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Image: Presbyters gather in worship for the February 18, 2020 Presbytery Assembly at the Life Together Center at the First Federated Church of Peoria.

GOOD NEWS from the Presbytery of Great Rivers

*We are called to share Christ's love by partnering in service,
uniting in worship, and risking in ministry.*

February 21, 2020

Let Us Pray

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Every week during 2020, we offer up different church names so that we can pray for our entire Presbyterian community. You are welcome to follow this calendar as you will! The full list can be found on our website under the Churches tab or by clicking [here](#).



(This will send this week's newsletter as an email to a friend!)

This week on our prayer calendar. . .



Carthage - First United

First United Presbyterian Church
 PO Box 340, Carthage, IL 62321
 Rev. Joy Ridge
 Amy McVeigh, Admin Assistant
 Thomas Hartzell, Clerk of Session
 Karen Andrews, Treasurer



For Headline News Happening Around the PC(USA), [click here](#)



Mark Your Calendar

FEBRUARY

Elder/Deacon Training

Saturday, February 22
 8:30 am - Noon
 Normal-First

Committee on Ministry

Tuesday, February 25
 10 am - 3 pm
 Peoria-First Federated LTC

Elder/Deacon Training

Saturday, February 29
 8:30 am - Noon
 Springfield-Third

[Click here for the PGR Calendar](#)



Carthage - Fountain Green United

Fountain Green United Presbyterian Church
2767 E County Road 1900, Carthage, IL 62321
Mark Hanson, Commissioned Lay Pastor
Tracy Hocker, Clerk of Session
[Facebook](#)

In Sympathy and Prayer:

We have received word through Westminster Presbyterian Church in Peoria that Carolyn Cuthill, wife of the Rev. Robert T. Cuthill, died Feb. 14. Robert Cuthill served as the first executive presbyter of the newly formed Great Rivers Presbytery in 1972. Their son, Stephen, wanted people who knew his parents notified. Carolyn's memorial service was Feb. 17 in North Oaks, MN. The obituary will be available next week.

Condolences can be sent to Robert's address:
5919 Centerville Rd.
Apt. 104
North Oaks, MN 55127



Let us keep Rev. Cuthill, his family, and all whose lives have been impacted by Carolyn in our hearts and prayers.

Thank You For A Great Presbytery Assembly!

We wish to thank everyone who had a part in making our Presbytery Assembly a success! We were able to assist congregations by approving requests to meet ministry needs, be in worship and community together, and participate in visioning discussions for the future of our presbytery. The visioning discussions centered around naming together operative assumptions/shadow values in our presbytery, lifting up what kinds of questions we should be asking now, and naming more explicitly the impact our presbytery makes when we are working together as a community of churches. We were able to collect approximately 50 pages of handwritten notes! In the coming months, the Leadership Team and Visioning Teams will begin analyzing common themes and patterns in the data you have provided. For now, here are quotations that serve as a general sample of how we felt, thought, and were, upon the closing of our conversation spaces:



- *I feel: "encouraged," "hopeful," "excited," "optimistic," "enlightened," "skeptical," "confident," "energized," "overwhelmed," "included"*
- *"I think it is good we are talking"*
- *"I feel we are in a process of learning"*
- *"I feel we are on the right track"*
- *"I think we are part of the problem and part of the solution"*

- *"I am fearful that changes won't happen"*
- *"I am grateful for our presbytery and the opportunity to move forward"*
- *"I think for the first time Presbytery is important to the churches"*
- *"I think we have work to do"*

Please look for a more detailed analysis once we've had time to process your responses and consider next steps.

THANK YOU FOR BEING A PART OF THESE IMPORTANT DISCUSSIONS!



New "Sixty Second Sermon" Video from your Lead Presbyter! (as shown at our recent Presbytery Assembly)

"Let's Build God's House Together!"

This "Sixty Second Sermon"-style video is call to build God's house, but perhaps in a different way than we are accustomed. The majority of the participants in this video are either members of Great Rivers Presbytery and/or members of the PC(USA) Special Committee on Racism Truth and Reconciliation. The closing and invitation for the offering is led by Bryce Wiebe, Director for Special Offerings for the PC(USA).

This video was created in partnership with the Office of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Special Offerings as the first in a planned four-part series for the four special offerings of the PC(USA). The first 2020 offering is One Great Hour of Sharing:

"The three programs supported by One Great Hour of Sharing - Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and Self-Development of People - all work in different ways to serve individuals and communities in need. From initial disaster response to ongoing community development, their work fits together to provide people with safety, sustenance, and hope."

Click [HERE](#) for more information, including a Leader's Guide, worship materials and bulletin inserts, sample letters, engagement maps and calendars, age-responsive curriculum, and more.



[Click here to view Youtube video!](#)

This video can also be found here on "[Pastor Ryan's Sixty Second Sermons](#)" where it can be liked and shared!

Questions for Discussion/Reflection:

- In what ways do you resonate with the image of building a falling house of cards as a metaphor for working in the church?
- What did you notice happening as the house of cards was being rebuilt over and over again? What does this say about our goals, our efforts, and our impact as people who care about God's house?
- More generally, what does it mean for you to be a part of a household of God? What does it mean for you to build a house of God?

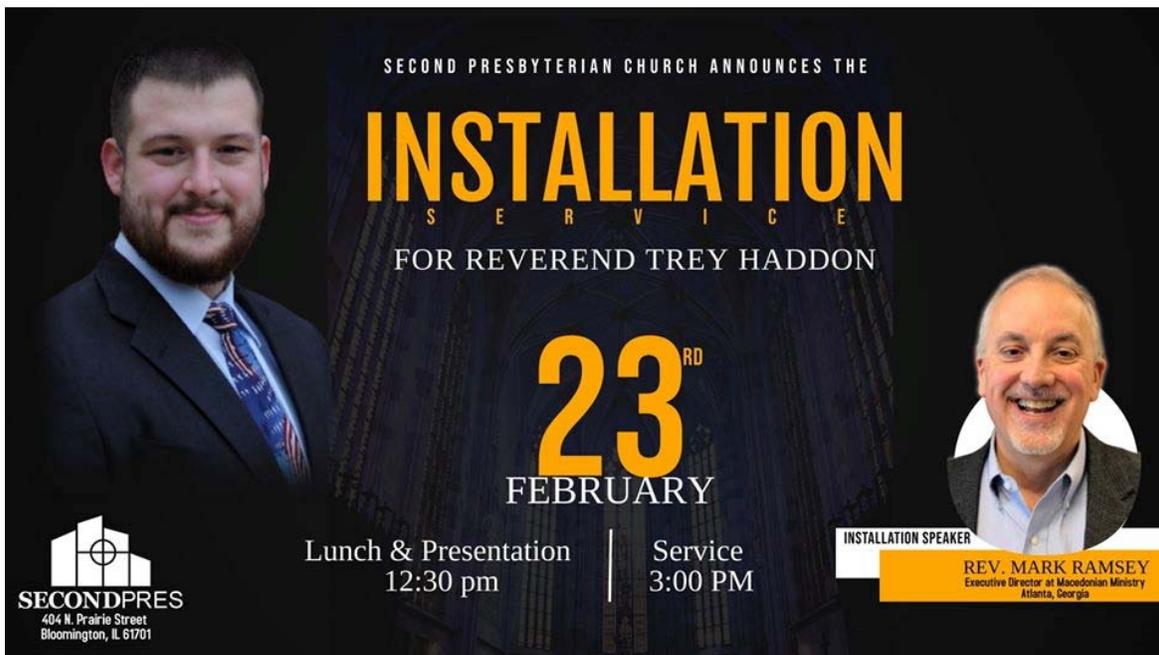
- Think back on a time when you were able to really build something lifegiving. Who were the partners that helped you in that? What did you have to learn/relearn along the way?
- Consider your own communal and spiritual household: who is actively a part of your household? Who might be excluded? What new tools might we need to rebuild/repair/reinvigorate God's household?
- The different vignettes offered as a way to "build God's house together" are: become partners, expand the table, proclaim boldly, (re)learn, share abundantly, engage the community. Reflect on how your community of faith is actively engaging each of these.
- At the beginning of the video, the excited church builder sets out to build God's house with a bundle of books and an ordination stole and says he "just needs the right stuff." He then solicits cards from different people. What is the right stuff we have been taught we need? What are the "cards" that we demand of others in order to work for our own vision for building up the church?
- There is a shift in the video from building card houses to building relationships, reflecting how there is a shift that building God's house is more about people than steeples. How does expanding the metaphor from God's "house" to God's "household" impact our reading of Isaiah 58:12 to "become repairers of the breach?" What breaches are there that must be repaired?
- What new skills, learnings, or paradigm shifts will need to take place in your community to build the kind of household we will need to build to be faithful to God's calling?
- What structures can we build that can make us more sensitive, more informed, and more responsive to issues of hunger, disaster, and oppression?
- The Office of Special Offerings has stories in the form of minutes for mission of examples of building God's household. What stories do you have in your own community of building up God's house? What stories can you tell from the last year? How might you create new stories together?

[Director's Fun Fact: much of the acting in this video was improvised: the symbol of the cards was explained, and then the cards were either taken or given-people were free in that moment to respond however they felt natural. This is the result!]

~Rev. Ryan Landino, Lead Presbyter for Transformation of Great Rivers Presbytery

Installation Service!

This Sunday, February 23, 2020, we celebrate the installation of the Reverend Trey Haddon as Senior Pastor of Second Presbyterian Church of Bloomington! The occasion of installation will begin at 12:30 pm with lunch followed by a presentation, "Halfway to What?" starting at 1:15pm. The Rev. Mark Ramsey (Macedonian Ministry in Atlanta, GA) will lead us into the Installation service at 3 pm. Let us celebrate together!



FREE Bibles

Good Shepherd has approximately 89 NRSV bibles that are looking for new homes. We replaced our sanctuary bibles with the NIV version. The contact for this would be Jim Bertelson at 309-912-1316 or cvtenor@gmail.com. Please word however you would like. Thank you so much!

Cathy Schrupp
Administration
Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church
309-788-4050

We Celebrate HOPE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH for Becoming a Matthew 25 Congregation!

We have just received word from the Rev. Dr. Diane Moffett, President & Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency that Hope Presbyterian Church of Springfield has declared that

they are now a "Matthew 25 congregation!" The Matthew 25 Initiative is the current missional focus of the PC(USA). It involves making a commitment of conviction to any or all of three specific areas, either as a celebration of present action and/or an expression of ongoing mission:

- Focus #1: **Building congregational vitality** by challenging people and congregations to deepen their faith and get actively and joyfully engaged with their community and the world. *What does this mean?* [Click HERE](#)
- Focus #2: **Dismantling structural racism** by advocating and acting to break down the systems, practices and thinking that underlie discrimination, bias, prejudice and oppression of people of color. *What does this entail?* [Click HERE](#)
- Focus #3: **Eradicating systemic poverty** by working to change laws, policies, plans and structures in our society that perpetuate economic exploitation of people who are poor. *How do we do that?* [Click HERE](#)



We currently have four--no, *FIVE*--congregations that have made the commitment to be a Matthew 25 church in our presbytery. Our Presbytery of Great Rivers is also one of 4 of the 8 presbyteries in our synod to declare that we are a Matthew 25 mid-council.

*Springfield | Hope Presbyterian Church ***NEWLY COMMITTED****

Bartonville | Trinity Presbyterian Church

Clinton | Clinton Presbyterian Church

Lewistown | First Presbyterian Church

Macomb | First Presbyterian Church

**WHO WILL
BECOME
OUR NEXT
MATTHEW 25 CHURCH?**

How do we become a Matthew 25 church? It's easy! Simply pledging to become a Matthew 25 church and letting us know is the first step. [Click HERE](#), where you can enter the name of your church and click which of the three you are committed to.

[Click HERE](#) for more resources.

The goal of the national church is to be a clearinghouse of resources, training materials, devotional and preaching aids, success stories, curricula and more - everything to help you strengthen relationships, transform your church, and bring alive your commitment to "serve the least of these" in your community and around the world.

2020 Elder/Deacon Training

Elder/Deacon training this Saturday, 2/22 at
Normal-First Presbyterian Church, 8:30 am - noon!

PLEASE RSVP to Patti at pparrish@greatriverspby.org or 309-683-6890. Include name, email, cell, and church city/name.

February 22

Normal-First

First Presbyterian Church
2000 E College Ave
Normal, IL 61761

February 29

Springfield-Third

Third Presbyterian Church
1030 N 7th St
Springfield, IL 62702

Next Church 2020 National Gathering



WHAT DO THESE STONES MEAN?

Witness, Power, and Hope

Cincinnati, OH

March 2-4, 2020

Joshua 4:1-9

FINAL REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS TODAY: [Click here for more information and to Register](#)

Get Connected!

Be sure to encourage your congregations, sessions, and even your church newsletter editorial staff and volunteers to be sure to sign up for our presbytery newsletter and follow our Facebook page so you don't miss out on what is going on in our community of churches!

Have you liked our "Presbytery of Great Rivers" Facebook page?



Have you signed up for our "Good News from Great Rivers" email newsletter?



Presbytery of Great Rivers, 3601 N Sheridan Rd, Peoria, IL 61604

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