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# *The First Epistle*



First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead • Established in 1872 • July 2011

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Independence Day  
July 4th

## Through the Storm

It had been raining all week. I thought the rain on May 22, 2011 was just another rainy day like the others that week. But I was wrong; the rain turned into a raging tempest with a funnel cloud that roared through my North Minneapolis community, causing destruction at every turn.

After it was over, I received a call from one of my pastors, asking if we were all right. Others were not so lucky, she relayed, and told me of reports of damage she received from other church members.

After the winds had died down and the rain stopped, I wanted to see what had happened with my own two eyes. Outside of my own home, nothing was damaged; not a stick or leaf littered the sidewalk. The sun shined deceptively. But as we walked four blocks to the west, this was no longer the case. It was as if we had walked directly into a nightmare. My community of the past 18 years, full of life with its music blaring and kids laughing and playing had come to a complete standstill. All around me, all I saw was death and destruction. The feeling that nothing would ever be the same gripped my soul.

The trees. One of the most shocking sights was the trees. They were everywhere except for where they belonged. No longer were the trees our old friends, who had been with us as long as we could remember. The trees who shaded us from the rays of the sun, home to the joyfully-singing birds, who let us lean on them while we waited for the bus without complaint. Quite literally, the trees had turned on us. Our majestic trees were now horizontal—huge roots previously deeply buried in the earth, now above ground, looking as if they would and would strangle or



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## Church Security

On Sunday a theft of financial instruments (credit cards and checks) occurred at the church. These financial instruments were illegally used at several business establishments later that day. A suspect has been identified by the police and they are conducting further investigations. We were advised by the police to be cautious of our security. As a result LaVonne would feel a lot more comfortable if the church was locked at all times. From this point on the doors will be locked, until further notice. Anyone wishing to enter will be allowed in by LaVonne. Those people that have entry keys certainly will be expected to use them whenever they need to. Earlier this year police had advised churches of just such an incident occurring. We all agree, ideally, that a church should always be open and welcoming to all. It is sad, but in this day and age a new reality has apparently arrived to drastically change this concept.

# The First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead

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## E-mail addresses

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**Church**

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**Newsletter articles:**

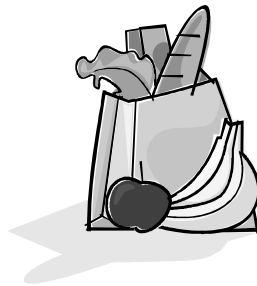
[bugandtim@msn.com](mailto:bugandtim@msn.com)

*Our mission is to be a caring community of God's people who live by Christ's teachings, reach out to others to share the love of God, and celebrate the good news of Jesus Christ through worship, prayer, thought, and action.*

## Dorothy Day Food Pantry

We will serve Monday, July 25 at 6:15 p.m. Please consider serving the 4th Monday of each month with your church congregation. It is great fellowship and helps out the pantry in a very important mission. We cannot do it without you!

If you have any questions, please contact Marilyn Woods at 236-9917.



## Happy Birthday

Jacqueline Kelsh	July 3
Leola Jefferson	July 10
Andrew Cook	July 11
Alex Hawkins	July 14
Margaretha Hagemann	July 15
Garrett Hawkins	July 19
Tom Dowdell	July 22
Marlys Winter	July 22
Jesse Turner	July 24
Sara Conrad	July 27
Tracy Ellingson	July 29
Mary Long	July 29


## Minnesota Food Share

Because of the can-do spirit of thousands of dedicated supporters throughout Minnesota, the March Campaign surpassed its 2011 goal and raised **12,048,127 dollars and pounds!**

The Membership Development Committee has ordered copies of the special edition of Presbyterians Today "What Presbyterians Believe". If members would like a copy for themselves, or to share with a friend, please check in the narthex., or ask Diane Wray Williams. We are asking members to donate \$1 to cover the cost of the magazine if they are able and then we can get more to give to possible new members.



**Synod School 2011**



Synod School, an annual midsummer ministry of the  
Synod of Lakes and Prairies of the Presbyterian  
Church (U.S.A.), is ...

learning  
worship  
music  
fellowship  
relaxation  
spiritual growth  
affordable  
fun for all ages

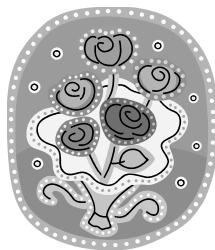
\*\*\*\*\*  
July 24-29, 2011  
Buena Vista University, Storm Lake, Iowa  
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*Discover Synod School!*  
Go to [www.lakesandprairies.org/school.html](http://www.lakesandprairies.org/school.html)  
or phone 1-800-328-1880, ext. 207.

**All My Relatives**

**Flowers for the Worship Service**

You are invited to give flowers to brighten our worship. Choose a date to honor someone special, and sign up on the flower chart in the narthex or call the church office. For information or questions, call Grace Covey (233-4691), Mary Skalet (236-5559), Marion DeJong (233-3041), Ruth Mathews (233-4469) or Elizabeth Swee (236-9346). Thank you!



**We ask that more members of the Congregation please consider participating in the flower program.** It brightens our sanctuary and can be a very good way to honor your loved ones.

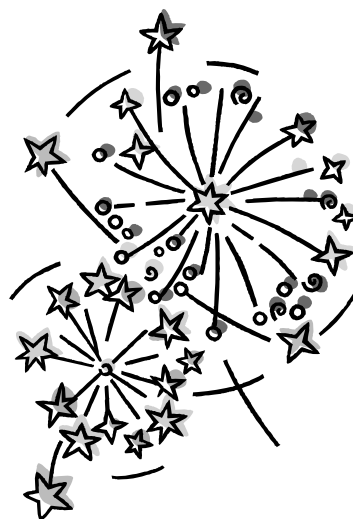


**Down on Main Street!**

Our week of exploring stories Jesus told about everyday people in everyday situations was awesome! We had busy mornings of game time, snack time, learning new songs, making crafts and acting out the parables. During all this we spent time with those we already knew and developed friendships with some new individuals. There were 16 children who attended VCS for at least part, if not the whole time.

Our week went smoothly because of the efforts of many people. Thanks to the families for bringing the children to VCS. Thank you to the youth and adults who led activities and/or traveled with the various groups. The kitchen crew did a wonderful job of having interesting snacks for us-thank you! And we must not forget to thank you to all the church members who loaned or donated items for VCS. It is great to see that there are so many who are willing to give of themselves to help children about the love of Jesus.

We certainly did find that Jesus made a BIG difference in all of us.



*Pentecost Offering Continued from page 1*

entangle you if you dared get too close. They now lay with branches snarled within one another, blocking the streets; onto and into houses, smashing out windows, crushing roofs and entering attics like unwanted guests. The full weight of them on top of parked cars, compressing them beyond recognition.

An odd sense of betrayal came over me.

Many walked through the neighborhood looking shell-shocked. Some blocks were so ravaged that residents were ordered to evacuate their homes, so many dragged their belongings and their children behind them. Intuitively, I knew the questions going through their minds. What are we...? how could this?...where are we going to...? how can we pay for this? The force of the storm had not only rocked our physical world, but our emotional world as well.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken us?

Finally, I made it to the place I had been aiming for—one of my church member's home, who my pastor told me had sustained major damage. Nothing could have prepared me for what I saw. There were three—not one, but three—200 foot-high pine trees against her home. The sight of it stopped me in my tracks. Juxtaposed with this was her family—several young grandchildren and cousins playing together, laughing and playing in her driveway. I had to hold back tears...praising God that none of these beautiful babies or their parents had lost their lives. Even in the midst of this, God was still with us.

### **Another Northsider's story**

Relief to Northside residents came slowly. With so many power lines down, many people did not have electricity for several days. Unless a family could afford the luxury of a hotel, they spent both their days and nights in the dark, groceries ruined and unable to use the stove or microwave, an inability to use the telephone or access the Internet to find out where help could be had. For many, this fostered feelings of depression and hopelessness; they found themselves literally and figuratively in darkness.

Mary Smith, a longtime Northside resident, has a home that sustained damage from the tornado. A tree fell on her house, there were several broken windows and the roof was damaged. Like many others, her home had no gas, electricity or water.

Like many other tornado victims, she heard about a local park where services were being offered. She said she waited in line for five hours with a reported 1200 local residents seeking help. "Just the long wait added insult to injury. People became really restless and agitated; cutting in line, even using drugs, with policemen just a few steps away," she said. "Adding to the sense of demoralization, volunteers were passing out hot dogs and peanut butter sandwiches and people clamored to get them—clearly they were hungry. It was totally exhausting, both mentally and physically."

Smith was able to secure a month's worth of food stamps for her family. "I was grateful for them, but I couldn't really go grocery shopping, because the power was still out at my house," she said. "And, even though I had food stamps, they don't pay for household items like paper goods, cleaning supplies and everyday necessities."

### **How Kwanzaa is helping to rebuild the Northside community**

Throughout history, the Black church is known for having open hearts, open hands and an unparalleled willingness to help those in its beloved community when there is a crisis. The Reverends Ralph and Alika Galloway, co-pastors of the Northside's Kwanzaa Community Church, are poised to carry on this tradition. Their strategy includes utilizing church ministries and collaborating with others to help the healing and rebuilding of the Northside community.

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# News and Events

## Thank you...

...so much for participating in United Campus Ministry's meal program! We appreciate all you do for us and your homemade meals are always delicious! We hope you consider participating during the 2011-2012 school year. Thanks again!

Amelia Shoptaugh  
Associate Campus Minister

## Congratulation to Recent Newlyweds Married at First Presbyterian!



Kalynn Nelson & Dustin Lerud – April 29<sup>th</sup>

Mallory Griggs & Brady Dickelman – May 14<sup>th</sup>

Ashley & Cody Turner – June 4<sup>th</sup>

## Summer Nursery

Child care for little ones during the 10:30 am worship service is an important part of our church's hospitality to families, members and visitors. Please consider taking a turn providing care for children in the nursery during the summer. Barb Worman will be coordinating the staffing of the nursery for July. Caregivers should plan arrive at 10:15 am.

If you are able to help with this aspect of our church's ministry please sign-up on the bulletin board outside the nursery or Barb Worman at 236-0889 or by email at bgmw54@aol.com. Thank you!

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### Community collaboration:

- Kwanzaa is participating in the Northside Community Response Team, made up of agencies who have come together to blend resources to make the greatest impact on the families in the community.
- Kwanzaa is planning a conference in collaboration with the University of Minnesota featuring leading experts who will address the long-term psychological and emotional impact on children after the tornado.

### Providing resources and enhancing Kwanzaa ministries:

- The church has been distributing grocery store gift cards, assisting with transportation, disseminating and interpreting disaster relief information and assisting residents in their negotiations with contractors and insurance adjusters.
- The capacity of this year's Freedom School has been expanded in order to serve more children. Attendance at this summer program will offer them a safe, culturally-specific, summer activity that will include reading assistance, field trips and hot meals each day.
- Kwanzaa now has a wonderful Urban Farm near the 2100 Emerson Avenue North site, where community members are welcome to participate in the planting and caring for a large vegetable garden. Because of the tornado, Kwanzaa has expanded the garden both in size and in scope, offering more families a way to obtain free vegetables for their families.

### A renewed sense of hope

More than three weeks after the storm raged through North Minneapolis, there are still trees down everywhere you look. But there is something else more prominent than the downed trees—you see evidence of God's grace. Volunteers cleaning debris, community agencies banding together to consolidate services, and neighbors helping neighbors. And, as we know as Christians, the winds of the storm were mighty, but our God is still sovereign!

*Tara Parrish is Director of Communications for Kwanzaa Community Presbyterian Church in Minneapolis.*

*Reprinted from pcusa.org.*