

Cross Currents



Mission Recognition

Earlier this winter, I received word that Presbyterian Church of the Cross would be recognized by 'Voices for Children in Nebraska' at their "Spotlight Gala" annual banquet. The letter shared: "You have been selected as the faith-based award recipient! You have shown outstanding dedication, through your service and advocacy, to improving the lives of Nebraska's children and families."

Since the development of our Mission Committee following our 2004 Long-range planning process, the Committee has guided the members of the church into many areas of 'hands on mission.' The Committee also recommended and the Session concurred that our special focus in mission involvement would be 'Children and Youth at Risk.' This has led us to major engagements with Omaha Street School, with financial, lunch service, and cleaning support (by both adults and youth of the church). Omaha Public Schools have been engaged with teacher support at schools with low parental support, backing special programs, supporting the graduations at the Independent Learning Program at Druid Hills, and supplying coats for several schools (to be handed out by principals). We are also involved with Project Harmony, Campfire Inc., CASA, Special Olympics Nebraska, Madonna School and NOVA. In addition, our connection with our sister church in Gnozдово, Russia is centered around their work with children and youth at risk there.

These efforts gained us recognition by the Omaha Public Schools as the first church selected to be an 'A+ Advocate' in January of 2008. And now Voices for Children is recognizing our dedication. Congratulations to those involved with all our mission efforts. While we don't do these things to get noticed – we do them to serve those in need – it is always nice to have our efforts appreciated.

Voices for Children will be having there 'Spotlight Gala' on March 19th. You might have noticed ads for it on KETV. It is there we will be recognized. Voices for Children is an organization begun by our own Kathy Bigsby Moore many years ago. The focus of the organization is to be an advocate for the children and youth of the state of Nebraska. In the political process of programs and budgets, the people with the least voice, and political clout are children and youth. Because of this, their needs are easy targets for neglect and budget slashing. It is easy to leave out most vulnerable residents of the state with the least protection.

This year is also special at the 'Spotlight Gala' because Kathy Moore is retiring from leadership at 'Voices.' Her service and dedication will be celebrated that night, too.

Your congregation is at work in our community. Thanks for your support.

Kirk

The Discipline of Worship

If you were to sit down with 10 different people and ask each of them what worship is, it is possible that you could receive 10 different answers. “Worship is a religious ceremony.” “Worship is a collection of rituals celebrated within a congregation of people.” “Worship is a time to sing songs about God and hear Scripture read and proclaimed.” “Worship isn’t worship if there aren’t hymns.” “Worship isn’t worship if there isn’t a praise band complete with drums and guitars.” “Worship is when we meet with God.”

The idea of worship is a broad one, and depending on what church you find yourself in on a given Sunday, it can look very different from any other church. So when it comes to defining worship, there are multiple responses that can all be equally right. I appreciate Richard Foster’s simple definition of worship as “our response to the overtures of love from the heart of the Father.” I also find our Directory for Worship (found in the Presbyterian Church (USA) *Book of Order*) a helpful guide in defining what it means to worship:

“Christian worship joyfully ascribes all praise and honor, glory and power to the triune God. In worship the people of God acknowledge God present in the world and in their lives. As they respond to God’s claim and redemptive action in Jesus Christ, believers are transformed and renewed. In worship the faithful offer themselves to God and are equipped for God’s service in the world” (W-1.001).

To think of worship as a discipline is not to think of worship as a spiritual obligation where God is keeping track of your attendance record. That is to relegate worship to the realm of legalism. As I’m sure you know worship is so much more than just showing up to a church building every Sunday morning. Worship, like all of the disciplines we have explored together, is a way of life. Foster encourages us to view worship not as one other item on a to-do list but as our number one priority in life. Foster writes, “If the Lord is to be *Lord*, worship must have priority in our lives... Our lives are to be punctuated with praise, thanksgiving, and adoration” (161).

Worship is a lifestyle, but in it being a lifestyle, worship must also be transformative. We do not attend worship—whether in a sanctuary, or a seaside chapel, or a hospital bed—to leave the same as when we arrived. We come to worship to change—to hear the assurance that we are forgiven, to hear God’s promises proclaimed to us once again and to be challenged to respond in the life of discipleship, to partake of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper whereby the Holy Spirit lifts us into the presence of the triune God. We worship because we believe that we have encountered God in the person of Jesus Christ and we believe that because of Jesus Christ we are made new creations. We worship because we cannot *not* worship.

My challenge to you is to make worship the priority it should be, whether you are able to be present with us on Sundays or not. Worship is not just a weekly act but a daily one that can happen in the midst of a congregation, or in everyday moments of prayer. Foster writes, “If we are accustomed to carrying out the business of our lives in human strength and wisdom we will do the same in gathered worship. If, however, we have cultivated the habit of allowing every conversation, every business transaction to be divinely prompted, that same sensitivity will flow into public worship” (166-167).

If you are able to be at one of our two services on Sunday mornings, come expecting that God is going to meet you there. Not because the worship leaders will have anything to do with it, but because God promises to be present when two or more are gathered in His name. Come prepared to worship. Use the prelude time to center yourself and focus yourself to worship God. Come prepared to participate by joining your heart and voice in song and prayer. Come prepared to respond in faith. Come prepared to be transformed.

For next time: Guidance.

Blessings, Nadia

Lenten Study Daily Scripture Readings

This year, we have challenged our Lenten Study participants to begin a discipline of daily Scripture readings throughout the season of Lent. The calendar enclosed in this edition of the Cross Currents includes daily readings from the Old Testament, Psalms, New Testament, and Gospels for each day of Lent. These readings have been taken from the Daily Revised Common Lectionary schedule. As you read, you will be reading the same passages as others around the world. I hope that this calendar will be a helpful tool for you as we move through the season of Lent together.

Look For This Book in Our Library!

Finding Life in the Last Season by Omaha author, Diane Doering, is a simple little book with a big message, "God Cares." The author draws on her experience as an outreach minister in care facilities. Doering writes about a variety of human situations: the bond of aging sisters who are very different from one another, a wife's heartache as she cares for her husband with dementia and the quiet, contemplative scene as a daughter looks in on her elderly parents preparing to move to a nursing home.

This collection of short stories and devotions gives encouragement to the aged, their loved ones and care givers.

I recently read this meaningful quick read and highly recommend it.

Sharon Sievers



Cross Currents

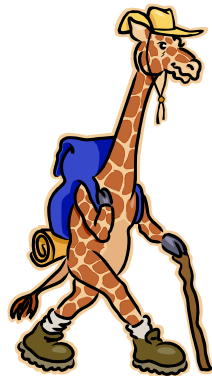
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Travel plans taking you away from home? Ever wonder what to do with the extra soap, shampoo and lotion you receive from the hotel? If so, we have a community service opportunity for you! Please save your unused toiletries (most hotels will replace daily), bring them to church and drop them to the toiletry basket located at the information table. These toiletries are gathered and donated to those in need within our community. Don't travel but still want to help? Purchase travel size items!

Hiking and Birding

Join us on March 19 at 9:30 a.m. in the north parking lot and help us choose a local trail to hike. Everyone is welcome. Call Tom Stalnaker at 390-9913 if you would like more information.



Presbyterian Women Gathering Report

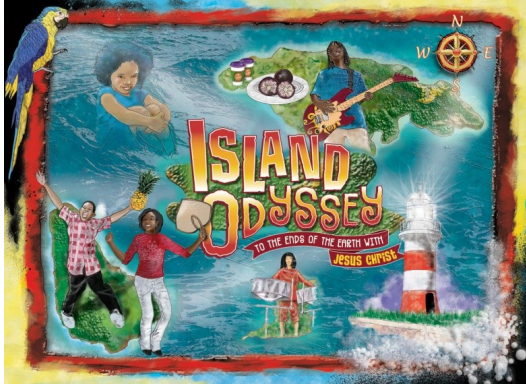


On Saturday, February 26, the Presbyterian Women at Church of

the Cross held a Gathering Coffee for all of the women at Church of the Cross. Patty Ritchie presented "Music and Spirituality." We learned how to take the time to enjoy music, we talked about how music makes us feel, how it affects our moods, our perspectives, our lives. Patty played a piece for us on her cello and she played different kinds of music from classical to pop and everything in between. It was a nice event with some new faces and some of the regular faces. We want to thank Patty for her program. Everyone really enjoyed the morning and the fellowship.

49ers

The 49ers will meet for lunch on Tuesday, April 5th, at 11:30 a.m. at Clancy's, just north of Dodge St. We will order from the menu and receive separate checks. Our speaker will be Chris Cady of the Greater Omaha Chapter of the National Safety Council. She will speak about the dangers of falling. And, we will have a short course of Tai Chi! For reservations sign up at the Information Center or call Vi Fuerst at 333-6758 or Merle Marymee at 895-2855.



Welcome New Members

PCOC Members please take a moment to welcome Jim and Kate Ritter and their family to Church of the Cross.

Jim and Kate are Omaha/Council Bluffs natives and currently reside in the West Omaha area. Jim is a Financial Advisor for Robert W. Baird, while Kate is a stay-at-home mom. They have 4 children that keep them involved with Millard school activities such as athletics, music and scouting.

Their children are Alex—21, is currently attending Baylor University, Emma—18, is a senior at Millard West also involved with the Omaha Youth Symphony. Greg—12, attends Millard North Middle school and Liesel—10 attends school at Morton Elementary.

Jim and Kate transferred with a letter of Reaffirmation of Faith from All Saints Episcopal Church. They were attracted to Church of the Cross for our traditional services and music, as well as being acquainted with the Metzger and Ritchie families.

Please make it a point to introduce yourself and welcome the Ritter's to our church family.

Get ready for an exciting island adventure at this summer's VBS! **June 13-17 from 9am-Noon** we'll be journeying with Paul through the islands of Cyprus, Crete, and Malta to learn about hearing God's voice, following His way, and being true to God's plan for us. From there we'll meet up with John at the Isle of Patmos before we voyage even further to the Isles of Fiji to celebrate the joy of spreading the good news wherever we go! We hope you can join us on this grand adventure filled with fun, friendship, crafts, and music. **Registration will begin at the beginning of April** for those 3 years old by May 31st to those entering 5th grade in the fall. The cost is just \$10 with a cap of \$25 per family. This year we'd like to encourage everyone to bring a friend to VBS—they don't need to be a member of our church to register! If you register with a friend who hasn't attended our VBS before you and your friend get to visit the Treasure Chest on the first day to pick out a prize. This year our mission theme will be a fundraiser for the Narnia Center in Russia so that our kids can join in our church's commitment to Christian mission in Russia. We hope to see you all there!

SAVE THE DATE!

The Christian Education Committee will be offering a Communion Class especially designed for parents and children ages 5-10. The class will be held on Wednesday, March 30th from 5:30 – 7:00 P.M. and a light dinner will be served. Please save the date and watch for more information in the next issue of Cross Currents.

Are You Spring Cleaning ???

Please save your books for the Discovery Preschool Used Book Sale coming in May. "Gently used" children and adults books will be gladly accepted. All donations can be left in the boxes provided in the Narthex beginning Sunday, March 13th and the Discovery Preschool area. Thank you!

What's Next for PCOC Partnership with Gnozdo Church in Russia?

Since Church of the Cross decided in Spring 2009 to enter into a partner relationship with the Gnozdo Baptist Church in Smolensk, Russia, eight of our members have visited the church in four different trips and have established close ties worshipping together, visiting various mission projects, helping rebuild the church camp, assisting with Vacation Bible School, and participating in a conference on post-orphanage ministry.

This year, the Mission Committee has agreed to sponsor another team trip to visit our Russian partners on August 25-September 3, 2011. The team will make the trip with several goals in mind:

1. To strengthen our ties and deepen our friendship,
2. To assist our partners in their work with the children of the Forest School,
To provide additional labor for the reconstruction of their church camp.

Can you see yourself on this team of no more than 7 people? Are you interested in developing new friendships on the other side of the world, serving youth at risk in Russia, and expanding your horizons? Then contact one of the members of the Russia Team (below). We want you to join us for a meeting with our friend and Mission Co-Worker Ellen Smith during her visit in late March, where the preliminary details of the trip will be discussed. A firm commitment is not yet required, so this will be a great time to learn more, get your questions answered, and hear the latest news from Ellen. (Date of the meeting will be announced soon)

Karen Morey 402-431-9326
Janelle Davis 402-397-8715
Tina Morgan 402-894-5733



Presents

LENORA-MARYA ANOP, VIOLIN



With
Yulia Kalashnikova, piano
Dana Sloan, harpsichord

SUNDAY, APRIL 3, 2011
3:00 P.M.
FREE ADMISSION

Does the church office have your email address? Have you been receiving emails from the church concerning announcements or cancellations? If not, the office does not have your current email address. Contact the church office, 333-7466 or churchofthecross@pcoc.us and let us know the correct information so that the records can be updated.

Thank you

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1517 South 114th Street
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Worship 9:00 & 11:10 a.m.
Church School 10:00 a.m.
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Www.organvesper.com

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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, Youth Choir
Jayne Frederickson, Kristi Treu,	Directors, Childrens' Choirs

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**Next Cross Currents Deadline is:
March 20, 2011
Mailing Date is: March 23, 2011**