

Welcome to Our New Elders & Deacons

The annual Congregational Meeting was held on January 26, 2025. Election of these church officers was held at that time.

Elders

Jimmy Downes
Jon Fritz
Susan Geschwender
Charlotte Hubbard
Gary Marron
Trudy Meyer
Scott Stalnaker
Pam Swenson

Deacons

Russ Beernink
Cherri Carpenter
Anna Flairty
Barbara Haar-Rightmyer
Ann Pearson
Corey Prideaux
Sandy Simpson
Barbara Thompson
Kristine Gasko (1-yr.)

Nominating Committee

Darold Bauer
Kris Goodman
Gary Lynn
Marietta Morhardt
Tim Graumann (alt.)
Tina Morgan (alt.)
Congregational Rep to
the Personnel Committee
Jim Miller

Ash Wednesday — March 5

You're invited to a meaningful service with the imposition of ashes. The service will begin in the Sanctuary at 6:45 p.m. following Cornerstone dinner. The service will be livestreamed also.

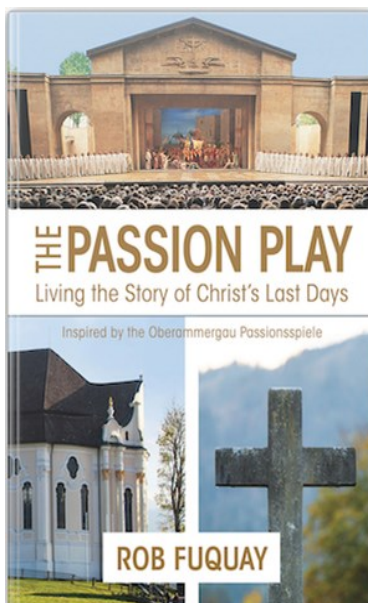


2025 Lenten Study

One of our most meaningful churchwide activities is starting soon – The Lenten Study! Small groups will begin a 6-week study on March 9 and end on Palm Sunday, April 13. Rob Fuquay's book, *The Passion Play, Living the Story of Christ's Last Days*, has been chosen as this year's study. The Lenten Study is a great opportunity to get to know others in our church family while preparing for Easter. We hope you will join us! Find more information on the Lenten Study on Page 5 with the Christian Education News.

Classes will be offered the following days and times:

Sundays at 10 a.m.
Sundays at 5 p.m.
Mondays at 1:30 p.m.
Thursdays at 7 p.m. on Zoom



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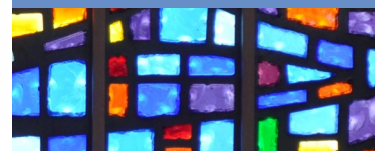
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“Leaders See”

This month, I share this article written a few years ago by Presbyterian Pastor Rodger Nishioka.

Each of us has a deep and profound need to be seen. That truth has never been more real to me than when a young white man shot and killed eight people, six of whom were Asian American women, in Atlanta recently. Those deaths brought into clear focus the dramatic rise of anti-Asian hatred across our country.

I am a fourth-generation Japanese American. I was born in Honolulu. My parents were both born in California. Their parents, my grandparents, were born either in California or in Hawaii. It was my great-grandparents who emigrated from Japan to the United States. We have been Americans for more than 150 years. Yet we, like many other Asian Americans, are viewed as “perpetual foreigners.”

It is one thing to live in a large metropolitan area with many other Asian American faces. It is another thing to live in the Midwest where there are fewer of us around. So it was particularly moving for me when I was walking to church in the week following the shootings in Atlanta, and I saw an older white woman, who was out walking her dog, approaching me. I remembered seeing her on earlier walks. As I came closer to her, I stepped off the sidewalk to walk in the street (COVID protocol). She smiled at me and nodded her head. I waved and said “good morning” and kept walking. Then I heard her say, “Excuse me.” I stopped and turned around. She was standing there with her dog and said, “I really don’t know you, but I see you walking. I just wanted to say that I am glad you’re here, and I am so sad about what happened in Atlanta, and I hope you’re okay.” And standing there on that bright, sunny morning, in this neighborhood near my church, I started to cry. “Thank you,” I said, when I could get the words out. “Thank you so much for your kindness.”

Each of us has a deep and profound need to be seen. Jesus did just that. Jesus saw people. He saw the leper and the paralyzed man. He saw the child and the widow. He saw the pharisee and the rich young ruler. He saw them all.

Leaders see. Leaders see people carefully, thoughtfully, and clearly, so much so that each person knows they have been seen. It is far too easy, espe-

cially in these days as the pace of our lives begins to pick up, for us to get too focused on our tasks, our errands, so that we do not see the people whom God has placed before us. People need to be seen. Good leaders see.

For Reflection:

A time when you knew someone saw you, really saw you.

A time when you felt unseen.

A way you can see others in these days.

This article was written by Presbyterian Pastor Rodger Nishioka, Senior Pastor of Village Presbyterian Church in Prairie Village, Kansas. It was originally published in 2021 in RE: Ruling Elders, A Monthly Resource for Serving Faithfully, which is a publication of the Presbyterian Church (USA) for Ruling Elders.

Your pastor and friend,

Marshall Ziemann



**Pastor/Head of Staff
Marshall Ziemann**
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Tuesday Bible Studies

The Tuesday Bible Studies continue in the New Testament book of Romans. Newcomers are always welcome; just bring your favorite Bible and join us in the classroom in the Welcome Center at either 7:00 (men) or 1:00 (everyone).



A Spontaneous Trip

A couple years ago, I was blessed enough to do a Seminarian study abroad in Frankfurt, Germany. The course, on paper, was roughly about exploring the pedagogical differences between Christian Education in America and Germany, but it also became an exploration of protestant history in our free time. With contemporary German pedagogy, the rejection of Nazism is omnipresent; with the beginnings of Lutheran Protestantism, the witness, power and revolutionary nature of discipleship is omnipresent. The tension that emerged from these diametrically opposed spheres led to some tough discussions.

At one point, on the way back from Marburg University (academic haunt of Heidegger), we ended up down a rabbit hole. We heatedly debated the differences between predestination and reductionism; about seemingly fixed relations and what they mean. Toward the end of it, my professor grew frustrated with some of the concepts. He said, “None of this leaves any room for spontaneity.” Curious as to what that had to do with anything, I asked him, “Why does that matter?” He said, “Because that’s where Kant says God comes into the world – God throws everything off, God is the something new, the divine that is the unscheduled and unplanned.”

It was a moment of revelation for me.

Spontaneity, as it turns out, was all I could think about the other day. That’s because Rock asked me on a Wednesday if I wanted to leave with him that Friday. He asked me if I wanted to drive to the North Woods of Minnesota, in January, up to an empty YMCA camp to visit our Moldovan friend Dima (who visited our church this summer as an International Peacekeeper). As it would turn out, Dima has recently been gifted a plot of land that will now be used for a YMCA Moldova camp, and he’s visiting the States to research the YMCA camps in America.

Meeting Rock’s spontaneity with my own, I said, “sure, but let’s leave tomorrow.”

So off we went the very next day, and, just as you can imagine, nothing went according to plan. But that ended up being ok because it turned out what God had in store for us was better than what we had planned. In the end, it turned out that we had way more time with Dima. We planned for Minneapolis and God led us to Duluth. We planned for about 5 hours with Dima and God set aside almost 9. We planned to meet Dima in the waning hours of Thurs-

day and God had us meet him on Friday morning. And it made all the difference.

By virtue of God’s revisions, we were able to walk around Camp Miller together, on Sturgeon Lake, from the frozen beachfront to the storage basements of the dining hall, and we were able to see Dima envisioning his own tract of land; how he was going to use it for Moldovan children and Ukrainian refugees. Later, sitting down at a diner, we went over blueprints, schedules, future programs offered, employment projections. Dima mentioned a mission partner, a church from the Netherlands, who was also interested in helping. Taking all of this in, my mind started to race: *is this a new international mission opportunity; will this church in the Netherlands become a new international mission partner; is God “coming into our world” with these “new” things?*

Who knows. I certainly don’t. But I hope we’re all spontaneous enough to find out.



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Deacon Moderator
Patti Sparks

Membership :Co-Moderators
Brenda Graumann and Earlene Uhrig



The View from My Office

WE ARE STARTING OUR SECOND MONTH OF THE BIBLE

By now, you have probably been able to settle into some sort of routine for your reading. You may assume that this will happen occasionally in an undertaking like this! Try not to get to far behind, however, because then it is easy to give up on the entire project.

Quitters' day was January 10, the second Friday in January is when most folks allow that new years resolution to go by the wayside. It takes time to create a new habit. For me, I find that if I take time first thing in the morning it is best for me. I come downstairs, start the coffee brewing, I have the Bible open at the dining room table and I sit down and read. I make every effort not to pour that first cup of coffee until I have the day's reading completed.

Then I enjoy coffee as I take time to contemplate what I have read. Josh recently reminded me that it is the LIVING word. I may have read passages, prophecies, parables, and pericopes several times before, but may be struck with a new thought when I read it this time. That's why I keep turning back to the Bible and keep reading.

FEBRUARY

Old Testament readings this month are primarily from Exodus and Leviticus. Exodus contains the familiar story of Israel's escape from bondage in Egypt. The first twenty chapters are the most exciting. Once we get into Chapter 21, we enter the world of laws and customs which may seem a bit strange to us today. Recently we discussed Exodus at Bible studies on Tuesday. Marshall encouraged us to read them quickly and not get bogged down.

Leviticus might be a book to simply read aloud. I found in the past it was hard to understand as it is intended to regulate religious and civil life for Israel. For me it was like being in court and hearing lawyers present their point of views before a jury. To understand the New Testament, one must grasp concepts from books such as Leviticus's basic concepts in the Old Testament.

Most of our readings in the New Testament this month will be in Acts. For me it is very interesting because it deals with the growth and development

of the earliest church during a period of about thirty years after Christ departs in glory.

Date	Scripture Reading
1	Exodus 15, 16 / Psalm 15, 16
2	Exodus 17, 18 / Matthew 24
3	Exodus 19, 20 / Matthew 25
4	Exodus 21, 22 / Psalm 17
5	Exodus 23, 24 / Matthew 26
6	Exodus 25, 26 / Matthew 27
7	Exodus 27, 28 / Matthew 28
8	Exodus 29, 20 / Psalm 18
9	Exodus 31, 32 / Acts 1
10	Exodus 33, 34 / Acts 2
11	Exodus 35, 36 / Psalm 19
12	Exodus 37, 38 / Acts 3
13	Exodus 39, 40 / Acts 4
14	Leviticus 1, 2, 3 / Acts 5
15	Leviticus 4, 5 / Psalm 20, 21
16	Leviticus 6, 7 / Acts 6
17	Leviticus 8, 9 / Acts 7
18	Leviticus 10, 11, 12 / Psalm 22
19	Leviticus 13, 14 / Acts 8
20	Leviticus 15, 16 / Acts 9
21	Leviticus 17, 18 / Acts 10
22	Leviticus 19, 20 / Psalm 23, 24
23	Leviticus 21, 22 / Acts 11
24	Leviticus 23, 24 / Acts 12
25	Leviticus 25, 26 / Psalm 25
26	Leviticus 27 / Numbers 1 / Acts 13
27	Numbers 2, 3 / Acts 14
28	Numbers 4, 5 / Acts 15

LET US GATHER

Sunday, February 2, 10:10 am, coffee in hand, anyone who wants to meet and discuss reading daily the Bible in a year. Let's meet in the Hearth Room. Let's support each other and see what we've learned.



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Finance Committee Moderator:
Jeff Friesen

Building and Grounds Committee Moderator:
Josh Murray

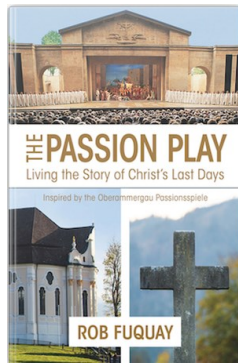


Lenten Study 2025

One of our most meaningful church-wide activities is starting soon – The Lenten Study!

Small groups will begin a 6-week study on March 9 and end on Palm Sunday, April 13.

Rob Fuquay's book, *The Passion Play, Living the Story of Christ's Last Days*, has been chosen as this year's study.



“Perfect for this Lent, this study takes you on a journey to the origins of the Oberammergau Passion Play and helps you understand how the play has been used both as a ritual of praise and, later, as a weapon. The play covers the final period of Jesus' life from his visit to Jerusalem to the journey to the cross. This study helps readers feel a sense of connection to the play while recognizing their own place in the story of Jesus.”

The Lenten Study is a great opportunity to get to know others in our church family while preparing for Easter. We hope you will join us!

Classes will be offered the following days and times:

Sundays at 10 a.m.
Sundays at 5 p.m.
Mondays at 1:30 p.m.
Thursdays at 7 p.m. on Zoom

Register Online by February 15.

If you need assistance registering, stop by the Information Desk in the Welcome Center and someone will be happy to help you, or contact Heather in the Church Office.



Scan QR Code to register:

Summer Fun for Children and Youth

Registration for summer camps and activities in our community has begun, and we don't want you to miss out on our activities here at Church of the Cross.

Put these dates on your calendar now:

Senior High Mission Trip – June 1 – 7
Junior High Mission Trip – June 27 – 29
Vacation Bible School - July 15 - 17, 9 a.m. to Noon
Senior High Youth Triennium – July 28 – 31
Art & Music Camp – August 5 – 8, 9 – 3 p.m.
Registration information to come!

Important Dates to Remember

March 9	Lenten Study Begins
April 19	Easter Egg Hunt, 10 a.m.
April 27	Confirmation Sunday
May 4	Youth Sunday
July 15 – 17	Vacation Bible School
August 5 - 8	Art & Music Camp

Junior High Mission Trip

Our JHF group will be traveling to Sioux Falls, South Dakota for our summer mission trip. We will be departing PCOC on Friday, June 27 and returning on Sunday, June 29. First Presbyterian Church will host our stay. We will be serving the community with three organizations. The first night, we will be preparing, serving, and cleaning up dinner at The Banquet. On Saturday morning we will work at a food bank, and in the afternoon, we will work at a homeless shelter. On Sunday we will worship with our host church and then head over to a local water park for some fun before heading back to Omaha. Registration forms have been mailed home. The cost of attending is \$50. The deadline to register is March 1.

Senior High Mission Trip

Our SHF group will be traveling to Estes Park, Colorado for our summer mission trip. We will be departing on Sunday, June 1 and returning on Saturday, June 7. We will be staying at the YMCA of the Rockies and working at Pastor Christine's church, Presbyterian Community Church of the Rockies. We plan to restore a labyrinth on their church grounds. The YMCA of the Rockies has several ways to keep us entertained throughout the week after a hard day's work, like swimming, hiking, mini golf, axe throwing, and horseback riding. They even have a roller-skating rink! Registration forms have been mailed home. The cost of attending is \$100. The deadline to register is March 1.



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

CE Committee Moderator: Kathryn Vint

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

SHF Leaders: Dawn & Brad Gibson, Ethan Bennett, Susan Price, Piper Smith, Jonathan Fritz



Deacons February Update

Submitted by Larry Frederickson

Upcoming activities include the next blood drive that will be held March 2 from 8:00 - 2:00. Also, The Valentine outreach committee will soon be preparing Valentine care packages for our young adults who have recently moved on from high school.

If you are the parent of an 18 - 23 year old who has a new address, please submit the new address to the Deacons So these young adults can receive their care package.

The Deacons prepared a luncheon for friends and family of congregant Betty Mack in remembrance and celebration of her remarkable 101 years of life. As you know, the Deacons serve the church through the Neighborhood Care program, hospital visits, home meals, prayer shawls, funeral luncheons and home delivered communion among others activities.

What you may not know is the Deacons Are totally self-funded; no dollars come out of the Church budget for these activities.

Our annual Deacon offering will be this month and we will welcome your ongoing support!

Finally, we wish to congratulate those Deacons that have fulfilled their three year commitment:

- Neal Hubbard
- John Morey
- Jerry Cornett
- Danny Whitlow
- Carolyn Will
- Inga Wagner
- Carl Greiner
- Ginger Peterson-Britt
- Tina Morgan

Thank you for your service to the Church!



MUSIC NOTES

A Valentine Vesper Concert on Sunday, February 16, at 3:00 p.m.

Our February performers are Darci Gamirl and David Downing, partners in life and on the stage in the Bel Canto Duo.

Darci is an oboe and English horn specialist, composer, and producer who performs as a soloist and orchestral musician with various orchestras and national touring productions. Interesting fact: Darci played at PCOC with the chamber ensemble and choir last December.

David is a Grammy-nominated cellist and sought-after recording artist. After extensive classical music studies at such prestigious schools as the Interlochen Arts Academy, the Harid Conservatory of Music, and the Cleveland Institute of Music, David walked away from the classical orchestral world—and the cello. Thanks to loving, supportive family and friends and his passion for creating music, David started performing again and never looked back.

Darci and David formed the Bel Canto Duo in 2016. The duo was awarded Outstanding New Artist by the Omaha Entertainment Awards (2023) and was a finalist (American Prize) for chamber music composition

and the Ernst Bacon Prive for the performance of American music.

The Bel Canto Duo’s concert is entitled “Visions of Love,” a fitting theme for a concert near Valentine’s Day. The concert is free, and everyone is invited to attend. Stay after the concert for cookies!

Have questions about any of these, contact Kristi Treu.



Kristi Treu

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

Worship & Music Committee Moderator:
Don Metzger



FEBRUARY

Birthdays

- 2/1 Bidong Tot, Kaiden Kort
- 2/2 Bernice Hall, Kathryn Lewis, Arlin Kiel, Kevin Wetuski, Shirley Payne
- 2/3 Nancy Hamil
- 2/5 Michaela Kalkwarf, Brady Luke, Amelia Vint, Augustus Vint
- 2/6 William Harrison
- 2/7 Holli Wright
- 2/8 Rodney Whorlow
- 2/10 Judy Bruce, Jackson Cunningham
- 2/11 Belinda Greiner, Sarah Mooney
- 2/12 Haley Allen-Mendick, Keith Engelmann, Jackson Kussman, Annie Bougger, Elizabeth Murray
- 2/13 Peggy Johnson, Lauren Ballou, Noah McClain
- 2/15 Richard Bowen, Stan Hale, Doug Rathman, Gayle Hoybook
- 2/16 Art Morse, Bridget Buda, Anthony Billings
- 2/17 Jim Spielman
- 2/19 Ardell Penney, Michelle Kwaw
- 2/20 Bob Reid, Tyler Falcone, Kiana Sekle, Eric Haas
- 2/21 Jenna Cunningham
- 2/22 Bev Koch, Sally Hanley
- 2/23 Mark Spielman, Dodie Bellus
- 2/24 Dennis Kaiser
- 2/25 Steven Schmidt, Brenda Graumann, Raelynne Hale
- 2/26 Michelle Boesen, Heather Obregon
- 2/27 Tim Jerry
- 2/28 Sarah Frederickson, Linda Matson

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 prayerteam@pcoc.us or
and Judy Arms

Thanksgiving Baskets Update

In November, PCOC provided 100 Thanksgiving baskets to Completely Kids using the funds from the annual Thanksgiving offering. On Wednesday, Nov. 13, the 6-member confirmation class helped prepare the baskets. Each basket included non-perishable goods, including mashed potatoes, gravy, stuffing, corn, a 5 lb. bag of sugar for baking, and a \$20 Hy Vee gift card to be used towards meat and other perishable items for the holiday meal, all packaged in a reusable shopping bag. Completely Kids distributed the bags to needy families on the evening of Nov. 26. Thank you for supporting this mission effort and helping to make Thanksgiving happier for these families.



Calling all knitters!

Our supply of Prayer Shawls that are taken to our hospitalized and shut-in members is running low. If you are a knitter, please consider making one for the Pastors and Deacons to distribute to our members. They are greatly appreciated. You may leave your finished shawl on the counter in Room 15 and I will attach a label stating that it was crafted with love by our Prayer Shawl Ministry. Thank you for using your creative talent for this project. Any questions? Contact Ginger Petersen-Britt, 402-218-9663.



Cross Care
connections

Cross Care Connections provides a personally tailored relationship with a fellow church member to walk with you at life's most challenging times. These trained compassionate individuals can provide confidential support to help you navigate major life events.

Contact Marshall or Josh in the church office for more information about this program or to request a Cross Care provider.

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

Active Minds in February

Active Minds will be adding Pinochle to our games in February. Newcomers and friends are always welcome. Tuesdays, 1:30-4:00 in the lower level Great Room. We have very patient teachers available every week! Please join us as your schedule allows. You are welcome to join us after Bible Study. Contact Person, Earlene Uhrig.



49ERS on Tuesday, February 4

Our program for Tuesday, February 4, 2025, will be Amanda Stastny:, Bumbling Bee Native Wildflowers. She will be presenting information regarding the locally native and pollinator wildflowers and grasses which are beneficial for Nebraska and for our environment at large. She recently was featured in the Omaha World Herald. We are limiting our reservations to 40 individuals due to space constraints. The lunch location is Wheatfields, One Pacific Place, at 11:30 a.m. Everyone is welcome, whether or not you are 49, younger or older, come join us! We will order from a special menu. For reservations or questions, please contact Mary Ott, or Judy Sundberg. We also have a sign-up sheet at the Information Center.



Presbyterian Women February 6

Join the Presbyterian Women's Circle of Love on Thursday, February 6th at 9:30 am in the Courtyard Room. Carol Sorensen will continue our Bible study from Growing Older & Wiser by Dale & Sandy Larsen. This month's topic "They Don't Always Listen" from 1 Kings 12: 1-20. All church women are invited to join us. Please contact Cindy Nisley at with any questions.



Friday Night Gourmets on February 7

The Friday Night Gourmets will meet for an early Valentine Day Dinner Outing. We will meet at Farmer Brown's Steakhouse at 2620 River Rd Dr, Waterloo NE. There is a social hour starting at 6:00p.m. and dinner is at 6:45p.m. We will have a special party menu and pay with individual checks. Sign up at the Information Desk by February 2. Any Questions? Contact the hosts Mike Howland or Linda Matson.



PCOC Book Group on February 19

PCOC Book Group will meet February 19 in Room 13 from 5:15 to 6:30 p.m. to review *The Island of Missing Trees* by Elif Shafak. All readers are welcome! Questions? Contact Charlotte Hubbard.



Presbyterian Men February 22

On Saturday, February 22 at 9:00 am, PCOC men are invited to attend a continental breakfast and program in the Welcome Center featuring Jim Dingman. He will speak about Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), personal experiences and the ways he is giving back. Please sign-up to attend at the Information Desk by Sunday, February 16th. Invite someone to attend with you. Contact Jon Boomgaarden with questions.

GALS on February 22

Join GALS as we take a guided 1 hour tour of the Joslyn Museum from 10:30 - 12:30. It will be a morning of fellowship, beauty, and learning. We will meet inside the main entrance of the museum, with the guided tour starting at 11:00. Following the tour, you are free to enjoy lunch at the onsite café, visit other museum exhibits, or proceed with your other Saturday Events. There is no cost for the tour, but the museum accepts donations, if you so choose. Any Questions? Contact Anne Wattles or Staci Voss.

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. for gentle stretching and movement! Drop in if you'd like to attend a class.

Coordinator: Paula Allen

Membership Committee Co-Moderators:

Brenda Graumann — Earlene Uhrig

Congregational Life Committee Moderator:

Sue Meusey and Linda Miller

AGAPE FOR ALL – Looking back and looking forward

Martin Luther King Day will have passed when this Cross Currents arrives but as I'm reflecting today on the work of MLK, I am reminded of our country's history and the Agape for All messages that we have studied and carried with us for the last five or so years at Church of the Cross. Martin Luther King wrote in his Letter from Birmingham City Jail that; "I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states. I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. Never again can we afford to live with the narrow, provincial 'outside agitator' idea. Anyone who lives inside the United States can never be considered an outsider".

This message seems particularly poignant now as we watch the devastation inflicted by wildfires on the Los Angeles area. Do you know someone who has been affected? What feelings do you have about the thirty schools that have been lost so far? The people in Los Angeles are our 'neighbors' and "what happens to them directly, affects all indirectly". How can we help – both from near and far?

Refugee Resettlement

Church of the Cross sponsored a refugee family who arrived over a year ago. That was an amazing experience for the steadfast volunteers who devoted hundreds of hours to securing a household of materials to prepare for their arrival and then spent almost a year helping the family find their way into the Omaha community through schools, jobs and their religious community. Refugee resettlement is a significant issue in today's world and represents both the historical perspective of being the foundation upon which our country is built as well as a very current, sometimes divisive issue today.

We will be bringing in experts from the Omaha Area to speak at our next two Embracing Community Connections classes on April 27 and May 4th to help us understand the present day picture of refugee resettlement in Omaha. We will provide more details in March.

Redlining

There are also historical issues that continue to affect the day-to-day lives of some of our neighbors, even though we think they have been resolved long ago. Redlining is one of those issues. Many of us would say we were not directly affected by redlining, but, again, hasn't it affected all, in some way or another?

To help us better understand that issue, Church of the Cross has agreed to cosponsor the documentary film "Divisible" on Tuesday, April 8th at 6:30 pm at the Omaha Conservatory of Music at 7023 Cass Street. There is no cost to attend.

"Divisible" is a documentary made in Omaha, about Omaha, that explains the history, mechanics, and lasting ramifications of redlining in our city. Redlining began in the last century and is a process of segregating neighborhoods by race.

Redlining was outlawed by the Fair Housing Act of 1968, but the practice did not end at that time. Redlining not only told real estate agents where people could live, but allowed discriminatory lending for homebuying and neighborhood business development. The result is disparity in generational wealth, education, health care, and access to good nutrition among different sectors of our city.

We will have more information next month and hope many of you will be able to attend this important showing. Please mark your calendars with the date today.

Choose a Sunday to Help!

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



Ushers Needed

Questions? Contact
Mary Lynn Bennett

Deacons Moderator:
Patti Sparks



Agape Book Review

Submitted by Ann Pearson

Ahead of Their Time: The Story of the Omaha DePorres Club, by Matt Holland

This is a remarkable story of a little known, but relatively recent piece of Omaha history that took place from 1947 to 1960. Author Matt Holland discovered it as he searched through a box of papers he found in his father's attic.

The paths of two White men crossed at Creighton University, a student named Denny Holland and a priest named Father Markoe. Through honest conversation they agreed that the condition of black folks in Omaha was reprehensible and that it was time for action. The two areas of greatest concern were education and in hiring discrimination, in every business and industry in Omaha. The 16,000 black folks in Omaha considered Omaha "the Birmingham of the North." It is also worth noting that the efforts of these two men occurred many years before the period that became known as The Civil Rights Movement.

Let's learn a bit about these two individuals. Father John Markoe was born in 1890 and, as he grew up, was known for his athleticism and his "wild streak" which, as he grew into manhood involved alcohol. He entered the Navy and advanced to Lieutenant but soon received a dishonorable discharge because of his drinking. With the influence of his older brother, James Markoe, he entered the Jesuit priesthood in St. Louis. There he witnessed the horrible living conditions of the black folks in the East St. Louis slums. Having seen the poverty and suffering, he concluded "racism denied the teaching of Christ and went against natural law and decency." It was so indecent as to be "rotten" in his mind. Antiracism efforts became his life's calling. He and his brother quickly concluded that converting blacks to Christianity was pointless because they then experienced the unchristian life of segregation in churches, neighborhoods and educational institutions. They changed their mission focus to convincing White people that THEY had the responsibility of undoing the damage that had been done over the centuries of slavery and abuse.

Denny Holland, who had grown up in the small town of Barnard, Kansas, was familiar with terroristic taunting at his grandparents' store by the KKK, because they were Catholics. The "last straw" occurred when his grandparents allowed a traveling baseball team to patronize their store. That baseball team just happened to include the great Satchel Paige. The Hol-

lands eventually lost their store and had to earn their living through common labor. As Denny Holland moved forward in his life he spent time volunteering at the Friendship House, in New York City. This experience taught him (a White man) what it was like to be Black and mistreated by White people. "Negroes had at long last become fellow human beings."

When Denny and Father John Markoe met at Creighton, the DePorres Club began. They named the club after St. Martin DePorres who was the patron saint of social justice, racial harmony and mixed-race people. The club, a gathering of Black and White students and adults, immediately decided that they were not a prayer group; their purpose was peaceful activism. This included newspaper articles, passing out flyers, picketing, and eventually boycotting. They remained true to these actions in spite of being labeled communists and trouble makers. They eventually focused their efforts on desegregating schools and churches (especially in the Catholic community) and breaking down the total discrimination of Black people seeking work. None of the major businesses in Omaha would hire people of color because "it would offend the White people." This included but was not limited to the Coca Cola company, Reed's Ice Cream Company, and the Omaha Street Railway Company, which provided all transportation between Council Bluffs and Omaha. (The transportation administration couldn't be convinced that men returning from WWII who had operated tanks and jeeps and bomber airplanes could be taught to operate a bus safely.)

My favorite accomplishment of the DePorres Club involved Tuskegee Airman Woodrow Morgan, who was captured by the Germans when he was shot down over Germany in World War II. He survived to return home to Omaha. He was getting ready to move his family into a house on 31st and Parker, when the neighbors found out and started breaking his windows and throwing paint on his house. They were there threatening him the day he was trying to move in. Well... surprise...there was another group there as well, to assist and protect him. Yes, the Omaha DePorres Club. Omaha at its worst and Omaha at its best! Let us all strive to be Omaha at its best!

We have so much to learn!



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. Below are the latest thank you notes we have received:

- The PCUSA Ministry Engagement and Support thanks you for your recent gift of \$1,820 for the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

- Habitat for Humanity thanks you for your support and your recent donation of \$5,000, which will help build stronger neighborhoods and brighter futures. They also thank you for your support as they celebrate 40 years and thousands of families served in our community.

- Courtney Koenig, Omaha Public School King Elementary's social worker, thanks you for your generous donation of pants, underwear and coats. The school's supply was entirely depleted and your donation helped to replenish it. They have been able to give winter coats to several students and the children have been so excited!

- Omaha Public Schools Foundation thanks you for your generous donation of \$9,500 that will help support Bancroft, King, Sherman, and Walnut Hill Elementary Schools and the ILP.

- Sherman Elementary staff and students wrote, "Thank you, thank you, thank you for sharing your love and kindness with Sherman Elementary. We are so blessed by your generosity in supporting our students and community with school supplies and warm jackets, clothing and backpacks. Our thanks does not seem enough. But please know our students and families greatly benefit from your kindness, love, support and generosity."

- Your contributions of \$10,735, \$1,500 and \$385 to provide working poor families with a week's supply of groceries is greatly appreciated by Heartland Hope Mission. Your support provides fresh produce, meat, milk and hygiene items. Additionally, your contribution allows families in need to have access to clothing, household items and to meet with a Client Service specialist to receive navigational services, SNAP (food stamp) application assistance and connects them to their Job Paths program.

- The ROC Crew thanks you for your support during 2024. Their goal is to share Jesus' love with the vulnerable young people around the Ashland community.



SPIRIT OF MISSION

Mission Committee Moderator:

Keith Allen — Mission@pcoc.us

Linda Twomey, Executive Director of Siena Francis House, would "like to sincerely thank you for the generous \$13,500.00 gift you made. On behalf of our organization and the individuals we serve, please know how grateful we are for your gift."

Siena Francis House Servers Needed

**Sunday, February 9
4:15 to 6:15 p.m.**

PCOC has the dinner shift on the 2nd Sunday of every month at Siena Francis House. We need at least 6 volunteers. Please consider giving your time to this mission. Questions? Contact Keith Allen.

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



Heartland Hope Mission

A huge thank-you to those who provided gifts for 11 - 14 year olds and your monetary donations to Heartland Hope Mission's Christmas celebration this year. HHM scheduled 12 sessions over 7 days to provide gifts for children of local families in need and a Christmas dinner to cook at home. PCOC collected and delivered over 300 gifts this year for this annual event.

Thanks also to the PCOC congregation for supporting the pantry collection every 3rd Sunday of the month. Your donations every month have averaged about 150 lbs of groceries and 25 lbs of hygiene each month! Keep it up!

Finally, please consider volunteering on the first Saturday of each month to work at the HHM West pantry at 15555 Industrial Road from 9:30am - 12:30pm. Several members of our church will be there with you and it is a great way to meet the staff, other volunteers and help local clients for a short period of time on one Saturday each month. Please contact John Bennett if interested in volunteering at (402) 618-6991 or mljbennett85@gmail.com. Thank you for continuing to support Heartland Hope Mission.

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



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**Next Cross Currents Deadline is:
Third Friday of the month
February 21, 2024**

Refugee Family Update

The Mohammad Ali family has been in Omaha for a year and a half now. We are pleased to report that they are doing well and are happy in this country. They are also very happy about the recent changes in their home country of Syria.

Ali has changed jobs this past year and is working for a distributor of Mediterranean food. He drives a truck to cities within a hundred mile radius of Omaha.

Ali was successful obtaining green cards for his entire family. This enables everyone to work permanently in the US and travel freely including abroad.

This summer Ali's brother and family moved to Washington State and the entire Ali family drove out to see them. Their minivan, which we helped them purchase, has served them well.

This summer the family had to decide if they wanted to move from their 3 bedroom apartment, but they

decided to renew their lease for another year. The children are all enrolled in the same OPS schools where they started and are earning good grades and becoming more proficient in English. The mother and oldest child have their learner's permits for driving. Several members from the mentoring committee continue to visit the family to help with schooling, medical care, language and social support. But the family has made many connections with Syrian neighbors and other community resources, so our PCOC committee has accomplished our goals.



Cross Currents

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For *Cross Currents* and Bulletin announcements, church website updates, Zoom meeting invites, or other communications needs, please contact Christian.
