

The First Epistle



First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead • Established 1872

September 2020

The Session:

Moderator: Robert Drake

Clerk of Session: Kim Kelsh

Treasurer: Chris Swee

Kathy McKaig, Peggy Johnson, Kim Kelsh, Mary Larson, Chris Swee, Mary Skalet, Megan Wheeler, Dave Lanpher, and Diane Wray-Williams.

The Deacons

Moderator: Barb Worman

Jim Gale, Kathy Giddings, Nicole Hestbeck, Joni Lordemann, John Ortez, Helen Pemble, Deb Piekutowski, Elizabeth Swee

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KIDS “DIG” GRATEFUL GARDEN

During the first week of August, nine kids joined 4-H volunteer, Alecia Hultgren, in the Grateful Garden. Newly expanded through a City of Moorhead partnership, the Grateful Garden offered plenty of room for the kids to social-distance while “digging” up lots of fun ways to explore where our food comes from.



Sponsored by the Clay County 4-H chapter, the program teaches kids about nutrition, plants science, the importance of pollinators, and the roles

omnivores, herbivores, and carnivores play in nature’s life cycle. The kids also got their hands dirty by doing some of the work necessary to keep a garden growing.

When asked what the purpose of the program is, Alecia answered, “We want the kids to try new foods, learn about the things that you see in a typical garden, and learn how to explore the natural environment by asking exploratory-style questions. We also want gardening to be fun!” Alecia was the perfect person to make this a fun program; she is a Clay County Master Gardener, and she is affiliated with the University of Minnesota extension office.

One of the fun games the kids really enjoyed was called, “Berry Picking,” where they used their imagination as they pretended to see and do the things you might see and do when actually picking berries.

One of the participants was Carleigh Swee, daughter of church members Chris and Nadine Swee. She said her favorite part was, “tying tomato plants because you had to crawl through the holes, it was impossible!”

Carleigh’s second favorite part was looking for potato bugs, “even though it was gross!” When asked why they are so gross, Carleigh wrinkled her face and said, “ewww-yuuucckk, ick!” But for some odd reason, this was her second favorite part!

This partnership with 4-H and the Grateful Garden was made possible by Mary Larson and the rest of the dedicated garden volunteers, including 2020 Garden Coordinator, Jane Swanson. Without the expansion of the garden, this important community outreach with 4-H might not have been made possible. Thank you to everyone who helps make the garden look so wonderful.



The First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead

Worship: 10:30 am

2900 Fifth Street South, Moorhead, MN 56560

www.firstpresmhd.org

218.233.1192

E-mail Addresses:

Rev. Robert Drake robert@firstpresmhd.org

Church: admin@firstpresmhd.org

Newsletter Articles: nadineswee@yahoo.com

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Our mission is to be a caring community of God's people who live by Christ's teachings, reach out to others to share the love of God, and celebrate the good news of Jesus Christ through worship, prayer, thought, and action.

CONFRONTING HOPELESSNESS, THWARTING DIVISION

These two phrases truly capture what we need to be doing in our community, our nation and the world. Many of us do feel sad and overwhelmed these days by the inequity, frustration, anger, injustice and division that is so prevalent. And since we are still isolating much of the time it is hard to feel hopeful, let alone feel empowered to take action. Or to know what action we could or should take.

One thing we can do is to support the Peace and Global Witness Offering of the PC(USA) between now and World Communion Sunday (October 4). Your gift to this special offering empowers congregations and individuals to become peacemakers themselves. We are encouraged and equipped to find and address the anxiety and discord that is prevalent throughout this broken and sinful world.

Gifts to the Peace & Global Witness Offering enable the church to promote the Peace of Christ by addressing systems of conflict and injustice across the world. Individual congregations can utilize up to 25% of this Offering to connect locally with the witness of Christ's peace. Mid Councils retain an additional 25% for ministries of peace and reconciliation. The remaining 50% is used by the Presbyterian Mission Agency to advocate for peace and justice in cultures of violence, including our own, through collaborative projects of education and Christian witness.

Please send your Peacemaking gift to our church during the coming month. And add a note to let us know that this donation is for the Peace & Global Witness Offering.

In addition, you can check out this Season of Peace daily devotional of reflection and study which helps us to focus on our calling as peacemakers. The Season of Peace resource can be downloaded as a single file or you can sign up to receive the daily devotional by email each day from September 6 to October 4. <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/peacemaking/season-peace/>

And as you spend time reflecting on your role as a peacemaker, enjoy spending some time coloring the Peacemaking page enclosed in this newsletter.

What should we do with the local portion of the Peace & Global Witness Offering when the needs of our community are so great? When times are uncertain? When we feel isolated and disconnected?

The Action Ministry Committee has decided that this year our donations to this offering could make an impact locally on those struggling with food insecurity, experiencing unemployment, and facing an immediate need for food for their families. So the 30% portion of this year's Peace & Global Witness offering will be given to Churches United's Dorothy Day Food Pantry. Thank you for supporting this offering and helping our neighbors in need of this basic support for life.





PASTOR REFLECTION

Are you anxious? Are you stressed out? Do you feel peaceful most of the time? Do you feel tense most of the time? If someone says something or does something, do you instantly go from 0 to 10? Do you feel like you have enough emotional and spiritual reserve in your soul's gas tank?

For me, the answers are: no, not really, yes, no, happens more frequently these days, none whatsoever.

For instance, right now, as I type this, I'm on my deck catching the waning rays of summer's sun. The next time I get to do this, wearing nothing but shorts and flip flops, could very well be nine months from now. Nine months!

But, as peaceful as it is on my deck here in Staples, I have to contend with my neighbor and his old gas-powered lawnmower.

VROOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO, OOM,

BRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR, WHACK. PUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUL,
VROOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO, BRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR.

Ever since my husband and I bought a battery-operated EGO lawnmower, I am more than ever aware of how loud gas mowers are. With a battery lawn mower you can literally talk on the phone while mowing. Now, on my deck, I can't even hear myself think.

Why is it that what my neighbor does affects me so much? Do I have any right to control what my neighbor can and cannot do?

Have you ever wondered what you would do if you were the president of the United States, and could pass any law you wanted? I have. A lot. I would pass a law against gas lawn mowers. And bad music. And cheap beer.

What unfair laws would you pass?

It seems like no matter what we humans do, our actions not only affect us, they also affect everyone around us. It's like we're all tied together, and no matter how we try, we just can't ever break the bond of human connectedness.

I wonder if God planned it that way? Gas lawn mowers and all.

Which brings me back to anxiety, stress, tension, and our soul's emotional and spiritual reserves.

Unless you are a hermit, you live in some form of a society, and most likely you live in multiple levels and layers of society. Even if we are introverted and independent, we still interact with all these multiple layers of society.

Coronavirus shows us how important these social bonds are. But at the same time, the violence in our nation's streets and the animosity in our national discord affects us all. It might not be as noticeable as my neighbor's lawnmower (and I like the guy, after all), but it sure does affect us.

As a pastor, a big part of my job is talking with people—church members, church visitors, former church members, people I meet, other clergy, the server at a restaurant, basically everybody I meet. I like this, I'm natural at it; it doesn't feel like work.

What I've noticed over the last few months, is that our collective anxiety is up. Our stress levels are high. People are tense, quick to respond in anger, and they have no reserve for patience.

Noticing stuff like this is one of the many things you pay me to do. But now I'm unsure what to do about it. How are we going to cope with our heightened level of stress and anxiety?

I think our best route to diffuse this situation is to do what churches do best: we worship God, we send out Deacon teams to check-in with people, and we educate people about Jesus Christ.

Focusing on these three things are the core of what it means to be a church. So, if you're feeling some of the emotions I described above, feel free to give me a call, and I'll come visit you. We'll worship, pray, and talk about Jesus.

- Pastor Robert Drake

CARING for NEIGHBORS in NEED

Since it's already been around for a little over a year, many of you probably already know about Caring for Neighbors in Need. This is a mission project started by church member Julie Sorenson and her neighbor, Rebecca Smith, in May of 2019. Using the same techniques extreme-coupon pros use, they make bulk purchases of health and hygiene items, and donate them to Churches United for the Homeless (CUH).

Julie and Rebecca got the idea during an open house for Bright Sky Apartments, a supportive-housing development providing 43 units of permanent housing for adults and families that is owned and operated by CUH.

Julie remembers turning to Rebecca, and saying, "Wouldn't it be nice if we could use coupons to buy products and then donate them to residents here, like those extreme-coupon reality TV shows."

After emailing CUH Executive Director, Rev. Sue Koesterman, Julie and Rebecca got the greenlight to put their idea into action.

The next step was finding money to buy the products.

Julie is an expert at writing grants, and so far has received three grants totaling \$2,700! Congratulations, Julie! The Awesome Foundation awarded Caring for Neighbors in Need \$1,000, and the Walmart Foundation awarded them two separate grants adding up to \$1,700.

How do Julie and Rebecca convert coupons into much-needed products for our neighbors?

Julie answers, "We buy two to four newspapers the last Saturday of every month and cut out the coupons. Then I make a spread sheet listing each coupon. Once we're ready, we go to Walmart, get two carts and two handbaskets for sorting, and buy the items. We then go immediately to Churches United and drop everything off."

Julie and Rebecca get help from other people, including Ineke Justitz, Kim Kelsh, Monica Ecker-Browne, and Mary Skalet.

Since its inception, Caring for Neighbors in Need has purchased \$2,328 worth of products for \$1,680, for a total savings of \$648! Great work Julie, Rebecca, and everyone else who has helped out.

If you would like to help keep this mission going strong, you may write a check to the church, and place "Caring for Neighbors in Need" in the memo line. Julie and Rebecca are thankful for all those who have already donated.



Julie Sorenson and Rebecca Smith accept \$1000 grant money from Walmart Foundation (the fabric art behind them was made by Julie

Calling Snow Shovelers!

It is hard to believe, but B & G is already thinking about snow removal! We are changing the format this year and assigning 2 people at a time to the task, for a 2 week period. The same people as last year will be included in the list unless we hear differently. On the list presently are John and Tim Ortez, Frank Kratky, Ron Johnson, Erik and Chris Swee, and Jim Gale. If anyone feels the spirit moving them to help this year, please let us know! We need new volunteers! Please contact either Mary Skalet (218-329-1633) or Frank Kratky (218-233-8382 or 218-329-4226). Thank you !



CLEARWATER FOREST COULD USE YOUR HELP

Dear First Presbyterian Church,

Presbyterian Clearwater Forest was unusually quiet this summer due to the pandemic. Children, youth and grandparents were not practicing archery, balancing on the high ropes, pedaling the bike trails or cooling off in the lake. Despite the oddness of this season we want to share some good news, and some more difficult news, as we continue to plan and build for the years to come.

We gave the year-round staff and the summer staff, who were hired before COVID-19 shut us down, the option of fulfilling their contracts on site. The summer staff, an amazing group of young leaders, sheltered in place together for several weeks, working on leadership development and spiritual growth, as well as making improvements on the property and building relationship with our previous and hopeful campers through virtual experiences they developed. The year-round staff implemented pandemic cleaning procedures and cleaned out the kitchen in preparations for upgrades. The big news is that by the time you receive this letter we will have broken ground for the renovation of Hallett Hall. The plans were scaled back due to the difficulty of raising funds this spring, and we will be putting in more labor as staff, board and volunteers to make the dream a reality. Our capital campaign committee and staff are hard at work raising the funds needed to complete this project as well as our dreams for Osprey.



While a new Conservation Easement has helped build a more secure financial foundation for the future, our needs continue for both the day to day operations and rebuilding the scholarship fund so that every child who wants to come to camp in 2021 and beyond will have that opportunity. Like everyone else, even here in this special, powerfully life-growing, giving and liminal place that is Clearwater Forest, the bills still arrive. The cost of keeping the buildings in good shape, lights, heat, air, and emergency repair continue. Lawns still need care. Equipment and supplies need to be available, functional and safe for group use. Staff need to be cared for.



In this time of uncertainty, the Board of Presbyterian Clearwater Forest is fully aware of how vastly diverse each person's unique situation may be. Our ask is that if you are able, you would please consider an additional gift to our ministry. With the loss of 95% of our revenue from bookings, summer camps and retreats since March, we are working hard to replace over \$300,000 in lost income. We are still over \$100,000 short and are relying on your extra gift. If you are not financially able, but feel called to support, consider joining the many who pray their support and offer time and service to the radically distinct and blessed place that is Presbyterian Clearwater Forest.

Thank you for the many ways you support Clearwater Forest as we honor the past and build together for the future.

Doug Snaza, Director of Outreach and Programs, and the Funds Development Committee

To send a financial gift to Clearwater Forest, checks may be made payable to "Clearwater Forest" and mailed to:

16595 Crooked Lake Road
Deerwood, MN 56444

To send a financial gift online, visit their website at www.clearwaterforest.org

NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

At our outdoor worship service on Sunday, August 23, we officially welcomed Susan Nelson into our congregation. Susan sat down with Pastor Robert, sharing parts of her life story with him. Here are some excerpts.

“I grew up in Mandan and Bismarck, where I attended Bismarck High School, graduating in 1964. We lived on the very western edge of town, and I always enjoyed looking at the animals and plants that grew there beside the Missouri River, which was a steep vertical drop two blocks from my parent’s house.”

When asked what they did for fun, Susan talked about taking the inter-city bus between Mandan and Bismarck that cost 10¢. They would then go to Woolworth or maybe see a movie.

Susan was married to Lynn Mader when she was 20, and they had two boys, Greg, now 54, and Eric, now 46. But the marriage ended in 1976 in divorce. This change in life sparked Susan to get a master’s degree in counseling from Moorhead State University (MSUM today) in 1978.

“I worked for almost 30 years in the counseling field, first in rural Minnesota, then in Alexandria, and then later at Vocational Rehabilitation,” Susan says about her vocational life.

Today, Susan has four grandchildren from her two sons, ranging in age from 3 ½ to 14 ½. They live in Washington State and in Mesa Arizona.

For hobbies, Susan enjoys being a supporting member of the Botanic Garden Society located near the Yunker farm. “I really enjoyed gardening and designing flower beds, at least up until last year.”

Susan even completed the Master Gardener program in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. This was back when she lived there with her second husband, Dallas Nelson. “We lived there from 2007 until shortly after his death in January 2011, from cancer.

When asked about her deceased husband, Susan recalls, “Dallas was a terrific, friendly guy who liked golf, target shooting and making pottery on a wheel. He had numerous boats during our marriage, and he enjoyed the water and cruising around. But I preferred canoes, so eventually we switched to an Alumacraft canoe.”

Asked about other hobbies, Susan says, “In 1997 I discovered watercolor painting, this was when we lived in Rochester, MN, where Dallas taught at the Tech College. He taught a Building Maintenance course on boilers and air conditioning. Before he was a teacher, Dallas earned a four-year degree in Law Enforcement, and was a policeman in a Minneapolis suburb, until he broke his leg in four places, and was told he had to quit police work.”

It was after this that Susan really became involved in watercolor painting. She continued participating in watercolor clubs and shows in Rochester, Eau Claire, and now in Moorhead.

What does Susan like to paint? “My favorites are flowers, old barns, nature, animals, especially cats. Drawing and painting are activities that give me great joy. I participate in the Hjemkomst Artists Group, which meets on Thursdays.”

Susan has a long history in various church groups. She grew up in First Baptist Church of Bismarck. Over the years, she found meaning in other churches such as United Church of Christ, United Methodist, and the Unitarian Universalists.

“I am happy to have found and joined the First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead. It feels like a very positive, Bible-based church that offers spiritual support to those of us like myself who were feeling lost for a while!”

We are happy that Susan found us too!



Susan Nelson, shown here with two of her watercolors and a pencil drawing.

SOCCER NET REPLACED

Sajid Ghauri deserves many thanks for his recent replacement of a missing soccer net. The missing net was a result of being eaten by the rampaging lawn mower (some driver error may have been involved). The remorseful driver was having difficulty in finding a replacement net. A call to Sajid asking for advice was met with, “I will fix it”. Sajid quickly installed a new net. So, thank you Sajid, for your kind help.

Knitting Group

The Knitting Group began life several years ago with people bringing their personal projects, blankets for Linus project, prayer shawls for Deacons to distribute and hats, mittens and scarves for children. We have since moved to Caribou coffee in south Fargo for conversation and coffee, but covid 19 shut that down. Members are working on hats and mittens for Ellen Hopkins school (through Joni Lordeman) for recess--yes winter is coming--the YWCA shelter and Bdecan ministry as some children are on board a bus to school and are not allowed on the bus without proper outerwear. If knitting is not your "thing", cash donations to purchase clothing gear for the children can be sent to the resby office marked for Bdecan ministry

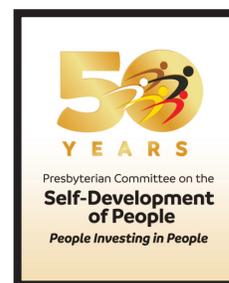


Members are looking for an alternative meeting space with coffee! and we we will let you know when and where that will happen soon. In the meantime keep knitting and crocheting. Ask Donna Monreith for balls of yarn to keep you happy.

Self Development of People

The National committee on the Self Development of People met recently to approve partnerships with several groups:

- Koininia Bakery in Georgia where the group needs straining for it bakers a major source of income for many;
- Atlanta Alliance providing seed and supplies for a cooperative farm
- Print Collaborative of Cleveland where members are able to connect with persons of color to provide website help, print needs for small businesses;
- North Flint Reinvestment providing a local fresh foods market after the national chains departed after the Flint water crisis;
- Logan Square Neighborhood Association of Chicago, providing a way for the neighborhood to have a larger voice in self determination;
- Living Well United of LeRoy IL, providing hope and programs for seniors in this rural area.



Elizabeth Swee is part of the 16 member group who approved the projects and moved to fund them are part of your gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing. Although in the recent past, site visits were required, today it is site visits by Zoom not physical travel. It has been interesting to see the interactions by this new way of doing things.

SESSION VOTES FOR OUTDOOR ONLY WORSHIP

Once again, following the recommendation of the Worship Team and the COVID Re-opening Task Force, the session voted to not return to indoor worship for the month of September. Outdoor worship is 13th and 27th.



CHURCH FINANCES DURING CORONAVIRUS

If you're wondering how the church is doing during the coronavirus pandemic, church treasurer Chris Swee has some good news for us.

“After a few years of belt tightening, and carefully managing our financial resources, I am happy to report that members and visitors are really stepping up to support their church. Our income is \$17,000 more than it was last year at this time.”

A quick glance at the graphic will show you what Chris is talking about. At the end of July 2019, the church' income was \$67,000.

But this year, at the end of July 2020, the church's income was \$84,000, a \$17,000 increase.

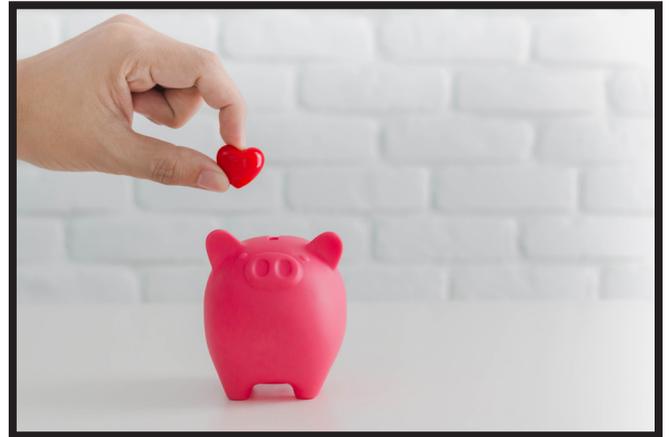
Where is the money coming from?

Although each person's financial giving is private, Pastor Robert has some guesses.

“We've done a great job over the last three years of paying attention to the basics; like worship, kids' Sunday school, and community outreach like the Grateful Garden. Although we're a small church, we still manage to do a lot with what we have. And I think people noticed, and they know that we wisely spend resources where we feel God is calling us. It all adds up.”

It also helps that the church's expenses are down, partly as a result of decreased administrative costs due to the coronavirus pandemic.

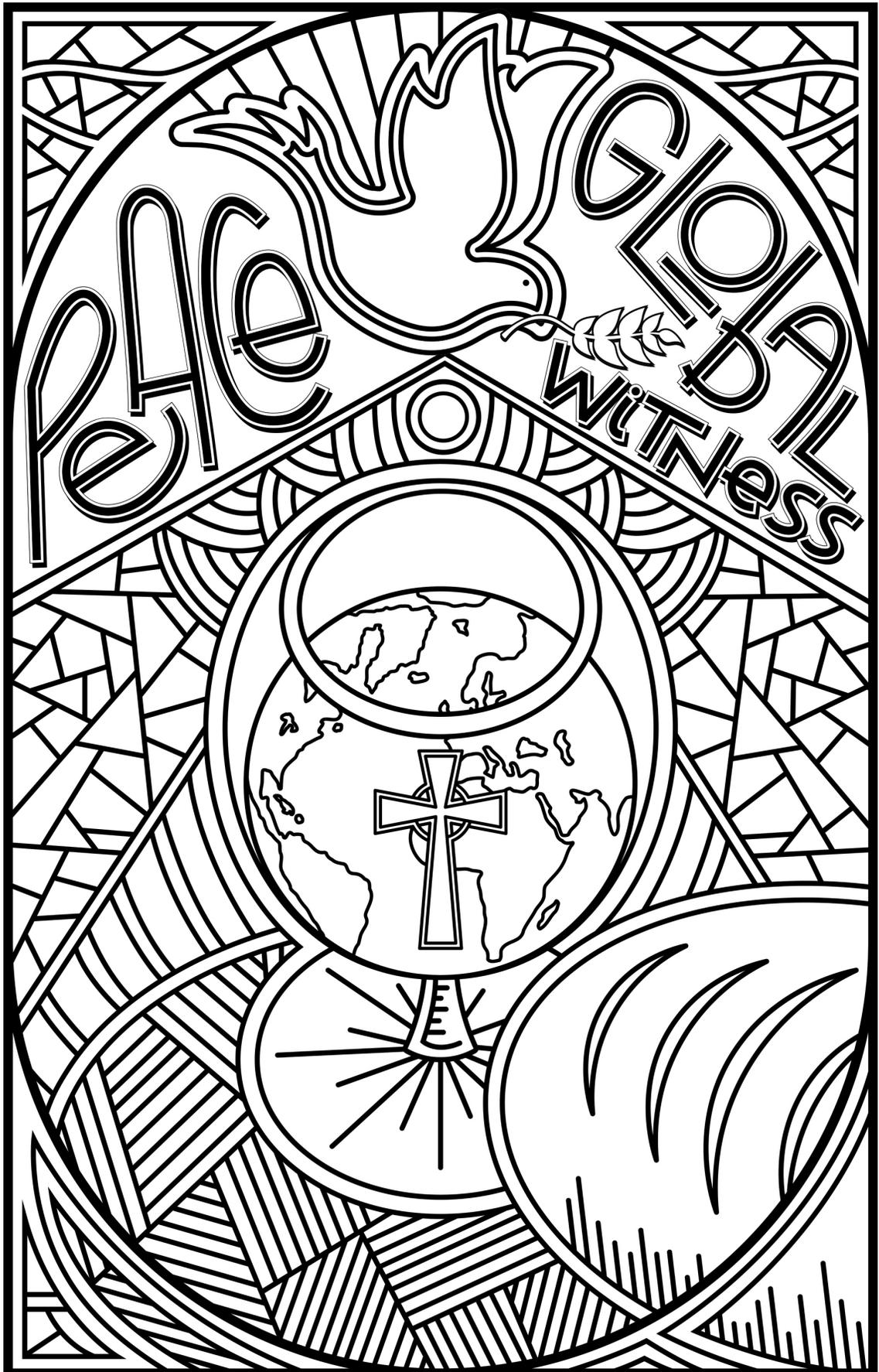
Thank you to everyone who gives of their financial gifts. We are on track to end the year with a balanced budget. Thank you also to everyone who gives of their time and volunteer gifts. The church needs all of us, and God is helping bring us together.



Income	Expenses
\$84,000 YTD July 31, 2020	\$76,000 YTD July 31, 2020
\$67,000 YTD July 31, 2019	\$78,000 YTD July 31, 2019

STAY SAFE
 together we will get through this

 PEACE & GLOBAL WITNESS
SPECIAL OFFERINGS
PEACEMAKING AND RECONCILIATION



First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead
2900 Fifth Street South
Moorhead, MN 56560

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Inside this Issue:



4-H Gardening Class

New Member!

