

Light of the Northern Plains

Presbytery of the Northern Plains

October 2017

PRAYER JOYS/CONCERNS

The Rev. Elise Pokel, pastor at the First Presbyterian Church of Crookston, would appreciate prayers of healing and comfort during this difficult time.

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

FALL PRESBYTERY MEETING ON OCTOBER 6TH IN HALLOCK

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. During worship, an offering will be collected for the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance program. The Presbytery's new structure will become effective with the October meeting. The new structure required a major rewriting of the Presbytery's bylaws and policies. Both 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 and the policies on Saturday morning.

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.

On Saturday morning two examinations will take place. Jane Holtzclaw, who is currently an inquirer under care of the Presbytery, will be examined for advancement to Candidate status. The Moorhead Church has called Robert Drake to be their new pastor. Mr. Drake is currently under care of the Presbytery of Northern Waters. With the consent of the Presbytery of Northern Waters, he has requested that he be examined for ordination by Northern Plains. His statement of faith has been posted on the Presbytery web page with other meeting materials.

Presbytery meeting materials are now posted on the Presbytery website at www.northernplainspresbytery.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.

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 pnpooffice@gmail.com.

WHAT IS YOUR ANCESTRAL LANGUAGE?!

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

And the LORD said,

“Look, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down, and confuse their language there, so that they will not understand one another’s speech.”

- Genesis 11:6-7

And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each.

- Acts 2:6

My dad graduated from Monango High School in 1937. He moved a few miles south to Ellendale and enrolled in the NI, the State Normal and Industrial School, with plans to be a high school shop teacher. Those plans changed in the fall of his senior year when he was called into the college office. A school in rural Emmons County had contacted the college with an emergency. It was September and the school had already gone through three teachers. Did the college have anyone who could handle the school? The administration thought my dad was capable, so he dropped out of college, obtained an emergency teaching certificate, and headed west on the train.

When he got there, he discovered the entire first grade class spoke only German. My father spoke only English and needed to deal with the other seven grades as well as teaching those three girls. They were third generation in this country; their grandparents were born in Russia, but their parents either came as infants or were born here. German was spoken at home; you sent the kids to school to learn English.

I was born about ten years after that, but I still remember hearing mostly German in the cafes when I was growing up and headed west from Ellendale, even in the 1970’s when I was in college. Some Lutherans in my age bracket remember doing their “reading for the preacher” (confirmation) in Norwegian. Many rural congregations held annual services in the language their founders spoke, well into this century.

Why is it that we now have so much antagonism toward people who speak other languages on our streets and in our stores? In 2015, a woman was attacked with a beer mug by another woman for the “crime” of speaking Swahili in an Applebee’s. That happened in Coon Rapids; whatever happened to Minnesota Nice? Why is speaking Swahili or Spanish any different from speaking German or Norwegian?

The first permanent settlement in what is now the United States was in St. Augustine, and it was settled by the Spanish. You could logically extrapolate that to mean that we should all be speaking Spanish here. Or if you believe in the Kensington Runestone, we should all be speaking Norwegian. How about learning Dakota or Ojibwe, since they were here to greet our earliest ancestors?

In the story of Pentecost, it clearly says that people heard the message about Jesus in their own native languages. That’s the reason why the Bible has been translated into so many languages over the years; why so many of our churches support Wycliffe and other translation groups. It is not nearly so effective to have to teach English before you can teach Jesus.

According to Genesis, God gave people different languages to speak for a reason. We need to remember that for many of us, English is not our ancestral language either, and our ancestors did not learn English in a day. It is always good to put yourself in someone else’s shoes before making judgment. It is what Jesus taught, and what Jesus would do.

CONGRATUATIONS TO MR. AND MRS. HANCOCK

Alissa Anderson (now Alissa Hancock), Administrator of Connections and Records, married Casey Hancock of Northwood, ND, on September 16, 2017, in a beautiful outdoor wedding at the Myra Museum in Grand Fork, ND. Casey and Alissa met in January 2014 and have had many adventures together since; such as vacations at Clearwater Beach, FL, and Las Vegas, along with a variety of concerts and many fishing adventures all year around. They plan on staying in the Grand Forks area.

“As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. ‘This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”

John 15:9-12



REFLECTIONS ON A PARTICULAR CONFIRMATION SERVICE

By: the Rev. Martha McDowell, member at large of the Presbytery of the Northern Plains

“Christianity is one generation away from extinction.” I heard this pronouncement long ago. But, if you attend or visit worship at the Cavalier Presbyterian Church, PC(USA), you will quickly realize that rather than becoming extinct, Christianity is alive and growing in Cavalier, North Dakota! The event that will be a light that shines into the future happened on May 7, 2017, when Kylie Roselynn Hartje joined the church through confirmation.

Kylie's confirmation is worth celebrating throughout the Presbytery because this congregation is today a light shining into the future as it has been for many generations. Kylie's confirmation shines a light on the steadfastness of her family. She is the sixth generation that has professed its faith as part of the Cavalier congregation. Kylie's father, grandmother, great-grandparents, great-great grandparents, and great-great-great-grandparents were all members of the congregation - the last-named joining soon after it was organized in 1889.

Does this speak to the commitment that Kylie and her family have made through this whole time to profess their faith? Yes!

Does this speak to the dedication of Kylie's family to hang in there through hard times both in the church and the community? Yes!

Does this speak to their inherent desire to do good, even when there may be dark days ahead? Yes!

Does this speak to the strong, devoted witness of the Cavalier congregation? Yes!

Does this event give hope to all congregations, large or small, who celebrate all age groups as they learn and live their faith? Yes!



Four generations coming together in faith: Corene Vaughn, Kylie Hartje, Zelda Hartje, and Todd Hartje



Ruth Carpenter, Zelda Hartje, Kylie Hartje, and the Rev. Martha McDowell

We hear people proclaim the bad news that congregations are dying, that congregations are smaller and smaller, that congregations don't have the energy anymore, etcetera, etcetera, and so forth. But we shouldn't assume that just because something is happening, it's what God wants it to happen. The positive church people need to not listen to negative voices; rather they need to listen to God.

If you and your session ever begin to doubt whether you should continue to soldier on, then I pray you will call Kylie, her Mom, Zelda Hartje, or the elder who met with her weekly, Ruth Carpenter; or the Clerk of Session at Cavalier, or the Moderator, and talk with them. Or call me, I was the minister who was blessed to lead worship that Sunday.

We can all share with you the human struggle as well as the undeniable presence of God, in faith that no matter what, if we let God, then God will lead us. The path may not be what we expected, but it will be what God expects.

Yes! If we listen to the Spirit, and follow the Spirit, amazing things happen in spite of our fallible human nature. Hallelujah!

CELEBRATE THE 500 YEARS OF THE REFORMATION

Five hundred years ago, Martin Luther presented his 95 theses about the church and its need for reform. Five centuries on is an exciting time to reflect on what we bring forward from the past that strengthens us and future generations for the coming 500 years of ministry of the gospel of Christ.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is providing a wide range of resources for churches commemorating the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. They include a "Commemorate Reformation Sunday" website, "Theological Conversations" series on Reformation topics, and a video providing a 500-year perspective on the Reformation. These resources can be found at: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/worship/worship-reformationsunday/> or in the recent article by Paul Seebeck (Presbyterian News Service) Keeping congregations 'creative and open to what God is doing in the world,' which can be found at <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/story/resources-celebration-500th-anniversary-reformation/> has many links to additional resources.



LAST CHANCE TO HAVE SESSION RECORDS READ THIS YEAR!

The last session records reading of the year is approaching fast. It will be held on Friday, October 6, 2017, at First Presbyterian Church of Hallock. The reading will start at 10:00 a.m. and should end before the start of the Fall Presbytery Meeting.

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.

Please plan to be at this cooperative and informative session. 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.



HEALTHY BOUNDARY TRAINING

The Presbytery of the Northern Plains will be hosting a boundary training for pastoral leaders on Friday, November 10, 2017, at First Presbyterian Church of Grand Forks. 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 Hancock, 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 in order to receive the certificate and to fulfill the Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures (P-2.0200) requirement.**

Everyone is highly encouraged to attend. Please contact the presbytery office to registrar at 701-772-0783 or pnpmision@gmail.com, by November 6, 2017.

UPCOMING PRESBYTERY MEETINGS

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, at 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.

Presbytery's Calendar

October 6	Session Records Reading (pg 4)
October 6-7	Fall Presbytery Meeting at First Presbyterian Church of Hallock
October 9	Office closed
October 14	Bdecan Ministry Team meeting at Bdecan Presbyterian Church
October 29	Reformation Sunday (pg 2)
Nov 10	Healthy Boundary Training at First Presbyterian Church (pg 4)
Nov 11-12	Bdecan fundraiser at Moorhead Center Mall Bazaar
Nov 23-24	Thanksgiving Break, office closed
Nov 28	Giving Tuesday
Dec 25 – Jan 2	Christmas Break, office closed
Mar 1, 2018	Healthy Boundary Training
Apr 13, 2018	Spring Presbytery Meeting at Westminster Presbyterian Church of Casselton

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 and request to be put on the electronic newsletter list.

Light of the Northern Plains is published under the Council of the Presbytery of the Northern Plains.

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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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