



# The CHIMES

The Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church of Arlington Heights

September/October 2020

Choose love. Be the light. Change the world.

From the Pastor

## Exodus: Discovering Our Promised Land

by Rev. Alex Lang, Head of Staff

When I arrived at First Pres seven years ago in 2013, you may remember that my opening sermon series walked us through the book of Genesis. The reasoning behind studying the book of Genesis in such detail is that it lays a foundation for the entire Bible. In some way or another, every aspect of the Christian religion is derived from the book of Genesis.




Since then, we have not studied an entire book of the Old Testament. We've examined various stories and scriptures, but not an entire book. As I've been considering 2020, the challenges of where we've been and the uncertainty of what's to come, I have felt God drawing me back to the Old Testament. The Old Testament comprises 66 percent of our Bible and is critical to the Christian faith because it lays the foundation of Jewish faith, which is essential to understanding the person and ministry of Jesus.

For me, the Old Testament has always represented something remarkable: the journey of a people to discover how their relationship with God informed their identity. Although Genesis lays the foundation for the rest of the Bible, the formation of the identity of the Hebrew people is formed beginning in the book of Exodus. The story of Exodus describes how the Hebrew people are trying to find calm in the chaos. God is aiming to release them from slavery so they can find the Promised Land.

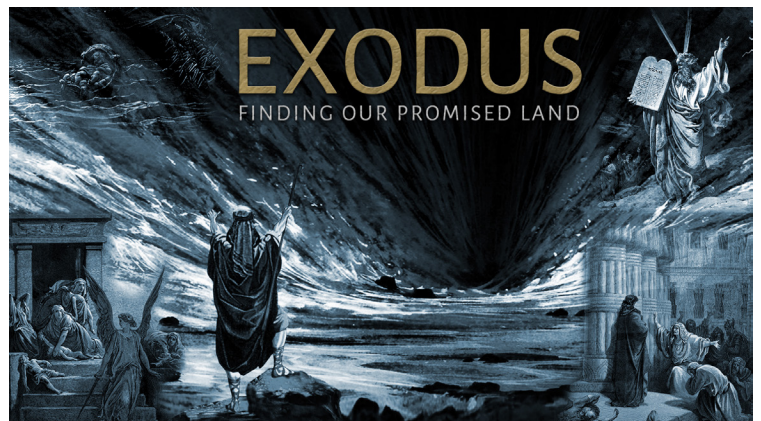
This fall we are doing a sermon series called **Exodus: Discovering Our Promised Land**. When I originally envisioned this sermon series back in February of 2020, it was based on the notion that I would be returning from England and I could tell you all about my adventures

abroad. I was going to regale you with tales from my travels, the amazing wisdom that I gleaned from interacting with pastors and parishioners from abroad. Unfortunately, that trip did not happen. Instead, like everyone else, I was relegated to my home. Like you, I have had to readjust to a new normal, which includes a lot of unknowns and a world that is constantly in flux.

The beauty of the story of Exodus is that it speaks directly to our present circumstances. I can't think of a book of the Bible that better captures the feeling of the present moment and offers us wisdom of how to navigate a path forward. Through the stories in Exodus, we will examine the various ways we are bound as individuals, a church, and a community at large. In the end, the goal of this series will be to understand the new and bold

direction we need to be taking as Christians if we want to be able to discover our Promised Land. 

*“For me, the Old Testament has always represented something remarkable: the journey of a people to discover how their relationship with God informed their identity.”*



Join us for the new sermon series, **Exodus: Finding our Promised Land**, beginning Sunday, September 13.


# News from the Worship, Music, and Sacraments Committee

We all want to gather again in our Sanctuary, sing hymns, hear Chris play the organ, and listen to our wonderful choir! We want this so badly. Yet, we know that for everyone's well-being this is something that is still several months away. Many churches have decided not to hold in person worship until after the first of the year, 2021. We have not gone that far in our planning, yet. However, the WMS committee is bringing some recommendations to the Session and we expect we will be able to go forward as follows:

Beginning Sunday,  
September 13 through  
November 1, we will  
hold worship at 10:00  
am in our west parking  
lot, weather permitting.

- Beginning Sunday, September 13, we will hold worship at 10:00 am in our west parking lot (the parking lot between the buildings.)
- We hope that we can do this every week through November 1, weather permitting.
- We will continue to stream worship for those that cannot or do not want to gather in the parking lot.
- We will not be singing hymns, but we will have special music.
- We will celebrate communion on **World Communion Sunday (October 4)** using pre-packaged juice and wafer sets purchased online.
- We will continue to require masks be worn, even in the parking lot.
- Folding chairs will be available for worship and you are welcome to bring your more comfortable outdoor chairs.
- Pastoral and Program staff will use their discretion in cancelling outdoor worship in the event of bad weather.

Again, the Session needs to concur with these actions at their next meeting but we are hopeful we will be able to do this. In the meantime, we do have one more **Friday night worship experience on August 21, at 7:00 pm**. We hope you will join us.

WMS is also in beginning conversations about Christmas Eve worship. We welcome any creative ideas. Send them to [judyhockenberry@firstpresah.org](mailto:judyhockenberry@firstpresah.org) or to [adamhendrickson@firstpresah.org](mailto:adamhendrickson@firstpresah.org). 

# Peace & Global Witness Offering

by Phyllis Orzechowski - Chair, Mission Committee

The Peace & Global Witness Offering “supports ministries of reconciliation and peace within cultures of violence and conflict”. That quote comes from the Presbyterian Church (USA) Mission Agency.

During this coronavirus pandemic, it seems there is more stress than peace. Cultures of violence and conflict are evident when someone will shoot another person over the argument of wearing a face covering. People are losing jobs, struggling to make ends meet, and emotions are running high. This offering encourages churches to stand up to promote and teach peace and reconciliation. Peace and reconciliation are more important than ever in our community and in our country.

This year's Peace & Global Witness offering will run from September 6 through October 4, and will be distributed as follows:

**50%**

Supports the work for peace being done by Presbyterians around the globe


**25%**

Will go to our mid council, joining with other congregations in our area to support peacemaking in our region

**25%**

Will stay with our congregation, so that we can use it to commit ourselves to peacemaking

## Where should the 25% of this offering go that stays with our congregation?

The Mission Committee could certainly make that determination, but I would also appreciate your suggestions. Where do you think that money should go? Do you know an organization in our area that you support that works to promote peace and reconciliation? Please send an email to [Mission@firstpresah.org](mailto:Mission@firstpresah.org) and let me know. 

# Reflections on Juneteenth

by Rev. Jan Niemeyer

Many in our congregation and community were impacted by the Juneteenth Service of Remembrance that was held at First Pres on Friday, June 19. The reflections shared by Floyd Mays and TC Anderson called our congregation to awareness and action in support of our Black brothers and sisters to address the racism that is inherent in so many of our societal systems. The Reverend Jan Niemeyer was so moved by what she heard that evening and what she was witnessing around the country that she penned the following letter and shared it with the First Pres staff. May we all feel called to follow in Jesus' footsteps to seek justice for all.

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I'm an 81-year-old white woman, American citizen born in Springfield, Illinois, and for many years now, I've been an activist. Each time I've gotten the call to speak out, to learn more, I move from one realization to another about who is in a situation not necessarily of their own making in which they are in some kind of danger: malnutrition, starvation, oppression, death.

It's only mid-July, but the year 2020 has proved to be a most dangerous one. The worldwide COVID-19 pandemic has killed thousands of people, but it has also revealed, uncovered, shown to the world, deadly forces at work in human life: How dangerous it is to be a Black person.

Pastor Martin Niemoeller spoke in the years following the Holocaust of human responsibility and he used these words:

"First they came for the socialists and I did not speak out because I was not a socialist. Then they came for the trade unionist and I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist. Next, they came for the Jews and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me and there was no one left to speak for me."

I have finally come to realize that they have been coming for Black people for 400 years and in all my life I have not spoken out for Black people because I am white.

Yes, I studied and researched and learned and continue to learn, but until this year, I saw Black people as different for me. I acted as though the threats to their lives and livelihoods were threats against them and although it was clearly my concern to stand by them, to care about them, to love them so that they could have the strength to overcome the dangers to their lives, I did not yet

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realize that the very fact that I am white, made it my business to take away the threat.

White people are not here to help. White people are the problem. It is as if we, like that police officer in Minneapolis, are complacently kneeling on the neck of George Floyd, thinking that his life is not my concern.

I realize that almost all the white people that I know are good, kind, loving people. They are people who have no intention of hurting and certainly not of killing Black people, but the cultural reality in which we live is that the system of racism is driven by the complacency of white people thinking that it's not our problem to solve.

It has taken far too long for me to wake up to this reality. A young man named Floyd Mays spoke truth to power when he told our wonderful, loving, and caring majority white congregation that we needed to take action in the face of the dangerous threat to life and limb our society poses to the Black people of our own family.

I know the fear and helplessness I felt when my beloved adult grandson lay dangerously near death from COVID-19, but I have not until now realized in my own skin, the daily threat of random acts of violence, of systemic exclusion from the benefits that flow toward those who are white and are historically restricted and often stolen from people who are Black.

Dear members of my white-skinned family, not only must we care about and love those who are Black or of any color other than white, it is our job to end the systems in our society that are crushing their lives and find ways to live as one family from here on out. Now is the time to take up our own work.

Don't be shy. Step on up. By God's grace we can do what we are called to do. What part of the system calls you to act? What is your part of the job? Write it down. Tell everyone you know and care about. Share your passion and together we will dismantle this terrible regime. 📣



# A Produce Partnership

by Katy Allen

Children's Ministries and the Mission Committee have joined forces this summer to distribute free, fresh produce to those in need in our community. Using yield from the Loaves & Fishes garden and generous produce donations from First Pres gardeners, we have opened a produce "market" on Wednesday evenings in our parking lot. Interest has steadily grown since the market first opened on July 22. The increase

in customers speaks to the desire for fresh vegetables. The market will continue until September 2.

This partnership is just one example of the many ways First Pres has answered the call to serve others during these incredibly challenging times. If you have produce from your personal garden that you would like to donate, you may drop it off at First Pres on Sunday mornings between 9:30-10:30 am or on Wednesday evenings between 5:30-6:00 pm. [📍](#)

## FREE FRESH PRODUCE

### Wednesdays from 6:30 – 7:30pm July 22 – September 2

First Presbyterian Church of Arlington Heights  
Corner of St. James Street and Vail Ave  
(west parking lot). Produce will be available while supplies last.



Variety each week depends on what is harvested from our onsite Loaves & Fishes Garden and donations.

## PADS Update

by Michele Holifield

Right after March 15, 2020, First Pres opened a warming center in Fellowship Hall for those in the community who did not have a place to go to keep warm during the day. At the time, we thought the center might be open for a few weeks and then we would be back to our typical schedule of hosting PADS on Tuesday evenings. Here I am writing this article in August! The warming center is no longer open, but we have served over 3,000 meals since March to those in need.

On March 31, we began delivering breakfast, lunch, and dinner to over 100 people experiencing homelessness in the community who were now living at the Red Roof Inn and Comfort Inn in Arlington Heights. JOURNEYS | The Road Home was able to secure funding to place families and individuals in both hotels. With PADS sites unable to remain open due to COVID-19, and most other facilities closed, this was the safest option for everyone.

First Pres, through many generous donations of food, time, and money has continued to provide breakfast, lunch, and

dinner to guests all summer. In addition, Starbucks Coffee on Golf and Arlington Heights Roads donates coffee for us to serve during our morning breakfast deliveries.

We will continue to provide this service for the coming months. We do not know what the future holds for the PADS program, but we are working closely with JOURNEYS to ensure the health and safety of all those in our community who are the most vulnerable.

Thank you to everyone who has participated in the mission. If you would like to get involved, send an email to [padsfood@firstpresah.org](mailto:padsfood@firstpresah.org). [📍](#)






# TROOP 32 Moving Forward in a Post Pandemic Era

The Boys and Girls from Troop 32 have been meeting virtually every week to continue the momentum they had been building this year. Some Eagle projects have been completed, utilizing proper social distancing protocols, and the troop has been camping once a month overcoming various challenges.

Everything the Scouts had learned has been put to the test and Troop 32 has passed that test!


The leadership group and church sponsors are extremely proud of these Boy and Girl Scouts.

Contact Troop 32 to learn more about their adventures at [t32scoutmaster@gmail.com](mailto:t32scoutmaster@gmail.com). 




Our Mary & Martha Lending Closet has recently purchased a 20-foot inflatable movie screen that is perfect for a backyard movie night. An air pump is included with the screen. If you do not have a projector, the lending closet can also help you with that. Also available are non-breakable plates, bowls, and cups for that small outdoor gathering.

If you are interested in borrowing the movie screen, please send an email to the Lending Closet at [maryandmartha@firstpresah.org](mailto:maryandmartha@firstpresah.org). A donation in the amount of your choosing is requested to further the mission of the Mary & Martha Lending Closet.

The Mary and Martha Lending Closet supports the food programs for local school districts. The need for support for these programs is great, and your support of the lending closet allows us to continue supporting the food programs. 



Although our churches were closed, it did not stop the generous spirit of giving for the children and school of Christopher House. A big THANK YOU from all the young students beginning a very uncertain year at Christopher House School in Chicago. Your generosity totaled \$2,015 which allows for the purchase of school supplies, backpacks, and other materials that are so desperately needed by struggling families to ensure a successful year of learning. Though we could not be together in person, you continued to support this cause. Thank you for your donations! The K-8th grade school hopes to open on August 19, but this may change because of the challenging times. With collections from First Pres, Church of Barrington, Westminster, and Presbyterian Church of Park Ridge, each child will receive a backpack and school supplies amounting to \$25 per child. THANK YOU!! 



# Children's Ministries

by Katy Allen, Director of Children's Ministries

## "Virtual" MissionFactory

Although MissionFactory looked very different this summer than it has in previous years, we were thrilled to welcome twelve 5th and 6th graders for a week of at-home and in-person activities. In-person highlights of the week included decorating the sidewalk squares along Dunton Avenue with sidewalk chalk to cheer all those walking by, visiting church members who live within walking distance of the church (while remaining physically distanced, of course), tending the Loaves & Fishes Garden, and painting friendship rocks. At-home activities were fun, too! Kids decorated portions of welcome signs that were given to The Hope Center at JOURNEYS | The Road Home and the Kenneth Young Center, assembling care packages for freshman headed off to college this fall, and creating a unique centerpiece for our Zoom calls each morning.

Creating a "virtual" tween program took creativity and planning. For example, instead of the whole group fun run that we introduced to MissionFactory last summer, we borrowed the idea of a virtual fundraising walk from a local park district. Kids were invited to walk, run, bike, or scooter a total of 10 miles during the week to raise money to purchase school supplies for the children in Sisseton, South Dakota, as part of the Dakota Partnership. We raised over \$750 and provided 30 backpacks filled with supplies.

We also collected food to help support the Wheeling Township Food Pantry.

Special thanks to Liza Churchill, Amy Hempleman, Susannah Holifield, and Jim Mayer for helping to chaperone our in-person activities, Laura and Mikayla Carlson for prepping our friendship rocks, and Conor Stanley for photographing our activities. 📷



# Youth Ministries

by TC Anderson, Associate Pastor for Children, Youth, & Families

## Mission Trips at Home

Even though we weren't able to go on the mission trips that we had planned for the summer of 2020, we were still able to do some kind of mission during our scheduled weeks. Both our Middle School youth and our High School youth had At Home Mission Trip packets delivered to them this summer!

From June 15-19, Middle School youth were doing things in their neighborhoods and homes like food drives, walking around their neighborhoods to pick up trash, and serving meals to our homeless population with PADS. We collected a full trunk, back seat, and side passenger seat worth of food (all sizes relative to a 2010 Ford Fusion). It was a great week.

From July 20-24, our High School youth did a clothing drive in their own homes, made birthday kits for WINGS, and helped beautify the grounds at the Kenneth Young Center (KYC). See the photo below of the group who made the grounds so beautiful. KYC is extremely grateful for all of the help that our youth and adults did that day and it looks like they all had a wonderful time doing it!

## This Fall

We're not 100% sure what this fall/winter is going to look like. There is a lot up in the air, and everyone is trying to figure out the best way forward. Whether we're able to meet in person, just online, or some combination of the two, I do want you to know that we're all working very hard to come up with ways to engage, teach, fellowship, and grow with you and your children/youth. No matter what this fall looks like, we will have lessons, classes, and engagement for you all throughout it. We miss you all and will see you again sometime soon, one way or another! 📷



# Presbyterian Women News

This year will be a very different year for Presbyterian Women to keep everyone safe but still together with social distancing. The first socially distanced Circle meeting will be **Wednesday, September 16, at 9:00 am in the Sanctuary**. A ZOOM option will be available by RSVP to Gladys Holtz at [gladysholtz@comcast.net](mailto:gladysholtz@comcast.net), by Sunday, September 13. The gathering and program planned for **October 28** is still undecided.



Our Bible study this year is called **Into the Light: Finding Hope Through Prayers of Lament**. For more information, go to [presbyterianwomen.org/bible-study/into-the-light/](http://presbyterianwomen.org/bible-study/into-the-light/). To order a bible study guide, send cash or check for \$12 (made payable to Presbyterian Women) to Rosalie Stoike (1911 N Spruce Terrace, Arlington Heights, 60004) by September 1. For more information, call Rosalie at 847-259-2367.

Thank you again for your support of Christopher House. **We will still be supporting the Christopher House and Firman House Food Drive** but in a very different way. Keep watching for more information! We are a community of women. Give a little sunshine to someone with a message or friendly call. Share any important joys and concerns with Gladys Holtz. 📍

## Parents' Day Out this Fall

Parents' Day Out (PDO) will be opening our doors this September very differently than we have over the past 42 years. It will remain our top priority to keep the PDO staff and students safe and healthy. We will remain a play-based, childcare facility offering opportunities for music, crafts, socialization and education, even in a COVID-19 world. PDO will follow all IDPH guidelines including smaller class sizes, mask wearing, temperature checks, and health screening questions daily. It will be a wonderful sight to see children again at First Pres and the dedicated staff making a difference in their lives.

# Honorary Life Membership Presbyterian Women

On Sunday, July 5th, it was with pleasure that Sue Henderson presented **Rev. Judy Hockenberry** with the **Honorary Life Membership** for her outstanding work with members of Presbyterian Women. This Honorarium was established to honor faithful service to the women's organization and to the church. Judy grew up in the church and has always been a part of Presbyterian Women. In the last four years, Judy has been the "caring heart of ministry to all of us." Judy has been a supportive inspiration for PW by helping us find meaning each month for Bible Study. We are pleased and proud to have Rev. Judy Hockenberry as the 2020 Recipient for Presbyterian Women. 📍



## To Ingrid Kaufman With Thanks

On Sunday, July 5, **Ingrid Kaufman** was presented with a token of appreciation for her service as moderator of Presbyterian Women. The members of Presbyterian Women thanked Ingrid for her welcoming and generous spirit conveying Christian love even through the closing of the church due to the coronavirus pandemic. Ingrid sent out caring lifelines to all of us. Ingrid was honored with a Certificate of Appreciation, an Amazon gift card, and flowers. Ingrid is a true treasure in Presbyterian Women. Thank you. 📍



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**We are praying for these and many other members in our congregation.**



## SYMPATHY

Please join in extending sympathy to:

The Gilling family, on the death of **Harry Gilling**

**Jean Jacoby**, on the death of her husband,  
**Merritt (Jake) Jacoby**

**Sue Taflinger**, on the death of her sister, Gail Gill  
**Tina Finch** and family, on the death of Tina's father,  
Rev. Thomas Martin

**Carol Kelley** and family, on the death of her brother,  
Rich Willuweit

The Kresge family, on the death of **Aleda (Billie) Kresge**  
**Stephen Lee** and family, on the death of Stephen's mother

**Stephen Smith**, on the death of his wife, **Julie Smith**  
**Carl Stanley** and family, on the death of his mother,  
Toni Stanley

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## BAPTISMS/MEMBERSHIP

We welcomed  
*Alexander Langston*  
into our family of faith  
on June 21, 2020

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## HEARTFELT THANKS

Thank you everyone for all the wonderful cards and notes our members sent me about my sister's passing. Each day, each card just lifted me up. Thank you all so much. Love you all.

-Sue Taflinger