

Christmas at PCOC: Our Place in the Story

As we count the days to Christmas, it's easy to get lost in a flurry of shopping, wrapping, baking, parties, and more. Be sure to remember the reason for the season. PCOC provides many ways to help you celebrate a Christ-centered holiday. Join us as we find our place in the story.

Lighting of the Advent Candles

A special way for families to participate in our weekly worship services this season is by lighting the Advent candles. You can involve the whole family in reading the call to worship. Please sign up at the Information Desk.



Children's Christmas Pageant & Advent Dinner on December 4

On Sunday, December 4 at 5:00 p.m., our children are planning an outstanding program titled "Be More Than Counted." Join the sheep, angels, wisemen, Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus in our Sanctuary for a special Christmas message with music provided by the children. For those who signed up, the Advent Dinner will follow in Fellowship Hall. Find the details on page 9.



Quiet Christmas on December 11

The holidays can be difficult. Our Quiet Christmas service is a time to acknowledge what we are missing amidst the bustle of the season. The service will include scripture and softer seasonal music to create a time for God to find us as we search for peace, love, and joy.

Annual Advent Worship Service with Choir and Guest Musicians

Alleluia and Chamber Singers, along with Resound Vocal Ensemble and professional brass ensemble and percussion, will provide music for both of our worship services on Sunday, December 18. They will present John Rutter's exciting setting of the "Gloria," arrangements of beloved old and new Christmas carols and songs, and congregational hymns. This is a perfect opportunity to invite a friend, neighbor, or colleague to join you.



The Congregational Life Committee invites you to bring treats to share at Coffee Fellowship that day. Please have items already cut and ready to serve.

Christmas Eve: Services at 5:00 and 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary

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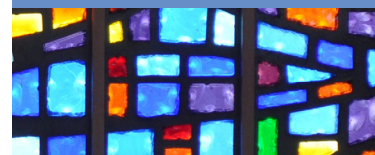
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As We Enter a New Season

Advent is a season, not a day. We need all four weeks of it to get ready to celebrate Christmas. Usually, children think Advent takes too long while adults think it's not long enough to get everything done as the days dramatically speed up. The goal is that by the time Christmas finally rolls around we are fully ready to fully celebrate, because we've had enough time to get our houses, gifts, and hearts in order.

Although we know that December 25 will eventually roll around, Advent is meant to ensure that it actually means something when it does. That's why all our "Advent traditions" are so important – our Advent Workshop, our church-wide Advent Dinner, the music, the parties, the tree with presents, the Advent calendar, making crafts, the stories of angels, Mary, Joseph, Bethlehem, shepherds, and Magi...

Just as some folks like to "give up" something for Lent, others like to "add something" for Advent. You might add some time to give to a charitable cause, such as serving dinner at the Siena Francis House, or take part in some of the holiday projects with the Heartland Hope Mission, Completely Kids, Omaha Street School, or by ringing bells with the Presbyterian Men at a local Hy-Vee. You might add your gift to the Giving Tree in the Narthex or donate funds to the "Mission Giving Tree" located near the church office. "Adding something" to your normal gifting routine is a small, but significant way to add a blessing to your life and to someone else's, too.

Advent is all about waiting...and being hopeful as

we wait. So, we light another candle every Sunday. We think about Israel, waiting for a Messiah. We consider Mary and Joseph, heading to Bethlehem, waiting for the Christ-child to be born. We count down our own days to Christmas, maybe using an Advent paper chain to mark each passing day. We also remember that Christ promised to return to earth one day, even though he has tarried some 2,000 years. As we wait, we hope.

What are you hoping for this year as you wait?

Your pastor and friend,

Marshall Ziemann



Building Project Update

Work goes steadily along. This week (November 21), concrete pouring has begun on the new slab and south parking lot. We should be able to regain the parking lot in December.

After the Advent Dinner, work is expected to begin on the new large windows at the east end of Fellowship Hall, as well as on new replacement windows that cross the ceiling from east to west. Also, the big window in the Narthex will be removed as the entryway into the new addition is formed. A temporary partition will be added as this big window is removed.

The Tuesday Bible Studies

**Our Tuesday gatherings continue in Room 15
7:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. — December 6 & 13**

"Isaiah and the Messiah"

Join us as we prepare for Christmas by studying Isaiah's prophecies about the coming of the Messiah. Some are well known, while others are more obscure. We'll read them together and see how the coming of Jesus was foretold. Bring your own Bible.

Then we will take a break for the holidays and return with a new study on Tuesday, January 17, 2023.

**New Members are welcome! Bring your own Bible and an inquisitive mind.
No need to register – just drop in!**

Celebrating Christmas as the Body of Christ

It's time to get out your favorite Christmas decorations and plan your favorite holiday traditions. Of course, in my family, there is an annual viewing of "How the Grinch Stole Christmas." We watch the original cartoon version with the drawings by Dr. Seuss and the music of Theodor Geisel. As I was making the calendar to plan this exciting event, I stopped to think about that story of cold-hearted Mr. Grinch and the busy Whos from Whoville preparing for Christmas much as we do. Despite the villainy of Mr. Grinch, the Whos from Whoville came together and celebrated Christmas.. Their joy melted Mr. Grinch's heart and he learned that Christmas was not about presents and decorations but about joy in the birth of Christ. As I think about the movie, I can't help but celebrate the Whos all coming together in community, holding hands, and singing about Christmas.

As Presbyterians, we put a lot of emphasis on being together. Our theology emphasizes the Body of Christ as the Community of all Believers. Our sacraments stress the Body of Christ. In our Baptism ritual, we have the fount at the front of the Church and the Baptism performed in front of the entire church. When the parents make vows to raise their children in the church, the church makes vows to care and teach the child in the faith. Likewise, our practice of the Lord's Supper is done in community. We sit in our pews preparing to share the meal with those around us. Served by members of the Body of Christ, we are reminded that we are called to service in God's kingdom. We eat the bread all together. We drink the juice all together. In doing this, we nourish not only our individual souls but the Body of Christ. Our church government, likewise, originates out of the Body. Our session are members of our congregation and decisions are made by the Body for the congregation. Our Presbyterian churches all belong to the Presbytery, and they are part of an extended family.

My question is do you come to the celebration of Christ's birth as part of the Body of Christ? Do you, like the Whos, join with your family to celebrate Christmas? In our modern world, more and more people are opting to stay home, watch Christmas Eve service from afar, and isolate themselves from the body of Christ. They use the holiday to relax instead of to renew, and the result is a Christmas that feels unfulfilled and incomplete. To cele-

brate Christmas, one that is meaningful, is to celebrate it with your family and your church family. To celebrate Christmas, is to come together," holding hands" and singing about the arrival of our Savior. This is what will heal your souls and renew your spirit! And of course, we have many opportunities to join this Christmas season. I want to invite especially to the Advent Dinner put on by our Deacon on December 4. It is a family feast for Church of the Cross. We have a Quiet Christmas on December 11 at 4:00 with a chance to be introspective and enjoy what is best of Advent. Big Music Sunday is on December 18 where you will hear our choirs accompanied by members of the Omaha Symphony. We will celebrate the birth of Jesus on our Christmas Eve Service at 5:00 and 7:00, and finally, we will worship on Christmas Day! Friends, as Matthew said, "where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there with them." Friends you are the body of Christ. Let's come together. Let's Celebrate. Let's watch all of our hearts grow three sizes bigger.



Grace and peace,

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

Living on Hope: Terminal Illness, Chronic Pain, and Life in the Unknown
Led by Cross Care Connections
Continues through December 11
10:00-11:00 a.m. in Room 15

Register Now for Pastor Christine's January Class!
The Ten Commandments – Past, Present, and Future
Sundays, January 29 – February 19
10:00-11:00 a.m. in Room 15

The Ten Commandments are foundational to our faith and to God's story. It's the "setting in stone" of God's expectations for humanity. Yet, the law has had different emphases in the Christian tradition over the years. In this class, we will analyze the Ten Commandments from several different lenses from Biblical scholarship to history to contemporary culture. Sign up online!



JHF Serves at Heartland Hope Mission

Our JHF group spent their Saturday morning serving others at the West O Pantry at Heartland Hope Mission. They helped 500 food insecure people by bagging 155 Thanksgiving dinner bags! What a blessing it is to have youth and leaders that have a heart for service!



SHF Friendsgiving

One of the most beloved events amongst our SHF group is Friendsgiving. What is Friendsgiving, you ask? Basically, it's Thanksgiving with your friends. For SHF, it's Thanksgiving with your youth group. And that's what happened on Sunday, November 13. Our senior high youth and leaders met for food, fun, and fellowship at the home of Susan Price. It's these events our youth remember for years to come. Thanks to Susan for hosting!



Important Dates to Remember

- December 4** Children's Christmas Pageant, 5 p.m.
- December 7** Confirmation/Mentor Christmas Party, 6 p.m.
- December 11** Fall Semester of Sunday School ends
- January 8** Spring Semester of Sunday School begins
- January 11** Cornerstone begins

Children's Christmas Pageant

All are invited to attend this year's Children's Christmas Pageant, Be More Than Counted, on Sunday, December 4 at 5:00 p.m. (Parents, check your email for rehearsal reminders.) The Advent Dinner is immediately after the pageant for those who signed up. It's going to be a wonderful evening!

Confirmation Cozy Sock Christmas Party

Confirmands and Mentors are invited to the Confirmation Cozy Sock Christmas Party on Wednesday, December 7 at 6 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Wear your favorite cozy Christmas socks and bring a pair to exchange. We'll play some minute to win it inspired games and enjoy a delicious meal together. Please RSVP to Heather by November 30.

Cornerstone Resumes January 11

Build strong ties with God and one another every Wednesday night with Bible study, music, and dinner. Please register and submit payment online. Everyone who registers for dinner is asked to volunteer to set up, serve dinner, or clean up. Registering ahead of time helps us plan for class supplies and gives us an accurate count for dinner so that we have enough food and are not wasteful. The deadline to register is January 1.



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



Adult Ed Classes in the New Year
Stories for Life in God's World:
A Study of Parables
Wednesdays, January 11 – March 15
6:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Using a study from the Kerygma Bible Study Series, Kirk Ryckman will lead a class on Wednesdays from 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. Together we will study these timeless stories that speak to our faith and influence the decisions we make while discovering what makes a parable unique. We hope to grow in our appreciation of how Jesus used these short and seemingly simple stories to express the heart of the good news he brought. If you plan to eat dinner at Cornerstone before class, you'll need to complete the Cornerstone registration online, too.

The Ten Commandments
- Past, Present, and Future

Sundays, January 29 – February 19, 10:00 a.m.

The Ten Commandments are foundational to our faith and to God's story. It's the "setting in stone" of God's expectations for humanity. Yet, the law has had different emphases in the Christian tradition over the years. In this class, we will analyze the Ten Commandments from several different lenses from

Biblical scholarship to history to contemporary culture. There is no book, but Pastor Christine will provide some readings for you throughout the study. Register online now!

Drug Education Class
for Parents and Children
January 11 at 6:30 p.m.



Join members of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Omaha Division Wednesday, January 11, at 6:30 p.m., as they provide an overview on the latest drug threats facing the country and more specifically what's being seen in Nebraska. The presentation for adults will focus on the methods used by drug trafficking networks to move illicit drugs into and across the country while both growing a consumer base and aiding in a nation-high overdose death record. Students will be broken into groups by grade and given age-appropriate presentations on drug education and awareness. Students and adults will have time to ask questions at the end of their presentations. For more information, contact DEA Public Information Officer Emily Murray at Emily.A.Murray@dea.gov. Please register online.



MUSIC NOTES



An A Cappella Christmas
with Calmus Vocal Ensemble

Don't miss this extraordinary group, known as one of the world's premiere a cappella vocal groups. Coming to us from Leipzig, Germany, Calmus will perform a concert of Advent and Christmas music in our beautifully decorated sanctuary on Thursday evening, December 8, at 7:00 p.m. Invite a friend and be part of a truly memorable evening.

We look forward to seeing you at our annual Advent worship service on December 18 featuring our choirs and guest musicians! Details on front page.

Ushers Needed! If you are looking for a way to serve the church, please consider filling one of our open usher spots. Ushers serve at one service, one Sunday every month. We have openings on the 3rd Sunday at 11:10, 4th Sunday at both services, and 5th Sunday at both services (Jan. and April). Sign up online. Questions? Contact Jayne Frederickson.



Kristi Treu

Director of Music & Executive
 Director of Vesper Concerts
 (402)333-7466 Ext. 5
kristi@pcoc.us

Worship & Music Committee Moderator:
 Jayne Frederickson



The View from My Office

Stewardship Update

Stewardship always reminds me of fall. Fall is when the leaves change colors, cooler temperatures arrive, and I pull out the sweaters. It may also mean budgets, year-end tasks, and preparing for church Advent and Christmas events. Life as a church leader can be . . . rather full . . . all kinds of full.



"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11

My schedule is full, the bucket of suggestions is full, and the necessity for people appearing in my office with envelopes is full. Someone asked for a couple minutes the other day and I agreed but warned them that we would most likely be interrupted. And when it comes to year-end, I am hoping for the pews and offering plates are full. I pray your heart is full, full of peace, joy, and gratitude; full of blessings, friends, and laughter; full of spiritual, mental, and basic wellness.

As we approach the Advent season, stop for a moment to take an inventory of your blessings. At my house, my confirmation mentee, Logan Voss, gifted me a Gratitude Jar. Tied to it is a small bag with colored paper for me to write out a gratitude and remember my blessings often. It is easy to count the tasks, the costs, and the energy to prepare for a holiday event. I encourage you to take time to count the blessings. Take it all in, thank the Lord, and celebrate his goodness.

As I prepare this article, together we are 94% of the way to next year's budget goal financially, and 77% of the way there for returned pledge cards. I encourage everyone to do their best to complete and return their financial giving commitment for next year to my office.

Thank you for your faithful stewardship involvement and I look forward to 2023.

Building and Grounds

Year-end activities continue to be busy for us. During November, year-end inspections for the elevator, fire extinguishers, and the kitchen hood have been completed.

We are also working replacing the Circle Drive and North entrance flooring. We have had the door sills caulked and installed tightly again hoping to eliminate moisture wicking its way and have completed other tests for concrete moisture. The new carpet should be installed soon. We want our entrances to be welcoming and functional for our guests and members.

The Women Who Served the Church stained glass window has been temporarily moved to the corridor to prepare for the new entrances from the Narthex to the new Welcome Center.



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

Finance Committee Moderator:
Sam Rennick

Building and Grounds Committee Moderator: John Stalnaker



In December, we participate in the PCUSA Christmas Joy offering. The funds from this offering are divided to support our pastor retirement fund and three of our local charities: Use the special envelopes in the pews or write "Christmas Joy" on a blue envelope.



Presbyterian Women on December 1

All church ladies are invited to join us on Thursday, December 1 at 9:00 a.m. in Room 15. Charlene Weyand will lead us in Lesson 4, Sabbath and Sunday. Questions? Contact Cindy Nisley.

Keep Moving on Mondays & Thursdays

Music & Movement meets at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. in the Great Room on Dec. 1, 5, 8, 12, and 15.

Coordinator: Betty Baddley

Tai Chi meets at 10 a.m. Masks are optional. Drop in if you'd like to attend a class. Note: No class on December 1 and 5. Contact Paula Allen with questions. **Coordinator: Paula Allen**

49ers on Tuesday, December 6 at 11:30

Our December speaker will be a SURPRISE GUEST FROM THE NORTH POLE. You won't want to miss this!!! Join us 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. **Coordinators: Judy Sundberg & Mary Ott**



Friday Night Gourmets on December 9

Come One, Come all, to Friday Night Gourmets' Hearty Hors d'oeuvre Christmas Party! Join us on December 9 at 6:30 p.m. at Tim and Kris Goodman's Home, 17206 Fairway Drive, in the Tiburon South subdivision. Please bring a dessert or an appetizer and the beverage of your choice! We will provide wassail and a signature cocktail. It will be a fun and festive occasion. Questions? Call Kris at Goodman or AJ & Judy Sundberg. Sign up at the Information Center in the Narthex.

Tables for 8 Winter Session 2023



The deadline for registration for the winter session (January, February, March, and April) is December 10. New "Regular" participants (couples or singles) are definitely welcome to join this fellowship opportunity. New "Substitutes" are welcome as well. Questions and answers about

"Tables for Eight" are on the registration form, and the form is available at the Information Desk or on the church website. Please return registration forms to the Information Desk on or before December 10. Questions: Contact Pam Otto.

Presbyterian Men Volunteers Needed to Ring Bells



Enthusiastic volunteers are needed to ring bells for the Salvation Army's Christmas campaign on Saturday, December 17, at Hy-Vee on 132nd and Dodge. Each volunteer will ring during 1-hour shifts starting at 10:00 a.m. and ending at 4:00 p.m. (2 people at the east and west doors/shift). Volunteers should check in with one of the PM Board Members about 5 minutes before the start of your shift. This is an easy and enjoyable opportunity to assist the Salvation Army in helping those among us in need during the Christmas season. Please sign-up at the Information Desk by Sunday, December 11. Thanks to Jim Chapin for coordinating this activity.



Book Group on Wednesday, December 21

PCOC Book Group will meet Wednesday December 21, 5:15 – 6:30, to discuss *Payne Hollow, Life on the Fringe of Society* by Harlan Hubbard. PLEASE NOTE: We will NOT be meeting at church as we usually do. We will meet at the Fettig's residence at The Arboretum Village, 8141 Farnam Drive (across the street from Methodist Hospital parking garage). Closer to the meeting date, June will send an email to the Book Group with specific directions regarding getting to her residence. All readers are welcome! **Coordinator: June Fettig**

Active Minds Is on Break for December

We'll be back in January 2023 with Mahjong. Details coming shortly after Christmas. **Coordinator: Earlene Uhrig**

More on Back Page!

Congregational Life Committee
Moderator: Kristin Jacobi



- 1 Joan Boomgaarden, Char Fehr, John Fettig,
John Morey, Kathy Thornton
- 2 William Smith
- 3 Piper Smith
- 4 Jenny Bruce, Jaeda Lawson-Betum, Ron Mau
- 5 Dee Coffey, John Hall
- 7 Nathalie Hart, Helen McNiven, Kevin O'Neill
Jr., Libby Whitlow
- 8 Addison Hansen Holdren, Ken Kluck,
Jan Steffa, Joe Trapp
- 9 Sam Arnold, Beth Morris, Jeffrey Swenson,
Webb Versaw
- 10 Dennis Boesen, Ryan Davelaar, Kathy
Moore, George Rath
- 11 Sydney Goodwin, Nadine Jenkins,
Robin Kussman
- 13 Angela Ayika, Holly Baddley, Maudie Brantz,
Paula Hazelrigg
- 14 Cindy Garner, Marinell Neuhaus
- 15 Shirley Emig, Brenda Ticknor
- 16 Adam Buda, Aaron Fettig, Matthew Reid
- 17 Lee Harlan, 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
- 25 Toni Craig, Sawyer Dittman, Paul Price,
Don Upah, 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, Tori Wright,
- 30 T. J. Davey, Mark Mathia, Paul Nickel Jr.,
Chris Rath, Marla Vanneman, Staci Voss
- 31 Bob Allen, Amavi Amela, Avis Polacek,
Mary Reid, Chelsea Spielman

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY OF

Jim & Joan Gayle Chapin

Monday the Twenty-Sixth of December, 2022

from 2:30pm to 5:30pm

Cake & Card, Reception

Hosted by their nieces

Presbyterian Church of the Cross

1517 South 114th Street • Omaha, Nebraska 68144

RSVP to

Julie Trivilino: 402.917.8449

jrtrivilino64@gmail.com

or

Vicki Petrick: 402.707.4588



Your presence is your present.



Penny Cassling November 11,
2022. A service was held at the
church on November 16.

Betty Stevens October 30, 2022. A service was held
at the church on November 9.

Virginia Wilson November 3, 2022. A service was
held at the church on November 11.

Thank you for the wonderful
"Surprise Birthday Celebration"
between services this past month. My family changed the clocks
forward one hour so I thought I was attending the
11:10 service but instead, I was greeted by my
church family with birthday hugs and wishes. I
received over 100 beautiful birthday cards and they
are still arriving. This 99th birthday was certainly a
special one. Peace, Faith, and Love from Betty
Mack and family



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 Coordinators: Julie Buehler and
Judy Arms

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



A Holiday Invitation

Many of you remember our friend and member Doug Patten. He has a Christmas Village that he and his late wife, Virginia collected over the years. They always had a great time putting it up and enjoying it during the Christmas season. This year Doug thought it would be great to have it up again. It's the first time in 4 years. With the help of a good friend, Doug spent days setting it up for the season.

With that said, Doug is opening up and inviting you and your family, all the Young at Heart, to his home to enjoy this wonderful holiday display! Doug asks that you call before you come. He has it worked out so that children are able to see the village close up. If you are coming as a group, he requests no more than 12. And if your group is all adults, he says come around 4 or 5 p.m. for some Christmas Cheer!

Doug seldom gets out with the exception of doctor appointments, so he's going to be home most of the



time. He is very excited to share his Christmas Village with all of you! Give him a call this holiday season — you'll be glad you did!

Doug Patten's Phone & Address
Check the church directory



DEACONS' UPDATE

Experience All the Season Offers!

Winter in the Midwest always make me think of gathering with family and friends! Life seems to slow down just a bit; early sunsets certainly affect our normal rhythms. Rather than grumble about disappearing daylight, embrace it! I encourage you to step outside in the evening, maybe with a little snow on the ground, and 'experience' the peace on earth that came with the birth of a different kind of King.

You can experience the season with your church family as well. On Sunday, December 4, the annual Advent children's pageant takes place at 5 p.m. with dinner following. The pageant is a delight every year – children tell 'the greatest story ever told' with the purest of hearts. Immediately following the pageant, the Deacons will host a wonderful meal in Fellowship Hall and carols by the fire on the patio.

In the Cornett house the cornucopia of desserts provided by the congregation is the food highlight of the season. I encourage you to experience a wonderful evening with family and friends!

A Very Merry Christmas to you and your family,
Jerry Cornett, Deacon

Deacons Moderator:
Pam Swenson

Advent Dinner Reminder

Sorry, sign up for the dinner ended on November 23. If you signed up, please remember to bring a dessert to share.

- Pre-cut bars, cupcakes, or cookies only.
- No cakes or pies this year, please.
- Bring your dessert to the kitchen on Sunday morning or before the pageant begins.





Kids Helping Kids at Thanksgiving

Each November, Church of the Cross uses the previous year’s Thanksgiving offering and part of the Christmas offering to provide Thanksgiving meals for needy families. We work through our mission partner Completely Kids at 2566 St. Mary’s Avenue. This year, members of the Confirmation class, Confirmation mentors, and their families filled bags with corn, stuffing, potatoes, gravy, sugar, and a \$20 Hy-Vee gift card to purchase meat. Our efforts helped 70 families who are struggling this holiday season. It was a great evening for our PCOC kids to learn about one of our mission partners and help other kids in Omaha.



Hope-Filled Christmas for 2022

The holiday season is almost here. What better way to celebrate the season of giving than to provide gifts for children in our community who would normally receive very little, if anything, Christmas morning. Please consider the following options for giving to Heartland Hope Mission’s annual Hope-filled Christmas celebration for local families in need this year.

Option 1: The PCOC Giving Tree

Of course, we have the traditional Giving Tree up in the church’s Narthex this year. Take an angel ornament from the tree – each one has 11 – 15-year-old boy or girl suggestions for gift ideas. Shop for a gift and return it to the church by Sunday, December 11, unwrapped. Place it in the decorated Christmas box in the Narthex. You can also donate Christmas wrapping paper for parents to wrap their child’s gifts.

Option 2: Amazon Wish List

For those of you who prefer to shop online, you can choose from three different wish lists (links are

provided on the church website) to select and purchase a gift through Amazon. The gift(s) will be delivered directly to HHM from Amazon before the Christmas event.

- Baby and preschool gifts Amazon wish list
- School aged gifts Amazon wish list
- Pre-teen and Teen gifts Amazon wish list

Option 3: Adopt-a-Family

If you prefer a more personal touch, consider adopting a local family who is struggling financially this year and buying gifts for the children. You will be able to designate the number of children for whom you would like to provide gifts. There is a \$50 minimum commitment per child. Please drop off Adopt-a-Family gifts to HHM by Friday, December 9. If that date doesn’t work, the last drop off date is Wednesday, December 14. Learn more about the Adopt-a-Family option on the church website.

Option 4: Donate to Support a Family

Finally, if you are unable to shop, but would still like to help with this annual event, HHM also appreciates any monetary donations. Learn more on the church website and donate to support this effort.

Volunteer Your Time

If you would like to volunteer and help HHM with this holiday event, please contact Amanda DeVries at Amanda@HeartlandHopeMission.org to learn how you can help!

Remember the Pantry at Christmas, Too!

Please remember in your holiday busyness to donate pantry and hygiene items on the 3rd Sunday of the month (December 18). The most needed items are listed below. Drop them off inside the circle drive doors anytime during the month or bring them with you to worship on December 18. Our mission group will deliver them to HHM.

Food Items:

- Cereal
- Pasta
- Canned Soup
- Canned Vegetables
- Canned Fruit
- Canned Meat
- Mac & Cheese
- Peanut Butter

Hygiene Items:

- Baby Diapers (most needed size 4-6)
- Baby Wipes
- Full-Size Shampoo
- Full-Size Body Wash
- Toilet Paper
- Toothpaste

Thank you for your generous support of Heartland Hope Mission and our Mission Committee!



Holiday Mission Giving Tree

Our beautiful wooden giving tree is set up in the Lobby outside the Church Office. Donations this year will go to the following PCOC 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 or better results this year.

Envelopes are 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 which organization(s).



All checks should be made out to Presbyterian Church of the Cross.

Contact Karen Metzger with any questions.



Mission Committee Moderator:
Karen Morey

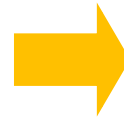
Siena Francis House
Dinner Servers Needed
Sunday, December 11
4:15 to 6:15 p.m.



PCOC has the dinner shift on the 2nd Sunday of every month. We need at least 6 volunteers. Please consider giving your time to this mission.

Questions? Contact Sandi Stuckey

Scan our QR code to access the church online sign up page. We've made it easy to sign up to serve at Siena Francis House.



OFFICER NOMINATIONS

Nominate an Officer Today!

In the Presbyterian Church, we have the privilege and responsibility of nominating and electing our own congregational leaders. Now is the time to nominate a new class of Elders and Deacons. Your input is both appreciated and necessary! Forms are available online, in the Church Office, and at the Information Desk. **The deadline is December 18.**

Qualifications:

- To be considered for Elder, an individual should be a person of "wisdom and maturity of faith, having demonstrated skills in leadership and being compassionate in spirit." Book of Order, G-2.0301.



- To be considered for Deacon, an individual should be a person of "spiritual character, honest repute, exemplary lives, brotherly and sisterly love, sincere compassion, and sound judgment." Book of Order, G-2.0201
- Common qualifications for the office of Elder or Deacon include: deep Christian faith and dedicated discipleship, active involvement in the life of PCOC, enthusiasm for the mission of PCOC, consistent financial giving, and regular worship participation.

Questions? Contact a member of the church nominating committee: Brad Gibson, Jim Chapin, Anna Sumner, Earlene Uhrig, Jeff Boyum, and Pam Otto.



This is the time of year we celebrate Christ’s entrance into our hearts, minds and actions. Christ’s agape love for all spectrums of society ignites our growth. Enjoy the season!

Coming Up...

Presbyterian Women through PCUSA, is offering a Justice & Peace Book Discussion Group. A wide variety of social justice books will be discussed! This a great opportunity to meet new people from around the country, and the planning is already done! This book club is open to all and will meet via Zoom every other month.



To experience a rich culture of gospel singing, consider attending “Joyful Noise: A Gospel Christmas” on December 3 and 4 at the Holland Center.

Future Outings

- Black History Museum
- Malcolm X Museum
- Another restaurant outing in North Omaha

Recaps

The opera “Life and Times of Malcolm X” was an electric performance. The Orpheum’s full house was enthusiastic, and a great mix of people was a sure sign that our city is pulling together for supportive strides in social justice.

As always, contact Kathy Moore and or Patty Ritchie with ideas for future learning and involvement.

The Agape Section of our Library is full of rich offerings. Ann Pearson has provided a wonderful review of a Native American book on the next page. Please remember there are also several children’s books, if you would like to share some interesting readings with your children during the holiday breaks. A new entry is *The Gift Horse*, A Lakota Story. Patty Ritchie picked it up while visiting an incredible museum in Bentonville, Arkansas. If you happen to travel to Bentonville to visit Crystal Bridges, please allow a couple more hours to go through the Museum of Native American History. The museum was established by a private individual who is an enrolled member of the Cherokee, and it has over 10,000 Native artifacts. It is beautifully put together and quite unique.

Book Discussion Group

JUSTICE AND PEACE

2022 Reading Selections
(6:30 PM – 8:30 PM Eastern Time)

- JANUARY 10**
DECOLONIZING WEALTH
Indigenous wisdom to heal divides and restore balance
- JULY 11**
Just Mercy
A Story of Justice and Redemption
Bryan Stevenson
- MARCH 14**
Caste
The Origins of Our Discontents
Isabel Wilkerson
- SEPTEMBER 12**
JOHN ICELAND POVERTY IN AMERICA A HANDBOOK
THIRD EDITION
- MAY 9**
Trust Women
A PROGRESSIVE CHRISTIAN ARGUMENT FOR REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE
Rebecca Todd Peters
- NOVEMBER 14**
THIS LAND IS OUR LAND
AN IMMIGRANT'S MANIFESTO
SUKETU MEHTA

DISCUSS THE BOOKS WITH OTHERS VIA ZOOM
• The J&P Book Discussion Group is open to all!

DISCUSSION GROUP MEETS EVERY OTHER MONTH
• Read and discuss any or all books that appeal to you. Registration will be needed to join the discussion on Zoom.

RECEIVE STUDY GUIDES TO INFORM YOUR READING
• Questions for discussion or reflection will be sent with your registration confirmation.

To register, scan the QR code with your smart phone or go to presbyterianwomen.org/justice

Selections are recommended reading by the Justice & Peace Committee of PW's Board of Directors.

To register go to presbyterianwomen.org/justice, or scan the code in the lower left hand corner of the image above. You will receive Study Guides to inform your reading. Let Kathy Moore or Patty Ritchie know if you plan to participate!

Book Review

Submitted by Ann Pearson

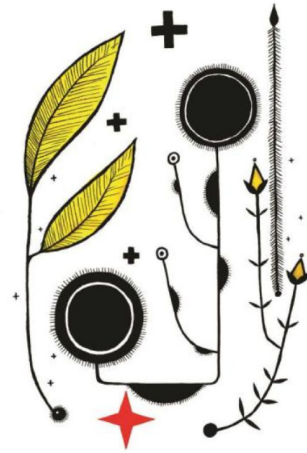
After One Hundred Winters: In Search of Reconciliation on America's Stolen Lands

by Margaret D. Jacobs, Professor of History and Director of the Center for Great Plains Studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Here we go again! Whenever I pick up a new book in our Agape for All section of the library, I find Nebraskans at the heart of Social Justice issues. And given the two recent holidays of Indigenous People's Day (or Columbus Day) and Thanksgiving Day, it seemed appropriate to focus a while on Native American issues. The issues have been traumatic for Native Americans and they are deeply uncomfortable for us "settlers" to face and acknowledge. Yet as the reader finds out, there is great hope in the recent efforts of "settlers" to join the new movements of "Truth and Reconciliation" which have become so essential as we look back on the history of settlers and Native Americans.

Margaret Jacobs introduces her book with the touching story of the Tanderup family in Neligh, Nebraska. This couple, a decent and kind family, had farmed their acreage for several generations until faced with the prospect of the Keystone Pipeline ruining their land and way of life. Interestingly enough, they became acquainted with and joined forces with a number of Native American tribes who, for the SECOND time were facing desecration of their lives by invasive forces. The tribes included the Ponca, Omaha, Winnebago and Santee Sioux. (Does Neligh, Nebraska sound familiar? Do these tribes sound familiar?) As these folks joined forces, they became friends. And as the Tanderups heard the tragic stories of the tribes on whose land they were living, they joined an effort called the "Truth and Reconciliation Movement." First they listened to and faced the truth that, as a result of treaty violation and thefts of land by the American government (starting in 1858), the Poncas had been robbed of food sources, housing, and contracted malaria which resulted in loss of 25% of their population. They realized that this is the "Westward Expansion" and "Opening of the West" we have all read about in American History books.

As an act of reconciliation, the Tanderups invited the Poncas and Pawnee to plant a medicine bag of corn seeds they had held onto since 1887. The big question was whether the seeds would grow! To the



AFTER
ONE HUNDRED
WINTERS

In Search of Reconciliation on America's Stolen Lands

MARGARET D. JACOBS

delight of everyone, they grew and thrived! Subsequently the Tanderups returned several acres of their land to the tribes.

Ms. Jacobs continues to describe the tragic, destructive forces that all Native Americans in this country have endured over the last three hundred years. It becomes very clear that the intention of the American Government was to annihilate the people and culture of Native Americans on this land. It is also clear that not all settlers wanted this to happen. In one interesting chapter, she describes the intentions of good settlers gone wrong, much of which happened in the Indian Boarding Schools we are hearing about so much lately. Two of the primary schools mentioned were the well-known government-run school in Genoa Nebraska, and a Presbyterian-run missionary school for the Omaha tribe in Burt and Thurston counties around 1946. (Read *The Middle Five: Indian Schoolboys of the Omaha Tribe* by Francis La Flesche).

I join Ms. Jacobs in emphasizing that these stories and this history is not told with the goal of producing shock or pain or guilt, but to provide knowledge, insight, enlightenment, and motivation to seek ways of reconciliation. As you will learn reading this book, the Native Americans of our great nation are far more interested in peaceful resolution and forgiveness that they ever were in warfare with settlers and cowboys.

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
December 16, 2022



FELLOWSHIP GROUPS/EVENTS (CONTINUED)

Young Adult Fellowship

College Christmas Party! Hey college kids, join us at the Voss House on Friday, December 23 starting at 5 p.m. Watch your mail for the official invite and details!

Cross Roads (fellowship for young adults) will not meet in December.

College Bible Study meets every Sunday 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. The Zoom link is in your weekly emails from church.

Led by Pastor Christine



A circle of smiles on the last night of fall Cornerstone.

Cross Currents

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

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Communications: Gayle Kerr-McFadden gayle@pcoc.us or (402)333-7466 ext. 7
For Cross Currents and Bulletin announcements, church website updates, Zoom meeting invites, or other communications needs, please contact Gayle.