

FPC First Report

June 2023
Issue 54
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From Pastor Sue:

I was overwhelmed Sunday (June 25) at worship and the picnic that afternoon by the sheer number of people who came up and wished me a meaningful and restful renewal leave. Sometimes you aren't aware of how many people you touch, and this past Sunday I got a taste of how many people my ministry at this church has touched. I think pastors going on a renewal leave are often anxious about their church members begrudging them this time, but you have encouraged me to take this leave with graciousness and love. What I also hadn't expected was the number of teachers who were excited for me! As one of them said - they get a renewal leave every summer, and they don't know how they would have made it all the years they did without those regular breaks.

This is my first one in almost 32 years of ordained ministry, and I leave now excited and knowing that I am supported and loved by you.

I'm very much looking forward to this time to rest from work, to step away from the hectic pace of ministry and being on call 24/7 for almost the entirety of the past almost 8 years, to reflect on my ministry, and reconnect with the source of life. I'm also realizing just how much I will miss being with you over the next three months. You are a part of my life, my thoughts, and my prayers, every single day, and to not be with you in weekly worship, doing ministry together, and just connecting over drinks or email feels very odd. And it may sound odd, but I'm already looking forward to reconnecting in three months, to see how you have grown and to share how I have grown.

I know you have questions about will happen during these three months. First, let me address the elephant in the room: it is not uncommon for churches to fear that their pastor will use their renewal leave to seek a new call. Take a breath - the whole goal of a renewal leave is so that your pastor can return to you refreshed, re-energized, and with renewed creativity, so that church and pastor can have many more years of fruitful ministry together. So I am coming back!

My renewal leave is July 5 – October 4. While I'm on leave, I will not be answering any church phone calls or emails. Carrie, Kris and Brian all know how to reach me should there be a need. Meanwhile, feel free to stalk me on Facebook if you want to see my photos while I'm on leave!

May each of us use this time to reconnect with God, reconnect with those who are important in our lives, and reconnect with our deepest selves, so that we can all continue to serve the church with energy, intelligence, imagination and love! I will pray for you daily, and I hope you will do the same for me.



June Session Highlights

Prayer:

- The Session has started a new habit of intentionally praying by name for our congregation. Every session meeting we pray for a portion of our congregation, and if we know specific needs, we lift that up as well. So know that you are remembered by name, and lifted up, and if you have any specific prayer requests, please don't hesitate to let us know.

Pastor Sue's Renewal Leave:

- Session reviewed the final coverage plans for those things Pastor Sue typically does, and to the best that we know, we've got it all covered! Guest Preachers are in place for every Sunday, (Kara Hillhouse, Carl Eskridge, Ray Meester, Beth Graverholt, Jane Holtzclaw, and Kris Brammer) and support for employees, committees and ministry teams is in place.
- Should there be a pastoral care need that the deacons need assistance with, we've got several local pastors on call to step in and help. Carrie, Kris and Brian have those contacts, and can invite them in if needed at a moment's notice.
- The Session is going to take advantage of this time to do some leadership development with Steve Henderson, and deacons and Foundation board members are invited to participate (watch for more info)
- Session is going to read "We Aren't Broke: Uncovering Hidden Resources for Mission and Ministry" by Mark Elsdon during the renewal leave time.
- Session continues to pray for our church and our future, and to ask where God is leading us and how we can be a part of what God is doing. (We do this whether we are in a season of renewal or not, because God is constantly speaking – it's up to us to be always listening!)

Other things the Session did:

- **Communication:** Recognizing the need for good communication, both within and beyond the church, the Session is exploring the possibility of hiring a part-time communications person. This is in the early stages, so pray for us as we develop a job description. (We already have money in the budget for this.)
- **Congregational Meeting Sept 10:** This is a called meeting to approve bylaw changes to the church and foundation bylaws related to the nomination and election process, and to elect ruling elders, deacons, at-large congregational nominating committee members, and foundation board members. This will be a short meeting immediately after worship.
- **Session Member Job Description:** We received a draft session member job description, and will put that on the August agenda for review.
- **Membership Roll Review:** We are in the process of our annual review of membership rolls.
- **Monday Devotions:** Session members are signing up to provide the Monday Devotions while Pastor Sue is on renewal leave.

Youth Mission Trip Review

Back on June 8th, 3 young people from First Presbyterian joined three young people from Eastridge Presbyterian for the loooong van ride to the Tokio, ND on the Spirit Lake Reservation. Why were they doing this, you might ask? We were on a mission trip, the first in four years, since before COVID, and what a trip it was. We spent four days worshipping, playing, and learning during the trip. On Sunday we worshipped with the congregation of Bdecan (ba-day-shan) Presbyterian Church in Tokio and sung some hymns in the Dakota Language. Following the Worship service, we welcomed with a potluck lunch followed by some fellowship and games of bingo.



The next two days were filled with laughter as we lead a Vacation Bible School style days with Bible stories, crafts, and games with the children of the church and the community. These two days were probably the most impactful on our youth as they got to know the children and became friends. Finally, on our last day, we helped the church with basic projects around as well as organizing and cleaning out their community clothing closet. This clothing closet is the recipient of the donations you gave to purchase underwear and socks. After working for the day, we were taken on a tour of the reservation by one of the church leaders where we learned about life on the reservation and about the Dakota culture.



It was an impactful trip for our young people to move beyond their comfort zones, experience a different life and culture, make some new friends, and share the love of God as well as receive the love of God from those whom we served. This trip could not have happened if not for your support and prayers. On behalf of the youth and adults on the trip from FPC and EPC, we thank you.



Christian Education

Regular Sunday School classes for children, youth, and adults will resume Sept. 10th with the annual CElebration when we kick-off the 2023-2024 Sunday School year. The CE Committee is already getting ready for next year as they review Sunday School Curriculum for the children and youth, research topic and issues for adult education opportunities and plan for the upcoming Youth Fellowship year. Be on the lookout for more information about next year's offerings in the August and September newsletters.

The Return of Flat Jesus!!! Are you traveling this summer, doing some fun activities for the young and old? Whether you are in worship weekly or traveling the country, a fun way to remember that Jesus is with us always is to take Flat Jesus with you on your travels.



You can download a copy of flat Jesus or pick up a laminated version here at the church. Then all you have to do is take a selfie of you and Flat Jesus on your travels and email them to Kris at dce@fpclincn.org. We'll add them to the monthly newsletter and church the church bulletin board after your trip.

Mission

Mission/ Social Justice continues to collect items or The Lighthouse!

Please think about picking up an item or two next time you are out shopping!
If you would label your item and get it to Carrie in the church office, we will make sure the items are delivered to The Lighthouse! Let's stock them up over the summer!!!!

The Lighthouse Wish List

Quarterly / semester incentive gift cards (food, Walmart, target, visa etc.)

Large variety of sizes of organizational bins for HW room

New trashcan / recycling bin in HW room

Label maker

AA & AAA Batteries

5 new mousepads (for homework room)

BIC Mechanical Pencils

New Pool Sticks

Disinfectant Wipes/Spray

Kleenex

Fellowship Trip Recap



Our fourteenth Spring Fellowship Trip was held May 26th-29th in the Crawford area of the northwestern corner of the Nebraska Panhandle. We stayed in the lodging and campground at Fort Robinson and focused our learning adventures on the land management, conservation, recreation, culture, and history of the area.

On Friday, we stopped at the Nebraska National Forest near Halsey for an overview of the outcomes of the severe Bovee fire in October 2022 and we visited Seneca with local ranchers and land-owners to learn the history of a small former railroad and ranching town in the Nebraska Sandhills.



Saturday was a fast-paced day of visiting the natural beauty of Pine Ridge public lands at Sowbelly Canyon and Chadron State Park, where we also heard about fire's impact on forest management, then gaining new knowledge about Basque sheepherding and sheep operations from Basque sheep rancher Dave Paris at his sheep and cattle ranch.

We also spent time at the Museum of the Fur Trade viewing exhibits with thousands of original artifacts that preserve the rich, amazing history of the North American fur trade. Following a delicious potluck breakfast and beautiful worship service in the morning, Sunday was a recreational day filled with horseback and jeep riding, fishing, hiking, attending a play at the fort's theatre, and sightseeing.



The group joined together in the evenings for meals, fun and conviviality with both relaxing and competitive games, and simply fabulous fellowship. Most of the group returned to Lincoln on Monday. We truly had a wonderful time and have started discussing the destination of FPC's Spring Fellowship Trip 15!

We can't wait and hope you'll consider joining us in May 2024!



This & That...

CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to Mayuom Buom, a member of our Sudanese congregation, upon his graduation from Emporia State University, Emporia, KS. with a major in psychology. Mayuom will pursue his Masters at the University of South Dakota.

He was an outstanding basketball player an Emporia and has two more years of eligibility so will pursue his sport at USD. He is the son of Sara Wiew and has four siblings 2 of whom have earned or are earning advanced degrees.

We wish him well in his future endeavors!



prayer

Please keep Pastor Jock in your prayers as he travels to Ethiopia June 18 - July 14 to officiate at Luka Thor's wedding.



Church office hours for the summer.

June 5 through September 1 the church office will be open Monday - Thursday 7 am - 5 pm and closed on Friday's.

Carrie is going to Dallas Texas July 17 - 23 for continuing education. We will need help in the office during her absence to help with answering the phone, receiving mail, and greeting visitors.

Carrie will also be going on vacation from August 30 - September 15 this year and we could use some help in the office while she is visiting her Mom.

If you have a few hours to spare, please use the QR code to sign up to help in the office.





First Presbyterian Church Foundation

Our Foundation supports our church in so many ways and has for generations and will for generations to come. Our Foundation supports the church budget, supports our music, caring, mission, and Christian education programs, just to name a few. As we lift up our Foundation, we want to make you aware of the new way to give to the Foundation Birthday Club. During the month of your birthday, you will receive a note from our Foundation asking you to participate in the Foundation Birthday Club. This is a way you can support our Foundation.

If you have any questions regarding this program or any other questions about our Foundation, please contact the church finance office at ~ finance@fpclincoln.org



What Is Stephen Ministry?

Stephen Ministry offers a proven and effective way to organize, equip, and supervise a team of congregation members—called Stephen Ministers—to provide high-quality, one-to-one, Christ-centered care to people in the congregation and the community experiencing life difficulties.

Who's Involved in Stephen Ministry?

Stephen Leaders are church staff, lay leaders, and pastors trained to provide ongoing leadership for their congregation's Stephen Ministry. They are equipped for this key role through the Bridge Leader's Training Course offered by Stephen Ministries St. Louis.



FPC Online Store

Did you know that FPC now has an online store to meet all of your hat, polo and fleece needs? Just hop on over to <https://fpclincoln.qbstores.com/> to see what is available!



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Lincoln, NE

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.

Did you know?

That it is easier than ever to make your Pledge
and Per Capita payments online now?
You can even set up recurring payments!
No Login Required!

Simply go to www.onrealm.org/fpclincoln/give

We now have **Venmo** - [@FPCLincolnNE](https://www.venmo.com/@FPCLincolnNE)

You can still give by text as well by **texting MissionPossible to 73256**

Sunday Worship Times

In-Person Worship Services

10 am - English - (Livestreamed at <https://fpclincoln.online.church>)

12 pm - Nuer

Events & Opportunities

fpclincoln.org/events

Worship Online:

[Fpclincoln.online.church](http://fpclincoln.online.church)