# FirstPresNews *monthly*

AUGUST 2023 | VOLUME VIII

## A note from the pastor ...

*He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches." He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."*

Although we have been focused on the book of Romans over the last few weeks, I've also been thinking about a couple of the parables from the lectionaries gospel readings. In Matthew 13, Jesus talks about the mustard seed and yeast. These metaphors speak of a very small beginning that grows into something that provides a home for birds or food for hundreds.

While it is usually not anyone's preference to think of themselves, or something that they are a part of as tiny or insignificant, Jesus suggest that if we are participating in the kingdom of God we can be confident that incredible potential resides in the smallest things. Part of the lesson of the seed is that in each of us, in our communities of faith, there is the kernel of all that God is trying to do in the world. There is something inevitable about putting a tiny seed into even moderately good soil, and offering it even the minimal amount of nurture which releases all that is locked inside. The presence of God in each of our lives only needs a little more space to continue to grow in us, and produce a life of flourishing. The same is true of our church family. We can get caught up in anxiety and regret about how small we are, but Jesus reminds us in these texts that it is about the potential we hold when we are true to who we have been created to be. Whether we are one or one hundred, the call remains the same to be true to the way of Jesus.

The lesson of the yeast is that the presence of God will always work its way more deeply and broadly into the lives of people who come into contact with that presence. As individuals and as a community our first vocation is to make room for the spirit of God to permeate more fully our lives and our communities. The growth we want to see is the increase of the kingdom of God.

Peace, Darren




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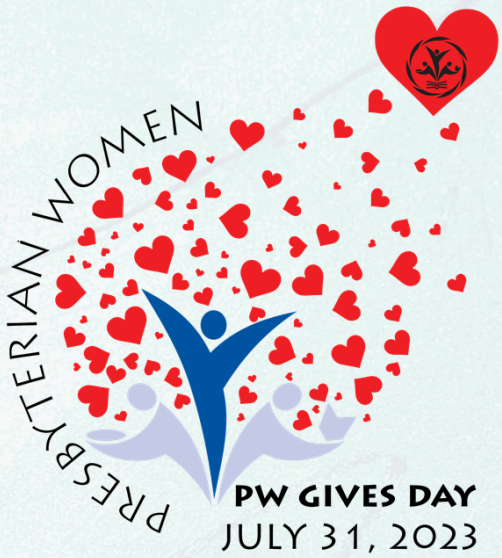
Jason & Jessica Smith
*August 3, 1996*
Jerry & Nancy Ritter
*August 5, 1961*
Dave & Gayle Titus
*August 6, 1993*
Ben & Catherine Neal
*August 10, 1973*
Bill & Lissy Blandford
*August 18, 1973*
Steve & Mary Bernstein
*August 23, 1977*




3 Zachary Higgs
Janna Smith
Mike Walton
5 Georgia Hall
6 Steve Fringer
12 Cody LaMarr
20 Mary Lee
21 Steve Simpson
Theo Leavell
22 Mac MacCaughey
27 Evelyn Vanderheyden
28 Mary Johnson
Bud Eastman

***Fellowship:***

6 Jen & Todd S., Ken S.
13 Dennis & Nancy R.
20 Royce & Barbara E., Steve & Pam S.
27 Jerry & Nancy R., Deb Y.




**Presbyterian Women,**
**Your Invitation to PW Gives Day**

PW Gives Day is July 31—a day set aside each year to commemorate the founding of Presbyterian Women. This year, PW celebrates 35 years as the women's organization of the PC(USA). Won't you consider sharing your PW story and supporting PW with a gift of $35 or more? What about $35 to commemorate 35 years?

*https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/giving-funding/give/*

Presbyterian Women is a not-for-profit ministry that is wholly funded by gifts from participants and supporters. PW does not receive per capita funding, nor is it supported through the church's collection plate. A sustainable PW is possible only because of the generosity and vision of Presbyterian women and the Purpose that guides our walk.

MISSION Initiative

August 1-7th, the Cuban Pastors, Ary and Beidy will visit First Presbyterian church. We have a number of activities planned for the Pastors. Please see the list of events posted on the Cuban bulletin board outside of the church offices. A couple of highlights: Meet and Greet with the Pastors on August 3rd, 6:30-8:30 pm, in Ihrman Hall. The Pastors will also attend Music and More, so look for them at church earlier on Thursday.

Sunday August 6, 2023, the Pastors will participate in the service with Pastor Darren. We will all share a Potluck, after the service in the lower level dining area. Please bring a dish to share.

Pastors Ary and Beidy want to spend as much time with the church family as possible so please join us for as many activities as you can manage.

The Pastors spent 3 weeks in Guyana securing their US Visas to travel to the US. The Pastors have a one -time entry Visa to enter the US, so let's do our best to welcome them to Racine.

Thanks to every one in our church family for supporting the visit by Pastors Ary and Beidy. It has been a quick organizational challenge. All plans are coming together.

Endless Gratitude to all.

Respectfully submitted,
Meg Daniels and Georgia Herrera

# DEACONS

Following to Lead | Leading to Serve

The Deacons held the annual church picnic on July 9th. We had about 40 members attending. It was held at the DeKoven Center with a 10 am worship service followed by lunch. Thanks to everyone that brought side dishes. The weather was wonderful.

Welcome to the new Deacons: Bill Anderson and Linda Schubert. Thanks for joining us. Deacons currently meet by zoom and a link goes out on the Sunday before the meeting. Our next meeting will be August 15th at 6:30 pm. This is a change just for August as LuAnn and Bill will be out of state.

## Christian Formation Initiative

**Teachers are needed for the Fall.** We have a group of young high school men that enjoy the lessons in our curriculum. Can you help teach? Each lesson takes two Sundays. IF we can get enough teachers, we can schedule alternate Sundays. Please consider doing this.

Our nursery care, Tricia, will be doing some Bible stories with the young children in the nursery as well. There are 4 young ones in the nursery, so she is willing to do this with them.




**Journey to Bethlehem is planned for December**.

We need your help to make it a reality. Please watch for sign-ups in September.




The food pantry has been very busy. In June, we served 169 families. My thanks to the many volunteers who have helped with this important mission of the church. We need the following: bath soap, dish soap, cookies, popcorn (already popped), pretzels, crackers, hearty soups and cereal.

We have some new volunteers from Goodwill. Their job now requires them to do community service. I am still hoping someone from the church will co-chair this with me. Please consider this.






## **I Tell You** (excerpt)

I could not predict the fullness
of the day. How it was enough
to stand alone without help
in the green yard at dawn.
How two geese would spin out of the ochre sun opening my spine, curling my head up to the sky in an arc I took for granted.
And the lilac bush by the red
brick wall flooding the air
with its purple weight of beauty?
How it made my body swoon,
brought my arms to reach for it without even thinking.

In class today a Dutch woman split in two by a stroke - one branch of her body a petrified silence, walked leaning on her husband to the treatment table while we the unimpaired looked on with envy.
How he dignified her wobble,
beheld her deformation, untied her shoe, removed the brace that stakes her weaknesses. How he cradled
her down in his arms to the table smoothing her hair as if they were alone in their bed. I tell you -his smile would have made you weep.

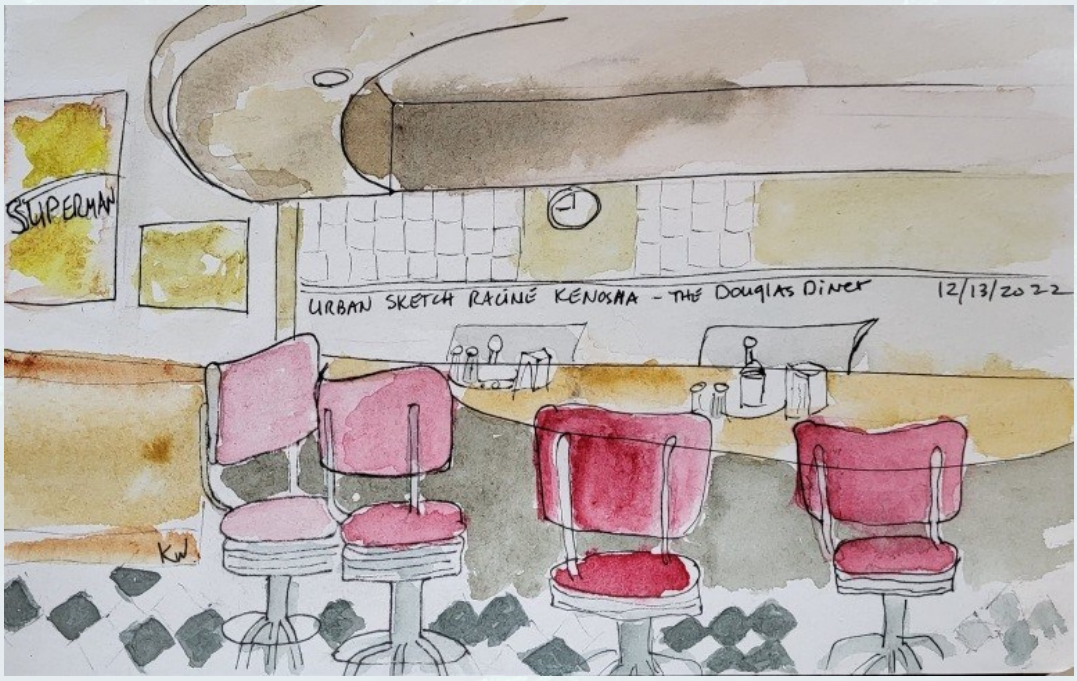
At twilight I visit my garden
where the peonies are about to burst.
Some days there will be more
flowers than the vase can hold.

*© Susan Glassmeyer*




The Racine Arts Council is hosting a two-day event, September 9 & 10, sketching locations along our beautiful lakeshore. We will sketch *The DeKoven Center* gardens and historic buildings, our eclectic and energized downtown and our stunning *Wind Point Lighthouse.* The day will end with an Art Party at a private horse farm in Caledonia. Sunday we are offering a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to learn about Frank Lloyd Wright's Wingspread through the eyes of author Mark Hertzberg, enjoy a gourmet brunch, a *Practical Perspective* class taught by Chicago Architect Brian Wright, and time to sketch *Wingspread*! This event is sponsored by *The Johnson Foundation* and *Village of Mt. Pleasant Tourism*.

If you are an artist, this event is for you!!! Come to all events or just a few!
$100 for Two-day / $50 for Saturday only! To Register: racineartscouncil.org







**To assure you a seat at the finale concert, order your tickets now.**

**Tickets are $10 each—what a bargain!!**

1) *See Georgia Hall after a Thursday noontime concert, to purchase with cash or check.*
2) *Send a check to: First Presbyterian Church, Attn: M&M Season Finale, 716 College Avenue, Racine, WI 53403.*
3) *Email Theresa Revis - First Presbyterian Church Financial Secretary at: fsoffice@firstpresracine.org. Let her know many tickets you'd like to order.*
4) *Call Georgia Hall - Music & More Chair at 262.308.1883.*
5) *Purchase your ticket securely through PayPal. Visit FirstPresRacine.org, click on the 30 Anniversary Music & More graphic and choose "Music & More Season Finale Ticket" from the dropdown list.*
6) *Or scan the above QR code to be taken directly to PayPal.*

Your purchased tickets will be available during the Thursday noon concerts or you can check in the night of the concert!

Music & MORE
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## CONCERT SERIES 30-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Have you attended a Music & More concert this summer? We have been celebrating our 30th Season and have been entertained by vocalists, duets, trios, quartets, groups, and many talented musicians playing hand bells, horns, violins, oboes, flutes of all sizes, recorders, cellos, guitars, piano, and organ. Our concerts are eclectic, fast-paced, and fun! All noontime concerts are free; donations are encouraged and will be divided at the Season Finale between Health Care Network, Racine Arts Council, and Racine Vocational Ministry.

The Music & More program is funded by donations from individuals and businesses. This will be our most costly season with more musicians, increased advertising, and a gala Season Finale concert with performers coming from Maryland, New York, and Texas to help us celebrate 30 years. Your financial support makes it possible for us to continue offering this unique series of music and community outreach. Your check can be sent to First Presbyterian Church, for Music & More. Or it's easy to donate securely online using a credit card at firstpresracine.org/donate. Donations may be given IN HONOR or IN MEMORY of someone, or to mark a special occasion.

Mark your calendars for the two remaining noontime concerts, and the Season Finale Concert which will be held on Friday, August 18 at 7:00 p.m. Tickets are on sale now - $10. *(See previous page for information on how to purchase.)*

August 3
*Darlene Rivest & Anna Kojovic-Frodl – violin & piano*
*High Winds & Keyboard – flutes & piano*
*Jill Jensen & Jack Grassel – vocal & guitar*

August 10
*Jessi Kolberg – organ*
*Cello Sextet*
*Lynda Schlitz – vocal, Brian Dale – drums, Dwayne Williams – bass, & Kostia Efimov – piano*

Season Finale Concert—Friday, August 18
*Randy, Beth & Charlotte Bush – vocal & piano*
&
*The Choral Arts Society – Favorite Beatles Songs*
*with Guest Musicians/Band*
*Mark Paffrath & Marv Dykhuis – vocal & guitar*
*Noel Crowder – bass | Steve Comeau – drums*
*John Traylor – percussion | Mary Skop – piano*