



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN

The Heart of Mission

June 9, 2020



Looking back on last week's Heart of Mission, I might say now that it was a little defensive. I am and was being proud of our church's mission stance. Yet, you might yawn at my words today if you are a person of color or have spent years working on anti-racism.

I am a white, female, Christian, American. Each one of those categories means something historically, politically, and affects the way other people respond to my very being.

The first time I was aware I had different colored skin from someone else was when I was 4. My pregnant mother with 2 young children whose husband was going through medical school hired a Black woman to help her clean house. She was also our babysitter. Ophelia taught me how to put on a pillow case. I loved her because she taught me things like that. She was so gracious to do so. She was in her retirement years and was working because she had to care for an ill family member. I learned that later at the dinner table where my family talked about all things sacred and unsacred. Ophelia did not have to be so gracious to me.

I have spent some time this week looking at my lifeline of race awareness and white privilege. You see, I noticed our differences in skin color when I was 4 but it wasn't until graduate school that I could see my whiteness because being white was normative for the culture.

I was very aware of my whiteness this week.

I will remember this time right now as a time of pushing against what some scholars call "White fragility." I noticed that between Monday's Black Lives Matter protest that I attended and Saturday's that there were more people with white skin in Saturday's. I noticed that I seek to listen in crowds but now I realize my silence can be perceived as

condoning death and senseless violence. I noticed that I may seek to share my grief at the violence to my brothers and sisters of color that has been going on FOREVER but my tears and rage can be perceived as violence to them as well.

On Sunday Matt, Mindy, Judi and I shared stories about other people's struggles with racism in the sermon, but I have a story as well. I struggle to understand where I have blocked out perspective and I struggle to speak where I have been silent.

If you'd like to join me in this journey, I want to recommend a video. Even a year after it was posted, this Facebook video (June 11, 2019) from *Teaching Tolerance* of an interview with educator Robin DiAngelo, author of *White Fragility: Why it's so hard for White people to talk about racism* is relevant.

<https://www.facebook.com/18586933445/videos/2396789563977027>

Then, if you haven't already, you might want to read her book. The questions are powerful. You can join me on Wednesday night 7pm zoom and we can talk about this there too. Also, the **Compassion Peace and Justice committee** just had a book recommended to them in light of the protests on race, violence and white privilege in our country, *The Color of Promise* by Jemar Tisby. <https://www.thecolorofcompromise.com/> Is there any interest in a book study on this? Please let me know. I certainly am interested.

Please read the announcements below regarding our mission partners.

Peace,

Rachel Matthews, Temporary Mission Coordinator
First Presbyterian Church Champaign

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mission Committee meetings this month:

World Mission will meet June 16, 4:30pm.

Community Mission Deacons will be meet June 23, 4:30pm.

Courage Connection: Donations needed! Courage Connection has been very active the last few months and has been a safe shelter for families who have suffered from domestic violence. They are currently in need of full size shampoo and toiletries (full size), gift cards. They are still providing housing through June for their families.

Bring toiletries to the mission deacon's house, Michael Hogue, 1104 W Clark St. He will be delivering to Courage Connection.

Salt and Light: Donations needed! They have issued a plea for hand sanitizer. Donated hand sanitizer can be dropped off at Salt & Light Urbana's customer service desk for Bethany Parker. Thank you!! Salt and Light has been faithfully open during this time of shelter in place. We are grateful for all they have continued to do. They expect an increase of traffic as people are beginning to venture out more.

Here is the request from Lisa Sheltra, Director of Community Engagement, Our grocery and thrift stores have seen steady traffic during these times of need, and as the state continues the re-opening process, we only see the need continuing. As we seek to follow state and local guidelines, and protect the well-being of our customers and our staff, we are experiencing many of the same shortages that consumers are struggling with for personal purchasing. We have committed, as part of our safety practices, to a continual use of hand sanitizer by all personnel throughout our stores, but we are rapidly running out, and are unable to replenish our supply through any of our usual channels. We hoped that members of your congregations, as individual purchasers, may have luck finding a bottle or two on obscure shelves somewhere even though we are not able to make a quantity purchase.

Friends of the Presbyterian Education Board in Pakistan has sent a video about what the teachers and children are doing during the pandemic. You have got to see it! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fXPqIS2hrZk&feature=youtu.be>
During this lockdown period PEB has been using a number of different strategies to keep in touch with their students:

1. Making short videos of lessons
2. Giving out hand written notes on a chapter or two at a time
3. Having students watch certain assigned Youtube videos
4. Calling students to school in small groups
5. Having certain classes come to school twice a week
6. Holding classes in students' homes

The teachers are using a wide variety of methods of assessment:

1. Some are giving an assessment after 15 days of study
2. Some are going to review the work assigned at home once school reopens and give tests
3. Some are posting assignments on WhatsApp and following up with a Zoom meeting to assess
4. Some are calling students once a week
5. Some are giving monthly tests
6. Some are checking the weekly assignments students hand in and sending them back

7. Some are sending weekly plans to the parents so they know what work their children should be doing.

The PEB teachers are asking for a donation for the supplies they are using. See their website for their June Emergency needs request:

<https://www.friendsofpeb.org/immediate-need>

The Refugee Center reports on Facebook, “With Illinois schools moving to remote learning during COVID 19, a special program called the Pandemic Emergency Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) is here to help families buy food for school-aged children or young people. If you currently received SNAP benefits, you are automatically loaded into your Illinois LINK EBT account along with your regular SNAP benefits. If you do not currently receive SNAP benefits and need to apply for the P-EBT program or to learn more, click here: <http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=124142> #HelpsHere”

Frontera de Cristo - Join our PCUSA Mission Co-workers Miriam Maldonado and Mark Adams will be talking on Borders as Places of Encounter at the zoom “Coffee, Conversations and Compassion.” Here is a 5 minute video appetizer about Frontera de Cristo that Mark sent in a recent newsletter:

https://vimeo.com/377582688/58251a96b6?fbclid=IwAR0RbuwQ_nDkkaVNMjKzSldmhY2P6XO2Cj2PI2UkxlgVtXkuKIPXKMIrAaU&utm_source=June+2020&utm_campaign=FDC+June+2020&utm_medium=email

Please register with office@fronteradecristo.org to join their Thursday zoom Coffee, Conversations and Compassion hour, June 11, 6pm CT.

Please pray for Indonesian mission coworker Farsijanna and her husband Bernie, upon the recent death of his brother.

Let us keep all our mission partners in our prayers, those who are waiting to go back to their place of ministry and those who are able to work where they are. Listen for God’s call to you in their ministry.

Our PC(USA) Mission CoWorkers:

Mark Adams and Miriam Maidonado Escobar (Mexico)

Farsijanna Adeney-Risakotta (Indonesia)

Jeff and Christi Boyd (Central Africa)

Jo Ella Holman (Caribbean and Cuba)

Bob and Kristi Rice (South Sudan)

Our regional and global mission partners:

Kemmerer Village (and Camp Carew)

Lifeline Pilots

Marion Medical Mission
Mission Aviation Fellowship
Opportunity International
Friends of Presbyterian Education Board in Pakistan Presbyterian Cuba Partnership
Special Offerings of the PC(USA)
Theological Education Fund
Young Adult Volunteers

Here in Champaign – Urbana:

CU Better Together
CU at Home
CANAAN S.A.F.E. HOUSE
CANTEEN RUN
COURAGE CONNECTION
DREAAM
eMPTY TOMB, INC
FAITH IN ACTION
JESUS IS THE WAY PRISON MINISTRY
THE REFUGEE CENTER
RESTORATION URBAN MINISTRY
SALT & LIGHT

Here at First Presbyterian Church

FPCC Amateur Preachers
FPCC Environmental Committee working with Faith in Place
FPCC Presbyterian Women
FPCC ESL
FPCC Children, Youth and Families
FPCC Mission Possible/Go and Serve



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