A Note from Pastor Erik ...

One of my favorite parts of my role as pastor is working with Stephanie to plan our worship services. Selecting the hymns can be both challenging and wonderful. We try to strike the balance between choosing hymns that are familiar while also creating space for us to grow and learn and sing new hymns.

Many years ago I decided I wanted to be a hymn-writer! It was one of those fanciful ideas that never came to fruition, but at the core of it was a desire to give words to the mysterious relationship between humanity and God. It turns out I’m not much of a poet and I’m not as much of a mystic as I think I’d like to be. And so, I think that’s why I find the hymns of our faith to be a source of my connection to God. I’m using the words – and the faith – of others to help me on my journey.

Isn’t that what we often do as Christians? When our own faith doesn’t feel secure, or we feel discouraged, God has given us others on the journey to walk alongside us. We can find strength in the faith of others.

Later this month, a group of us will be travelling to Cuba to visit our partner church, Nueva Paz. We will be celebrating 10 years of journeying together and supporting one another in our ministries. Just like our relationships with fellow faith travelers in our more local lives, our siblings in faith in Cuba also help draw us closer to God and help us to experience the mystery of the divine.

Finally, I give thanks to God for all of you in this Thanksgiving month – our last month of the liturgical year before Advent! I’m grateful for the ways that God is stirring among us and helping us to grow in our faith together here at PCWS. May we continue to encounter God on our journey with one another!

Sending Our College Students . . . Some PCWS Love . . .
With College Care Packages!

The Deacons are collecting items to include in care packages that will be sent to our younger members away at college. Please consider donating some of the suggested items or other things you feel might be enjoyed by those away from home.

- Leftover Halloween candy
- Tea or cocoa packages
- Individual soup packets
- Granola bars
- Kleenex packets
- Hand sanitizer
- Popcorn
- Mints
- Pens/pencils
- Individual bags of chips
- Individual cookie packets
- Toothbrushes
- Floss
- Note cards

Please bring your donations to church before **November 5th** to be included in the packages.

Pastor Appreciation Celebration
Sunday, November 3

The deacons of PCWS will be hosting a Pastor Appreciation Fellowship hour after worship. This is an opportunity to honor and to say "thank you" to Pastor Erik for his ministry at PCWS and his blessing in our lives.

Please mark that date on your calendars and **plan to attend**!
The Interfaith Book Group will meet at PCWS in the Jones Room. Jerry Allers will lead a discussion of Pavilion of Women by Pearl S. Buck. All women of the church are welcome to be a part of this wonderful group of ecumenical friends. We grow together by reading and discussing wide-ranging ideas and thoughts provided by the books we read.

World Communion Sunday

On Sunday, October 6 we celebrated World Communion as we recognized our connection to the church throughout the different cultures and languages around the world. Special thanks to Sue Eck for providing breads from various cultures and for coordinating the display.

Presbyterian Women

Make plans to join Presbyterian Women in the following fall offerings:

**November 1 - Church Women United World Community Day** will be held at the First Presbyterian Church of LaGrange. The theme “Resolve to Love” begins with a Bible study at 9:30 a.m. and the program at 10:30 a.m.

**November 7 - Presbyterian Women meeting** at 12:30 p.m. at PCWS includes lunch ($12) followed by our program with Pastor Erik who will share his travel experiences to the Holy Land.

**November 21 - Afternoon Circle** will be held in the Graham Charter Room at 1:30 p.m. to continue their study of "Love Carved in Stone, Lesson 3: Words of Love: Keep Sabbath."

Session Scroll

The Session met Wednesday, October 16. Highlights of the meeting:

- Celebrated the completion of the playground and the dedication & blessing.
- Preliminary discussions of the 2020 budget and received a Stewardship update.
- Continued discussion of a new logo and branding for PCWS.
- Approved the minutes of the Congregational Meeting on October 13 which amended the by-laws of the church changing elder terms to 3 years and reducing the size of the session.

September 2019
Relocating Peonies to PCWS from Evie Meyer’s Home

Last month Nancy Meyer, Evie Meyer’s daughter, removed several peony plants from Evie’s garden. As Evie’s children prepare the house for sale, it was important to preserve these heirloom plants. Evie, one of our charter members, treasured these plants as has her family. The peony plants originally came from Evie’s parent’s yard where Evie grew up!

Jane and Sal Melilli planted the peony plants in our Memorial Garden and in the garden along the fence behind the manse. What a wonderful gift to PCWS from Evie’s children and a special way for her legacy to continue at PCWS!

Here is a photo of Evie’s peonies in bloom at her home:

Playground Blessing & Dedication

After months of planning, designing, fundraising and anticipation, the vision for the new PCWS playground came to fruition on September 27, 2019 with the Playground Blessing & Dedication event. Despite the challenges of the weather that stormy evening, Pastor Erik led the group in a ribbon cutting and celebration of this joyous milestone stating, “This playground is a space set apart – a place for service to Christ’s church and a place where ministry happens. Embrace all children who come to this playground. We dedicate this space to the children and to the furthering of your kingdom here.”

Once again, thank you to everyone who contributed funds, design vision, volunteer time, manpower and commitment to achieving this goal. This playground will indeed serve our church and community for decades to come!

Guest Preacher on November 17

While Pastor Erik is away in Cuba, we will welcome back The Rev. Scott Matheney as our guest preacher on November 17. Scott is the chaplain at Elmhurst College and a minister member of the Presbytery of Chicago.

2019-20 PCWS Book Club

The group will meet in the Graham Charter Room Monday, November 25 at 7:00 p.m. for discussion of Inheritance: A Memoir of Genealogy, Paternity and Love by Dani Shapiro (nonfiction).

Everyone is welcome to attend for any or all of the discussions. Check the church calendar for future dates and Books. For more information, contact Joyce Rodos.
**Family Ministries**

Meet Presby, the PCWS Prayer Bear!

Each week, Presby will be going home with one of our Sunday School children and will encourage families to pray together.

Presby comes with his very own binder so that families can record how and who they prayed for during the week. Keep your eyes open for sightings of this cute fuzzy new PCWS member!

**Family Camp – January 3-5, 2020**

Are you interested in learning more about PCWS Family Camp? Please reach out to Lorraine Hoskins for more information, or pick up a flyer in the church office (also distributed in the September and October editions of Glad Tidings).

To Register and Pay Online, visit our [Online Donation Page](#)!

**Confirmation 2019-2020**

Our new confirmation class started in September with a Saturday retreat on September 21. Rogers Malone and Pastor Erik are leading the group of seven students: Andrew Carlisle, Ryan Gertsmeier, Alexis McClintock, Avery Mezan, Piper Murray, Shannon Sullivan, and Marin Yates. Special thanks to Amy Malone and Carolyn Bozek who are serving as mentors and advisors throughout the nine-month long program.

In October the class participated in service projects with six of the students and their leaders participating in the Margaret’s Village Work Day with other members of PCWS, and two of the students joining their parents at the Greater Chicago Food Depository. Putting our faith in action through service helps us understand what it means to be people created in God’s image.

This month we will be attending evening prayers at an Islamic center and Friday night Shabbat services at a Jewish Temple to learn more about the other Abrahamic faiths and help us to also see how our faith tradition is unique. This has been a highlight of the confirmation program for many students in the past.

Throughout the year we will be meeting on Sundays to learn more about Christianity and to explore our own faith. To do that, we’ll also be welcoming members of the session who will be attending our classes so that the students will get to know members of PCWS.

Look for our students in worship on Sunday mornings and introduce yourself to them! Also, keep our students and their leaders in your prayers during these months of preparation and discernment.

**UPYS & JUPYS Calendar of Events**

- **Sat., 11/2 @ 6 p.m.**  
  **Church Talent Show & Dinner**  
  Be a part of a youth group act! Bring your own talent too! Sing a song? Do a dance? Share what you got!

- **Sun., 11/10 @ noon**  
  **Coffee w/ Candice**  
  Starbucks in Downtown La Grange

- **Sat., 12/7 @ 6:30-8 p.m.**  
  **Cookie Baking for Cookie Walk**

- **Sun., 12/8 at 9 a.m.**  
  **Cookie Walk & Brunch**  
  Come before church to help set up and then help during the Cookie Walk fundraiser for the UPY Mission Trip! After, we’ll have brunch together!
**November Music**

During this season of Thanksgiving, there will be musical offerings by the Chancel Choir, an oboe solo by Diane Wood, and the No-Name Band. We are truly blessed here at PCWS with all the wonderfully talented members of the congregation!

Looking ahead towards December, some really exciting musical selections and offerings will add to the season of Hope, Peace, Love and Joy. Stay tuned for more information coming soon!

**Chancel Choir**
**November Rehearsal**
Thursday, November 14

**Sing in Church**
Sunday, November 17

Stephanie Coates
Director of Music

**Gathering Around the Table**

*Gathering Around the Table* is a new program that was started last year to encourage people to connect with others in the church. We have had a wide range of events including cocktail parties, brewery outings, lunches and breakfasts at local restaurants, and dinner events in homes. It is a great chance to meet new people and get to know others a little better. Visit [www.presbyws.org/signup](http://www.presbyws.org/signup) or the bulletin board outside the Jones Room to see upcoming events.

Do you have an idea for a Gathering? A place you think would be good? Want to host a Gathering in your home? Maybe this is a way for you to get involved in a new and different way! Reach out to Theresa Dixon or Loretta Gratias-Bremer and we’ll make it happen!!

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**From the Youth Director**

I am never ready for the holidays, but here we are again- it’s November. The air is crisp and cool, the leaves are bright or already gone. I feel like this particularly slow and warm October further stunted my lack of preparedness for another holiday season. Time moves too fast. I read once the days are long but years are short- and with every new season I am again reminded of just how true that is.

Coming up are some exciting opportunities for our youth:

**November 2nd** is a new, fun endeavor- a talent show!!! I have invited the youth to join me early to learn a special treat we would like to share with the congregation so please discuss bringing your child early (at 4:00 p.m.) to the Youth Room at church to be a part of these festivities! ALL AGES WELCOME!

**November 10th** we will have another noon lunch date with Joey and me- location still TBD. It seems to work well for attendance and excitement levels to change it up monthly, so we will continue to do this.

**November 17th** - What I am most excited about this month is our Friendsgiving Dinner at the Gertsmeier’s. **SAVE THE DATE:** 6:30—8:00 p.m. we will have a feast. This year- something new- I am encouraging the youth to bring a dish of their choosing to share and enjoy.

Speaking of the Holidays:

**December 7th**: Cookie Baking - On December 7 from 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. - the eve of the cookie walk - I am inviting the youth into my home where we will bake for the cookie walk. Please talk to me if you are interested in helping or attending.

**December 8th** - Cookie Walk 9:00 a.m. **Remember** . . . I need youth to volunteer as well as people to bake! This year I am trying something new- I would like our youth to get some skin in the game ,we will be trying a baking night!

As always, I am here for questions/comments/corny jokes.

Happy Holidays Church Family- you all look lovely in this November glow.

Candice Mares
Youth Director

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November, 2019
Cookie Walk - Save the Date

Sunday, December 8, our wonderful Youth will be selling cookies after worship—just one of the many activities that morning. On Saturday, December 7 at 6:30 p.m. the youth will be baking delicious cookies for the annual Cookie Walk. Mark your calendar and plan to attend all the events that Sunday morning.

Christmas Pageant

The annual PCWS Christmas Pageant will be on Sunday, December 15 at 4:00 p.m. and, once again, Laurie Merrifield needs your help - both young and old - to continue our celebrated traditional pageant celebrating the birth of Jesus!

During Sunday School classes on November 17 and 24, children will be invited to sign up for the roles they want. Signups will also be posted in the hall. Practices will be:

**Sunday, December 8:** During Sunday School.

**Friday, December 13:** 4:30 – 5:30 p.m. for the speaking parts (Mary, Joseph, Angel Gabriel, Angel of the Lord, narrators).

**Sunday, December 15:** after worship there will be a final practice for entire cast from 10:30-12:30 with lunch included. Parents are welcome to stay during practices or to leave their children with us.

**Sunday, December 15:** Children should arrive at 3:15 p.m. to get ready. We are also seeking assistance with make-up and costumes from 3:15-4:00 p.m. If you would like to help or if your child would like to be part of this treasured tradition please contact Laurie Merrifield, lampony@me.com.

Christmas Caroling
December 22, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Climb aboard the bus at 3:00 p.m. to join the fun as we bring Christmas Cheer to members and friends of PCWS!

Advent Fair - December 8
HOPE...PEACE....JOY....LOVE......

Please join us in the Jones Room following worship for music, crafts, games and even a photo booth! Grab a cup of cocoa and join us in fun and festive fellowship.

If you would like to lead a craft table, assist with the cookie walk or serve hot cocoa, please contact Kim Fronk.

Special Holiday Collections

In addition to the Alternative Giving Fair, another PCWS holiday tradition during Advent is the gathering of gently used coats and jackets and new winter hats, scarves and mittens. They will be delivered to Sharing Connections and Margaret’s Village the week before Christmas.

Once the holiday greens have been hung, look for the Christmas Giving Tree near the baptismal wall and feel free to decorate the tree with your hats, mittens and scarves. A coat rack will be located near the elevator on the main floor for your coats and jackets.

Also, per annual tradition, we will be collecting non-perishable food items, which will be delivered to the Pine Avenue Food Pantry shortly after Christmas, to help restock the pantry after the holidays and get them off to a good start in the new year. The food tree will be located in the narthex and bags and boxes of groceries can be deposited there.
**Stewardship 2020**

Session kicked off the church’s 2020 Stewardship Campaign with a challenge for PCWS members to fulfill their role as God’s caretakers.

The call to action came during an October 6 presentation by Elder Mike Lobash, who urged congregation members to consider a pledge amount that would fulfill an obligation to take care of God’s world. This year’s campaign is aimed at reminding PCWS members to be God’s stewards, who are charged with caring for His worldly creation.

“Being good stewards requires us to realize nothing in this world is ours or of our own making,” Lobash said. “We are simply put here to care for what God has created.”

PCWS’ stewardship campaign is the only formal, scheduled fundraising activity the church undertakes to support the operating budget of the church. Church members are asked as part of the campaign to make a financial pledge they can fulfill during the upcoming calendar year. By year’s end, pledges typically fund 98 percent of the church’s $430,000 budget. The remaining 2 percent is funded through non-member offerings, loose offerings received during worship services and receipts from renting church facilities.

Elder Condy Dixon, Session’s leader of the stewardship campaign, is continuing to build the financial momentum church members put in play a few years ago. In 2015, the church embarked on a three-year capital campaign. Funds were used to modernize the church’s worship space, improve the landscaping and beautify the manse, among other things. During that same time, the church expanded its mission outreach through projects to assist the poor and to enhance the church’s welcoming atmosphere.

“It’s clear this congregation has created momentum through its financial gifts,” Lobash said. “As that momentum builds, next year will see an expansion of mission projects and a growth in staff.”

Next year’s budget, once final, is expected to contain funding for an additional staff member to work with youth and support other ministry areas with Pastor Erik. Also expected to receive an increase next year is the church’s mission budget. Mission expenses are the church’s third-largest budgeted expense, accounting for more than $45,000 annually. The largest part of the church’s budget are operational expenses, including staff salaries and property maintenance.

Members have been encouraged to return completed pledge cards indicating next year’s giving intentions by the end of October, but if you have not had the chance to return your card, please do so. Pledges also can be submitted through www.presbyws.org or by sending a confidential e-mail to stewardship@presbyws.org.

Lobash said he would like church members to consider converting some of the money given during the capital campaign and other fundraising efforts over the past few into a regular pledge amount.

“All of us reached a little deeper into our pockets in the past few years as we made pledges and subsequent contributions to the capital campaign and then again to the ‘welcome the new pastor’ fund,” Lobash said.
2019 Mission Series—Local Mission

We conclude our 2019 PCWS mission series this month looking at the local mission opportunities supported through the budget. This category benefits organizations serving those in the suburban areas we call home.

The LeaderShop, based in LaGrange, seeks to empower junior and senior high youth to become community-minded individuals through diverse programs that foster confidence, knowledge and leadership. They offer after-school programs, service and leadership opportunities, and educational opportunities through workshops and retreats. PCWS has supported this organization which our own youth have participated in over the years.

The LaGrange Area Transitional Housing (LATH) program joined with BEDS Plus Care. Through LATH, families with a history of housing instability, compounded by disability or serious/chronic health conditions, are provided local agency-owned affordable housing and supportive services for up to 24 months. This includes regular case management support and assistance in achieving behavior health, health and life goals for household members.

Interfaith Community Partners is “Connecting older adults with their community — one ride at a time.” Volunteer drivers take Greater Lyons Township area residents to medical and other appointments in our community. PCWS is one of the seven local congregations who joined in the initial efforts as the program was launched in 1999 to help older adults live independently in our community. Services are expanding to Clarendon Hills, Darien, Downers Grove, Summit, Westmont, and Willowbrook.

Pillars Community Health has merged with Community Nurses Health Association to provide health, social, and educational services to our communities. They offer same-day medical and dental appointments. Staff is available for help related to mental health, addiction, or domestic violence. They offer Head Start, and Child Care; Prevention/Health Education and Outreach and Benefits Assistance.

To be able to meet unexpected needs during the year, Session approved a Mission discretionary fund. This can be used during the year for responding to natural disasters, new mission initiatives or other noteworthy opportunities. This year some funding was used toward our Pop Up Mission (PUMP) activities.

Your support of our mission budget through your donations makes a difference in the lives of people working to overcome issues from hunger, homelessness or medical concerns in meaningful ways. Thank you for your ongoing support through your offerings and special giving.

Coming Soon: Mission’s Annual Alternative Giving Fair!
Sunday, December 8

Please join us in the Graham Charter Room for this year’s Alternative Giving Fair. As in the past, there will be a wide range of opportunities for you to give directly to local and global mission agencies, including Heifer International and Church World Service; to the Christmas Joy Offering, to Margaret’s Village and to Nueva Paz.

There will also be items for purchase which will support families and fair-trade practices including Thistle Farms, Equal Exchange and Ten Thousand Villages. While we will not be ordering Advent Calendars this year, never fear, we’ll still have the Divine Fair Trade Chocolate after-dinner mints!

Stock up on great holiday gifts for teachers, neighbors, friends and family and help others while you do. Watch for more details in your next Glad Tidings and PCWS communications!
Cuba Trip This Month!

Later this month, Kathy Wennerstrum, Mindy McMahon, Kevin McDermott, and Pastor Erik will be travelling to Cuba to visit our partner congregation in Nueva Paz and to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the partnership!

We will be celebrating the anniversary by bringing a special project that will recognize the friendship between our congregations.

Whenever we visit Cuba, we try to bring items with us that our friends report that they need. They have asked us to bring the following items:

- Craft Items: yarn, fabric, ribbon, glue
- Glasses, readers
- Antacids
- Benadryl and other antihistamines
- Ibuprofen
- Decongestants
- Pain relieving ointments
- Probiotics
- Vitamins for children and adults
- Vitamin C
- Band aids
- A medium suitcase with wheels

Please bring these items to PCWS no later than Friday, November 8. There is a bin in the Donation Center outside Pastor Erik’s office.

Also, join us in worship on November 10th as we commission the mission team, and please keep them in your prayers during their trip from November 11 through 18.

If you would like to learn more about our partnership with Nueva Paz church or if you are interested in joining a future trip, please talk with Kathy Wennerstrum or Jane Boxell. When the mission team returns, there will also be the opportunity for conversation with them about their experience.
Office Corner

It’s funny how quickly the next season arrives. A couple of weeks ago, while sitting at my desk, the sky darkened as if the sun had gone down, and rain began to pour. I stepped outside for a few moments, and reached my hand out into the rain. It was cold rain. Just as suddenly as the sky had darkened, so had the rain changed from warm summer rain, to cold fall rain. The changing of the seasons is a good reminder to be grateful – when we are acclimated to the warmth of summer, the change to fall reminds us to be grateful for the warmth we’ve had. The same sentiment applies as we gather for the Thanksgiving holiday. Fall is a wonderful time to reflect and be thankful.

In the church office, we are ramping up for Advent. It still seems so far off, but it will be here in a matter of weeks. There are supplies to order so that they are on hand, there are events to coordinate, and there are documents to prepare. This time of year is so busy, that we try to be grateful for the quieter time in the summer. I am always looking for extra hands to help with Advent preparations. If you have a couple of hours that you can give to us to help prepare, please let me know. I’m happy to have more hands to help out.

The church office will be closed for the Thanksgiving holiday, Thursday, November 28 and Friday, November 29. If you need anything, it’s always a good idea to call the office before stopping in, or email me, that way I know to expect you. I am happy to help with projects and questions throughout the week, and don’t want to miss you if I’m out to the post office or supply store.

I hope you have a wonderful November and Thanksgiving holiday!

Forrest Schroeder
Church Administrator
Remember in Prayer

- Our siblings at Nueva Paz Presbyterian Church in Cuba
- Men & women serving in the Armed Services
- Betty Anderson
- Betty Toft
- Billye Dvorak
- Brent Young, son-in-law of Larry & Becky Glasscock
- Brian, friend of the Smyers family
- Carol Stoub
- Cheryl Donchez, friend of Theresa & Condy Dixon
- Elaine Wood
- Family & Friends of Evie Meyer
- The Family of Gary Eiten, friend of Julie & Pat Kelly
- Gary Mirlenbrink, uncle of Lori Carsten
- Family of Herman Mirlenbrink, grandfather of Lori Carsten
- Holly Oliver, daughter of Mary Kae Headland
- Jan Keeler, friend of Amy Malone
- John Kregg
- Joshua Haberkorn, grandson of Shirley Pine
- Kathleen Kircher
- Kim Rae, friend of Amy Malone
- Linda Bell, daughter of Margot Walsh
- Lisa & Mike Porters, friends of the Leslie family
- Marc Goldstein, friend of Carol Ulreich
- Marge Sandrik
- Mary Jo & Tully Davia, Isabella Davia’s grandparents
- Mary Kate Miller, step-mother of Julie Garino
- Mary, dear friend of Bruce Geary
- Mary Palmer, aunt of Lori Carsten
- Michael DeVries
- Michael, friend of Jane Norman
- Mike Slesicki, cousin of Barb Farr & Joe Benson
- Norb Mirlenbrink, uncle of Lori Carsten
- Peggy Mirlenbrink, aunt of Lori Carsten
- Phil Kasik
- Ruth Kaduke, niece of Herb & Joyce Smyers
- Teri Tuffner, aunt of Candice Mares
- The people of Syria, and especially the relatives of PCWS’ Interfaith Women’s Book Group
- Theresa Ybanez, great niece of Laura Fruit
- Parents of Tiffany Sellman
- Toni Potenza Moya, daughter of Harriett Potenza & Craig Harris
- The family of Zach Fangmeier: His mother Taylor, Brother Nick, and aunt Mary Moos
- The Family of Joseph Van Cura

News Deadlines

Bulletin:
Email announcements to the church office by 9:00 a.m. Wednesday morning.

Weekly Connection:
Email information to Michelle Hennessy by Tuesday, 5:00 p.m. for inclusion in the Thursday email.

Glad Tidings Deadline:
Articles for the next month’s Glad Tidings by the 10th of each month.

To ensure your submission is received, please email articles and pictures to: GT@presbyws.org.

Thank you from the Family of Evie Meyer

Evie Meyer’s children, Nancy, Tom, and John, were grateful for the service and reception at PCWS on October 12. Thank you to the Board of Deacons, our musicians, and others who helped with the events of the day. Continue to keep Evie’s family in your prayers and reach out to them with love.

We’re Social! Are You?

Follow us, share our Information with your friends and family!

You don’t need to join Facebook to see our Page!
Scan to
Learn about PCWS

To view a calendar of events, please visit our webpage!

Signup online and let us know what talent you’d like to share!