

Cross Currents



Faith in Action



This year's theme for our fall stewardship campaign is: **Faith in Action**. Faith in Action is a great description of what our church is all about. **Faith** is the set of core beliefs that bind us together following Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. But our faith is not a set of beliefs that is simply a mental agreement that we know these things to be true. Our faith is a set of beliefs that leads directly to action.

Several times in his letters that became a major part of our New Testament, Paul referred to the church as the 'body of Christ.' This image of the body holds great meaning because Paul speaks of the body needing all of our individual gifts as members if it is to do all that it can do. This is the church. We only function well, when all our members reach in, and share their talents, their abilities, and their resources with others in the church. And when these talents and abilities and resources come together, we are able to do remarkable things.

The other side of the image of the 'body of Christ' is that to those in the world beyond the faith, the way that the church and its people function in the world, signifies the action of Christ in the world. We 'become' the image of Christ when we respond to needs in our community, nation and the world.

Faith that leads to action is what being the church, as the body of Christ, is all about. And Presbyterian Church of the Cross has tried to be faithful in as many ways as possible in being a place where our faith, our shared beliefs, lead to action.

The fall stewardship campaign is an opportunity for each member to think about their commitment of time, abilities and resources to the work we are called to do together. Faith in Action is a what we are all about - and we can only do our best if you are a part of it.

Later this month you will receive your opportunity to pledge to our Annual Budget for 2012. We will celebrate our commitments on October 30 in worship. Thank you for your commitment to our Lord, and this church.

Who's in Charge? (Sermon from October 2, 2011)

October 2, 2011

Matthew 21:33-46

This is a tough parable. Back in Sunday School days we had songs about Zaccheus, and being fishers of men, and the Ark. There were no cute songs about the wicked tenants. Sunday School lessons for children tend to skip over this type of Scripture. But it was important enough for Jesus to tell, and for Matthew to record, so we have come across it today.

The setting of the parable is after Jesus Palm Sunday entry into Jerusalem, so it is the final week of his life and teaching. Tensions are rising as Jesus' enemies try to trick him. The question which began a series of parables was a question of authority. By whose authority did Jesus act? Jesus responded by going back to the basics and talking about who is ultimately in charge of life.

It is easy to read this parable and see it as a condemnation of the Jewish authorities and an opening to the Gentiles, like us. It is also comfortable to read it that way. We can identify the bad guys and state emphatically, **'Well that doesn't apply to me!'** We generally are fond of Scripture which we can dispose of that easily. Those Scriptures do not challenge us, nor do they threaten us.

However, I think we have missed the point entirely if we do not find this parable a little intimidating. We need to ask, 'What got the original tenants in trouble? Remember, the Jews, especially those who were the target of this parable took their faith seriously -- at least as seriously as we do! Where did they go wrong?

Those in charge of land, whether the master is near or far away, are called stewards. This is the primary usage of the word steward in the New Testament. Their obligation is to take care of the possessions of the master, act in the master's behalf, protect what is the master's. Our word stewardship comes from this. How do we take care of our master's possessions.

As we read this parable, are we clear that it's implication is that God is the ultimate owner? This is the Lord's... the church... its mission... I dare say, our lives... and our possessions. Ultimately the source of everything we have is from God.

That is a dangerous idea for God to imply in America! Our heritage is to protect our property! As thirteen puny colonies, we took on mighty England - mainly over taxation. They thought they were entitled to a sizeable piece of our property. We didn't. We revolted, and threw them out of our vineyard.

Does God think he is entitled to a portion of our property? That is more than an implication here. That is the point...! The parable reminds us that the ultimate owner, God is - the Lord - the master of all. Now the arrangement is: we are allowed to live, to work, even to accumulate things with freedom. Yet God, the owner, will not be forgotten. God asks to be taken seriously. The owner wants to be a priority in our time... a priority in the way we spend our money... a priority in our choices as we walk through this life.

As I think about the original hearers of this parable and us, the biggest difference between our response as tenants and theirs, is that they took the owner's claim on their lives seriously. They reacted harshly, because they knew it was a legitimate claim on them.

As today's tenants, the servants come, the son comes, and they are not attacked. They are trivialized or ignored.

It is as though the master sent his son to our vineyard. The son was welcomed to a cocktail party, but could not get a meeting with those he needed to see. When a first meeting time was finally scheduled and the appointed time arrived, several missed for their kids sports events or practices. The second time a meeting was scheduled, it conflicted with the Winegrower's Charity 10 K Race. The third meeting was put off because several had to catch up on their rest.

When they finally realized what the son wanted - the portion of their harvest due the master - they turned the matter over to their accountants and tax attorneys, for a minimal impact on their somewhat lavish lifestyles...

Today's response is not as vicious, but it is just as opposed to God's rule in our lives.

Ultimately for us, this needs to be a reminder of who is in charge, 'Who is the owner, the master of the lives we live?' When we fail to recognize who's in charge the consequences can be dangerous.

The following conversation, involving a U.S. Navy ship off the coast of Newfoundland a few years ago, was cited in one of the Montreal newspapers.

It began when a Navy vessel communicated: "Please divert your course 15 degrees to avert a collision."

The response was "Recommend you divert YOUR course 15 degrees."

"This is the captain of a U.S. Navy ship. I say again: Divert your course."

And the word came back, "No, I say again: Divert YOUR course."

"This is an aircraft carrier of the United States Navy. We are a large warship. Divert your course at once!"

"This is a lighthouse. Your call."

As our lives run their course, we may think we are big stuff but the light of the world makes a claim upon us, and calls us to change our course, or respond in commitment, do we listen?

As we come to this table and remember our Lord's sacrifice for us -- as we look around the vineyard we have been blessed to live in, to work in, to serve in - **do we note who the ultimate owner is?** The question comes, "Who is in charge?"

Hey, I see someone coming representing the owner. Should we kill him? Ignore him? Or give him our joyful, faithful response?



Faith in Action

Stewardship for 2012 at Church of the Cross
Supporting our Programs, Staff, Mission and Ministry
through the Annual Budget

What is Stewardship?

What is Stewardship?

It Starts...

A steward in biblical time was the most highly favored and most trusted servant. The steward was the individual who managed all the household affairs of his masters which would include the servants, the fields, the livestock, the trading marketing), and all other business affairs. The more wealthy the master, the more involved was the job of the steward.



So the idea of 'stewardship' is the idea of taking care and using wisely the things which the master (God) has entrusted to you in this life.

The Old Testament reminds us over and over again, what source of everything is.

The Psalmist put it this way:



"The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it;"

This reminds us that God truly is the source of all that we have.

If you were a part of our Lenten Study several years ago we used the book, *Living Your Strengths*, and took the *Clifton Strengthfinder*. Out of 33 potential categories for strengths we discovered our 5 signature strengths. We also learned that only one in 33 million had our same strengths in the same order we had. We each are made uniquely by God and given personal and individual gifts that make us who we are.

So..... Stewardship....

... is taking those gifts we've been given by God and using them wisely.

Stewardship is taking care of your health, the environment, using your time well, using your abilities well, and using the financial resources you have been entrusted with well also.

The master (God) has entrusted us to use all the resources that we have been given for the span of our lives. This use should not only serve us. It should serve those things that are important to us. They should serve to the glory of the God we believe gave us everything—from the gift of life—to the personality we live with—to the wealth and abilities that we possess.



All of us can be good stewards, grateful to God, and responsive to opportunities to serve Him.

Christian Education

Coming to Bible Explorers Workshop On Sunday mornings.....

Theme: "The Call of Samuel"
Scripture: 1 Samuel 3: 1-4
October 16 – November 13
10:00 – 10:50 A.M.

Art workshop – Kristi Treu
Games Workshop – MaryLynn Bennett
Drama Workshop – Rana Johnson
Video Workshop – Amy Miller
Discovery Workshop – Traci Harrison



“What is God Up To?” A Presbytery Wide Educational Event

You are invited to join us on Saturday, October 15th for a Presbytery wide educational event which is being hosted here at Church of the Cross! Keynote speeches and workshops will be focused on the topic of evangelism. What is the theology of evangelism? How can we use social media (facebook, Twitter, etc) as a tool for evangelism? How can we authentically share the Gospel in an increasingly post-Christian and postmodern culture? These questions and more will be on the table for this daylong event which will include a lunch prepared by our own Senior High Youth Group (proceeds going towards their 2012 Mission Trip to Joplin, MO). Registration is \$10. Please pick up a registration form at the information desk for more information.

Halloween Bash



All the little ghosts and goblins of the church are invited for our first annual Halloween Bash, co-hosted by the Junior High Fellowship and MOPS! We'll start off at **4:45pm** on **Sunday, October 30th** in the Fellowship Hall, then go downstairs for fun (not scary!) trick-or-treating in the basement hallway. Afterward stay to decorate a mini pumpkin and enjoy some fellowship at a Harvest Dinner hosted by MOPS. All ages are welcome at this congregation-wide event! Signups for trick-or-treating and/or the Harvest Dinner will be at the Information Desk. We hope to see all of you at this spooktacular event.

MOMSnext is looking for YOU!!!

Are you looking for wisdom, guidance, and encouragement to raise your school age children??

Are you trying to figure out how to thrive as a parent of school age kids?

Are you facing new challenges and issues as your kids get older?

If the answer to these questions is "YES", then you need MOMSnext!

We already have a group started but would love to have more moms involved.

MOMSnext is currently integrated with our MOPS group and meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month from 6:00 – 7:30 PM.

We are sharing speakers, meals and activities but would eventually like the MOMSnext group to become its own entity.

We want to invite speakers and have discussion topics that are relevant to your needs. We'd like to provide child care with activities that are age appropriate for your children. We just need more moms with children 1st grader and older. Come and join us at our next meeting on Tuesday, October 11th at 6:00 P.M. and see what we're all about. As one mom stated, "MOMSnext has allowed me to continue to develop relationships and to cultivate them into stronger friendships through sharing, caring and mentoring one another through the elementary school years." *Better Moms Make a Better World!*



Gifts and Memorials update.....

On August 22, 2011, Session approved the addition of 100 hymnals to the Gift and Memorial Items List. The Worship and Music Committee removed the oldest and most worn of our present hymnals, and those that are now borderline will most likely need to be replaced next year. The cost per hymnal is \$20.00, and each new hymnal will have a bookplate in the front, just as those do now, noting the name of the donor.

FINANCE COMMITTEE HAS COMPLETED THE REVIEW OF THE BOOKS

On September 21, 2010, members of the Finance Committee met to review all the financial procedures in place at Church of the Cross. The report of their review has been duplicated for Cross Currents and a supply is at the Information Center. Anyone in the congregation with any questions about the financial procedures of our church is invited and encouraged to attend the Finance Committee meeting on Tuesday, October 18, 2011, at 5:30 p.m. in the church library to ask their questions. If you have questions and prefer to not attend the meeting, feel free to ask a member of the Finance Committee or June Fettig, Business Administrator.

Friday Night Gourmets

Next meeting will be Oct. 14, at Mediterranean Bistro. The address is 1712 N. 120th Street. Sign up sheet will be at the information desk in the narthex. If you have any questions, contact Joan and Neelo Boomgaarden at 402-895-6475 or Bob Binhammer at 402-392-1061. Time is 6:30 pm.

Hiking and Birding Club

The Hiking and Birding Club will meet at 9:30 a.m. on October 22nd at Chalco Hills Recreation Area, near the Natural Resources Center, for a walk around Wehrspann Lake. Chalco Hills is located on Giles Road west of 144th St. All are welcome. Contact Tom Stalanker, 402-390-9913, for more information.

49ers November Meeting

We will meet for lunch at 11:30 a.m. Tuesday, November 1st at Lakeside village, 17475 Frances St. Our guest speakers, Bill and Evonne Williams program "A Rendezvous with Destiny," will tell us about the seven Heartland Honor Flights to Washington, D. C. to visit the World War II monuments.

Paid reservations \$10.00 necessary by October 28th. Call Elinor Brooks, 402-333-0418, or Mary Kuhn, 402-333-1710, for menu choices.



Spirit of Mission

Another Habitat Home for a Deserving Family

An August 11th dedication marked another successful build with Habitat for Humanity and the Neighbors South Coalition. This year's house was at 1519 South 27th Street. Its proud new residents are Abdulrahman, Kadra and their four young children. Abdulrahman and his wife Kadra are from Somalia. Abdulrahman moved to the United States in 1994; Kadra was able to join him 2002.

Construction of the home began on June 10th. After 12 long, hot weekends the build was completed in late August. Presbyterian Church of the Cross was again a contributor to this year's build, both financially and through volunteers for construction and providing food.

A BIG "Thank You" to all who helped with this year's build and food. With your support we had another successful build this year and look forward to next season's house.

If you would like to learn more about the home and see additional photos, please visit Habitat for Humanity Neighborhood South Coalition Omaha at www.neighbors-south.com/ns.

Thank you to Matt Will for organizing and leading our church's volunteer efforts, which helped make the home a reality for this deserving family!





SPIRIT of MISSION

From Russia With Love

The weekend of September 22-25 was a very special one here at Church of the Cross. We had the great honor and pleasure of welcoming guests—Russian and American—to the Seventh Annual Russia Mission Network Conference. The conference is held annually for churches, who, like ours, are partnered with a Russian church. The conference allows opportunity for fellowship, to learn from speakers and panel discussions, and to build relationships across borders, both nationally and internationally.

On Thursday night, we had the joy of having Alex Krutov share his personal story of growing up as a Russian orphan and how God led him to co-founding a post-orphanage ministry in St. Petersburg, called “The Harbor.” On Friday night, we hosted Marina Shishova, an extraordinary Russian orthodox woman active in issues of ecumenism and peacemaking. We were also pleased that she could join us in worship on Sunday for both services.

During the day on Friday and Saturday, participants heard from PC(USA) mission workers, Gary Payton (regional liaison for Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Armenia, and Poland) as well as Amgad Beblawi (PC (USA) Mission coordinator for the Middle East, Europe, and Central Asia). We also enjoyed catching up with mission worker, Ellen Smith, who heads the twinning program between Russian and American Churches. Other speakers included Bob Bronkema who shared about the exciting ministry being done in the Moscow Protestant Chaplaincy, a church located in Moscow that serves diplomats and business people, and at the same time African refugees. We were also pleased to hold a panel discussion featuring our Russian guests. This included Olya Ignatenkova of the Smolensk Baptist Church, Kristina Ignatenkova, of our partner church, Grace Baptist in Gnozdo, Pavel and Alina Skachkov of Smolensk, and Alex Krutov. Topics for discussion included orphan and post orphanage ministry, camping ministry, and ministry to young families, as well as helpful advice for how to best build partner relationships with our Russian friends. Karen Morey led a seminar on using technology in our partnership, such as Facebook and Skype. Also, Kirk and I were happy to lead morning devotions on Friday and Saturday.

That’s just a brief glimpse into what went on over that weekend and there are many people in need of thanks for their hard work in organizing and carrying out this event. I can’t list all of their names here, but you know who you are: dedicated kitchen workers, airport runners, hospitality bag makers, greeters, pot luck participants, conference planning committee members, and others. Thanks to everyone who helped to make this event so meaningful and successful.

One of the biggest things I took away from my experience with the conference was the joy of our shared love of our brothers and sisters in Russia as well as their love for us. I was glad for the eye opening experience of learning what our friends around the world are doing to faithfully follow Christ in their church partnerships as well as the opportunity to learn new things about Russia and the state of mission around the world. I know that we all left encouraged and excited about our partnerships and excited to see what new ways God might be leading us to serve together.

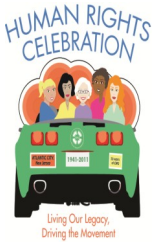
Blessings, Nadia



CHURCH WOMEN UNITED FALL FESTIVAL OF TABLES



The Church Women United Fall Festival of Tables was held at Church of the Cross on September 27, 2011. Two hundred and twenty women enjoyed a lunch, beautifully decorated tables by each of the 24 different church women's groups. We want to thank the Presbyterian Women at Church of the Cross for hosting the event. Their hard work made us all feel very welcome. We especially want to thank Paul Nickel and Ken Penny for their help patrolling the parking lot and keeping the Discovery Preschool students safe with the added traffic. Our program was a Tip Top Style Show with clothing from the Tip Top Thrift Shop in Benson. The proceeds from the Fall Festival of Tables and the nut sales go to Uta Halee Girls Village, a residential mental health treatment center for adolescent girls and their families.



The Church Women United will be celebrating Human Rights Day on Tuesday, October 25 9:30 a.m. at Kountze Memorial Lutheran Church. Sryiani Tidball a UNL professor and an expert on Human Trafficking will be the keynote speaker. If you are interested in attending and carpooling, please contact Diane Kratz at 402.334.1605 or dhkratz@hotmail.com.



SNICKERS SUNDAY IS OCTOBER 16!

Sunday, October 16 is Snickers Sunday. Presbyterian Churches all over the Presbytery will be collecting Snickers 2.07 oz. candy bars for the Prison Ministries Christmas Stocking Project. Please bring the 2.07 oz. Snickers to church on Sunday October 16 if you have not yet done so. This is a great mission project for the entire congregation to participate. Our youth groups, children, and families are encouraged to bring 2.07 oz. Snickers bars on October 16 and put them in the box in the lobby of Fellowship Hall. The Presbyterian Women at Church of the Cross made almost 200 Christmas stockings for the Prison Ministries. A special thanks to those women who took fabric home to finish the stockings after the Sewing for Mission Day.

Cross Currents

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



Coming October 16th

Paul Chou, violin; Ann Chang, piano

Vesper Concerts presents violinist Paul Chou and pianist Ann Chang on Sunday, October 16th, at 3:00 p.m. in a program of music by Beethoven ("Kreutzer" sonata), Brahms (G Major sonata), Gershwin ("Ain't Necessarily So"), and William Bolcom ("Graceful Ghost").

Paul Chou is an accomplished professional musician who occupied the Ronald J. Ulrich Endowed Chair of Orchestral Studies in the Department of Music at Lehigh University. As a violinist and conductor, his performances have been met with critical acclaim by domestic and international audiences and critics.

Ann Chang is an active soloist and lecturer in the U.S. and Europe. Her curiosity and wide-ranging musical interests have taken her in many directions, allowing her to forge a unique career and establish a rare reputation. She is in great demand as an artist and teacher, and her recent appointment as Fulbright Scholar to Belgium (Brussels) has given her an opportunity to expand her interest in the study of Classic Performance Practice. Chang is Artistic Director of the Lied Center in Lincoln, as well as Artist in Residence at the UNL School of Music.

The concert will be performed at the Presbyterian Church of the Cross, 1517 South 114 Street in Omaha, and admission is FREE.



CHURCH OF THE CROSS
2011 REVIEW OF FINANCIAL
ACCOUNTING RECORDS AND PROCEDURES

The Finance Committee conducted a review of the financial accounting records and procedures. The areas that were addressed were:

- Proof of cash
- Test cash receipts procedures
- Check register entries and check clearing endorsements (monthly)
- Test the cash disbursement procedures
- Test Vesper Concerts receipts and disbursement procedures

The results of our review should not be considered to constitute an audit by an outside accounting firm. In the committee's opinion, this review complies with G-10.0401 of the Book of Order as a review of all books and records relating to finance by a committee of members versed in accounting. The review was conducted on September 20, 2011. The following summarizes the results of that review:

Proof of Cash A monthly proof of cash was completed for the operating and the HIFI accounts for the months of September, 2010 through August 2011. This consists of reconciling total deposits and checks per bank statements with general ledger activity and balance. The proofs of cash were in agreement with the bank reconciliations

Cash Receipts Procedure Sunday morning offering is collected and organized by two members of a team of volunteers ("baggers") and taken to the bank that day. The next day the bag is picked up and the income is processed by one of a team of volunteers ("counters") who enter the contributions to the appropriate giving record, prepare the deposit slip and income reporting form. This income reporting form is then checked by the Business Administrator for accuracy. Deposits for February 2011 and July 2011 (random choice) were traced from the deposit slips to the income reporting form used by the counters, and from the income reporting forms to the reports generated by the accounting system. The deposit slips were checked against the bank statements. No discrepancies were found.

Check Register Entries and Check Clearing Endorsements As of September 1997, checks clearing each month and the check register are reviewed by a member of the Finance Committee for any unusual items or endorsements. All entries questioned were explained to the satisfaction of the committee members. No unusual items were noted.

Cash Disbursement Procedure During the 1994 review, procedures for payment of bills were documented and established for use by the Business Administrator and have been updated annually as needed. Checks over \$10,000 require two signatures. Any non-recurring payments less than \$10,000 but greater than \$500 are to have at the verbal approval of the moderator of the Finance Committee followed by moderator's initials and date on the check stubs. Other payments are to simply have an Expense Request Form filled out by the committee, staff or church member who incurred the expense with proper receipts attached. Checks issued during January, 2011, March, 2011 and June, 2011, (random choice) were reviewed. The 2011 review confirmed that these procedures are being followed and are working well.

(continued on page 11)

(continued from page 10)

Vesper Concerts dba Organ Vesper Series

4th Quarter of 2010 deposit detail was checked against the bank statements. No discrepancies were found. Checks for this period were reviewed. The expense request process was followed.

What is working well:

- Documentation with appropriate explanation of any allocation and/or deposit corrections on income reporting forms.
 - The whole financial recording and processing system is working well.
- Financial committee oversight process is working well.

Recommendations:

None at this time

The Finance Committee participating in the review – Dave Pederson, Moderator; Dave Braunlich, Bob Reid, Jim Ritter, Don Sievers, Tom Stalnaker, Jeanie Wiesner, and staff, June Fettig.

Publication Policies

From time to time both *Cross Currents* and the announcement section of the Sunday bulletin become too long. Studies show that a brief announcement will receive a more thorough reading.

To that end, we ask that you limit the length of your announcements to 50 words or less which will run for a maximum of three weeks before the event you are announcing.

Deadlines for publications are:

Cross Currents Sunday of publication week. (final deadline). Newsletter is formatted on Monday and printed first thing on Tuesday morning. The newsletter is collated on Wednesday mornings to be mailed that day.

Sunday Bulletin—Wednesday prior to Sunday worship. (no later).

Holiday weeks may need to be printed at earlier times.

You may mail, drop your announcement in the office, email (churchofthecross@pcoc.us) or fax us at 402-697-9084 your announcement. Please do not ask us to take announcements over the phone.

Thank you for your help with these guidelines. This will ensure that publications are completed in a timely and correct manner.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if, when we lost our temper, we couldn't ever find it again?



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

Worship 9:00 & 11:10 a.m.
Church School 10:00 a.m.
Phone: 402-333-7466 Fax: 402-697-9084

E-mail addresses:
churchofthecross@pcoc.us
Kirk- karyckman@pcoc.us
Nadia-nadia@pcoc.us
Dana - dana.sloan@pcoc.us
Sheri—sessions@pcoc.us
June—junef@pcoc.us
Web site: www.churchofthecrossomaha.org
Www.vesperconcerts.org

Staff

Dr. Kirk A. Ryckman Pastor
Rev. Nadia Mullin Associate Pastor
Dana Sloan M.M. Minister of Music
June Fettig Business Administrator
Sheri Sessions Christian Education Director
Barbara Elliott Director, Discovery Preschool
Robin R. High Associate Organist
Julie Hansen Secretary/Receptionist
Linda Hulsey Director, Credo Choir
Jayne Frederickson, Kristi Treu,
Directors, Childrens' Choirs

Check out the church website for the updated list of Gift and Memorial items available.

CROSS CURRENTS

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:
October 16, 2011
Mailing Date is: October 19, 2011