

# COMMUNITY CALL

Ministers: The People of God; Pastor: Rev. D. Matthew Stith  
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## ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The Annual Congregational Meeting will be held on January 29 with February 5 set for a storm date.

All committees and groups should have their yearly reports in by January 13 to give the clerk time to get the report ready to be distributed on January 29. Please include the year's reports, activities, and anything else you feel would be interesting about your proceedings to the church members.

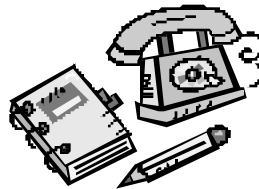
Please make an effort to attend this important meeting of your church.

## DIRECTORY OF NAMES AND ADDRESSES

The 2006 Church Directory is in the initial stages of completion. If your address has changed since last April, please make sure we have the correct address.

There is a copy of the directory on the table in the narthex on which corrections can be made, or you can call and leave a message on the answering machine at the church. Please do this promptly so that this directory can be ready for distribution the first part of March.

Thank You!  
Delores Horn



## PASTOR'S PEN

As the holiday season has progressed, I've noticed that the furniture and decorations up at the front of the church (pulpit, communion table, baptismal font, etc.) have been moved around a whole lot over the past few weeks. Whether it be for the cantata, the children's program, a funeral, or simply to make room for all of the performers on Christmas Eve, we've been doing more than our usual share of rearranging. After something like the fifth or sixth time I moved the communion table around, it occurred to me that this would be a good time for us to think again about the reasons that these fixtures are located where



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they are. Why does the table always sit right there, front and center? Why is the pulpit in the middle, rather than off to one side? Can't we just tuck the font in a closet somewhere and only haul it out when we need it? Believe it or not, it isn't just a matter of tradition, nor even of my hidebound inflexibility. Instead, the way we arrange the space in which we worship God is an expression of our worship theology, of our beliefs about how God is best served and honored in our worship.

As Presbyterians, we are a part of what is known as the Reformed branch of Christianity. Broadly speaking, this means that we stand in the tradition that grows out of the Protestant Reformation, taking our cues from John Calvin and his colleagues. One of the hallmarks of Reformed Christianity is a strong emphasis on the importance, authority, and centrality of the Word of God, for worship, for faith, and for the Christian life.

Accordingly, our Sanctuary is arranged in such a way as to reflect the importance of God's Word for us. The central location of the pulpit, in which the written Word of God is set and from which the Word is read and proclaimed in preaching, embodies the central role of that Word in our lives. In many Reformed churches, the pulpit is also physically elevated, in order to signify the high regard in which the Scriptures are held. This is why I am always very hesitant to move the pulpit off to one side...we ought to be very, very reluctant to try to get the Word of God "out of the way."

A second pillar of Reformed faith is the administration of the Sacraments, the Lord's Supper and Baptism. Calvin and the other reformers went so far as to

say that where the Sacraments are not rightly administered, there is no church (they said the same thing about the reading and preaching of the Word). Our communion table, set on the same level as the congregation and, as best we can manage, in their midst, gives physical shape to our belief that the church in worship is no less than the family of God gathered around his table for fellowship. The constant, visible presence of the baptismal font serves as a reminder that it is only in our baptism that we become who we are, that we are claimed as members of God's covenant people and sealed to the benefits of Christ's death and resurrection. Removing or rearranging these fixtures, even on days when we are not celebrating either Sacrament, risks suggesting that we are something other than a people formed in baptism and nourished by God's grace at his table.

Of course, there is much more to be said on these subjects, and about our Reformed heritage in general. Our adult Sunday School class will be studying Calvin and the Reformation, along with many aspects of our Reformed heritage, this semester, and we invite any of you who are able to join us, Sundays at 9:00 AM in the conference room, starting on January 15.

Happy New Year!

**SHHH!**  
**IT'S A SURPRISE**



Our church family hosting a surprise baby shower for Jaden Thomas and Janine Steele. Please join us on Sunday, January 15th from 2-3:30 p.m. in the fellowship hall.

If you'd like to assist by providing food for the shower, please call Toni Stith (282-2715).



## DECEMBER CLERK'S CORNER

The December meeting of the Session and Trustees was held on Thursday, December 22, 2005 rather than on Wednesday, December 21st due to schedule conflicts.

Two special meetings of the Session are scheduled for January 9th and February 1st. The purpose of the first meeting will be to review the financial proposal purposed by the General Assembly Loan Committee. The second will be to finalize plans for letting of bids for the new addition.

The clerk reported that the 2006 per capita assessment will be \$26.10 per member for a total of \$7,569.00. Breakdown for per capita: General Assembly - \$5.57, Synod - \$4.53 and Presbytery of the Northern Plains - \$16.00.

The Session voted to present an overture to the presbytery at the January meeting to oppose the report of the General Assembly Committee on Peace, Unity and Purity of the Presbyterian Church (USA). The portion of the report that is being opposed is that which deals with church polity regarding ordination of ministers, elders and deacons.

Carrie Leopold, Hand Bell Director, and Dawn Larson, Music Director, will be contacted to see if they are interested in attending workshops at the International Peace Garden this coming summer in regard to their fields. If they are, the Session will discuss ways of assisting them financially.

Two new head ushers have been recruited to replace those who have resigned.

The Christian Education Committee is still looking for three Sunday School teachers for the elementary grades in

the upcoming months. They also would like to separate the junior and senior high youth group but need leaders to do so.

The Mission, Outreach and Evangelism Committee reported that it had placed half page ads regarding Christmas activities of the church in the West Fargo Pioneer and the Midweek papers.

The Nominating Committee reported that they have two nominees for elder for 2006, three nominees for Trustee and a full slate of members for the Nominating Committee. They are still looking for an additional nominee for elder. If you would like to be considered or if you have a suggestion for someone else to be considered, please notify Melissa Barenthsen.

The Session voted to hire Sandra Keller for the bookkeeper/office support position. She will begin on January 3rd. She replaces Krysta Erovick who resigned.

The Session voted to present a motion to the congregation to increase the compensation for the pastor by \$1,200 for 2006. This will be voted on at the January 29th Annual Meeting.

Pastor Stith reported on the death of Member Marcella Bahls, age 16, on December 22nd. Her funeral is to be on December 27th with burial at Sunset Memorial Gardens. He also reported that he officiated at the funeral for Thomas Meester, father of Anneus Meester on Wednesday, December 22nd. He reminded the Session that he will be on vacation from January 1st following worship until January 9th.

The Clerk reported that 129 persons were served communion on December 4th. Janine and Andrew Steele are the parents of Jaden Thomas Steele, born

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on December 4th.

25 gift baskets were assembled and delivered prior to Christmas to shut-ins and church staff.

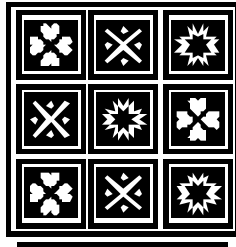
The PW reported that they had realized a profit of \$264.60 from the Cookie and Candy Sale.

The regular January meeting will be on January 18th.

Delores Horn  
Clerk of Session

**CHRISTMAS QUILT**

The drawing for the Christmas quilt was held on Sunday, December 18 during the potluck following the Sunday School Christmas program. The winner was Eileen Spitzer.



The Quilters made one hundred fifty-eight dollars in this venture. They will use these funds to pay for a new ironing board materials used in making wedding and missions quilts. Thanks to all who contributed to this worthy cause.

**YOUTH HELPERS  
FOR  
NURSERY**

Several youths in the church have indicated that they would like to help out in the nursery on Sundays during church. They work with one adult to take care of babies and young children so the parents can attend worship.

If you would like to help in this service please sign up on the sheet in the narthex.

Thank You.  
Service & Fellowship Committee

**SOUL TRAIN NEWS**

Soul Train has had an exciting 2005. We have had between 20-25 kids each week ranging from 6th-12th grade. We have gone to the Acres of Terror, ridden on hayrides, shot balloons into fields, played basketball (didn't the adults win that competition? - at least that is the way I remember it!), got locked in at the YMCA, bowled, set up the giving tree, started a church giving plate, had a Progressive dinner, saw a play at Bethel and had fun being together.

We have many people to thank because this program would not run smoothly without the help of the church. The following people have helped serve meals, drive to various events and help organize activities. A huge thank you to all of you!!!!

Roger and Melissa Barenthsen

Tom and Cathy Birrenkott

Becky DeJong

Lee and Lia Dobrinz

Amy Grossman

Steve and Sue Hanna

Melanie Hansen

Jim and Marlys Martin

Gail Matzke

Carolyn Meester

Marj Meester

Boots Misheski

Todd and Cheryl Montgomery

Larry and Vicki Peihl

Chuck and Kristen Richard

Dwight and Lisa Steffen

Matt and Toni Stith

Jason and Jill Swart

Carey Talley

Andrew and Gayle Thostenson

Don and Shelly Van Cleve

...and anyone else I forgot - sorry!

Soul Train will start again on January 22, 2006. Have a great New Year and we will see you in a couple of weeks!!!

## JANUARY DATES TO REMEMBER



### BIRTHDAYS

- 1-1 Jessie LaCoe  
 1-4 Wil Petik  
 1-5 Evan Thostenson  
 1-8 Ross Montgomery  
     Craig Pederson  
 1-10 Elizabeth Meyer  
 1-11 Kristina Sterup  
 1-11 Nan Wiese  
 1-12 Isaac Leopold  
 1-12 Richard Whitcomb  
 1-18 Grace Moorhead  
 1-19 Donna Gertz  
 1-21 Jenna Olson  
 1-22 Derek Leopold  
 1-23 Austin Montgomery  
 1-24 Nancy Stedman  
 1-26 Gail Matzke  
 1-27 Jennifer Clennon  
 1-28 Brenda Bjorklund  
     Brian Matzke  
 1-29 LaVerne Dahl  
     Kaylee Jo Sharbono  
 1-30 Julie Faircloth  
     Pat Langfitt  
     Matthew Pyle

### ANNIVERSARIES

- 1-9-82 – Brent and Boots Montgomery  
 1-16-81 - Martin and LaVerne Dahl  
 1-19-57 – Edwin and Harriet Diede



## NEW IMPROVED SUNDAY SCHOOL SCHEDULE

- Jan. 22 Memorization Sunday  
 Feb. 26 Memorization Sunday  
 Apr. 2 Memorization Sunday  
 Apr. 16 Easter  
     \*No Sunday School\*  
 May 14 Memorization  
     Sunday  
 May 21 Carnival  
     \*\*\*Last Day of  
     Sunday School\*\*\*

## 2006—A NEW YEAR NEW MISSION GOALS



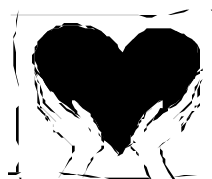
This marks the twelfth month our Missions Committee has been asking our church family for donations. We thank you for your strong response!

This month our focus will be the New Life Center. Their needs are for men's toiletries such as shampoo, razors, soap, toothbrushes, and toothpaste.

They also would like cans of regular coffee. So here is a challenge for our church family this month: let's aim for donating 25 cans of coffee!

Items may be left in the playpen in the narthex.

A new year—may our giving be pleasing to God!



## PLEASE LEND A HAND: SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS STILL NEEDED

We are in need of teachers to fill one month positions in January through April for grades K-5. Won't you consider spending some time with some of these baptized members?

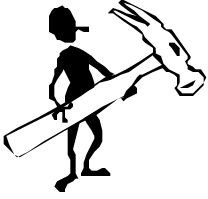
Listen for Christ's Call.

Sign-up sheets are posted in the narthex.

## PER CAPITA

Per capita is due at the Presbytery of the Northern Plains office soon. The per capita per adult member this year is **\$26.10**. Adult members include all ages of those who have been confirmed in the church along with adults who have joined the church in another manner.

Please pay your per capita assessment as soon as you are able so that this obligation can be paid.



## PROJECT OPEN DOOR DECEMBER REPORT

December was a very busy month for POD. First, on the financing front, the PCUSA Church Building and Loan Program received our application and responded positively. A loan proposal from them will be made to the Session on January 9th. If the Session approves their proposal, the PCUSA Church Building and Loan Program will put this up to their loan committee and if that goes well, they will issue us a "commitment letter" by the end of January. Once we have the commitment letter we will have 60 days to sign our agreement. When that is done, we will move to close the loan and sign final documents well before construction begins in the spring.

As for the design committee, they looked at more detailed drawings by our architect in early December. Then the following folks were consulted on finishing schemes: Mary-Jo & Blair Moorhead, Carrie Leopold, Cheryl Montgomery, Marlys Martin, Delores Horn, Gayle Thostenson, and Lee Dobrinz. These people met on two occasions with the architect to decide on wood color, paint, rugs, window trim color, siding color, and brick shades in addition to a dozen other finishing issues. Before Christmas, these people came to excellent consensus and completed their work sufficiently enough for the architect to be able to prepare bid documents.

In early January, the design committee will meet with the architect to put their stamp of approval on the bid documents. Later in January, contractors will have an opportunity to respond with bids which will then be reviewed by the

design committee. The results of these bids will be shared with the Session at a special meeting in early February.

As for contributions to POD, several expected and large gifts came in towards the end of December and at the time of this writing, there is now \$167,000 in Certificates of Deposits as well as \$24,661.81 in a money market account. As for expenses, we paid out, as expected, \$9,160.00 to our architect in December. We expect to pay out in January another \$14,000 to \$17,000 in architect and surveying fees. A complete financial report for POD will be made in the church's annual report which will be made available to all members in late January.

Finally, for those who have promised to support POD, please keep your pledge commitments up to date. (This is essential for planning and in dealing with lending institutions.) And, if you are sitting on the sidelines with you funds, please get in the game. Every contribution is welcome and useful. (In fact, we have children in the church who are regularly contributing 25 to 50 cents per week.)

As we move into the New Year, significant decisions will have to be made. Those decisions will require careful study, deliberation, and discernment from God. So please, keep praying!

### RINGING IN THANKS

A big thank you to all those who so willingly gave of their time to ring bells for the Salvation Army drive! Your gift of time was invaluable.



Louise Johnson  
Coordinator