



*May 28, 2020*

## Presbytery News

### **WORSHIP IS ESSENTIAL**

Friends, We are getting questions about whether our churches have to open for in person worship this Sunday, following the President's statements today declaring that houses of worship are an essential service, and demanding that governors "re-open" churches this weekend.

First, we know houses of worship are essential - that has never been in question, nor do we need the government to confirm that. What has been in question is when it is wise and safe to return to in person worship services? While there are powers that governments have to determine when things close, or even to set limits on gatherings, it is the session that is responsible for evaluating when they determine it is wise and safe to return to in person worship. We strongly encourage each session to consider how and when they will make decisions about resuming in person worship and activities, taking into the best guidance of both government and scientific leaders.

Our best advice: let's continue to stay connected and worship online. And if your session determines it is time to resume in person worship, do so safely and with grace toward those who are not ready to come back in person yet.

Stephen Earl, Interim Executive Presbyter  
Sue Collier, Moderator of Council  
Sue Babovec, Chair of the Disaster Response Team

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## New Worshiping/Church Vitality Committee

### A series of articles on the 7 Marks of a Vital Congregation.

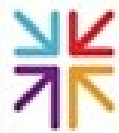
Each week, the Christian Education Director of FPC Beatrice records a short children's lesson and then also sends out activity pages and links to websites with other ideas for children to do that connects with the sermon message for that week. Last week, one of the links was to a video on how to do a prayer walk with children. So, on Sunday morning, my wife rounded up our children while I was facilitating adult Sunday school on Zoom, she took them on a prayer walk. They walked around the neighborhood and prayed for the things and people they saw, giving thanks to God for all the blessings in the world.

According to the Vital Congregations of the PC(USA), one of the seven marks of congregational vitality is "Intentional Authentic Evangelism," which they describe in part as "intentionally sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ, not just acts of kindness." This is pivotal to the health and vitality of a church because as Paul writes, "We have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God." (2 Cor 4:7) The uniqueness of this time lends itself to our churches carrying out "intentional authentic evangelism" and equipping our members to be evangelists in so many ways. My wife was an evangelist for my children on that prayer walk, and it was because of the work of our CE director who provided her the resources to do so.

There are so many ways that churches can and are equipping followers of Jesus to be share the Good News of Jesus. I've heard of many churches in our presbytery and across the country who are providing "Take Home Bible School" or providing Sunday school material for families to work on together throughout the week. I'm sure that your church is equipping your members in your own unique way as well. What you are doing is not a small thing or just a band-aid until we can "return." What we are doing now is helping us to build healthier and more engaged churches in the future. The New Worshiping Community and Church Vitality Committee celebrates with you the creative ways you are nurturing the sharing of the Good News of Jesus in these times, and we are here to assist you if you need it.

On behalf of the New Worshiping Communities and Vital Congregations  
Committee,  
Zac Wolfe  
FPC Beatrice

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# SPECIAL OFFERINGS

April 13 - May 31, 2020

## Pentecost

The Pentecost Offering unites us in a church-wide effort to support young people and inspire them to share their faith, ideas, and unique gifts with the church and the world.

A gift to the Pentecost Offering helps the church encourage, develop, and support its young people, and also address the needs of at-risk children. 40% of the Pentecost offering can be retained by individual congregations wanting to make an impact in the lives of young people within their own community. The remaining 60% is used to support children-at-risk, youth, and young adults through ministries of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

- **Through your local congregations**

(Congregations keep 40% of raised funds to initiate or support programs for young people in their communities.)

- **Mobile Giving**

Text: **YOUNG** to **56512**

- **By Mail**

Include your home church in the comments section so your congregation is informed

- **Over the Phone**

800-728-7228

**GIVE NOW ONLINE**



Your support during the COVID-19 crisis is more important than ever!  
Your gift will help to eradicate systemic poverty, end structural racism and support congregational vitality.

Support the Matthew 25/COVID-19 Emergency Response and long-term recovery work and ministry continuation funding for congregations with your gift today.



To give by check: Make payable to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and write "E052197- Matthew 25" on the memo line, mail to:  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
P.O. Box 643700  
Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700



[Give Now Online](#)



Greetings from the Co-Moderators of the 223rd General Assembly! Literally, greetings! Many presbyteries have reached out to ask for a word of encouragement and connection in these times, so Vilmarie and Cindy have prepared a brief video that you are welcome to use at any gathering before the 224th General Assembly is convened.



**Make Self-Care a PRIORITY**

Emotional reactions to the COVID-19 crisis can range from fear and hopelessness to denial and anger. You may even feel all these emotions over the course of one day. Prioritizing your own self-care can help you cope with any unsettling emotions you may be experiencing. Self-care means choosing to act in healthy ways rather than simply reacting to events.

### **Physical coping strategies**

- Get enough sleep to feel rested. A key ingredient of self-care, sleep affects both mood and energy level. Establish a routine and get to bed at a reasonable hour.
- Get moving. Physical activity can help reduce feelings of stress and tension. It can also help you sleep better if it's done at least several hours before bedtime. (Always talk to your doctor before starting an exercise routine.)
- Eat well-balanced meals at regular times of the day.
- Do something calming and relaxing. Deep breathing, meditation, and mindfulness activities can help relieve stress. But simply doing something you enjoy can also help ease tension.
- Avoid using alcohol and drugs to help you cope. (Take any medication ordered by your doctor only as prescribed.)

### **Mental coping strategies**

- Concentrate on the here and now instead of worrying about what could happen. Focus on the needs of your loved ones, activities you enjoy, and practical things you need to do.
- Structure your time. Large blocks of unstructured time will tempt your thoughts to center around what troubles you most.
- Remind yourself of your abilities and strengths. Self-statements such as "I can handle this uncertainty," help reinforce the fact that you're steering your own ship.
- Set short-term goals, such as what you want to get done in the next hour or day. Focusing on what you accomplish can help you feel more in control.

### **Emotional coping strategies**

- Reach out to people who care and express your feelings and fears. Talk about your thoughts and worries with loved ones.
- Spend time doing things you enjoy with friends and family. (Be sure to follow social distancing guidelines from authorities where you live.)
- Have realistic expectations for yourself. There are many unknowns in this situation, and you won't have all the answers. Nor can you control every outcome. Give yourself a break and recognize you're doing the best you can.

[Read More Here](#)



Nebraska Presbyterian Foundation

# NEBRASKA PRESBYTERIAN FOUNDATION AWARDS GRANTS

Nebraska Presbyterian Foundation Board of Directors awarded grants totaling \$137,211 to nine churches or organizations in April to partially fund projects which support outreach activities to enhance or expand some aspect of their ministry. Grantees and their projects include:

- Hope Presbyterian Church (Omaha) for food and supplies to fill backpacks for distribution at their local elementary school
- New Life Presbyterian (Omaha) in support of their free neighborhood after-school enrichment and food program
- PMRV PDA (Omaha) for home rebuilding supplies for ongoing work weeks related to Spring 2019 flooding
- First Presbyterian Church (Gordon) to upgrade their technology and increase internet capacity to livestream their worship services
- Palmyra Presbyterian Church (Palmyra) for first aid kits to distribute community wide as an outreach project
- First Presbyterian Church (Lincoln) for installation of a hearing loop to enhance the worship experience for the hearing impaired
- Eastridge Presbyterian Church (Lincoln) to enlarge their existing food pantry and build an adjoining ADA compliant sidewalk ramp to address increasing food insecurity in their community
- Church of the Plains (Edgar) for an upgrade to their recording and livestream equipment
- Community Presbyterian Church (Fairfield) for improvements to their sound system and internet throughout their building to allow all areas to be used for community events

With our current restrictions on gathering, the projects to upgrade technology are crucial to reach congregations and community members with new and creative methods, and projects that address food insecurity in our communities are needed now more than ever. NPF is proud to partner with all our grantees to help support their mission and share the love of Christ.

The next grant cycle will begin again in December and we don't anticipate any changes to our project funding or grant application schedule. If there is a project your congregation has dreamed about doing but lacked resources, or a current program you offer that you would like to expand, we would love to hear about it. Questions? Contact Audrey Richert at [arichert@nebpresby.org](mailto:arichert@nebpresby.org) or 402-420-9877.

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# Leading in Tumultuous Times

**Online Series**

Attending to one's leadership is more important than ever in this time of adaptive challenge and change. Equally important is staying connected to our spiritual source—the two go hand in hand, actually. Join us for a series of month-long online leadership courses, where we'll explore our own spiritual formation as leaders, adaptive leadership and leadership in general, and what it is to be a wise leader.

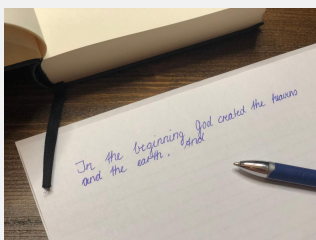
Word cloud terms: Evolving, Modify, Challenge, better, Overcome, Survive, leadership, Innovative, Learn, Progressive, responsive, Improve, Flexible, Transform, Solutions, develop

OPSF is offering fully paid scholarships for the June online Adaptive Leadership series.

Only 12 available so sign up today! Scholarships for the June series are available to all Pastors & CP's in our 13 state region as well as all PLR participants .

Be sure to mark your registration "OPSF" or "PLR" with the "Organization/Affiliation" dropdown on the registration form to receive the scholarship.

[Register Now!](#)



## Creativity Amid Chaos: The Nebraska Corona Bible

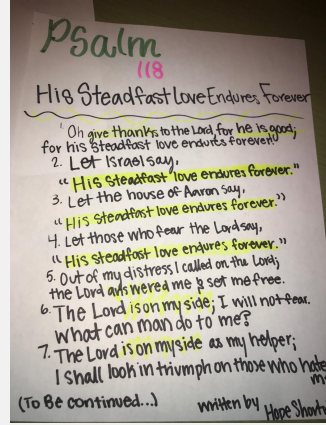
A project both daunting and intriguingly simple: People all across the Cornhusker State are copying the whole Bible in their own handwriting. Envisioned as a means to stay connected beyond the digital divide, the Nebraska Corona Bible will be a time capsule of these unprecedented times and a powerful testimony of hope amid this crisis.

To participate or learn more, please check out the

website [www.nebraskacoronaible.com](http://www.nebraskacoronaible.com) and sign up today for your favorite text.

**Contact:**

Rev. Thomas Dummermuth  
Eastridge Presbyterian Church  
tdummermuth@eastridge.org  
402-817-9642



## Sanitizing After Services

- [EPA List of Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2](#)
- [CDC Cleaning & Disinfection for Households](#)



## FRAUD ALERT - URGENT

There is a scam email being sent to Church members asking you to purchase gift cards. Members at Westminster have been victim to this scam.

**Please DO NOT RESPOND to it! It is a fraud attempt.**

Be assured that a Church staff member will **NEVER SOLICIT YOU** in this manner.

## Weekly Homestead Zoom Forum





WEEKLY ZOOM FORUM

## FAITH, NOT FEAR.



Click the video above to watch yesterday's Zoom forum. They happen weekly on Wednesday's at 1pm. Click the link below to register. You will receive a confirmation e-mail from Zoom with the link to connect to the meeting.

[Register now!](#)

## *Weekly Prayer Requests*

### *Wahoo First Presbyterian*

Prayers are requested for the well being and prosperity of the Wahoo Czech congregation. May they continue to grow as a caring and nurturing Christian community, as well as individuals, focusing on prayer, Bible study and worship.

#### **Homestead Presbytery**

840 S. 17th Street, Lincoln, NE 68508  
**Monday-Thursday** 9:00am-4:00pm  
**Friday** 9:00am-12:30pm

Office: 402.474.0612  
Interim EP: 803.556.3355  
Stated Clerk: 402.217.3684



