

SPIRIT SIGHTINGS

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF PALATINE

SEPTEMBER 2023

FROM THE PASTOR...

"The human mind plans the way, but the Lord directs the steps." (Proverbs 16:9)

As we approach the end of summer, we find ourselves amid a season that holds both beauty and change. September marks the transition from the warmth of summer to the cool embrace of fall. This change reminds us that life is in a constant state of motion, and just as the seasons shift, so do the seasons of our own lives and our church community. Embracing change can be both challenging and rewarding. It's an invitation to let go of the old, step out of our comfort zones, and welcome the new possibilities that lie ahead. Therefore, I offer to you a prayer I came across written by an American Author, Debbie Ford:



Dear God,
On this day I ask You to grant this request?
May I know who I am and what I am,
Every moment of every day.
May I be a catalyst for light and love,
And bring inspiration to those whose eyes I meet.
May I have the strength to stand tall in the face of
conflict,
And the courage to speak my voice, even when I'm
scared.
May I have the humility to follow my heart,
And the passion to live my soul's desires.
May I seek to know the highest truth
And dismiss the gravitational pull of my lower self.
May I embrace and love the totality of myself?
My darkness as well as my light.
May I be brave enough to hear my heart?
To let it soften so that I may gracefully
Choose faith over fear.
Today is my day to surrender anything that stands
Between the sacredness of my humanity and my
divinity.
May I be drenched in my Holiness
And engulfed by Your love.
May all else melt away.
And so it is. [Amen]

~ In Christ, RJ



STEWARDSHIP

A question that I am often asked is, "how is our church (PCOP) doing financially?" As I am a glass half full person, I answer "OK, but it could be better." Looking at our most recent statements we are projected to finish the year with a deficit of about \$25,000. The leadership of PCOP hopes that we can reduce, or eliminate that deficit before the year end, but to do this we need your help.

Looking at the statements, an item of concern is our current giving. We are about \$5000 behind in our pledged offerings. The leadership hopes that we, the congregation, will step up, give more, and meet the commitment of \$170,720.

Loose offerings are donations that are made by members and friends of the congregation that do not pledge. Historically we receive about \$17,000 in loose offerings. Currently, we are on track to receive that full amount, but again we need your help to meet this goal. Please continue to give freely and plentifully to support our ministry.

The following reflection comes from Day 1 of 33 Days of Stewardship Discovery Guide by authors Dave Sutherland and Kirk Nowery.

The essence of life is not ownership but stewardship – the faithful management of all that God entrusts to us. Some of us are entrusted with a lot, some with a little; but whatever comes to us brings with it an undeniable responsibility. The temptation is to think that the abundance is found in possessing life's benefits, when actually it's discovered in stewarding life's blessings.

Dear Lord, please help us to be good stewards of the bounty that you shared with us. Together, as stewards of that bounty, help us to ensure the financial security of our church so that we can continue to minister to our congregation and community. Amen.

Bruce Churchill, Stewardship Team

GARDEN MINISTRY - IT'S OUR 18TH YEAR!

This year the garden has endured some challenges, but keeps producing! With the lack of rain in the spring and early summer, we had to put the garden on a sprinkler system in the early morning hours. We also had a problem with animals or insects eating the beans, broccoli, and kale. Although the beans finally started growing, the broccoli and kale crops did not. The radishes and any crops grown from seed struggled as well in the beginning. With that said, we are doing great now! We have had a good crop of beans, lettuce, squash, Swiss chard, zucchini, dill, sage, and coriander. In the later part of August, we added lots of tomatoes and peppers to the list.

We are still looking for people to help weed and harvest. And, if you are available to take produce over to the Township Pantry on either Mondays or Wednesdays, please let us know that as well!

The Pantry has been thankful for our donations. With the increase of individuals and families coming to them for food and health/home supplies, fresh food from our garden is a welcome addition to what they receive.

Working in the garden is a wonderful way to come together to help others! Come join fellow gardeners- ***Jim Ekeberg, Marge Pearson, Curt Peterson, Pam Anderson, Robin Dillon, Mirabel Wiryen, Mindy Drum, Crystalyn Boyer, Cheryl Maluta, Lyn Nawrot and the church of servants.***

Please contact Lyn at 224-578-2202 for more information!





PCOP FOOD PANTRY

The PCOP Food Pantry has consistently served 5 families throughout the summer months, providing basic food staples which they are able to select from a fixed shopping list. Now that classes have resumed, we are looking forward to adding to our list of clients as the school social workers identify new families who will benefit from a helping hand in providing food for their families.

Hopefully, the beginning of school will also bring a return of some of the children we are serving as they join their parents on “pick-up” days. They are a joy and bring smiles to those staffing the pantry, especially when they are perusing our “gratis” table and selecting a few items from it. The gratis table holds items not on our shopping list but donated to the pantry, like baking mixes, cereals & pastas different than what we stock, and sometimes we are gifted with “cake kits” (a foil pan/muffin tin, cake mix, frosting, sprinkles, etc.). You can imagine the delight when a child finds one of those.

The Pantry Team continues to be grateful for your continued support through donations, as well as through prayers for those we serve.

Barbara, Wayne, Mary and Anita

PENTECOST 2 : OPEN YOUR HEARTS TO GOD’S WISDOM AND GOODNESS

Pentecost 2 Season: July 9 - August 20

Team Members- Linda & John Baumgart, Kathy Ekeberg, Jan Lohs, Ben Stevenson

The P2 theme was “Open Your Hearts to God’s Wisdom and Goodness.” Communion was celebrated twice during the season. Devotions were quotations from a variety of Christian thinkers across the ages, including some of today’s important voices, that focus on how God’s wisdom can impact our lives and, in turn, the lives of others. Three different quotations were emailed twice each week.

PCOP’s Food Pantry was our local mission. Insights from a social worker from one of the schools the pantry serves brought a deeper understanding of the prevalence of poverty within our community, how it affects families, and how PCOP’s Food Pantry is a source of light to families who are served.

Feed My Starving (FMSC) was our global mission. Thirty volunteers from PCOP took part in a meaningful and, also fun, packing event. Before heading over to FMSC, we enjoyed a light supper at the Kenters (thanks to Mary and Tom for their hospitality!). “Team P2” comprised a range of ages and some fresh faces and, along with the other volunteers that evening, we packed a total of 24,408 meals. This will feed 66 people for a year and put a dent in the massive problem of global hunger.

Beautiful weather graced the church’s Picnic Brunch on July 30th. There was a great turnout and the tables were groaning with an abundance of food. Thanks to all who added a delicious dish!

Thanks also to the many people who participated or helped during the season in other ways—donating to the pantry, volunteering at and/or financially supporting FMSC, ushering, bringing food to Fellowship on Sundays.

We encourage you to continue to support the PCOP FOOD PANTRY by donating food items or financial support. Checks can be made out to PCOP, with “Food Pantry” clearly mentioned in the note section (to help the church track mission gifts).



HARVEST 1: WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE

Harvest 1 Season: August 27 - October 8

Team Members-Lyn Nawrot, Jean Tittle, Cheryl Maluta, Mary & Tom Kenter

“**With God All Things Are Possible**” is the theme for the 2023 Harvest 1 Season. The scripture readings reminded us that what seems impossible for us as humans, is possible with God by our sides.

- *Sarah having a child at an advanced age.* – “**Is anything too wonderful for the Lord?** At the set time I will return to you, in due season, and Sarah shall have a son.” Genesis 18: 14
- *Moses bringing the Israelites out of Egypt.* – “But Moses said to God, ‘Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?’ He said, ‘**I will be with you;** and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain.’” Exodus 3: 11-12
- *Jesus calling fishermen to become disciples who would follow Him, learn from Him, and then filled with the Holy Spirit would spread the Gospel to all nations.* – “As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea- for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, “**Follow me and I will make you fish for people,**” Mark 1: 16-17

Our Mission focus will be the Peace & Global Witness offering that will be collected thru the end of Harvest I. 25% of the monies collected for this offering will go back to the PCOP Food Pantry. We are looking at the possibility to raise \$1000 so that \$250 will go back to our Pantry. You can either include the donation in your weekly pledge envelope, or put a separate donation in one of the Peace & Global Witness offering envelopes that are on the table in the Narthex and put in the offering plate. In addition to that, our local mission focus will be for collections of personal health and cleaning products for the clients of the Township of Palatine Food Pantry. You can obtain a list of what is needed on the table in the Narthex and place those items in the trunk located in the entryway.

For Christian Education, Pastor RJ will lead a series on “Does God Have a Sense of Humor.” Tuesday morning bible study will be in person and Thursday night will be on zoom. For Devotions, DFF Wendy Canedy will be sharing stories from the “God Winks” series about messages from God that you are not alone and everything will be ok.

Communion will be served on World Communion Day, October 1

And on October 1, we will have a joint worship service and fellowship with the church of servants. You won’t want to miss this event! On Easter Sunday last year, the members of the church of servants impressed us with their delicious food. It is now our turn to show their members our culinary skills! There will be a sign up sign in the foyer to let us know what you can bring that day. On other Sundays during our season, we will be serving coffee and juice and we would appreciate any sweet or savory treats to share.

As we move through the season look for the signs of God winking in your daily life and remember, with God all things are possible!



PC USA 101

“In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit, we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks and to live holy and joyful lives, even as we watch for God’s new heaven and new earth praying, ‘Come, Lord Jesus.’ ” —From “A Brief Statement of Faith”

At the core of Presbyterian identity is a secure hope in the grace of God in Jesus Christ, a hope that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, empowers us to live lives of gratitude: “In affirming with the earliest Christians that Jesus is Lord, the Church confesses that he is its hope, and that the Church, as Christ’s body, is bound to his authority and thus free to live in the lively, joyous reality of the grace of God.” (Book of Order F-1.0204)

This strong emphasis on the grace of God in Jesus Christ is our heritage from the founder of the Reformed tradition, John Calvin.



FROM THE DIRECTOR OF FAITH FORMATION

It’s difficult to believe that summer has already come and gone! The past couple of months the children’s lessons and crafts have centered around the following themes: the calling of the disciples, the Transfiguration, Jesus teaching in the temple, the workers in the vineyard, the definition of a parable, the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus the Light of the World, how we as believers should let our lights shine in the world, and how everything in life has its season. We continue to ask about prayer requests and pray the Lord’s Prayer at the end of every lesson.

The Pentecost Two Season Team chose a series of devotional quotations from various Christian theologians and thinkers (both ancient and modern day) for this season, which we as a congregation began receiving a few weeks ago. They are just the right length and a fun departure from a traditional devotion. I’ve been tempted to write several of them on Post-It Notes and place them around the house to be found and read throughout the day! Enjoy these early fall days and look for another update soon!

**Blessings~
Wendy Canedy
PCOP/DFP**





FROM THE DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

From “**God Be the Love to Search and Keep Me**” (O Christ Surround Me) GTG#543

4. *Walking behind to hem my journey,
going ahead to light my way,
and from beneath, above, and all ways:
O Christ, surround me; O Christ, surround me.*
5. *Christ in the eyes of all who see me,
Christ in the ears that hear my voice,
Christ in the hearts of all who know me:
O Christ, surround me; O Christ, surround me.*

Reflection on verses four and five of the Harvest 1 theme song led me to consider: How does our acceptance and following of Christ’s example lead to our sharing of Christ’s love in our daily interactions?

Director of Music, Ingrid Mikolajczyk

STAFF UPDATE

PCOP staff has gone through some changes this year!

Social Media Director: In January, Jess Bedsole stepped down from this position. We are grateful to Jess for helping us during the critical time of COVID-19 when our church was going through some major transition. We are blessed to have Mary Kenter, who stepped in as a volunteer to help us with graphics and the Spirit Sighting Newsletters. We are grateful for Mary’s creative work, and in cooperation with Jack Kang, we now have a video of all the events for each season which is used as a pre-worship video and posted on our church’s FaceBook page.

Treasurer: As many of you are aware, George Craig is no longer a part of our PCOP community. We appreciate his work as the treasurer for over 10 years. We are grateful to Mindy Drum for stepping in as Interim Treasurer. With Mindy’s gift of organization and details, she has created a manual for the Treasurer position and made sure all of our accounts and numbers are in management status.

Treasurer Needed: As mentioned above, Mindy volunteered as an Interim Treasurer. Due to her schedule, we need a person with some accounting knowledge to take on this role on a permanent basis. This position will require 15-20 hours per month. If you feel called to this position, or know of someone who is looking for such a position, please contact Pastor RJ at pastor@palatinepres.com.



Rummage Sale

Saturday, September 30th 9am – 2pm

Preparation for the Rummage Sale is underway! We are looking forward to this fun and worthwhile event that benefits our church and the community. And we are asking for your help!

Donate / Set-up / Work at the Sale / Shop

Sign-up for sale day: A sign-up poster to work on the day of the sale is in the entryway. Please stop and take a look. Sale day tasks are mainly welcoming and assisting shoppers, and also keeping merchandise in order. Volunteers will also be needed for cleanup after the sale.

Donation drop-off: Sun, Sept. 24 - early Fri, Sept. 29

Sort through your closets, basement, garage and attic for gently used items that need a new home . . . clothing, baby items, toys, household goods, tools, sports equipment, books, CDs, DVDs, electronics, etc., etc. Donations may be left in the craft area of the church.

Sale set-up: Mon, Sept. 25 – Fri. Sept 29

Much help is needed that week for setting up displays, sorting and pricing. Please come as you are able any day between 9am and 5pm. Let us know if evenings work best for you.

Questions: contact Mindy Drum mdrum21@gmail.com



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Presbyterian Women will begin their 2023-24 season in September. All women are invited to attend one or both Circles for Bible study and fellowship. The Horizons study for the year is “Sacred Encounters: The Power and Presence of Jesus in Luke-Acts” by Olive Mahabir. *Study books are available in the church office at a cost of \$11.00.*

Grace Circle will meet at 10:00 am at church on Wednesday, September 20.

Rebecca Circle will meet via zoom at 10:00 am on Saturday, September 16.

Contact Jan Lohs jan@lohsresearch.com if you wish to attend.



SEPTEMBER

9/3	Worship	10am	9/16	Rebecca Circle-Zoom	10am
9/4	<i>Labor Day - Office Closed</i>		9/17	Worship	10am
9/6	Alpha Ministry	7pm	9/19	Bible Study Presbytery Assembly Stewardship	10am 4pm 7pm
9/7	Bible Study-Zoom	7pm	9/20	Grace Circle Alpha Ministry	10am 7pm
9/8	W3 & B3	7pm	9/21	Bible Study-Zoom	7pm
9/10	Worship	10am	9/24	Worship Session	10am 11:30am
9/12	Bible Study Personnel	10am 7pm	9/26	Bible Study	10am
9/13	PW Board	10am	9/28	Food Pantry Pick-up Bible Study	2:30-4pm 7pm
9/14	Food Pantry Pick-up Bible Study-Zoom	2:30-4pm 7pm	9/30	Rummage Sale	9am - 1pm

OUR OFFICE HOURS ARE MONDAY - THURSDAY, 10:00AM - 2:00PM

PASTOR KANG'S IN-OFFICE HOURS - TUESDAYS, WEDNESDAYS AND THURSDAYS BETWEEN 10:00AM & 12:00PM

FOR TIMES NOT IN THAT FRAMEWORK, PLEASE CALL AHEAD TO MAKE CERTAIN SHE IS AVAILABLE.

If you have yet to sign up to serve on one or two 2023 Season Teams, please do so! You may sign up in person across from the office or call, or email the church office.

*We especially need people to sign up for Advent Season Team.
The planning meeting for Advent Season will be October 15th*

**UPCOMING EVENT
HARVEST 1 SEASON**

F E L L O W S H I P

OCTOBER 1st - FOLLOWING WORSHIP

Potluck Lunch with church of servants

Bring a dish to share.

***Please sign up so we know
you're coming!***

**UPCOMING EVENT
HARVEST 2 SEASON**



**BREAKING THE CYCLE
OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

DATE:

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 15 FOLLOWING WORSHIP

GUEST SPEAKER:

**SHELLEY WELCH, SR. MANAGER
OF ANNUAL FUND GIVING**