

Fall Into Learning!

Sunday School Begins September 11

Now that school has begun, it's time for Sunday School to resume. Classes for preschoolers to high schoolers to adults begin on September 11 at 10:00 a.m. *We'd love to see you ALL on Sunday mornings!*

- Preschoolers (3's, 4's, and 5's that haven't started Kindergarten) meet upstairs in Room 7
- Kindergarten – 5th graders meet downstairs in the Gathering Space
- 6th – 12th graders meet downstairs in the Great Room
- Our September adult education event will be the Civil Rights History Tour Presentation led by Kathy Moore, Anna Sumner, and Staci Voss on Sunday, September 11 at 10:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall. They will share photos and stories of the many sites they saw and the experiences they had in Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, and Georgia on this week-long civil rights tour led by Preston Love, Jr.. No need to register, just show up!

Cornerstone is Back!

Cornerstone is our midweek program for all ages. Come to Choir, Bible Study, and enjoy a delicious meal prepared by Chef Nickie. Childcare is provided from 5:30 – 8:15 p.m. Cornerstone begins September 14 and ends on November 16. Register online now!

Choirs

5:30 – 6:00 p.m. Children's Choir for 1st – 7th graders

5:50 – 6:45 p.m. Chamber Singers

6:50 – 8:20 p.m. Alleluia Choir

Bible Study

6:30 – 7:15 p.m. Preschool – 7th graders

6:30 – 7:30 p.m. Confirmation Class

6:30 – 7:30 p.m. Adult Education Class

The adult education class will be "Diving into Scripture" led by Kirk Ryckman. This class will use three sources in the Kerygma Bible Study Series: Your Bible: The Study Begins; and Listening to Scripture – Strategies for Interpreting the Bible; and of course, the Bible.

More Fall Education Events

- Tuesday Bible Studies return on September 13 — Learn more on page 2
- Financial Literacy classes begin September 18 — Read more on page 4
- Women's Retreat is October 7 & 8 — Learn more on pages 2 & 5.

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New Knee, New Fall

A big thank you for praying for my recent knee replacement and for your many cards. Both my surgery and my subsequent physical therapy are going well. I was able to return to the office after two weeks and happy to return to the sanctuary for worship on August 21. I missed being away. I am thankful for our great staff who “held down the fort” in my absence.

I did worship online with you on both the Sundays I missed. I was happy to join along online and am grateful to Gayle, Christian, and Piper for the nice job they do each week to livestream our worship service over the internet. There are many moving parts in producing our services online and these 3 know the ropes and make it possible for folks to still tune in even when they are not able to attend in person. I’m glad I could tune in.

But I also need to state the obvious – it wasn’t the same as being here in person, not by a long shot. Back in the darker days of COVID (when no one could worship in person) broadcasting our online services was a lifeline for all of us. We recorded everything during the week, spliced the parts together, and then made it available for all of us to watch and worship along on Sundays. Week by week, it’s how we got through the pandemic, and

we were happy to provide this necessary ministry – it’s how we were able to keep on worshipping together while apart.

Nowadays, we are still happy to livestream our worship for those who can’t make it in person that week. I think this is a vital ministry our church should keep on providing.

But I do need to be honest – it’s so much better to be here in person, now that we can. In short, it’s just great to be around other people again, to catch up with friends again, to sing, pray, and worship together again, to fellowship again. Reconnecting is a great privilege and blessing – and it’s something we can feel.

If the time is not right for you to return in person, that’s totally fine – it’s your call. But when you do feel the freedom to return, you will be in for a joyous reunion!

Your pastor and friend,
Marshall Ziemann



The Tuesday Bible Studies

**Tuesdays in Room 15,
September 13 – December 13
“In the Beginning...”**

Led by Pastor Ziemann at 7:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

Join us on Tuesdays this fall as we study the stories of Genesis 1-11. Both groups will look at the same passage each week. You know these stories - Creation, The Fall, Abel and Cain, Noah and the Flood, The Tower of Babel - we’ll read them and discuss how these themes still apply to our lives today. Bring your own Bible.

- Men’s Bible Study from 7:00-8:00 a.m. in Room 15 (Note this is a men’s study only. If you are interested in a women’s only Bible study, please refer to the information above about Presbyterian Women’s Morning Circle.)
- Afternoon Bible Study from 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. in Room 15

New Members are welcome! Bring your own Bible and an inquisitive mind.

Register by September 1 using the Adult Education signup online.

Dear friends,

I am so excited about this upcoming fall and the ways in which we are working at creating meaningful community at PCOC. First, as the care pastor, I realized that we have many people in our congregation who are newly diagnosed with terminal disease, a considerable number who act as caregivers for loved ones, and still others who are survivors. Even though many of us right here in our congregation have confronted disease, we are largely disconnected from one another in this important space. In response, Cross Care Connections has decided to sponsor a fall Sunday School series on coping with disease entitled, “Living on Hope: Terminal Illness, Chronic Pain, and Life in the Unknown.”

This class will be at 10:00 on Sunday mornings beginning on October 9 and is for anyone who wants to understand the impact of disease on their physical, emotional and spiritual lives. I hope that former caregivers, survivors, and the newly diagnosed will join us where we can learn from each other and provide support. There will be a place for those who just want to listen and a place for those who need to share. We will be reading Deanna Thomason’s “Glimpsing Resurrection: Cancer, Trauma, and Ministry.” While her experience of disease comes from breast cancer, her story parallels many people facing all kinds of diseases. We will use this as a launch pad to discuss a host of issues and learn how our faith can accompany us on this journey.

In addition to the text, we will have several guest speakers from our Cross Care Connections Team along with retired pastors Dick Meyer and Kirk Ryckman and professional chef Renee Cornett. They will offer practical and spiritual advice on how to live with disease, pain, and trauma. With their expertise and experience, I think we can learn to navigate disease and its impact. Furthermore, the class will give us an opportunity to create a care network. It will provide us space to talk, listen, cry, and laugh together as we share experiences and knowledge. The deadline for signing up is October 1.

Second, we are hosting a Women’s retreat called Family-ology at Camp Calvin Crest on October 7-8. This will be a wonderful way for women of all ages to connect. If you have never been to Camp

Calvin Crest, you are in for a treat, as this is truly sacred space. The retreat is based around family stories which I will ground in a few of the family stories from the Bible. We will think about how some of our favorite stories are shaped by the family and reflect the relationships in our own families. I think you will all be surprised by the humor embedded in these conversations, that kind of family relationship humor that will provide a lens for our own families. I hope that these will help us understand how family relationships are central not only to our contemporary lives but to our lives in Christ. Sign-up for the retreat by September 16.

Friends, our church is as strong as its community in Christ. These are a couple of opportunities out of many ways to get involved at PCOC. Please come join us.



Grace and peace,

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

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.



Find the Power of Prayer

Find prayer request cards in the pews. Just complete the card on Sunday and leave in the offering plate. Or, you can use our easy online form on the announcements page of the church website. Prayer requests are confidential and shared only with members of the prayer team.

Prayer Team

Prayer Team Coordinators: Julie Buehler,
and Judy Arms



The View from My Office

ENVISIONING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER

This fall’s stewardship campaign is Envisioning Our Future Together. A pledge card and letter will be mailed to each member in late September.

Getting people to give is nice. Developing generous hearts is better. Imagine Church of the Cross where most of its members and guests gave cheerfully. I have found in my life, that I handle money every day. A second matter that I have found common is that most people don’t want to talk about it. Frankly, they fear it.

As a congregation, we should be willing to talk about money, and often it should be talked about in a way that challenges each of us. How can any of us possibly accept a challenge if we don’t know what the challenge is?

This fall, Finance Committee is undertaking a short CE adult class about financial literacy. We will learn how to use your IRA’s RMD for a QCD when giving, tax advantages for giving an appreciated stock, and theological reasons for planning your estate. This will be at 10 a.m. on September 18 and 25. All events are in Fellowship Hall with guest speakers and Oct 2 at noon, lunch will be served. Everyone is invited to participate as we learn about ways to make giving to the church a more cheerful experience.

BUILDING & GROUNDS

A new library drop ceiling has replaced the original ceiling from the 60’s. Stop by to enjoy this update. The electrical transformer used by OPPD to bring our power into the building has also been replaced as the first phase of preparing for the Welcome Center addition. Next, the south parking lot and island will be removed in late September to allow for leveling the parking lot and the east lawn. Significant work needs to be accomplished to prepare for the Welcome Center and our new front door! We know it will cause some inconvenience until the parking lot is again useable. Please be patient.

VOLUNTEER NEEDED

In addition to putting together fall usher teams, our Worship & Music committee is asking for volunteers to help with pew maintenance. Each week a volunteer is needed to straighten up the pew rack, add supplies as needed, and sharpen pencils.

Contact the church office or Jayne Frederickson if you are willing to volunteer.

FIVE IDEAS FOR HONORING YOUR MINISTRY STAFF

I found this idea on the CTA, Inc. website and thought I’d share. Overwhelm them with appreciation and love!

It doesn’t take much to make a difference, and a little effort goes a long way to give your ministry leaders enough encouragement to energize them for another day, another week, another month. . . you get the idea. Below are 5 ways to show your appreciation and support.

- Ask if you may pray for them.
- Invite them over to your home for a meal.
- Write a personal thank you note.
- Drop off a homemade dessert.
- Put together a goody bag of fun, inspiring gifts and treats.



Rock Sumner
Business Administrator
(402)333-7466 Ext. 6
rock@pcoc.us

Finance Committee Moderator:
Sam Rennick

Building and Grounds Committee Moderator: John Stalnaker

Join One of Our Music Ensembles

Ready for another year of singing and playing great music to enhance our worship? Craving fellowship with other musicians? Then please check out one of our many music ensembles. Rehearsals are beginning in earnest in September and now is the perfect time to join. Visit the church website for information about opportunities or contact Kristi at kristi@pcoc.us.



Above: Alleluia Singers fill the Sanctuary with joyful music during worship. This 60-member choir is open to all adult singers. Rehearsals are on Wednesday evenings September through May

All-Church Orchestra

We are excited to gather the many talented instrumentalists in our congregation for the intergenerational All-Church Orchestra (ages 12 – 102)! There are two rehearsals that you must be able to attend on September 28 and October 5 from 7:00 to 7:45 p.m. in the Sanctuary. The orchestra will play in worship on Sunday, October 9 at the 11:10 service. Warm-up will begin at 10:20 a.m.

So that we can organize music, stands, and chairs, we must have your “reservation” by Friday, September 16. Please email either Patty Ritchie or Kristi Treu at kristi@pcoc.us to sign up.



VESPER CONCERTS SEASON BONUS:
PATRIOT DAY
WITH OFFUTT BRASS
 Sunday, September 11, 2022
 3:00 p.m.

Vesper Concerts Announces a BONUS Concert on September 11

Back by popular demand, the Offutt Brass ensemble will present a special performance for Patriot Day, a day that commemorates the lives of those who died in the 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and United Airlines Flight 93, as well as first responders who died while attempting to rescue people who were trapped.

We are very fortunate that our schedules meshed, so we can present this special and meaningful event. Due to the popularity of Offutt Brass, we recommend coming early to secure your seat. Doors will open at 2:30 for a 3:00 p.m. concert.



Kristi Treu

Director of Music & Executive
 Director of Vesper Concerts
 (402)333-7466 Ext. 5
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Worship & Music Committee Moderator:
 Jayne Frederickson



Important Dates to Remember

September 10	JHF/SHF volunteer at All Play Baseball Game 11-3 p.m.
September 11	Sunday School begins
September 14	Cornerstone begins
October 16	2nd Grade Bible Presentation, 9 a.m.
October 30	Trunk or Treat, 3 p.m.
November 20	Advent Workshop, noon
December 4	Children's Christmas Pageant, 5 p.m.

PCOC Women's Retreat

Family-ology (Biblical, Church, Individual): That's the theme for the PCOC Women's Retreat at Camp Calvin Crest. We're excited to spend Friday, October 7 and Saturday, October 8 together. Pastor Christine will lead "All in the Family – a Bible Study of Relationships in God's Kingdom" with several sessions beginning in late afternoon on Friday and ending in late afternoon on Saturday. There will be time for reflection, outdoor activities, crafts, games, relaxation, worship, snacking and visiting. You don't want to miss out on this wonderful opportunity to experience some great bonding time with the women in our church family! It will be a time to, as the song says, "Make new friends but keep the old. One is silver and the other's gold." Learn more in Pastor Christine's article on page 2. **Register online now!**



Garage Sale Recap

Another garage sale has come and gone. After tallying up all the proceeds, we raised \$6400 for SHF! A very special thank you goes out to the Garage Sale Committee – Matt & Christina Kahler, Chris & Staci Voss, Tammy Holdren, Lisa Luke, Sheri Cunningham, Brad & Dawn Gibson, Susan Price, and Ethan Bennett. They worked for months making sure we had all our bases covered before the sale even began.

Kudos to Sandi Stuckey and John Bennett for their help coordinating unsold donations and getting them to Siena Francis and Heartland Hope Mission. We always love it when we can support our mission partners and hope to have more mission partners participate in the future.

I'm always amazed at the number of church members that pitch in to make this fundraiser successful. Several of these volunteers aren't even affiliated with SHF. They just love helping. Isn't that amazing?

This year we had a total of 59 volunteers work at some point during the prep weeks or on the day of the garage sale. Thank you for all your hard work, especially those working in Rooms 8, 9, and 10, where we didn't have air conditioning during the hottest weeks of the summer!

Thank you to those who donated items, to those who shopped at the garage sale, and to the congregation for always supporting our youth!



Above: Lisa and Brady Luke working the furniture room. SHF volunteers at the end of the day after the final donations were unloaded at Goodwill.

Save the Date — Advent Workshop

Mark your calendars! This year's Advent Workshop and Lunch is planned for Sunday, November 20, 2022. Our Senior High Youth Group will prepare and serve lunch after late worship. Then the crafting begins! Look for the online sign up coming soon!



Heather Berry
Director of Christian Education
 (402)333-7466 Ext. 2
 heather@pcoc.us

CE Committee Moderator: Matt Kahler

JHF Leaders: Jeremy Cunningham, Julie Evers, Ashley Sherlock, and John Stalnaker

SHF Leaders: Dawn & Brad Gibson, Ethan Bennett, Susan Price



- 1 Nancy Drews, Alyson Grady
- 2 Kristen Curtis, Spencer Friesen, Kyndall Goodwin, Noah Luke, Hudson Schiessler, Ron Sladek
- 3 Tim Graumann, Bill Graves
- 4 Avery Boesen, Oliver Boesen, Carol Bolton, Sean Johnson
- 5 Sue Freyer, Silas Pflueger, Donna Turner, Josh Versaw
- 6 Russ Beernink, Marshall Zieman
- 7 Jeanette Garner, Art Halbersleben, Gayle Kerr-McFadden, Nellie McDaniel, Jack Thomas
- 8 Makenzie McNeel, Sophia Miller, Arnie Nelson
- 10 Cecelia Ballou, Michael Weyant
- 11 Gary Fitch, Larry Frederickson, Tom Kort, Joshua Paul, Barb Scanlan
- 13 Jean Waters
- 14 Ryan Koch, Barbara McNeal, John Sparks, Justin Summers
- 15 Madelyn Grady, Katherine Innes, Charles Madison, Mike McGillick, Rick Sessions
- 16 Verta Pugh, Kirk Ryckman, Cara Schiessler
- 17 Chad Bumsted, Harrison Versaw
- 19 Abby Sekle, Nuna Tchona
- 20 Shanna Mathia, Sara Pickens
- 21 Anne Anderson, Ava Davey, Molly McGuire, Sue Thomas, Tim Williams
- 22 Brayden Downes, Olivia Downes, Lauren Harrison, Leah Whaley
- 24 Pam Otto
- 25 Jerry Klein, Roger Pauba, Emily Sumner
- 26 Mary Carlson, Sierra Cunningham, Skip Decker, Dick Hart, Martha Henry
- 27 Alena Bennett, David Goodwin, Gary Petersen, Cassie Rathman, Kara Versaw
- 28 Adelyn Paul, Bryan Weber
- 30 Chuck Baddley, Carol Futhey, Marjorie Huff



Dana Sloan August 12, 2022
 A memorial service is planned for Saturday, August 27 at 11 a.m. in the Sanctuary with lunch to follow.



Jameson Charles Huff,
 born November 3, 2014
 Alexander Edward Huff,
 born March 21, 2017

Thank You! 

Thank you to everyone for the prayers, calls, emails, and cards after having my unexpected pacemaker surgery. The follow-up surgeon's report is good, and I hope by the time you're reading this that my stamina is back up to normal again. It's wonderful to know that I'm in such a supportive family at PCOC!
 – Ardys Hansum

Dear PCOC Friends,
 Thank you to all for the expressions of care through prayers, calls, cards, emails, and visits during my recovery from my recent knee surgery. All were greatly appreciated, and I hope to return to church activities soon. God's blessings to you all.
 – Carol Futhey

Thank you for the cards, messages, and emails during my recent stay in the hospital. I'm home now and recovering nicely. I hope to see you all soon. It's wonderful to be part of such a loving and caring church family.
 – Reece Conner

A big thank you to everybody who prayed for my knee replacement surgery on Monday. Everything went great and I came home from the hospital that day and have already started PT. I hope to be back among your smiling faces in a few weeks.
 – Marshall Zieman

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



Presbyterian Women Morning Circle

Presbyterian Women will start a new year on Thursday, September 1 at 9:00 a.m. in Room 15. This season our monthly Circle group is studying “Celebrating Sabbath.” The lessons will discuss embracing and practicing Sabbath in our everyday lives. Sharon Walsh will lead us in Lesson 1 of this book. We will meet in person in September. If you’d like to join by Zoom, please let us know. **Questions? Contact Cindy Nisley.**

Get Moving on Mondays & Thursdays

Music & Movement meets at 9 and 11 a.m. in the Great Room. **Coordinator: Betty Baddley**

Tai Chi meets at 10 a.m. Masks are optional. Drop in if you’d like to attend a class. Contact Paula Allen with questions. **Coordinator: Paula Allen**

49ers on Tuesday, September 6

Our speaker will be Joy Johnson Brown. Ms. Brown co-founded two nonprofit organizations. Centering Corporation is North America’s oldest and largest bereavement resource center. Ted E Bear Hollow is a center for grieving children. After retiring in 2009, Joy began writing comedy, dry novels about four retired widows in a retirement community in Omaha. Endorsed by Phyllis Diller, *The BOOB Girls: the Burned Out Old Broads at Table*. Please note: Our lunch location has changed! We meet for lunch at 11:30 a.m. at WHEATFIELDS, 1224 South 103rd Street (One Pacific Place) in the Garden Room. Everyone is welcome – whether you are 49, younger, or older – come join us! We will order from a special menu. Sign up at the Information Center desk or contact Judy or Mary.. **Coordinators: Judy Sundberg & Mary Ott 4**



Friday Night Gourmets on September 9

Friday Night Gourmets will meet at Farmer Brown’s Steak House in Waterloo. Check out all the fun we have had in the past and take a chance meeting someone new. Couples or singles are welcome; we do not discriminate. Sign up at the Information Desk in the Narthex. Questions? **Contact hosts Verta Pugh or Launie Lambert.**

♦ ♣ Active Minds on Tuesdays ♥ ♠

September will focus on single deck Pinochle. Pinochle was quite popular with early German immigrants to the United States. Interesting find: Pinochle was supposedly outlawed in some East coast communities during World War I as an anti-German sentiment---even though it was also very popular with Irish and many (non-German) Jewish immigrants.

Double deck Pinochle is more common, and we will pursue double deck as well as Cutthroat (3-person rules) for those who choose to learn these variations. You are always welcome to join our group; we can teach you to play whichever week you can join the fun! Active Minds meets on Tuesdays on the lower level from 2-4 p.m. **Coordinator: Earlene Uhrig**

Cross Roads on September 11

This is a monthly lunch gathering of young adults (ages 20-40) after late worship. We’ll meet on the 2nd Sunday, September 11, at the circle drive doors. We will get pizza, have a sermon talk-back, and enjoy fellowship. **Led by Pastor Christine.**

College Bible Study Is Back!

Our college students and new recent school graduates are invited join us on September 11 at 8 p.m. on Zoom. It’s a great chance to bond, learn how to live a life of faith in a new environment, and keep connected with our church friends. **Led by Pastor Christine.**

Book Group on Wednesday, September 14

Join the PCOC Book Group in Room 13 from 5:15 to 6:30 p.m. We will be discussing “The Midnight Library” by Matt Haig. All readers are welcome! **Coordinator: June Fettig**



Congregational Life Committee Moderator:
Kristin Jacobi

Membership Committee Moderator:
Pam Otto



Sign Up to Give Blood This Month

The Deacons blood drive will be Sunday, September 25 in the lower level Great Room. Sign-ups will begin Sunday, September 3 in the Narthex.

You can also sign-up online on the church website.



Attention Parents of Young Adults

The Deacons send cards and fun surprises several times a year to our 18 to 23-year-olds who are attending college or finding their independence after high school. The Deacons want them to always know that they have a church family who cares! If you are a parent of one of these individuals, please provide your kid's name and new address (such as an upcoming college address) to the church office.



ONLINE SIGN UP INFORMATION

Have You Noticed Our QR Code Around the Church?

Our QR code (to right) makes signing up online for events super easy. Just aim your smartphone's camera at the code and click the yellow bar to navigate to the signup page of the church website.

Once you are on that page, scroll until you find your event. Click the button to go to the signup. When you submit, it is automatically sent to the person organizing that event.

If you are an event organizer, Gayle will create your online signup for you. Just email gayle@pcoc.us with your sign up details.

Don't have a smart device of your own to use to sign up? We have a tablet at the Information Desk that will take you directly to the signup page, too! Just ask at the Information Desk.



<https://churchofthecrossomaha.org/signup/>



So many wonderful activities are enriching our faith journeys.

Upcoming Events-

Civil Rights History Tour Presentation

Kathy Moore, Anna Sumner, and Staci Voss will share a Minute for Mission in worship on August 28. On September 11 at 11 a.m., they will give a presentation during the Coffee Fellowship hour. Pictured below: Anna, Staci, and Kathy in front of the Edmund Pettus Bridge .



Lunch at Big Mama’s Kitchen and Best Burger at the Highlander

On Tuesday, September 20 at 11:30 a.m., join us to enjoy a chicken dinner at Big Mama’s Kitchen, or a beefy or vegan option at Best Burger. We’ll be in the sleek new Highlander Accelerator building at 2112 North 30th Street in the heart of North Omaha’s revitalization initiative. We’re hoping this will be the first in a series of outings supporting Black-owned restaurants in Omaha. Seating is limited to eight due to staffing considerations. We’ll have separate checks and estimate about \$20 per person. Sign up at the Information Desk. If you know of a restaurant you’d like to add to our list, please contact Mary Ott.

Tri-Faith United We Walk

Join us for a walk for an inclusive Omaha on Sunday, September 11, 2022 , from 3-6 p.m.. Meet at the Tri -Faith Commons at 13136 Faith Plaza.

What’s Cookin? Table at Cornerstone

Our table will be available for conversation at Cornerstone suppers again this year. Stop by and pull up a chair! This is a safe space to share stories

and ideas about social justice in our country. We begin September 14!

“Agape Themed Women’s Retreat

Join us on Saturday, September 24, 2022 at Trinity Lutheran Church, located at 6340 N. 30th St. A wonderful day of prayer, music, conversation, and activities is planned. Questions? Contact Patty Ritchie. The keynote speaker is Dr. Vivyonne Ewing “Finding the Holy Spirit...Finding Who I Am.” To register, see details in your Friday email from church.

Quick Recaps

There’s Always Room for Cello

Patty Ritchie was invited to share music at Church of the Resurrection and the Garden Walk in North Omaha, benefiting “No More Empty Pots.”

Malcolm X Memorial Museum Tour

We had the privilege and joy of touring the Malcolm X Foundation at 3448 Evans Street, right here in Omaha. Being the first Black woman to run for city council, and the founder of this site, Rowena Moore, is one of North Omaha’s important activists. Starting the foundation with just an historical marker at the site of his birth, the site now includes a museum, plaza, greenhouse, community garden, and 11 acres of gorgeous land.

“Churches of Color” Summer Visits

Church of the Resurrection, Mount Moriah, and Salem Baptist Church offered us compelling and meaningful worship. We are forming and strengthening relationships. We think of the lyrics: “In Christ there is no east or west, In him no south or north, but one great fellowship of love throughout the whole wide world.”





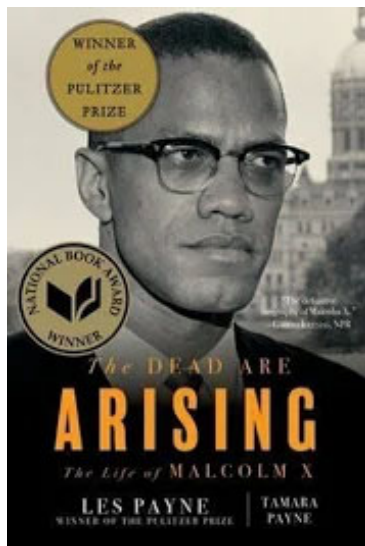
“Justice by the Numbers”

Three of our members attended a presentation at New Life Presbyterian Church in North Omaha. Professors from UNO’s Criminal Justice Academic Department provided compelling data on incarceration rates in Nebraska. We learned about disparities of “life opportunities,” and possible justice system roadblocks for people of color.

Book Review by Ann Pearson

The Dead are Arising: The Life of Malcolm X by Les Payne

There are so many aspects of this Pulitzer Prize winning book that I would love to report, but I won't do that to you. However, I highly recommend that you take the time to read it. The book elaborates and clarifies some of the most puzzling and unknown aspects of the civil rights movement of the 60's. Since Malcolm X is one of Omaha's own heroes, it's important to understand the major role he played in advancing the rights of black people and encouraging the development of their unique and valuable identities as individuals and as a race.



It is essential to know he was born in Omaha and that his family was terrorized by the Ku Klux Klan. Imagine that: they had to leave town because of the KKK in our own Omaha. Malcolm X had a tumultuous childhood due to family circumstances created by the racist society that tormented his family. As a young man, he led an unsavory life on the streets of Boston. And then during his time in jail he became part of a Muslim sect that he later realized was more of a cult than a true religion. As time went on, he educated himself on the true values of the Muslim religion and realized its immense value to black people in the United States. Under his leadership, the Muslim religion became an

important tool for learning self-respect. From his viewpoint, Christianity had been used as a way for the white race to justify their blatant abuse of the Black race.

The language he used that may have sounded violent or militaristic to the white race was a call to Black people to stand up for themselves and for their inherent value as human beings. To the white race, this sounded violent, but he was actually proclaiming the rights of Blacks to defend themselves against a very violent white society. It was also part of a vigorous debate among leaders of the civil rights movement about the effectiveness and legitimacy of MLK's nonviolent approach. Certainly, there were arguments to be made on both sides of the issue.

And finally, one of the least known aspects of his leadership was his unique approach to the international facets of civil rights. After travels to the Mideast and Africa, he learned how crucial it was for American Black people to learn their ancestry and their family stories. Descendants of slavery had no idea of their true value.

In conclusion, no matter what tone of black, white, yellow, or red we may be, we have so much to learn about ourselves and each other that will make us all much better human beings. Take advantage of our Agape Social Justice library to learn and grow in love for all God's people.

This book is available in the church library!

Social Justice PCOC Library Section

Our church library is a treasure trove for our entire congregation. The library has a vibrant “Social Justice” section. Books for all ages, covering a variety of topics are available.

Find the list of available social justice books on our church website:

<https://churchofthecrossomaha.org/agape/#library>.





School Supply Drive for OPS Schools


God is good! Once again Presbyterian Church of the Cross has been blessed to donate much needed school supplies to the Omaha inner-city schools of ILP at Saratoga, Sherman, Walnut Hill, and Bancroft Elementary. In a year where inflation has driven the prices of some supplies 20-30% higher than normal, we still hit our goal of 125 backpacks! On top of that, the Presbyterian Woman’s Group provided 50 hand bags they personally manufactured.

Also, our collection boxes were filled with 60 bags of assorted pens, pencils, rulers, glue, pencil boxes, scissors, notepads, crayons, and markers. Finally, each school received 20 Ukrainian flag pins and a box of assorted candy for the teacher’s lounges to say thank you for all they do.



Our volunteers packed the supplies, and they were delivered during the week of August 15. This was the largest collection of supplies we’ve ever achieved! A great big thank you goes out to all who contributed, packed, and delivered!!

Your Back to School Supply Drive Mission Team,
Rob Bailey, Linda Miller, Amy Miller and John Bennet



Siena Francis House
Servers Needed
Sunday, September 11
4:15 to 6:15 p.m.
Sign up online on the church website



SPIRIT OF MISSION

Mission Committee Moderator:
Karen Morey

Heartland Hope Mission Update

Did you know that Heartland Hope Mission has opened a second pantry distribution location in West Omaha at 15555 Industrial Road? They opened their doors this year and are serving clients in need every Saturday mornings from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. They plan to eventually move their corporate offices from their South Omaha location to this location and expand their pantry service hours.

The COVID pandemic and the recent increase in inflation have greatly increased the demand for HHM pantries and services by 45% over last year. This has depleted their stock of grocery and hygiene supplies and increased the need for their social service counseling that their staff provides. Due to the hard work and dedication of their talented staff and generous mission partners like PCOC, Heartland Hope Mission will weather this storm as they have in the past. But they need the help of their mission partners, like PCOC, now more than ever.

Here are a couple ways that you can learn more or get the latest information about Heartland Hope Mission.

- Attend the worship service on September 11 - Staff from HHM will be presenting a Minute for Mission that morning at both services. They will be available in the Narthex after the service to answer any questions you may have about HHM.
- Attend HHM’s annual fundraiser dinner on October 6 at 6 p.m.. Join me and 9 other PCOC members at a table for 10 who support HHM and want to know more about their important and meaningful work in our community.

Please contact John Bennett if you are interested in attending this annual event. Thank you for continuing to support of HHM. Visit their website at <https://heartlandhopemission.org/> to learn more or volunteer.

The BURM Overture Passed!

The members of Church of the Cross have cause to celebrate: our efforts on behalf of an overture to our national denomination to expand PC(USA)'s mission engagement and education in Eastern Europe (specifically Belarus, Ukraine, and Russia) have paid off! PCOC is a long-time member of the BURM (Belarus, Ukraine, Russia Mission) Network, a group of Presbyterian churches in the U.S. who have partnerships/relationships with churches and church organizations in these countries.

In July, the General Assembly of PC(USA) held its bi-annual meeting, and the commissioners voted in favor of INT-14 On Expanding Mission Engagement and Education with Eastern Europe. This overture's journey to reach the floor of GA was a long one; it began in 2020 when the BURM Network drafted an overture to address the need in congregations for more education and engagement opportunities in and about Eastern Europe. PCOC members, Karen Morey and Jean Waters, as members of the Steering Committee of the BURM Network, were actively involved in writing the document and learning the appropriate steps required to reach the floor of General Assembly in 2022.

To begin the journey, the overture had to be submitted by a Presbytery, so Rev. Ralph Clingan, another Steering Committee member, presented it to the Session of his church in St. George, Utah in August 2021. That Session approved the overture and took it to their Presbytery for a vote. The Presbytery of Utah voted "yes" in October 2021 and submitted the overture to General Assembly.

The next step required that at least three presbyteries "concur" with the overture. So BURM Network members across the United States began to lobby in their own presbyteries for concurrence. To support that effort, PCOC's own Communications Coordinator Gayle Kerr-McFadden developed three brief videos to educate presbyteries and their commissioners about the importance of the overture.

At the November 2021 meeting of Presbytery of Missouri River Valley, Rev. Marshall Zieman and Karen Morey spoke on behalf of the overture, and the result was a unanimous vote to concur! Our presbytery was one of the first to concur, with many more to follow. This guaranteed that the overture would be discussed by the International Engagement Committee, one of many committees who met in the weeks before General Assembly convened, to dis-

cuss all the overtures on their agendas for consideration.

But as we were nearing the long-awaited GA meetings, the world was rocked by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. This was a crisis that had not even been on our radar during the months when our overture was making its way through the process. The BURM Network jumped back into action to consider how the unexpected war might change the overture or even make it irrelevant. The conclusion was that the actions proposed were still appropriate, though the context had changed and needed to be mentioned in the wording. Minor amendments were made, and, up against deadlines, were hustled through the required procedures.

The International Engagement Committee, made up of commissioners elected by presbyteries, met for four days in late June. The committee was charged with reviewing the overture, listening to its advocates (Rev. Ralph Clingan and Karen Morey), asking questions, hearing from staff members (including Ellen Smith), suggesting amendments, and acting to either deny or approve the overture's movement onto the floor of General Assembly. When the vote passed to appoint a small group to further amend the overture, Ellen Smith joined a few other volunteers to re-write the document.

It was a tense time for those on the steering committee who were watching the proceedings on Zoom and praying for passage. Two days later, the new version of the overture was presented to the committee for a vote, and it passed unanimously!

The overture moved on to the plenary session of General Assembly, and on July 1, 2022, the overture passed with a unanimous vote. This means the Presbyterian Mission Agency will use various actions to "strengthen our accompaniment in the region impacted by the war in Russia and Ukraine and listen deeply and broadly to the many voices."

The BURM Network will work with the national staff to develop educational materials and opportunities for congregations to gain a better understanding of the complexities in the region and our own country's engagement. There will be opportunities for youth engagement across the region and including youth from the United States. If you are interested in learning more and/or participating in the development of this new initiative, contact Karen Morey or Jean Waters.

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
September 16, 2022**



SPIRIT OF MISSION (CONTINUED)

Refugee Project Continues!

A second drive for items that arriving refugee families will need has begun, and we are collecting **KITCHEN ITEMS** during the month of September. Our partner, Lutheran Family Services, plans to provide for 1,000 refugees from various nations who will be settling in Nebraska in the next year. Stop by the Information Desk and grab a flyer of the needed items (or check the church website). Please bring your new/nearly new donations to the Narthex on any Sunday during September. If you would like to help with this or future refugee projects, contact Jeanne Smay, Dawn Buchanan, or Paula Allen.



OSS Needs School Supplies

Omaha Street School (OSS) has a list of needed supplies available through an Amazon Wish List. You can also make a donation, so OSS can purchase supplies. Find the links to online giving and their Amazon wish list in your Friday email from church or on our website.

Volunteer for AllPlay Baseball

AllPlay needs 100+ Volunteers each Saturday to make the Miracle League the greatest experience for each player in every game. The Fall Season runs through September 17. Many volunteer positions are available, and shifts are about 2 hours. Sign up on the church website!

Cross Currents

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For Cross Currents and Bulletin announcements, church website updates, Zoom meeting invites, or other communications needs, please contact Gayle.
