



October 7, 2021

Presbytery News

Special Presbytery Notices

Nebraska congregation honors the International Day of the Girl, Oct. 11, by addressing the numerous intersectional needs of one of the world's most vulnerable populations

by Emily Enders Odom, Mission Engagement & Support | Special to Presbyterian News Service

LOUISVILLE — For every step forward that has been taken toward closing the global gender gap, there have been at least two steps back.

And then some — largely due to COVID-19.

“Unfortunately, the gains women and girls have made in the last several decades are being eroded due to the pandemic,” said Sue Rheem, the PC(USA) Representative to the UN. “More women and girls are being pushed into poverty as a result of COVID-19.”

At least one congregation, Westminster Presbyterian Church in Lincoln, Nebraska, not only took note of the ever-widening disparity during the ongoing pandemic, but members of the church also took swift, generous and compassionate action on behalf of women and girls.



On Sunday, September 12, Westminster's head of staff, the Rev. Chris Peters, revealed that the church was being challenged with a surprise “reverse offering.” On that morning, each household received an envelope containing \$50 in cash along with the encouragement to use it “to love your neighbor” by supporting

persons in need or an organization that provides direct aid. Peters announced that the entirety of the reverse offering's funds came from the congregation's unexpected 2020 budget surplus, which he attributed to church members' sustained giving even through months of distance due to COVID-19.

With envelope in hand, ruling elder Linda Burchard immediately turned to the Presbyterian Giving Catalog, which has long been her go-to resource for alternative Christmas gifts for her extended family.

Now in its eighth, record-breaking year, the Presbyterian Giving Catalog — which is available both in print and online, in English, Spanish and Korean — is filled with a wide variety of gifts that provide real and positive impact around the world, including aid for refugees, access to clean water and the help to end hunger.

Several weeks earlier, Burchard, who currently serves on Westminster's Church Life Ministry Committee, recalled having seen a story in the local newspaper about a religious organization that was training girls and women in Africa to become self-sustaining by making clothing.

"In that moment, I realized that I often support the needs of women and children through the PC(USA)'s Giving Catalog and Presbyterian Women," said Burchard. "When I went online and discovered that I could fund a sewing machine for \$50, it seemed to me a perfect way to empower and support women with my reverse offering."

Burchard's gift was not only life-affirming, but it was also timely as the world prepares to observe the International Day of the Girl on Oct. 11 .

The U.N. General Assembly acted in December 2011 to recognize Oct. 11, 2012, as the inaugural day of the International Day of the Girl (Child), which, at that time, was specifically centered on the grave issue of child marriages. Today the observance is intended to bring attention more broadly to the challenges girls face, and to promote girls' empowerment and the fulfillment of their human rights.

Among the many ways the Giving Catalog supports the goals of the U.N. observance are such gift options as health for mothers and newborns, land tenure training and protection, teacher training, women's empowerment project, jerry cans and latrines, the latter allowing girls worldwide to remain in school.

"When I heard of Linda's gift to support women and girls through our Presbyterian Giving Catalog," said Peters, "I told her I couldn't think of a better way to use her offering! At Westminster, we often name the importance of working for the flourishing of all people as part of our call as Christians. As we approach International Day of the Girl 2021, I am grateful for the many ways Westminster-Lincoln's members are directly supporting the flourishing of women and girls, through our reverse offering and on their own."

Peters said that other reverse offering gifts have been used to benefit such local non-profits as Friendship Home, an organization that provides crisis support and housing to women who are victims of domestic violence and their children.

"The reverse offering has afforded members a wonderful opportunity to practice what we are called to do in the Bible," added Burchard. "It is exciting to hear where our members have chosen to give their money."

Across the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), several of the Giving Catalog's ministry partners, such as the Presbyterian Hunger Program (PHP), regularly express their gratitude for the ways in which the Giving Catalog is helping to close the global gender gap.



“The generous support we receive from Presbyterians through the Giving Catalog goes a long way to improving the standard and quality of life for thousands of women and girls around the world,” said Valéry Nodem, associate for International Hunger Concerns with PHP. “Whether they and their families are displaced by conflict and seek protection, whether they need individual family toilets that protect them from disease or violence, or whether they simply need the reassurance that through equitable access to land, their families will be able to produce enough food to meet their food needs and enable them to continue their education, women and girls occupy a prominent place in our work.”

Nodem's PHP colleague, Eileen Schuhmann, mission specialist for International Hunger Concerns, cited how the Giving Catalog's new land tenure training and protection item specifically benefits women and girls.

“It is vital that women have access to, use of, and control of land,” said Schuhmann. “Less than 15% of global landowners are women and 40% of countries limit women's property rights. Often, women and their children are evicted from their lands when the male head of household dies. Secure rights to land translate into better and more sustainable land management, and a protection of natural resources. And not only are women's land rights correlated with the health and sustainability of the land, but land ownership is also often a prerequisite for decision making potential in communities.”

Schuhmann gave the example of one PHP partner, Action for Rural Women's Empowerment (ARUWE), a women-led organization in Uganda that has been working to promote the rights of women to land and property in the Kyankwanzi district. She said that ARUWE has made it its mission to educate women on their rights to land under the law and has assisted them in accessing land services and securing land registration.

“We continue to dedicate our efforts to promoting equitable access and control over land as a production resource for rural women to enhance their meaningful contribution to food security and economic development,” said Agnes Mirembe, ARUWE's executive director.

Such efforts are more critical now than ever. According to Rheem, there are more than 1.1 billion girls under the age of 18 whose lives, while unequivocally the most at-risk, simultaneously hold the most promise.

“This generation is set to become the largest generation of women in history ready to be leaders and change-makers,” said Rheem. “As followers of Christ, we are

called to support the needs of girls to achieve gender equity, so they become future leaders for change.”

Bryce Wiebe, director of the Presbyterian Giving Catalog, also pointed toward the PMA’s call to be a Matthew 25 church and its emphasis on ministering to “the least of these.”

“The Church is at its best when we gather among the most vulnerable, just as Jesus did,” he said. “We are continuously grateful for the connections Presbyterians are making through gifts that reflect their sense of purpose and faith, with people in need all around the world.”

Back at Westminster in Lincoln, Peters reminded his parishioners that any household who was not present in worship on September 12 is still invited to receive their reverse offering envelope with \$50, either on a Sunday morning or by making a request to the church office.

“I hope that Linda’s example inspires others to seek ways to care for women and girls this International Day of the Girl and every day,” he said.

Now is the time to unite with thousands of others using the Presbyterian Giving Catalog to support the ministries closest to their hearts: feeding the hungry, comforting the brokenhearted and sharing our faith with young and old. Give today by clicking here.

Westminster’s reverse offering was highlighted as the lead story on KLKN’s 5:30 p.m. newscast on Sunday, September 12.

The Administration and Finance Committee Seeks Your Input!

The Administration and Finance Committee is hard at work on the final recommendation for the 2022 Budget, and we would like to know what you’re thinking!



If you have any thoughts, ideas or concerns about the proposed budget (available in the August Presbytery Docket on the Presbytery’s [website](#)) please contact Joyce Douglas at jvdouglas@windstream.net no later than September 24th for consideration for the final proposed budget.

We will be presenting the final budget to Council in October and to the Presbytery for approval at the November meeting.

REGISTRATION CLOSES THIS SUNDAY!!!!

Pastors Mental Health Retreat

Oct 27-28, 2021

St. Benedict Retreat Center, Schuyler NE



Homestead Presbytery is offering, as a gift to our pastors, a fully funded 2 day spiritual retreat at the St. Benedict Retreat Center (Schuyler NE) on **Wed Oct 27 through Thurs Oct 28.**

The focus will be on spiritual awareness, self care, and resilience with ample opportunity for personal meditative time.

Details:

Location: Benedictine Retreat Center Schuyler Ne
1128 Road 1 Anx
Schuyler, Ne 58661

Date: Wed. Oct. 27 – Thurs. Oct. 28, 2021

Time: Wed. 1:00pm through Thurs. 4:00pm

Lunch is at NOON, so arrive early and select all meals you will be present for on your registration form. Also, please note that the St. Benedict Center does not make special dietary accommodations. There is a salad bar during the buffet style meals. There are also guest refrigerators as well as microwaves available for your use.

Facilitator: Rev. Cindy Halvorson, MDiv, DMin

You may also contact Jane Holtzclaw at:
pastorjane728@gmail.com or the Presbytery office for further information.

GET REGISTERED NOW!

Ever Dreamed of Being a Church Finance Administrator? Here's your chance!

First Presbyterian Church in Lincoln is seeking a new Finance Administrator. The Finance Administrator is responsible for the overall financial life of the church and First Presbyterian Church (FPC) Foundation in terms of record-keeping, accounting, payables, payroll, reporting, and working directly with other staff responsible for receiving and recording deposits. This is a part time job, 20 hours per week, with a flexible schedule.

For more info: <https://fpclincoln.org/job-openings/>



Great Plains Small Church Connection Annual Conference Best Laid Plans Based on Proverbs 19:21

Grow • Enjoy • Renew • Fresh Ideas • Be Encouraged • Soul Fed •
Community

Well, our Best Laid Plans have once again been changed.

Great Plains Small Church Connection (formerly Wee Kirk) has moved the conference planned for Calvin Crest Camp and Conference Center in September 2021 to an online conference series of 4 sessions using Zoom.

Moving Forward: Tools to Feed Souls

Our keynote presenter will still be Rev Stephanie Ahlschwede, a United Methodist pastor with a deep commitment to the ministry of the laity and small membership churches. As Executive Director of United Methodist

Ministries, she served a fifteen county area helping congregations of all sizes develop local ministries related to the alleviation of hunger and poverty.

The first session of the 4-part virtual conference:

- **Monday, October 18, 2021**, Stephanie Ahlschwede presenting a talk with breakout discussion groups. 3-5 PM Central Time
- **Monday, November 15, 2021** – Purpose and Transitions – a workshop led by Kris Peterson followed by Great Ideas to Solid Sermons, a workshop led by Steve Nofel. 3-5 PM Central Time
- **Monday, January 17, 2022** - It's Better Thank It Sounds: Embracing Evaluations & Counting for Success in the Local Church - a workshop lead by Stephanie Ahlschwede, followed by: Attitudes in Prayer, a workshop led by Kim Nofel, and A Quick Dive into Philippians, a workshop led by Newell and Claudia Krogmann 3-5 PM Central Time
- **Monday, February 21, 2022** – another presentation by Stephanie Ahlschwede with time for questions and answers, and a surprise 'hands on' experience. 3-5 PM Central Time

Register at: www.calvincrest.org

Cost: \$50 for the complete conference of 4 sessions plus 'the surprise' or \$20 per session

For more information contact:

Claudia Krogmann, Registrar

507-665-3198

claudia@krogmanns.com

Partial Scholarships are available. Contact registrar claudia@krogmanns.com for information or to apply



Confidence in Conflict

Confidence in Conflict: Navigating the Struggle

When you hear the word conflict, what reaction happens in your body? Is it possible to have a healthy relationship with conflict? How do you develop the capacity to enter into conflict well? These are some burning questions that we'll explore with you in this online conflict workshop on October 21 from 1:00 to 4:00 pm (Central time).

Conflict is everywhere in our world today. Join us and feel more confident when you find yourself in conflict. [Learn more and register here.](#)



Can slowing down help with stress and boundaries?

by Danny Elenz, PsyD, LP

It's funny how sometimes the simplest things can, if we are paying attention, offer us the best wisdom.

My friends have to be sick of hearing about our puppy, Georgie, who we rescued during the pandemic, but I just can't help myself - she is so cute... And smart... And silly! (If you don't believe it, just ask me!) I've taken about 1,000 pictures of her because I want to remember all the precious moments we share together. But lately, I've

graduated to taking slow motion videos of her, which is SUPER fun. This technology is gold. You get to see life from a whole new perspective. It's as if I'm seeing Georgie through fresh eyes; I've never noticed the way her oversized ears flop slowly as she's sprinting through the backyard fetching me a ball, how she smiles and her eyes close with pure glee when I scratch just right behind her ear, and how her enormous tongue diligently flops out to lick her nose (spilling saliva all over) keeping her nose moist to help her smell the squirrels and rabbits in the neighborhood. It's truly awe-inspiring how much is revealed in the slow motion, the detail I miss at life's typical speed.



This got me thinking: What else am I missing as I travel at lightspeed? Hustling to keep up with this busy season of work and a calendar full of make-up plans after the past year and a half, it doesn't seem that I slow down enough to get a clear view. Even when I do, it's scary sometimes to recognize how I'm feeling or to notice behavior patterns I'm not happy about slipping into. For me, a lot of things are hard to sit with: the loss of my dear grandmother this past year to Covid-19, missed family mile markers/celebrations due to the pandemic, other family health problems I've felt unable to attend to fully, the losses of goals and plans, and the anxiety of what's to come this fall and winter.

My guess is that you might feel similarly. I imagine many of you find it hard to attend to some difficult feelings, stressors, and maybe as a result, your boundaries. At LeaderWise, we work with compassionate, inspiring, well-meaning, and busy church leaders who are at a critical place in their vocation: They're overwhelmed. We see many folks pushing through their stress and boundaries, understandably, out of sheer necessity. It's natural that, through our care for others, we might overcommit ourselves or take on too much responsibility for things that aren't ours to take on. The trouble with this is, through our stress and fuzzy boundaries, we might wind up making poor decisions that we wouldn't typically make when we are coming from a healthier place. In fact, research finds that, contrary to what we might assume, "reasonably well-trained, responsible individuals, who are undergoing a stressful time, are at greatest risk of violating boundaries" (Gonsiorek & Gabbard, 1995). 1

What if you find ways to slow down so that you can see the details more clearly? Let me invite you to slow down right now. First take a few deep breaths... Just notice what thoughts or feelings rise to the surface when you really slow down... Ask yourself, What might I be missing by not slowing down to take a closer look? What do I especially need to put into slow motion to see more clearly? What conditions make it easier to slow down? What makes it hard for me to slow down? Now consider what small steps you can take to give yourself more space to reflect. Get more fresh air during the day, turn to the window instead of Twitter/the news/Facebook when you have a free second, or focus on your breath in between tasks.

You might also find it helpful to get some support through our [boundaries workshop at LeaderWise](#). But be warned, this won't be your average boundaries training! We have skilled and experienced facilitators who understand the intersection of stress

and boundaries. We hear feedback from participants that this is the best boundaries training they've attended. You will have the opportunity to re-frame your approach to boundaries, learn simple, yet profound approaches to managing boundaries, attend to your stress levels and overall well being, and explore complex boundary examples in a safe, curious environment.

I encourage you to make the commitment to slow down so that you may be sustained by seeing yourself and your life a little more clearly.

Homestead Presbytery has a NEW PHONE NUMBER!!

402-413-2143

Make sure to write down the new number for
Homestead Presbytery!



Weekly Prayer Requests

Hickman

Please pray for Hickman Presbyterian Church as we are working to resume many of the activities we suspended last year. In addition, we are also continuing to branch out by providing Hybrid options for worship, classes, and meetings for those who prefer them. We are currently setting up several rooms as Hybrid meeting spaces.

We are still waiting on the equipment to upgrade our video and audio capabilities in the Sanctuary. As with any major transition, there are several people who are working very hard to staff these activities. We are pleased that many have stepped up to help with this, but we could use additional volunteers to keep the momentum going. Please pray for those who answer the call!

Homestead Presbytery

840 S. 17th Street, Lincoln, NE 68508

Monday-Thursday 9:00am-4:00pm

Friday 9:00am-12:30pm

Office: 402.413.2143

Interim EP: 803.556.3355

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