

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF THE CROSS
1517 South 114th St
Omaha NE 68144-1799

PHONE: 402-333-7466
FAX: 402-697-9084
www.churchofthecrossomaha.org

WE'RE NOT LETTING THE PANDEMIC KEEP US DOWN!

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, AT 5:30 P.M.—OUTDOOR CANDLELIGHT CAROL SING

Join us outdoors on the back lawn for sparkling Christmas lights, candlelight, and carol singing by the warmth of a roaring fire. We will have several fire pits spread out so everyone can get warm while being distanced. Song books and candles will be available. Please wear your masks. We may schedule another carol sing later in the month depending on the weather. Make sure to check your email and the church website for the latest updates!



Joy to the World!

ADVENT CANDLELIGHT CONCERTS

A mixture of PCOC and guest musicians will perform in a new concert each week during Advent. These concerts will be posted on the website each Wednesday evening.

Wednesday, December 2 – Thomas Kluge, viola

Wednesday, December 9 – Bach Cantata performed by a small ensemble of singers & instrumentalists

Wednesday, December 16 – Dana Sloan, organ

Wednesday, December 23 – Dr. Sara Renner, English horn & Dana Sloan, organ



Advent

ALL OF THE MUSIC PRESENTED DURING ADVENT will be available on a special page on the church website. You may visit the website anytime to listen and enjoy the beautiful music of the season.

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

Who says you can't have a children's pageant during a pandemic?! Not us! We have creative and talented people who feel it is important to figure out a safe way to have the pageant this year. Our children (and parents) have been working hard to pull it off. Many hours have been spent recording the children in each family separately to keep everyone socially distanced. We've done Zoom meetings with angels, shepherds and sheep. We've taken photos and included audio recordings of our confirmands reading the scripture. Sounds amazing, right?! Well you don't want to miss it! The pageant will be available for viewing online on December 20. A special thank you goes out to Sue Thomas and Gayle McFadden for all their time and dedication to providing this opportunity for our children and this gift for our church family!



★ Children's ★
Christmas Program

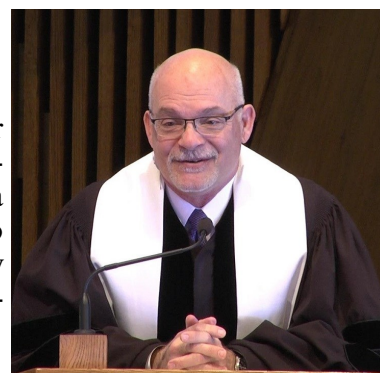


CONFIRMAND/MENTOR VIRTUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY

Don't think you can have fun on Zoom? We'll see! Confirmands and Mentors are invited to Zoom together on December 9 at 6 p.m. for some holiday fun. Look for the invite in your email or online.

“A Different Christmas”

by Marshall Ziemann, Pastor and Head of Staff



Christmas this year, for many of us, will be a Christmas unlike any other we've ever experienced. At first, all I could think about was the many holiday traditions that won't be happening this year. This is normally such a fun, busy time for our church family to gather together in various ways to celebrate Christ's birth. Now, instead of busily planning to see how many activities to cram in, this Advent is becoming, at least for me, a time to reflect upon what's really important. What comes to my mind?

Well, obviously, my family. This year, more than ever, I've prayed for my family members to stay well. Our son's recent wedding was our only family event of the entire year.

Tending to my own faith is also important. In lieu of so many happy gatherings (while I sorely miss) I'm able to carve out more time to read, meditate, reflect, and pray. For me, it's hard to just sit and think, but I'm giving it a try this Advent.

All of you, my church family, are also on my mind a lot. I miss being with you like normal. I'm now realizing that the gift of fellowship should never be taken for granted. I'm VERY THANKFUL for Zoom technology that makes it possible to see and speak with others online. I'm so grateful that so many of us are diving into this new world, disciplining ourselves to keep connected until the situation is better. We will eventually meet in person again, and in the meantime (this long meantime) we are doing the right thing by staying home and staying connected. To many of us this means that we have to take initiative to reach out. That, too, is a new task that many of us are having to learn - staying connected in new ways.

Advent is a season, not a day. We need all four weeks of it to get ready to celebrate Christmas, and we will need all four weeks this year. The four Advent candles we light during Advent focus on Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. I'd say these are four things which each of us needs more than ever this year.

Hundreds of you find us each week online. I am thankful for that. Please know that all the online activities we will present this year are meant to keep you and your family connected to God and each other. This Advent, may each of us find the appropriate ways to draw near to Christ our Savior and coming King!

Your pastor and friend,

Marshall Ziemann



CAPITAL CAMPAIGN CONTINUES

Although COVID has changed our timeline, our Capital Campaign, Reaching Out to Others, Lifting High the Cross, quietly continues. Your faithful pledging has allowed us reach more than half of our pledged goal of \$4.1M, and your gifts are providing a substantial amount in the bank already. This project will be a magnificent and delightful south entrance to our worship area. Watch for more updates in the Spring! Contact Rock with any questions about your giving.

Cross Care

Contact
Christine Dempsey

Cross Care is a care giving ministry of the Deacons of Presbyterian Church of the Cross and is made up of a group of trained caregivers who are ready to provide visitation, friendship, prayer, fellowship, support, and assistance to members of Church of the Cross who are:

- Home bound due to illness or mobility issues
- Hospitalized
- Recently home from the hospital and in need of a little extra help
- Dealing with a long term illness
- Dealing with the loss of a loved one
- Going through a difficult life transition (loss of job, divorce, new baby, etc.)
- In need of occasional transportation to appointments or in running errands
- Just need someone to talk to

If you or someone you know is in need of Cross Care, you can file a request using one of the white Care Cards located in the sanctuary pews. All requests will be kept confidential. If you would prefer to speak with a pastor directly, please contact the church office at 402-333-7466

Dear friends,

Oh, I have missed seeing you in person so much, but I love talking with you all on the phone. As we get to know each other better and better, and I am again reminded of how small our world is. Some of you love cherry pie! Some of you are bird watchers! Some of you know the back roads of Western Nebraska! We can reminisce together! Yet here we come to advent season in a year like no other. 2020 has given us all an unexpected look at our world--what we had taken for granted, and what we now long to reclaim. During all of this stress, our faith sustains us and provides us with the promise of restoration. Advent, in particular, is a season of hope, and one where we are reminded again and again that our hope is in Jesus Christ.



This promise of hope is very much alive at Church of the Cross and there are a few things that we are doing to remind us to be thankful for one another. In addition to our online worship, Christmas pageant and outdoor music activities outlined elsewhere in the Cross Currents, there are some additional things happening to lighten our burden. First, I want to invite you to participate in our outdoor Christmas light festival. All you have to do is sign up via the church website, we will list your address and then our church members can drive by and enjoy. There will be a little, friendly competition! Second, we are planning an online Blue Christmas for December 13th. This allows us to reflect on a year that has been particularly challenging giving us space to contemplate and renew. It is, in a way, permission to feel blue in a time that we associate with so much joy. In engaging in our emotions of sadness and even sorrow, we can reconnect with that sacrificial love of God that is in Christ Jesus. Third, especially if you are facing personal loss, we are inviting you to engage with our newly rebranded Cross Care Connections team. You will receive a mailing and a flier about our wonderful program to care for our members. I pray that you will reach out to us, so that we may walk with you in your time of need.

You are in all in my thoughts and prayers!

Grace and peace,

Christine



Reaching Out

DEACONS REACHING OUT DURING THE PANDEMIC

During this long Pandemic your 24 member Deacons have been busy, focusing on the spiritual and physical support of you, our fellow members. Here are some areas that we have been working on:

Home meals: Delivering foods (such as soup, pot pies, and lasagna) to members homebound due to Covid-19, surgery or loss of a loved one

Caregiving outreach: Making calls, emails, and visits to members, offering encouragement and checking if they need assistance (such as grocery delivery or a ride home from hospital)

Greeting Cards: Sending cards of sympathy, thank you, get well/thinking of you, birth of a baby, and baptism to affected members

Masks: Sewing masks and making them available to all members

Prayer Shawls: Knitting them for members who need comfort during a difficult time

Halloween outreach: Assembling Care baskets and mailing them to our college students

Post card message: Sending a card to all members – that we love them and are uplifting them in our prayers

PRESBYTERIAN MEN

Even though there was no Shrimp Boil this November, on the 5th, Presbyterian Men (PM) purchased 4,000 diapers and 4,500 wipes for Heartland Hope Mission (HHM) who delivered them to Macy, Nebraska on the 12th to assist Indian families as one of their new outreaches.

This was possible due to an much-appreciated anonymous donation and some PM funds were used. Thanks to David Hopp and Jon Boomgaarden for coordinating this effort.





Spirit of Mission

Page 5

HOLIDAY MISSION GIVING TREE

Our beautiful wooden giving tree will be set up in the circle drive entrance by December 7. Donations this year will go to the following Mission partners: Omaha Street School, Russian Mission Partnership, and Siena Francis House. With our help, these partners provide food, clothing, education, and other support to our local community and abroad.



Many of you have generously given to this mission project before, and we are hoping to achieve the same results or better remotely this year.

- If you stop by the church, envelopes will be available by the tree. Just check your donation choice, enclose your check, and leave the envelope in the basket. Rock will periodically retrieve donations.
- You can also mail a donation to PCOC. On the memo line, simply write your choice of organization (s).
- All checks should be made out to Presbyterian Church of the Cross.

Contact Karen Metzger with any questions .

OMAHA STREET SCHOOL LUNCH CREW



One of the ways that PCOC supports at-risk youth in our community is through Omaha Street School. On the second Thursday of each month, PCOC sends a team to prepare and serve lunch to students and staff. On November 12, the masked-up PCOC crew included Karen Morey, Bill Ritchie, Tina Morgan, and Carolyn Will.

With the pandemic, OSS and our team are taking extra care to stay safe. The taco lunch fixings were prepared ahead of time and served from behind a plexiglass shield, and social interactions with the students during the meal were not allowed.

SIENA FRANCIS HOUSE

Siena Francis continues to serve the homeless in Omaha thru this times with Covid-19 and Church of the Cross also continues to support them. Volunteers assisted in serving dinners as long as volunteers were allowed to help.

We also have given 35 laundry baskets filled with cleaning supplies to assist those that have moved into the apartments of Siena Francis and those graduating from the programs and found housing. We were featured on their Facebook page.

The congregation gave many donations of jeans, under garments and socks this fall and it took two trips to deliver all the donations. The staff was very appreciative of your donations. Individuals also have donated during this time and the Mission Committee continues to deliver when needed.

Thank you to all for the dollars we give through your pledged giving and donations through out the year that assist those who are homeless at this time in life. Siena Francis is reaching out to assist this population in our city with the help of persons like YOU.



Spirit of Mission

IN PLACE OF THE ANGEL TREE THIS YEAR . . . EASY GIFT GIVING FOR HHM KIDS

Many holiday traditions are changing this year due to COVID-19, and our annual Christmas Giving Tree for Heartland Hope Mission is no exception. Instead of taking a paper angel with gift suggestions for boys and girls from a decorated tree in the narthex, we are asking you to shop online for HHM using Amazon (through their AmazonSmile charitable program). HHM has provided these Amazon wish-list links to make it super easy to buy and deliver the gifts.



Provided below are the links to the HHM Amazon wish-lists. Click the link for the type of gift you'd like to buy.

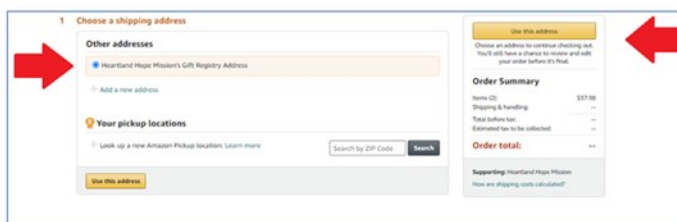
- **Baby/Preschool: https://smile.amazon.com/hz/charitylist/ls/2N1N5JWVEY67M/?ref=smi_ext_lnk_lcl_cl
- **Grade School: https://smile.amazon.com/hz/charitylist/ls/14L4IPS47KKI/?ref=smi_ext_lnk_lcl_cl
- **Pre Teen/Teen: https://smile.amazon.com/hz/charitylist/ls/20YNJQBGOVLZG/?ref=smi_ext_lnk_lcl_cl

Gift suggestions are shown. Choose the gift(s) you'd like to purchase by selecting a quantity and clicking **Add to Cart**.

Click **Proceed to Checkout**.

Choose the Heartland Hope Mission shipping address rather than any personal addresses that might be showing. Click the **Use this address** button.

On the next screen choose your payment method to complete the purchase. Once purchased the gifts will be sent directly to Heartland Hope Mission in South Omaha, where they will be distributed to families.



Another option is to donate directly to Heartland Hope Mission's Christmas fund on our own PCOC custom donation page at <https://donorbox.org/pcocchristmas>. The HHM staff will then purchase the gifts for you. All donations will remain anonymous.

Please have your gifts delivered and donations made to HHM by December 8. For more information about this Christmas event or Heartland Hope Mission in general, please visit their website at <https://heartlandhopemission.org/>. Thank you for your continuing generosity and support of our missions at Presbyterian Church of the Cross. Merry Christmas!

Our Church Family



A Loss
in the
Church
Family

Deaths

- * Marlene Sutton, passed away on March 31, 2020
- * John Behrens, passed away on May 27, 2020
- * Jean Hanson, passed away on July 16, 2020
- * Joyce Ferney, passed away on August 20, 2020
- * Derek Geschwender, passed away on September 8, 2020
- * Dorothy Thompson, passed away on September 29, 2020
- * Helen Kelley, passed away on October 12, 2020
- * Donald Drews, passed away on October 22, 2020
- * Robert Knightly, passed away on October 22, 2020
- * Linda Wax, passed away on November 2, 2020
- * James McGrath, passed away on November 16, 2020



Baptisms



- ◆ Mason Miles Anderson, born on September 11, 2010, grandson of Roger and Nancy Utman, baptized on March 8, 2020
- ◆ Maxwell Jonathan Darling, born on April 3, 2017, son of Matt and Elizabeth Darling on April July 12, 2020
- ◆ Charles For Darling, born on November 2, 2018, son of Matt and Elizabeth Darling
- ◆ Isla Rae Kalkwarf, born on June 22, 2020, daughter of Michaela and Justin Kalkwarf on September 20, 2020
- ◆ Ana Nicole Kalkwarf, born on June 22, 2020, daughter of Michaela and Justin Kalkwarf

“TABLES FOR EIGHT” - WINTER SESSION 2021

The Membership Committee invites you to participate in the 2021 Tables for Eight “Virtual” Winter Session (**January, February, March, and April**). This will be the same format that we did for the Fall Session and offers an opportunity to stay in touch with fellow church members.

Each group will meet monthly via Zoom and the date and time will be determined by each group. Couples or singles are welcome to join this fellowship opportunity. If you would like to participate, please contact Pam Otto **The deadline for registration for the winter session is December 10.**

While the building is closed to in-person activities, we are keeping in touch with the congregation several times a week via e-mail. Since March, the church has been sending weekly emails with congregational news and updates. If you are **not** receiving e-mails from the church, **please contact the office to ensure we have your correct e-mail address.**

Email is churchofthecross@pcoc.us.

Gifts and Memorials

- Indoor Signage \$7,600.00
- 6– 8ft Tables \$1,800.00
- Carpet Replacement North and Circle Drive Entrances \$5,064.00
- Cookie/Donut Hole Ministry
- Educational Material Endowments
- Mission Funds
- Musicians for Special Services
- Printed Music for Choirs
- Youth Program Funds
- Facility Fund

Reminder :

Call the church office when you or a family member is hospitalized. 402-333-7466

Prayer Chain

Contact Julie Buehler, Judy Arms, or the church office.

December Birthdays

- 1 Joan Boomgaarden, Char Fehr, John Fettig John Morey
Kathy Thornton
- 2 William Smith
- 3 Jim McGrath, Piper Smith
- 4 Jennifer Bruce, Jaeda Lawson-Betum, Ron Mau
- 5 Dee Coffey, John Hall
- 7 Nathalie Hart, Helen McNiven, Libby Whitlow
- 8 Addison Holdren-Hansen, Ken Kluck
- 9 Sam Arnold, Beth Morris, Jeffrey Swenson
- 10 Dennis Boesen, Ryan Davelaar, Kathy Moore, George Rath
- 11 Sydney Goodwin, Nadine Jenkins, Robin Kussman
- 13 Angela Ayika, Holly Baddley, Paula Hazelrigg
- 14 Cynthia Garner, Marinell Neuhaus
- 15 Shirley Emig, Brenda Ticknor
- 16 Adam Buda, Aaron Fettig, Matthew Reid
- 17 Janet Wallace, Charlene Weyand
- 18 Barbara Thompson
- 19 Jim Conway, Douglas Corum, Charlene Meyer
- 21 Irene Boomgaarden, Katie Gerot
- 22 Kristin Johnson, Karleen Nelson
- 23 Jacob Bumsted, Carole Sieck, Tom Stalnaker
- 24 Ken Burson, Elaine Penkava
- 25 Toni Craig, Matt Will
- 26 Howard Anderson, Julie Driftmier, Tammy Holdren, Gary Lippstreu
- 27 Brian Weyant
- 28 Ardys Hansum, Brooklyn Miller, David Tchona, Clarence Waters, Jackie Youngstrom
- 29 Charlotte Avivor, Louis Knight
- 30 T. J. Davey, Mark Mathia, Paul Nickel, Chris Rath, Staci Voss
- 31 Bob Allen, David Ambrose, Amavi Amela, Avis Polacek, Mary Reid, Chelsea Spielman

Pastor

Marshall Zieman, D. Min.
Ext. 1-marshall@pcoc.us

Associate Pastor

Christine Dempsey Ph.D.
Ext. 4-christine@pcoc.us

Director of Music

Executive Director of Vesper Concerts
Kristi Treu, M. M.
Ext. 5-kristi@pcoc.us

Director of Christian Education

Heather Berry
Ext. 2-heather@pcoc.us

Organist

Dana Sloan, M.M.
Ext. 7-dana.sloan@pcoc.us

Business Administrator

Rock Sumner
Ext. 6-rock@pcoc.us

Administrative Assistant

Julie Hansen
Ext. 3-churchofthecross@pcoc.us

Communications Coordinator

Gayle Kerr-McFadden
Gayle@pcoc.us

Phone: 402-333-7466

www.churchofthecrossomaha.org
www.vesperconcerts.org



Welcome New Members

Rick and Brentleigh Bowen

Please welcome back former members, Rick and Brentleigh Bowen, to Church of the Cross. Rick grew up in the church when Dr. Ralph Gerber was here and remembers receiving his God and Country Award during that time.

The Bowens are retired. Rick enjoys old movies, good music, aviation and participates in the Omaha Ukulele Club. The Ukulele Club performs at the Union Station during Christmas time and at retirement centers. Brentleigh is occupied with “downsizing”. She enjoys plant-based cooking, meditation and practices healthy aging. She enjoys thrift shopping and participates in mindfulness groups and book clubs. She also participates in Tai Chi and Music and Movement at the church.

Bill and Sharon Walsh

We thank Nancy Koehler for introducing Bill and Sharon Walsh to Church of the Cross. They have been viewing our Sunday service via the Website and decided to join our church without ever being in our Sanctuary. However, they have attended our outdoor Vesper Concerts.



They are retired and reside at the Arboretum. In September, they celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary. They have a daughter, Julie, that lives in Omaha. Bill enjoys computers and reading, and Sharon enjoys painting, sewing and reading.

Dick and Jane Miller

Dick and Jane have visited our church over a period of time and decided it was time to join.

Dick and Jane are retired. Dick volunteers with the American Red Cross Disaster Assistance Program and that is where he met Dick Dinsdale, our retired Associate Pastor Lynda’s husband, who invited them to visit Church of the Cross. Previously they belonged to Benson Presbyterian. On Sept 10, they celebrated their 72nd Anniversary! For 41 years Dick has worked for the Boy Scouts of America in various executive positions throughout the country, Dick belongs to the Rotary Club. Jane owned a ceramic shop and was also active in Rotary Club. Jane enjoys reading. Their son and his family live in Omaha, and their daughter lives in Indiana



Committee Moderators

Building and Grounds
Gary Marron

Christian Education
Amy Miller

Congregational Life
Susan Price/Kris Goodman

Finance
Ken Kluck

Membership
Melissa Marvin

Mission
Jimmy Downes

Worship and Music
Jean Lynn

Deacons

Moderator
Joe Weaver

Vice Moderator
Anna Sumner

Secretary
Jessica Downes

Treasurer
Adam Goodwin

Funeral Meals
Pam Swenson

Home Meals Coordinator
Earlene Uhrig

Prayer Shawls Information
Nancy Koehler and Tammie Will

PieceMakers
Karen Morey
Debbie McMullen

(New members continued)

Josh and Emily Murray

We thank Craig Mack, Betty Mack's son, for telling the Murrays about Church of the Cross. The Murrays come from Columbia Missouri and have been attending for a period of time. When they first attended Church of the Cross, the atmosphere was warm and welcoming and very much like home, and Sunday School has been wonderful for their daughter, Elizabeth. They enjoy the traditional service.



Josh works for the American Red Cross doing communications, public relations, and marketing; and coincidentally, he replaced Dick Dinsdale at the American Red Cross when Dick retired. Josh enjoys working outdoors, golf, sporting events, reading and family time. Emily is employed with the Drug Enforcement Administration in Public Relations. She enjoys running, reading, watching movies, cooking, writing and spending time with family. Their daughter is in second grade and was excited to receive her first Bible from Church of the Cross.

Jane Hawkins

Please welcome Jane Hawkins to Church of the Cross. Jane has been attending here for years so you may know her already. She chose PCOC because of the friendliness of the people and likes helping with the kid programs. Jane was born in Winnipeg Manitoba, Canada and grew up in Fergus Falls, Minnesota. Currently she is a substitute teacher for OPS, but did teach full time for 33 years.



She plays the piano, organ and violin, enjoys movies and reading, and exercising at the YMCA. Jane also does volunteer reading for OPS. She and her husband, David, enjoy tent camping with their dog and traveling to see relatives.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

PRESCHOOL SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES

The preschool lessons will be based on the Whirl Curriculum. Watch the short video and slideshow lessons anytime each Sunday in December.

ELEMENTARY SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES

In December we will begin the next unit, Good News for Outsiders, in our Simply Loved Curriculum. Your materials are in the mail and on their way to you. Join Sue and Heather on Zoom on December 6 at 10:00 a.m. and find the lesson videos online the remaining Sundays of the month.

YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES

Join Heather on Zoom for Bible Study on Sundays at 5 p.m. During the month of December, we will be focusing on Advent.

Junior High Leaders

Jonathan and Carla Fritz,
Julie Evers and Nickie Johnson
Sundays 4:45-6:30

Senior High Leaders

Dawn and Brad Gibson,
Holly Baddley, Ethan Bennett
Sunday 4:45-6:30

If interested please contact the church office for more information,
402-333-7466

49ers

Judy Sundberg
Donna Turner

Friday Night Gourmet

Curt Field and Launie Lambert

Presbyterian Women

Diane Kratz

Presbyterian Men

Jon Boomgaarden

PCOC Book Group

June Fetting

Music & Movement

Betty Baddley

Tai Chi

Paula Allen

Fellowship for Families

Amy Miller

Active Minds

Earlene Uhrig

Cross Your Heart Moms

Bev Koch

HAPPY HOLIDAYS
From
THE CHURCH OF THE CROSS STAFF



Marshall



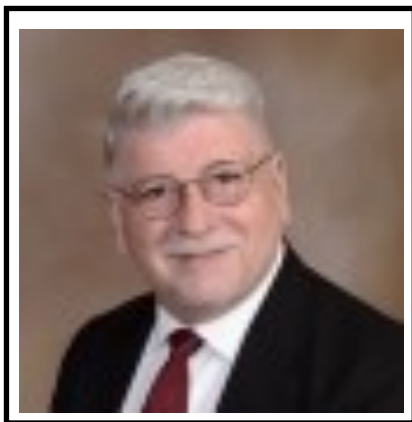
Christine



Heather



Kristi



Rock



Gayle



Julie



Presbyterian Church of the Cross
1517 South 114th Street
Omaha NE 68144-1799

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Omaha Ne
Permit No. 833



Cross Currents

The *Cross Currents* is
published monthly by the
Presbyterian
Church of the Cross,
1517 South 114th Street,
Omaha NE 68144-1799

A Poem of Thanks for Your Caring

*What is the most mysterious may be most real. Prayers sent to strengthen soften
and heal.*

Cards sent to connect, encourage and lighten have soothed, stilled and brightened.

*I summoned your prayers on many nights to guide me to sleep and release any
fright. Now I breathe deeply and speak kinder words. I can again laugh, walk
and listen for birds.*

*With gratitude for your friendship, faith and care Bill and I are daily aware
Joy transcends Covid, your thoughts brings us peace. God's love in our world—
may it always increase*

Submitted by Patty Ritchie