



August 27, 2020

Presbytery News

Opportunities to Be Helped and to Help with Challenges Due to the Pandemic

Opportunity #1 --- Pastor Zac Wolfe of Beatrice First Presbyterian Church has announced that their Session will be donating \$500 for use by churches in Homestead Presbytery that have special ministry needs related to the COVID-19 Pandemic. An application for such funds follows and is due (postmarked or emailed) by October 31, 2020. At Beatrice Session's request, the Homestead Presbytery Disaster Response Team will review applications and make decisions regarding distribution of funds. If interested, please complete the application entitled "Application for Funds to Help Cover Pandemic-Related Ministry Expenses."

Opportunity #2 --- Beatrice First Presbyterian Church Session is also presenting a challenge to other churches and individuals in Homestead Presbytery inviting any that are interested and able to donate funds for the same purpose. They will match dollar for dollar up to another \$1000 to help churches with special ministry needs related to the COVID-19 Pandemic. This opportunity to give and have gifts matched will extend through December 31, 2020 or until the \$1,000 is matched. If interested, please complete the form entitled "Donation of Matching Funds to Cover Pandemic-related Ministry Expenses in Homestead Presbytery."

Per Business and Finance Committee of Homestead Presbytery:

That the Business and Finance Committee endorses the matching gift program sponsored by the Beatrice church for churches facing financial struggles in the time of the pandemic (a \$500 gift with matching donation from the Beatrice church up to an additional \$1000) and that the assistance fund be managed and dispersed by the Disaster Response Committee in accordance to guidelines and procedures developed by the Disaster Response Committee.

The funds should be sent to the Presbytery for accounting purposes, with immediate notification upon receipt of a donation being sent to the Pastor and Clerk of Session in addition to the chair of the Disaster Response Committee. Should, at the end of the pandemic, there be funds remaining, then the balance shall be designated for

*use by the Disaster Response Committee to respond to financial needs in the
Presbytery due to disaster.*

What an incredible blessing this is for both churches with needs and for churches and individuals who can step up to meet those needs. Thank you, Beatrice First Presbyterian Church, for your wonderful spirit of generosity!

[Download Application Here!](#)

New Worshiping/Church Vitality Committee **A series of articles on the** **7 Marks of a Vital Congregation**

Mark 6 **Vital Congregations are Caring Congregations**

"Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers."

Romans 12:9-13

Caring Relationships seem an easy mark of church vitality. We all want a place to belong; people who care about us. When session members at my church did an activity at a recent retreat we said that one of our church's strengths was how much we cared about each other. But the real question is, "Would a new member feel this same caring, especially if they were different from us?"

Another mark of a vital congregation is its ability to see people the way Christ sees them; not from judgments or preconceived perceptions. It is allowing them to be honest about their struggles. It is also a place where conflicts are confronted and crucial conversations of forgiveness and reconciliation are a regular part of the congregation's interactions with one another.

In addition, vital, caring congregations develop caring relationships in the neighborhood and community. Before the pandemic my congregation invited the neighborhood to join us for several activities. We hope to continue to include our neighbors when it is safe to do so.

A truly caring congregation does not come easily. Caring relationships don't come through hospitality and welcoming committees, they come through a carefully cultivated environment that is genuine and sincere in being the household of God.

Ask yourself the following questions to determine if your congregation is a caring congregation:

- What practices of caring relationships does your congregation cherish most?
- What would a neighbor/community visitor say about the environment of

caring relationships?

- How does your congregation respond in caring for the sick, marginalized, grieving, lonely? What about the alcoholic, the racially profiled, the abused child?
- Are people free to share their story and feel comfortable being authentic?
- What stops us from truth-telling in God's house? What are the fears?
- How might you foster a genuine environment of caring relationships and true agape?
- How does your church handle conflict?
- What relationships in the church need to be reconciled?
- How do you foster and nurture lasting relationships in your community, with your presbytery, and beyond?

Doris Martin, Ruling Elder
First Presbyterian Church, Beatrice

Presbyterian Week of Action - August 24–30, 2020

In response to the recent and ongoing violent police responses to black individuals in the community and in custody, and during peaceful protests and community vigils around the country, our denomination has chosen to offer a **Week of Action** regarding racial injustice **August 24-30**. This week is structured to provide a public witness that facilitates

education, visibility, and action that reinforces our PC(USA) statements and policy around the support of eradicating racism and acknowledging that God loves all Black lives. Our denomination leaders (a number of whom are non-white) hope to join with the greater church to provide faithful leadership in the area of justice, love, and equality within our denomination and communities.

Homestead Presbytery invites member congregations to participate in any or all of the denomination-sanctioned events and activities, and utilize specially-designed graphics on personal social media websites, during the **PC(USA) Week of Action**. A number of yard signs have been printed and are available to churches and individuals willing to display them, if desired. Contact Homestead Office for information about how to coordinate delivery of the signs.

[Learn more here](#)



The Art of Transitional Leadership: 2020 Virtual Training

Learning Ministry Skills for Today's and
Tomorrow's Church Pastors, Staff, COMs and
Congregational Leaders

October 12-15, 2020
Online



Whether it is a change in leadership or a changing community, leading a congregation through change is both challenging and rewarding. It takes knowledge, skill, resilience and spiritual strength to navigate the waters of change in a way that leaders and congregations thrive. This training is for individuals who are considering ministry in temporary settings (as an interim, transitional or designated pastor) or are experiencing ministry in these transitional times. It satisfies Week 1 requirements for those who wish to be Interim Pastors.

[Register Now](#)

[Event Flyer](#)



Due to the COVID 19 Crisis, the in-person conference Monday, September 21 - Wednesday, September 23, 2020 at Calvin Crest Camp & Conference Center has been CANCELLED.

Instead, we invite you to join us via Zoom from
1-3 pm on Monday, September 21
to worship with the Rev. Eunice "Junior" McGarrahan as she discusses Hope and
Joy in the Unknown,
and immediately following,
attend a workshop with the Rev. Kim Nofel -
Default to Hope and Joy

[Registration](#) is required for each day
[REGISTRATION for DAY 1](#)
and/or

1-2 pm on Tuesday, September 22 for a workshop,
Adapting, Learning, and Becoming Stronger
with the Rev. Darin Bentzinger

[Registration](#) is required for each day
[REGISTRATION for DAY 2](#)

This virtual conference is offered free of charge. However, if you or your congregation would like to make a donation to our ministry to help fund future in-person and virtual conferences, you may do so at

Homestead Church Technology Upgrade Grant

Homestead Presbytery, through the Program and Grants Committee, is offering Technology Upgrade Grants of up to \$1000 to congregations who demonstrate need and vision. During this time of the coronavirus pandemic we seek to assist and support those congregations who would like to upgrade their technology to facilitate new models and platforms for worship and congregational gatherings.

Below you will find two versions of the Grant application. One is a fillable PDF form that you can download and just type in your responses and e-mail back the form; the second form is a word document if you prefer to print and hand write your application.

[Fillable PDF Grant Application](#)

[Word Doc Grant Application](#)

Weekly Prayer Requests

Belden Union

The Presbyterians in Belden are missing each other during this unusual time when gathering in person is not safe. We miss seeing each other's smiles and touching hands or hugging during the passing of the peace. But we praise God that no one of us has been ill, and our treasurer has survived heart surgery and is doing well. We look forward to the day when we will gather once again in our sanctuary to sing God's praises. Our clerk of session is the infection control RN at the local nursing care facility, so we are being well-advised. We thank God for her as well. We are especially grateful that there have been no cases of COVID at Hillcrest where she works.

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

