

Light of the Northern Plains

Presbytery of the Northern Plains

January 2015

PRAYER CONCERNS/JOYS

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) asks that everyone hold the people of Pakistan in their thoughts and prayers following the attack on the school in Peshawar. Pray for the children and adults who were killed and for the family, friends, teachers, and schoolmates who grieve for them. Ask God to sustain the people of Pakistan as their nation comes to terms with this tragedy. Please pray that the spirit and strength of the Pakistani people will prevail as their nation recovers.

Please hold our Chogoria partners in your prayers.

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

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.

A HOPE FOR ALL SEASONS

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

One of the candles we lit during advent was the HOPE candle. We were reminded that our hope comes from God. We had a confident expectation of the coming savior. A week or so ago, we celebrated his birth.



Along comes the New Year. Do you ever get in a bit of a “funk” around January 1st? There is logic behind the calendar and how it was arranged, but whoever decided the New Year should begin in the middle of winter didn't live in ND. The New Year is a time to get excited about what is ahead, but what is ahead for us are several long, cold months. In addition to the expected cold weather, the beginning of each year also brings expectations, new beginnings, and new opportunities to “start again.” New chances to “get it right this time.”

Expectations, opportunities, get it right this time, do it over, these words can lead us to experience the “fear of failure.” Why make resolutions when we know we will fail at most of them by noon on January 1st. It all seems so intimidating, so beyond our reach. The positive changes we want to see won't automatically happen just because it's 2015 and we made a few resolutions. The changes we want to see will take time, struggle, pain, and prayer, just like every other year. We don't like struggles; we don't like pain.

Several years ago we had our half moon driveway paved; the construction crew did what they needed to do to give us a beautifully,

paved driveway. The area was leveled and pressed down with a heavy machine, a layer of pea gravel was pressed into the earth, and then a layer of hot asphalt was pressed down with a roller. After seasons of heat and freezing temperatures, tiny cracks have appeared. Last spring I noticed tiny, green shoots were appearing here and there. They weren't robust yet, but they were alive. In a few months, plants that lie seemingly lifeless under the frozen ground will struggle to work through the hard soil. The desire to live will cause these plants to struggle their way up through all that has been pressed down on them...snow, rocks, asphalt. We marvel at their tenacity, their willingness to struggle in order to grow.

How do we respond to our daily struggles? What happens to our hope when all our expectations are covered by the rocks of reality? As Christians we maintain our basic perspective of hope. We know we have a living hope; it is not for some future day, it is for now. It is new every morning! With that assurance, we are able to put one foot in front of the other, we are able to grow through the frozen ground, and we are able to grow in spite of the adversities that are pressed down on us. We are able to face each new day as if each day was January 1st and we had a clean slate ahead of us. Lamentations 3:19-26 screams “HOPE”!

Our life in Christ is our secure hope against all the instability this world will produce. It is a hope that is able to spring up regardless of what has been piled on and pressed down on it. When the rocks, gravel and hot asphalt of this world attempt to bury us beneath their weight, our living hope in God's compassion and faithfulness will bring us peace and encouragement.

If we have only the world's hope, superficial and fickle, our natural instincts might tell us to hibernate. This would result in a life lived in existence only; a life filled with dead ends, failures, fears. But a Christian's hope isn't a “pie in the sky” hope, it isn't an “I hope, so hope,” it is an “I know, so hope.” It is a hope that keeps us going through difficult times because we serve a God who is faithful. Jesus is our living hope, a hope we grasped onto during the past advent season. His is the only hope that is eternal, sure, and sufficient for our needs.

When we have our roots planted firmly in the hope of the Lord, we will get the hope and security that is sufficient for this life. We plant our life in hope, knowing what will be reaped is a heavenly home with our God, a God whose mercies never end, a God who is faithful. Amen

MINISTER OF PASTORAL CARE HIRED! WELCOME, DARREL

By: Donna Monteith, Teaching Elder, Personnel Committee Chair



The Rev. Dr. Darrel Cory has been hired as the new Minister of Pastoral Care for the Presbytery. He will start work on January 2, 2015.

The Personnel Committee interviewed several qualified candidates for the position, and, after prayerful consideration, offered the position to Darrel. Council agreed with the decision of the Personnel Committee, and voted to hire him at their December meeting.

When we hired Keri Shelton as the inaugural Minister of Pastoral Care, she was able to help the Presbytery formulate an idea of what that position could be. We look forward to the different gifts that Darrel will now bring as he puts his own stamp on the position.

WELCOME ROBYN EDDY!

Robyn Eddy joined our Presbytery at the October Presbytery meeting, transferring from the Cascades Presbytery in Oregon. She grew up attending First Presbyterian Church in Spokane, WA, and sensed her call to ministry while at Macalester College in St Paul, where she was highly involved in Inter Varsity Christian Fellowship. She spent several summers working with a Christian Ministry in the National Parks, and met her husband while serving in Denali National Park in Alaska. Robyn was ordained by the Inland Northwest Presbytery in 1999 after graduating from Princeton Theological Seminary (with her middle year spent at San Francisco Theological Seminary).



Before beginning her first call, Robyn and her husband hiked 2000 miles along the Pacific Crest Trail from central California to the Canadian border. Her first call was to a three-point United Methodist parish north of Seattle, WA, where she served for four years as a co-pastor with her United Methodist Pastor husband. While there, she was also very involved with the local Walk to Emmaus ministry. She and her husband then took two years of extended leave to travel around the world, finally settling down in Eugene, OR. While her husband pursued a PhD at the University of Oregon, Robyn served as full time Pastor of Youth and Family Ministry at an ELCA congregation for eight years. During that time she had two children, Jasper and Eleanor.

The Eddy family relocated to Minot about a year ago, where her husband is Professor of Sociology at Minot State University and Robyn is taking an "extended maternity leave" to home school her children. Last summer they enjoyed the most successful veggie garden of their lives. She enjoys playing guitar, singing, gardening, playing Settlers of Catan, traveling, and building snow forts with her kids. If there were mountains nearby, she would hike them in the summer and snowboard them in the winter. She hopes to learn where to find wild asparagus and pick chokecherries in North Dakota. Robyn would love to serve as pulpit supply for any congregations in the area.

MY THANKS TO COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY

By: Teaching Elder Mary Holtey, former Chair of the Committee on Ministry

Wishing you all a Happy New Year! The end of the year brings to a close my 15 months as the moderator of Committee on Ministry (COM). Thank you for affording me this opportunity. Ruling Elder Jim Skaret will become the new moderator as of January 1, 2015. He's a seasoned pro in areas of church leadership. I thank him for taking on this new and important role in the presbytery. My thanks, as well, to Don Casmey for his three years on COM and Don Woodford for filling an unexpired term this past year. Both "Dons" have been very available when asked to respond to various congregational and pastoral needs within the presbytery. And finally, I thank Alissa Anderson, Administrator of Connections and Records, for her invaluable leadership to COM. She served as both my "computer" and my "memory." At least one of us is organized! I'll continue as a member of the committee for one more year.

2015 IRS MILEAGE RATES

Beginning on January 1, 2015, the standard mileage rates for the use of a vehicle will be:

- 57.5 cents per mile for business miles driven (the Presbytery reimburses 60% of the IRS rate)
- 23 cents per mile driven for medical or moving purposes
- 14 cents per mile driven in service of charitable organizations

The standard mileage rate for business is based on an annual study of the fixed and variable costs of operating an automobile. The rate for medical and moving purposes is based on the variable costs as determined by the same study.



LET'S GO TO THE MOVIES TOGETHER: "Exodus: Gods and Kings"



The South-East Ministry Region is planning to see "Exodus: Gods and Kings" at one of the Marcus theaters in Fargo on Tuesday, January 13, 2015, about 1:30ish. The movie tickets will be \$5.00 and popcorn \$1.00. The exact location and time will be announced when times are released one week prior. After the movie, we will gather and have a little discuss about the movie and what we would like to share with our fellow brothers and sisters.

Please RSVP to Alissa Anderson, Administrator of Connections and Records, at 701-772-0783 or pnppmission@gmail.com to get the location and time, as the date nears.

OFFICER / ELDER TRAINING

The North-East and North-West Ministry Regions are hosting training for all Clerks of Session, Ruling Elders, and Treasurers at the Gilby Presbyterian Church on January 31, 2015, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. A meal will be provided. All are welcome.



Whether you would like to get a refresher or are new to your position, you and your questions are welcome. The Stated Clerk, Michael Lochow; Finance Chair, Marilyn Ogden; and the Rev. Darrel Cory will lead each of the different areas of training.

Please RSVP by January 27, 2015, to Alissa Anderson, Administrator for Connections and Records, at 701-772-0783 or pnppmission@gmail.com.

CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS

The North-East Ministry region is having a local mission day at one of the church. 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 pm., starting with prepping, and then painting and 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 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.



PRESBYTERY LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE

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. As always, the office would love to hear feedback on what you liked and ways it could be improved. Check it out at: www.northernplainspresbytery.com.

Just a reminder, the Presbytery has a Facebook page. The group will receive periodic event updates and is open to posts and discussion topics from members. So become a fan of the Presbytery and join in the fun.

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

- January 31, 2015 – Officer/Elder Training
- Feb 21 – Mission Work Day
- April 2015 – Northland Rescue Mission / Planning Meeting

North-West Ministry Region

- January 31, 2015 - Officer/Elder Training

South-Central Ministry Region

- Spring 2015 - Presentation on Evangelism

South-East Ministry Region

- January 13, 2015 – Movie Night
- May 9, 2015 – Fargo/Moorhead Marathon

South-West Ministry Region

- February 2015 – Winter Festival
- April 2015 – Weekly 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.

HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM BDEAN TEAM

By: Donna Preston, Bdecan Ministry Team Leader

Happy New Year from the Bdecan Ministry Team. I give thanks and reflect back to all the great things God has done this year with our ministry at Bdecan Presbyterian Church. Not only are the Sunday morning and Wednesday evening children programs growing, but a youth group has been started with Oyate Lutheran Church. The youth group put together fry bread kits for November's food pantry and they made cookies and visited two elderly living communities in Fort Totten and St. Michael in December. There are plans being made for a Super Bowl party and youth lock-in.

Thank you to all PW's, churches, and individuals who accepted the Hunter church's PW challenge. The gifts of money for the Youth and Outreach Coordinator Position are very much appreciated. They will ensure we will be able to financial support the position in the next year as we continue to look for additional sources of revenue and fund raising opportunities. Westminster Presbyterian Church of Alexandria, VA, have been a godsend to help with the major funding for the position. We are thankful for their partnership with the Bdecan Team to enable us to continue the wonderful ministry. All monies from this point on for the ministry at Bdecan need to go through the Presbytery Office. Please make all checks out to Presbytery of the Northern Plains (PNP) and in the memo line please write Bdecan and what account the monies should be credited to.

We want to continue to share the story about Bdecan Presbyterian Church and the ministry that is happening there. If you would like to hear the story, please contact Joe Obermeyer at 701-294-2283 or email bdecanpresbyterianchurch@yahoo.com (new address).

Reminder: Bdecan Presbyterian Church also has a new website. It is www.bdecanpresbyterianchurch.org. Check it out. Joe will be posting his monthly newsletter on the website, plan to check in around the 10th of the month to read about what is happening.

YOUTH RETREAT IS COMING!



Youth Spring Retreat is Coming! Mark your calendars. Start arranging rides. Start mobilizing your youth groups

It will be held on May 1-3, 2015, at Crystal Spring Retreat Center (west of Jamestown). All youth grades 6th-12th are invited to enjoy a weekend together at our Presbytery-Wide Youth Retreat. The cost of the retreat is \$85 per participant (financial assistance is available) which includes great accommodations, wonderful food, indoor and outdoor fun including a ropes course, thoughtful worship, and crazy games.

Retreat brochures and registration forms will be posted by the end of January on the Presbytery's website at www.northernplainspresbytery.com or you can contact the Presbytery office at 701-772-0783 for a hard copy.

2015 PRESBYTERY MEETING SCHEDULE



The next Presbytery Meeting of the Presbytery of the Northern Plains will be on April 17 and 18, 2015, at First Presbyterian Church of Grand Forks.

The Fall meeting will be held on October 23 & 24, 2015, at Glencoe Sloan Memorial (rural Bismarck). Please plan on staying in the Bismarck/Mandan area and driving out to the church.

Presbytery's Calendar

Jan 1	Holiday, office closed
Jan 7	Youth Connection Team cc
Jan 8	1001 Worshipping Communities cc
Jan 13	SE Movie Night (pg 3)
Jan 15	Council cc
Jan 15	Staff Reviews
Jan 31	Officer/Elder training (pg 3)
Feb 18	Ash Wednesday
Feb 19	Council meeting location TBA
Feb 21	SE Mission Work Day (pg 3)
March 6	World Day of Prayer
March 19	Council cc
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 4)
May 25	Memorial Day, office closed
July 4	Independence Day, office closed
July 18-25	Youth Mission Trip
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 pnppoffice@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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Copy deadline for the *Light* is the twenty-fifth of the month. Items may be sent to:

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