

# Light of the Northern Plains

Presbytery of the Northern Plains

December 2017

## PRAYER JOYS/CONCERNS

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.

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.

For the love of God to be evident in everything we do and say, For people listening to God's voice to serve in leadership positions in their churches, For our sessions, For the ministry of the different agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), For wisdom for the many committees that are at work at all levels of the church, For pastors who are facing health problems, For the unity of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

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

## BREATH PRAYER FOR PEACE

*By Kasey Hitt - An exert from "Feasting on Fruit: Peace"*

### Scripture Reading on Peace: Philippians 4:1-9

**Breathe In:** You might begin by exhaling *peace's* opposite which is discord, war, and distress. Imagine *peace* filling and spreading through your body with each inhale and letting go of any discord, warring, and distress with each exhale.

Soon you'll not only be able to picture yourself breathing in *peace* but you will have such an abundance of *peace* it will overflow and you'll begin breathing out *peace* into the world. Practice consciously breathing *peace* in and out as long as desired.

**Breathe Out:** How can you breathe out *peace* everywhere you go? Remember Hildegard of Bingen's words and allow yourself to be "a feather on the breath of God."

As you consider the Scriptures you've read, any dreams and conversations or times of prayer, do you have a sense of what the Holy Spirit is saying about peace in your own internal world?

Who is the Spirit bringing to mind that is in need of greater peace in your external world--workplace, church, neighborhood, family, etc.? How might the Holy Spirit be inviting you to widen the welcome by bringing and offering peace to the world? Ask the Spirit to show you what simple step you can take now in offering the fruit of peace.

***"May the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."***

- Philippians 4:7

## IT COULD HAPPEN HERE

*By: the Rev. Donna Monteith, moderator of the Presbytery of the Northern Plains*

***God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult. Selah***

- Psalm 46:1-3 NRSV



November 5, 2017, was the date of the annual ham dinner sponsored by the Presbyterian Church of Grandin. We served dinner at the hall until 1:00 p.m., then ate together and cleaned up. It was mid-afternoon when I got home, changed clothes and sat down to read the paper. I

turned on the TV to news of the mass shooting at First Baptist Church of Sutherland Springs, TX.

As a graduate of Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, I am familiar with that area of Central Texas. I did not recognize the name of Sutherland Springs, so I looked for it on a map. It is less than 50 miles from one of my favorite preaching points from seminary days, Cheapside, TX. The church buildings even bear a resemblance to one another. The Sutherland Springs church also bore a resemblance to several of our churches here in the Northern Plains.

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In February, 2016, Sanford Hospital in Fargo and local law enforcement had planned a presentation for local congregations on what to do if there was a threat to your church campus. It was postponed for several months because Officer Jason Moszer was shot and killed the night before it was to occur. Local law enforcement had other things to deal with. We met together for lunch and discussion anyway, and received some statistics that were frightening. Congregations like Sutherland Springs and many of our congregations are more likely to be targeted because they are rural and law enforcement will not be able to respond quickly, offering a chance for the perpetrator to escape. There were also statistics about the likelihood of an event based on denomination. Presbyterians are near the bottom of the list of churches that are likely to be targeted, as are the denominations we are most likely to federate with in this area, Lutherans and Methodists.

The following Sunday, in addition to praying for the people of Sutherland Springs, we had a conversation in my congregations about what to do if such a thing were to happen here. Congregations need to have an emergency plan just like families need to have an emergency plan in case of fire or storm at home. It is unfortunate that most of us have neither.

Next time you are in your sanctuary, look around with new eyes. Locate all the exits, even those you have never used; those that are never used by anyone. Look at the church furnishings; where could you take cover if you cannot get out? What could you throw at the perpetrator to distract him and allow others to escape? How quickly can you dial 911 on your cell phone?

God has promised to be our refuge and strength, but things still happen in this world due to our sinful nature and misuse of the free will granted to us by God. It is especially unfortunate that this is our topic in the month when we are again preparing ourselves for the coming of the Prince of Peace. What can we do, not just now, but in the future as individuals, congregations and as a Presbytery, to help bring peace to our world?

Have a blessed and reflective Advent, and a very merry Christmas.

## RESOURCES TO PROTECT YOUR HOUSE OF WORSHIP

Source: <https://www.fema.gov/faith-resources>

Across the United States, Americans congregate in faith-based venues to worship, learn, play, and bond as a community. However, public gatherings are vulnerable, and adversaries may perceive houses of worship as attractive targets where they can inflict mass casualties, cause substantial psychological impacts, and draw extensive media coverage.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) offers numerous resources to assist faith-based and community organizations with their efforts to prepare for all types of hazards, whether natural or man-made. Technical assistance is provided through presentations, workshops, training, webinars, tabletop exercises, and training.

In coordination with interagency partners, the DHS Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) established a website for faith-based organizations that serves as a “one-stop shop” for information on available Federal tools, resources, and assistance: [www.fema.gov/protecting-houses-worship](http://www.fema.gov/protecting-houses-worship). Additionally, DHS’s National Protection and Programs Directorate (NPPD) offers a wide range of security and resilience tools, training, and resources. Through its [Hometown Security](http://www.dhs.gov/hometown-security) (<https://www.dhs.gov/hometown-security>) initiative, these resources are made available to communities, including faith-based organizations. Many of these resources were created in collaboration with private sector partners to ensure they are useful and reflect the evolving security landscape. The list of resources in the link will help the private sector with their security planning, and many of these practices can also be used more broadly in local venues visited by large numbers of people, such as faith-based organizations.

As part of the DHS Hometown Security initiative ([www.dhs.gov/hometown-security](http://www.dhs.gov/hometown-security)), DHS asks communities to Connect, Plan, Train, and Report. Applying these four steps to prepare for an incident or attack can help . . . to plan for their role in the safety and security of their businesses and communities.



## NUMBER OF COMMISSIONERS CHANGE FOR PRESBYTERY MEETINGS

By: the Rev. Mary Holtey, Leadership Pod Leader



“Things they are a changin’” at Presbytery! At the Presbytery meeting in October, commissioners voted on changes to the bylaws. Updating the bylaws became necessary to complement the structural changes of committees to pods. All the bylaws came up for review, including **B-2.0300 Ruling Elder Commissioners**. From now on, churches with a membership of 100-300 are invited to send **two** ruling elder commissioners to presbytery. This includes our churches in the following communities: Hallock, Grand Forks, Casselton, Rolla/St. John, Moorhead, Mandan, East Grand Forks, West Fargo and Jamestown. Churches with a membership of over 300 may now bring **three**

ruling elders. This includes Bismarck and Fargo. Congregations with fewer than 100 members will continue to bring one ruling elder commissioner. We hope this will increase our participation at Presbytery and share more equitably our work together. The complete bylaw document is on the Presbytery’s website, [www.northernplainspresbytery.com](http://www.northernplainspresbytery.com). If you have questions about the membership of your church and how many commissioners to invite, please call the presbytery office.

# INSTALLATION SERVICE FOR THE REV. ROBERT DRAKE

Sunday, January 21, 2018 at 3:00 p.m.

Come celebrate with the First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead, MN, as they install their new pastor, the Rev. Robert Drake, on January, 21, 2018, at 3:00 p.m. A special commission will be appointed by the Rev. Donna Montieth (Grandin/Hunter), Presbytery of the Northern Plains moderator, for this installation.



## THE NEW STRUCTURE IS UP AND RUNNING . . .

*By: the Rev. Mary Holtey, Leadership Pod Leader*

The new Presbytery structure has been launched! One of the four pods contained in this structure is Leadership. It may be the one that looks the most like Council because it handles the business issues of the Presbytery. However, we're eager for the four pods to work equally, just ordered with different tasks.

The primary tasks of the Leadership Pod are personnel, finance, and records. However, it is also charged with relaying important communication to each other to foster a joint working relationship between all leadership within the Presbytery. The membership of this pod is made up of Presbytery of the Northern Plains moderator, vice moderator, treasurer, leaders from the other three pods, chairpersons from the Nominating and Representation Committees, and task leaders for personnel, finance, and records who all have full voice and vote.

You are encouraged, if you haven't already done so, to fill out the survey of your gifts and talents to discover where your skills and passions may best be utilized in the life of the Presbytery. You may access this survey at the Presbytery's website, [www.northernplainspresbytery.com](http://www.northernplainspresbytery.com). If your talents include finances, or human resources, or work with session records, we'd encourage your participation in these tasks.

In addition, on the Presbytery's website you will find details of the responsibilities and duties assigned to each pod under the "Our Structure" tab. It also gives each pod membership and email contact for those individuals. It is our hope that this information will be helpful as we move forward in the new structure. If you have questions about the Leadership Pod, please contact Mary Holtey, [mholtey@firstpresfargo.org](mailto:mholtey@firstpresfargo.org).

## IT'S ALL MISSION, NOT JUST THE MISSION POD

*By: Ruling Elder Karen Macdonald, Mission Pod Leader*



When discussing church business at the Leadership Pod, I was reminded that all of church business is "mission"; not just what occurs within the Mission Pod. What does this mean? That everything we do within our individual congregations or within the Presbytery structure should reflect or be based on the faithful witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ. As we develop the Mission Pod activities, I hope and pray that we keep this in mind.

The Mission Pod is charged with overseeing the missions of the Presbytery. They are the 1) University of Jamestown; 2) Clearwater Forest; 3) Chogoria Ministry; 4) Bdecan Mission and Food Pantry; 5) Youth Connection; 6) Earth Care; and 7) 1001 Worshipping Communities. Each mission team has at least a member from three different congregations within the Presbytery and meets on a semi-annual basis and submits reports to the Presbytery regarding ongoing activities. The Mission Pod also includes representatives from Presbyterian Women and Self-Development of People Committee.

Our goals for the coming year are to educate congregations on the missions of Presbytery, to enhance fund-raising by the mission teams, and to encourage the use of designated mission funds for the faithful witness to Jesus Christ. We hope to provide answers to questions that church members might have about where the mission funds go. This might be in the form of a weekly or monthly mission statement about one of the missions; "talking points" for sessions to use as they determine their unified mission giving; how new missions can be formed; and stewardship of our talents and gifts.

Let me give you an example. University of Jamestown has a covenant relationship with the Presbytery and receives funding through the Mission Pod. Where does the money go? The University has called a full-time chaplain and the Mission Pod has asked that the funding go to support the campus ministry program. We are hoping to hear more about the campus ministry program in the future and know that this will support the overall mission of Presbytery of the Northern Plains.

The session at Glencoe Sloan Memorial recently met and I gave a presentation on what happens to the dollars that are sent to the Presbytery through the unified mission giving. The discussion that followed was heart-warming and thoughtful and led to the determination of Glencoe's pledge. Is this the discussion that all churches would like to have? Can the Mission Pod provide information to individual sessions as they meet to determine their budgets for the coming year? Or in years to come? What information would individual churches like to have? If all our work within the Presbytery is mission-based, I pray the Mission Pod will be stewards of your giving.



## 2018 PRESBYTERY MEETINGS DATES

Mark your calendar, the 2018 Presbytery Meeting dates have been set and they are:

- Friday, April 13, 2018, Westminster Presbyterian Church of Casselton
- Monday, October 8, 2018, First Presbyterian Church of Mandan.

## END OF YEAR TO DO LIST

By: Ruling Elder Lana Schultz, Records Task Leader

Some reminders to clerks of session and moderators of some items to include in your session's agenda before the end of the year:

1. Elect church treasurer, clerk of session, and Presbytery commissioner. (G-3.0205, G-3.0104, & G-3.0202)
2. Conduct the deacons' annual review. (G-2.0202)
3. Approve the statistical report for your church. (G-3.02)
4. Appoint an auditor or financial person/committee to review the church's financial records. (G-3.0113)
5. Prepare and adopt a budget. (G-3.0205)
6. Report on the reading of session records.
7. Set an annual meeting date for 2018. (G-1.0501)
8. Consider starting each session meeting with devotions as part of continuing education.
9. Be sure you have adopted and implemented a sexual misconduct policy. (G-3.0106)
10. Summarize the property and liability insurance coverage and premium(s) for facilities, programs, staff and officers. (G-3.0112)
11. Report pastor's terms of call and indicate "session has reviewed minimum compensation calculation policy." (P-400.01)

Stated Clerk Michael Lochow ([sc.pbypnp@gmail.com](mailto:sc.pbypnp@gmail.com)) and Lana Schultz, Records Task Leader ([lanaj0@casselton.net](mailto:lanaj0@casselton.net)) welcome your questions, suggestions and concerns.

## 2017-2019 BOOK OF ORDER 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 [pnppoffice@gmail.com](mailto:pnppoffice@gmail.com). There are a limited number available, so it is on a first come, first served basis.

## REST FEST!

Youth Connection's Annual President's Day Weekend Retreat!

**Save the Date: Saturday-Monday, February 17-19, 2018**

Enjoy a weekend away with friends from the Presbytery at our Annual "Rest Fest" Retreat. This event is open to all 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade youth. Join us Saturday through Monday, February 17-19, as we take a break from our crazy schedules and find ways to "rest" together. Stay tuned for more information.

## Presbytery's Calendar

Dec 6	Youth Connection Team cc
Dec 14	Care for Pastoral Leaders cc
Dec 15	Leadership Pod cc
Dec 25 – Jan 2	Christmas Break, office closed
Jan 11	Care for Pastoral Leaders cc
Jan 13	Recharge Event, Fargo (pg 4)
Jan 18	Leadership Pod cc
Jan 18	Mission Pod cc
Jan 21	Drake Installation Service (pg 3)
Jan 29	Care for Congregations Pod wc
Feb 8	Care for Pastoral Leaders cc
Feb 15	Leadership Pod cc
Feb 17-18	Rest Fest (pg 4)
Feb 26	Care for Congregations Pod wc
Apr 13, 2018	Spring Presbytery Meeting at Westminster Presbyterian Church of Casselton

cc = Conference Call

wc = Web Conference

## 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 [pnppoffice@gmail.com](mailto:pnppoffice@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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