

Light of the Northern Plains

Presbytery of the Northern Plains

September 2017

PRAYER JOYS/CONCERNS

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 students and teachers starting a new school year; 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 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 or call 701-772-0783. If the request is on behalf of someone else, please check with them before requesting.

In 2017, I returned to Synod School at Presbytery School at Buena Vista University (BVU) in Storm Lake, Iowa, after an absence of a few years. J. Herbert Nelson was our convocation speaker. I discovered that he is an even more riveting speaker than I expected from hearing him at GA – and a lot less nerdy looking in khakis and a polo shirt. Imagine our surprise near the end of the week when he casually mentioned that he had been pulled over the night before by the Storm Lake Police Department for something most of us had only heard of on the national news, “Driving While Black.” The attendees thought we were Lakes and Prairies Nice, so the whole area should be. We were shocked, even though he only mentioned it casually.

To put this in context, BVU is somewhat smaller than the University of Jamestown, and Storm Lake is about 2/3 the size of Jamestown. Both cities are in agricultural areas and have agriculture-related industry as major employers. BVU seemed to have a number of students of color from looking at school-related photos that were posted around campus, and from the students who were working there during Synod School. It made me wonder, if it happened to J. Herbert, did it also happen to them? And does it happen here?

Ironically, Elona Street-Stewart, our Synod Executive, was offering a course on white privilege this year. We have a tendency to think there is no such thing, but I did not hear of anyone else being pulled over by the police for no good reason. Former President Obama pointed out that even his white grandmother who helped raise him was known to cross the street to avoid a black person. We need to check our own attitudes.

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DOES IT HAPPEN HERE?

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

There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

- Galatians 3:28

In 2016 I had the awesome privilege of being a Commissioner to General Assembly from this presbytery. One of our tasks was electing a new Stated Clerk. Unusual for Presbyterians, there was actually a contested race for the position. There was the candidate put forth by the Search Committee, and there was another candidate who self-referred.

There were some lively sessions as we got to know the two candidates during their presentations and question and answer sessions. In the end, the Rev. J. Herbert Nelson was clearly the best candidate and elected to the position. He was articulate, knew the Book of Order and Presbyterian precedent well, was able to formulate coherent answers on the fly, and was, frankly, a bit nerdy. (He wears bowties.) His election broke new ground for the church, as he is the first black person to be elected to that position.



The Rev. J. Herbert Nelson, Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church USA

ANITRACISM CAMPAIGN

The PC(USA) is engaging in an ongoing campaign to share a wealth of antiracism resources. Books, studies, training sessions and other events are available at, <https://facing-racism.pcusa.org/>, to assist in equipping your congregation to work against racism.

Consider planning, publicizing and holding study sessions on racism using these study guides at an upcoming meeting or other event for your congregation and/or community. Learning more about the newest confession will help engage people in conversation about its applicability to contemporary racism in the U.S. and the role of the church.

Paul clearly states that those of us who are in Christ Jesus are one; are equal. Do we recognize that in others who look different from us? Having been a member of the Bdecan Ministry Team since its inception, I am often appalled by the racist comments made by some church folk concerning those who live on or come from the reservations. We think that we are Northern Plains nice, whether Minnesota or North Dakota, but sometimes we are not all that nice when it comes to those who do not seem to be like us, and more often than not, it is subtle.

Deb DeMeester, a Synod staff member, had a conversation with the Police Chief in Storm Lake, and another with the President of BVU, so hopefully consciousnesses have been raised. I pray that the same effect was had on all those in attendance at Synod School.

Here in Northern Plains, many of us live in places where ethnic differences are between Germans and Norwegians, or Norwegians and Swedes, so we really need to be conscious of how we are, how we feel, when the differences are larger than that. We are one in Christ, and that should be sufficient.

PRESBYTERY MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

By: Michael Lochow, Ruling Elder, Stated Clerk



The one hundred seventeenth Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of the Northern Plains will be held at the First Presbyterian Church of Hallock, Minnesota, on Friday and Saturday, October 6-7, 2017. Registration will begin at 11:00 a.m. with the meeting convening at 1:00 p.m.

The meeting will open with worship, including the celebration of Holy Communion. The Presbytery's new structure will become effective with the October meeting. Leaders of the Pods and task leaders were elected at the spring meeting. The new structure required a major rewriting of the Presbytery's bylaws. Those bylaws will be provided prior to the meeting so that the changes can be discussed and approved at this meeting. The revised bylaws will be presented on Friday afternoon.

Also part of Friday's agenda will be the educational piece for the meeting. It will be on conflict resolution led by the Rev. Deb Burger-Peery and Ruling Elder Jane Holtzclaw. The dinner on Friday evening will include a celebration of the old committees and a moving into the new structure. Reports from the Ministry Teams after dinner will complete Friday's agenda.

Saturday's agenda will include presentation of policy changes from the Enactment Task Force, the report from Council, and the Budget and Finance Committee will present the 2018 budget for the Presbytery. The First Presbyterian Church of Minot has voted to close. A closing commission will be formed on Saturday to guide them through the closing process.

The Presbytery will be giving one-day meetings a try in 2018. Please note that these meetings will begin at 9:00 a.m. in order to complete the business and education.

Presbytery meeting materials will be posted and available on the Presbytery website at www.northernplainspresbytery.com by noon on Friday, September 22, 2017, for congregations/individuals to download. For congregations that do not have internet access, packets can be mailed out to them. If your congregation needs a packet, you must contact the Presbytery office by September 27, 2017, to ensure you receive the packet in time.

Child Care will be provided for preschool children of minister members or elder commissioners at no cost to the users. Attendees who need child care must contact the Presbytery office no later than September 22, 2017, if they wish to use this service.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the Presbytery office at 701-772-0783 or toll free at 1-800-243-3532, or by email at pnpoffice@gmail.com.

Please review all Presbytery materials which will be posted on the Presbytery web page. It is important as a commissioner to Presbytery you come prepared and ready to participate. Following the presbytery meeting you should be prepared to report to your local session on the work of the Presbytery and how your church might participate more fully.

UPCOMING PRESBYTERY MEETINGS DATES

Mark your calendar, the 2018 Presbytery Meeting dates have been set (locations will be announced soon). Here is a list of the upcoming Presbytery Meeting dates:

- Friday & Saturday, October 6-7, 2017 at First Presbyterian Church of Hallock, MN
- Friday, April 13, 2018, Westminster Presbyterian Church of Casselton
- Monday, October 8, 2018, location TBA

The Presbytery of the Northern Plains (PNP) holds two stated meetings each year. The dates are selected by taking into consideration weather, church calendars, and planting/harvesting. No one date is perfect so we ask that each congregation do their best to encourage attendance of at least their voting delegate and pastoral leader. However, all are always welcome to attend.

The agendas of these meetings include inspirational worship, education focused on issues facing Northern Plains churches, fellowship and business.

COUNT ME IN . . .

"Together — one of the most inspiring words in the English language. Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success."

- Edward Everett Hale

By: Ruling Elder Marilyn Ogden, member of the Enactment Task Force

The Enactment Task Force has been busy this summer bringing the new pod structure for Presbytery of the Northern Plains (PNP) to life. As of this date, all of the leadership roles for the various pods along with many of the task leadership positions have been filled. Thank you to everyone who has worked on creating this new and improved operating structure and for the many who have accepted leadership roles within it.

A hallmark of the Presbyterian Church (PC (USA)) is our style of government. Each congregation is made up of lay members who are elected and ordained to serve on their session, thereby becoming a "ruling elder." They can

go on to serve in the upper governing bodies of the church in a variety of capacities, including the presbytery. From the beginning, our denomination has placed a great emphasis on creating a form of governance that not only encourages, but mandates, more than just clergy involvement. Ensuring parity between ministers of the Word and Sacrament and ruling elders is intentional in the PC (USA). We believe the Church is best served with contributions from both ruling elders and ministers of the Word and Sacrament. This shared involvement allows for diversity and alternate points of views that good governance needs. We strive for fair and effective governance at all levels, which cannot happen without participation at all levels as well. The participation this article is addressing is the ruling elder delegate, designated from every congregation in our presbytery. This position plays a fundamental role in ensuring our best practices continue and that congregations remain connected and informed in all matters before the PC (USA).

The new pod system continues our work on the northern plains through the leadership and involvement of our clergy and the elder delegates. Under the committee system, most delegates and committee members were given a three-year term. The pod system is moving away from a three-year commitment to a shorter per task assignment/commitment whenever possible. As stated above, the pod leaders and many of the task leaders have already volunteered to serve, and in many cases, they will have longer term. The task leader will seek to find task members from individual congregations to assist as the need arises. The tasks will typically have a shorter time commitment and upon completion members will be released with thanks. The elder delegates who are not serving as either a pod or task leader may be asked to assist on a task, or to recruit members of their congregations to serve on a task. The idea is to share the work of the presbytery over many, thereby, not overwhelming a few.

As of this writing, we still have congregations without a designated elder delegate. There is still time to designate an elder delegate if your congregation has not yet done so. Please do not sit on the sideline, step up and be counted. No church is too small, or too old, or too underfinanced to forgo the involvement in presbytery. We are the Church, we are here to help every congregation be fully represented and active in the life of the presbytery. Our presbytery is like a tartan, which combines many colors to make it unique and whole. Every congregation is a color of our presbytery tartan and it takes all the colors to make our tartan complete.

"I am only one, but I am
one. I can't do
everything, but I can do
something. The
something I ought to do,
I can do. And by the
grace of God, I will."
- Edward Everett Hale

U OF J NEW CHAPLAIN, THE REV. DR. CANDACE ADAMS



The University of Jamestown has completed its search for a new chaplain and has called the Rev. Dr. Candace Adams. Here is more about Candace in her own words . . . *"It has been a joy to serve as a Minister of Word and Sacrament for 22 years. For the past eleven years, I have served as the pastor of Hope Presbyterian Church in Spicer, Minnesota. Recently, I accepted the position as chaplain at the University of Jamestown. It is with delight that I have accepted this ministry opportunity. It is humbling to be invited into the sacred spaces of individuals' lives, especially young adults. I simply yearn to be a companion in faith."*

My service to the larger church has included various capacities at the Presbytery level including moderator and vice-moderator and General Assembly advocate and commissioner. I have also had the privilege of serving on a Synod of Lakes and Prairies committee and as a Synod School teacher.

My journey includes my best friend and husband, Doug. Together we received a call to be foster and adoptive parents. We adopted six children through the foster care system. We have nine grandchildren. Our family journey has been a rollercoaster ride – many highs and lows, twists and turns. We have learned to trust the Lord in all circumstances.

I enjoy spending time with God in creation, especially on water. A couple of my favorite activities are kayaking, swimming and biking. While I don't consider myself an artist, I appreciate opportunities to be creative.

I look forward to meeting members of the Northern Plains Presbytery and collaborating in ministry. I would welcome the opportunity to offer pulpit supply or to share a minute for mission regarding the ministry at the University of Jamestown."

SESSION RECORD DATES

All congregations are required to have their Session minutes and their church register records (2 books) reviewed annually or biennially based upon meeting frequency according to the Book of Order. At these review sessions, minute books and church registers will be exchanged with another clerk or moderator and each will read the other's records. The Session Records Committee has made the following arrangements for reading opportunities within the presbytery. There will be no other opportunities for reading records other than the appointed times below:

- Saturday, September 9 - Westminster Presbyterian Church of Devils Lake at 1:00 p.m. Moderator: Dorothy Bergh
- Saturday, September 16 - Westminster Presbyterian Church of Casselton at 10:00 a.m. Moderator: Denise Olson
- Saturday, September 16 - First Presbyterian Church of Grand Forks at 10:00 a.m. Moderator: Vicki Bunker
- Saturday, September 23 - United Presbyterian Church of Jamestown at 10:00 a.m. Moderator: Lana Schultz
- Friday, October 6 - First Presbyterian Church of Hallock, at 10:00 a.m.

Please plan to be at one of the cooperative and informative sessions above. The committee will report to Presbytery those churches whose records have been read and those whose records have not been read. Forms to be completed for the session reviews are available to download at www.northernplainspresbytery.com under the Clerk's Corner section of the website. If you have any questions, please contact the Presbytery office at 701-772-0783.

MISSION GRANT AVAILABLE

As part of the Presbyterian Women (PW) purpose "we commit ourselves to support the mission of the church worldwide," PW invites any church group and/or ministry team affiliated with the Northern Plains Presbytery to apply for mission funds (max. \$2,000). Funds will be distributed at the discretion of PW of Northern Plains Presbytery. Project must be underway within 12 months of receiving mission funds. **A project budget is required.** Download the application at: <https://www.northernplainspresbytery.com/pw-grant-application>.



The Presbytery of the Northern Plains also has grants available for Presbyterian congregations and groups to assist you in completing a project or starting a new ministry. The application process is open-ended with no deadlines set. A brief list of funds available with the intent of the donor and an application form is downloadable at <http://www.northernplainspresbytery.com/#!grants/cl9n>.

2017-2019 BOOK OF ORDERS AND PLANNING CALENDARS FOR SALE

The Presbytery office has two different resources for you to purchase at a reduced price. The first is the 2017-2019 Book of Order for sale at \$ 8.80 plus shipping cost. The second is the 2017-2018 Presbyterian Planning Calendars for sale at \$ 9.35 plus shipping cost. If interested, please contact the Presbytery office at 701-772-0783 or email pnpoffice@gmail.com. There are a limited number available, so it is on a first come, first served basis.

Presbytery's Calendar

- September 1 CPM Meeting in Grand Forks
September 3 Season of Peace begins
September 4 Holiday, office closed
September 8-9 Pastoral Leader Enneagram Workshop in Jamestown
September 9 Session Records Reading (pg 4)
September 11 Leadership Pod meeting at First - Fargo
September 14 Committee on Ministry cc
September 16 Session Records Reading (pg 4)
September 21 Council cc
September 23 Session Records Reading (pg 4)
September 30 Presbyterian Women Cluster in Red Lake Falls
October 6 Session Records Reading (pg 4)
October 6-7 Fall Presbytery Meeting at First Presbyterian Church of Hallock
October 9 Office closed

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 pnpoffice@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:

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