

# *The SPIRIT* of the Season of Harvest



Ridgefield-Crystal Lake Presbyterian Church  
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September - November 2018

Dear Friends,

I would like to draw your attention to a number of exciting events coming up between now and Thanksgiving.

- 1) After spending the Summer looking for inspiration and example from amongst lesser known Biblical characters in our “Faces of Faith” series, I thought during September I might turn our attention to “How God Deals with our Frailty & Failure.” After all, we aren’t all saints!
- 2) Our Adult Education class is being re-named as “Faith Encounters,” which I believe better reflects the purpose of that learning opportunity. We try to vary the subject to cater to different interests, and during September and October there will be two classes offered. Our Christian Ed. Team will be launching a “**Season of Kindness.**” This will be a whole church challenge to learn how simple everyday acts can show Christ’s love.

I will be leading a book discussion on “The Presbyterian Controversy.” This deals with the 1922-36 crisis between Fundamentalists, Modernists and Moderates over Biblical interpretation, Darwinism, the church’s role in politics and how to educate pastors. This crisis almost destroyed our denomination and the compromises and decisions made formed the church we have today. Anyone from 15-95 is invited to join our lively and informative discussions in the Lounge, week by week at 10:00-10:45AM. Come to one or come to them all! Watch our weekly announcements for exact dates and more details.

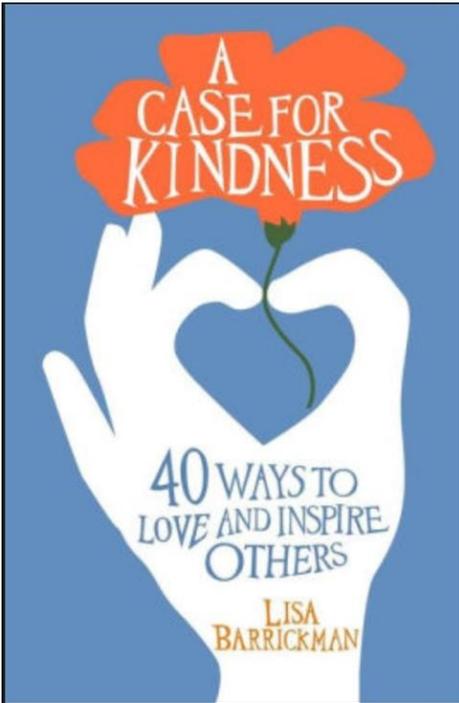
- 3) Just as in nature, the church year is split into different seasons. For some time now we have been successfully coordinating our worship, education and ministries to work hand -in-glove so that we maximize our celebratory impact and involve all aspects of our shared life of faith. To do that takes planning and input from as many as possible. As we approach Fall we have to start thinking about Advent and beyond and so you are invited to join our next **Seasonal Planning Meeting at 10:30AM on Wednesday, October 17,** (Subway sandwich lunch to follow).

Your Pastor & Friend, John

# Christian Education - A Season for Kindness

*"I cannot do all things, but I can do small things with great love."*

– Mother Teresa



Muster all the kindness you can in your heart. That's right, right this second. Now hold it in the palm of your hands, and throw it like confetti into the air. Imagine its beautiful array of colors floating and landing everywhere. Perhaps some land on the shoulder of your neighbors and stay with them for a few days. Perhaps others land right at your own feet. Maybe a few land on random strangers in line at the grocery. If you look for the confetti of kindness in the world, you will find it, but if you spread that kindness, unimaginable brilliance will shine through. Wouldn't you like to be a part of that?

Wait no more! The Christian Education team beginning the week of September 30th will be kicking off *A Case for Kindness*. For 6 weeks (~40 days) you may pledge to be a part of something magical and deliberately share kindness with others. Don't worry - kindness doesn't take long; the effect will long outlast the time it takes.

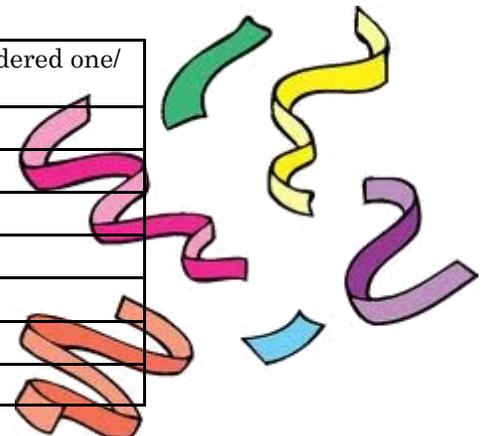
## Examples of Kindness:

1. Write a letter of appreciation to someone who impacted your life.
2. Make dinner for a friend.
3. Take a bottle of water to someone working outside on a hot day (or hot chocolate on a cold day).
4. Tape a sandwich bag of coins to a vending machine or parking meter.
5. Take in your neighbor's trashcans after trash pickup.

*Just think - if 70% of the congregation participates that's 175 people sharing 40 acts of kindness a piece or 7,000 acts of kindness in just 6 weeks!*

During these six weeks we will focus on being stewards of kindness and how SMALL things can make a BIG difference, and at 10AM in Squad Room 2, you will get to hear from different congregational members as they share their stories and discuss the book *A Case for Kindness*. The children will have their own kindness opportunities in Sunday School, too. Be on the lookout for info on how you can be involved.

September 30 <sup>th</sup>	Introduce A Case for Kindness and pick up books if you ordered one/ CROP Walk as a congregation (Sign up on RCLPC's team)
October 7 <sup>th</sup>	The Extra Mile
October 14 <sup>th</sup>	Seeking God's Guidance
October 21 <sup>st</sup>	Many Gifts
October 28 <sup>th</sup>	Place a Lamp on the Lampstand
November 4 <sup>th</sup>	People Before Projects
November 11 <sup>th</sup>	Eyes Wide Open
November 18 <sup>th</sup>	Bountiful Harvest of Kindness Celebration





## Sunday, September 30, 2018

Mark your calendars! The [McHenry County CROP Hunger Walk](#) will take place Sunday, September 30! Our RCLPC family will gather with others in our community to fight hunger both here and around the world.

Please consider sponsoring a walker and/or walk either a 1-mile or 4-mile route, stepping off at 1pm from First United Methodist Church, 236 W. Crystal Lake Ave., Crystal Lake. 25% of the funds raised go to our local food pantries in McHenry County! The remaining 75% will be distributed by [Church World Service](#) to areas of the world with the greatest hunger needs.

Let's make this the biggest group of RCLPC walkers yet! Register to become a walker, a sponsor, or both at <https://www.crophungerwalk.org/mchenrycounty/>. Search for "RCLPC" in the "Find a Walker or Team" field and join in! We hope you will plan to support this year's RCLPC CROP Walk Team to help feed the hungry both in our community and throughout the world!

Questions? Contact Allison Larsen ([AJLarsen90@gmail.com](mailto:AJLarsen90@gmail.com)) or Nancy Blakely ([NBBlakely@comcast.net](mailto:NBBlakely@comcast.net)).

## Meet Your Deacon Family - Sunday, October 21

Plan to come to the "Meet your Deacon Family" gathering during the 10AM hour Sunday, Oct. 21! Everyone is welcome -- members, visitors, young and old. There will be snacks and drinks, of course! Get to know each other, and learn of ways we can all support each other.

## Make a Joyful Noise with Us!

Music is the heart of the worship experience at Ridgefield-Crystal Lake Presbyterian Church. Throughout its 180-year history, our music ministry enriches and enlivens worship through a wide variety of music, from traditional classical and modern choral works, to gospel, jazz and a host of world music offerings. The all-volunteer choirs and band include members of all ages and varying backgrounds, with musical experience ranging from beginner to professional.

As a congregation, the hymns we sing each Sunday are shaping who we are and what we are becoming. It does not matter how well we sing them, but only that we are singing--singing them with energy and fervor, singing them boldly and with intentionality. Not only are we changing ourselves in that singing, but we are being changed together as we are united in thought and prayer, united in breath as we breathe together with each phrase. As we breathe together, even our hearts begin to pulse together. The power of singing transforms us not only as individuals but transforms the entire community. The Christian faith is a singing faith.

Join us as we journey together through song and instrumental music as ministers of congregational singing.

- Adult choir—Wednesdays, 7:15-8:45PM, choir room
- Jubilation choir (middle school—high school) Sundays, Noon, choir room
- Band—singers and instrumentalists, Wednesdays, 6:00-7:15PM, Sunday morning, 8:00AM
- Children's music—experience song, movement and instruments through the Christian education hour at 10:00AM

*Do you play an instrument or love to sing and you're not sure how or where to begin participating? Contact Sherri Dees at [sherri@rclpc.org](mailto:sherri@rclpc.org) with questions, or visit with me after 9 or 11 o'clock worship.*

## *Greetings from Your Compassion, Peace and Justice (CPJ) Team*

Your Compassion, Peace and Justice (CPJ) Team is delighted to preview some of CPJ's upcoming activities this fall. We invite you to participate in all or some of the activities we've outlined below.

- ◆ In October, RCLPC will again be hosting a visiting PCUSA International Peacemaker. "Holly" Bako Rakotondralambo from Madagascar will be visiting RCLPC **October 10-11** (Wednesday/Thursday) as part of her week-long visit to Blackhawk Presbytery. We are planning various events for the congregation to learn about Holly's faith-based work to address environmental, health, and other social justice issues in one of the poorest countries of the world.



- ◆ On **November 4** (Sunday), all are invited to participate in a "Write for Rights" letter-writing event. A portion of Friendship Hall will be open from 8:30AM-12:30PM for congregation members to pen letters to government officials in other countries on behalf of prisoners of conscience and other victims of human rights abuses. This year's cases are all women who have been jailed, threatened, or otherwise targeted for advocating on behalf of youth, women, people with disabilities and other groups.

**WRITE A LETTER  
CHANGE A LIFE**

- ◆ Throughout November CPJ will be hosting a series of "Denominational Positions" discussions during the 10-11AM Faith Encounters hour. Illustratively, each one-hour session will explore PCUSA positions on one topic: for example, gun violence, immigration, health care, the environment. The list of topics is still being developed and suggestions may be offered to Pastor John or the Adult Education Committee.

And, just what is a "denominational position"? If you've taken the PCUSA 101 course, you've learned that our denomination is akin to a representational democracy. All manner of issues, ranging from our PCUSA constitution to administration to social witness, are guided and determined by our elected representatives.

Obviously, not everyone will agree with every position, and there is often much debate, particularly on social witness issues. These sessions are your chance to learn the denomination's position on various topical concerns.



- ◆ We often see "threads" or interconnectedness among disparate items. For the above three CPJ programs, there is a "Madagascar" thread. Our visiting international peacemaker is from Madagascar. At January's letter-writing event for prisoners of conscience, several wrote to Madagascar's Minister of Justice, asking him to overturn the conviction of Clovis Razafimalala, falsely imprisoned for his efforts to protect that island's rain forest. This summer's PCUSA General Assembly unanimously approved a resolution calling on the church to promoting democracy, good governance, human rights, and sustainable development in Madagascar.
- ◆ Your Compassion, Peace and Justice Team invites you to prayerfully consider participating in any or all of this fall's events. More details will be forthcoming in the church bulletins as the event dates approach.

# ***RCLPC in Mission***

## **Living Waters for the World Update**

Our Presbyterian Church partners in Jerez, Guatemala recently celebrated the two year anniversary of the installation of their water purification system. They are now producing monthly nearly 2000 gallons of clean, safe water for the congregation and community. The photo below shows the Water Committee around the table where they celebrated with cake and songs of praise! How delighted we are with the success of this partnership with our brothers and sisters in Jerez!

The six month anniversary of the installation of the water system at Ciudad de Refugio, our Presbyterian partners in La Felicidad, occurred in June. Reports indicate the system is operating as expected and providing purified water for the church and village there as well.

In late August, Cindy and David Theobald and Jac Kelawae visited our two partners at Jerez and La Felicidad to bring greetings from RCLPC and just to catch up with the news between our churches. They also went out to our next partnering church at El Chico, on the Pacific coast of the country. The power to run the water system there will require solar powered generation, and they visited El Chico to lay the groundwork for our future visit to install the water purification system. Solar powered generation at El Chico will be the first in Guatemala for Living Waters for the World.

~ Your Living Waters for the World Team



## **Local Mission:**

### **Addressing Hunger and Homelessness in Our Communities**

What would your life look like with an income less than half the poverty line? That's less than \$10,000 for a family of three. Over 6,000 McHenry County residents can tell you. Can you imagine paying more than half your income for rent? One in five McHenry County households does. That's unaffordable if you're poor. These factors help create a situation in which over 160 McHenry County residents are homeless on any given night, and 625 residents experience homelessness in the course of a year, with 28 percent of those residents being children. Here the leading factors contributing to homelessness are mental illness, domestic violence, and economic hardship. Veterans and those with substance addiction or other chronic health issues make up the remainder.

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## **Addressing Hunger and Homelessness in Our Communities**

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RCLPC has a long history of helping to address short-term needs of hungry and homeless people, as well as work toward solutions. Financial gifts from this year's budgeted church mission funds include:

- ◆ \$750 — Pioneer Center, whose services include assistance to homeless youth and PADS emergency housing.
- ◆ \$750 — Home of the Sparrow, a shelter that has served women and their children for more than 30 years.
- ◆ \$1000 — Turning Point, a domestic violence agency serving women, men, and children.

In June members donated items for guests of the Old Firehouse Assistance Center (OFAC), a center which provides services and resources for homeless people, and gave financial gifts to support both OFAC and the new McHenry County Homelessness Project. Two weekends of the summer theater performances raised funds for these efforts: \$1482 to be used for items OFAC needs throughout the year and \$1604 for the McHenry County Homelessness Project.

The recently organized McHenry County Homelessness Project is planning a fixed-site emergency shelter to serve the county. This will allow our homeless neighbors stability—an address they can use in job searches, transportation to a job, and services as needed. The facility will offer 80 beds per night, space for day use that includes service providers, access to job search and training help, plus laundry and showers. Residents begin their journeys to self-sufficiency at all these shelters.

Beyond our financial gifts, RCLPC hosted a Compassion for Campers lunch on August 20 at the PADS day center. Church members donated personal items ranging from insect repellent to socks for homeless people. We regularly serve at the Crystal Lake Food Pantry. On August 21 we hosted a senior food truck in Crystal Lake that visited two senior living centers. We will be participating in the McHenry County CROP Hunger Walk on September 30. Each spring we participate in Bread for the World's Offering of Letters, where we write letters to our legislators asking them to pass legislation that will alleviate and prevent hunger at home and abroad.

Hunger Action Week in October will bring two new opportunities this year. PC(USA) International Peacemaker Holly Rakotondralambo, program director for the Madagascar Department of Development, will be at RCLPC on Wednesday, October 10, to talk about food sustainability. In a separate effort, our youth will be filling bags with food and giving them to homeless people in Chicago.

Volunteers are always welcome and needed, wherever your time and interest lead you:

- ◆ OFAC needs people to prepare and serve lunches on weekdays at the center. A simple lunch for 25-40 guests can be prepared for under \$30. Contact Cindy Theobald for information.
- ◆ At 10:00am on 2nd and 5th Sundays from October through April, we make lunches in the church kitchen for homeless people. Join us, or assist on a weekday with shopping for the lunch supplies. Contact MJ Towne.
- ◆ Continue to fill the basket in Fellowship Hall with items for distribution at OFAC. Check the list for what's needed. Contact Charlie Doll with questions.

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## Addressing Hunger and Homelessness in Our Communities

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- ◆ Continue to fill the basket in Fellowship Hall with items for distribution at OFAC. Check the list for what's needed. Contact Charlie Doll with questions.
- ◆ On a Wednesday each month help at the Crystal Lake Food Pantry. Morning and afternoon shifts are available. Contact MJ Towne.
- ◆ Be part of the 30th McHenry County CROP Hunger Walk on Sunday afternoon, September 30. Sign up online or through Allison Larsen to walk, donate, or do both!

RCLPC continues to be very generous in supporting efforts to help hungry and homeless people. We support efforts to make hunger and homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring. We look to a day when all God's children have enough to eat and a place to call home. Thank you very much for your generosity and faithfulness.

~ Mission Team



### **Prayer Chain**

Did you know that RCLPC has a Prayer Chain? Our small anonymous band of dedicated volunteers, in total confidence, give the power of prayer in response to congregational requests. We would like to review and expand this important aspect of our common life and invite suggestions and new volunteers.

Please contact either Deb Steele or Pastor John to discuss further.