

## Holy Week: Experience a Full Range of Emotions

We have a meaningful Holy Week planned. You may notice that the format for music during Holy Week looks different this year. We hope to create a logical musical progression from Jesus's triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday to foreshadowing and following his journey to the cross during the week to then celebrating Easter on Sunday. Please join us to experience a full range of emotions along Christ's journey.



**Palm Sunday, April 2.** The choirs will sing for both services on Palm Sunday along with Jason Johnson, guest trumpet player. In addition to palm waving and the children's processional, the service will include music from Handel's "Messiah."



**Maundy Thursday, April 6.** The Maundy Thursday service will be a quiet service focused on communion with guest flutist Nestor Herszbaum and soprano Olivia Hacker.



**Good Friday, April 7.** On Good Friday evening at 7:00 p.m., we will present "The Seven Last Words of Christ" by Th odore Dubois with Alleluia Singers, chamber orchestra, and guest soloists.



**Easter Sunday, April 9.** Easter Sunday will include the choirs, Trinity Brass, and the "Hallelujah Chorus" at the end of the service. Our Sanctuary will be filled with a lovely array of Easter flowers.

## Easter Egg Hunt on April 8

Easter is just around the corner! Hop on over to church 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 we'll move to the East Lawn for the hunt at 10:30 a.m. Be sure to bring your own basket to collect eggs. Keep an eye out – maybe you'll spot Peter Cottontail! We're accepting donations of individually-wrapped candy to fill our eggs. Please place candy donations in the bins in the Narthex by Sunday, April 2.

## And More . . .

We have a great lineup of April events following Easter.

- Calmus Vocal Ensemble comes to Vesper Concerts on April 12 — find details on page 6
- Confirmation Sunday is April 16 — read more on page 5
- "Trouble the Water: Conversations to Disrupt Racism and Dominance" adult class starts April 16 — learn more on page 11

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### You Are a Messenger

As someone has said, our job is not to bring our world to Christ, but to bring Christ to our world. Our task is to tell our world about the Risen Savior.

The following is a little story from the Scottish author and pastor George MacLeod (1895-1991) entitled, “No Other Plans.”

There is a very old legend, and all legends that persist speak truth, concerning the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to heaven after His Ascension.

It is said that the angel Gabriel met Him at the gates of the city.

Lord, this is a great salvation that Thou hast wrought,’ said the angel.

But the Lord Jesus only said, ‘Yes.’

What plans hast Thou made for carrying on the work? How are all men to know what Thou hast done?’ asked Gabriel.

“I left Peter and James and John and Martha and Mary to tell their friends, and their friends to tell their friends, till all the world should know.”

“But, Lord Jesus,” said Gabriel, ‘suppose Peter is too busy with his nets, or Martha with her housework, or the friends they tell are too occupied, and forget to tell their friends – what then?’

The Lord Jesus did not answer at once; then He said in His quiet, wonderful voice: ‘I have not made any other plans. I am counting on them.’”

Friends, as we celebrate another Holy Week and Easter Sunday together, we are also struck with the fact that the work of the Church is ever before us, and Christ is counting on us to tell others what he has done.

“And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” (Colossians 3:17)

April this year will offer us a meaningful Holy Week, followed by another Confirmation Sunday, and then later on a Saturday Clean Up Day.

As the weather warms up and Spring returns to Nebraska, we continue in the task of bringing Christ to our world. Wherever you go, remember that, as Christ’s ambassador, you do not go alone – the power of the risen Lord accompanies you!



**Pastor/Head of Staff**  
**Marshall Ziemman**  
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### The Tuesday Bible Studies

Join us on Tuesdays for one of our Bible Studies! We’re currently studying 1 Corinthians.

- 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!**



## Are You Ready? Easter Is Around the Corner

We are entering Eastertide after a long Lent, and I am sure that you have noticed that Lent seems to accompany that never-ending winter of gray skies and barren trees. Easter comes with spring when God pulls out the cheery palette of pink, lavender, yellow, and orange. In theological terms, Easter is when we celebrate the Resurrection of Christ. Yet, while we live this transformation each year, I wonder if we notice, really notice, the risen Christ. It seems that for many of us, this day is filled with a family feast, an Easter egg hunt, and maybe a once-a-year worship service. It is a nice break from the ordinary, but it does not embody the life-altering epiphany that Jesus Christ has Risen.

I think we don't fully grasp what it means that Jesus has risen. For many of us, the language is theological jargon that has meaning within the church but does not seem to impact our day-to-day experiences. Before Easter, I ate a bowl of Grapenuts every morning, opened my mail with a paring knife, read some news headlines about my Huskers, and listened to the cat complain about his food. After Easter, all these will remain. It is hard to grasp that Easter has any impact on my reality. Or does it? I might suggest that our Easter framework changes how we are in this world, and how we are in this world takes actions that once seemed mundane and makes them sublime. For Christ died for us, this is all that stuff that weighs on our hearts – our self-loathing, our fear of not being good enough, our grudges, our prejudices, and our sins. He takes all that stuff on himself for us and buries it. Death, however, is not the final say because it is in the resurrection that we are given hope, that we are a new creation. As Paul writes to the Corinthians "Christ died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them... So, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation." (2 Corinthians 5:15, 17)

When we enter life as a new creation, it reframes how we approach each day, every person we meet, and life's experiences. Think about the life of a baby. When my sons were little, we noted how they never wanted to go to sleep; they did not want to miss the action; it was too exciting. I have so many pictures where they just fell asleep in the middle playing with cars, or petting the cat, or even eating Cheerios. Imagine if we can recapture that passion

for every experience in our lives and each person we encounter. What if everything were new again? What if we can regain the optimism that life held when we were small? What if we walk into each day wondering what is possible? This is how Easter is transformative! As Resurrection people, we are called to live into each day with the hope that is in Christ and with the confidence that in him all things are possible. (Philippians 4:13, Luke 1:37)

The question is how do we enter into the new creation? How do we find the transformation in Easter? We need to reclaim our faith traditions and reorient ourselves towards the experience of Holy Week and into the Easter season. If we can walk with Jesus' disciples during Holy Week and experience their anguish and fear, then we can experience the fullness of a renewed life on Easter Day. The best way to do this is to make Holy Week a priority beginning with Palm Sunday worship, practicing a daily devotion (I recommend Daily 365 <https://d365.org/>), the Tenebrae Maundy Thursday service where we will partake in the Lord's Supper, our Good Friday concert featuring the "Seven Last Words of Christ" by Théodore Dubois, and worship on Easter Sunday. If you take the steps to practice this Holy Week Ritual, I think you will be awakened to the joy and hope that is in Easter Sunday.



Grace and peace,

**Christine Dempsey**  
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### A Prayer for the 5th Sunday in Lent

Christ our Savior, you call us by name,  
leading us from death into eternal life.  
Awaken and unbind us by your Word,  
so that we may live and grow in faith,  
sharing your saving love with others;  
for you are the resurrection and the life.

Prayer Provided by PC(USA) | based on John 11:1-45



### The View from My Office

#### KEEP OUR VISION FOCUSED

Join Us Inside!

Let's Finish This Together!

It is exciting to see changes happening each day with the Welcome Center. This week, the new ceiling for the Narthex is being installed with new light fixtures and speakers. New sidewalks were poured outside the new front door under the covered entrance. Grading is being done to connect the north and south parking lots and soon concrete will be poured. Drywall is going up inside and windows are next to be installed.

In the midst of all this construction activity, I have taken the time to consider how we, as a congregation, will make our final payments to the contractor. Sometimes I enjoy creating spreadsheets. I know that over 75% of our current pledges have been completely paid. But after a couple weeks of launching the latest phase for funds 'Join Us Inside,' I understand we will still need to raise approximately **\$357,000** more.

Many responses have been received to our final call to support this project with being 100% pledged with no long-term debt.

I look forward to hearing from you if you are yet considering your investment in our church's future. Let's open our new front door debt free together!

#### B&G BUSINESS AS USUAL

Repairs to drywall and paint for the Sanctuary side aisle ceilings was done by Jerry Cornett. Painting the restroom alcoves was done by Roger Utman and Anna Sumner. Replacing drainpipe sleeves in the upper ceiling area over the library which was causing a small leak was done by Chris Voss. Moving clocks forward for daylight savings time was done by Casey Ballou. Painting the inside of the return vents in Fellowship Hall was done by Mike Howland.

The lower-level corridor water fountain has been replaced. A basketball hoop will be installed in the north lot by mid-April.

This is a busy building! Thanks for everyone's efforts to keep our building in good repair, as new areas are being constructed and other areas of our facility are aging and need our attention.

### HAPPY FOR YOUR FRIENDSHIPS

Anna and I feel grateful that we have a caring and loving church family. My mom's journey through end of life gave her family time to care for her, love her, and simply be with her. A family member was with her each day of her 4-month hospice treatment.

We are particularly grateful for the competent and caring staff that helped us in the three senior facilities she chose to reside in for the past seven years. Each move allowed her to thrive with changing health circumstances. These care providers are a credit to their profession, the City of Watertown, and to their own families. We are blessed.

Anna and I want to say thank you to our church family for your many calls, text messages, emails, hugs, kind words, and support. You have been our stronghold. Many cards had lovely messages and we'd like to share this one.

We remember people for different reasons –  
a great laugh,  
a unique perspective,  
a story shared.

But mostly, we remember –  
a life well-lived  
and honor a person well loved.

May each of you feel well loved.



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**Finance Committee Moderator:** Mimi Bauer

**Building and Grounds Committee Moderator:**  
Casey Ballou

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**Spring Cleanup on April 29**  
**9 a.m. to Noon**



Bring your clippers and snippers to help us clean up the landscaped areas of the church grounds. We'll start with donuts and coffee before we get to work!



## Parade of Palms April 2

Children of all ages are invited to participate in the Parade of Palms on Palm Sunday, April 2 during both services. Meet Heather in the Narthex 10 minutes before worship starts to receive your palm and instructions. Parents, if your children are too shy to walk by themselves, please feel free to join our parade. The more the merrier!



### Important Dates to Remember

<b>April 2</b>	<b>Children's Palm Parade, 9 and 11:10 a.m.</b>
<b>April 8</b>	<b>Easter Egg Hunt, 10 a.m.</b>
<b>April 16</b>	<b>Confirmation Sunday</b>
<b>May 7</b>	<b>Youth Sunday/Senior Brunch</b>
<b>May 21</b>	<b>CE Recognition Sunday</b>
<b>June 13-15</b>	<b>Vacation Bible School</b>

## One Great Hour of Sharing April 9



One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) is the single largest way the Presbyterians come together every year to work for a better world. This special offering enables us to share God's love with our neighbors in need around the world by providing relief from natural disasters, food for the hungry, and support for the poor and oppressed.

Our Sunday School children were given their Gracie fish banks a few weeks ago. During the season of Lent, children are encouraged to fill up their banks and bring them back to church on Easter Sunday, April 9. Look for the baskets outside the doors to the Sanctuary to drop off your fish banks.

## Confirmation Sunday April 16

Our Confirmation Class has been working hard all year long learning all about our faith, and now is the time for them to officially join the church. Come support them in worship on Sunday, April 16 as they take their vows of membership. A reception in their honor is planned for 10:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall. All are invited to attend!

## Celebrating Women Baskets Silent Auction

Do you have a special woman in your life that deserves to be pampered? Not sure what to get her? Well look no further, because SHF is assembling baskets just in time for Mother's Day. The silent auction begins on April 23 and bidding ends on May 7. Come by the Lobby and find the perfect gift for the woman in your life. You'll be notified right after late church on May 7 if you win. As always, thanks for your support!

## Vacation Bible School June 13-15 (Tuesday-Thursday) 9 a.m. - noon

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.

Registration is open! Make sure your children don't miss out on the fun. Get them registered online today!



## Garage Sale News

SHF will not be sponsoring a church garage sale this summer. We are going to take a year off! Please save your treasures for next year's sale.



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**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



## Guest Organists in Coming Weeks

When Dana Sloan (our organist for 48 years!) passed away last August, we were incredibly fortunate to have Annette White step into the position of organist/accompanist with ease. Annette has faithfully led worship from the organ for two services every Sunday and has played for Alleluia and Chamber Singers every Wednesday evening—a Herculean task!

Annette would eventually like to go back to being a substitute. In order to make her load a bit lighter, we may invite a substitute organist to play from time to time at the 9:00 service, or you might find Kristi accompanying the hymns at the piano. In addition, the church has formed a Search Committee and is posting a job position for Organist/Accompanist. Please help us spread the word if you know of anyone in the community who has the skills needed for this important position. The job posting can be found on the church website.

## Calmus Vocal Ensemble at Vesper Concerts on Wednesday, April 12

We were sad that they couldn't make it last December, but Vesper Concerts is thrilled that Calmus was able to reschedule their U.S. tour and will be in Omaha on Wednesday evening, April 12, at 7:00 p.m. Their program is called "Love. Amen!"



Read these notes from Calmus describing the program:

"The program is a whole cosmos of feelings associated with love. Love not only gives rise to happiness, joy, pride, and hope, but also to disappointment, anger, and revenge."

"In 'Love. Amen!', Calmus dedicates itself to all these spectrums of love, but first and foremost to divine love, which for many people is an elixir of life in times of uncertainty, grief, or need."

"With the program 'Love. Amen!', Calmus sends a message of compassion and caring in times of division. For as Dr. Martin Luther King said, 'Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.'"

## Spend "An Evening with Invoke" on Friday, May 5

Invoke is a string quartet with a contemporary twist. Described as "...not classical but not, not classical...beautiful, adventurous, American and immediately engaging" (David Srebnik, former SiriusXM Classical Producer), Invoke strives to successfully dodge even the most valiant attempts at genre classification. The multi-instrumental quartet encompasses traditions from across America, including bluegrass, Appalachian fiddle tunes, jazz, and minimalism. We hope you can join us for the last concert of the season on Friday, May 5, at 7:00 p.m.



**Kristi Treu**

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Director of Vesper Concerts  
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**Worship & Music Committee Moderator:**  
Jayne Frederickson

## The Worship & Music Committee Needs a Few More Sunday Ushers!

If you can serve in ministry as an usher, please sign up online for one of our open Sundays this spring! Questions? Ask Jayne Frederickson.





- 4/1 Ardith Clary
- 4/2 Betsy Conway, Will Morris, Scott Stalnaker
- 4/3 Max Darling, Janelle Davis,  
Colleen McGrath
- 4/4 Jeff Friesen, Tim Goodman
- 4/6 Ron Bowers
- 4/7 Sue Allen, Jim Chapin, Matt Darling,  
Nicholas McGrath, Jeff Schiessler,  
Nancy Utman
- 4/8 Sophia Buda, Mimi Labah, Charles Knight
- 4/9 Evalyn Mathia, Frank McMullen
- 4/10 Marilyn Fitch, Penny Morgan, Rita Seiler
- 4/11 Joan Carnaby, Jim Miller, Craig Moore
- 4/12 Sunny Karges
- 4/14 Everly Lorentzen
- 4/15 Logan Voss
- 4/16 Erika Cornett, Jacquie Kluck
- 4/17 Diane Hammang, Jackson Morris
- 4/18 Jamie Bougger, Noel Johnson, Sue Kiel
- 4/19 Adalyn Spielman
- 4/20 Kerri Davelaar, Zachary Metzger
- 4/21 Lily Haas, Matt Karges, David Paul
- 4/23 Michael Kussman, Marsha Marron,  
Darrell Stuedemann, Judy Sundberg
- 4/24 Brynn Stalnaker
- 4/25 Evan Graumann, Sue Meusey
- 4/26 Moira Hopp, Meghan McClain
- 4/27 Paul Holubeck, Laura Linder, A J Sundberg
- 4/28 Pauline Lundgren, Jennifer Paisley
- 4/29 Paul Thomas
- 4/30 Timothy Harrison, Daniel Hinz,  
Garrett Moore



Florence Howell, member since 1979, passed away on February 25, 2023. A memorial service and reception were held at the church on March 18.

Jackie Upah, member since 1988, passed away on March 9 in North Carolina. Jackie had moved in recent years to be closer to her daughter. Cards may be sent to Noelle Upah at 5617 Closeburn Road, Charlotte, NC 28210.

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

### 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

### PCOC . . . It's Where You Belong!

Do you know someone who is looking for a church home? Invite them to visit PCOC — our Holy Week worship services will be a wonderful example of what our church has to offer.



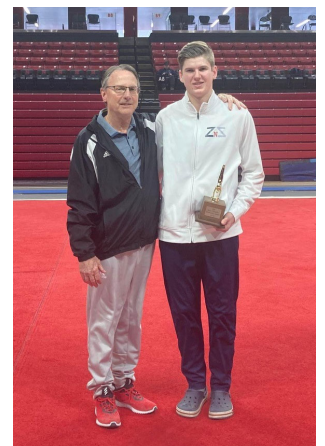
Our next new member discussion will be held on Sunday, June 11 after the worship service. The discussion will last about an hour, and a light lunch will be provided.



Scan our QR code to sign up online or call the church office to register!

### Church Member Kudos

Congratulations to church member James Fuller on being named the winner of the Ken Chmelka Memorial Award. This award is given to a gymnast who displays integrity, work ethic, teamwork, and sportsmanship. James is the son of Valerie Fuller. Well done, James!



### Membership Committee Co-Moderators:

Amy Boesen & Brenda Graumann





## Active Minds in April

Active Minds will focus on the card game of Spades and the board game of Rummikub for the month of April. These are great to play with grandkids or adults. Join us when your schedule allows. Tuesdays, lower level, 2-4 pm. Direct questions to Earlene.

**Coordinator: Earlene Uhrig**

## Presbyterian Women on April 6

You're invited to Presbyterian Women's Circle on Thursday, April 6 at 9:00 a.m. in Room 15. Ruth Madison will share Lesson 8, Sabbath and Justice. Questions? Contact Cindy Nisley.

**Coordinator: Cindy Nisley**



## Cross Roads for Young Adults April 2 After Late Worship



Young adults (ages 20-40) will meet after late worship on April 2 at the circle drive doors. We will get pizza, have a sermon talk-back, and enjoy fellowship.

**Coordinator: Pastor Christine**

## Save the Date for YA Mission Trip!

Our young adult summer mission trip will be June 22-June 25 at Calvin Crest. More details coming soon.

## 49ers on April 4

Our speaker for Tuesday, April 4 will be Carl Greiner M.D., retired professor of psychiatry from UNMC. Carl, a member of PCOC, taught psychiatrists in training for 33 years. His presentation "How a Psychiatrist Thinks" will cover how psychiatrists access new patients. He will describe the biopsychosocial model for understanding a patient's life. Ample time will be left for questions. 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**



## Book Group on Wednesday, April 12

PCOC Book Group will meet Wednesday April 12 from 5:15 to 6:30 p.m. to discuss *Law Man* by Shon Hopwood. All readers are welcome!

**Coordinator: June Fetting**

## Friday Night Gourmets on April 14

Please join us at The Panda House, Chinese restaurant, at 14459 W. Center Road. We will order from the menu and have separate checks. Sign up at the Information Desk. Looking forward to seeing all of you there! Questions? Call one of the hosts:

Nancy Koehler

Kim Banat & Betty Goodwin

Susan Price

## Tables for Eight Spring/Summer Session

The deadline for registration for the Spring/Summer session (May, June, July and August) is April 10. New participants (couples or singles) are always welcome to join this fellowship opportunity as "regulars" or "substitutes." Specific details on how "Tables for Eight" works are on the registration form, and the form is available at the Information Desk or on the church website.

Please Note: If you are currently in a group and want to participate next session, you do not have to sign up again; you will automatically be put in a new group. However, if you do not want to participate or want to change to a "sub", please notify Pam Otto before April 10.

## 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**

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## Congregational Life Committee Co-Moderators:

Kathy Nickel & Stephanie Weaver —

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**Mission Committee Moderator:**  
Anne Wattles

## The Mission Committee Mailbox

The Mission Committee would like to share with you some of the mail we receive every month from the organizations which are the grateful recipients of your generosity. For January through early March, we have received these thank you notes from the following mission partners:

- Calvin Crest for the impact your giving has on the lives and faith of their camping families
- Siena Francis House for assisting in fulfilling their mission of welcoming and empowering those experiencing homelessness
- Heartland Hope Mission so they can continue to meet the needs of poor families
- Habitat for Humanity for our gift which helped provide 65 affordable homeownership opportunities
- Together, Inc. so they can continue with their mission of preventing and ending homelessness.

The total Mission dollars sent to the above organizations was over \$22,300. THANK YOU for your generosity!

## Support Siena Francis House in April

Our next date to serve dinner at Siena Francis House is Sunday, April 9. We need at least 6 volunteers to serve from 4:15 to 6:15 p.m. Please consider giving your time to this mission. Questions? Contact Keith Allen. Scan our QR code to sign up online via the church website.



## Have You Heard the Good News?

Exciting things are happening for our church family this spring! We are expecting a refugee family in Omaha, assigned to us through our partnership with Lutheran Family Services. We are anxious to help these new friends get settled and begin their adventure in our country.

The Refugee Assistance subcommittee (of the Mission Committee) has been preparing for the arrival since last fall. The PCOC Mission Committee has approved our plan, and now we want to share this outreach with you. You may have seen the "doll house" outside the church office - now we are inviting you to be part of furnishing the house to welcome our new family.

Choose a heart from the "clothesline" of items; each one represents a needed item for the family's home. For those who have already found the clothesline and have articles to offer, the donation bins are in the office lobby.



We also hope to receive donations of the following furniture items.

- Sofa (no sofa sleepers)
- End tables
- Chairs for the living room
- Dining room table and chairs (6-8 chairs)
- Dressers for bedrooms
- Flat screen TV
- TV stand or table
- Living room and bedroom lamps

If you have any of these items to donate, contact Roger Utman. Please provide dimensions and a picture of each item.

We are unable to provide storage or pick-up of any item(s) prior to the time the family is due to arrive.

We will keep you informed about our progress and our family's arrival - we want you to feel part of this family affair. We are blessed to be a blessing to this refugee family. Thanks be to God!

If you have questions about the refugee support effort, please contact Jeanne Smay.

## Mission Travelers Return from Lithuania

Four members of PCOC have returned from their trip to Lithuania, brimming with enthusiasm for what they saw and heard from several organizations serving refugees, students from war-torn countries, and the environment. The trip was sponsored by the BURM Network of the Presbyterian Church (USA), which our church belongs to, and was led by our friend, mission worker Ellen Smith. The purpose of this trip was to explore and learn from organizations outside of Belarus, Ukraine, and Russia about the ways they are finding to respond to the war crisis. Watch for the team's report to the congregation once they have recovered from jet lag!



## Heartland Hope Mission – More Than a Pantry

Heartland Hope Mission helps working poor families by providing some of life's most basic staples including: a week's supply of food, clothing, hygiene items, SNAP assistance, community referrals, and job resources. Heartland Hope Mission is a faith-based organization that also offers Bible studies and prayer.

For Thanksgiving and Christmas, they provide groceries to prepare full holiday meals. They also provide age-appropriate new toys for parents to take home and wrap for their children to open on Christmas.

Right: Alena and Mary Lynn Bennett are pictured by the gift tables from which the parents choose gifts for their children.



Since June 2009, PCOC has partnered with HHM as one of our major mission partners. We support them financially through our mission budget and with donation of non-perishable grocery and hygiene items each month for their pantry. We have also provided over 150 children's gifts each year for their Christmas celebration.

Right: Pantry collection delivery from PCOC – Feb. 2023



HHM has grown from where they started in a modest fixer-upper house in South Omaha to having two expansive facilities, one in South Omaha and the other in West O. They currently have three pantry distributions per week in South Omaha and one per week in West O. By summer of 2023, the West O location will be expanding their weekly pantry schedule. HHM also provides pantry services to a native American reservation north of Omaha, an emergency mobile pantry, and a home delivery service to the elderly. Here are a few statistics about their support during 2022:

- 63,000 individuals received a food pantry from HHM
- 10,571 family members received holiday assistance
- 8,091 diaper packs were distributed
- PCOC donated 2,321 lbs. of groceries and 722 lbs. of hygiene products, which averages 193 lbs. groceries and 60 lbs. of hygiene products per month in 2022! Let's continue our good work by supporting the next Pantry Sunday on April 16! Bring your items to church with you or drop them inside the circle drive doors



**High Need Items**  
**Heartland Hope**  
MISSION

<b>Food Items:</b>	<b>Hygiene Items:</b>
Peanut Butter	Baby Diapers
Canned Fruit	(most needed size 4-6)
Canned Corn	Baby Wipes
Mac & Cheese	Full-Size Shampoo
Cereal	Full-Size Body Wash
Pasta	Toilet Paper
Pasta Sauce	Toothpaste

anytime.

HHM is "More Than A Pantry" in so many wonderful ways. To learn more about them and sign up to volunteer at an HHM pantry visit <https://heartlandhopemission.org/>.

## Voices for Children Update

The first quarter of 2023 has been action-packed for Voices for Children. In addition to the four staff brought on during the last half of 2022, LaKeisha Phelps joined the staff as the new Youth and Family Engagement Coordinator, an intern will be working with them throughout the second semester and a new Fund Development and Marketing Manager joined the team just this month.

The Legislative Session is in full swing with several bills affecting Nebraska's children, both positively and negatively. They send out a very informative Advokid alert periodically. If you aren't on the email list, please sign up by going to their website [www.voicesforchildren.com](http://www.voicesforchildren.com).

They will be releasing the next Kids Count Report in April or May, and there is significant information on their website from the Report released last fall.

Volunteer opportunities exist on the Special Events Committee to help prepare for the 2023 Annual Event. It will be held on Friday, September 22 at the Livestock Exchange Building. Most of the meetings are via Zoom and will be held quarterly. PCOC members Amy Boesen and Kathy Moore will be serving on that committee and would love to have additional volunteers join them. Current Board Members from PCOC are John Stalnaker and Christina Kahler.



Above: Voices for Children Board of Directors

Voices for Children will be moving their office in the next month or so, downsizing substantially to accommodate the new workforce accommodations of frequent remote work, etc. We will let you know when they have relocated.

## Agape for All News

This month we celebrate great initiatives and opportunities all around us. There are books to read, lectures to attend, videos to watch, and conversations to start.

Would you like to smile today, to breath more deeply, and see progress in our journey toward more respect? Watch this short video of a young child reciting his beautiful poem.

<https://youtu.be/wxJwmJO85VI>

### New Adult Education Offering

Plan to join us on Sundays at 10 a.m. on April 16 through May 7 for “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!

### Challenge Yourself to Learn More

Learn more about one or more of these Omaha organizations that are doing racial justice work:

- **Omaha Community Council for Racial Justice and Reconciliation** is a network of organizations and citizens that have come together to coordinate efforts to memorialize victims of lynching in Douglas County and to raise awareness of the community's legacy of racial violence and injustice. The Steering Committee includes representatives from Omaha NAACP, Great Plains Black History Museum, Omaha Human Rights & Relations Dept, Creighton University, Urban League of Nebraska, OPS, and Black Votes Matter.

(continued on page 12)



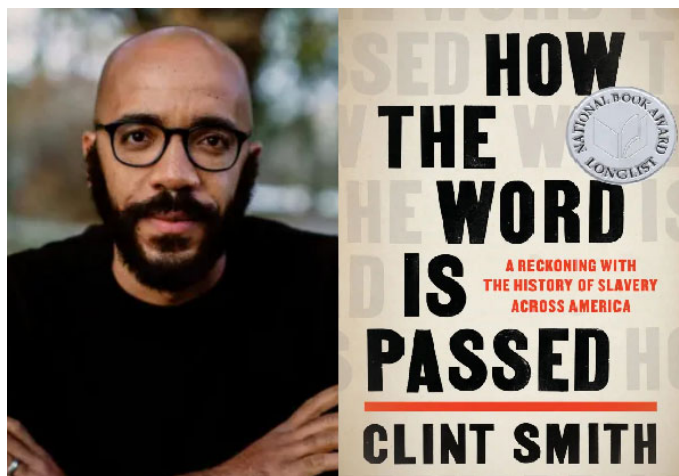


## Agape for All News (continued from page 11)

- **Inclusive Communities** hosts Table Talk to facilitate discussions that foster an understanding of differences and greater respect to help eliminate prejudice and inequities in our community.
- **Movement in Omaha for Racial Equity (MORE)** is fighting for racial equity through engagement, education, and advocacy. They hosted a meeting on critical race theory with Inclusive Communities and others.
- **Tri-Faith Initiative** recently hosted its first annual Race, Religion, and Social Justice conference. Areas of focus included belief, behavior and belonging; religious pluralism; intersectional identities; postcolonial formations of power and whiteness; race, truth and reconciliation; identity formation; collaboration and conflict; and bridging differences.
- **And many more organizations:** NAACP, Fabric Lab, Omaha 360, 100 Black Women, Urban League, League of Women Voters of Greater Omaha, 100 Black Men, Black Men United, ADL (Antidifamation League), Black Votes Matter, and Empowerment

## Save the Date: June 7, 2023 for an "Evening with Clint Smith"

You won't want to miss the opening keynote address for the 2023 Race, Religion, and Social Justice Conference. It will start at 7:00 p.m. at Temple Israel at the Tri Faith Center, Omaha.



The keynote speaker is author Clint Smith. Clint was born and raised in New Orleans, and he received his BA in English from Davidson College and his PhD in Education from Harvard University. He is the author of the narrative nonfiction book,

*How the Word Is Passed: A Reckoning With the History of Slavery Across America*, which was a #1 New York Times bestseller, winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award for Nonfiction, the Hillman Prize for Book Journalism, the Stowe Prize, Longlisted for the National Book Award, and selected by the New York Times as one of the 10 best books of 2021. He is also the author of the poetry collection *Counting Descent*, which won the 2017 Literary Award for Best Poetry Book from the Black Caucus of the American Library Association and was a finalist for an NAACP Image Award. He is a staff writer at The Atlantic magazine.

## Join a Book Discussion

The Presbyterian Women in the PC(USA) Justice and Peace Committee is hosting a series of book discussion groups in 2023, and you're invited to participate! The book discussions will be held on Zoom, bimonthly on the second Monday, 6:30–8:30 p.m. (Eastern). It's free to participate, but registration is required. The upcoming books and discussion dates are shown below.



Learn more about the book discussions (including the three books already covered) and register at [www.presbyterianwomen.org/what\\_we\\_do/work-for-justice/](http://www.presbyterianwomen.org/what_we_do/work-for-justice/).

## Check Out the PCOC Library

The PCOC library has a growing social justice section. Find the full list of our social justice titles on the church website at [www.churchofthecrossomaha.org/agape/#library](http://www.churchofthecrossomaha.org/agape/#library)

Perhaps you might choose a good book and submit a book report to us. It might be shared in an upcoming *Cross Currents*!

### Agape for All Book Report

#### *A Warrior of the People: How Susan La Flesche Overcame Racial and Gender Inequality to Become America's First Indian Doctor*

by Joe Starita

Submitted by Ann Pearson

If Presbyterians anointed saints, Dr. Susan La Flesche Picotte would be the first one. Part of the excitement of reading this book was to find that the Presbyterians of her time played an essential role in her success as a missionary in the Native American community and the building of a hospital for Indians and all the people of Walt Hills, Nebraska. This involvement included the Blackbird Hills Presbyterian Church where she and her sister were active members.

Hers is the story of a remarkable woman who started out as the youngest daughter of Joseph La Flesche ("Iron Eyes") who was a key figure in the life of the Omaha tribe during the 1880's. "Iron Eyes" had European ancestry via his father who was a French trader. Joseph LaFlesche grew up understanding that the only way for Native Americans to avoid complete annihilation by the white settlers "flooding in" from the East Coast was to adapt to the new culture. His idea involved a blending of cultures, not a complete obliteration of the Omaha Tribe's lifestyle and customs.

Because of his leadership position he was able to spend some time on the East Coast where he realized the necessity for some kind of accommodation to the white people heading West. He insisted that his own children experience and accept aspects of the white culture. For Susan and her older sisters and brother this included learning English and being sent to schools on the East Coast.

Susan made numerous friends and impressed very important people during this earlier part of her life, but she never abandoned the idea of returning to her Omaha people. The incident that prompted this determination was one in which she watched a small Indian child die because a white doctor would not take the time to treat her. So in spite of the exciting times she had out East, she eventually returned to serve her people as a desperately needed physician in 1890. Her initial position was at the reservation government boarding school run by Office of Indian Affairs.

As phenomenal as her life had been up to this point, what follows in the next 20 years is even more extraordinary. She works long days and nights serving not only children at the school, but spending hours on horseback or in a wagon to deliver care all over the reservation. This meant hours between patients, often at night. She became

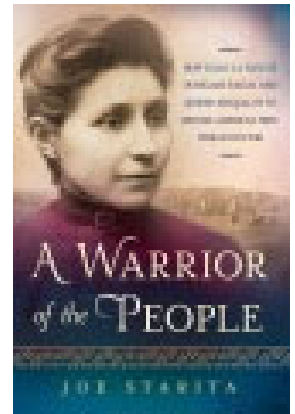
such a trusted and beloved member of the community that they would come to her for all kinds of help having nothing to do with health issues. She gladly provided it for them. She was especially persistent in pursuing government officials for simple services to help with community health issues. . She was passionate about educating her people about Tuberculosis, flies, and the importance of clean homes and fresh air. Her greatest frustration was fighting the scourge of alcoholism among the Tribe. At one point her father had brought the situation under control, but local government officials destroyed this when they changed the laws so that the white businesses could sell alcohol to the Indians. This happened simply so the white community could profit from the Indians weakness for alcohol.

All throughout her incredible life of service, political advocacy, raising her family, and caring for her sick parents, she suffered from a chronic and excruciatingly painful illness that they finally diagnosed as a form of cancer of the bone. An interesting point is that Dr. Marie Curie sent her a radium pill to treat her pain. A very "close to home" moment occurs when she comes to Omaha's Methodist Hospital for treatment toward the end of her life. She died at the young age of 49.

As I finished this book, I found myself exhausted and weeping. I've read very few biographies of a human being (man or woman), who has accomplished so much, with such limited means, under such heartbreaking conditions, in such physical pain, and with such love and utter devotion.

And we Presbyterians can humbly and gratefully say we were an essential part of her life.

This book was the Best Nonfiction Biography 2017 Nebraska Center for the Book Award Winner.



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**Next Cross Currents Deadline is:  
Third Friday of the month  
April 21, 2022**



## DEACONS UPDATE

The Red Cross blood drive hosted by the Deacons was a success! The following was provided by our Red Cross contact Briana DeSadier:

- 24 heroes registered to give
- 21 units of lifesaving blood were collected
- 63 lives will be impacted/saved
- 3 donors were unable to donate or their finish donation for various reasons.

The next Deacons sponsored blood drive at PCOC is tentatively scheduled for Sunday September 24, 2023.

Neighborhood care is an ongoing Deacons activity. The Deacons have created a map that breaks up the greater Omaha area into zones and have assigned a

Deacon to each zone. Generally speaking, the Deacon assigned will reside inside or very close to the neighborhood zone to which they are assigned. So, if the Deacon assigned to your neighborhood reaches out to you, don't hesitate to tell them if there is some way they can serve you.

Another activity the Deacons perform this time of year is preparing Easter Baskets for more than 50 home-bound members. The Deacons purchase, fill the baskets/bags, and deliver them before Easter weekend.

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**Deacons Moderator:**  
Neal Hubbard

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### 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.

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