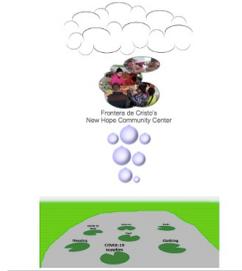




The Heart of Mission July 14, 2020

Let it Rain for All of God's Children!
A Charity of Raindrops



Raindrop Offering 2020 – www.firstpres.church/raindropoffering

This “season of pandemic” has taught me something about community. There will always be people who need help entering into community. There will always be people who need to hear and experience the good news of Christ, “God loves you, too.” If you were connected to a community before we were told to stay at home, you probably found ways to remain connected either through phone, mail or the internet, family, church or work. If you were homeless or displaced before the pandemic, you might be having a really hard time right now. Eric Corbin reminded us Sunday that we are called to **become a neighbor** to those in need. The Samaritan **became the good neighbor** when the opportunity arose. We are called to reach out to people who need a community.

One of the wonderful things about being part of a PC(USA) community like First Presbyterian Champaign is how connected we are already through other churches as well as ecumenical and interfaith partnerships. Virtual worship and communicating has made it easier in some ways to strengthen those community ties. We can even connect with our neighbors on the border of Mexico. And, they are not even strangers, they are our bi-national brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ. They help us become a neighbor to the stranger.

This year’s Raindrop Offering goes to help our bi-national brothers and sisters at Frontera de Cristo one of five PC(USA) border ministries. Frontera de Cristo ministers to people in need in the sister cities of Douglas, AZ and Agua Prieta, Sonora, Mexico.

What else can I tell you about this ministry?

We heard about the New Hope Center, a center for education for children and ESL students in our Wednesday evening zoom interview with Claudia Kirby. The New Hope Center continued its work with their families even with the challenges of Covid-19 just like we have continued our ESL work and our Christian education ministry here in Champaign .

You also heard about Café Justo, which is more than a coffee shop at Frontera de Cristo, it is one way people can work to remain in their homes and with their families.

We heard about the Migrant Resource Center and their partnership with C.A.M.E. the Migrant Exodus shelter housed at the Holy Family Catholic Church in Agua Prieta. Steve Gritten wrote an article on that in this month's First Presbyterian Church newsletter.

There are many churches in Mexico as well as in the United States that work together to help these ministries thrive. So, how can you build a relationship with our neighbors on the border and help them do the work of Christ there? How can you get involved with your heart?

You can pray.

Frontera de Cristo's webpage instructs us, "Prayer is central to who we are. We invite you to pray with us for all suffering on both sides of the border. We recognize that fear, hatred, tension, and division in our communities and the deaths of over 6,330 migrants in our deserts between 1998 and 2014 is not God's will. We pray for the day when people will come from east and west, north and south, to eat together at God's banquet; the day when the wall that divides us will be turned on its side and become a table that unites us." Read more things to pray for in their Spring newsletter.

<http://fronteradecristo.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Newsletter-Spring-2020.pdf>

In their most recent July e-newsletter they have asked that our prayers be "for wisdom to continue being a presence of peace, justice, and love."

You can encounter Christ.

In a recent "Coffee, Conversation and Compassion" Zoom meeting, Mark and Miriam talked about the border as a place of encounter. If you look up this link, you might even see a picture of someone from Champaign in the write up! The article is on the PC(USA) Mission Agency website:

https://www.presbyterianmission.org/story/the-border-as-a-place-of-encounter/?utm_source=July+2020&utm_campaign=FDC+June+2020&utm_medium=email

You can talk to people at Frontera de Cristo and ask them questions during the "Coffee, Conversations and Compassion" Thursday Zoom evenings. (And, you can drink some coffee!) Cafe Justo will continue to offer their coffee special through August 31. The next conversation will be June 16, 7pm. Email "conversation" to office@fronteradecristo.org to get the Zoom link. Here is the link to [order coffee online from Cafe Justo here.](#)

You can give.

Each raindrop may not be much. All the raindrops together can make a big difference.

Each dollar may not be much. All our money together can make a big difference.

Choose an amount to give. Together our giving will help reduce the impact of COVID-19 and the increased financial need at Frontera de Cristo because of it.

You can give either through check or online giving.

*Please write the check to **First Presbyterian Church**, indicate “**Raindrop**” on your check or online giving information line. <http://firstpres.church/raindropoffering/>*

First Presbyterian Church will be sending one check to Frontera de Cristo at the end of our collection. The Raindrop Offering will be collected in the month of July.

Thank you for your generous support.

Peace,
Rachel Matthews, Temporary Mission Coordinator

More Mission Announcements:

World Mission Committee 3rd Tuesday meeting July 21, 4:30pm Zoom.

Community Mission Deacons 4th Tuesday meeting July 28, 4:30pm Zoom.

Matthew 25 Congregation News from the Presbyterian Mission Agency:

As the Matthew 25 vision moves into its second year, the COVID-19 pandemic has redefined what community means. You are among the 575-plus congregations, groups and mid councils who, during these unprecedented challenges, are keeping their focus on serving others. Given the current unrest and demand for justice in our nation, the call to be a Matthew 25 church is even more compelling. This newsletter is specifically for you — to resource, network and engage with communities, one another and the denomination.

Last month, the first online Matthew 25 gathering was held with great participation and feedback. You asked for more and we listened. The next online Matthew 25 event is scheduled for **July 29 at 2 p.m. (EDT)**. Mark your calendars today and watch for more information coming your way.

CU at Home:

Thursdays are a time for prayer and fasting for CU at Home. Their work is dependent on our prayers. All their work is essential services. Out of their e-newsletter comes the following prayers and moments of praise.

Special prayers - We have a close friend of C-U at Home whose wife is battling cancer and not doing well. Would you consider adding this wonderful woman to your prayers today and moving forward as she continues to fight this disease? Father God, we ask for your divine intervention and for healing. We know you hold the power over pain, and over sickness, and we call on you now Father to work a miracle. We don't always understand why things happen the way they do but we love you, we trust you, and we praise you for all you've done and are going to do. We commit this woman, her husband, and family into your hands. In the holy and mighty name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

Prayers -

*Would you join us in prayer for **all of our friends who are still in pain from the loss of our dear friend, Todd Ledbetter?** Todd was killed on July 1st and, understandably so, there is still a lot of raw emotion in our midst.*

*Please pray for **our new staff as we have expanded both men's and women's shelter to year-round operation.** We ask for prayer that all of our staff would continue to take care of our personal health as we serve in the trenches on a daily basis.*

*Would you also **pray for a friend who is having trouble with his anger and escalating situations he is involved in?** Pray that he would continue to grow and seek wise counsel from those around him.*

Praises -

Thank you God for a **friend without an address who continues to help out around the drop-in center and the shelter!** He truly has a desire to serve and is always willing to help out in any way he can!

Praise the Lord for the **nearly 60 people who attended Todd Ledbetter's Memorial Service last night!** Even through the pain and heartache, there was a sense of unity as we all loved Todd and cared about him deeply.

Praise to Jesus for a **new friend without an address who is no longer in an active domestic violence situation!** It's a blessing to have such a committed staff and strong community partnerships as this young lady is now in a much better position than she was a few days ago!

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
eEMPTY 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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