

# Light of the Northern Plains

Presbytery of the Northern Plains

March 2015

## PRAYER CONCERNS/JOYS

Continued prayers are requested for Lori Billings, wife of Dan Billings (Teaching Elder at Midway Parish), as she has entered long term rehabilitation in the Fargo-Moorhead area. Please pray for Lori and Dan during this time of recovery.

Marshall Reikow, son of Teaching Elder Deanna Reikow at First Presbyterian Church of Mandan, ND, had emergency surgery on Tuesday (2/17) night to stop the bleeding from his throat after having his tonsils and adenoids removed. Please pray for Marshall and his family during this time of recovery.

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 [pnpoffice@gmail.com](mailto:pnpoffice@gmail.com) or call 701-772-0783. If the request is on behalf of someone else, please check with them before requesting.*

## BEING THE BEST WE CAN BE!

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

I suppose it is safe to say that millions of folks watched the Oscars award show on television last night. Awards were given left and right for the best this and the best that. Each of the many categories had a winner who received the sought after Oscar. Commentators spent hours describing each person's gown or tuxedo. The results were their opinions on who had the best gown and who had the best tuxedo, and who looked the most glamorous, or any other word used to describe their outer appearance. Many of the acceptance speeches seemed trite, with long lists of people who the winner deemed necessary to mention. Some speeches did appear to be heartfelt and sincere. (In their minds I am sure each one thought they were being sincere.) Watching the "beautiful" people in their element makes it rather difficult to think of them as actually having to put their jeans on one leg at a time, as the rest of us do. Jewels and fancy clothes can appear to cover a multitude of disappointments, shortcomings, fears, or any flaw that one has simply because he/she is human.

The show got me thinking about who really is the best and how does one get to the point of being the best...of anything. Each day presents challenges. We either address these challenges, or we retreat from them.

We all know people who just flat out make us want to be better people. We may know them intimately, or they may be an acquaintance. But they have the gift of bringing out the best in us, or at the very least, bringing out our desire to be the best we can be. These folks accept us with all our shortcomings and flaws. They do not dwell on these aspects of our personalities, in fact, they never mention when and how we fail. Instead, they are always there to encourage, guide, and when necessary, to lovingly redirect us. They don't remember when we may have wronged them. They love us and forgive us no matter how many times we stumble and fall. In their eyes, they see no judgment. They don't care about our past. They help us live in the present and work for a future where our best can emerge.

They love us unconditionally. Yes, we all love to be around people with these qualities.

Well, friends, God wants us to be that kind of person; someone who will help another one of his children to want to be the best he/she can be. He wants us to offer encouragement to one another. He wants us to show his children love in a very real way. He wants us to be the reflection of his love. He wants us to "...love our neighbor as ourselves." (paraphrased)

During this reflective time of Lent, let us spend time with God allowing his spirit to permeate our beings. Let us look for opportunities to love, instead of reasons to hate. Let us spend time with God; allowing him to help us become the child he knows we can be...the very best!

## COLLECTING CHILDREN'S CLOTHING FOR BDECAN

Bdecán Ministry Team will be collecting all sizes and all seasons of gently used or new children's clothes for the Bdecán Clothing Closet. You can bring them to either the Presbyterian Women Spring Gathering in Colgate (see page 4) or to the Presbytery meeting on April 17-18, 2015, at First Presbyterian Church of Grand Forks. Need of children's clothes is on-going. Please call Joe Obermeyer, Youth and Outreach Coordinator at Bdecán Presbyterian Church, at 701-294-2283, if you need to arrange a pickup from your congregation.



## PER CAPITA IS NOT A TAX OR A MEMBERSHIP FEE

Many congregations are a buzz about making their “Per Capita” payment. Many may think this is just another word for a tax or membership fee, but it is important to understand why this is not the case. If “Per Capita” were a tax, there would be a penalty for not paying it. Or if it were a membership fee, then if you didn’t pay it, you would not be able to be a member of the Presbyterian Church. Instead, “Per Capita” is a voluntary contribution by a congregation to the Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly. But if it is voluntary, why should you pay it? Let me try to explain.

The per capita payments for 2015, is \$43.27 per member. Here is the Per Capita Apportionment breakdown is:	
General Assembly	\$ 7.07
Synod of Lakes & Prairies	\$ 5.20
Northern Plains Presbytery	\$31.00
Total 2015 Per Capita	\$43.27

Each year the Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly determines its financial needs for ecclesiastical expenses (staffing, office expenses, etc), and then spreads that expense as a requested assessment from each church, based on the number of church members in each church. These governmental units provide the organizational structure, resources and leadership to make our ministry present throughout the World. Each church is asked to pay the total per capita payment to the Presbytery, which then distributes the payments among the three recipients. Even if a local church does not pay that church’s per capita assessment, the Presbytery makes the payment to the Synod and General Assembly. By sharing these ecclesiastical expenses each dollar given in support of mission, special offerings, and ministry programs can be applied directly to that cause.

One of the strengths of the Presbyterian Church USA (PC (USA)) is that it is a connectional church. Everyday your congregation joins together with the more than 2.5 million fellow Presbyterians, in 16 Synods, 173 Presbyteries and over 11,000 congregations in a shared ministry. Congregations who submit their per capita are witnessing through their actions support of our connectional nature. They understand they do not stand alone and want to join in with other congregations to be an active part of the PC (USA). While we are separated by region or by distance, Presbyterians still view themselves as a single body, faithfully sharing our resources at all levels of the church.

Still have questions about Per Capita? A brochure has been created to help understand the fundamentals of Per Capita and Unified mission. Free copies are available to be downloaded at the Presbytery of the Northern Plains website ([www.northernplainspresbytery.com](http://www.northernplainspresbytery.com)), or one can be mailed to you by contacting the Presbytery office.

## 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 your dedication and service to serving the Lord and your congregation.*
- *This is a “thank you” note to show my gratitude towards two people in my life, the very first is Pastor Ben Dove and the other is Pastor Kevin Kaufmann – they have inspired me more than anyone else.*
- *I want to say thank you for challenging me and pulling me out of the shadows of fearful living. You helped me to see my giftedness and I will always be thankful for that. Bless you!*
- *Thank you for showing me how to live as a person of faith who can live fully, enjoying all that life can offer and being present with God at all times and in all places.*
- *I enjoy a pastor who is happy and enjoying doing his work for the Lord.*
- *Thank you for your humble service and how you live your faith in ministry. Your life influences so many.*



## ECO-PALMS FOR HOLY WEEK

To celebrate Palm Sunday, the Presbyterian Hunger Program partners with Eco-Palms to bring branches worthy of celebration. Conventionally, palms are harvested in rainforests that are critical habitats for migrating birds. The more fronds harvesters cut, the more income they generate, which results in over-harvesting and threatens the rainforest. But Eco-Palms ensure fair wages, environmental protection training, and development assistance for harvesting communities throughout the rainforests of Guatemala and Mexico. Palms are harvested sustainably and processed in the harvesting communities, ensuring more of the benefit goes to the workers and towns where the palms are grown. Last year, almost 1,000 congregations in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) purchased Eco-Palms for Palm Sunday. For additional details and ordering information call 651-487-7189 or go to:

<http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/enough/eco-palms/>



## LEADING LONG, LEADING WELL WORKSHOP

Leading well in today's church is especially challenging for clergy. How do you remain resilient so you can focus on leading God's mission in the world?

Pastor well-being has been the subject of many studies and news articles of late. Statistics about the rate of burnout are staggering:

- 33% of pastors report feeling the first signs of burnout within their first five years of ministry.
- 57% of pastors say they would leave the ministry if they felt they had somewhere else to go within the first 10 years of ministry.
- 1,500 pastors leave ministry each month due to burnout, conflict, or controversy (as reported by [pastorburnout.com](http://pastorburnout.com)).



As a presbytery, the best thing we can do to help negate the effects of burnout, is to encourage and equip pastors to care for themselves and develop healthy coping and Sabbath taking practices. To that end, the Presbytery will be hosting a workshop, Leading Long, Leading Well, addressing these issues.

In this 1.5-day workshop, we will explore the notion of resiliency as part of strong leadership, and offer you the opportunity to discover what resiliency means for your own leadership. We will also explore mind, body, and spirit practices that will enhance your leadership effectiveness.

The event will be held on Thursday, April 16, 2015, and Friday, April 17, 2015, until 11:30 am (so you may have lunch and join the Presbytery meeting at 1:00 pm) at First Presbyterian Church of Grand Forks. It is the hope that by tying the two events together, Pastors will feel like this is an efficient use of their CE time. North Central Ministry Development Center will be leading the event with Mark Sundby and Mary Kay DuChene returning as our presenters.

Come, rejuvenate! For your leadership today and tomorrow! A [brochure](#) with registration form is available from the Presbytery's website at: [www.northernplainspresbytery.com](http://www.northernplainspresbytery.com)

## TWO YOUTH EVENTS IN THE WORKS – SPREAD THE WORD

*By: Scott Dobovsky, leader of the Youth Connection Team and Laurie Elhard, Admin. for Communication and Finance*

The Youth Connection Team has two youth events that we would love your congregation's youth and leaders to be part of, however, we need your help in getting the word out about them. INVITE them; they can't go if they don't know. So, please announce both events in your church bulletin, newsletter, and bulletin boards!

- **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) on May 1-3, 2015. 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. A [brochure](#) is available from the Presbytery's website at: [www.northernplainspresbytery.com](http://www.northernplainspresbytery.com)
- **Sr. High Mission Trip.** The trip will run from July 18 - 25, 2015, and is open for any youth going into 9th grade (fall 2015) to those who graduate spring 2015. It will begin in Fargo and the group will 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. Cost is \$230 per person. A minimum of 10 youth from around the Presbytery is required for this mission trip to take place. [Registration forms](#) and a [promotional flyer](#) are available from the Presbytery's website at: [www.northernplainspresbytery.com](http://www.northernplainspresbytery.com)

Your youth will love the chance to get out of town, deepen their faith, and connect with other Presbyterian youth from across the Presbytery. Also, we want to make sure all youth can attend these events. So please let us know of any obstacles your congregation may be facing having your youth attend (travel arrangements, sharing leaders, or if financial assistance needed), we will try to help find solutions.

If you have additional questions, please contact either Scott Dobovsky, leader of the Youth Connection Team, at 701-293-6311 or [sdobovsky@firstpresfargo.org](mailto:sdobovsky@firstpresfargo.org) or the Presbytery office at (701) 772-0783 or [pnppoffice@gmail.com](mailto:pnppoffice@gmail.com).

## STATISTICAL UPDATE

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

The Statistical Sweepstakes ended on February 19<sup>th</sup>, here were some last minute entries which reduced the non-filers to four which is an improvement over past years. I will be calling those churches to see what information I can gather before the OGA cuts off my access as well. I have reviewed all of the data entered by the churches and contacted those which needed a little tweaking. The tweaking usually involved membership numbers which did not match from one page to another or blank spaces. The reporting on finances was much improved. A thank you goes to all fifty-five churches which filed their reports timely. Fourteen of those churches needed no tweaking: Argyle, Buffalo, Devils Lake, Edgeley, Ellendale, Emerado, Forest River, Grand Forks, Hallock, Inkster, Minto, Oakes, Tower City, and West Fargo.

## SPRING GATHERING

By: Donna Preston, PNP Presbyterian Women Moderator

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, cost is \$15. 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." Two featured speakers will be Joe Obermeyer, Youth and Outreach Coordinator, Bdecan Presbyterian Church and Elaine Sweet, chair of Northern Plains 1001 Worshipping Communities.

A collection will be taken for Prison Ministry in Jamestown. Items in need are: shampoo, conditioner, hair spray, deodorant, pocket Kleenex, toothpaste, toothbrushes, shower gel, loofah, chap stick, hand lotion, manicure kit, prayer shawl. Also, any new or gently used children's clothes will be collected for Bdecan Clothes Closet. Please RSVP for this event to Donna Preston at [preston@cord.edu](mailto:preston@cord.edu) or at 701-238-7414 by April 1, 2015.

### ONLINE DONATION - ACCEPTED!

Have you checked out the Presbytery's newly designed website? If not, we would encourage you to do so. One of the new features is online donations from individuals who would like to contribute to the mission of the Presbytery. Also registration and fees for events can now be collected online too.

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

### OFFICER / ELDER TRAINING SOUP RECIPE

The Presbytery office has received many requests for the soup recipe that was served at the North-East and North-West Ministry Region Officer / Elder Training at Gilby Presbyterian Church. Vicki Bunker graciously provided it. Enjoy!

#### Fairfax County Minestrone Soup:

- 1lb. Ground Beef
- 1 medium Onion
- 1 can Tomato Soup
- 1 can Old Fashioned Vegetable Soup
- 1 can Beef Broth
- 1 can Kidney Beans
- 2 ½ cups Water
- 1/3 Box of Frozen Spinach (thawed and drained)
- ½ cup red wine (optional)
- Very Small Egg Noodles

Brown the ground beef with one medium chopped onion; drain meat. Then add the tomato soup, old fashioned vegetable soup, beef broth and kidney beans (drained). Add the 2 ½ cups of water, 1/3 box of spinach (thawed and drained) and ½ cup red wine (optional). Bring to a slow boil and then add 1 handful of very small egg noodles. Simmer 20 to 30 minutes. Serve with parmesan cheese if desired. Serves 8-10.

*(The Old fashioned veg. soup is not made any more, I used vegetarian vegetable soup, but I think any of the vegetable soup would work just fine. I did not add the wine.)*

## Presbytery's Calendar

March 3	Youth Connection Team conference call
March 5	Committee Task Force conference call
March 6	World Day of Prayer
March 10	Committee On Ministry meeting at Westminster – Devils Lake
March 12	1001 Worship Communities conference call
March 19	Council conference call
April 3	Good Friday, Office Closed
April 5	Easter
April 11	PW Gathering in Colgate (pg 4)
April 16-17	Leading Long, Leading Well Workshop (pg 3)
<b>April 17-18</b>	<b>Annual Presbytery Meeting at First - Grand Forks</b>
April 22	North-East Ministry Region Planning Meeting
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 [pnpoffice@gmail.com](mailto:pnpoffice@gmail.com) and request to be put on the electronic newsletter list.

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

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