“When I Was In Prison...”
One of the unique ministries of our church is coordinated by Paul Smith, as part of his work with Nebraskans for Alternatives to the Death Penalty. Four times a year Paul coordinates visits to the Nebraska prisoners on death row at the Tecumseh State Correctional Institution, and he visits individual prisoners periodically throughout the year. We have been privileged to have four paintings by three death row inmates on display in our Welcome Center for a good part of this year. Many of you have heard his presentation on this ministry, how it has touched him, and how it has touched the inmates, which he gave at a Sunday Forum and at a Sand Dollars dinner. One of the more difficult moments in this ministry came in August this year, when the State of Nebraska executed Carey Dean Moore, one of the inmates Paul has been visiting for many years.

In recognition of this unique ministry and in gratitude for Paul’s leadership, we have given Paul a miniature of a bronze sculpture created by Canadian artist Timothy Schmalz, called “When I was In Prison...” (One of a series of sculptures Schmalz created based on Matthew 25).

Church Family,
Thank you so very much for the incredibly beautiful and thoughtful gift. The sculpture “When I Was In Prison” is moving in its creation and emotionally captivating with it’s realistic portrayal of our Christ being held and the message we as Christians are called to love. My journey with the prisoners is on-going. Most certainly there will be more hills and valleys to cover, but with God’s guidance, it will be fulfilling for all involved. I am privileged and honored to accept this generous gift and be part of such a powerful opportunity. I humbly thank you.
Paul Smith
In a few short days (or maybe now if your mail was delayed!), we are starting a new year – looking forward to new challenges, new opportunities, new friends, new experiences. For some, we are hoping next year is better than last, and a chance to let whatever this last year held that was hard to carry go. For others, we are excited about a new year that continues the good we’ve experienced this year. No matter what 2018 held for you, I pray that it was a year that put you in touch with what is most important in life, and those who are most important in your life.

As our church looks to a new year, I want to say thank you to all of you – because our church has had an amazing year!

- We have purchased property to build a new community garden, and we are beginning work on converting the old location to a parking lot.
- We have continued the clean-up around and in the church, and are looking forward to finishing that up in 2019.
- We have welcomed many new members who have already brought so much to our church with their unique gifts.
- We have said goodbye to many long-time members, who have been promoted to the church triumphant.
- We have strengthened partnerships with our neighbors.
- We have been a presence in our community and a light to many in need.
- We have worshipped together with amazing services, blessed by great music, readers, children’s time leaders, preachers, as well as laughter and fellowship.
- We have learned and grown in faith, through our educational offerings and book club, our conversations and our work side by side.
- And that’s just off the top of my head!

The reality is, we could not have done any of that without the support and contributions of all of you. Your time, your creativity, your energy and imagination, and your dollars, have all made a difference in this church, and without ALL of those, we could not have done what we did. Sometimes we wonder what difference our little contribution can make. Well, a lot! One person can’t do it all, nor can one person fund it all. It has taken all of you, with your big and little contributions together, to give us the great year we’ve had. So thank you for what you, with God’s blessing, have made possible. We have surely grown where we are planted, and we look forward to 2019, and continuing to be salt for the earth and light of the world.

Pastor Sue

~ Rooted in God ~ Open to Grace ~ Filled with Joy~
Annual Meeting

Our Annual Meeting is scheduled for February 3, 2019 after the 11:00 am service. There will only be one service that day, no 8:30 or 12:30 service. We will have lunch provided with our annual meeting.

Did you know 2019 is our 150th anniversary?

We are planning several events and activities next year to celebrate, more info will come later on all of that, but for now, put on your calendar:

Sunday, March 31 - our big celebration!
One service at 11 am, and we're pulling out all the stops! We've invited back former pastors, our Synod Executive Elona Street-Stewart will preach, and we'll have a catered lunch and program afterwards.

Sunday, June 9 - a joint celebration with First Christian Church, who is also celebrating their 150th in 2019!
We're having a joint Pentecost / 150th Celebration Service at the Auld Pavilion at Antelope Park, of course following by another wonderful meal.

More info to come on all this and more!
FPChristian Education
What a wonderful Christmas program we had in December. Thanks to all who helped make it a success; our kids and youth, parents, the Worship and Sacraments committee, the Christian Education committee, Brian and Mary Pfoltner for leading the music, and of course, or Creative Director, Connie Philippi. It was truly a team effort.

In January, we return to a more normal Sunday School and Youth Group Schedule. Our children will continue to explore the theme of God’s Family and the youth will begin an overview of the New Testament. In Youth Group, our youth begin preparation for Youth Sunday (Feb. 24th) they will be learning about all the components of the worship service and why we do what we do in worship as well as write the liturgy and the sermon. It takes a lot of work and commitment but our youth are excited about sharing God’s word in worship with the congregation of First Presbyterian. So prayers are appreciated!

Our Forum speaker this month is … Our very own Susie Wilson

What’s Happening in November!

Children’s Ministry and Faith Formation:
  Jan. 6th – Children’s Mission Hour and FORUM
  Jan. 13th – Sunday School, Activity Time, and Teacher Appreciation Breakfast
  Jan. 20th – Sunday School and Activity Time,
  Jan. 27th – Sunday School and Activity Time
Youth Ministry and Faith Formation:
  Jan. 6th @ 5:30 pm – FPC Youth at Urban Air. Cost is $13.
  Jan. 13th @ 5:30 pm – Youth Sunday Prep begins with choosing scripture
  Jan. 20th @ 5:30 pm – Youth Sunday Prep – Bible Study and games
  Jan. 27th @ 5:30 p.m. – Glow in the Dark Games and Annual Meeting Prep
Adult Ministry and Faith Formation: (Sunday Morning Classes unless otherwise noted)
FORUM – The Forum speaker for January will be our own member Susie Wilson, who is the Coordinator of Communications and Grants at Matt Talbot. She will share with us the mission and ministry of Matt Talbot Kitchen and Outreach as well as address some of the underlying issues that effects their clients and those seeking service from Matt Talbot.

Bible Discovery Class meets in Room 105. The Bible Discovery Class uses the Present Word curriculum which is a bible study exploring various themes.

Faith and Theology Class meets in Room 107. This class uses a DVD presentation followed up by group discussion. Their topic this quarter is “Allegiance to Empire”

Third Sunday in Hebrews meets in Hebrews 211 (2nd floor) on the third Sundays of each month for a discussion on various Christian Doctrines and how they have changed throughout history. This month’s topic is *What Does God Want with Us: Predestination*
Thank you!

Wow! Your gifts were truly overwhelming. This photo just doesn’t do justice to the overflowing sacks of toys and games that First Presbyterian Church donated to the families at McPhee this week – enough to fill the entire back of a pickup and a car. Thank you for so generously sharing your Christmas joy with these young families, our neighbors to brighten their holiday season. Even in winter you can feel our roots reaching out as we grow where we are planted.

Brrrr! We Need Children’s Cold-Weather Gear

Last fall when we asked Chris Boden, the principal at McPhee Elementary, how we could best help their families this winter, she quickly said that many of their children would need gloves, mittens, scarves, and hats. So from now until mid-January, we’ll be collecting these cold-weather accessories for the children of McPhee. What better way to help our neighbors then by sharing some of the warmth -- both literally and figuratively – that we are so accustomed to. Please drop your gifts by the church office. And thanks to all who helped tie fleece scarves in early December to give this drive a head start.
Worship & Sacraments

January, 2019 will bring the committee a new moderator, Elder Nancy Field and we will welcome her commitment, knowledge and energy.

The Ratigan-Schottler Manufacturing Co. of Beatrice specializes in sanctuary modifications and this committee has a proposal to Session for contracting with this company to create sanctuary seating modifications for more inclusive spaces for wheel chairs.

Notes

First Report Deadline for February!

February’s First Report Deadline is February 15th. Anything turned in after that date may not get included in the newsletter. This is to allow for time for editing, printing and mailing the newsletter to our members. Thank you for getting your information to us from the various committee’s, groups and activities within the church!
PW Is Voluntary and Inclusive!

How many amazing organizations or volunteer activities are you a part of that require no membership fees or even an enrollment sheet? Presbyterian Women requires neither! How is that for relying on the generosity and faithfulness of its “membership”? Being an elected PW leader (at the presbytery, synod and national level) does require membership in a PC(USA) church, and two-thirds of the PWC leadership must be member of the PC(USA).

Participation in Presbyterian Women is open to all women who choose to be supportive of Presbyterian Women in any way. Presbyterian Women intentionally seeks the inclusion of all ages, races, ethnicities and geographic locations so that it reflects the rich diversity of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). All women who are members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are considered part of Presbyterian Women.

And anyone—male or female—“who supports the PW Purpose . . . is welcome and encouraged to participate in all activities”. Participation may include attending a gathering, volunteering at a mission event, or participating in a Bible study! Even so, participation in PW is intentionally welcoming. So feel free to invite your Lutheran neighbor, your “none” granddaughter, or even you’re a-cappella vocal quartet to your next Bible study or Together in Service.
It’s not too late to turn in pledge cards for 2019. By providing your commitment of time, treasure, and talents you can help church leaders plan for an effective year of ministry.

If you have any questions, please contact a member of the Stewardship and Finance Committee.
The choir sang at Madonna Rehabilitation on Sunday, December 16. They first performed a few pieces on their own, then led the patients, family and staff in a Christmas sing-a-long.
The **Flyleaf Book Club** will meet on January 18. The book we will be discussing is *The Aviator's Wife*.

**SAND DOLLARS WILL HAVE OUR ANNUAL "GAME NIGHT"** on Friday evening, January 18 beginning at 7:00 P.M. *(note different time)* On this night we bring finger food to munch during our exciting and challenging games! So bring a favorite game and snack and come for some fun!

**Sudanese Notes:**
There are many activities going on within the Sudanese Ministry this year. It has been a year with many blessings. One of the biggest is the Great Three Revivals that took places here in our church and it has had tremendous effects in the life of the Sudanese Christians in the State of Nebraska. The result of those Revivals has brought many people back to Christ. There were so many testimonies about what our Almighty God has done in the life of individuals. And I personally continue to pray so that God will continue to do His work in our church as well as our community in general.

The second activity that takes place here in our Church through Sudanese Ministry is our young ladies Friday bible study program. It started in the basements of the apartment by our members and attendees, but it is now in the Great Hall from 6 to 9 pm every Friday unless someone in Community requests the program to take place in his or her house in case he/she needs people to pray in his/ her home. Due to my tight schedule, some of these ladies with my wife Lenyduer Bol have stepped up for home visitation and prayer and share God’s word with people.

The membership for Sudanese Ministry is increasing. The Sudanese Community in Lincoln is the smallest one amongst others refugees, but our Ministry here has done its best to reach out through the help of the Holy Spirit. Change is coming, our young people strive to participate in Ministry in different ways. Sudanese Trauma Healing Project is underway and if God blesses it, we will bring these young people to ministry to the needy through words of God and counseling. The programs that remain in dormant stage physically not Spiritually was Nuer Language; due to transportation problems, it did not work this year. Saturday Bible Study was in the same stage and it will be started again at the beginning of 2019. Let’s continue to pray for Sudanese Ministry to grow spiritually.

Yours in Christ, Jock Tut Paleak,
Parish Associate for Sudanese Ministry.
The Weather Hasn't Been Good to Our Garden Move

The major moving event for the Community Gardens at 18th and F was to have been Saturday, October 27th. We had about 50 volunteers there that day including volunteers from two UNL fraternities: Pi Kappa Alpha and Tau Kappa Epsilon. Church volunteers provided coffee and rolls and then a wonderful luncheon buffet for the workers. Several things affected our progress that day: (1) the wet ground; (2) the difficulty of taking the garden boxes apart; (3) the fact the ground at 17th and F was wet and uneven after digging for the plumbing; and (4) the change in the Nebraska football schedule.

The weather hasn't improved very much so we still are waiting to be able to finish the project. In taking apart the boxes we were not able to save as much of the wood as we had hoped. Now we have salvaged some wood and are buying some new wood and the boxes will only be 10 inches high rather than 20.

We are grateful to all the volunteers who have been working on the garden move, but we need to be extra grateful for the expertise of a new member, Lynn Bonge, who has taken over the technical planning of the move and the installment of the plumbing and his brother in law, Bill Janike, who has been right along side him throughout.

We hope the weather will get better in a long enough stretch in the next couple of months to finish the project by spring. We will be working on building portions of the boxes on the stage in Great Hall during January. Once the weather improves and the ground dries out we will be leveling the 17th and F lot and then take the garden boxes out to the site and fill them with garden dirt and put mulch around the boxes. Watch the church Sunday bulletins and the Wednesday online notice for times you can volunteer to help.

Your Garden/Parking Lot Task Force
Children’s Christmas Program
January is National Book Month!

Celebrate by reading books from the FPC Library

There are literally 1000’s of books on the shelves of the FPC Library.

You are guaranteed to find something you will enjoy reading.

Happy New Year!!!

As 2019 begins, many of us will make New Year’s Resolutions to improve ourselves in some way. Consider a resolution to grow your faith, practice regular devotions, or learn about specific topics of faith that might need some refreshing. The FPC library can help you with all of these!

We have an entire section of devotionals, and books to assist you with prayer and reflection, found right by the door leading to the chapel. You are sure to find one that speaks to you.

Outside the snow is falling and books are calling...

There are few things better on a cold winter evening than curling up with a good book.

Come in to see the display of winter themed books, and take one home.

The Library offers wonderful books to help kids beat the winter blues. In addition to picture & early reader books, we have a great selection of chapter books for upper elementary & middle school students.

Examples include:
- Esperanza Rising, by Pam Munoz Ryan
- Gypsy Summer, by Betty Barclift
- Harris and Me, by Gary Paulsen
- Miracle’s Boys, by Jacqueline Woodson
- The Lemonade War, by Jacqueline Davies

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**Property**
North and East Parking Lots have been resurfaced and new yellow lines allowing a larger parking space. In the North Lot, the staff parking has been moved to the north side of the lot.

**Mission and Social Justice**
Children’s games will be collected from Nov. 1 to mid-December for distribution to McPhee families at the holidays.

**Christian Education**
Faith & Theology class will be watching a DVD series on “Being Christian in a Time of Christian Change”. Bible Discovery Classes this winter will follow the theme “Our love for God”. Hebrews class for Jan 20th will be “What does God want with us?” – Predestination and Feb 17th will be “Why doesn’t god do something about evil?” – Providence of God. The March 3rd Forum will be Sarah Troyer with the Lincoln Friendship Home.

**Personnel**
Session approved hiring a person to work 5 ½ hours on Sunday mornings to help with opening the church, making coffee, attending to the inside and outside of the church as needed and then closing up the church.

**Music and Fine Arts**
The most recent AFTS concert, in remembrance of victims, had a good crowd of more than 160.

**Media**
Session approved the final part of the audio upgrade to include installation of mounted speakers, wireless microphone, new permanently mounted Projector screen and new mounted projector for Great Hall and a surge controller for the sanctuary.
Please notify the church office of any name, address, email, and/or telephone changes.

**First Presbyterian Church**

*Where faith is nurtured, curiosity is encouraged, diversity is welcomed, and all are loved.*

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For after hour calls to the church office, 402-477-6037, the staff voicemail extensions and e-mail addresses follow:

**Pastor/Head of Staff:** Rev. Dr. Sue Coller  
 x 103   scoller@fpclincoln.org

**Parish Associate for Sudanese Ministry:**  
Rev. Jock Tut Paleak  
 x 114   jtutpaleak@gmail.com

**Music Director:** Dr. Brian Pfoltner  
 x 121   musicdir@fpclincoln.org

**Organist:** Dr. Charles W. Ore  
charles.w.ore@gmail.com

**Director of Christian Education:** Kris Brammer  
 x 106   dce@fpclincoln.org

**Church Administrator:** Carrie Cross  
 x 101   churchadmin@fpclincoln.org

**Financial Coordinator:** Cheryl Rennick  
 X 102  Finance@fpclincoln.org

**Custodian/Maintenance:** Jeff Kephart  
maintenance@fpclincoln.org

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Outside Classes and Programs @ FPC:

- **Men’s AA** - Mondays
- **Women’s AA** - Tuesdays
- **Big Book Bunch AA** - Tuesdays and Thursdays
- **El Centro Zumba Class** - Tuesday and Friday
- **Lincoln Literacy** - Monday through Thursday
- **SCC ESL** - Monday through Thursday
- **Flyleaf Book Club** - 3rd Friday of the month

At FPC, we warmly welcome any sort of group or organization that provides needed services for members of our community.