

Resource Guide for Older Adult Ministries

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A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Good Morning from Oregon,

The theme of this issue of *PNN* is, *Love Endures*. Our nation, and the entire world, is experiencing the ongoing, ongoing, and ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Following the death of George Floyd at the hands of Minnesota police, America is wrestling with generations of systematic racism. In addition, horrific unprecedented forest fires raging in the Pacific Northwest have displaced thousands of people and devastated a number of communities in California, Oregon, and Washington State. The way in which many individuals are reaching out to help not only friends in need, but also total strangers who are in acute need, is truly heartwarming. Love Endures!

Six articles in this issue of *PNN* share insights on *Love Endures*:

- "President's Reflection" by Michele Hendrix
- MEMO from Membership by Linda Rauenbuehler.
- "Keeping Faith as Second Presbyterian Celebrates its Jubilee Anniversary" by Lillian Rhudy.
- "Central's Prayer Shawl Ministry in the COVID-19 Era" by Margaret Prentice.
- "To Hanoi with Love - during the COVID-19 Era" by Quentin Holmes.
- "Awakening to Structural Racism" by Quentin Holmes.

Other articles in this issue include:

- "Ashes from the Sky"
- "Arts Camp inspires Creativity" by Steve Aschmann
- "The Grace of God in the 21st Century" by William Johnson
- 2020 POAMN Virtual National Conference

PNN is your newsletter. We need you to send us short notes about things you have done or ideas that your group has found to work. Many older adults are in our congregations. By the power of God, plus our faithfulness and our warmth, we can reach out.

Thanks be to God!

Quentin A. Holmes

Quentin Holmes / Marcola, OR



Quentin & wife, Jane, Holmes



Michele Hendrix
POAMN President

POAMN PRESIDENT'S REFLECTION

It's Fall Y'all!

My work in Older Adult Ministry over the past 35 years has been quite a journey and, there is no doubt, a "calling" in my life. I believe that the blessing of growing older is the ability to draw on the experiences that require faith and endurance, and we can utilize those experiences and skills in ministry to all generations in the church! I joined POAMN in the early '90's, discovering it when I went from volunteering in Older Adult Ministry (OAM) to becoming Director of OAM at my home church – Grace Presbyterian Houston (GPCH), my church home for 29 years and where I served older adults on staff for 18+ years.

POAMN was my lifeline when I began my ministry at Grace and was extremely instrumental in helping to define and shape the Encore 50+ Ministry developed at GPCH. The opportunity to grow, serve, equip, learn, network, and develop lifelong friendships has truly been a blessing. I have often said that I did not have a job, I had a joy! It was not always easy, but it has always been rewarding! As we began to develop this ministry at Grace Church, our ministry team was aware that the older adult group in our congregation (community, city, and nation) was growing, that we had the need to address this ministry where we would be serving people from 50+ to 90+, and that it was vital that we provided ministry opportunities that served and met the needs of older adults and strengthened the intergenerational relationships in the church.

I was elected into leadership with POAMN in 2009 and served as the Conference Chair until 2012. After a brief six-month sabbatical in 2013, I was selected to serve as President Elect to my wonderful mentor Helen Morrison, our past President. This has also been another joy in my life, and I feel fortunate and honored to serve as President of POAMN to date. As I now transition into "retirement," I will treasure the work we have accomplished, the friendships made in this network, the resources and opportunities we have provided, and the challenges we have addressed and overcome, along with the many fond memories of our journey together.

One of our greatest challenges of late has been how to stay safe, healthy, kind, prayerful, connected, resourceful, and relevant to our membership and the many older adults we continue to serve and advocate for during this COVID-19 pandemic. At my current home church, we are now serving as (what I have nicknamed) "Digital Deacons." We went from being very present in the lives of our older adults to serving from staying in place (SIP) and social distancing. That basically means phone calls, letters, cards, emails, texts and Zoom calls! However, there has been an amazing positive response to those contacts with our older adults, who shared how meaningful each of those contacts has been in preventing loneliness in their lives. We also offer a "KEYS Older Adult Coffee Hour" with our OAM Pastor every Thursday morning, along with additional ministry programming by Zoom.

POAMN has compiled many resources on our website (poamn.org) that may assist and encourage you in serving the older adults in your congregations. Also, we have several online "Quick Sheets" that address a variety of topics, and you will find these under the "Resource" tab on the web, plus some of the workshops (and PowerPoint presentations) offered during our 2019 POAMN National Conference held in Louisville, KY. I encourage you to utilize the information and resources that are available through POAMN. We are a network that serves all people and all generations, and we recognize that all generations need each other.

I hope you will join us on October 27-28, 2020, for our first POAMN 2020 National Virtual Conference. On October 27th our keynote speaker, Rev. Dr. Cynthia Rigby, will address the theme, "*Why Ask Why? Faith & Lament in Times of Crisis.*" On October 28th Rev. Sally Wright's keynote will address, "*Know My Heart: Pastoral Care While Social Distancing.*" This event will bring together leaders and experts on aging, spirituality, and pastoral care, as well as leaders from communities of faith, seminaries, academia, and community or-

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ganizations. The current pandemic has made pastoral care and pastoring an even greater challenge with the need for SIP and social distancing. As shepherds and faith leaders, we still must care for people, many of whom are feeling a rise in anxiety and depression.

It has been my distinct pleasure to serve as POAMN President these past seven years, and I will complete this special service at the close of the POAMN 2020 Zoom Conference in a few weeks. I hope you will join us for these timely and pertinent topics. POAMN has been a trailblazer in Older Adult Ministry for forty years, and I believe that my dear friend Pat Baker, President Elect, and the POAMN Executive Committee will lead POAMN to new heights with more success and progress than ever before. I remain committed to POAMN and will continue to serve those who are aging in my congregation, community, and city!

Until next time... Blessings,

Michele Hendrix

POAMN President



Linda Rauenbuehler
Membership Committee Chair

MEMO FROM MEMBERSHIP

Love Endures is the theme for this edition of the POAMN Network News. To get started, I did as I usually do: I googled the words “love,” “endures,” and “Bible” to get an idea for an angle I may want to take. I found a variety of Bible verses that are often used at weddings. That made me curious as to what Bible verses were spoken at our wedding. I went looking for, and found, my old tape recorder and that special cassette tape that was recorded 40 years ago.

I think Ted and I are an example of enduring love. When we got married on August 15, 1980, we had not seen each other the whole year that we were engaged because he was in the military and stationed in Germany, while I was teaching in eastern Colorado. Even after getting married, we did not live together our first year because he only had seven months Membership left before he was being sent to Denver for a military training school. I had a good job, and we decided not to uproot me to move overseas, only to turn around and come right back to Colorado.

Our love has endured a lot through the nine years that we were friends before getting married and through the challenges that come with forty years of marriage. Although love endures between people, it is still hard to comprehend the great love that God has for each of his children, a love that also endures through all the ups and downs of living. How comforting to know that **Love Endures**.

Annual Conference

Due to COVID-19, our annual conference scheduled for October at Mo Ranch in Texas has been postponed to 2021. In its place, we are excited to offer a virtual conference on October 27-28, 2020. The theme is, *Shaping Faith in Crisis: Peace by Piece*. Please visit our website at www.poamn.org/virtual-conference-2020/ for the latest information as this conference develops.

Certificate of Older Adult Ministry

POAMN collaborates with Columbia Seminary in Decatur, Georgia, on classes leading to a Certificate of Older Adult Ministry. Please check out this wonderful opportunity. Information can be found by going to Columbia Theological Seminary and looking under Lifelong Learning.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Rauenbuehler
POAMN Membership Chair

KEEPING FAITH AS SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH CELEBRATES ITS JUBILEE ANNIVERSARY & COVID-19 TAKES CHARGE!?

By Lillian Rhudy, Second Presbyterian Church / Richmond, Virginia

Second Presbyterian in downtown Richmond, Virginia, marked its 175th Jubilee in this year 2020. The world changed as COVID-19 made its horrific entrance into the world we so often took for granted. The church had just completed a \$5 million Capital Campaign, bringing upgrades and refreshment to the entire church, including the Gothic Revival Sanctuary designed by Minard Lafever. A full year of events was planned to celebrate and move into the future.

So, the question: how does a church both celebrate and move forward, keeping faith and showing God's enduring love in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis and racial justice unrest?

As we all know, on Memorial Day weekend a black man named George Floyd lost his life due to the actions of Minneapolis police officers. George Floyd's death ignited another crisis as protesters came forth throughout this country, seeking to bring equality, equity, better schools, jobs, and housing to people of color and to those in poverty.

Second Presbyterian is only blocks away from Richmond's well-known Monument Ave. Much violence, looting, and the defacing of five monuments occurred. These monuments represented those who fought for the South in the Civil War. These monuments were covered in graffiti and obscenities. Some were pulled down, and four monuments were taken down by the city. Life in Richmond and other places became very tense, and many divisions emerged throughout Virginia as to what should be done with these glorified reminders of a dark era in Virginia's history. To many, the monuments represented reminders of *THE LOST CAUSE*, i.e., Richmond and its support of slavery. For others, the monuments were merely symbols of Virginia's history. The controversy continues as to what to do with these vivid reminders of this dark piece in history.



SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH / RICHMOND, VA

Perhaps by coincidence, this celebration was called the Jubilee anniversary. The word Jubilee" comes from the book of Leviticus in the Hebrew Bible, known in Christianity as the Old Testament. The Jubilee year was the year for rest, "including the forgiveness of all debt and the liberation of slaves and servants to their native lands." So, what can we do as individual members in today's world to bring a new reality and liberation as systemic racism continues?

All these happenings encouraged Second Presbyterian to take an even closer look at its own history. Rev. Dr. Moses Hoge served Second from 1845 till he died in 1899. Rev. Dr. Hoge also served as Chaplain for the Confederacy, giving time and energy as a healing presence for those serving in the Confederate Army. Moses Hoge served within the religious culture's interpretation of the gospel at that time, when piety and social justice were kept further apart. Now, in 2020, Second's 12th Pastor, Alex Evans, takes an active part in helping direct Second in the call of the gospel to engage in both piety and social justice in this fragile year. Second has made an effort to inspire and educate its members in the depths and dangers of racism, of which we are all a part. Also, in seeking to be anti-racist in these difficult days, Second seeks to become more intentional in equity and equality for all. Members participate in classes, conversations, in protests, in activities in the city, and in a 21-day racial justice challenge on our website.

As a church family, we continue to be grateful for the leadership of Moses Hoge during his 54-year pastorate.

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Second Presbyterian also sees, and seeks to redeem, some of the missteps in its history linking it to the “the southern way” and preservation of slavery. In addition, Second recognizes all the positive contributions and leadership of all twelve pastors and members. The life and ministry of Second Presbyterian’s 10th pastor, Rev. Dr. Winn, significantly transformed the church and its mission in the city. Second remains both convicted and honored to carry on their legacy of love, grace, hope, faith, and positive contributions.

So, in what way is Second Presbyterian meeting these challenges? One of the goals for Second Presbyterian is “to use this year to emphasize the need for continued transformation and, remembering our past, to move faithfully into God’s future, build upon the rich blessings of this sacred sanctuary, and to know Christ and make Christ known in downtown Richmond. Seeking to REMEMBER, RECONCILE, AND REDEDICATE our lives as God’s People.”

Through the years, and especially in the 1970’s, under Dr. Winn’s leadership, Second Presbyterian became a leader in helping to provide food and shelter for the homeless. Eventually, this evolved into a non-profit called CARITAS, Congregations Around Richmond Involved to Assure Shelter. Second has continued to provide bag lunches on Mondays for about 200 hungry and homeless people. Also, during the 1970’s, Second participated with other churches in Assistance for Families of Inmates in VA Prisons. While it had humble beginnings, it continues to enable inmates’ family members and friends to go to forty different prisons by providing transportation and, later, meals at the church when they return.

Among other ministries of outreach and compassion, Second Presbyterian is commissioned as a Matthew 25 congregation. Many connections and educational opportunities have occurred through the wonders of ZOOM. Programs, book groups, Bible study and worship continue. We seek to grow in faithfulness, justice, and joy.

Thus, as we look deeply at Second Presbyterian’s celebration of its 175 years, it is Grace, Faith, and God’s Love that have sustained Second through good times and challenging times. We have to remember we are all broken people redeemed by the crucified Jesus. Second Presbyterian continues to seek God’s direction, living toward God’s promised reign.

Yes, COVID-19 and social issues caused many changes in how our 175th year was celebrated. However, Second Presbyterian’s 2020 celebration has been successful and significant and possible because of God’s love and grace flowing through the members’ desire to be the hands of God in this city and throughout the world. So it is when our current pastor, Rev. Dr. Alex Evans, the 12th pastor, gives the benediction each Sunday. Those listening are reminded, “Life is short, and we do not have much time for gladdening the hearts of those who journey with us. So, be swift to love and make haste to be kind. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.” **

Lillian Rhudy, LCSW
POAMN Conference Chair

** (the adapted version of 18th century words of Henri Frederic)



175th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
AT SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

CENTRAL'S PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY – DURING THE COVID-19 ERA

By Margaret Prentice / Central Presbyterian Church/Eugene, Oregon

“It’s a wonderful feeling to be wrapped in prayers and God’s eternal love. Where there is love, there is life”. This is a quote from one of the many similar notes we have received from a prayer shawl recipient. It humbles us and warms our hearts to know our prayer shawls are so treasured and fulfill the needs for which they are designed. We began this ministry just over eight years ago when it was dedicated during the morning worship service on April 29, 2012. It is a ministry of the Deacons, funded by the Deacons.

Normally, we meet regularly once a month in the church parlor for an hour and a half or so. However, due to COVID-19, we now have to hold our meetings outside in the church courtyard to comply with “social distancing.” We are a group of dedicated, caring, and faithful volunteers. Prayer is an integral part of our meetings; it may be for the comfort of recipients, for the work of our hands, for the shawls. We use the book, “Knitting into the Ministry,” by Susan S. Jorgensen and Susan S. Izard, as a valuable resource. Most of the shawls we knit are rectangular and knitted in what is known as trinity stitch: a pattern of threes, three plain and three purl. The pattern of threes is a common pattern everywhere, e.g., past, present and future; or birth, life and death. We are all familiar with the Holy Trinity, and we like to think of our pattern as faith, hope and love. A label with “Central Presbyterian Church Prayer Shawl Ministry” on it is sewn on each shawl, and we attach a card with the words, “This prayer shawl was knitted with love and prayers by a member of Central’s Prayer Shawl Ministry. As you wrap it around you, may you feel embraced by God’s love and comfort.” We have donated more than 80 shawls to church members and friends of members.

An added and unexpected bonus to this ministry has been the strong bonds that have developed among us over these eight years. Our group is small, anywhere from four to eight ladies at most meetings, and as we knit we have far-ranging topics of discussion. We also give each other advice, make suggestions for specialty doctors, etc. We help each other out with knitting questions and gaffes too. COVID-19, of course, put a halt to our getting together in person. We had a Zoom meeting in May, but that was not at all satisfying. Zoom didn’t work for some; there wasn’t the sense of community we were used to, or the feeling of relaxation and comfort as our needles clicked and we conversed quietly.



MEETING OF PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY – During COVID-19

Fortunately, our church has a fairly large, partially shady courtyard which Session decided could be used for groups of under ten people. Protocols were put in place for its use starting in June, and after I surveyed my fellow knitters and received a resounding “Yes!” we were the first group to try out meeting in the courtyard. We brought our own chairs, wore masks, and social distanced while we knitted and caught up.

It was a joyous time. We were truly happy to be together again. The forecast for our July meeting date was for hotter than 90 degrees, too hot to be outdoors, I thought, even in the shade, and especially with knitting in mind. Should we cancel? I emailed the usual reminder anyway and was surprised and delighted to receive positive responses with only one person declining because of the heat. We met, found shady spots, and even though some of us had to give up knitting because of sweaty hands, we tolerated the heat and once again shared stories, laughed, and enjoyed being together, keeping alive our little community of faith, hope and love. Love endures.

TO HANOI WITH LOVE – DURING THE COVID-19 ERA

by Quentin A. Holmes, Deacon, Central Presbyterian Church / Eugene, Oregon

“And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.”

(1 Corinthians 13:13)

Rich and Jacquie Litchfield are long-time members of Central Presbyterian Church. Rich sings in the church choir and Jacquie is a deacon. This February, as they have each spring for 21 years now, Rich and Jacquie Litchfield journeyed to Hanoi, North Vietnam, where they volunteer teaching orthodontics at the National Hospital of Dentistry (NHOS) in Hanoi. “It’s all about the relationships,” says retired orthodontist Rich Litchfield, now age 79. While all orthodontists are dentists, only 6% of dentists are orthodontists, specialists who apply braces and align bite.

Gathering clouds of something called the Coronavirus began being mentioned in news coming out of a city in China. But that seemed far, far away in a totally different country. So, in mid-February, Rich and Jacquie headed out on their annual trip to Hanoi, North Vietnam, with plans to continue on to Thailand afterwards to visit long-time friends. Initially, things went more or less as planned. We often think of teaching as lecturing. However, Rich teaches orthodontics to Vietnamese dental students by using a hands-on, collaborative approach. Even though the dental students have been taught to read books written in English, verbal communication was another matter. A patient of one of the students would be seated in a dental chair, and everyone gathered around, with Jacquie serving as language translator. The patient’s dentist (one of the dental students) would describe what they would usually do. Other dental students would describe what they would usually do. Only then would Dr. Litchfield make suggestions about things they might need to consider. “I wonder what if . . . ?” “Have you thought about . . . ?” And, collectively, they would arrive at, and perform, a more effective orthodontic procedure.

Day by day, the specter of the risks posed by the coronavirus became larger and larger. However, Rich’s volunteer work teaching orthodontics continued on successfully.

As the time neared for the Litchfields to travel on to Thailand, it became obvious that doing so would not be possible because of the virus. Scrapping their original plans, it took Rich & Jacquie three days to get an airline flight out of North Vietnam to Europe. The next challenge was getting an airline flight from Europe to the USA. A week later they touched down in Seattle, Washington, and were allowed to enter our country only because they were US citizens returning home. From there, Rich & Jacquie drove home and quarantined in their house for the next 14 days.



DR. RICH LITCHFIELD AND A DENTAL STUDENT



JACQUIE LITCHFIELD, STUDENTS & PATIENT

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While Rich and Jacquie Litchfield have been contributing to the health of dental patients in Vietnam, they also feel deeply blessed. Over the years, deep and lasting personal relationships between the Litchfields and the dental students have developed. The Litchfields have become a part of an extended Vietnamese family. “We might teach ourselves out of a job, but we’ll never lose our friendships with these, our Vietnamese sisters,” says Jacquie Litchfield. Rich and Jacquie remain committed to volunteering in Vietnam.

“We will continue to go as long as we feel we are making a difference and being helpful,” Jacquie says.

Love Endures.



RICH LITCHFIELD'S EXTENDED VIETNAMESE FAMILY

[Editor's Note: The Holiday Farm Fire in Lane County, Oregon was ignited during the night on September 7th by a tree limb falling on an electrical powerline. Dry, hot, extremely fierce winds blowing down off the Cascade Mountains drove the fire racing, racing down the forested McKensie Valley rapidly. Forced to suddenly evacuate in the middle of the night, hundreds of residents of the Mckensie Valley lost their homes, their farms, and all of their belongings. Within the next 80 hours this forest fire grew to over 160,000 acres, dense smoke from it totally blotted out the sun in Eugene, Springfield, & Marcola, and made the air quality "Extremely Hazardous" as far away as Portland, Oregon for over 10 days. This fire spread Northward and also began entering the Mohawk River Valley. The fierce winds abated on September 10th, the forest fire "Stood Up," and NONE of the homes in the Mohawk Rural Fire District (including my own home in the Woods) were burned. Even areas that escaped the actual flames were showered with ashes.]



HOLIDAY FARM FIRE - VIEWING EAST AT 2PM ON SEPT. 8TH
FROM NEAR MARCOLA, OREGON

ASHES FALLING FROM THE SKY

Do not forget that the ashes falling from the sky are all that remains of the pine and grass and thistle and bear and coyote and deer and mouse that could not escape. Gather some up in a sacred manner. Take it to your altar. Offer prayers for these beings. Honor their death. Pray for life. Call in rain. Remind Fire that it is full, has gobbled enough, and can rest. May all beings be safe. May all things be loved. May all beings be remembered. May all beings be mourned.

Sadie Whip - Eugene, Oregon (September, 2020)

ARTS CAMP INSPIRES CREATIVITY

by Steve Aschmann / Asheville, North Carolina

Here's a ministry idea that can be adapted to a congregation of any size. Over the course of five weeks this summer, my wife Carol and I stepped out of our comfort zone. With old and young, families large and small, individuals and couples, preschoolers, teens, and senior adults, we participated in a virtual Arts Camp organized by the staff of the First Presbyterian Church of Asheville, North Carolina. With a theme of "Created to Create", we discovered our artistic skills inspired, challenged and stretched. More, we discovered that this type of ministry especially appealed to older adults. Even more important, everyone had lots of fun.

Arts Camp was the idea of First Presbyterian's leadership team who looked for an intergenerational learning experience that would appeal to every generation. Associate Pastor Julie Hester noted Arts Camp program was chosen "to encourage more creativity" among all ages and "to support the Arts ministry" of the congregation. Inspired by the Creation Story in the Book of Genesis, Rev. Hester said that the Bible tells us that all humans, regardless of age, are "made in the image of God". That means all of us are meant to be "co-creators" with our maker. Activities were designed to encourage people to experiment, have fun, and explore. Participants were told to get creative and not be worried about technique.

Each week had a theme that was associated with the Sunday sermon and scripture. This year's camp focused on the parables of Jesus. Weekly on-line opportunities included a Story, an Art Idea, a Mission Project, a Family Activity, and a Song. Campers were given the option of picking and choosing where we would devote our attention. A 30-minute Zoom gathering each Sunday came to be the highlight of the week, where participants interacted, played, and showed off their artistic efforts. Campers were also invited to post a photo of their projects on the Arts Camp Gallery, which became available for the entire congregation to view. Projects included crafting an "image of God" self-portrait from things found in the kitchen, making our own salt dough and molding scenes inspired by our parables, cutting paper a la Matisse, creating a button collage, drawing with string, and my favorite, baking and consuming Syrian bread.

Often older adults are reluctant to try new artistic endeavors and creative crafts in a public setting, but the virtual format allowed senior members of the congregation to experiment in the privacy of their own homes, working at our own pace. Camp organizers involved older adults in numerous ways. Skilled older adults were invited to be story tellers, book readers, and art project instructors. All adults enjoyed being able to have time interacting with younger members of the faith community, applauding the creations of the children, and celebrating our faith with all ages.



STEVE ASCHMANN'S ART WORK
"SELF-PORTRAIT" USING ITEMS FROM THE KITCHEN



"GARDEN FLOWERS" BY STEVE ASCHMANN
DIFFERENT FLOWERS REPRESENT GOD'S CREATIVITY
AND DIVERSITY IN THE WORLD.



"BIG DIPPER AND COMET" BY CAROL ASCHMANN
CELEBRATES GOD'S CREATIVITY AND RULE

AWAKENING TO STRUCTURAL RACISM

by Quentin Holmes, Deacon
Central Presbyterian Church/Eugene, Oregon

Members of POAMN's Executive Committee participated in a four-class series entitled, *Awakening to Structural Racism*, which was organized and conducted by Rick Ufford-Chase of Stony Point Center in Stony Point, NY, and Rev. Dr. Paul Roberts, Sr., of Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary in Atlanta, GA . Ufford-Chase is a past-Moderator of General Assembly/PC(USA); Rev. Dr. Roberts is a full professor at Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary, a Historically Black College. Many of us wish to respond to injustices underlying the Black Lives Matter movement in a way that goes beyond simply hanging a banner on our church building. These classes were informative, eye-opening, and weighed heavily on our innermost being, for, knowingly or not, each of us have been a part of letting racial injustices continue. On the positive side, it was indeed helpful to wrestle with this extremely-challenging issue in the company of Christians of deep faith from various places all across the USA.

Based upon Matthew 25, the classes were held online via ZOOM at 7PM EDT on Monday August 10th, August 17th, August 24th, and August 31st. Typically, a ZOOM meeting involves listening to the main speaker or an individual participant. However, these classes were set up with a "Chat Line" that allowed participants to pose questions/ask for clarification during the presentation by the featured speaker, and the speakers often responded to those questions. Some 290 people participated in the first class on August 10th.

Each of the classes was close to two hours in duration. Each class began with Bible Study led by Bryce Wiebe, a Deacon in PC(USA). Then came a selected short video presentation providing an informative look at a current situation here in the USA.

Next came the evening's main lecture, after which the participants were broken up into a number of "Awakening to Structural Racism Groups" for cohort (i.e., small group) discussions. Following the cohort discussions, we all joined back together for a wrap-up, followed by a closing prayer led by Rev. Dr. Paul Roberts.

Class One - August 10th, 2020:

Class Content:

Bible Study: Matthew 25 – Bryce Wiebe

Troubling the Waters: Episode Two (video was shown by course leaders – no preparation necessary)

Course Content: Alison Wood – Alie provided introductory material related to the Video and provide "prompts" for Learning Cohort discussions about the material.

Desired Outcome: to understand the role of "whiteness" in discussions about dismantling racism, and to wrestle with the implications of one's position as a person who identifies as White or as a person who is Black, Indigenous or a Person of Color in the work of dismantling structural racism.

Cohort Discussions

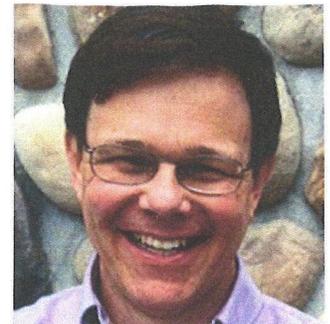
Class Two - August 17th, 2020:

Class Content:

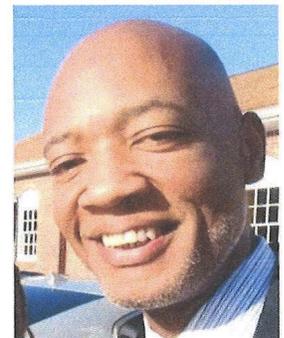
Bible Study: Matthew 25 – Bryce Wiebe

Course Content: Jessica Vasquez-Torrez

Desired Outcome: to understand the basics of what it means to be "centered" or "decentered" in the broader culture, and to be able to identify the implications of that analysis in our own lives.



RICK UFFORD-CHASE
STONY POINT CENTER



REV. DR. PAUL ROBERTS, SR.
JOHNSON C. SMITH
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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Cohort Discussions

Zoom Recording for this class can be found at the following link:

https://zoom.us/rec/share/5s1ldeH2yE1OaJ3mwV_URqUfl626aaa8gScb_PQKmkcU8h_FgZ_znJZat9mkk5Ps

Class Three - August 24th, 2020:

Class Content:

Bible Study: Matthew 25 – Bryce Wiebe

Course Content: Ashley DeTar Birt and Denise Anderson

Desired Outcome – to be familiar with current work on dismantling racism being done in the PC (USA) and to understand its implications for local congregations and communities

Cohort Discussions

Zoom Recording for this class can be found at the following link:

https://zoom.us/rec/share/z_VxfqjKrGJIXs-W6h_4Qo0HP628eaa823BI_VfmU4ajWqgsl4R1-TCmQamkXmT

Class Four - August 31st, 2020:

Class Content:

Bible Study: Matthew 25 - Bryce Wiebe

Course Content: Participants were divided into “affinity groups” (one for those who identify as White and another for those who identify as Black, Indigenous or People of Color). Alison Wood and Paul Roberts

Desired Outcome: Participants will develop concrete “next steps” that are tailored to their own situation and community.

Cohort Discussions

Zoom Recording for this class can be found at the following link:

<https://zoom.us/rec/share/nHboDa2fi4-Fc16amQhdUPYGo0JY3UOoMWNrN9iQ3GRVquLpyWpTeoqK-MoBLATov.ISX3YBWvaJAIM7LK>

Informative, challenging, uplifting, downright scary – these words each express how I would describe the *Awakening to Structural Racism* classes. It was indeed helpful to begin wrestling with such a challenging problem in the company of Christians of deep faith from all across the USA. A follow-on set of four classes that will take place virtually on Monday nights in October is currently being created by Rick Ufford-Chase and Paul Roberts.

THE GRACE OF GOD IN THE 21ST CENTURY

A Personal Perspective

by the Rev. Dr. William N. Johnson, D.Min.

“For it is by grace you have been saved through faith - and this is not from yourself, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast.”

Ephesians 2:8-9 (New International Version)

What ever happened to Grace?

As we live in and move through these times of demonstrations, protests, riots, looting, defunding, political animosity and hatred, killings, tragic racism and COVID-19, one cannot help but wonder what ever has happened to God’s Grace? For me, a retired (since 2000) Presbyterian Pastor, it would be easy to say, “*Well, God’s Grace has submerged and might surface at some future time. Maybe. If we do better.*” Or I might say, “*God’s Grace is here and active, I have it as do my loved ones, but who knows about others who are different or think differently?*” Grace, from the Greek Charis - Χαρις - is about what God has done, is doing and will be

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doing even when we are not aware of it; especially if and when we are not aware of God at work in our lives and in the life of this world and universe. Granted, as a retired and older (almost 86) male pastor, there are moments when I cannot help but wonder if and when we will ever - in our life time - see and experience God's Grace. Or is it just lurking around the corner? Waiting, waiting ... for who knows what?

But, God's Grace abounds and lives and moves in and around and throughout each one of us as a gift from God and not something we have done or earned as Paul says in his second letter to the Ephesians. And it is an experience to be shared with all!

Remember, Grace has many words expressing it: gracious, gratitude, forgiveness, gift, love, charity, etc. All exhibit the eternal depth of God's love.

For many of us who have been ordained as "*Ministers of the Word and Sacrament*" we began our ministry basically thinking of preaching and teaching. But the Grace of God goes far beyond that. The Grace of God also includes feeding, visiting, clothing, helping, caring, counseling, etc. All of life! So, when we talk about, experience and proclaim, the Grace of God, it is all inclusive. It is the totality of the life God has given us in the creation of the universe and in redemption by Jesus the Christ, and it is to be proclaimed, shared and acted out, not just talked about.

In fact, Karl Barth, one of the 20th century's foremost theologians in my opinion, said that God's grace was "*for all of creation.*" And, I am convinced, that Grace is seen and experienced not only in what we preach or teach, but especially in what we do and how we do it and with whom we do it, and for whom we do it!

Dr. Richard Mouw, former president of Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, CA, wrote in his book called, "*Calvin in a Las Vegas Airport*" that he believed someday he would see a Rabbi friend of his in heaven and would also see an agnostic woman friend who had been abused by her father as a child and did not and could not believe in a loving heavenly father. But they would both be with him in the presence of Jesus the Christ. An examples of Mouw's understanding of the Grace of God beyond anything we could express. *(He also got in trouble with some of Fuller's leadership for that inclusive understanding of the Grace of God and almost lost his job, sadly.)*

The Grace of God exceeds anything we can possibly comprehend or dream up, but it is here and at work in all of God's creation, including you and me, especially in these difficult and sometimes dangerous times in which we live. But we take this Grace by faith trusting that the Creator/Redeemer God in Jesus the Christ will prevail and touch this wonderful creation God has brought about in ways we can only guess and explore but not fully understand.

At the beginning I asked, "*What ever happened to the Grace of God?*" Nothing. God's Grace is still here, alive, at work, vital, all-inclusive, through faith but not always understood. Is God's Grace only for Christians or for all of God's creation? We have battled this question for centuries, and still do. Now what?

Think about this! Pray about this! Talk about this! Share this! Believe this! The Grace of God is an eternal truth for all to experience and share. This is God's gift to all of God's creation! Amen! Alleluia!

Prayer of Protection

*The light of God surrounds me.
The love and peace of God enfolds me.
The power of God protects me.
The presence Of God watches over me.
Where ever I am, God is, and all is well.
Amen*



SHAPING FAITH IN CRISIS PEACE BY PIECE

OCTOBER 27-28, 2020

This virtual event will bring together leaders and experts on aging, spirituality, and pastoral care, as well as leaders from communities of faith, seminaries, academia, and community organizations. The current pandemic has made pastoral care an even greater challenge with the need for SIP (Shelter in Place) and social distancing. As shepherds and faith leaders we still must care for people, many of whom are feeling a rise in loneliness, anxiety, and depression.

Keynote Speakers



Why Ask Why? Faith & Lament in Times of Crisis
Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Rigby
W.C. Brown Professor
of Theology, Austin
Presbyterian Theological
Seminary



**Know My Heart:
Pastoral Care While Social
Distancing**
Rev. Sally Wright
Pastor of Pastoral Care
Village Presbyterian Church,
Prairie Village, Kansas

Worship Leader



Dianna Wright
Interim Director Ecclesial
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POAMN
Presbyterian Older Adult Ministries Network

A suggested donation of \$25 includes both days. POAMN is a 501(c)(3) organization.

Funds collected will be given as a donation to
Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) www.pcusa.org/pda

For schedule and registration go to:

<https://poamn.org/virtual-conference-2020/>

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Special thanks to those that have made an extra donation to support POAMN!

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