

Fling WIDE Our Doors!

When Marshall and I sat down to discuss this fall's stewardship drive, we knew we wanted to build a theme around opening our new front doors! After tossing around a few ideas, it was Marshall who changed OPEN to FLING!

Recently in Bible study, I learned that Paul asks the Corinthians to widen their hearts to him, and to the Gospel, and to the One whose love for them is perfect and unfailing. His call for believers today is the same as it was back then.



Open and soften your hearts. Receive God's abundant grace and extravagant love. Paul also shares that there are many false teachers in the world who seek to lead us astray with empty promises of an easier path to the truth.

May we widen our hearts and our doors to God's word, the Holy Spirit, and his faithful witnesses by reflecting God's love and generosity through our stewardship this year.

Our 2023 Stewardship Campaign is now underway. You are encouraged to prayerfully consider how you and your family may participate. For me, that's a great way to think of stewardship – participate!

Commitment Sunday is October 22 this year. This is when we will celebrate our collective commitments of time, talents, and financial resources to Presbyterian Church of the Cross. You are welcome to return your stewardship card by this date.

Giving allows us to be part of the future and revel in God's grace knowing the impact of love demonstrated by each of you with your faithful pledges and gifts.

I believe that God wants us each to experience the joy of giving. In Galatians 5:22, we see that joy is one of the fruits. In Psalm 100:2, we are called to serve the Lord with joy: "Serve the Lord with gladness; Come before God's presence with singing."

The reality is that joy is a key component of the Christian life, and we need to experience God's joy every single day. That makes me wonder, how could I possibly experience the joy of the Lord every single day?

Here are two simple ways that I've come across. Serving the Lord with gladness means being part of God's work through 1) living a Life of Stewardship and 2) by demonstrating generosity by opening my heart wide to others.

Perhaps as we Fling WIDE our Doors, we are finding a way to experience joy and love and experience a true relationship with God daily.

**In Christ's love,
Rock Sumner, Business Administrator**

In This Issue:

Stewardship Update —
Page 1

Message from Our Pastor
— Page 2

Business Updates —
Page 3

Music Notes — Page 3

Christian Education News
— Pages 4-5

Our Church Family —
Page 6

Fellowship Groups &
Events — Page 7

Spirit of Mission —
Pages 8-11

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



Falling for Fall

For many reasons, I love the month of October. It seems to be a time of getting to work and reaching out. Summer vacation is past, school is underway, but winter is coming soon, so it's time to get to work with the tasks at hand.

I am so happy that we have moved into fall! It feels so good to be cranking it all up again-

- our 2 worship services
- SS for adults, youth, & kids
- Tuesday Bible Studies
- Cornerstone, which includes Dinner, Children's & Adult Choir Practice, & Confirmation
- JHF & SHF on Sunday afternoons
- 49ers and Friday Night Gourmets
- Music & Movement & Tai Chi
- Another New Member's Discussion
- Vesper Concerts
- Trunk or Treat!

In addition to all these regular activities, our Nominating Committee is currently working diligently to nominate a Search Committee who will search for our next Associate Pastor. Their nine nominees should be revealed shortly, and then the congregation will be asked to elect them.

October also brings with it our annual Stewardship season where we begin to plan financially for next year. Simply put, the amount of your returned pledges sets the limits of what we hope to do financially as a church. All summer long we have been hearing from various missions we support. With your continued (and increased) support we hope to do even more. As you receive your 2024 pledge card, pray about what you would like your giving to be next year. Based on your pledges, the Session will set our new budget. At PCOC, truly every pledge counts. We need every family's involvement in order to continue our level of support. Please return your pledge card during the month of October.

Finally, let me encourage you to remain faithful in prayer for our church. Sometimes, with all we have going on, we can forget to be still before the Lord, seeking guidance, direction, and support for ourselves and others. Set aside a time each day to meet with God. Pray for our church to be effective and faithful, and pray about doing your part in that. Pray for your own needs, and remember to place the needs of others before the Lord.

As our busy life ramps up at church, remember to ask God about your role in it. Everybody counts. It's truly amazing what we can accomplish together.

May we all sense God's presence in us and around us as we go forth into this busy fall!



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



The Tuesday Bible Studies

Now meeting in the new Welcome Center, our Tuesday gatherings have returned –
at 7:00 a.m. (men's only)
and 1:00 p.m. (for everyone)
from September 12 – December 12

EXODUS

Join us on Tuesdays this fall as we study the stories of Exodus. Both groups will look at the same passage each week. You know these stories – Israel's captivity in Egypt, the stories of Moses and the burning bush, the plagues, release from Pharaoh, and the adventures and misadventures while wandering in the desert. We'll read them and discuss how these themes still apply to our lives today. Bring your own Bible or ask how to zoom in.

The VIEW FROM MY OFFICE VOLUNTEERS MAKE OUR DAY

It always amazes me how many volunteers it takes each week to keep our church running smoothly. In this photo



are a few of the volunteers who help collate and fold our *Cross Currents* mailing each month.

Generally, they are here starting at 8 a.m. and work until they are finished. Of course, this takes only a couple hours, but there is an abundance of conversation and laughter each month.

I want to give a special shout out to this team of great volunteers who have been making this happen

for years: Paula Hazelrigg, Donna Turner, Carol Fehrer, Sue Jenkins, Julie Hansen, Dee Coffee, Sandi Stuckey, Jim Miller, Gary and Marilyn Fitch, Martha Henry, Verta Pugh, and anyone else I may have forgotten to mention.

THANK YOU!



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

Finance Committee Moderator:

Mimi Bauer

Building and Grounds Committee Moderator:

Casey Ballou



MUSIC NOTES

Back Alley Brass Band

Join us for a party on the East Lawn on October 8! The Back Alley Brass Band will have you up on your feet with their New Orleans-style jazz, but you should still bring your lawn chairs. This event will be a party for the entire family.

Back Alley is a New Orleans style brass band based in Kansas City, MO. Blasting onto the live music scene, Back Alley has quickly become one of the most sought-after groups to play in every type of venue. These high energy players have a powerful sound that provides everyone with a great time!!

Bring Your Appetites! The Corn Dog Company food truck will be here! Certificates for a FREE Mini Corn Dog will be given to the first 50 children ages 12 and under (a \$5 value)!

Check out their delicious menu at
<https://www.thecorndogco.com/menu.html>



Annual Outdoor Concert
Sunday, October 8, 2023
4:30 P.M.



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

Worship & Music Committee Moderator:

Jayne Frederickson



2nd Grade Bible Presentation on October 8

All second graders will receive a *Deep Blue Bible* during worship on October 8. The Christian Education Committee invites the congregation to join the second graders and their families for this memorable occasion. If you have a second grader and are unable to attend worship that day, please let Heather know, so other arrangements to deliver your child's bible can be made.



Trunk or Treat on October 29

Join us on the East Lawn on Sunday, October 29 at 3:00 p.m. for fun, games, and trunk or treating. Be sure to wear your costume and bring a bucket for your treats.



This year we are encouraging everyone in the congregation to participate by hosting a trunk. All you have to do is decide on a theme, decorate your vehicle, dress up (come on, it's fun!), and provide treats or toys to hand out to the children. It's that easy and so much fun! Help us make this the best Trunk or Treat ever for our church family. If you plan to host a trunk, please sign up online or let Heather know.

We are also accepting candy donations, too. Please donate individually-wrapped candy or treats. You may drop them in the bin in the Lobby. Thanks!

Important Dates to Remember

October 8	2nd Grade Bible Presentation, 9 and 11:10 a.m.
October 29	Trunk or Treat, 3 p.m.
November 1	Deadline to register to participate in Children's Pageant
November 17	SHF Advent Workshop set up and food prep, 6 p.m.
November 19	Advent Workshop and Lunch, noon
November 29	Children's Pageant Rehearsal, 6 p.m.
December 2	Children's Pageant Rehearsal, 2 p.m.
December 3	Children's Pageant Rehearsal, 10 a.m.
December 3	Children's Christmas Pageant, 5 p.m.

Advent Workshop

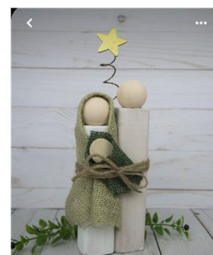
Mark your calendars! This year's Advent Workshop and Lunch is planned for Sunday, November 19. Our Senior High Youth Group will prepare and serve lunch after late worship, then the crafting begins. Be sure to register online by November 1 to reserve your crafts and lunch!

Note: SHF will be meeting on Friday, November 17 at 6 p.m. to set up and prep lunch. On Sunday, November 19, SHF youth need to arrive at 10 a.m. and need to stay to clean up and reset Fellowship Hall. Parents plan to pick up your youth at 3 p.m.

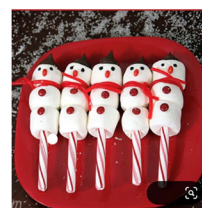


**Family Craft
(left)**

**Shut-in Craft
(right)**



**Kid's
Crafts**





Children's Christmas Pageant

The Children's Christmas Pageant will be on Sunday, December 3 at 5:00 p.m. All children (preschool – 5th grade) will be wearing costumes and singing! Registration is required to participate, and the deadline is November 1. There are mandatory rehearsals: Wednesday, November 29 from 6 to 7 p.m., Saturday, December 2 from 2 to 4 p.m., and Sunday, December 3 from 10 to 11 a.m.

Please register your child's participation before November 1:

Want to sign up for one of these events? Just scan the QR code (right) to access our sign-up page, locate your event, and complete the online sign-up form! You can also find the sign up page on the church website at <https://churchofthecrossomaha.org/signup/>.



Literature in the Welcome Center

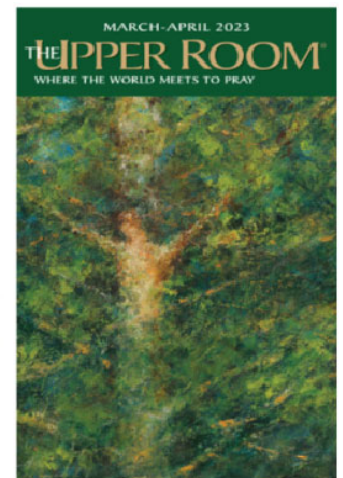
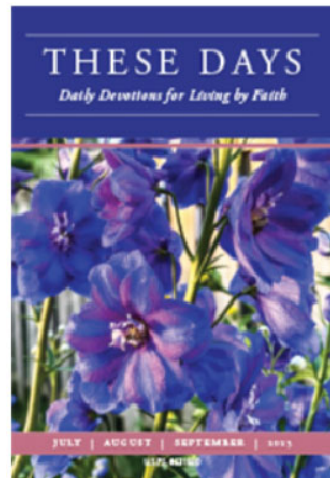
Did you know that there's free literature available in the new Welcome Center? There are two publications that you might want to check out.

The Upper Room is a daily devotional magazine published in more than 30 languages and 100 countries around the world. The daily meditations are written by readers of the magazine and others interested in sharing their faith experiences through writing — both laity and clergy, published authors and new writers. The meditations are stories of real people working to live faithfully with the Bible as their touchstone. Every day, readers of *The Upper Room* around the world read the same story in many different languages and pray the same prayer together.

The daily devotional guide and the community it draws together invite people to:

- Listen to scripture as God's personal message, linking their stories to God's story
- Commune with God in prayer
- See their daily choices and small acts of obedience as part of God's work

- Realize our connection through Christ as a universal family of believers
- Encounter the living Christ and be transformed into Christ's likeness



These Days Daily Devotions for Living by Faith is an inspiring and uplifting daily devotional. Each issue features:

- Scripture suggestions
- Thought-provoking daily reflections written by clergy and lay leaders
- Inspiring prayers
- Adult coloring pages
- Colorful artwork on the outside covers with poems, prayers, and songs pertinent to the issue's theme.
- Information about the writers

These publications are found on the wall right behind the Information Desk in the new Welcome Center. Stop by and pick one up!



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, Ashley Sherlock, and John Stalnaker

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



- 10/1 Mary Johnson, Betty Woodhull
- 10/2 Spencer Evers, Cadence Fritz, Sarah Koch,
Karen Metzger, Piper Mooney,
Roger Utman, Eileen Wright
- 10/4 Brem Bremers, Christian Fritz,
Tom Searson
- 10/5 Bobbi Dyer, Larry Keating
- 10/6 Loren Penkava, Sam Rennick,
John Stalnaker
- 10/7 Melissa Rock, Polly Wyatt
- 10/8 Brad Gibson
- 10/9 Susan Emmert
- 10/10 Adam Luke, Donna Wilhite
- 10/11 Donna Adams, Rachel Foehlinger Vaughn
- 10/12 Brody McGuire
- 10/13 Mike Morey, Amen Sekle
- 10/13 Robert Wyatt
- 10/14 Carrigan Innes
- 10/15 Kathleen Cain, Lori Pirnie, Teresa Thorson
- 10/16 Kenneth Penney, Barb Stuedemann
- 10/17 Velma Juarez
- 10/18 Jenn Luth, Jennifer Spann, Lindsey Woods
- 10/19 Sue Jenkins, Eliza Lewis
- 10/20 Philip Holubeck, Linda Rathman,
Stanton Weyand
- 10/21 Nancy Buda, Becca Frampton
- 10/22 Linda Miller
- 10/23 Barrett Ballou, Hallie Ballou, Don Miller,
Tina Morgan, Karen Saunders
- 10/24 Callen Moore, Barbara Wolpa,
Dave Woods
- 10/25 Mason Downes
- 10/26 Bridget Ayika, Beckett Friesen,
Dianne Witmer
- 10/27 Pat Vint
- 10/28 Avery Fuller, Deb Schmadeke
- 10/29 Sally Hansen, Karen Schumacher,
Becky Ziemann
- 10/30 Wendy Chapman, Doug Larson
- 10/31 Laura Falcone

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

Membership Committee Co-Moderators:
Amy Boesen & Brenda Graumann

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

PCOC . . . It's Where You Belong!

Do you know someone who is looking for a church home? Invite them to visit PCOC! Our next new member discussion will be held on Sunday, October 1 after the late worship service. The discussion will last about an hour, and a light lunch will be provided. Sign up online or call the church office.



Breast Cancer Support Group

For anyone currently diagnosed
with Breast Cancer
Contact Karen Morey or Heather Berry
for more information.

In Need of Prayer?

Submit a prayer request online or use one of the yellow 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!

I would just like to thank our wonderful PCOC church family for making Sunday mornings the highlight of my week. My health dictates that I try and do most of my activity in the early mornings, so being a regular greeter works out perfectly for me. I am so grateful for the opportunity to be able to say hello, shake a hand, see a smile, or hold a door for so many fantastic folks — sure makes for a good start on Sundays. Really just getting to say "Good Morning" to all of you is a true blessing for me. Thankyou all!

Sincerely, Doug Larson



Stay Active in October

Music and Movement exercise classes meet at 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. every Monday and Thursday. Questions? Contact Betty Baddley.

Tai Chi meets at 10 a.m. on Mondays and Thursdays. Drop in anytime if you'd like to attend a class. Questions? Contact Paula Allen.

Active Minds in October

Active Minds will continue playing Whist for the month of October. New participants are always welcome. Come watch, learn about this fun card game, and then decide if you want to conquer the rules! Hope you will join us for this drop-in fellowship time on Tuesdays from 2-4 p.m. in the lower level Great Room. Questions? Contact Earlene Uhrig.

PW on October 5

Come join us as we continue studying *Sacred Encounters: The Power and Presence of Jesus Christ in Luke-Acts*. We will meet October 5 at 9:30 a.m. in Room 15. Karen Saunders will present Lesson 2, The Exorcism in Geraga: Legion the demon-possessed man.

Our group has a project this year to assist Heartland Hope Mission's lady clients each month. In October, we are collecting period products and will have a box by the current food gathering bin. We would appreciate any donations for our project. Questions? Contact Cindy Nisley.

49ers on October 10

Note the special date (2nd Tuesday in October). Our speakers will be Paula Allen and Jeanne Smay, co-leaders of the PCOC refugee resettlement team, who will update us on the progress of the refugee family that is being sponsored by PCOC. We meet for lunch at 11:30 a.m. at WHEATFIELDS, 1224 South 103rd Street (One Pacific Place). We order from a special menu provided for our group. Everyone is welcome - whether you are 49, younger, or older - come join us! For reservations and/or questions, please contact Mary Ott or Judy Sundberg. Or, sign up at the Information Desk.

Presbyterian Men on October 12

All PCOC men are invited to our next activity, a free, 90-minute guided tour of the "CLAAS Factory" at 8401 S 132nd St. at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, October 12. Please arrange carpooling with guys who live near you. We plan to have lunch afterwards at 11:00 a.m. at Shirley's Diner, 13838 R Plaza, and enjoy food & fellowship (pay for your own lunch). Sign up at the Information Desk by Sunday, October 8. Bring a guest, and new members, join us! Questions? Contact Gary Fitch.

Friday Night Gourmets October 13

Join us for a spooky Friday Night Gourmets on Friday, October 13, at the Pink Poodle in Crescent, Iowa. We will order from a limited menu that includes prime rib, chicken, and more. Sign up online or at the information desk. Drinks will start at 6:30 and dinner at 7:00. Please indicate at signup if you would like to carpool. Hosts are Mary Reed and Charlene Meyer.

Book Group on October 18

PCOC Book Group will meet Wednesday, October 18 from 5:15 to 6:30 p.m. to review *A Woman of No Importance* by Sonya Purnel. All readers are welcome! Questions? Contact June Fettig.



Fall **POTLUCK**

Please join **PCOC GALS** for a cozy themed fall potluck and craft evening

SUNDAY, 10.22  5-8 PM

Voss Home 4925 South 197th Street, Omaha

Sign Up Sign Up to bring a beverage, potluck course, and vase/pot (for craft) via SignUp Genius by 10.10.23. Contact Staci Voss for more details.



Mission Exploration in Moldova and Romania, Part 1: Moldova

Submitted by Karen Morey

There is so much to share; it is hard to know where to begin! In September, Anne Wattles and I traveled to Moldova and Romania with Ellen Smith and a small group of other Presbyterians to explore mission partnership opportunities in these two countries bordering Ukraine. It was a whirlwind itinerary, spending time with seven different organizations who are doing impressive work with Ukrainian refugees, elderly citizens, and young people. In every city, we were hosted by people in these organizations with generous hospitality, open hearts, and passionate commitment for their causes.

Moldova is about the size of Maryland and is the poorest country in Europe. Yet, in proportion to their population, they have taken in more Ukrainian refugees than any other European nation. Agencies originally focused on other critical social services have stepped up to organize programs to serve the refugees flowing into the country.

In Chisinau (the capital city), the young leadership team of YMCA Moldova (director pictured to right) obtained a grant from HP for 500 laptops, which they distributed to village schools, creating an inventory and control system which HP asked them to share with other grant recipients.



They then provided instruction to teachers on how to teach the use of the laptops. The schools are extremely grateful, as the village schools do not have the same resources as the schools in the cities. The YMCA now also operates a shelter for up to 30 Ukrainian refugees, helping them locate more permanent residences, schools for children, and jobs.

Homecare, also in Chisinau, provides nursing and home care for the elderly in villages all over Moldova and also finds housing for Ukrainian refugee families.

In Balti, Moldova, we toured the Healthy City Refugee Center, a project supported by Church World Services and others. The Center was organized very quickly to respond to the refugee crisis and the local leadership team built a distribution system for food supplies, hygiene, clothing, blankets, and other items, serving 300 Ukrainian families per week. Now, with a staff of



SPIRIT OF MISSION

Mission Committee Moderator:
Anne Wattles

36, and a working system in place, they describe themselves as being in transition from the “emergency phase” to an “integration phase,” working to help refugees to meet Moldovans and become integrated into the society. They are now providing language classes, vocational and technical training, job placement services, and a hotline.

In Edinet, Moldova, we spent two days with the director of Moldova Christian Aid (MCA), an agency which



partners with churches to provide services to the most needy elderly in villages. MCA also manages a project in concert with PDA (Presbyterian Disaster Assistance) to provide a flock of chickens for Ukrainian refugee families (one family pictured above), to help them be self-sustaining. We visited several of these families.

We have so many stories about the people we met as we traveled among the cities and villages of Moldova and about the remarkable leadership of these agencies. Please ask us!

Coming in the November *Cross Currents*: Part 2 – Is This Romania or Transylvania?

Want to volunteer to support our missions?

Just scan the QR code (right) to access our sign-up page, locate your mission event, and complete the online sign-up form!

You can also find the sign up page on the church website at <https://churchofthecrossomaha.org/signup/>.



Serve at Siena Francis House

Sign up to serve dinner at Siena Francis House on Sunday, October 8. from 4:15 to 6:15 p.m. Questions? Contact Keith Allen. Scan our QR code to sign up online via the church website.



AllPlay Miracle Baseball League

Submitted by Sandi Stuckey

AllPlay concluded their fall season on September 16. Over 300 players participated in the 6-week session. Presbyterian Church of the Cross sponsored the family picnic for all the players and their families. Members of the church were servers, worked in the concession stand, greeted, and brought a group to be buddies. Thanks to all who volunteered and to the congregation for its mission funding.

All players receive uniforms, play each week, and enjoy the special activities all free of cost. This year, a portion of our giving will help to send Ryan Bisignano and his dad Tony to represent the AllPlay Miracle League in a national All-Star game in West Palm Beach, Florida in November. Both dad and son have participated in the Omaha AllPlay since it began with Tony Bisignano coaching the Cardinal teams. Again, thanks for your support! When we call out "Play Ball" next spring, be sure to sign up to be a volunteer.

BURM Conference

Peacebuilding and Partnering in Eastern Europe

Church of the Cross is hosting the 2023 Annual BURM Conference on November 2-4, 2023, and YOU are invited to participate!

For 14 years, Church of the Cross has been a member of the Belarus, Ukraine, and Russia Mission (BURM) Network, a network of PC(USA) churches partnering with churches in Russia. In our partnership with a small church in Gnozdo, a village near the city of Smolensk, many members of our church got to know the people, developed an understanding of our common bonds in Christianity, and worked together to serve their community. We learned to see each other as Christians – not as Russians or Americans – and all lives were enriched and our faith was strengthened.

With the current war in Ukraine, travel to Russia, Ukraine, or Belarus is nearly impossible and not safe. While we make efforts to maintain contact

with our friends in Gnozdo, we have also been considering other ways to serve in the region. Our mission co-worker, Ellen Smith, has been reaching out to potential partners in Lithuania, Poland, Moldova, and Romania, seeking opportunities to continue to serve with Christians in Eastern Europe. At the BURM Conference, we will hear updates from Ellen and the stories from two specific partners – the Hope Center in Vilnius, Lithuania and LCC International University in Klaipeda, Lithuania. (Both of these organizations were visited by a team from PCOC earlier this year.)

Larisa, the Founder and Director of the Hope Center, has an amazing testimony of God providing resources at just the right time to build the center's work of helping the homeless in Vilnius and now the Ukrainian refugees.

Naomi Enns, the Director of the Peace Center for Dialogue and Conflict Transformation at LLC University, will discuss the Center's focus on peacebuilding – a long-term process of creating the necessary conditions for sustainable peace. Naomi will be with us in person, and will provide two sessions at the conference: the first to provide fundamental knowledge of peacebuilding methods, and the second, a workshop to help use these skills.

Our third guest speaker, Carl Horton, is Coordinator of the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program. More information can be found about this program at <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/story/pcusa-celebrates-40-years-of-the-commitment-to-peacemaking-during-2023-season-of-peace>.

This conference is a unique opportunity to learn about and from partners in Eastern Europe and to gain skills that we can use at home and abroad. The BURM network is at a pivotal point – how should we and how can we change to meet the situation in Eastern Europe? What is God calling us to do next? We sincerely hope you will make plans to attend this conference and help us take the next steps – whatever those may be.

The conference will be held in-person at Presbyterian Church of the Cross on November 2 (evening), November 3 (all day), and November 4 (morning). There is also a virtual option. Please invite your friends (especially students) to attend the conference as well; this is a rare opportunity to hear these voices right here in Omaha!

Please register now! If you are interested in volunteering to help with the hosting duties, please contact Karen Morey or Jean Waters.



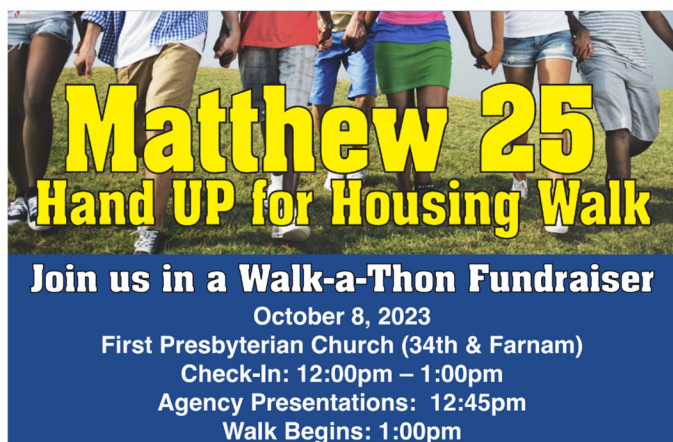
Agape for All -

Where All Are Welcome to Learn and Listen

Submitted by Kathy Moore

By the time you are reading this article, summer will be winding down, and we will be well into the fall season. Agape for All provided several spring and summer experiences including gospel brunches, museum tours, a Unity Walk, attendance at a Pow wow, and the addition of many new library books. A new class offering kicked off the end of September, and we will be brainstorming new ideas for experiences after the first of the year.

One upcoming event you might be interested in is an Annual Fundraising Walk-a-Thon, hosted by First Presbyterian Church on Sunday, October 8. It is an event that will support housing assistance through Youth Emergency Services (YES) and InCOMMON Community Development. Due to other obligations, we are not hosting an official Agape for All Team for this event, but we would encourage any of you interested in a “walk with a purpose” on a beautiful fall day to register at <http://www.fpcomaha.org/Matthew25>. Details and times are provided in the image below. Afterwards there will be agency and sponsor booths, the Table Grace food truck, a bounce house, and a raffle.



Agape for All has organized some group activities but equally meaningful are those occasions that an individual finds and experiences on their own. We'd love for you to share any of those with us, as Ann Pearson has done later on this page.

Our trip to UNO's "Undesign the Red Line" Exhibit on August 23 was powerful. Several PCOC members joined congregants from St. Luke's Methodist in Elkhorn for a challenging exploration of not only the practice of red lining (real estate exclusion of

members of our society from certain neighborhoods) but a wide variety of shameful policies, practices, and laws.

We now have a better understanding of decades, even centuries of discrimination.

While the evidence is overwhelming, we can intentionally forge a new future - together. For me, the essential “take away” from this densely illustrated and researched display is the final panel. We can REFRAME history. We can REIMAGINE what we need to do now. We can REINVEST, with time and resources.

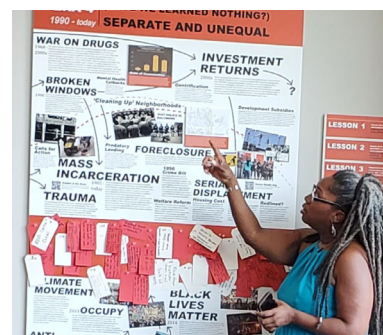
The exhibit is free, located in Room 218 of the Community Engagement Center at UNO. It is easy to study and follow, and it is well worth the investment of an hour or two. We would encourage everyone to visit it at least once. It is open to the public for unguided tours Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Guided tours can be arranged for Mondays between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m., Tuesdays between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. or Wednesdays between 2 and 6 p.m.

Reflections from an Agape Event

Submitted by Ann Pearson, PCOC Member

On Friday July 28, 2023 a remarkable moment took place on 24th and Patrick Street in North Omaha. A historical marker was placed in memory of Vivian Strong. In 1969 Vivian was a 14-year-old teenager enjoying music with her friends in a vacant apartment. When the police arrived, she and her friends ran, and the police officer shot Vivian in the back of her head, killing her instantly. The episode was followed by three nights of angry rioting. OPD Officer James Loder was later acquitted of her murder.

(continued on next page)



The monument has been a long time coming and the Strong family couldn't have expressed their appreciation and gratitude and forgiveness more sincerely. Among those present at this dedication of this beautiful marker were sponsors who included History Nebraska, Omaha Economic Development Corporation, and Dr. and Mrs. Franklin Thompson. The Planning Committee included the Strong family, the Great Plains Black History Museum, Preston Love with Black Lives Matter, and Dr. Cynthia Robinson, Chair of the UNO Black Studies Department.

There were prayers, singing, speeches of gratitude and forgiveness, and very meaningful acknowledgement from Deputy Chief Anna Colon of the OPD that “accountability was not served.(and although).we cannot undo the actions of the past, we can make a solemn vow prevent such tragedies from happening again.” The prevailing tone of the event was acknowledging the tragedies of the past, forgiving but not forgetting them, and looking forward to the future with new resolve and unity. The Strong family spoke eloquently and firmly about the road to forgiveness and Deputy Chief Anna Colon (a person of color) spoke of the need for unity. After the dedication of the marker, the family walked up to 24th and Grant Streets where a religious marker was also dedicated. It should be noted that a segment of 21st Street has been designated as Vivian Strong Street.

It was a phenomenal moment of remembrance, forgiveness, and promise for the future. If the Strong family can be hopeful and forgiving, so can all of us. I felt so honored and privileged to be part of it.

Agape Book Report Submitted by Ann Pearson

Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI written by David Grann is a tough one. And if at first it seems a bit more political than it should, I hope you will see the importance of the story as we go. As with all the Indian tribes in this country, the Osage were forced onto a reservation in Kansas in 1825. Then in 1870 they were forced to move again by “the Europeans” (as we were called by the Indians) to what became known as Osage County.

The Europeans thought the land was worthless prairie land. The Osage were smart enough to know that

if they paid for the land, they owned it and should be able to control it themselves. They believed in collective ownership so that every member of the tribe could benefit. There were 2,229 of them. And when oil was discovered, they literally became the richest people on earth. They started buying nice homes and cars and clothing. They started traveling. And suddenly, in the eyes of the Europeans, the Osage became “ignorant savages” who couldn’t possibly understand how to manage money properly. They will waste it. They will squander it. They don’t deserve it.

The federal and state government set up several systems of guardianships and headrights (a form of land rights) that were designed to “protect” the Osage from themselves. Instead, they became victims of what became an outrageous chapter of racism, greed, and murder known as The Reign of Terror. Of course, all along white men had been marrying Osage women to inherit the wealth that came with their headrights. But suddenly these women and their offspring began to die; poison was being slipped into their alcohol, doctors were prescribing insulin with poison in it, and they were being found dead in creeks. People who tried to talk about it or report possible leads on killers disappeared. White men were getting richer and Osage people, including their children, were dying. Finally, when a house and an entire family were blown up, the newly formed FBI under J. Edgar Hoover got involved. He sent an agent, Tom Hall, to investigate, and partial justice was eventually served. Unfortunately, the worst offender was never punished adequately, and the Osage suspected that dozens of these murders went unsolved. Eventually in 2011, a suit was settled for 380 million dollars.

Relatives of these families continue to comfort each other and seek information. A movie is coming out in October based on the book. There are PBS panels and interviews that can be found on You Tube. I encourage you to seek these out and get acquainted with the descendants of this amazing, loving group of people. You would expect to find a lot of anger and bitterness, but it is not there. There is patience and a certain persistence in looking for the truth. And finally, you will not hear any of them mourning the loss of the millions of dollars stolen from them. They just feel a hole in their collective hearts for the loss of so many of their family members. We can all learn from them and be impressed and grateful for their principled insistence that voice be given to the victims and lost descendants.

Presbyterian Church of the Cross
1517 South 114th Street
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
October 20, 2023**

† DEACON'S UPDATE

Deacons Taking Care of Our Congregation

Do you know what the Deacons at Church of the Cross are responsible for? You might be surprised! Maybe you have been the recipient of one of the caregiving programs in our church, or maybe you have volunteered your time and talent for one of the Deacon programs. Many people don't know exactly what role Deacons play in the life of our church but it is central to keeping us all connected and cared for (see blue box to right).

- Have you attended a funeral luncheon at Church of the Cross? Those are organized and staffed by Deacons, along with a long list of church members who regularly volunteer for that service.
- Have you had a son or daughter graduate from high school and attend college? If so, they probably enjoyed the Senior Recognition Brunch sponsored by the Deacons and may have received a Halloween or Valentine package from the Deacons.
- If you've been hospitalized, struggled with illness or homebound you may have received a visit with a prayer shawl or prayer stone, perhaps the flowers from the Sunday worship service, and maybe a home meal or two. That outreach is all organized by various Deacon committees.

As we begin to nominate new Deacons, please consider nominating yourself or someone you think would be a good fit for the Board of Deacons. Thank you!

- Kathy Moore, Deacon

Prayer Shawls,
Peacemaker
Newborn Quilts,
Coffee
Fellowship,
Holiday Baskets,
Cards & Candy,
Advent Dinner,
Cross Care,
Home Meals,
Funeral
Luncheons,
Senior
Recognition
Brunch,
Blood Drive,
Neighborhood
Connections
and Care

Cross Currents

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

For general questions about the church, contact the Church Office:
Email: churchofthecross@pcoc.us or phone: (402)333-7466

To submit content for the Bulletin announcements or the *Cross Currents* newsletter, contact Communications:
Email: communications@pcoc.us