



Image: Still shot from "How to Love Your Neighbors During a Pandemic (According to Children)" Video.

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.*

August 14 and 21, 2020

The governor has declared that we have moved into Phase 4 of the Restore Illinois Plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (read more by clicking [HERE](#).) It continues to be the recommendation of the presbytery that you be safe and wise as you fulfill your mission during this pandemic. Please note that all presbytery committees and assemblies will be virtual for the rest of 2020. For the most up-to-date resources on worship during this pandemic, please see <https://www.pcusa.org/covid19/>. If you or your congregation are experiencing any hardship as we endure this pandemic, please let us know how we might be able to help.

[PCUSA News](#)

[Synod of Lincoln
Trails](#)

[Board of Pensions](#)

[PGR Calendar](#)

[Presbytery of Great
Rivers](#)



Pleasant Plains, Farmingdale

Farmingdale Presbyterian Church
7971 Farmington Cemetery Rd, Pleasant Plains, IL
62677

Rev. Lonna Chang-Ren Lee
Pat Miller, Admin Assistant
Sharon Rohrer, Clerk of Session
Scott Morey, Treasurer



Quincy, Ellington Memorial

Ellington Memorial Presbyterian Church
4600 N 36th St, Quincy, IL 62305

[Website](#)
[Facebook](#)

CLP Ron Cox
Ginny Wellman, Admin Assistant
Linda Duncan, Clerk of session
Loretta Erke, Treasurer
[Facebook](#)



Reynolds, Hamlet Perryton
Hamlet Perryton Presbyterian Church
1848 170th Ave, Reynolds, IL 61279
Rev. Harold W. Losey
Colleen Hessman, Admin Assistant
Robert Winter, Clerk of Session
Charles Wood, Treasurer
[Facebook](#)



Rio, Rio
Rio Presbyterian Church
210 E Center Ave, Rio, IL 61472
Rev. Maura McGrath Nagle
Linda Harding, Admin Assistant
Dee Litchfield, Clerk of Session
Carol Boyer, Treasurer
[Facebook](#)



Presbytery of Great Rivers Assembly Notice

**Saturday, August 29, 2020 (Virtual Assembly via Zoom)
Call to Order 10:00 a.m, site opens at 9:30 a.m**

In compliance with Robert's Rules of Order and our bylaws, our August 29 assembly will be conducted virtually, which means you will be able to access the meeting by internet device or telephone.

To access the meeting, you must pre-register by following the link below (see full instructions for virtual meeting etiquette under papers for this meeting on the presbytery website):

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwtd-igpqpHtecuDrby34FCEnOy2_IEinE

Preliminary Highlights:

- Special Guest Rev. Molly Casteel from the Office of General Assembly who will present on "The Value of Accessibility, Representation, and Equity in Our Presbytery."
- Introduction of Sam La Mere from Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church and a vote for him to enter the discernment process as a inquirer for ministry (with invitation to the presbytery for questions of life, experience, and sense of call for those gathered for the assembly).
- End of Second Year Report of the Lead Presbyter for Transformation (including summary findings and takeaways from the 2/18/20 Visioning Conversations) and next steps by our Lead Presbyter for Transformation.
- Rev. Matt Wilcox of First Presbyterian Church of Normal preaching "Deep Roots," based on Ephesians 3:14-21.

- Panel Discussion with the Commissioners of the 224th (Virtual) PC(USA) General Assembly.
- There will be a thirty minute break for lunch before we resume with worship and important business in the afternoon.
- Presentation on the work done by the immediate past CLP Coordinator, with an announcement for a new job description.



Video: “How to Love Your Neighbors During a Pandemic (According to Children)”

The question of “how have you been loving your neighbors during this pandemic” was posed to eighteen young Presbyterians from across the country, ages ranging from 5-15, including several families from Great Rivers Presbytery! Names and identifying markers have been removed. Special THANK YOU for all who contributed to this video (you know who you are!), especially the children’s minister who helped me shape the question.

This video was created in partnership with the Office of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Special Offerings to reflect the second and third of four special offerings of the PC(USA).

“The Peace & Global Witness Offering encourages the church to cast off anxiety and fear, discord and division, and embrace our reconciling God’s mission to those around the corner and around the world.” Go to <https://specialofferings.pcusa.org/of.../peace-global-witness/> for more information, including a Leader’s Guide, worship materials and bulletin inserts, sample letters, engagement maps and calendars, age-responsive curriculum, and more.

Questions for Consideration:

- What do you notice about the young people’s responses? How might their faith inform our own?
- How have YOU been loving your neighbor in this pandemic?
- How is your congregation loving neighbor during these disruptions?

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

[Click here to view video on Facebook \(and feel free to share!\)](#)

Visioning Team August 2020 Highlights

The regular meeting of the Visioning Team met on August 11, 2020 by Zoom. The Visioning Team “*leads and equips the Presbytery to live into its vision and mission...facilitates mission within the Presbytery and individual churches through grants, challenges, partnerships, trainings, and other support....identifies key*

Highlights from the August meeting include:

- Discussed the PC(USA) week of Action and are commending it to our presbytery, with hopes that people can get on on board. Please see Visioning Team Statement in this newsletter.
- Explored Visioning Conversations data from the February 18 Presbytery Assembly and discussed our observations, which included broad visioning into the future and what detailed work will need to happen.
- Committed to holding town halls for next steps in shaping the future of our presbytery, planned for mid-September 2020.
- Established "Yes, and" Grants to encourage ministry that hasn't been done before and does not fit within our other grants, as a way to discover different ways to share love of Christ and foster new ideas to share that love.
- Took positive steps to build relationships with congregations.
- Reflected and responded to changes in ministry due to COVID-19 crisis, and are encouraging churches to do the same.
- "Spreading our wings and getting ready for takeoff!"

Visioning Team Statement on PCUSA Week of Action:

Our presbytery's mission statement faithfully proclaims: "We are called to share Christ's love by partnering in service, uniting in worship, and risking in ministry." This year, it was announced at our February assembly meeting that our presbytery took the step of living into this mission by joining the Presbyterian Church (USA)'s **Matthew 25 initiative**. Along with committing to build congregational vitality and eradicate systemic poverty, we have answered the call to actively work to dismantle structural racism.



For justice to roll down like water, we need to keep joining together in every opportunity we can to move that justice forward, and so our presbytery's Visioning Team encourages each of our congregations to engage in the upcoming **Presbyterian Week of Action next week on August 24-30**

Please join with us in engaging our congregations in this denomination-wide event. Will you share with your community about why Black Lives Matter? Will you engage in the week's events? Will you share the Week of Action posts from the denomination? If your congregation has been engaging in antiracism work in your own, unique, ways, will you share about it so the presbytery can hear what you've been doing? In whatever ways we are able to join in, let us engage in this good and holy work together as a presbytery. We look forward to hearing how congregations have engaged when we gather for our Assembly Meeting that Saturday.

To discover more about the Presbyterian Week of Action, including a schedule of events and a digital toolkit, visit www.pcusa.org/weekofaction.

The Visioning Team of the Presbytery of Great Rivers



BLACK LIVES MATTER

[PCUSA Hosts Presbyterian Week of Action, 8/24-8/30:](#)

The Presbyterian Mission Agency is hosting a Presbyterian Week of Action for August 24-30, 2020. This endeavor is structured to provide a public witness that facilitates education, visibility, and action that reinforces our PC(USA) statements and policy around the support of eradicating racism and acknowledging that God loves all Black lives. By joining together as national staff and the greater church, we hope to provide faithful leadership in the area of justice, love, and equality within our denomination and communities. Please receive this letter from our partners in the Office of General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency:

Communities of faith and people across the nation are joining the movement to confront the sins of racism and white supremacy. They are coming together to demand that Black lives of every age, gender, gender identity and sexuality are no longer ignored, dismissed or pushed to the margins of our society. They are protesting the unlawful and unjust killings of innocent Black individuals.

The [Presbyterian Church \(U.S.A.\)](#) affirms that all Black Lives Matter.

The [Presbyterian Week of Action, Aug. 24–30](#), is an endeavor to provide a public witness that facilitates education, visibility and action that reinforces our PC(USA) statements and policy that support eradicating racism and acknowledge that God loves all Black lives.

In "[Responding to the Sin of Racism and a Call to Action](#)" the 224th General Assembly (2020) declared, "Our country's most important institutions have been built to sustain white privilege, to protect white lives and white property at the expense of our siblings of color. The church through ignorance, denial, and in some cases deliberate action, has participated in this injustice. We have been slow to face the reality of systemic racism. We have been slow to acknowledge the pain of our fellow Presbyterians, of our fellow Christians, of our fellow citizens, and of those who have come to America for a better life, whose value has been judged by the color of their skin." The Assembly called the Church to "actively confront and dismantle systemic racism in our church and in society at large, and to work for a more just, merciful, and peaceful country that allows all of God's children to flourish."

Join with us, the national office and PC(USA) churches across the nation, the week of Aug. 24-30. Events will include a town hall, film screening, a rally and a day of service to our communities. Act now by planning to participate in the [daily schedule of events and share the news with our digital toolkit](#)

While we recognize and honor the good work toward justice that has been ongoing in our denomination, we also realize that in this time it is not enough. Though the Presbyterian Week of Action hopes to meet the immediacy of our current context, it will not be the culmination of our work as a denomination, for we have a long way to go to eradicate systemic racism and white supremacy. Nonetheless, this week will empower us, challenge us and enliven the faith we follow.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more information.

[CLICK HERE](#) for news article explaining more.

Week of Action Overview:

■ **Monday 8/24: Global Day of Solidarity**

This event will focus on how we uplift the solidarity expressed through our global partners.

■ **Tuesday 8/25: Town Hall**

In this event, moderator(s) will engage guests in and outside the church around critical issues of the movement for social justice.

■ **Wednesday 8/26: Liberation Bible Study and Twitterstorm**

The Liberation Bible Study will lay a Biblical foundation for justice work and more specifically why Black lives matter. It will also discuss how our denomination supports this and how we can improve. The Twitterstorm will be our first event completely on social media. The goal of a twitterstorm is to engage a variety of people around how the church can be a presence within the movement.

■ **Thursday 8/27: BLACKOUT Day and COVID-19 Memorial**

In joining with Presbyterian Women, who already wear black on Thursdays to honor the murdered and missing Black and Indigenous women, we encourage the entire denomination to wear black in solidarity with the struggle for Black lives and encourage the support of Black-owned business, which is in line with our policy.

The COVID-19 Memorial will be a uniquely sacred moment to pause and remember those we have lost during the pandemic.

■ **Friday 8/28: Film Screening and Young Adult Roundtable**

The Film Screening is an opportunity to watch and engage with a film that highlights the racial disparity in our nation.

The Young Adult Roundtable is an opportunity to have a conversation with and see how young people are engaging and processing faith in the midst of racial and health pandemics.

■ **Saturday 8/29: Rally/ Public Action**

Engage the entire denomination in a multi-city rally that calls attention and action to the racial injustice happening in our country. This will include various speakers, music, poets, etc.

■ **Sunday 8/30: Day of Service**

This day encourages congregations and mid-councils to forgo worship service or in addition to it, engage in some type of service outside the walls.



[Antiracism Training Opportunity: Antiracism Practices for Faithful Leadership](#)

Please receive this announcement from NEXT Church, in partnership with Crossroads Antiracism Organizing & Training

[CLICK HERE](#) for registration info!

Antiracist Practices for Faithful Leadership

- The goal of this cohort is to equip participants with an awareness of our own complicity with white supremacy, and expand our tools to embody antiracist leadership.
- Whether your leadership has been centered in racial justice for decades or you are just yearning to take steps to embody antiracist values in your ministry, this cohort will offer a space to learn, explore, and practice bringing racial justice to the core of your leadership.
- Participants will learn alongside a cohort of peers, receive both group and individual coaching from a multi-racial bench of trained coaches, and receive antiracist capacity building from Jessica Vazquez Torres, National Program Director at Crossroads Antiracism Organizing & Training.
- Each monthly session will include a 30 minute didactic led by Jessica Vazquez Torres followed by 60 minutes in small groups facilitated by a coaching team. Additionally, every participant will receive 5 individual coaching sessions to further deepen their antiracist leadership practices.

Coaches: MaryAnn McKibben Dana, Lakesha Bradshaw Easter, LeAnn Hodges, Yena Hwang, Shani McIlwain, Alex McNeill

Teacher: Jessica Vazquez Torres

Date: 2nd Thursdays, beginning September 10th

First Class: 6:15-7:45 pm Eastern (September 10th only)

Time: 2:00-3:30 pm Eastern (starting in October)

* Each monthly session (6 total) will include a 30 minute didactic led by Jessica Vazquez Torres followed by 60 minutes in small groups facilitated by a coaching team. Additionally, every participant will receive 5 individual coaching sessions to further deepen their anti-racist leadership practices.

Cost: \$550 per person

**Grant Opportunity: The Presbytery of Great Rivers offers grants for programs specifically addressing anti-racism capacity-building. We will offer individuals \$300, and up to \$600 per church, for pastors and elders, with priority given to those who have not received this particular grant before.*

[Responding to our East Iowa](#)

Neighbors in the Wake of Storm Damage

(Right: image courtesy of the Facebook page of First Presbyterian Church of Cedar Rapids, IA)

Last week, a derecho storm system with estimated winds up to 140 miles per hour tore through our western neighbor's presbytery and into ours, causing massive damage in the Cedar Rapids area. In an August 14th communication to their presbytery, Co-Moderators Lori Wunder & Dan Jessop and Stated Clerk Rebecca Blair began organizing and response, and on August 17th announced the creation of a Disaster Recovery Task Force (DRTF). Here is how you can help:



"If you wish to contribute to the Presbytery of East Iowa Disaster Relief Fund, you may mail checks to:

**Presbytery of East Iowa
1700 S. 1st Ave.
Ste 23 Iowa City, IA 52240**

Please write "Disaster Recovery Fund" in the memo line. If you prefer, you may donate online using Paypal. [Click here to donate](#). Please designate "Disaster Recovery" in the memo.

For those interested in partnering with other Presbyterians to assist storm-impacted areas, please reach out to Kristin Hutson, chair of the DRTF at kristin.e.hutson@gmail.com or call the PEIA office. She is working with both groups and individuals."

[Click HERE](#) for most up to date information to how you can help support Disaster Assistance in East Iowa Presbytery!

[Click HERE](#) for Presbyterian Mission Agency article about our denomination's response.

May we keep the affected congregations in our prayers as they rebuild, recover, and restore their community!

On Baptism and Ordination in a Time of Pandemic

Since it doesn't seem that it will be safe to go back to in-person worship in most places anytime soon, OGA and the PMA's Office of Theology and Worship have worked together to provide thoughts on baptism and ordination/installation for this unusual season.



[CLICK HERE](#) for July 2020 resource paper.

Image: Example of how to do contactless laying of the hands. Elders and ministers from around the presbytery were invited to trace their own hands on paper. Using those patterns, fabric hands were cut and attached to the cape, and ordinands received a card with the names of those who contributed their "hands."

Looking for Alternative, Online Worship? (PLEASE LET US KNOW IF ANYTHING HAS CHANGED!)

Here are several possibilities for connecting to different worship spaces around the presbytery. This is a listing of the last Sunday's offerings of different churches providing worship. Please let us know if there have been any changes so we can keep our list updated!

- Alexis-Norwood Presbyterian Church, Commissioned Pastor Gary Denise Pullen, 10:30 am on [Facebook](#) live, on his personal page.
- Bloomington-Second Presbyterian Church, Rev. Trey Haddon, Rev. Elissa Bailey, to previous sermons, <https://www.youtube.com/c/secondpres/videos> And this is the link to the sermon podcasts <https://open.spotify.com/show/5uetJTPbJqjRNn6bxu51Da>

- Bloomington-St Luke Union Church, Rev. Andy Gifford, 10:30 am on [Facebook](#) live.
- Buffalo Hart-Buffalo Hart Presbyterian Church, 9:30 am, via www.buffalohartpc.com
- Carlinville-Federated Church, [Carlinville Federated](#) offers video worship available at www.federatedchurch.com. The service is posted late Saturday afternoon and available throughout the following week.
- Chatham-Chatham Presbyterian Church, Rev. Jim Reitz, by newsletter and email, to access, email jareitz@chathampresbyterian.com
- Coal Valley-First Presbyterian Church, Coal Valley and Beulah, Rev. Tim Snart, worship posted on YouTube https://m.youtube.com/channel/UCiqgUcXCqN_ftlk5EP8Odeg
- Delavan-First Presbyterian Church, Rev. Jean Sparks, found on their webpage firstpresdelavan.org or directly at <http://firstpresdelavan.org/virtual-worship>.
- East Moline- Presbyterian Church is posting pre-recorded services on YouTube and can be found here www.youtube.com/channel/UCo0q4ViGTm1-qHYv02Ubbqw
- Elmwood-First Presbyterian Church, Rev. Marla Bauler, worship led by Zoom (link can be obtained by pastor), then posted afterwards to [Facebook](#).
- Farmington-First Presbyterian Church, Rev. Andy Sonneborn, 10:30 am by [Facebook](#) live.
- Galesburg-First Presbyterian Church, Rev. Ann Elyse Van Winkle, 10 am by [Facebook](#) live
- Geneseo-First Presbyterian Church, Rev. Tim Doty, virtual worship at 10:30 on Sundays, and also evening prayer M-F at 7:00 p.m. Both on our [facebook](#) page, [First Presbyterian Church Geneseo](#).
- Jacksonville-First Presbyterian Church, Rev. Jonathan Warren, 10 am by [Facebook](#) live.
- Leroy-First United Presbyterian Church, Rev. Annie McMillan, recorded YouTube videos of their services posted later on their [Facebook](#) page.
- Lincoln-First Presbyterian Church of Lincoln, Rev. Adam Quine, 10:00 am by [Facebook](#) live (older recorded sermons also on church website)
- Monmouth-Sugar Tree Grove United Presbyterian Church, Faith United Presbyterian Church, Monmouth, and Monmouth College collaborating on joint 10:30 am Sunday worship service, posted to Youtube: <https://m.youtube.com/user/monmouthcollege>
- Macomb-First Presbyterian Church, Rev. Erin Marth, 10 am, Zooming online worship services (upcoming services posted weekly at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/firstpresmacomb/>).
- New Windsor-New Windsor Presbyterian Church, Rev. Mark Bedford, worship videos and links shared by [Facebook](#)
- Normal-First Presbyterian Church, Rev. Matt Wilcox, 10:00 am by livestream and saved upon ending: <https://livestream.com/firstpresnormal>
- Peoria-First Federated Church, Rev. Frosty Krummel, look for streaming and video on their [Facebook](#)
- Peoria-United Presbyterian Church, Rev. Debra Avery, 10 a.m.
 - their [Facebook](#) page
 - YouTube from any smartphone, computer, or tablet: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAf9XQ9MUHNGaXdQQRSk6yQ>
- Peoria-Westminster Presbyterian - Peoria Rev. Denise Clark-Jones, 10 am, streaming online <https://westminsterpeoria.org/>
- Petersburg-Central Presbyterian Church, Commissioned Pastor Stephanie McCullough, worship posted on website <https://www.central-pres.org/worship>
- Reynolds-Hamlet Perryton is posting pre-recorded services since Easter weekend. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJY95CjdOLr4Vs1bzK0SX3g>
- Rio-Rio Presbyterian Church, Rio (and Sunbeam Presbyterian Church of Aledo), Rev. Maura McGrath-Nagle, 9:00 am by [Facebook](#) live.
- Rock Island-Gloria Dei Presbyterian Church, Rev. Drew Nagle, 10:30 am, by [Facebook](#) live, and posted afterwards.
- Rock Island-Good Shepherd, Rev. James Benson, sermons posted on website on Sundays, www.goodshepherdpres.org

- Rock Island-South Park Presbyterian Church, Rev. Blake Severson, worship shared by YouTube, https://m.youtube.com/channel/UCWRIYrkt6ZkaeizWVAj_yDQ
- Springfield-First Presbyterian Church, Rev. Susan Phillips, www.LincolnsChurch.org has links for Sunday 10:30 live worship and Wednesday 5:30 service.
- Springfield-Hope Presbyterian Church, Rev. Chuck Goodman, 9:30 am by [Facebook](#) live
- Springfield-Korean United Presbyterian Church of Springfield Rev. Jaechul Kim, streaming by YouTube live (Korean language) [Facebook](#) page.
- Springfield-Third-Presbyterian Church, returned to the Sanctuary for our normal Sunday morning Worship Service at 10:15am. We are continuing through at least the end of the year with our radio broadcast on Sundays from 9-9:30am. This is broadcast on Sportsradio1450 (1450 AM or 92.3 FM).
- Springfield-Westminster Presbyterian Church, Rev. Blythe Kieffer, Rev. Trajan McGill, Rev. Christian Choi, 10 am worship streamed online, www.wpcspi.org
- Woodhull-United Church, Rev. Cheyanna Losey, is still posting services on YouTube and will continue them for sure into August. YouTube videos of their services posted on [Facebook](#) page.

FRIENDLY REMINDER TO NOT FORGET TO MAKE SPACE FOR THE SPIRITUAL PRACTICE OF GIVING OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS!

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?

