



First Report

Feb. 2023
Issue 54
Volume 2

We need you to show up!

Thursday, March 30th, 6:30 – 8:15 pm
at St. Mark's United Methodist Church
at 84th and Pioneers.



Yes – that's it. Just show up, and learn about what our **Justice in Action** group has been doing to address justice issues related to mental health and criminal justice reform in Lincoln and Lancaster County. Then we want you to make plans to show up one more time, with friends, to the Nehemiah Action Community Assembly on May 4, when possible solutions are presented to leaders who can actually do something. It matters how many people show up, because the more who show up, the more power we have to effect change in our community.

Last fall, with 20 other faith communities, we formed Justice In Action, aimed at addressing justice issues in our community. Several members of our own Justice Ministry Team are serving on the research groups working on refining the specific issues we want to impact in the areas of mental health and criminal justice reform, and coming up with solutions we can present to civic leaders who have the ability to do something about them.

One of the first tasks of the research groups is to take the broad areas and narrow things down to problems we can actually impact.

In the area of **Mental Health**, we learned that people experiencing mental health issues in Lancaster County are often unable to access timely and appropriate care and often end up interacting with the criminal justice system, which is costly and robs them of the opportunity to receive the ongoing care they need to lead productive and positive lives.

Members of the Lincoln Police Department told our team that they have been acting as the primary navigators of the mental healthcare system for years and that they are often the first point of contact for someone experiencing a mental health crisis. It is difficult to get care to prevent a mental health crisis because of a shortage of providers and long waiting lists. We learned that the average wait for a medication appointment is 8 weeks.

In the area of **Criminal Justice Reform**, we learned that a growing number of people are placed or kept in the Lancaster County Jail for nonviolent offenses because the local system doesn't have sufficient tools, discretion, or community-based alternatives to address their needs while maintaining public safety.

The criminal justice team found that 67% of the people in the Lancaster County Jail are there pre-trial, meaning they haven't been convicted of any crime and are still presumed innocent. The average length of stay in the Lancaster County jail is nearly 30 days, and national data indicates staying just 48 hours significantly impacts the ability of a person to maintain their job, stable housing, and custody of their children.

We want you to show up with our team at the March 30th Rally, to learn more about those issues and to hear about possible solutions. This is one of the most significant things our church can do to make a long-term impact in our community that will better people's lives. Come and learn more about it!

Justice Ministry Team Leaders: Courtney Wittstruck, Jeri Brandt, Christy Abraham, and Pastor Sue Coller

Sue's Musings - Busy?

Sue's Musings – Busy?

How often is that our go-to answer when someone asks us how we are? I've been as guilty of that as you. Somehow we've bought into the lie that says anything less than "busy" means we aren't proving our value. It almost doesn't matter what we're doing – we just have to be busy.



Lent has often been a time when we think about giving something up: social media, meat, chocolate, etc.

Well, that's not what Lent is about. If you really want to get traditional – Lent was a time when people new to the faith learned how to connect with God, and to let God show through their lives. I don't know about you, but when I am so busy that I am tempted to wear it as a badge of honor, I'm not connecting with God. I'm too busy. But what is the cost of that – to our souls? To our relationships? Even to our health?

This Lent, I want to invite you, not so much to give something up, but to make room to connect with an unhurried God. What that looks like for each of us will be different. Maybe for you it is turning off the TV or stepping away from the computer screen and going for a walk. Maybe it's saying no to something that drains you, so that you can say yes to something that fills you up. Throughout this season, I am inviting you to pause and breathe, pause and breathe, until you find in the pause and the breath the God who has always been there waiting for you.

Sue Collier
ROOTED IN GOD - OPEN TO GRACE - FILLED WITH JOY

Worship

Our theme for this season is: **Reconnecting with an unhurried God**

The season of Lent has often been a time when we think about "giving something up" — a holdover from its penitential flavor in the medieval church. But what if we thought less about "giving up" and more about "making room?" In our Lent series this year, we will find out what it really costs to be so busy. Let us reconnect to an unhurried God.

The theme of this series draws on the need for self-care in order to continue our work of caring for others. It addresses the growing intensity and frenetic pace of life. The series will invite folks to practice making room, clearing out, slowing down, and prioritizing for the sake of holistic lives. "This holistic life involves living with the rhythms that allow us to thrive, finding a balance between work, play, rest, and reflection. Jesus calls his followers to more than just unbridled consumption or production. Rather, the Scriptures see our lives and bodies as gifts that should be nurtured."



Join us as we explore this topic during Lent 2023

Our committee put together a very colorful Advent bag with lots of idea of how to slow down during this Lenten season. I hope your family received yours. If not, please let the church office know and we will get one to you.

The Worship Committee invites you to attend Sunday morning worship at 10:00am for English and 12:00 noon for Sudanese, watch along with us on Sunday mornings through our new Livestream Link that you can find on our webpage. Or catch our worship anytime during the week.

We promise it will lift you up.

Ash Wednesday	Feb 22	7:00 pm
Palm Sunday	April 2	
Maundy Thursday	April 6	7:00 pm
Easter Sunday service	April 9	

Music Notes

Music in Worship

Sunday, Feb. 12, the Sunday School students joined the adult choir for the opening hymn. They all processed in playing the ever-popular Boomwhackers, and then led the congregation in the opening hymn.



The Hasting College Choir will be performing a free, public concert here at First Presbyterian on Sunday, March 26, 7:00 p.m. Hastings College is affiliated with the Presbyterian Church.



Arts For the Soul

Upcoming Events:

Saturday, March 4, 7:00 p.m.

Sing from the Heart--Dessert Concert & Charity Fundraiser for "The Gathering Place"

Tickets only \$5 (12 & under free). Desserts included!

Featuring The First Presbyterian Choir, with soloists Gretchen Pille, soprano (former 1st Pres choir member); and Jack Rinke, piano



Jack Rinke, Piano



The Gathering Place



Gretchen Pille

Sultans of String--Refuge Project

Saturday, April 15, 7:00 p.m.

Sultans of String have hit #1 across Canada on Top 10 national radio charts, and received multiple awards, including 3 JUNO (Canada's Grammy) nominations.



Events & Christian Education

Knitting for Newbies and Pros

Join us for a 5-week Knitting Experience
Sundays at 4:30 pm February 26 – March 26
Room 216 (2nd floor)



Nora Chismore (PhD student at UNL) will teach us newbies how to knit, those of you with experience can help us out or just come along for the company and together we'll knit (or learn how to knit!) prayer shawls for the church. We'll meet in Room 216 Sundays 4:30 – 5:30 pm, and then we'll join the youth group for dinner at 5:30.

If you want to learn how to knit, this is your chance!

If you're learning: bring with you:

Size 8 - 24-inch long circular needles and several skeins of solid color smooth textured worsted weight yarn. (It will likely say worsted weight on the label.) We recommend bringing yarn that is of a medium color, as it is easier to see. You'll need 4-6 skeins of yarn. Joann's and Michaels both have yarn and needles that will work. Don't worry if you don't have a clue what to do with that – that's what the class is about!

If you've been knitting forever – well, bring what works for you!

Join us for some time making friends, learning, and of course, eating, as we knit to surround our community in the warmth of prayer.

Sunday Worship Times

In-Person Worship Services

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

12 pm - Nuer

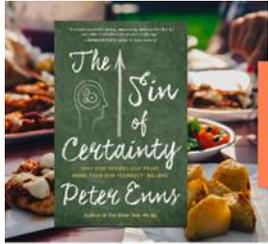
Events & Opportunities
fpclincoln.org/events

Online Sermons:
[Fpclincoln.org/sermon](https://fpclincoln.org/sermon)

Events & Christian Education, continued

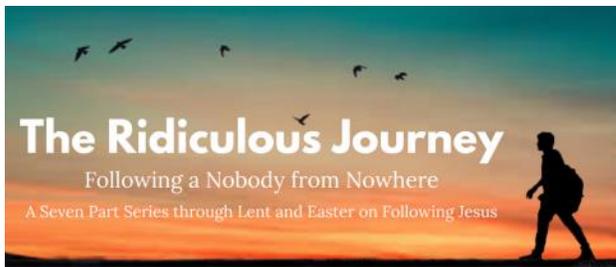
Youth Meals

The FPC Youth Group is looking for volunteers to provide a meal on Sunday nights for Youth Fellowship. If you would like to help out in our youth ministry by providing a meal, please visit the FPC Youth web page for a link to the sign-up or use your phone's camera to scan the QR Code here.



Dinner
and a
Book

We begin a new book for the Dinner and A Book group beginning March 1st. The book is called *The Sin of Certainty: Why God Desires Our Trust More than Our Beliefs* by Peter Enns. We discuss the authors argument that Christians mistake “certainty” and “correct belief” for faith when what God really desires is trust and intimacy. Books can be purchased at all major online retailers in paperback, e-book, and audiobook formats.



February 26th is the first Sunday in Lent, the Hebrews class will begin a new Lenten series called “The Ridiculous Journey.” This video based series uses short segments from speakers such Nadia Bolz-Weber, Brene Brown, Richard Rohr, Rachel Held Evans, and others to explore what it means to follow Jesus.

The 2023 Spring Fellowship Trip will be Memorial Day Weekend (May 26-29) with a destination of Fort Robinson. While in the Fort Robinson area, we plan to include our traditional stops at ranches, natural resource areas, and historical sites as well as other activities like horseback riding, jeep rides, hiking, fishing, and fossil hunting.



For more information:

<https://fpclincoln.org/event/spring-fellowship-trip/>



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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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