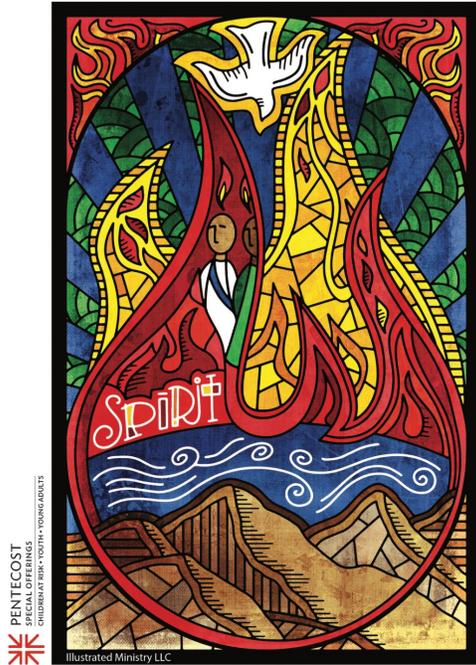


## The Heart of Mission

May 12, 2020



“God, from my youth you have taught me.” This verse from Psalm 71:17 collides in two areas of our mission this month: the Pentecost Offering and DREAAM. I encourage you to read the Psalm first in the New Revised Standard Version and then in The Message. It is a prayer of protection for our young people; it is a song for of praise to God who is our refuge; it is a statement of faith for those who have tried to live faithful lives. And, it is the theme of our PC(USA) Pentecost Offering on May 31.

“I run for dear life to GOD, I’ll never live to regret it. Do what you do so well: get me out of this mess and up on my feet.” (Psalm 71:1, The Message) Have you ever considered how God creates safe places for our young people? It

starts with our willingness to allow God to use us. I am reminded every day that some of our young people cannot even run for fun around the neighborhood without risking their lives just because of the color of their skin. I refer you to two links for further exploration:

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/08/us/run-with-maud-ahmaud-arbery.html> and (“We can’t ...” [https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=we%20can%27t%20go%20jogging&epa=SEARCH\\_BOX](https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=we%20can%27t%20go%20jogging&epa=SEARCH_BOX))

We do not need to look far to find a refuge for young men. DREAAM (Driven to Reach Excellence and Academic Achievement for Males) is more than a refuge for our young men. It helps make positive changes in their lives. Tutoring, food distribution and educational support have continued for our DREAAMers since the shelter in place orders. This has been challenging for everyone but especially for them. Try studying on a computer for school that four other people have to use at the same time! Try being tutored on a computer without headphones when a family member who works at night has to sleep. Try studying when you are hungry and have been inside all day and you are 10. Our DREAAMers overcome obstacles that many of us would not tolerate. Let’s help them “reach, teach and invest” in our young boys and men in Champaign-Urbana, Rantoul and Savoy. (<https://www.dream.org/our-change-approach>) First Presbyterian Church Champaign supports DREAAM throughout the year in small ways and annually when we give to the PC(USA) Pentecost Offering, another one of our PC(USA) church special offerings that supports our local community!

During this Pentecost season, we join together to build a life of faith and build the household of God with our children, youth and young adults.

40% stays with our congregation which we have designated for DREAAM.

25% supports Young Adult Volunteers (YAV), serving in communities around the word, and growing as leaders through transformative Christian service. A friend of mine, Nathan Paul Bonham, is a YAV this year. From the time he was born I have prayed for him and watched him grow in to a loving and faithful leader in our world. Please join me in praying for our young adults like Nathan.

25% supports Ministries with Youth to help guide our youth by uniting them in Christ and lifting them up as leaders and messengers of God's word. Our PC(USA) does this through Triennium. Our young people participated in Triennium last year, a national gathering of young people that happens every three years. I have shared some pictures of that wonderful time below.

10% is devoted to children at-risk to improve education and provide safe havens. Our congregation is joining the whole church in building for our future, in building individual lives of faith. Won't you join us? If we all do a little, it adds up to a lot.



Pray for all our mission partners this week. (Find them at <https://www.firstpres.church/mission-ministries/>)

Peace,

Rachel Matthews, Temporary Mission Coordinator  
First Presbyterian Church Champaign