

Light of the Northern Plains

Presbytery of the Northern Plains

August 2017

PRAYER JOYS/CONCERNS

Update: Gretchen Graf, Honorably Retired Teaching Elder of the Presbytery, returned home in early July from a trip to Mayo where she had a good report and learned much about next stages of recovery. She has learned that "normal" after a year means more energy but is also a new normal which includes watching for signs of graft vs host disease and addressing those quickly. She will be heading back to Mayo soon for her one-year checkup. Please keep Gretchen in your prayers as she recovers.

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

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, location TBA
- Monday, October 8, 2018, location TBA

THINK ABOUT THE CHILDREN

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

Jesus said,

"Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs."

- Matthew 19:14

Jesus made it pretty clear that he had a soft spot for children. He even said that we were to become like little children if we wanted to enter the kingdom. So what are we, as congregations, doing about the children in our midst?



During this month of August, many of us are meeting to finalize the details of our Christian Education program that will start in September. Some congregations are no doubt finalizing the details of their Child Protection Policy.

Those of us with children or grandchildren are engaging in back-to-school shopping for them, but what are we doing about the somewhat invisible children in our communities? I am talking about the children with unmet needs.

There are really good sales on school supplies, but they are still not affordable for many. If your city or county has a school supply drive, I encourage you to participate in it. If you are in a rural school district, as am I, recognize that some parents are unable to get to the distribution point on the assigned day and time to pick up the supplies for their child. It is possible to work with your local school to provide them with supplies. Many teachers would also appreciate a donation of supplies for their classrooms.

Those children who qualify for free or reduced price lunches may also need to receive a backpack of food for the weekend. In most of our Presbytery, the backpack program is run through Great Plains Food Bank with the cooperation of local food pantries. Donations of food, or money to provide it, are always needed. If you prefer a more hands-on approach, volunteers are often needed to fill the backpacks. There is also a need for facilities to serve food to the children through the summer months. Could your church be a site for a feeding program? Could you do a week of Vacation Bible School yet this month, invite everyone, and include a meal?

Back-to-school is a time for new clothes for many of our children. Some parents cannot afford a new outfit for their child. One of our local shelters engages with local donors to provide new back-to-school outfits for children living at the shelter. I am guessing that there are more children who could use new clothes. School counselors and social workers, and county Social Service workers can probably provide you with sizes needed to make an anonymous donation for their clients.

Jesus made it clear that the kingdom of heaven belongs to the children. Let us treat them like we believe it.

WELCOME TO ELISE POKEL



Elise and Andy Pokel at Wartburg Castle in Germany

The First Presbyterian Church, along with Trinity Lutheran Church, of Crookston, MN, is excited to announce and welcome the Rev. Elisa Pokel! The two churches joined in a shared call process in order to attract a full-time minister. Rev. Pokel will be the lead pastor at First Presbyterian and will share responsibilities in Youth and Family ministries at Trinity. Her ministry in Crookston begins on August 1, 2017. You are invited to her installation service on Wednesday, August 16, 2017, at 7:00 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church of Crookston, MN.

Rev. Pokel grew up in the Fargo/Moorhead area and attend Concordia College majoring in Religion and History. After working briefly, she heard the call to ministry and began seminary soon after. During her second year of seminary, she met her husband, Andy Pokel. She graduated from Luther Seminary in St. Paul, MN, in May and was ordained on July 29, 2017.

SESSION RECORD DATES

All congregations are required to have their Session minutes and their church register records (2 books) reviewed annually 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.

BDECAN VBS PROGRAMS

The children at Bdecan Presbyterian Church and surrounding areas have had a treat this summer with three Vacation Bible Schools (VBS) so far and one more to go.

The first one was held on June 12-14, with Joe Obermeyer leading it with five other pastors from all over the Midwest. The children learned about how Jesus gives us hope, direction, courage, love, and His Power to go out into the world to make disciples.

The second one was held on June 26 – 29 led by members of First Presbyterian Church in Wilmar, MN. The kids had a great time with the super hero themed week hearing stories, playing games, and making crafts.

On July 12-14th VBS was led by First Presbyterian Churches of Rochester and Ely MN. The week was focused on learning the Lord's Prayer in sign language, acting out the story of Noah with puppets, and introduction of new way to remember the 10 commandments.

The final VBS this summer will be led by the Presbyterian Clearwater Forest Camp in a Van program and will be in August.

POEM ABOUT BDECAN

The last week in June, a mission team from Willmar and Amboy came to Bdecan for their second year in a row. This year they held VBS and one of the ladies, Diann, shared a poem she wrote for the Team after their visit. Enjoy as it gives a glimpse into what Mission Teams experience when they come to Bdecan.

Grateful For:

The Mission Team that went to Bdecan.

The VBS and the children that attended.

Our youth and leaders that provide so much

For the children's needs.

The food that sustained us.

A place to shower and rest.

A place for fellowship and reflections.

Workers who were so tired but didn't quit.

The lessons we learned.

The dogs that entertained us as we rested at break time.

Louie's lessons of the Indian life and history on the reservation.

The grandma who picked up the children and brought them to VBS.
Safe from injury.

For Joe, who takes such good care of the children of Bdecan.

The churches that supported us with prayers and gifts.

Jobs completed:

food shelf/clothing area, kitchen/church cleaned and organized, lawn/mowed, trimmed, weeded, shed organized, pews/chairs cleaned, signs/made/painted/put up, garage/organized, picnic tables painted, a very successful VBS, and a house sided.

For reminding us to experience the gifts of the Spirit.

MIDDLE SCHOOL MISSION TRIP



By: Ashley Tangen Greenwood, Member of Youth Connection Team

This past June thirty-seven Middle School Youth and adult leaders boarded a bus in Fargo and headed to the Minneapolis/St. Paul area for a long weekend of mission work and fun together. Our 32 youth represented Presbyterian and ELCA churches from 10 different cities in North Dakota and Minnesota. The youth quickly got to know each other and created great and diverse friendship groups over their four days together.

The first day after travel was spent serving two charities. Our morning began with The Sheridan Story, a growing organization which responds to the needs of the over 200,000 children in Minnesota living in food insecurity, not always knowing where they will receive their next meal. The youth

gathered to learn about the work The Sheridan Story is accomplishing, and quickly joined in helping. I have personally never seen a group of Middle School youth work so hard and so quickly. Jobs were assigned, kids got to packing, and we finished our goal 30 minutes before expected! Youth packed bags full of protein, veggies, fruit, and necessities in an assembly-like system. There were youth preparing back-up food, making sure every item got recycled, and that everything was taken care of. It was incredible work done and we were able to pack 1,320 packs of food in only one hour!

After our morning spent in Roseville, we visited Galilee Lutheran Church of St. Paul, organizer of the Rice St. Gardens. Pastor Dana enthusiastically shared with our youth her missionary work around the world, and told us of the garden that has been prepared for



refugees and immigrants in the Twin Cities. Over 200 plots are available for families to use to plant their own gardens. They are responsible for taking care of the gardens and have created an incredible community within the space on busy Rice St. near St. Paul. Our youth spent time enjoying the beautiful garden space, helping with any clean up needed, but mostly meeting the various garden caretakers from different countries all over the world.

Our last service stop was with Feed My Starving Children (FMSC), which actually has dozens of sites all over the Twin Cities. The youth learned about the great need of starving children in the world and the work FMSC is doing to provide for them. We then

packed nutritional meals for families, completing over 100 boxes-feeding 20,113 people. It was fast paced work, where our kids excelled and enjoyed themselves in this act of community service.

Our theme was taken from Galatians 5:14 “you shall love your neighbor as yourself”, and our youth found great work in providing food for our neighbors in Minneapolis, St. Paul, and all over the world! They were challenged to “love their neighbor” as they got to know 37 different personalities, and deal with a busy, tiring schedule. We were together for only four days where we fit in three different mission sites and visits to Minnehaha Falls, the Mall of America, and Valley Fair.

Our Middle School youth did an incredible job on this trip, and were able to grow in their faith from the experience. We look forward to more opportunities for youth to connect within the Presbytery and in our own youth groups here at home.



25th ANNIVERSARY FOR TRI-COUNTY

The Tri-County Parish invites everyone to join them in celebrating their 25th Anniversary on Sunday, August 6, 2017, at the Red Willow Bible Camp with worship at 10:30 a.m. with a meal to follow and a program at 2:00 p.m. The Tri-County Parish Ministry is an ecumenical parish made up of one Presbyterian and six Lutheran congregations. We hope you will help them celebrate this wonderful milestone.

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>.



PASTORAL LEADERS WORKSHOP

Have you wondered about your personality type? What kind of impact does it have on your ministry and the way you respond to others in times of stress and discord? If you want answers to these questions and more, plan to attend the amazing Enneagram Workshop on September 8-9, 2017 at United Presbyterian Church of Jamestown. Rev. Greg Isaacson will help you explore your personality type using the Enneagram focusing on the three centers of intelligence (head, heart and body) to increase your understanding of self and others around you. Cost to attend is \$30, plus travel and lodging on your own. Please register by August 10th with the Presbytery office at 701-772-0783 or pnmission@gmail.com

HEALTHY BOUNDARY TRAINING



The Presbytery of the Northern Plains will be hosting a boundary training for Teaching Elders on Tuesday, August 15, 2017, at First Presbyterian Church of Grand Forks, ND. 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 Anderson, 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 to receive credit and a certificate at the end of the training. Please plan to attend if you need to renew or have never attended a class before. Please register with Alissa Anderson at 701-772-0783 or pnmission@gmail.com

PLANNING CALENDARS

The Presbytery office has 2017-2018 Presbyterian Planning Calendars for sale for \$ 9.35 plus shipping cost. If interested in purchasing one, please contact the Presbytery office at 701-772-0783 or email pnpooffice@gmail.com. It's on a first come, first served basis and no additional calendars will be purchased once supplies have run out.

Presbytery's Calendar

August 1	Leadership Retreat at United Pres. Church (Jmst)
August 2	Youth Connection cc
August 6	Tri-County Parish 25 th Ann. (pg 2)
August 15	Boundaries Training (pg 4)
August 17	Council Meeting in F/M area
August 22	Enactment Task Force mtg
August 24	Committee on Ministry mtg at United Pres. Church (Jmst)
September 1	CPM Meeting in Grand Forks
September 4	Holiday, office closed
September 8-9	Pastoral Leader Enneagram Workshop in Jamestown (p 4)
September 14	Committee on Ministry cc
September 21	Council cc
September 30	Presbyterian Women Cluster in Red Lake Falls
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 pnpooffice@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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