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Image: the Chapel Choir sings at the 2/23/20 Installation of Rev. Trey Haddon at the Second Presbyterian Church of Bloomington, IL (image courtesy of Betty Toland)

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 28, 2020

Let Us Pray



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 week on our prayer calendar. . .



Chatham - Chatham Presbyterian Church

1835 E Walnut St, Chatham, IL 62629

Rev. James Reitz

Brittany Bond, Admin Assistant

Eileen Hansen, Clerk of Session

Mr. Brian Metzger, Treasurer

[Website](#)

[Facebook Page](#)

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Forward to a Friend



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

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



Mark Your Calendar

FEBRUARY

Elder/Deacon Training

Saturday, February **29**

8:30 am - Noon

Springfield-Third

MARCH

Nominating Committee

Wednesday, March **18**

1:30 pm

Via ZOOM

Visioning Team

Thursday, March **19**

10 am - Noon

Via ZOOM



Chenoa - First Presbyterian Church

212 Lincoln St, Chenoa, IL 61726

Marcia Wahls, Admin/Clerk of Session

Ms. Nancy Murphy, treasurer

[Website](#)

[Facebook Page](#)

Committee on Ministry

Tuesday, March 24

10 am - 3 pm

Peoria-First Federated LTC

[Click here for the PGR Calendar](#)

Join Our List



Special Prayer Request

Friends, let us please keep the Rev. Mark Bedford, Pastor of New Windsor Presbyterian Church, in our prayers. Last Saturday, he went into the emergency room for severe vertigo and nausea, where they discovered a mass at the base of his brain. On Wednesday morning, he had an exploratory procedure to find out if it is malignant or if it can be removed without complication. On Wednesday afternoon, it was reported that the mass dissipated on its own without surgery, and all that's left are tests to find out what caused the initial hospitalization.



UPDATE, Message from Mark Bedford, Thursday, evening 2/28/20: "Friends, thank you all for your prayers. I'm home, after five days in the hospital, countless tests, and a spinal tap (not nearly as fun as the movie). And through it all, the absolute worst pain I had to endure was ripping the tape off of my IV port. God is good, all the time! All the time, God is good!"

Let us continue our prayers for Mark!

2020 Elder/Deacon Training

The **FINAL** Elder/Deacon training is **tomorrow**, Saturday, 2/29 at

Springfield-Third 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 29
Springfield-Third
Third Presbyterian Church
1030 N 7th St
Springfield, IL 62702

Welcome New Pastor!

Congratulations!

Congratulations to Rev. Trey Haddon, newly installed senior pastor to the Second Presbyterian Church of Bloomington! Images from installation service held on February 23, 2020. Thank you all participants, volunteers, commission members, and corresponding members for making it such a beautiful event! (Balcony level and commission images credited to Betty Toland, from Second Bloomington)



National Conference for Commissioned Pastors!

PC(USA) Co-Moderators Rev. Cindy Kohlmann and Ruling Elder Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri in Plenary Sessions, May 13-16, 2020

Canyon Creek Presbyterian Church Richardson, TX

The Commissioned Pastors Network of the Synod of the Sun presents the Empowering Commissioned Pastors Conference to be held **May 13th-16th, 2020**, at Canyon Creek Presbyterian Church, Richardson Texas (Dallas - Fort Worth area).

This conference will be all about and for Commissioned Pastors in all the varied circumstances and ways that Commissioned Pastors serve the Church. If you are actively training to become a Commissioned Pastor, but have not yet been commissioned, this conference is for you as well!

PC(USA) Co-Moderators Rev. Cindy Kohlmann and Ruling Elder Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri will be there to help lead plenary sessions and the event will also feature excellent workshops that will support Commissioned Pastors and strengthen skills and ministries. This conference is focused on Empowering Commissioned Pastors as they serve an



increasing portion of our PCUSA congregations. For more information, [Click Here](#)

Limited scholarships are available on a first-request basis, offered only to Commissioned Pastors (CPs, CLPs, CREs, etc.)

Early registration (by March 23, 2020) - \$125

Regular registration (March 23-April 15) - \$150

Please note: Lunches and Dinners are included in the registration fee. Free breakfast is offered at the event hotels.

[REGISTRATION HERE](#)

Celebrating Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church in Rock Island!

In appreciation for the Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church and Rev. James Benson, we are proud to share this email we have received from Lauren Rogers, Mission Specialist from the Office of Special Offerings and Presbyterian Giving Catalog:



"I wanted to invite you to join me in lifting up Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church in Rock Island. The Presbyterian Women of this congregation have been participating in the Presbyterian Giving Catalog since 2015, and we just received their most recent gift of rainwater catchment systems, moringa seeds, and a community irrigation water pump. I have reached out to them to offer my support as they continue engaging with the Catalog, and I have also shared with them our new [Links of Love activity](#). I hope you will extend our gratitude to them as well.

*Blessings,
Lauren W. Rogers
Mission Specialist, Special Offerings and the Presbyterian Giving Catalog
Presbyterian Mission Agency
specialofferings.pcusa.org"*

Congratulations also to you this Sunday for your 25th Anniversary of successful ministry since your merger to form Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church! Well done, good and faithful servants!

We Celebrate FIRST FEDERATED CHURCH OF PEORIA 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 five--no, *SIX*--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.

*Peoria | First Federated Church ***NEWLY COMMITTED****

Springfield | Hope Presbyterian Church

Bartonville | Trinity Presbyterian Church

Clinton | Clinton Presbyterian Church

Lewistown | First Presbyterian Church

Macomb | First Presbyterian Church

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

(I see you thinking about it over there...)

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.

Responding Proactively to Coronavirus/Covid-19

Please see this statement from our friend and colleague, the Rev. Karen Chamis, Resource Presbyterian from Cayuga-Syracuse Presbytery to her congregations regarding a church response to the Coronavirus/Covid-19 (shared with permission):

"Hello Cayuga-Syracuse!

Over the last couple of days I've received questions from several congregations asking if there is an extant strategic plan on the part of the Presbytery (or denomination) regarding Covid-19. I need to preface this letter by owning my Girl Scout heritage, and also the influence of my father (another scout!) who stressed the importance of "being prepared". Being prepared is not giving in to fear, but instead an act of stewardship and faith.

There is guidance from the **Office of the General Assembly (OGA)** that speaks specifically to the coronavirus in terms of staffing at the various levels of the church, as well as suggestions for worship etiquette. You'll find that by clicking [HERE](#). It has commentary on how to manage employees who are sick, hand shaking and other forms of touch in worship, and communion/intinction.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance has prepared the following guidelines for preparing for pandemics. Click [HERE](#)

As it is wise to be prepared in the event of any emergency or crisis, your Session might want to explore the following questions in response to any crisis:

Congregational Care

- 1) What mechanisms are in place to contact membership during an emergency? (social media, phone trees, etc.)
- 2) What provisions are we making during worship to ensure folks remain healthy? Should we explore making sure there are tissues, hand sanitizer are in the pews and ask folks to refrain from shaking hands during flu season?
- 3) How might we include those who stay home because they are ill? Streaming a worship service can be as simple as someone videoing the sermon. Please note that broader sharing (hymns and anthems) may be subject to copyright laws.
- 4) Can the work of the church continue through the use of video streaming platforms? Zoom, GotoMeeting, etc.? Some of these offer free meetings up to a certain number of minutes.

5) How does our church care for those who might be ill? Is there a plan in place for food delivery/transportation?

Community Care

1) For those who utilize our building, what mechanisms are in place to contact them in an emergency? Do they know our church's protocol regarding health and safety?

2) What community partners exist that do disaster relief and community response? How might we partner with them in caring for the larger community?

3) How might we model a faithful response in this particular time? What is God calling us to do... and to be?

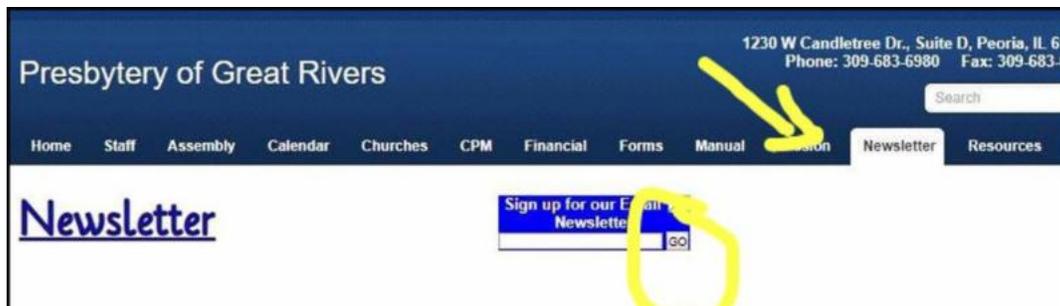
Get Connected!

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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