at [pnpooffice@gmail.com](mailto:pnpooffice@gmail.com) or call 701-772-0783. If the request is on behalf of someone else, please check with them before requesting.*

## CALLING ONE, CALLING ALL

The Presbytery of the Northern Plains is transitioning from a committee to a more task-oriented structure this October. This will allow for the workload to be more evenly divided and individuals will be able to contribute based on their passions and abilities. Everyone is asked to complete a survey which will help match your skills and passion for ministry at:

<https://www.northernplainspresbytery.com/copy-of-survey>.

**"Joyfully called as servants to accompany congregations and leaders in God's mission: Praying. Encouraging. Serving. Equipping. Stewarding."**

— Eph. 4:11-13

## FORGIVE US, LORD . . .

*By: Teaching Elder Donna Monteith, moderator of the Presbytery of the Northern Plains*

Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times."  
— Matthew 18:21-22 NRSV

In one of my previous calls, there was a family that was quite active in the church. I will call them Fred and Ginger. Fred was a Ruling Elder, Ginger was a Deacon, and her son was active in youth activities. It was a second marriage for both.

Fred had been a teacher in the local school system, but had left to farm with another member of our church. It was not a good time to start farming, and Fred and Ginger had to move to another town where they could both find jobs. There was no longer a Presbyterian church in that town, so they joined another church there, and I lost track of them.

A few years later, we heard that Fred was suffering from advanced stage cancer. Some of the church members participated in a fundraising benefit for him, and when he died, several of us attended his funeral. On the following Sunday, I thanked the members of my congregation for the kindness they had shown to Ginger and to his children. After worship was over that day, the organist came into my office as I was taking off my robe. She opened the conversation with, "Am I going to burn in hell because I am glad he is dead?"

I must have had a shocked expression on my face, as she did not wait for an answer, but continued by explaining that Fred had molested several of her children when they were in school, and he was an elementary teacher. This story came to mind now because the front page of the newspaper this morning featured a priest who had also served in that community who has now been accused of molesting a young person. I have worked with this priest; he always seemed like the one you would want to tell if someone were molested.

Jesus seems to make it very clear that we are to forgive, and keep on forgiving. Please note that Jesus never says that our forgiveness means not holding someone accountable for their sin. If we do not forgive, it has more impact on us than it does on the sinner. Not forgiving can consume us; prevent us from living our lives as God intends us to do, in freedom and in joy.

When the sin involves the exploitation of a young person, we can forgive the exploiter for the disease that caused them to act in this manner, but we need to be very sure as the church that it cannot happen again. If your congregation has not yet adopted a Child Protection Policy, I would encourage you to do so.

"Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs."

Matthew 19:14b NRSV



## HEALTHY BOUNDARY TRAINING

The Presbytery of the Northern Plains will be hosting a boundary training for Teaching Elders on Tuesday, August 15, 2017, at First Presbyterian Church of Grand Forks, ND. The training will begin at 9:30 a.m. and conclude by 4:00 p.m. Laurie Elhard, Administrator for Communication and Finance, and Alissa Anderson, Administrator for Connections and Records, will be leading the session. This training has been designed with the Pastoral Leader in mind, however all are welcome. You **MUST** attend the entire training to receive credit and a certificate at the end of the training. Please plan to attend if you need to renew or have never attended a class before. Please register with Alissa Anderson at 701-772-0783 or [pnpmmission@gmail.com](mailto:pnpmmission@gmail.com).

## UNIFIED MISSION: WHAT IS IT AND HOW IS IT USED

By: Laurie Elhard, Administrator of Communications and Finance

Unified Mission Support, also known as Shared or General Mission Support, is the Presbytery of the Northern Plains second largest funding source behind Per Capita. This funding typically comes from congregations whose session, though its annual budget, make a pledge or send in undesignated donations. It is used to underwrite the mission and programs at the presbytery, the synod and national levels. However, over the past decade support to the unified mission has decreased.

Each Fall at the Presbytery meeting, there is a vote to set the percentage of the Unified Mission Support that will remain in the presbytery and how much will go to support the work of the synod and the Presbyterian Mission Agency (national level). Currently it is set at 15 % each for the Presbyterian Mission Agency and Synod of Lakes and Prairies and 70% remains at the Presbytery level. This formula is used unless a session provides their own designations.

In 2016, the Presbytery of the Northern Plains received \$ 31,727.40 to support mission and programs, which was not enough to cover the total paid out (\$ 37,461.90). Here are some of the areas which were supported at the Presbytery level:

- **1001 Worshipping Communities Team** support leaders interested in establishing new worshipping communities through prayer, education, listening, and innovative shared thinking. It is their hope to share experiences, struggles, successes, and learning with the presbytery so that renewal might grow in many areas of our presbytery, touching numerous communities and congregations.
- **Bdecan Ministry Team** is a broad-based community initiative to empower the Dakota people of the Spirit Lake Nation. We collaborate to develop projects that will aid community members with support services that help them to provide for their material and spiritual needs. The Bdecan Ministry Team works with individuals and families to develop and build on their values to improve quality of life. The Presbytery also fully supports the **Bdecan Food Pantry**.
- **Chogoria Partnership Team** is intended to provide to both parties a variety of gifts through building a relationship, through exchanging knowledge, through prayer for one another, through sister congregations, and by engaging in joint activities.
- **Presbyterians for Earth Care** is part of a “nationwide network that cares for God’s Creation by: Connecting with God and others through biblical and theological reflection, study, and experiencing God in Creation; Equipping members with news and effective tools and resources; and Inspiring members through conferences on timely eco-justice issues and Creation-honoring worship.”
- **Youth Connections** is a team that organizes youth events and supports youth activities (Spring Youth Retreat, Youth Mission Trips, Presbyterian Youth Triennium).
- **Ministry Regions** purpose is to share in community, fellowship, education and encouragement and to unite in mission and ministry in a handier geographical area.
- Annual pledges to **Presbyterian Clearwater Forest** and the **University of Jamestown**.

As Helen Keller said, “*Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.*” Please encourage your congregation to prayerful consider making a pledge to the Unified Mission Support or consider giving of your time to one of the above teams. If you would like additional information, contact the Presbytery office at 701-772-0783 or email [pnpooffice@gmail.com](mailto:pnpooffice@gmail.com).





# PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S SPRING GATHERING

By: Lana Schultz, Presbyterian Women Moderator of the Presbytery of the Northern Plains



Generous gifts of “grab-and-go” food items and fleece blankets/pillows were collected and donated to the Ronald McDonald House Charities in Fargo, ND to assist those families who are away from home due to a child’s hospitalization.

On April 29, 2017, over 50 women registered at the First Presbyterian Church in Moorhead for PW’s Spring Gathering. The day began with worship and communion led by Rev. Cathie Bishop, Community Presbyterian Church, West Fargo. With the message “As God’s Chosen Ones,” a generous offering of \$662.50 was received and will be divided between the Global Exchange to Indonesia, USA Mission Experience to the Northeast, and the Dakota Fund providing our Native sisters with assistance to attend the Churchwide Gathering.

We welcomed two speakers at our Gathering. Ruling Elder Elona Street-Stewart, Synod Executive, shared with us in the morning about how important PW is to her and to women of all ages for learning and, building up and empowering each other in leadership and service.

In the afternoon, Ruling Elder Sue Medsker-Nedderman of Hastings, Nebraska, spoke on her mission trip to the San Francisco Bay area as part of the USA Mission Experience.

The group’s itinerary included, among other stops, visits to non-profits working with sex traffic victims, such as Safe House for former traffic victims, Cameron House saving 1,000 Chinese women from sexual slavery, and Justice Center for counseling and housing.

Rich Swartwood, Director at Clearwater Forest, spoke of the special events and camps at Clearwater Forest this year. Reminding us that everyone can contribute to Clearwater Forest by sending a child or grandchild to camp with a friend and/or contributing a scholarship so no child is turned away from attending.

Before our business meeting, good news was shared during a break. The Youth Connection and Bdecan Church each received mission funds this past year from PW for upcoming youth mission trips and to Clearwater Forest’s “camp in a van” bringing Bible camp to Bdecan in August to children who may never have attended Bible camp.

Outgoing officers—Pastor Donna Monteith-Search Committee and Elizabeth Swee-Treasurer were recognized with thanks. Officers installed for 2017 are: Lana Schultz-Moderator, Paula Christensen-Vice Moderator, Sharon Johnson-Treasurer, Hazel Merdink-Secretary, Jane Pierce, Pat Purath and Lila Stewart-Search Committee, North Cluster Leader-Hazel Merdink and South Cluster Leaders-Donna Preston and Jane Pierce. Changes to the bylaws were approved. Beginning in 2018, all officers will serve three-year terms.

Upcoming events/deadlines: June 15-send birthday offering to treasurer; June 24-Coordinating team meeting in Grandin at the church at 10:00 a.m.; September 30-North Cluster meets at Red Lake Falls; September 12-29, 2017—Global Exchange in Indonesia. Gifts of yarn necklaces should be sent to Gracia Fulwiler at the Fargo church before September 1<sup>st</sup> and she will send them on to our Global Exchange participant. August 2-5, 2018—Churchwide Gathering in Louisville with \$200 scholarship money available from PWP and registration begins January 2018; and June 20-23, 2019—Synod Gathering in Ames, Iowa.

Jane Pierce closed the meeting with devotions. The PW Coordinating Team wishes to thank our gracious hosts from First Presbyterian Church in Moorhead, our lunch providers from First Presbyterian Church in Fargo, and our accompanist Elizabeth Swee for their behind-the-scenes support.



**Ruling Elder Elona Street-Stewart, Synod Executive.**



**Ruling Elder Sue Medsker-Nedderman of Hastings, Nebraska.**



**L to R: Lila Stewart-Gilby, Jan Carlson-Fargo, Vicki Bunker-Gilby, Rita Freeborg-Gilby and Hazel Merdink-East Grand Forks.**



## OCTOBER PRESBYTERY MEETING

The Fall Presbytery Meeting will be held on October 6-7, 2017, at First Presbyterian Church of Hallock, MN. In late May an incorrect date was sent out by postcard. Please correct your calendar.

## PLANNING CALENDARS

The Presbytery office has 2017-2018 Presbyterian Planning Calendars for sale for \$ 9.35 plus shipping cost. If interested in purchasing one, please contact the Presbytery office at 701-772-0783 or email [pnpooffice@gmail.com](mailto:pnpooffice@gmail.com). It's on a first come, first served basis and no additional calendars will be purchased once supplies have run out.

## TWO YOUTH MISSION TRIPS SCHEDULED FOR THIS SUMMER:

**Middle School Mission Trip**  
**June 22-25, 2017**

Current 5th thru 8th grade  
Cost: \$175

**MINNEAPOLIS, MN**

Registration Deadline: June 11, 2017

Presbytery of the Northern Plains 701-772-0783 (office)  
5555 S Washington Street [pnpmmission@gmail.com](mailto:pnpmmission@gmail.com) (Alissa)  
Grand Forks, ND 58201 [pnpooffice@gmail.com](mailto:pnpooffice@gmail.com) (Laurie)

### HIGH SCHOOL

## DENVER MISSION TRIP

**JULY 15 - 22, 2017**

**CURRENT 8TH THRU  
12TH GRADES & ADULTS**

**DEADLINE JUNE 11, 2017**

**COST: \$350**

Presbytery of the Northern Plains 701-772-0783 (office)  
5555 S Washington Street [pnpmmission@gmail.com](mailto:pnpmmission@gmail.com) (Alissa)  
Grand Forks, ND 58201 [pnpooffice@gmail.com](mailto:pnpooffice@gmail.com) (Laurie)

## Presbytery's Calendar

June 3	Youth Connection at United Pres – Jamestown
June 4	Pentecost Sunday
June 7	Nominating Committee cc
June 8	Committee on Ministry cc
June 13	Enactment Task Force cc
June 15	Council Meeting at United Pres – Jamestown
June 21	Nominating Committee cc
June 22-25	Middle School Mission Trip (pg 4)
July 3 & 4	Holiday, Office Closed
July 5	Youth Connection cc
July 13	Committee on Ministry cc
July 15-22	Sr. High Mission Trip (pg 4)
July 20	Council cc
July 23	Synod School
October 6-7	Fall Presbytery Meeting at First Presbyterian Church of Hallock

cc = Conference Call

## OFFICE HOURS

The Presbytery office is open Monday thru Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Due to meeting schedules, please call before stopping by to make sure someone will be at the office.

PNP vision statement:

**“A vibrant, informed, Presbyterian community which nourishes ministry and joins in Christ’s mission.”**

Would you like to receive the *Light of the Northern Plains* electronically? You can by signing up for the paperless edition. It costs nothing. To sign up, simply email [pnpooffice@gmail.com](mailto:pnpooffice@gmail.com) and request to be put on the electronic newsletter list.

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Article deadline for the *Light* is the twenty-fifth of the month. Items may be sent to:

Laurie Elhard

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