

Light of the Northern Plains

Presbytery of the Northern Plains

February 2015

PRAYER CONCERNS/JOYS

Annie McDowell, mother of Teaching Elder Martha McDowell, passed away January 21, 2015. The funeral will be in Massachusetts and conducted by Martha per her mother's request. Please pray for the McDowell family during this time.

Lori Billings, wife of Dan Billings (Teaching Elder at Midway Parish), was in the hospital until January 17, 2015, when she was transferred to Vibra Hospital in Fargo, ND, for long term rehabilitation. Prayers are requested for Lori and Dan during this time of recovery.

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

Please join in prayer for the leadership of the Presbytery and the church in every time and place as we move forward in God's service.

Please pray for our congregations in transition and congregations that are in need of healing.

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 pnppoffice@gmail.com or call 701-772-0783. If the request is on behalf of someone else, please check with them before requesting.

DON'T JUST SIT THERE, DO SOMETHING!



By: Ruling Elder Sylvia Pringle, moderator of the Presbytery of the Northern Plains

A couple of months ago, my devotion was titled, "Don't just do something, sit there." I wrote about the demands of our fast paced, everyday lives and the importance of getting away and communing quietly with God; praying and sitting in his presence, talking to him and listening to what he has to say. Martha got caught up in the business of her day, while Mary sat at the feet of Jesus, listening to him. There are times when we need to "sit" and not "do."

This month I would like to turn that around, "Don't just sit there, do something."

Mark 1:38: But Jesus replied, "*We must go on to other towns as well, and I will preach to them too.*"

This was after Jesus had retreated and gone off to pray, alone. (vs. 35) When Jesus ended his prayer time, he stated that he needed to go and preach.

Something for us to remember about prayer is that AMEN doesn't mean "good bye, God." We tend to act as if the word AMEN signifies that we have been on the phone with God and are now disconnected from him. Rather than "good bye," we need to act as if the word signifies action.

As people of God, we have a cultural mandate to live actively in society. Reformed people generally agree on two things.

- 1) We are called to be in the world and not withdraw from it. We are not monastic. We don't stay shielded from the world and its problems, or joys.
- 2) We are to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and visit the prisoner.

We are also to meet the spiritual needs of people. We do this through words and actions.

During your alone time with God at the end of your prayer, when you say AMEN, what actions do you take?

Do you pray for the sick and then leave it at that? Or do you pray for the sick and then pick up the phone and call them so they know you are thinking about them? Do you ask if you can do anything? Do you bring them a hot meal or pick up medication for them?

Do you pray for the needy and hope God does something about their needs? Or do you pray and ask God to use you? Do you put

actions to your prayer? Do you work at the food pantry? Might you help someone prepare for a job interview?

Do you pray that God's kingdom on earth will enlarge, and then hope that God inspires someone else to do something? Or do you pray and then say as Jesus said, "I have to go somewhere so I can tell others about the good news of Christ. That is why I am here."

Fueled by love, your actions sow seeds of hope in someone's life.

We need to stop, from time to time, and go to a solitary place for prayer. At the end of our prayer, we need to get up and get busy with what is important, the work of God.

May you leave your solitary place of prayer and look for ways to serve God's children.

BEGINNING OF YEAR TO DO LIST

By: Ruling Elder Lana Schultz, chair of the Session Records Committee

Welcoming in a new year means additional items for clerks of session and moderators to include in your session's agenda:

1. Set dates for communion for the year. (G-3.0201b)
2. Elect commissioner(s) to Presbytery for the year. (G-3.0202)
3. Approve special offerings for the year.
4. Approve statistical/necrology report from Presbytery (due electronically by February 19, 2015). (G-3.0202)
5. Determine average annual attendance at worship for the past year. (G-3.0202)
6. Set date for installation/ordination of newly elected elders, even those who have served previous terms. (G-2.0403)
7. Review and update membership rolls. (G-3.0204a,b)
8. Prepare and adopt a budget (G-3.0113, G-3.0205).
9. Review property and liability insurance (G-3.0112).

The Session Records Committee welcomes your questions, suggestions, and concerns. The Presbytery office at 701-772-0783 or email pnpooffice@gmail.com can put you in contact with Stated Clerk Michael Lochow, committee chair Lana Schultz, or committee members Denise Olson or Dorothy Bergh.



BOOK OF ORDER MUSINGS

By: Ruling Elder Michael Lochow, Stated Clerk of Presbytery of the Northern Plains

The first of the year triggers a number of responsibilities for clerks of session. Elsewhere in this newsletter Lana Schultz, chair of the Session Records Committee, does an excellent job of pointing out those responsibilities for the beginning of the year. There are additional tasks as well that fall on the shoulders of the session and their clerks to see are accomplished. These are tasks mandated by the Book of Order.

1. Meet at least quarterly (G-3.0203) with minutes supporting those meetings.
2. The annual election of a treasurer (G-3.0205).
3. Report all financial actions at least annually to the session (G-3.0205c).
4. Creation of a sexual misconduct policy (G-3.0106).
5. Have a manual of operations updated based upon changes to Book of Order in 2011 (G-3.0106).

Did you know the following is also required at a minimum in the financial area (G-3.0205):

1. All offerings shall be counted and recorded by at least two duly appointed persons, or by one who is fidelity bonded; and
2. Financial books and records adequate to reflect all financial transactions shall be kept and open to inspection.

If you have created a budget as required in G-3.0113 and G-3.0205, then creation of financial statements comparing your budget with actual figures on a regular basis is relatively simple. With no budget or regular financial statements, you are flying financially blind. The financial areas are being emphasized because this is statistical reporting season and in my experience what most clerks of session struggle with for their statistical report is the financial page. If you have questions about any of these requirements, please contact me. Often there are templates or outlines that can help you meet these requirements.

THANK YOU - BECAUSE OF YOU . . .

At the Pastor Appreciation Banquet in October, individuals were asked to reflection on the impact pastors have had in their lives. After this meaningful time each person was asked to write messages that would be shared throughout the year. Here are a few of them . . .

- *Thank you for seeing me. Thank you for sowing the seeds of faith and challenging me. Thank you for proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ always.*
- *Thank you for being the important part of forming who I am today.*
- *Thank you for showing me that Pastors are real people and that there is a role for each of us in the church.*
- *Thank you for being involved in my life and helping me even when you might not have felt like helping me.*
- *Thank you for my pastor who is willing to be "Christ on Earth" by being available with good ears for my problems.*
- *Thank you for teaching me the importance of social justice.*
- *Thank you for reminding me that Christ is shared over a cup of coffee or a mug of beer.*



TWO YOUTH EVENTS IN THE WORKS – SPREAD THE WORD

By: Scott Dobovsky, leader of the Youth Connection Team



The Youth Connection Team is working on two events that we would love many youth and their leaders to be a part of. First, on May 1-3, 2015, will be the presbytery-wide Spring Youth Retreat. It's open to all youth in grades 6-12 and will be held at Crystal Springs Camp (just west of Jamestown). The theme of this retreat is "Balancing it All." We will be looking at how we balance our faith with everything else happening in our busy lives. Cost for this weekend is \$85 and registration forms are due by April 11, 2015. For more information about this event, please contact the Presbytery office at 701-772-0783 or go to www.northernplainspresbytery.com to download the brochure and registration form which will be posted by February 6, 2015.

The second event is a presbytery-wide Senior High (any youth going into 9th grade fall 2015 to those who graduate spring 2015) Mission Trip. The trip will run from July 18 – July 25. It will begin in Fargo and have the group travel around the state of North Dakota visiting churches and communities that are a part of our Presbytery. Work projects will be done at each stop and will end back in Fargo. Cost is \$230 per person; please let the Presbytery office know by February 9, 2015, if youth from your congregation are interested in going on this trip. If you have any questions on either event please contact Scott Dobovsky, leader of the youth connection team, at 701-293-6311 Ext or sdobovsky@firstpresfargo.org

ONLINE DONATION NOW BEING ACCEPTED!

At the end of December the Presbytery of the Northern Plains launched a newly designed website. Besides the new look, it has many more features to enhance the Presbytery's ministry. One of these features is the Presbytery can now receive online donations from individuals who would like to contribute to the mission of the Presbytery. In addition, registration and fees for events can now be collected online too.

Please take some time a check out the "new" website at: www.northernplainspresbytery.com. The office would love to hear feedback on what you liked and ways it could be improved.

WINTER ICE SKATING

The South-West Ministry Region is hosting a fun family-friendly event at Glencoe Sloan Memorial Church. Due to the unseasonable warm weather, this event has been rescheduled for Saturday, February 14, 2015, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. There will be ice skating, games (indoors) and refreshments. So mark your calendar and bring your skates to join us for a fun-filled afternoon!



The church is located on Highway 1804; just follow 1804 south 16 miles past the University of Mary. If you have any questions please contact Paul Snyder at 218-230-4081.

CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS



The North-East Ministry region is having a local mission day at one of their churches. The congregation that was chosen was the First Presbyterian Church of Grand Forks. They will be painting a few rooms on February 21, 2015, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., starting with prepping, painting, and then cleaning up. Lunch will be provided.

So bring a friend to enjoy some fellowship and have some fun while helping out our brothers and sisters. Everyone is invited to participate as long and as much as they would like.

Please RSVP to Alissa Anderson, Administrator for Connections and Records, by February 18, 2015, at 701-772-0783 or pnppmission@gmail.com.

REGIONAL GATHERINGS

Please be sure to spread the word about these gatherings and join with one another. The more we get together the stronger our connections grow; the more our knowledge of one another, the more we care for and our love for one another can flourish; and the more good we can do God's glory. Watch for future details of the gatherings below:

North-East Ministry Region

February 21, 2015 – Mission Work Day
April 2015 – Northland Rescue Mission /
Planning Meeting

South-Central Ministry Region

April 17, 2015 – Meal and Fellowship
Spring 2015 - Presentation on Evangelism

South-East Ministry Region

April 17, 2015 – Meal and Fellowship
May 9, 2015 – Fargo/Moorhead Marathon

South-West Ministry Region

February 14, 2015 – Ice Skating
February – April 2015 – Lent Worship Services

If you would like to know more about any of the above mentioned gatherings, or you have suggestions/ ideas for your region please contact Alissa Anderson, Administrator for Connections and Records, at 701-772-0783 or pnppmission@gmail.com.

PW CHURCHWIDE GATHERING NEWS

The Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women will take place in Minneapolis, June 18-21, 2015! Presbyterian Women and partners from across the globe will gather to learn, explore, worship, and have fun together. For a full schedule of this event, please go to: www.presbyterianwomen.org or call Presbyterian Distribution Service toll free, 800/524-2612 to request a free registration book, item CWG15001. In addition, copies of the brochure are available by contacting Donna Preston at 701-238-7414 or by email at preston@cord.edu.

Registration opens January 15th! The first 10 people who contact Elizabeth Swee at bswee@aol.com and/or Donna Preston at preston@cord.edu will receive a \$100 scholarship to attend the Churchwide Gathering.

Currently, we are looking into the cost of taking a bus from our Presbytery to the Churchwide Gathering. If you would be interested in this option, please contact Donna Preston at preston@cord.edu ASAP. The Coordinating Team will soon make a decision if this is feasible.

A 146 volunteers are needed for the Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women to run smoothly. There is now a website to see what the volunteer opportunities are and to sign up. It is pwsignup.com. Please make this information available to women in your congregation and encourage them to volunteer. If you have any questions regarding volunteering, contact Belinda Breit, volunteer coordinator, at belinda.breit@comcast.net.

SURVEY: HOW CAN PRESBYTERY SERVE YOU BETTER?



The Presbytery of the Northern Plains made a commitment in June of 2012 to implement a Strategic Plan for the workings of our presbytery with goals of improving our ability to Care, Connect, and Challenge congregations and members of the presbytery. A commitment was also made to review the process, expecting adjustments would be needed. To aid us in this process, we are asking you to please take a few minutes to answer a brief survey at: <http://www.northernplainspresbytery.com/#!/survey/c1y89>

Survey deadline is February 28, 2015.

If you would like to receive a hard copy of this survey, please contact the Presbytery office at 701-772-0783 or email (pnpooffice@gmail.com) and one will be mailed to you.

UPDATE ON SPRING GATHERING

Mark your calendars! The Presbytery of the Northern Plains Presbyterian Women's Spring Gathering will be held on Saturday, April 11, 2015, at First Presbyterian Church of Colgate. The day will start with registration at 9:30 a.m., followed with worship at 10:00 a.m. led by the Rev. Donna Monteith. The theme for the day is "Practicing God's Hospitality."

The full schedule of topics is still in the works. It is our hope to have Joe Obermeyer, Bdecan Youth and Outreach Coordinator, speaking on happenings at Bdecan Presbyterian Church with the offering going to Bdecan Ministry Team to support the ministry at Bdecan. More information coming soon!

Presbytery's Calendar

Feb 4	Youth Connection Team conference call
Feb 10	COM conference call
Feb 14	Winter Ice Skating (pg 3)
Feb 18	Ash Wednesday
Feb 19	Council meeting at United Pres Ch. of Jamestown
Feb 21	SE Mission Work Day (pg 3)
March 6	World Day of Prayer
March 12	1001 Worship Communities conference call
March 19	Council conference call
April 5	Easter
April 11	PW Gathering in Colgate
April 17-18	Annual Presbytery Meeting at First - Grand Forks
May 1-3	Spring Youth Retreat (pg 3)
May 25	Memorial Day, office closed
July 4	Independence Day, office closed
July 18-25	Youth Mission Trip (pg 3)
Sept 7	Labor Day, office closed
Oct 23-24	Fall Presbytery Meeting at Glencoe Sloan Memorial, rural Bismarck

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 and request to be put on the electronic newsletter list.

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Contributors: Sylvia Pringle, Scott Dobovsky, Donna Preston, Lana Schultz, Michael Lochow, Alissa Anderson and Laurie Elhard

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

Laurie Elhard
Presbytery of the Northern Plains
5555 South Washington Street Suite A
Grand Forks, ND 58201
701-772-0783
pnpooffice@gmail.com