

Finding Meaning in Old & New Experiences

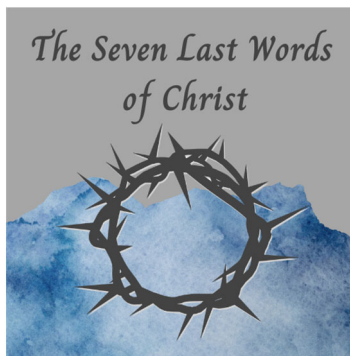
Have you noticed that we are searching for ways to enhance your church experiences in 2023? Perhaps you picked a “star word” on Epiphany in January and have been listening for how the Holy Spirit is speaking to you through it. Or, maybe you attended our Ash Wednesday service in February to receive ashes as a sign of both your humanity and a reminder of your mortality as you entered Lent. Perhaps you are one the 85 people who are participating in the Lenten Study of *The Seven Last Words* by Susan Robb, which began at the end of February.

Lent should be a time of meaning and growth. As you focus on Christ’s ministry, death, and resurrection this season, also take the time to examine how you live your Christian faith in the world around you. When Lent culminates with Holy Week in April, Church of the Cross will offer both familiar and new experiences for your Lenten journey this year.

Palm Sunday on April 2: It will be a day of celebration. Our children will lead a parade of palms through the Sanctuary, and the choirs, congregation, and trumpet will join in the jubilation. During coffee fellowship, we invite you to bring goodies to share as we continue the celebration. We will not have a big music program on this Sunday.

Maundy Thursday on April 6: Join us for our Tenebrae service and Communion in the Sanctuary at 7 p.m. The service will be livestreamed.

Good Friday on April 7: Starting at 7 p.m. in the Sanctuary, Alleluia Singers, along with professional guest soloists and chamber orchestra, will present “The Seven Last Words of Christ” by Théodore Dubois. French composer Théodore Dubois wrote this setting in 1867. The composition is a multi-movement work based on the final utterances of Christ on the cross: “Father, forgive them, they know not what they do,” “Verily, thou today shalt be with me in paradise,” “See, O woman, here behold thy Son beloved,” “God, my father, why has thou forsaken me,” “I am athirst,” “Father, into thy hands I commend my soul,” and “It is finished!” This will be a meaningful way to worship on Good Friday and is a fitting culmination for the Lenten study based on these same words. The service will be livestreamed.



Easter Egg Hunt on April 8: Join us at 10:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall. Be sure to bring your basket to collect eggs. Find details on page 4.

Easter Sunday on April 9: Join us for worship at 9:00 or 11:10 a.m. in the Sanctuary. The early service will be livestreamed.

In This Issue:

Messages from Our Pastors — Pages 2 & 3

Business Updates — Page 4

Christian Education News — Page 5

Music Notes — Page 6

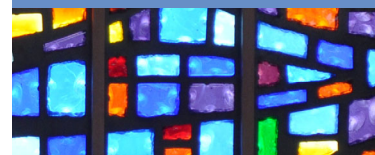
Our Church Family — Page 7

Fellowship Groups/Events — Page 8

Spirit of Mission — Page 9

Agape for All — Pages 10 & 11

Deacons Update — Page 12



**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



Mobility Issues

As this issue goes to print for March, I am about ready to head back to the office after being out two weeks getting another knee replaced. The PT has gone well, not great, this time. But I am improving enough to realize it, and trust that in a few more weeks I might be pain free. I'm thankful for a lot of things - good doctors and nurses, a loving and caring spouse, good PTs, a good medical system, and good insurance! Some folks have said that it's when you're down that God gets your attention. In my case, God is using these weeks to help me become more grateful for the blessings I have in my life. I have a lot more blessings that I've realized.



As Lent begins, I realize that, like it or not, one of the things I have given up for Lent this year is mobility. I've been waking with a walker for two weeks, and now I've graduated to a cane, which you will see me with for a while. Although it's slower getting around, I actually like using the cane, since it provides stability. And, after being homebound most of February, it feels good to be able to get around.

This has made me think about those who aren't able to get around so well. Sometimes we see these folks - like when you're walking behind a slow person, or perhaps see someone on crutches or in a wheelchair. But more often, we don't get to see these folks because they just can't get out at all, which presents another set of problems - isolation, loneliness, boredom, restlessness, etc. I'm thankful for our deacons and CrossCare givers, and also for our caring congregation. This Lent, please keep track of those who can't get out and about like they used to enjoy, and make sure they know you're thinking about them.

I did get to worship online for two Sundays in February, and once again I'm grateful - for our beautiful Sanctuary, a good sound system, good

cameras, good staff who produce the service, good music, and for Christ's gospel that is worth proclaiming every week - the gospel that reminds me that no one is ever alone, since Christ's Spirit lives in us. Since his Spirit is living in you, ask yourself this Lent who Christ is calling you to reach out to - those in our church family who would like to be here if they could, but aren't able to now. Let's not forget them - let's show them they are not forgotten.

Many thanks to the congregation for your cards and well wishes as I recover from my second knee replacement surgery. I'm grateful to Pastor Christine and all our staff for "holding down the fort" so well in my absence. I enjoyed worshipping with you online for two Sundays.



It's good to be back among you now as we begin Lent together.



**Pastor/Head of Staff
Marshall Zieman**
(402)333-7466 Ext. 1
marshall@pcoc.us

The Tuesday Bible Studies

Join us on Tuesdays for one of our Bible Studies

- 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 on page 8 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.

No need to register – just drop in!



Warming up with Christ

It's cold. It's cold outside, and I don't really like it. I associate cold with slushy February and blustery March. Perhaps because it is the time of year or the heaviness of the seasons, the cold of late winter is also a cold that I tend to associate with Lent. This time of contemplation is when we step back to look at our faith and consider the sacrifice that Jesus made for us. The mood of Ash Wednesday is solemn, and the forty days of Lent are a reminder of sacrifice. In the church liturgy there are no "Alleluias" in Lent. Yes, the mood of Lent seems to fit my impression of the cold, my dread of late winter and my mood of hungering sadness.

Traditionally, during Lent, spiritual leaders encourage us to give up something that will remind of Christ's sacrifice for us. Others will encourage us to take up a new spiritual discipline to help us draw closer to Christ and our faith. I think these are fine ideas to strengthen your faith and your daily devotion, but I'm not sure they warm the space. For me, these practices feel more like ritual rather than practices that help me grow closer to God. Because my mind is focused on cold, I tend to look at these opportunities unenthusiastically, and I am not too successful at changing my habits or my heart. It still seems cold.

Living in Nebraska my whole life, however, I have learned how to make things warm. If you have been to my office, you know that I keep it about ten degrees warmer than the rest of the church. I have space heater that runs full blast all winter. My desire to be warm is also part of my home where I love to hop in the hot tub, cozy up by the fire, and curl up in a fuzzy blanket. I like warmth! This year, I have been thinking about how to warm up Lent, how to take the distance and the distaste of what seems cold and make it into a time where I feel the comfort and assurance of Christ's presence.

In our church tradition, we have different images of Christ. Some images show Jesus hanging from the Cross with blood encrusted on his dying body. Others show Jesus amongst the people, perhaps surrounded by eager children or breaking bread with others. While the image of the dying Christ is important for our faith, I, personally, need to focus on the living Christ, the one who fosters relationships and is interacting with people. This is especially true this year with so much pain and loss from natural disaster, war, and disease. I need to

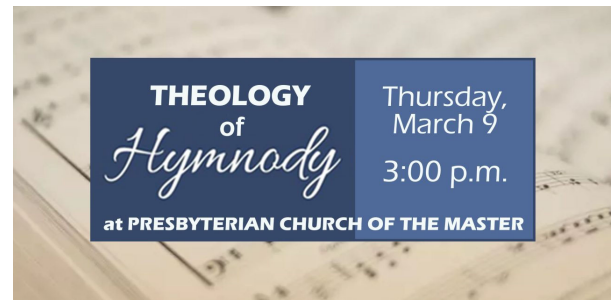
"warm up with Christ" and spend time basking in his generous presence. How? This year I am going to look for Christ's presence in every interaction I have with someone else, give generously to those in need, and celebrate worship while in the presence of God's children.

Friends, your Lenten practice should be something that draws you nearer to Christ so that you might grow in your faith and be a blessing to others. The traditional means of giving something up or adopting a new spiritual discipline are wonderful ways to focus on your faith practices. But, if these don't work for you, don't despair, there are other ways. And, this year, if you are struggling "getting warm" during Lent, I encourage you to join me.



Grace and peace,

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



Join us for a *Theology of Hymnody* on Thursday, March 9, at 3:00 p.m. at Presbyterian Church of the Master (10710 Corby Circle). One of the great gifts of the church is the rich hymn tradition from which we pull hymns every Sunday. This tradition is steeped in the theology of the Protestant Reformation and now serves as a fundamental means to convey our faith. Rev. Dr. Christine Dempsey, Associate Pastor at Presbyterian Church of the Cross and Dr. Chris Krampe, Director of Music at Presbyterian Church of the Master are teaming together to give you an introductory look at the history of the hymn tradition, a lesson on hymn tune, meter and performance, and finally an in depth analysis of some of our favorite hymns.

Event sponsored by our presbytery's
Worship & Spirituality Committee



The View from My Office

KEEP OUR VISION FOCUSED Join Us Inside!

I am overjoyed to invite each of you to a Welcome Center Walk-thru! On March 5 at 10:00 a.m. (or as early service ends), the Building Design Committee and MCL Contractors will open the door from the Narthex. Everyone will be able to walk into and around the construction area.

I was able to do this recently, and it is a wonderful experience to see the scope of the project after the first five months of work. By March 5, the new area should be enclosed and many of the indoor walls will be in place.

Plan to join everyone for this incredible opportunity to experience what it will be like to be inside the new Welcome Center.

After the walk-thru, Coffee Fellowship Hour will be held in Fellowship Hall with comfortable seating for all. Lenten Study and Sunday School should be able to walk thru before class begins. THANK YOU!



CEILING TILE REPLACEMENT Sanctuary Aisles and Narthex

We have a schedule for destruction as well as construction. On February 20 MCL began destruction of the Sanctuary aisle ceiling tiles and lights. The plan is to have a new drop-down ceiling and light fixtures in place by Sunday, February 28. Again, it will be exciting to see this phase of the project reach completion.

Next, MCL will be destructing the Narthex ceiling, lights, and speakers to replace these areas and it will take a few weeks.

There is much to be done but I want everyone to know that we are on schedule to complete the entire project by October (yes, this year!).

DEBT FREE IN TWENTY-THREE Let's Finish This Together!

In early March, everyone should receive an opportunity to help Church of the Cross complete this building expansion and renovation debt free. Members may make a one-time gift during this year or stretch your gift out over 12 months.

The fundraising goal is \$5,589,000. To completely cover the project with member pledges we will need to pledge another \$487,216. This represents about 8.71% of the entire project.

John Morey will say the heavy lifting is done folks; we can do this.

The bill comes due in October when we gain occupancy to all areas of the project. The finance committee has made arrangements with Security National Bank to cover the short-term construction needs as pledges are paid.

I am often asked when and how much will be needed to borrow to carry us through construction completion until pledges are paid. The answer is not easy, it will depend on when members pay their pledges. So the need to take out a short term loan for cash flow will depend on how pledges are paid in the next year!

Let me know how you will be able to be a part of completing this incredible project.



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

Finance Committee Moderator: Mimi Bauer

Building and Grounds Committee Moderator:
Casey Ballou



Save the Date! Vacation Bible School Tuesday – Thursday, June 13-15

In the depths of the colorful underground cave is the beating heart of the hero community. In the Hero Hotline Headquarters, everyone's gifts are valued, and every hero has a role to play in following Jesus, helping others, working together, listening to God, and showing grace.

We're forming our VBS Leadership Team now. Contact Heather to serve on this very important team. Parents and grandparents, we can't do this without you! Please consider serving!



APCE Annual Event

APCE stands for Association of Partners in Christian Education. It's an annual conference that brings together church educators from all over the United States and even the world. It is something that I look

forward to all year. I am grateful that I was able to attend APCE January 25 – 28 in Birmingham, Alabama. I spent 4 days and 3 nights learning more about Christian education, participating in worship, and enjoying fellowship with

other church educators and pastors. I am so thankful that our church values continuing education and supports our need to be in community with others in the same professional roles. Next year's event is in St. Louis, and I'm excited about it already!



Easter Egg Hunt

Easter is just around the corner! Hop on over to the east lawn on Saturday, April 8 for our annual Easter Egg Hunt. We'll start our time with crafts in Fellowship Hall at 10:00 a.m., then move on to the East Lawn for the hunt at 10:30 a.m. Be sure to bring your own basket to collect eggs. And keep an eye out – maybe you'll spot Peter Cottontail!

We are accepting donations of individually wrapped candy for the egg hunt. If you would like to donate, look for the collection box in the Narthex. Thank you!

Important Dates to Remember

March 15	Communion Class
March 27	Confirmation Exam/Dinner
April 8	Easter Egg Hunt
April 16	Confirmation Sunday



Above: The JHF Bake Sale was a sweet success! Thank you to all who purchased goodies! We collected over \$1000. All proceeds go towards JHF's summer mission trip to Okoboji.

Below: On February 5, the SHF youth group had fun escaping from The Locked Room.



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

CE Committee Moderator: Jeremy Cunningham

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

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



Midwest Premiere of “Parable of a Stormy Sea” on March 19

Vesper Concerts is excited to present Dr. Heather Baxter (Omaha Symphony), Dr. Alyssa Morris (Kansas State University), Dr. Sara Renner (Omaha Conservatory) for a concert of oboe and English horn music. Among the pieces they will play is Dr. Morris’s composition “Parable of a Stormy Sea,” a multi-movement work based on passages from Jonah and the Gospel of Mark. Concert time is 3:00 in the sanctuary.



Join Us at the Nebraska Choral Directors Association (NCDA) Church Choir Festival on April 29

Do you love to sing? You are encouraged to be part of the NCDA Church Choir Festival on Saturday, April 29 from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at St. Timothy’s Lutheran Church, 510 N. 93rd Street. Singers from Omaha and Lincoln will gather for an all-day workshop with Mark Hayes. Mark Hayes is an award-winning concert pianist, composer, arranger and conductor of international renown. His personal catalog totals over 1500 published works of all kinds.

NCDA
Church Choir Festival

April 29, 2023
St. Timothy's Lutheran Church
510 N 93rd St, Omaha
Clinic: 9:30 AM - 3:30 PM
Concert: 4:30 PM

Register at NebraskaChoral.org

Mark Hayes
Clinician

So far, we have singers participating from ten different churches and counting! You can participate in two different ways:

- As a singer (even if you aren’t currently a member of Alleluia Singers). You may register and participate in the rehearsals with Mark Hayes beginning at 9:30 a.m. Cost is \$20 for the day. Contact Kristi Treu at kristi@pcoc.us to sign up and get the music packet.
- As an audience member. The public is invited to a concert at 4:30 p.m. at St. Timothy’s Lutheran Church (510 N 93rd St.). Tickets are \$5 at the door.

Save the date for the 8th Annual Summer Youth Choir Festival June 19-25

Singers finishing grades 8-12 are invited to take part in this summer’s Youth Choir Festival beginning Monday evening, June 19. Rehearsals take place Monday through Thursday evening from 6:00 – 8:30. The Outreach Tour is all day Saturday June 24, and the week culminates with the worship service on Sunday morning. Registration is opening soon.

Please Help!



If you are looking for a way to serve the church, please consider filling one of our open usher spots. You can now sign up online for individual Sundays. 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



MARCH

Birthdays

- 3/1 Walter Karges
- 3/2 Chase Spencer
- 3/3 Mary Cramer, Anna Paul
- 3/4 Adam Goodwin, Drew Ritchie
- 3/5 Stan Garner, Mike Howland
- 3/6 Austin Curtis, Chase Jenkins, Sandy Johnson, Dick Miller
- 3/7 Len Juarez
- 3/8 Robbie Baddley, Charlotte Hubbard, Marsha Smith, Barb Woods
- 3/9 Elizabeth Swedlund
- 3/10 Brandon Fisher, Lloyd Meyer, Kathy Nickel, Anna Sumner
- 3/11 Euloge Sekle
- 3/12 John Goodwin, Doug Patten, Diane Wetuski
- 3/13 Mitch Pirnie, Anna Whaley
- 3/13 Pam Lindsey
- 3/14 Brad Burch, Chuck Krumme, Dan Scanlan
- 3/15 Paul Cornett, Melissa Marvin, Mary Ott, Henry Spann
- 3/17 Mary Kate Broderick, Mary Haddock
- 3/18 Valerie Fuller, Betty Goodwin, Karin Hjerpstedt, Heather McDaniel, Bob Swartzbaugh
- 3/19 Jennifer Bennett, Peg Conley, Kathryn Harrison, Stan Hille
- 3/20 Dave Berry, Xander Huff
- 3/21 Jill Bobek, Lena Florent, Carol Hale, David Moore, Cody Thorson
- 3/22 John Dyer, Brooks Luth
- 3/23 Jessica Downes, Nancy Long, Adam Lundgren, Jennifer Paul, Parker Spann
- 3/24 Judy Book, Brock Bougger, Bob Foehlinger
- 3/25 Gerry Reid
- 3/26 Darold Bauer
- 3/27 Lucas Bumsted, Karen Butler, John Conley, Paul Kratz, Gladys Kuster, Adeline Lorentzen, Lissa Treu
- 3/28 Dave Arnold, Molly Florent, Scott Morris, Jill Rath
- 3/29 John Swenson
- 3/29 Nathen Holdren, Ryan Sherlock
- 3/30 Jeremy Cunningham, Rebecca Weyant
- 3/31 Elise Arnold, Dylan Spencer

In need of prayer?

Submit a prayer request online. All requests are shared only with members of the prayer team.

Prayer Team Coordinators:

Julie Buehler and Judy Arms 4

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

New Member Class March 26

If you know someone who is looking for a church home, invite them to visit Church of the Cross! Lent is a great time for visitors to experience the many programs and events that PCOC has to offer.

Our next new member class will be on Sunday, March 26 after late service in Room 15. A light lunch will be served. Call the church office or sign up online to register.



Invite a Neighbor to Church

Membership Committee Co-Moderators:

Staci Voss & Branda Graumann

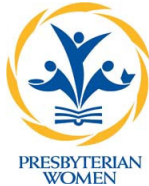
Active Minds in March

Active Minds will be learning a new board game, Qwirkle, for the month of March. We will also have tables playing Canasta. Please join us as your schedule allows. Find us in the lower level on Tuesdays from 2-4. Drop-ins always welcome! We generally have one or two tables that start at 1 p.m.

Coordinator: Earlene Uhrig

Presbyterian Women on March 2

You're invited to Presbyterian Women's Circle on Thursday, March 2 at 9:00 a.m. in Room 15. Kathy Nickel will offer Lesson 7 Sabbath & Self-Care. Contact Cindy Nisley if you have any questions.



Coordinator: Cindy Nisley

Stay Active on Mondays & Thursdays

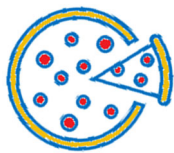
Music & Movement meets at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. in the Great Room.

Coordinator: Betty Baddley

Tai Chi meets at 10 a.m. Masks are optional. Drop in if you'd like to attend a class.

Coordinator: Paula Allen

Cross Roads for Young Adults March 5 After Late Worship



Young adults (ages 20-40) will meet after late worship on March 5 at the circle drive doors. We will get pizza, have a sermon talk-back, and enjoy fellowship.

Coordinator: Pastor Christine

Save the date! Our young adult summer mission trip will be June 22-June 25 at Calvin Crest.

Congregational Life Committee Co-Moderators:
Kathy Nickel & Stephanie Weaver

49ers on March 7



Our speaker for Tuesday, March 7, will be Cliff Hollestelle, wood and bronze sculptor. Cliff has lived his dream of capturing wildlife in an art form so viewers can observe them in a frozen moment in time. His many awards include the Viking of Distinction from Omaha North High School, Citation for Alumni Achievement from UNO, Ducks Unlimited for Nebraska and Nebraska Wildlife Federation from Ducks Unlimited, 2008 Pathfinder Award from Fremont Area Art Association, and 2009 Lincoln Mayor's Art Award. You can find details about his awards at the signup sheet in the Narthex. His artwork can be seen at the Lincoln Children's Zoo, Quarry Oaks Golf Course, and the University of Nebraska State Museum. He will bring some of his exquisite work for us to view during our lunch.

Lunch will be at 11:30 at Wheatfield's at One Pacific Place in the Garden Room, and we will order from a special menu. Sign up at the Information Desk in the Narthex.

Coordinators: Judy Sundberg and Mary Ott

Friday Night Gourmets on March 10

Friday Night Gourmets will meet on March 10 at 6:15. After many years, we are returning to Marlara's on 22nd and Pierce Streets. Mark your calendars and join us for a delicious Italian dinner. We will have separate checks and order from a party menu. A cash bar will be available. Please sign up at the Information Desk or call either Irene Astleford or Cheryl and Rodney Whorlow if you have questions.

Book Group on Wednesday, March 15

PCOC Book Group will meet Wednesday, March 15 from 5:15 to 6:30 p.m. to discuss *The Room on Rue* by Amelie Kristen Harmel. All readers are welcome!



Coordinator: June Fettig



Our Denomination's Response to the Syria/Turkey Earthquake

Through a coordinated response by the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA,) Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA,) and World Mission, PMA has reached out to multiple long-term partners of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) to invite them to request a solidarity grant.



Photo credit GOPA-DERD — taken from PCUSA website

These long-term partners include: the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon; the Middle East Council of Churches; the Forum for Development, Culture and Dialogue; and the Fellowship of Middle East Evangelical Churches. PDA also plans to respond through ACT Alliance members on the ground to address urgent needs and provide humanitarian aid. ACT Alliance is a global faith-based coalition that operates in more than 120 countries. This is how our denomination will give assistance to the area.

PCOC's Mission Committee is presenting a challenge to you, the congregation. The committee will match up to \$5,000 of what you give toward this disaster response. We believe our congregation is up to the challenge! If you choose to donate by check, please write "Syria/Turkey Earthquake" on the memo line, or you can donate on PCOC's website.

March Mission Activities

- **March 4 adult trip to Lithuania with Ellen Smith** — Karen Morey, Jean Waters, Jon & Irene Boomgarden attending. The group will meet with agencies who are working with Ukrainian refugees and with staff and students of LCC University to learn about their peacemaking programs with students from war-torn countries.

- **March 7 & 28 ROC Ministries** — We need one more adult to play games and socialize with youth from 3:30 to 7:15 p.m. If interested, email Rob Bailey.
- **March 12 Serve Dinner at Siena Francis House** — We need at least 6 volunteers. Please consider giving your time to this mission. Questions? Contact Keith Allen. Scan our QR code to sign up online.

Scan & Sign Up to Volunteer



- **March 19 Pantry Sunday** — Heartland Hope Mission's most needed items are listed below
- **March 23 Teacher Appreciation Lunch** — ILP (Integrated Learning Program)
- **March 30 Teacher Appreciation Lunch** — Walnut Hill Elementary

**Pantry Sunday Is
March 19**



<p>Food Items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peanut Butter Canned Fruit Canned Corn Mac & Cheese Cereal Pasta Pasta Sauce 	<p>Hygiene Items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baby Diapers (most needed size 4-6) Baby Wipes Full-Size Shampoo Full-Size Body Wash Toilet Paper Toothpaste
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

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



Mission Committee Moderator: Anne Wattles



New Adult Education Offering

Sundays, April 16 through May 14 or 21 at 10 a.m.

"Trouble the Water: Conversations to Disrupt Racism and Dominance"

Facilitated by Kathy Moore and Patty Ritchie

We will view and discuss a documentary series produced by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to facilitate conversation and engagement around the issues of race and racism. Our nation struggles with deep systemic and structural issues on a daily basis. This series will help us listen to one another, have difficult but honest conversations and collectively interrogate the systemic injustice Black, Indigenous, and People of Color experience in compounded ways throughout the United States. A discussion guide will be provided. Sign up on the church website.

A Day of Enlightenment in North Omaha

Our taste buds were happy, and our minds and hearts engaged as 17 people enjoyed lunch at Big Mama's in the Highlander building and toured the Malcolm X Museum.



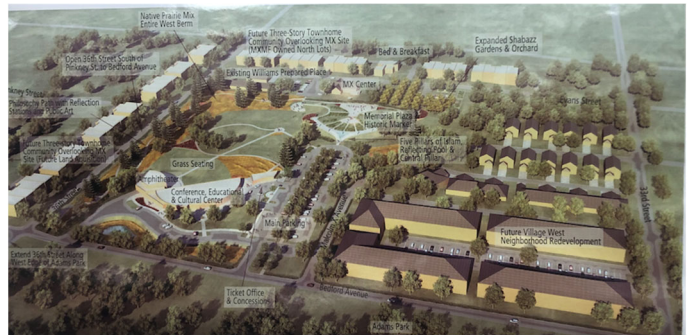
The mural shown here, created by Beveridge Middle School students, provided a vibrant backdrop for a riveting history of the life and times of Malcom X. Our tour director, Schmeeka Simpson, provided essential context for our social justice learning.

Here are a few comments from participants:

- "It was terrific to see some of the changes that have and are happening in North Omaha I'm so glad to have had the opportunity to participate."
- "I was humbled by the Malcom X speaker's position on race issues."
- "Malcolm X was non violent and believed in respecting all people. The person leading the tour was wonderful and so knowledgeable."

- "Going to the Malcom X Museum opened my eyes to so many things I didn't know about his life. Many misconceptions were corrected. I wish I had found out these facts many years ago."

The vision to develop an 18 acre plot of land with multiple uses, such as housing, gardens and orchards, the Malcolm X Museum, an outdoor amphitheater, and much more is truly inspired. Much work is ahead to realize what is shown in this 2011 rendering.



Great Food on March 26

Join us for a delicious meal in North Omaha at the Revive Center, after our 11:10 church service on March 26. There will be a variety of meats and sides offered. We'll have a special table for our group.

The Revive Center address is 2402 Lizzie Robinson Ave. It is located on the southwest corner of 24th and Lake. Parking is available west of the building. Plan to meet there at 12:40.

Sign up on the church website or at the Information Center in the Narthex. Contact Mary Ott with questions.

Black Votes Matter Summer Tour

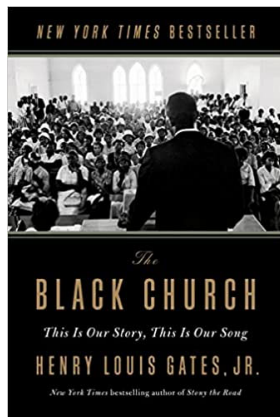
The tour, formerly known as the Civil Rights Southern States Tour, is gearing up for another powerful experience this summer. The dates of the tour are June 25-July 2. Last year, Staci Voss, Anna Sumner, and Kathy Moore participated in this remarkable journey to several southern states and learned firsthand about the Civil Rights movement, deepened their understanding of current events, and pondered future steps we all can take toward social justice. Our PCOC Mission Committee will likely provide financial assistance to offset the costs for more youth or adult attendees. Questions? Contact Kathy Moore. You can also research online at 4urban.org or call 402- 812-3324.

Agape for All Book Report
***The Black Church: This is Our Story,
 This Is Our Song***
by Henry Louis Gates, Jr.
 Submitted by Ann E. Pearson

Some of you have seen the PBS series produced by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. called "The Black Church." I have not seen it so cannot make any comparisons; but his book of the same name is, on its own, a beautiful, fascinating, and powerful story of the Black Church in America.

In his preface, Gates summarizes the Black Church as "the cultural cauldron that Black people created to combat a system designed in every way to crush their spirit." As he continues the story, he also makes the very compelling point that the religion used to keep them subservient was eventually transformed into a tool to "reinvent the world in which they were trapped". Ultimately, it gave them "the moral authority to turn the mirror of religion back on their (White) masters."

Using dozens of interviews, illustrations, and hours of research, he traces the origins of African American aspects of faith, religious practices, and culture back to their lives in Africa. They brought a rich heritage with them on the slave ships. Included in this culture were some practices of the Muslim faith. Interestingly enough the slaves were not initially interested in the Christian faith. Various sources conjecture that it was related to the fact that the Christians, especially Protestants, were worried that conversion to Christianity would involve teaching slaves to read (very dangerous to the slave owners). The story of Moses might teach them that they had the God-given right to be free. Fortunately, there were enough groups of Christians who believed in the necessity of conversion to the faith, that Black churches eventually came into existence and developed their own families of faith in their own style.



As these developing churches came into existence, they became a source of comfort and strength. In the South, where it was many, many years before they were allowed to meet publicly, it was an

especially precious way for them to gather secretly to share news of family and friends. As decades went by these tiny churches evolved into what Gates calls a "Nation Within a Nation."

One of the most interesting aspects of the Nation of Faith is the prominence of its Pentecostal aspects. In fact this was how the greatest amount of integration among blacks and whites of faith occurred. Gates delves into the essential nature of the Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit to the Pentecostals, both Black and White. He then goes on to describe what is known as Fundamentals of the Black Faith: The Music; The Preacher; and the Frenzy. Although Gates doesn't subscribe to this style of worship (his is an Episcopalian/Methodist background), he kindly and thoroughly describes how and why it is so essential for this group of people. In fact, I've had to re-examine my own dismissal of the legitimacy of this style.

I could go on, but I won't. Suffice it to say that the scope of this book is beyond anything that can be described in one book report. There is a long list of suggested reading. There are numerous personal stories of how the Christian faith enabled people to survive unbearable situations. There are extensive lists of Black religious leaders many of whom we've never heard of, but who were critical to the movement for Freedom. It becomes obvious that in the case of Black History, politics and religion cannot be separated.

If you read nothing else in the book, read the Introduction and Epilogue. In the Introduction Gates' analysis of the impact of the Black Church on American history demonstrates how powerful and essential it is to the greatness of this country. The Epilogue describes how his own tender faith journey has been impacted by his Blackness, his family, and The Black Church.

We have so much to learn!

Looking for a Good Book?

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



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

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



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

Next Cross Currents Deadline is:
Third Friday of the month
March 17, 2022



DEACONS UPDATE

Blood Drive on March 5

As part of their Health and Wellness program, the PCOC Board of Deacons is hosting a Red Cross Blood Drive on Sunday, March 5 between 9:00 a.m. and 2 p.m. in the lower-level Great Room. If you are 17 or older and have not given blood in the past 56 days, you can be a Hero on March 5 by donating a pint of blood. Your donation will help up to 3 blood recipients! Help us meet our goal of 25 pints donated that day.

Make an appointment for your donation by signing up at our Blood Drive reservation table in the Narthex before or after Sunday worship. A Deacon will assist you with making the appointment. You can also sign up online by going to the redcross.org

website. Walk-in donations are welcome that day, too.

The Red Cross has an incentive for any donor in the month of March. "Come give in March and get a \$10 Visa Prepaid Card by email. PLUS, get a chance to win a \$3,000 Visa Prepaid Card to help with gas or grocery expenses! You could be one of five lucky winners. Lend an arm; we'll lend a hand. Terms apply: rcblood.org/help."



Deacons Moderator:
Neal Hubbard

Cross Currents

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

Church Office: For general church information/requests/inquiries, contact the church office. Email: churchofthecross@pcoc.us or phone: (402)333-7466

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.