



Our Journey Through Lent

From Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday

Lent has begun, and PCOC is offering many opportunities for you to engage and reflect on what God has done to redeem us. On Ash Wednesday, more than 50 cars stopped by the “Ashes on the Go” event in our Circle Drive (photo on page 2). Our adult Lenten Study is in full swing with 7 small groups meeting weekly via Zoom or at the church. We will offer online and in-person worship experiences during Holy Week.

Palm Sunday – March 28

11:10 a.m. in-person worship* & recorded online service anytime

Holy Week

Homilies & Harmonies – March 29 to April 2

Pre-recorded and delivered online
Maundy Thursday will include
Communion

Maundy Thursday – April 1

7:30 p.m. in-person worship*

Easter Sunday – April 4

11:10 a.m. in-person worship*

*When in-person worship attendance numbers begin to rise, additional services may be added for these events. Check your email from church or our website for updates.



Annual Easter Egg Hunt

April 3 at 10 a.m.

Sponsored by Junior High Fellowship
Meet us on the back lawn at 10:00 a.m. and don't forget to bring your basket! Weather permitting.

Special Music This Month

- **March 14** — Live Resound Concerts in the Sanctuary
- **March 21** — Online “Leap of Faith” Vesper Concert
- Learn more on page 4



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Presbyterian
Church of the Cross
1517 S. 114th Street
Omaha, NE 68144

Phone:
(402)333-7466

Fax:
(402)697-9084

Email:
churchofthecross@pcoc.us

Website:
churchofthecrossomaha.org



The Year of Our Discontent

It's been 12 months now, but better days surely lie ahead.

So far, 2021 has been anything but uneventful. Here's hoping that the frozenness of our February will melt into a lovely warm Spring – time will tell. I hope that you are faring well after our recent sub-zero escapades. I am thankful that builders in the north know how to winterize homes and power grids. I was shocked and saddened to see the suffering of folks in Texas and other parts of the south. From our 20 years of living in Dallas, I know that it doesn't take much winter to really throw things off down there, and ice and snow and zero degrees quickly cause major damage. We used to joke that it's always the 2nd ice storm that you fear the most – because there's always only enough money in the budget for one major icy blast. But we never lost power due to the cold, so this upheaval is unprecedented, and truly dangerous.

Here at home, we are thrilled to be open again for in-person worship and see our sanctuary slowly begin to become inhabited again. It is not “church as usual” since we sing less and spread out more, but it is a good sign to see our worship beginning to “make a joyful noise” again.

While it's great to begin gathering again, we realize that it's not yet time for everyone to return. Don't fret about whether you are able to return yet or not – eventually, we all will make it back. In the meantime, stay vigilant, wait patiently for your turn for the vaccine, keep wearing your mask, and keep praying for our Douglas County numbers to keep improving. Our local numbers continue to slowly improve, and that is comforting news. Our own stats show the high percentage of members continuing to worship on-line. I am truly thankful to God for everyone's faithfulness and resolve during these last 12 months.

In fact, it was March 15 of last year when Session held a meeting after church to close the sanctuary and building for the next week, not realizing just what lay ahead. It seems odd to look back at that Sunday bulletin, to see the jam-packed calendar of our normal events, and then realize that all would

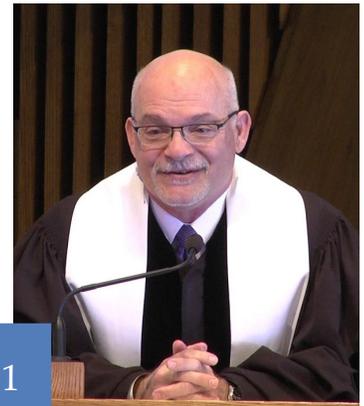
be quickly put on hold. Of course, we also didn't know just how we would do on-line worship, but we quickly made our foray into this new endeavor.

What a wild last 12 months it has been. I hope you are praying with me for continued strength and stamina, as we all yearn for better days ahead. I believe they are coming!

Wishing you a meaningful season of preparing for Easter as we enter into Lent!

Your pastor
and friend,

Marshall Ziemann



(402)333-7466 Ext. 1
marshall@pcoc.us

While our recent winter weather gave us a Fat Tuesday of -20 degrees, fortunately Ash Wednesday saw us reach a balmy +15 degrees - fine weather for our first ever “Ashes on the Go” event in our Circle Drive. Over 50 cars drove by at either noon or 5pm to receive their ashes. While it gave Pastor Christine and me no pleasure to remind folks of our mortality, it did feel good to briefly reconnect with so many folks, encouraging us to observe a holy Lent and keep close to Christ - and that goes for everybody!





Deacon Neighborhood Connection

About fifteen years ago, I went into my pastor's study to have a discussion about my faith walk. I thought that I would really like to journey towards being deacon – I ended up a minister. I am so overjoyed that part of my role here at Presbyterian Church of the Cross is to act as the staff liaison to the Deacon Board. Last Tuesday, we enjoyed a Zoom version of the Deacon retreat. It was a joy to welcome our new deacons and begin the planning for this upcoming year.

Our Deacons are the caregivers to the congregation. The word deacon is derived from the Greek word δίακονος which is usually translated as servant. Deacons are the eyes and ears of the congregation where they work within the congregation to provide care and to foster compassion for one another. They are charged with many tasks including delivering flowers, sending cards, overseeing the Advent Dinner, and assisting with communion to shut-ins.

A little over a year ago, our congregation completed the Deacon neighborhood project which placed our entire congregation into neighborhood groups. This is a wonderful vision for keeping our congregation connected, and it encourages us to be neighbors to one another. Omaha is a big city, and our members live all over it, so the neighborhood groups allow us to make our city a little smaller.

With new deacons on board, we have several areas that have new neighborhood assignments. The deacons in all areas will be contacting all of you via email or phone to help us all stay connected – even those of you that don't have specific caregiving needs. Our hope is that in connecting members that live close together, we can create a web of PCOC relationships that allow us to function as the church whether we are at the physical building or in our homes. Refer to the Deacons Update on Page 8 for a map and listing of the new Deacon neighborhood assignments.

In the next month, you can look forward to a first communication from your neighborhood Deacon. My hope is that over this year you continue to build your relationships with this unique group within our broader church family.



Grace and peace,

Christine

(402)333-7466 Ext. 4
christine@pcoc.us

Loving God,

giver of all light and life,
you sent Jesus Christ into the world
not to condemn, but to save.

Help us to lift up the light of Christ
so that the world might believe in him
and receive the gift of eternal life;
through Christ, the light of the world.

Prayer provided by PC(USA)
Based on John 3:14-21



If you or a loved one are facing a situation where you need spiritual or emotional support, contact Pastor Christine for more information about our Cross Care Connections program. You may also complete the online form on our website to request a Cross Care Connections provider.

Music Notes

The calendar page has turned in the church liturgical year and we find ourselves in the season of Lent. As is true for every other liturgical season, music plays an important role in our own self-reflection during Lent. My hope is that you can find time each day to spend a few moments to listen to music that can aid you in this process. One of my traditions during Lent is to listen to several recordings of Handel’s *Messiah* and to read the scriptural references that Handel used to compose this timeless work. I am continually astounded at how Handel brought these scriptures to life.

To help enhance your moments of quiet reflection, during Holy Week we will be offering Homilies and Harmonies, daily online encounters that will include a scripture reading, a short reflection, and musical offerings by a variety of our many talented PCOC members and friends of our congregation. Be on the lookout for more information as we get closer to Holy Week.

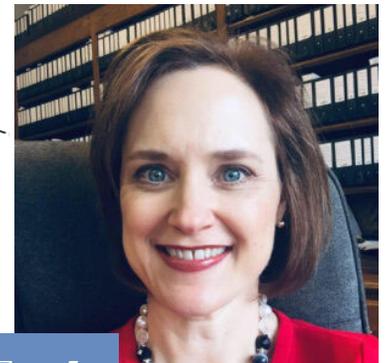
Resound Live Performances



Resound is a group of young adult singers that is sponsored by the Ron Haddock Memorial Scholarship. They have provided so much of the beautiful music you’ve experienced in our online worship services since last March.

They are excited to share a live and in-person 30-minute concert with you on Sunday, March 14, at either 5:30 or 7:00 p.m. Reservations must be made in advance, and you will find the sign-up form on the church website beginning March 1. The concert will also be recorded and made available to view on the website after March 14. We hope you can join us!

**Kristi Treu, Director of Music
Executive Director of Vesper Concerts**



(402)333-7466 Ext. 5
kristi@pcoc.us

Organist: Dana Sloan, M.M.
(402)333-7466 ext. 7
dana@pcoc.us

Worship & Music Committee Moderator:
Mike Shannon

**CHRISTOPHER MARKS, ORGAN
& CLARK POTTER, VIOLA**
LEAP OF FAITH



Leap of Faith: Music You’ve Never Heard

Organist Dr. Christopher Marks and violist Clark Potter, both from University of Nebraska – Lincoln, present “Leap of Faith: Music You’ve Never Heard,” a program of little-known works for organ and viola by composers Oskar Wermann (1840 – 1906), Daniel Pinkham (1923 – 2006), Carl TÜRCKE (1866-1945), and Marco Anzoletti (1866 – 1929). The concert will be premiered on the Vesper Concerts website on Sunday, March 21, beginning at 3 p.m. and will remain on the website for an entire week so you may watch at your convenience.

Vesperconcerts.org



The View from My Office – MARCH 2021

We have just begun a new church year of leadership as newly installed officers take their place as Session and Deacons members to begin serving. Last year's nominating committee was relieved of their duties and another nominating committee will prepare to serve this year.

As I think about this, I am drawn to Isaiah and that dramatic scene in the Old Testament when God drops by the temple. It is when God extends an invitation to Isaiah:

Isaiah 6:8, "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here I am. Send me."

This also reminds me of a familiar and favorite hymn of many of our younger members. God asks two straightforward questions: whom shall I send and who will go? Isaiah gives a straightforward answer: I will. And so, it began.

Isaiah did not know the details, he was not sure which age group he would work with, and he didn't know how many days a month he'd be expected to show up. He just said, "YES," and trusted that God would guide him from there.

Finding the right place to serve, for many of us, is a journey. At first you may have no clue what to do. That is okay. When you say yes to serving, ideally, you will begin searching for and recognizing what is necessary to serve effectively in your life.

You may discover gifts within yourself. I have come to realize that God does not give out talents by accident. If you are good at something, chances are God is thrilled about your leveraging that for His mission, kingdom, and church.

Thanks to each of our church officers who have opened their hearts up to the idea of serving and you are encouraged to open your eyes to the ways your talent can be used for God. Discover your passion.

Finance Committee Moderator:
Ken Kluck

Building and Grounds Committee Moderator:
John Stalnaker

Each of us has a place to serve. Find your place.

It is also that time of year when I have my annual review at the office with my boss. Marshall asked what my vision was for my position as Business Administrator for the upcoming year. What is it you would like to see happen?

What I am most thrilled about is our Capital Campaign which got off to a brilliant start just prior to the 2020 pandemic that seems to be floating quietly into 2021. My vision is to energize that anticipation we had a year ago.

We are working on a marketing plan to complete our Capital Campaign financially. We are adjusting a new timeline for giving as well as when to begin building. We are working on ways for our church to celebrate together as we create a welcoming environment for all who come through our front doors.

Thank you for your support during this past year.

Rock Sumner
Business
Administrator



(402)333-7466 Ext. 6
rock@pcoc.us

Gift & Memorial Needs

(approved by Session)

- 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 Endowment
- Mission Funds
- Musicians for Special Services
- Printed Music for Choirs
- Youth Program Funds

Preschool Sunday School

Weekly Video Lessons Available Online Anytime

Elementary Sunday School
March 7 Zoom at 10:00 a.m. with Sue and Heather

March 14, 21, 28
Video Lessons Available Online Anytime

Jr./Sr. High Youth Sunday School

March 14 & 28 Zoom at 5:00 p.m. with Heather & Holly

A Note from Heather Berry

While we miss being together in person, children’s programs will remain online for now. There are several opportunities for children to grow in their faith while we are meeting online. One way is to join Sue Thomas and I the first Sunday of each month for Zoom Sunday School. Elementary children should receive the necessary materials in the mail. If you aren’t on my list, please let me know so that I can add you! Hope to see you there!

Heather Berry
Director of Christian Education



(402)333-7466 Ext. 2
heather@pcoc.us

Confirmation Class “Final Exam”

March 22 at 5:30 on Zoom
Interviewed by the Session

CE Committee Moderator: Josh Versaw

JHF Leaders:

Carla & Jon Fritz, Julie Evers, & Nickie Johnson

SHF Leaders:

Dawn & Brad Gibson, Holly Baddley & Ethan Bennett



JHF and SHF will meet at church
March 7 & 21
5:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Easter Egg Hunt

The Easter Egg hunt is on the back lawn (weather permitting) at 10 a.m. on April 3. JHF Youth Group will be filling candy eggs and planning the event at the March 21 youth group meeting. JHF kids please plan to attend youth group!



A Look Ahead to Warmer Days— Save These Dates!

7th Annual Garage Sale — July 31

Proceeds support the SHF mission trip. Donation collection of gently used (but sellable) items, hangers, and plastic bags will begin in June. More information to come about volunteer signup and collection dates.



Vacation Bible School
July 12-16

"Treasured, Discovering You're Priceless to God" - Registration details coming in May!

Fun Activities to Do



BIRDS IN THE WORD

The Bible mentions many kinds of birds. How many have you seen?

Directions: Unscramble the bird names, using the Bible references and pictures as clues. Then insert the final unscrambled bird name to complete the passage below.

-  VDEO _____ (Genesis 8:8)
-  LWO _____ (Psalm 102:6)
-  GEELA _____ (Isaiah 40:31)
-  TOKRS _____ (Jeremiah 8:7)
-  APROSWRS _____

“Are not five _____ sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. ... Don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many _____.”

LUKE 12:6-7, NIV

Answers: dove, owl, eagle, stork, sparrows

FOR THE BIRDS

Display this recycled craft to care for feathered friends.



What you need:

- Peanut butter or vegetable shortening
- Plastic knife
- Empty toilet paper tube
- Bird seed
- A plate
- String

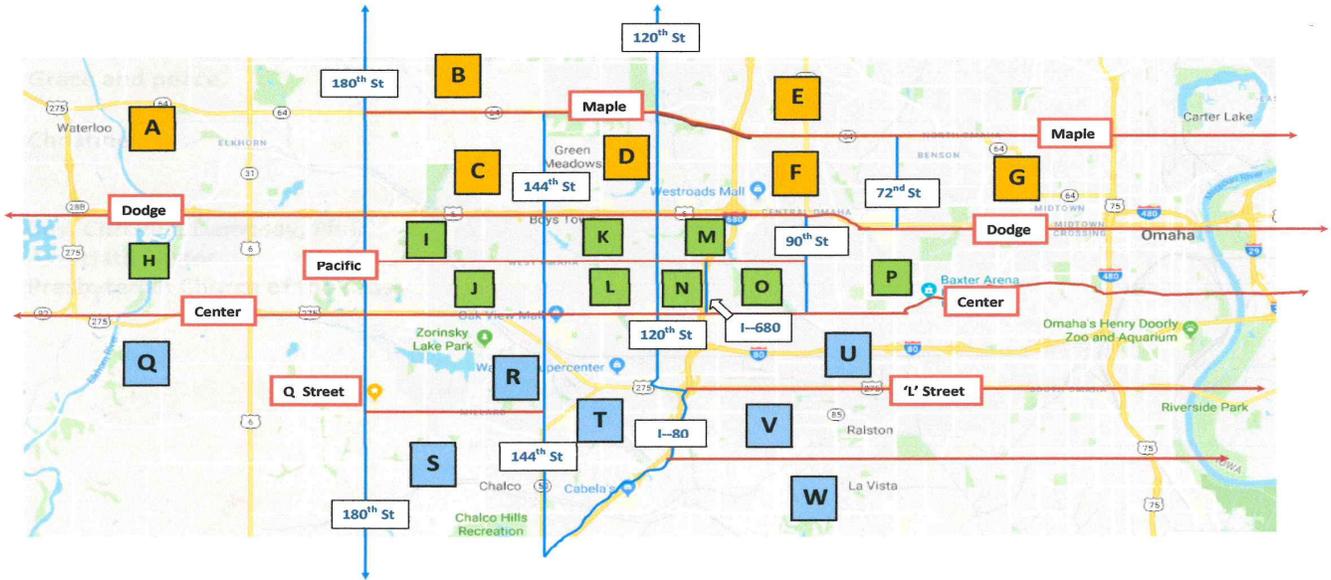
What you do:

1. Spread peanut butter or vegetable shortening on the tube, covering the entire outside surface.
2. Pour bird seed on a plate and roll the tube in the seeds.
3. Thread string through the tube and tie it to make a loop.
4. Hang the bird feeder outside. When seeds are eaten, coat the roll again.



New Neighborhood Assignments for Deacons

PCOC Neighborhood Areas



Deacon	Area
Kim Banat	A
Leslie Nicas	C
Meg Whaley	E
Matt Karges	G
Kathy Moore	I
Clarence Waters	K
Pam Swenson	M
Mary Beth Gust	O
Haley Allen	Q
Sally Hansen	S
Cindy Rieke	U
Becky Zieman	W

Deacon	Area
Tammie Will	B
Tammy Holdren	D
Rob Bailey	F
Peg Hiles	H
Jenny Bruce	J
Karen Sunders	L
Doug Larson	N
Anna Flairty	P
Mary Ott	R
Darrell Stuedemann	T
Bidong Tot	V

Deacons

Moderator
Anna Sumner

Vice Moderator
Pam Swenson

Secretary
Kim Banat

Treasurer Tammy Holdren

Funeral Meals
Pam Swenson

Home Meals Coordinator
Kathy Moore

Prayer Shawls Information
Tammie Will

PieceMakers
Karen Morey
Debbie McMullen

Deacons Highlights

In February the Deacons sent to the college/continuing studies students a Valentine's Day card and a \$25 gift card. 31 students received the greeting and gift card.





Member Life Events



Robert Hasebroock, died on February 9, 2021. A memorial service was held on February 20 at Heafey Mortuary.

Reminder

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

Prayer Team

Contact Julie Buehler
or Judy Arms

MARCH

- 1 Walter Karges
- 2 Spencer Chase
- 3 Mary Cramer, Anna Paul
- 4 Drew Ritchie, Katherine Braunlich, Adam Goodwin
- 5 Stan Garner, Mike Howland Ashley Weber
- 6 Sandra Johnson, Austin Curtis, Richard Miller
- 7 Michael Juarez
- 8 Marsha Smith, Robbie Baddley, Barb Woods, Grant Ticknor
- 9 Elizabeth Swedlund, Mary Jo Jeffers
- 10 Kathy Nickel, Anna Sumner, Lloyd Meyer
- 11 Euloge Sekle
- 12 Diane Wetuski, Tanya Lawson-Betum, Doug Patten, John Goodwin
- 13 Mitch Pirnie, Anna Whaley, Pam Lindsey
- 14 Chuck Krumme, Brad Burch, Bob Thomas, Dan Scanlan, Ryan King
- 15 Brenda Soukup, Henry Spann, Paul Cornett, Melissa Marvin, Mary Ott
- 17 Mary Haddock, Mary Kate Broderick
- 18 Heather McDaniel, Karter Evelyn Polzin, Karin Hjerpstedt, Betty Goodwin, Valerie Fuller, Bob Swartzbaugh
- 19 Jennifer Bennett, Kathryn Harrison, Stan Hille, Peg Conley
- 20 Amen Lawson-Betum, Dave Berry
- 21 Carol Hale, Cody Thorson, David Moore, Jill Bobek
- 22 John Dyer
- 23 Nancy Long, Parker Spann, Jessica Downes
- 24 Bob Foehlinger, Ed Ticknor, Brock Bougger, Judy Book
- 25 Gerry Reid, Shirley Morthole
- 26 Darold Bauer, Bill Crenson, Pam Griswold
- 27 Paul Kratz, Gladys Kuster, Lissa Treu, Karen Butler, John Conley, Lucas Bumsted
- 28 Dave Arnold, Scott Morris, Jill Rath
- 29 John Swenson
- 30 Jeremy Cunningham, Rebecca Weyant
- 31 Elise Arnold, Amelia Treu, Dylan Spencer

MARCH



FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

49ers

Judy Sundberg
Donna Turner

Friday Night Gourmet

Curt Field &
Laurie Lambert

Presbyterian Women

Diane Kratz

Presbyterian Men Jon

Boomgaarden

PCOC Book Group

June Fetting

Music & Movement

Betty Baddley

Tai Chi

Paula Allen

Active Minds

Earlene Uhrig

Cross Your Heart Moms

Bev Koch

Membership Committee Moderator:
Nancy Utman

Congregational Life Committee Moderators:
Susan Price/Kristin Jacobi



**PCOC
Book
Group**

Wednesday - March 17
5:15-6:30 p.m. on Zoom
Turtles All the Way Down
by John Green



Comfort and Warmth for CASA Kids

When children are removed from home due to abuse or neglect, they often leave with only the clothes on their back and whatever personal items can be hastily gathered up into a trash bag.



CASA for Douglas County partners with a network of child-serving agencies in our community to distribute backpacks to children entering foster care or being moved between placements. Project Hope Pack backpacks contain essential hygiene and comfort items and serve as a sign of hope

to boost children's spirits and promote dignity and resilience in the face of adversity.

We are seeking donations of fleece blankets to include in the backpacks to bring warmth and comfort to children in our community. You can help in two ways:

- Option 1: Purchase a blanket from the Project Hope Pack Amazon Wish List at <https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/genericItemsPage/1ETGJ57BWKVLH>
- Option 2: Purchase a blanket from the retailer of your choice and drop it in the donation bin just inside the church's circle drive entrance by Sunday, March 14.

Thank you for your support!



Food Items:	Hygiene Items:
Cereal	Baby Diapers
Pasta	(most needed size 4-6)
Canned Soup	Baby Wipes
Canned Vegetables	Full-Size Shampoo
Canned Fruit	Full-Size Body Wash
Canned Meat	Toilet Paper
Mac & Cheese	Toothpaste
Peanut Butter	

Drop your items off inside Circle Drive doors of the church anytime!



SPIRIT OF MISSION

Mission Committee Moderator:
Karen Metzger

Donate Your United Airlines Miles

Each year, the downtown Omaha Rotary sponsors local doctors to travel to Belize as a medical mission team to screen children for congenital heart disease. To help defray the costs for a trip this spring, the team is soliciting donations of United MileagePlus miles.



Our Mission Committee coordinator for this medical mission for the Downtown Rotaries Operation Hippocrates outreach is church member LeRoy Swedlund. If you have extra miles to donate, contact LeRoy by March 15.

One Great Hour of Sharing

Lent is the season for our One Great Hour of Sharing Special Offering. This annual offering provides relief from natural disasters, food for the hungry, and support for the poor and oppressed, both in our country and across the world. More detailed info is found at www.pcusa.org/oghs. As always, "fish banks" for children to use are available in the circle drive entrance. Children are asked to return their banks to church on Easter Sunday. One Great Hour of envelopes are included in this newsletter for your convenience. Thank you in advance for your generosity!





An update about ...



Voices for Children in Nebraska continues working to build pathways to opportunity for all kids and families through research, advocacy, and community engagement. The organization recently released their annual Kids Count in Nebraska Report, the most comprehensive data resource on child well-being in the state. This year's report looks at the early impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on families. You can view the report or order copies on their website at www.voicesforchildren.com.

The 2021 state legislative session is underway, and the Voices for Children team is hard at work encouraging our state's leaders to prioritize the needs of kids. Census data show that the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been devastating for many families across the state and increased challenges related to food insecurity, childcare, and housing. The team continues working to push forward policy changes that support families working to get back on their feet. Here are a few:

- LB 108, introduced by Senator McCollister, would address what's known as the "cliff effect" in the food stamp program (now known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP). The cliff effect occurs when a small increase in benefits triggers a much larger loss of food assistance. LB 108 would smooth the cliff by allowing families to deduct additional expenses from the food budget to qualify for food assistance.
- LB 485, introduced by Senator Day, would increase eligibility for child care assistance. Nebraska has long had one of the lowest eligibility levels for child care assistance in the nation, in spite of also having one of the highest numbers of working parents. Access to safe affordable child care is truly critical to ensuring that parents can work.

In addition, the team continues to work to ensure that children in the care of the state through the

child welfare and juvenile justice systems are supported and given the opportunities they deserve:

- LB 34, introduced by Senator Pansing Brooks, would remove some of the mandatory minimum sentences for juvenile offenses, ensuring that young people have the opportunity to return to the community if they have been rehabilitated.
- LB 307, also introduced by Senator Pansing Brooks, would ensure that every young person in our juvenile justice system has meaningful access to counsel when they want it.
- LB 491, introduced by Senator Machaela Cavanaugh, would end the privatization of child welfare services in the eastern service area (that includes Omaha) due to ongoing concerns about the current contractor, Saint Francis Ministries.

Voices for Children is also working to oppose bills that are contrary to research and best practices. They oppose the following bills:

- LB 537, introduced by Senator Geist, would increase the use of incarceration in our juvenile justice system and reinstitute the practice of detaining very young kids. Unnecessarily incarcerating children, especially those who are very young, harms both individuals and community safety by increasing the likelihood of future criminality.
- LB 673, introduced by Senator Murman, would increase the use regressive school discipline practices like physical intervention and classroom exclusion. This bill would harm our children of color and children with disabilities.

Voices for Children is thankful for the support of Presbyterian Church of the Cross that helps them to continue to work on behalf of kids! The team hopes you also will continue to join them by asking our leaders to put kids first. You can sign up to receive timely updates on the bills above and others at their website at www.voicesforchildren.com. The PCOC coordinator for Voices for Children is Kathy Moore.



Siena Francis House
Servers Needed
March 14 - 4:00 to 6:30 p.m.
Contact Keith Allen
to sign up.

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



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Next Cross Currents Deadline is:
Third Friday of the month
March 19, 2021



Cross Currents

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For Cross Currents communication requests/inquiries and general church information:
Contact Julie in the church office — Email: churchofthecross@pcoc.us
