

Looking Ahead

On July 2, we will celebrate Pastor Christine Dempsey's ministry with us over these past four years. Arriving in the fall of 2019, right before COVID, Christine barely had time to learn our names before we had to close our doors and start livestreaming and Zooming to keep in touch. Over these last years together, Pastor Christine has reached out to our congregation time and time again, through her many visits and phone calls, through the classes she's taught, through the groups she's helped shepherd (Deacons, Cross Care, Membership, Congregational Life, Confirmation, and Young Adults), and through countless conversations in Fellowship Hall. She will be missed!

In time, an Associate Pastor Nominating Committee will be formed to search for and identify our next Associate Pastor. The presbytery will guide and assist us in the process. A timeline will be developed, and input from the congregation and committees will be sought out. There is much work ahead of us, as together we seek the Lord's will for future pastoral leadership. To that end, please be in extra prayer for our church as we enter this new chapter.

In the Presbyterian Church, pastors are identified and called to specific churches through a process that is shared by local congregations and presbyteries working together. Our church is soon to be embarking on this process. Our first event will be a Congregational Lunch & Learn on July 30. The church will provide lunch that day, and members from our presbytery will guide us through a discernment process where we will all get a chance to share our ideas about who we are as a church, and what gifts and skills our next Associate Pastor should bring to us. You'll soon be hearing more about this.



If you are wondering about your role in all of this, I've provided some additional guidance on page 11 of this issue.

Remembering that God is faithful,

P.S.

If you're part of the Tuesday Bible Studies, we are on break for a couple of weeks and will resume on July 11.



Pastor/Head of Staff
Marshall Zieman
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Moving Forward in God's Grace

Do you know what the very last verse of the New Testament says? (This is a good confirmation question.) It says, "The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the Saints. Amen." (Revelation 22:21) This is really a remarkable final statement in our faith. With all the stories, miracles, guidance, and instructions, the final words are about God's grace. It is a reminder how the story of God from the beginning to its end is about God's love, and how this perfect love works through imperfect people. As I think about the breadth of scripture, how people have served, and how we are called to serve now, I am awed, and I am thankful. As I write this *Cross Currents* article today, I look back on how we have served God during the past four years and how we will continue to serve God in the future. Just like our last verse of scripture, the grace of Lord Jesus is with us now and as we move forward.

When I started at Church of the Cross in August of 2019, we had no idea of the global pandemic waiting in the wings. As I look back, the pastoral prayers during my first few months at Church of the Cross, I note that I mentioned the fear of possible pandemic in November of 2019. Nobody at that point could have imagined a world where we would shut down and life would come to a halt. I found a note a year later where I lamented that I had served at Church of the Cross longer in COVID than I had without it. The other major event to impact my ministry at Church of the Cross is the invasion of Ukraine. It was an unexpected world event; it was a war that no one thought would happen in Europe in this modern age. It stripped us of regular communication with our mission partner, it brought up memories of many of earlier twentieth-century wars, and for all, it reminded us about the fragility of our humanness.

Yet, here at Church of the Cross, we turned to our faith. As we read in Psalm 46:1, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." As we know, we were able to move forward with our building project, continue to worship and fellowship through video conferencing, and to build practices of giving that would sustain us. These are lessons about faith and about how God continues to work in and through us. While we know our story, for me being part of this story as a newly ordained pastor continues to amaze me, and I regularly give thanks to God that he sent me to you, to show me how you, as Christ's disciples, live into your

discipleship and how you are a blessing to each other.

It is with my deepest gratitude that I continue to enjoy the hundreds of cards that you sent me when my mother passed in 2020. They sustained me and my family when COVID-19 stole away a proper good-bye and longed-for hugs from family and friends.

My heart sings when words in a sermon or a prayer somehow made your day a little brighter. And, I have been truly honored to be at your bedside when you are sick. I will miss you all, so much, but the memories will not go away, and my sincere care for you will not end.

I am thankful for you, and I am truly honored that you have been such an important part of my discipleship journey. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.



Grace and peace,

Christine Dempsey
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christine@pcoc.us

Farewell Celebration & Brunch for Rev. Christine Dempsey July 2 after Worship

Rev. Christine Dempsey is answering a new call as Pastor of Presbyterian Community Church of the Rockies in Estes Park, Colorado. She will be greatly missed at PCOC! Please join us for a farewell celebration in her honor. Cards are welcome!

If you have not yet RSVP'd, please do so by returning your reservation form (received earlier this month by mail). It will help us to prepare the right amount of food.



Vesper Concerts 35th Year

Vesper Concerts is celebrating a wonderful milestone—our 35th season! Year after year Vesper Concerts raises the musical bar by featuring incredible local, regional, national, and international talent for our Omaha audiences.

Now our 35th season takes us to even greater heights! From beautiful works of Schubert for string quartet, to a boisterous New Orleans-style brass band, to everything you can imagine in between -- our Small Space will be overflowing with Big Music.

Perhaps our biggest news is that The Queen's Six vocal ensemble is coming to us from St. George's Chapel, whose home lies within the walls of Windsor Castle in London. Maybe you've heard them sing at both Prince Philip's and Queen Elizabeth's funerals or at the wedding of Prince Harry and Ms. Meghan Markle. We are very lucky to bring them to Nebraska for the very first time.



We will conclude our 35th season by paying tribute to the vision of Vesper Concerts' founder, Dana Sloan, with a memorial organ concert in May 2024. Dr. David von Behren, a native Nebraskan and internationally acclaimed organist, who currently teaches and performs at Memorial Church at Harvard University will be our guest recitalist.

With this special concert, Vesper Concerts will have come full circle since that very first organ recital in September 1989.

You can find all the information on our website, www.vesperconcerts.org. While you are there, be sure to sign up for our email newsletter list. Or, email Kristi at kristi@pcoc.us to have your address



added to our direct mailing list.

Join Alleluia Singers for Summer Choir Sundays

There are two more opportunities for you to sing with us for Summer Choir on July 16 and August 13. Join us in the choir rehearsal room at 9:00 a.m. We'll rehearse a few simple (but beautiful) pieces to sing at the 10:00 worship service. This is a great time to try choir on for size without making a large time commitment. Please email Kristi Treu at kristi@pcoc.us to let her know you are coming.



Kristi Treu

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

Worship & Music Committee Moderator:
Jayne Frederickson

Summer Ushers Needed

We are looking for ushers through Sunday, September 3. No experience needed! Families are welcome to sign up. We will send emails to all who sign up with directions about your usher duties.





The View from My Office

VOLUNTEER DOOR ACCESS CODE UPDATED — CONTACT ROCK TO OBTAIN NEW CODE.



B&G THANKS MANY GARDENERS

Lowell Wilhite and Peg Conley are organizing and recognizing our summer garden volunteers. Recently, Lowell thought it would be a grand idea to recognize who was caring for which landscaped area.

Lowell worked with Anna Sumner to design a dozen garden signs to do just that. Above is a sample of the sign and the beauty of our abundant gardens.

This summer, we also added many new landscaped areas with our new addition. The former single south parking lot island has expanded to three islands.

If you get a chance, thank the following individuals for their efforts: Tim Goodman, Roger & Nancy Utman, Gary Fitch, Pauline Lundgren, Paula Allen, Patty Ritchie, Kathy Moore, Linda Matson, Karen & Don Metzger, Helen Kort, Andrew Ebert, Anna & Rock Sumner, Peg Conley, and Lowell Wilhite.

FINANCIAL OUTLOOK

In June, financial or giving statements were mailed

out to members. Thank you to everyone who took the time to compare the church records with their personal records. It is always easier to adjust differences before the year ends.

I also included a note about this year's Per Capita giving being behind normal giving trends. Again, thank you to the members who have responded during June to keep our giving strong in this area.

CONGREGATIONAL HARMONY

When Pastor Christine accepted her new call in Estes Park, everyone on staff stepped up to handle a portion of what she does for our church. For me, that meant another committee meeting each month with Congregational Life!

At my first meeting, the ladies presented me with a beautiful card signed by many of you in memory of my mom who passed away in February. They also included a gift of \$840 to use in my mom's memory at Church of the Cross. Oh my gosh! I was stunned and speechless – yes, that doesn't happen often.

Thank you again for your heartfelt words, prayers, and gift. Our church family is very close to our hearts in the Sumner home.

On July 2, Congregational Life will host a farewell brunch for Pastor Christine as we celebrate her ministry with our church and wish her well on her next call in Estes Park.

Then, on July 30, Congregational Life will host a Lunch & Learn session. We will begin with a box-lunch and participate in a congregational meeting to begin our discernment phase of setting up our next Associate Pastor Nominating Committee. The meeting should last approxi-



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Finance Committee Moderator: Mimi Bauer

Building and Grounds Committee Moderator:
Casey Ballou

WELCOME CENTER UPDATE

KEEP OUR VISION FOCUSED
Opening SOON!

FIREPLACE READY TO ENJOY!

Everyday on the worksite is exciting and full of surprises! So many items are being changed daily. For instance, on June 5, the fireplace in the Welcome Center was lit for the first time—its inaugural burning! Marshall suggested we get out and buy a bag of marshmallows. However, we simply enjoyed the morning and basked in its flame.



Later in June, I asked the Kahler family if they'd take a family fireplace portrait! They said, "YES!"

Next time you are in the Welcome Center take a moment to examine the Italian tile that was mounted with large pieces and precision cuts to make this featured element in the Hearth Room. It is most spectacular. And for us old-timers, it is great to know that craftsmen are still at work on construction sites. The new fireplace tile is a work of beauty both inside and outside.

FURNISH THE WELCOME CENTER

The next photo shows the sample of the new round 60-inch tables on wheels. These are manufactured quite well and will hold up to use and storage in the Welcome Center area. Tables can be easily pulled out and set up for special events.



We have selected the same folding chairs and rack that is used in Fellowship Hall. We are hopeful that we can fill the rack with 30 donated chairs.

Our committee wants the room to be usable for all groups as soon as we have access to the space.

ONGOING GIVING OPPORTUNITIES WELCOME CENTER NEEDS

- Funds for Classroom 16 furnishings, tables, chairs, audio equipment - \$17,000.
- Funds for Welcome Center furnishings include two armchairs, an upholstered ottoman, coffee table, and two modular seating sectionals. Prices for individual pieces are available, together – \$20,000.
- Funds for Welcome Center 30 folding chairs with cart - \$1,350. The chairs are \$45 each, the cart is an additional \$750.
- Funds for Welcome Center furnishings, 4 round tables - \$1,750 each or \$6,900.

In June, B&G was considering repairing the timbers on the east side outdoor stairwell. After pulling two, we decided that the original landscaping tiers were also in need of considerable repair or replacement. Presently, we are pricing the concrete work to replace the stairs to help make the climb up or down to the playground area a safe path for everyone.

We are also considering having the 114th Street monument sign moved south towards the new entrance for the south parking lot. It will be a new design and let our guests know where to enter and park for worship, funerals, weddings, Vesper Concerts or other special events. Look for this new sign to be installed later this fall.

If you would like to help provide furnishings or help underwrite other expenses through an additional gift to the church, please contact Rock in the church office at 402-333-7466.



Vacation Bible School

What a wonderful 3 days we had at Hero Hotline VBS! We learned that we are all heroes that are called to follow Jesus, help others, and show grace. And we found out that we should strive for the things that bring peace and the things that build each other up, as Romans 14:19 instructs. The kids (and adults) had fun watching Professor Marshall and Super Meer – a meerkat puppet played by Don Metzger – interact in the daily skits. And everyone celebrated a successful VBS on Thursday with a pizza lunch for all the families and volunteers.



A huge THANK YOU goes out to all the volunteers that helped plan, prepare, execute, and clean up VBS! YOU are the real superheroes!



Top: Final VBS program for parents on Thursday.

Middle: Anna Sumner leads games.

Bottom left: A few of our PCOC kids with Super Meer.

Bottom right: Kids hearing the story of Moses with Becky Zieman and Brentleigh Bowen as pharaoh.



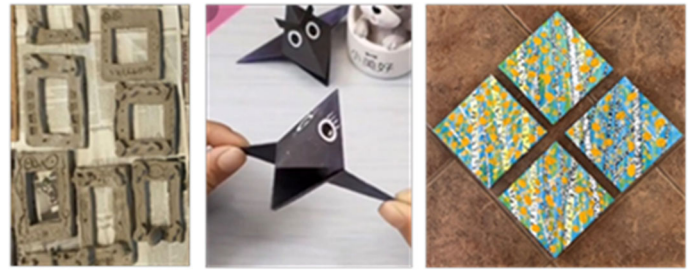
JHF Mission Trip

Our Junior High Youth Group had a productive and meaningful 3-day mission trip to Lakeshore Center in Okoboji, Iowa. Our group consisted of 9 youth and 5 adults, which we fit into two passenger vans. We left bright and early on Friday morning and returned at dinnertime on Sunday evening.



Our hard work benefited Lakeshore Center, a beautiful Presbyterian camp that is right on Lake Okoboji. We were lucky enough to be housed in their lodge, and we were fed delicious meals in their dining facility. While there, we prepped picnic tables for painting, pulled weeds, picked up sticks and limbs and carried them to burn piles, we helped with kitchen duties and cleaned out their freezers, and we participated in chapel twice a day, doing things such as skits, leading songs and scripture readings. We managed to fit in some fun, too, swimming and kayaking in the lake, playing lots of games, and enjoying campfires and s'mores. On our way home we stopped at Arnold's Park, a local amusement park. We were all worn out after that and anxious to get home.

Thank you for your prayers and support of our JHF group all year long. We are lucky to have a church that recognizes the value that our youth add to our church family.



Art Camp with Sue Thomas

July 11-14

9:00 a.m. to noon

Children 1st - 5th grade (completed) are invited to join us in the Gathering Space for Art Camp. The cost is \$25 for materials/child. Come have fun and create art with Sue Thomas:

- Discovering watercolor techniques
- Exploring drawing dimensions
- Sculpting with clay
- Print making across mediums
- Understanding Origami folds
- Creating optical illusions

Sign up on our church website to participate. Volunteers are also needed! Contact Sue Thomas to help.



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.



Heather Berry
Director of Christian Education
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 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



- 7/1 Kristin Jacobi, Larry Will
- 7/2 Nancy Anderson, Jane Burch,
Dawn Gibson, Max Justice, Emily Justice
- 7/3 Lois Decker
- 7/4 Amy Boesen, Lila Dittman, Julie Evers,
Korbin Stalnaker, Ada Stalnaker
- 7/6 Bonny Boettcher, Joan Gayle Chapin,
David Hawkins, Rock Sumner
- 7/7 Barbara Spielman
- 7/8 Jon Grady, David Hopp
- 7/9 Silas Boesen
- 7/10 Camille Hinz, Kathy Klein, Bob Nicas,
Jack Nicas, Jim Ussery
- 7/11 Janet Harley, Lisa Lewis
- 7/12 Irma Kramer
- 7/13 Carolyn Crenson, Justin Kalkwarf
- 7/14 Matthew Bennett, Barbara Jaeger
- 7/15 Stephen Niles, Clara Stalnaker
- 7/16 Jon Boomgaarden
- 7/17 Karon Frenk, Beth Kaiser
- 7/18 Cindy Rieke
- 7/19 Jean Engelmann, Erin Moore
- 7/20 Ron Fehr, Traci Harrison, Elijah Pflueger
- 7/21 Camille Hancock Friesen, Pat Pariset,
Doug Reid
- 7/22 David Bennett, Luke Justice, Ken Nisley
- 7/23 Dawn Zimmerman
- 7/24 Kristine Behrens, Scott Lewis,
Marietta Morhardt, LeRoy Swedlund
- 7/25 Carolyn Hansen, Haidyn Spielman
- 7/26 Joslyn Bailey, Tanya Mitzel
- 7/27 Irene Burson, James Fuller
- 7/28 Wendi Harkness, Danielle Obregon,
Jane Olson
- 7/29 John Bennett, Beth Maxwell, Amy Miller,
Amanda Stalnaker
- 7/30 Carol Barnes, Sue Garcia, Donna Mau,
Charles Spann
- 7/31 Jeanette Searson

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



Ron Mau passed away on May 18. Services were held on June 3 at Heafey Hoffmann Dworak Cutler's West Center Chapel.

Roy Willis passed away on May 24. Services were held on June 1 at Church of the Cross.

Use the Power of Prayer

Submit a prayer request online or use one of the Care Cards in the pews.. All requests are shared only with members of the prayer team.

Prayer Team Coordinators:
Julie Buehler and Judy Arms



Thank you for all of your support regarding the unexpected death of my brother, Paul from Las Vegas, on May 1st. Your calls, emails, cards, gifts of flowers, kind words, and hugs are much appreciated. Those expressions of love from my church family mean a great deal and give me comfort.

Ardys Hansum

We would like to thank our church family for the many cards and expressions of sympathy on the death of our mother, grandmother, and great grandmother, Bernice Grothe. We are so grateful for your kindness!

Susan Geschwender
Quinn and Marty McGuire, Molly and Brody

Welcome New Members!

Agustina Lopez

When you see Jessica and Jimmy Downes, please thank them for introducing Agustina to Church of the Cross. Agustina was born and grew up in Argentina and has lived in Omaha for fourteen months. She is joining by Reaffirmation of Faith and has served on Membership and Mission Church Committees in the past. She is employed as an “au pair” (nanny). She enjoys spending time outdoors, helping others, and cooking. Please welcome Agustina to our church family.



Judy Meyer

Judy was born in Montgomery, Alabama and grew up in Wayne, Indiana. She was raised Presbyterian. In 1969 her parents and sisters moved to Omaha, and they joined Church of the Cross. Judy was later married here. Recently she's been attending St. Paul United Methodist in Omaha, but after the pandemic she started looking for a new church home and came back to Church of the Cross. Her past church activities have been Sunday School Teacher, VBS helper, and belonging to a Fellowship Group. She is acquainted with Erin Moore, a recent new member, and Dawn Buchanan. Judy's husband is Gary, and she just became a new “Grammy”. In her spare time, she enjoys working out at “Pure Barre”, swimming, porcelain painting, and reading. Judy, welcome back to Church of the Cross!



Membership Committee Co-Moderators:

Amy Boesen & Brenda Graumann

Anne Laws

Does this lady look familiar?? After living in Colorado for several years, Anne decided to return to Omaha to be near friends and family. Plus, this summer her daughter and son-in-law, Janneane and Jeremy Gerot, will be departing for Stuttgart, Germany where they will be stationed for the next two and one-half years. While attending PCOC, Anne previously participated in the choir, bell choir, and helped with VBS. She was born in New Rochelle, New York and grew up in Pelham, New York. She is a retired high school and middle school math, science, and reading teacher. In her spare time, she enjoys walking her dog, swimming and working out at the YMCA, and enjoying music. Anne is also the proud grandmother of nine grandchildren, who are attending or graduated from college except for Will Gerot, the youngest grandson, who will be a junior at the International School in Germany. Please welcome Anne back to PCOC!



Sophina Kebeh

Sophina has been a long-time visitor, and her son, Lucien, joined PCOC in April. She is joining by Letter of Transfer from Presbyterian Church in Yaounde, Cameroon.



Do you know someone who is looking for a church home? If so, invite them to visit Church of the Cross this summer to experience all that we have to offer — traditional worship, exceptional music, excellent education, and active fellowship and mission programs.

Our next new member discussion will be held on Sunday, October 1 following the late worship service. Call the church office or sign up online to attend.



Fellowship This Summer

Some of our groups are taking a break for the month of July including Music & Movement, Active Minds, and others. We will update you when they resume activities.

GALS Night at Lauritzen Gardens

It was hot outside, but the gathering was cool! PCOC GALS had a great crowd to enjoy fellowship and live music on June 20. Stay tuned for upcoming GALS events.”



Keep Moving in July with Tai Chi

Tai Chi meets at 10 a.m. on Mondays and Thursdays. Drop in on the lower level if you'd like to attend a class. **Note:** Tai Chi will not meet on July 3, 6, and 10.

Coordinator: Paula Allen

Special Offer from Presbyterian Women

Entertainers! Serve your party or group in style with these glass Hostess Sets. The Presbyterian Women are offering them free of charge!



Contact Cindy Nisley if you are interested.

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



Book Group on Wednesday, July 19

PCOC Book Group will meet Wednesday, July 19 for their annual planning session from 5:15 to 6:30 p.m. All readers are welcome!

Coordinator: June Fettig

Quilting News

Thanks to Linda Miller, Cottonwood Quilt Guild was fortunate to receive Debbie Ryckman's quilt fabric. They held a Legacy Boutique and her fabric was sold to benefit the Guild and their charities.

As a thank you to Kirk, the Skinny Eighths small group made a quilt from Debbie's fabric for him. Many, many thanks for his generosity!



Breast Cancer Support Group

For anyone currently diagnosed with Breast Cancer

Contact Heather
402-333-7466



News from the PCOC Deacons

Submitted by Neal Hubbard

Your PCOC Board of Deacons watches over our church family members through various outreach activities. One of those ministry/outreach activities is our Neighborhood Care program. Did you know that PCOC has mapped Omaha and the surrounding area into 23 different neighborhoods? Your church has a sizeable footprint around the metro area and even in other states. If you're reading this, most likely you are in one of our neighborhoods.

Every year, our Board of Deacons members are each assigned one of the 23 neighborhoods. Their outreach activities may be in the form of phone calls, emails, home visits, written notes or perhaps a neighborhood gathering. Each Deacon has a different approach to their outreach. Our

Neighborhood Care program is a personal way of extending love and care to you from your church and the Deacons. In the first six months of this year, the Deacons have sent out dozens of cards, emails, made many telephone calls, and several home visits. Perhaps you received a birthday card from them or a card for some special date/event in your life. Maybe a phone call or an email inquiring about your well-being, or a home visit. Perhaps an email about an upcoming event at the church.

We believe the program is an enriching activity for the recipients, the Deacons and the PCOC church family. It could be a life changing event for someone in our community, either the receiver or the provider. The next time you see a Deacon, I hope you'll thank them for their work and ministry. I'm confident you'll see a smile and hear "thank you" or "you're welcome" in return.



A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR MARSHALL ZIEMAN (continued)

(continued from front page)

As we prepare for our new pastor search, I would ask you to do the following things:

- Pray about this. Thank God for the process that led us to find Christine four years ago and ask God to bless us again. Pray for our Nominating Committee as they select the Search Committee (APNC).
- Make plans to attend the congregational lunch on July 30 and offer your input. This lunch is preceded by two weeks of homework (!), which will include daily devotionals and prayer.
- In the fall, when the Nominating Committee has their slate of names ready, the Session will call a Congregational Meeting to elect the APNC. Attend this meeting, and vote. Once the APNC is established, continue to pray for them.
- Remain active in church, and if you are on a committee that had Christine as your liaison, step up and help "hold down the fort" during this interim time. If you're not on a committee

but would like to offer them your assistance, let them know. The committees are Membership, Congregational Life, and, of course, our Board of Deacons.

- Remember that God is in control, even in the interim times, and strive to reflect this belief in your attitude and with your service. God already knows who our next Associate Pastor will be, so relax, and be an encourager, especially to those most involved in the search.

Mark your calendars!

Sunday, July 30

"Lunch & Learn"

Plan to join us after worship
to hear more about our next steps!
A box lunch will be provided,
so we can quickly serve everyone
and start our discussion.



From the Mission Mailbox

Your mission dollars and volunteer hours at work!



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

- "Thank you for the incredible support of our mission. The financial and volunteer support is vital in helping us provide this program and Sandi Stuckey is a very special person and we love her," Bruce Froendt, All Play Executive Director and Founder. All Play is a special non-competitive baseball league for children with special needs.
- And another thank you note from All Play thanking you for your financial and volunteer support because it is "a blessing for them to provide this special activity for these incredible children."
- "Thank you for all the support you give to ILP throughout the year. You are greatly appreciated," Libby Officer-Thurston, Integrated Learning Program middle school teacher.
- You also received a thank you card from the outgoing ILP Principal Sandy Bender and staff for your support throughout the 2022-23 school year.
- On behalf of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Office of Ministry Engagement and Support, Rene Myers says thank you for your gift of \$1,820 and for your gracious and faithful support.

Refugee Update

Submitted by Betty Baddley

FINALLY, our refugee family has arrived in Omaha! The family has spent over 3 years in the process of coming to the U.S. They left Syria and spent time in Lebanon which they said was not especially welcoming of the Syrians. While in Lebanon, they were able to appeal to the UN and begin the process of finding a new home in another country.

Our family of eight includes father, Ali, and his wife, Salwa, and children (five daughters and one

son). Our committee mentors have met several times with the family and are becoming experts in Google translate - Arabic is not an easy language for us yet! The children, Rauaa (18), Raula (15), Assinat (12), Islam (10), Tasnim (8), and Moussa (5) have attended school in the past and look forward to going to school here and learning English. They share interests in sports including soccer and basketball, gardening, cycling, social media, photography, and drawing. Ali has worked as a painter, and he would like to do that again. He is interested in the restaurant business also. His goals are to be in a safe place, start the kids in education, and get a job and a car.

The family is working with the placement staff at LFS to find an apartment that will meet their needs. When this is accomplished, our committee is ready to move forward with getting them settled with all the wonderful items that the congregation collected for their household. This is such an exciting opportunity and a beautiful act of serving God's people as we help this family settle into a safe, productive, happy life in America.

Serve at Siena Francis House

Sign up to serve dinner at Siena Francis House on Sunday, July 9. from 4:15 to 6:15 p.m. Questions? Contact Keith Allen. Scan our QR code to sign up online via the church website.



ROC Ministries Fireworks Stand

ROC will be hosting a fireworks tent this year as a fundraiser. Please consider signing up to volunteer at their tent June 25 through July 5. Sign up on the church website or directly at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0d44adab23abf8c16-2023>.

Want to volunteer for a PCOC mission opportunity?

It's easy! Scan our QR code to access the PCOC online sign up page. Locate your mission event and sign up!





Mission Committee Moderator:
Anne Wattles

ILP Graduation Submitted by Rob Bailey

On Tuesday, May 23, PCOC once again supported the Integrated Learning Program graduation at Saratoga Elementary by providing flowers, diploma frames, and gift cards for the celebration. This year 5 graduates received diplomas and were presented with a \$20 gift card by PCOC church member and past OPS School Mission Coordinator Jon Boomgaarden. Jon drove in from Colorado especially for the occasion and to honor outgoing principal Sandra Bender who retired at the end of the school year. It was a special day for the graduates and Principal Bender!



Habitat Faith House Build Day 2023 Submitted by Rob Bailey

Habitat for Humanity Omaha supports our neighbors to achieve strength and independence through home ownership. This impact is transformational not just for individuals but for the Omaha community – fighting poverty, revitalizing neighborhoods, strengthening our economy.

H4H began its work in Omaha in 1984. On June 3, 10 volunteers from PCOC came together to install siding on a new Habitat for Humanity home located in the new Blue Stem Prairie development, which will eventually have over 100 new homes. This is the largest single building campaign ever in Nebraska. The home located at 5084 Vernon Circle will be home to a family who is still working on fulfilling their requirements, but it will be occupied by the 3rd quarter of 2023.



The team worked hard to complete most of the siding work and was thankful for the lunch provided by Launie Lambert. For anyone interested in next year's build feel free to contact H4H Coordinator Rob Bailey for information.

Helping Kids & Their Families Submitted by Gayle Kerr-McFadden

Food insecurity is a reality for thousands of Omaha children when they are not in school/daycare programs. Completely Kids helps to fill this gap by providing weekend food bags. On Wednesday, June 21, 14 volunteers from PCOC, including 5 from our YA mission group (pictured below), stuffed 300 summer food bags and handed them out to families in need at the Completely Kids facility. The bags included fruit cups, grains, and protein to help sustain kids over the weekend until they arrive back at the Completely Kids care program on Monday. During the school year, the weekend food need increases to 800 bags weekly as Completely Kids hosts care programs in several local schools.





Pantry Sunday Is July 16

Food and hygiene item collection for the Heartland Hope Mission pantry continues. Bring your items to church on Sunday, July 16, or drop them inside the circle drive doors of the church by 4 p.m. each Wednesday. The most needed food items are peanut butter, canned fruit, canned corn, mac & cheese, cereal, pasta, and pasta sauce. High demand hygiene items are baby diapers (all sizes but most needed are sizes 4-6), baby wipes, full size shampoo and body wash, toilet paper, and toothpaste.

Upcoming Trip with Ellen Smith

In late August/early September, Ellen Smith will be leading a trip to Moldova and Romania to explore new mission partnership opportunities. If you are interested in participating in this trip, contact Karen Morey or Jean Waters immediately. The group is hoping to finalize travel plans and buy plane tickets soon.

School Supply Drive

The Mission Committee is asking church members to bring school supplies to benefit Integrated Learning Program (ILP), Walnut Hill, Bancroft, and Sherman elementary schools. School supplies will be collected throughout the month of July.

Backpacks are always in high demand in addition to the usual school supplies. This project is a huge success every year because of your generosity, and items collected are very much needed by the students. For 2023, we've set a goal of 125 backpacks.



The collection boxes will be located in the circle drive lobby on the west side of the building and in the Narthex.

Questions? Reach out Rob Bailey for more information.

Agape for All -

Where All are Welcome to Learn and Listen
Submitted by Patty Ritchie

Conference on Race, Religion, & Social Justice

"Building Bridges of Hope" was the theme for the Tri-Faith and UNO Religious Studies Conference on Race, Religion, and Social Justice. The Tri Faith Commons hosted an inspiring and well attended event, featuring "An Evening with Clint Smith", author of *How the Word is Passed: A Reckoning with the History of Slavery Across America*, and a day-long conference which provided a myriad of connections and workshops. He was a fount of knowledge and research.

The promotional materials included this quote. "Hope is not simply wishful thinking. It is an intentional, confident expectation that the social issues we are addressing ought to, and can, be overcome." This conference made connections across differences. Several members of our congregation were fortunate to participate, and we celebrate Omaha's role in tackling essential social justice issues with joy and respect.

North Omaha Learning Experience Thursday, July 13 starting at 11:00 a.m.

On the tour we took with Preston Love a year and a half ago, we ran out of time and couldn't visit the Black History Museum. We've finally arranged another opportunity! The museum was started in 1975 by Mrs. Bertha Calloway to be a resource for the community. Recent events in our country certainly highlight the importance of this unique collection.

Executive Director, Eric Ewing is a wealth of knowledge about North Omaha's history and brings the archived materials to life as he recounts stories and events. The museum tour is free, but donations are welcome and needed.

A trip to North Omaha wouldn't be complete without a meal and another delightful restaurant recently reopened just down the street from the Museum. Lunch details are still being worked out, but we will try to have menu items and prices for you to choose from when you register on the church website.

(continued on next page)

If you have questions, please contact Kathy Moore or Patty Ritchie.

The schedule will be as follows:

- 11:00 a.m. - For those wanting to carpool, we will meet in the church parking lot and leave at 11:05.
- 11:30 a.m. - lunch at Jackson's Fair Deal Café at 2118 North 24th Street
- 1:00 p.m. - tour the Great Plains Black History Museum at 2221 North 24th Street
- 2:30/3:00 p.m. - arrive back at the church

Historical Marker for Vivian Strong Friday, July 28 at 11:30 a.m.

The Nebraska State Historical Society will place a historical marker at 24th & Patrick in honor of Vivian Strong. Immediately following, a second marker from the family will be unveiled at 24th & Grant Streets (about two blocks north).

Vivian Strong

On June 24, 1969, Vivian Strong, a 14-year-old Black girl, was killed in Omaha, NE. She was shot in the back of her head by a white police officer without warning. The killing sparked three days of riots in Omaha's Black community.

On April 18, 2023, the Omaha City Council unanimously approved the Vivian Strong St. naming of North 21st St. between Clark and Paul Streets.

The Nebraska State Historical Society has chosen to place a historical marker at 24th & Patrick in honor of Vivian Strong. Also, a second marker from the family will be unveiled at 24th & Grant, immediately after the first marker is unveiled.

STREET NAMING CEREMONY
📅 JUNE 16, 2023 | 3:00PM
📍 21ST & CLARK ST.

HISTORICAL MARKER CEREMONY
📅 JULY 28, 2023 | 11:30AM
📍 24TH & PATRICK

PLEASE JOIN THE FAMILY FOR THESE MOMENTOUS EVENTS.
WE'RE LOOKING FORWARD TO CELEBRATING
WITH THE COMMUNITY.

The Strong Family

UNO Undesign the Red Line Exhibit Wednesday, August 23 at 2:00 p.m.

What is redlining? Join us for a guided tour (approximately 1 hour) to learn more. Redlining can be defined as a discriminatory practice that consists of the systematic denial of services such as mortgages, insurance loans, and other financial

services to residents of certain areas, based on their race or ethnicity. Even though redlining became an illegal practice in 1968, the systemic ramifications of redlining are still present.

We will meet in the lobby of the Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center (behind the Clock Tower) at 1:45 p.m. We will then walk together to room 218 for a tour beginning at 2 p.m.

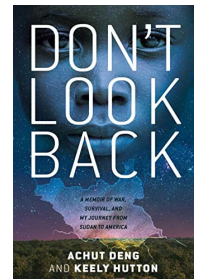
Parking is available in Lot E. Upon arrival, inform the parking attendant that you will attend the tour and park as directed.

Have questions or want to sign up? Call or email Patty Ritchie. You may also sign up online on the church website or in the Narthex. Perhaps we can meet somewhere afterwards and have a snack to talk.

Book Review Submitted by Becky Zieman

Years ago, I read a book and had seen the Reese Witherspoon movie about the Lost Boys of Sudan. So when I heard a memoirist's radio interview about being a girl who had fled the violence in Sudan, I decided I wanted to read a female perspective.

Don't Look Back is Achut Deng's account of how she, at the age of six, became separated from all her family members and had to walk over a thousand miles to a refugee camp in Kenya. She tells of the sacrificial love, care, and support of some, and the horrors and abuse that also occur to her on the journey, the ten years spent in a refugee camp, and what happens after she is released from there.



I appreciated hearing her experiences and felt challenged by the difficulties she faced. Of course, not all refugee experiences are the same. But I am glad that our church has the opportunity to welcome a refugee family from Syria. Jesus said in Matthew 10, "Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me."

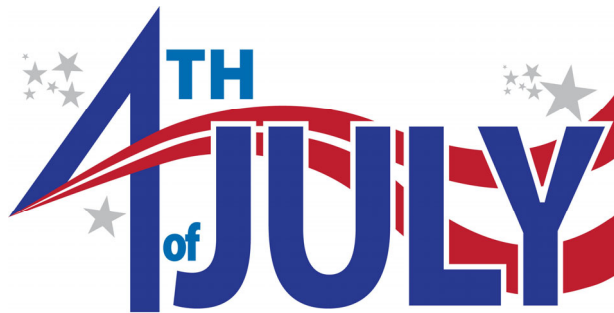
Perhaps you'd like to read this book? But for sure, join the Agape for All and the Refugee subcommittees in welcoming people wherever you find them!

Presbyterian Church of the Cross
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**Next Cross Currents Deadline is:
Third Friday of the month
July 21, 2023**



Have a safe and happy 4th of July!

The church office will be closed on Monday, July 3
and Tuesday, July 4.

Looking for ideas to celebrate the 4th?

We have a great idea, and you will be helping one of
our mission partners at the same time!

Voices for Children will be the featured non-profit at
the Storm Chasers baseball game on July 3 at
Werner Park. After the game, enjoy a spectacular
post-game fireworks show. Check the Storm Chas-
ers website for ticket availability.

Cross Currents

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