



FIRST PRES NEWS

monthly

VOLUME V | MAY 2026

A note from pastor...

Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. ¹⁷And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3:14-17

As the Mission Initiative was selecting the recipients for the Hand of Hope campaign this year, I looked up some information about the Synod of the Reformed-Presbyterian Church of Cuba which is the body that gathers together four presbyteries in Cuba. What I came across was their newsletter for the beginning of this year. I was struck by their theme for the year which is, "God calls us to be a church that gives thanks for, shares and celebrates Christ's wisdom." Rev. Yosbeni Ochoa Padilla offers a moving article explaining the significance of the theme in the Cuban context. He explains the difficult circumstances and great need on the island alongside an interpretation of the text above and concludes, "In the midst of very real challenges, Colossians invites us to live a faith that is profound, collective, and transformative. [the church is called] to be a space of hospitality, where the word of Christ is not only preached but is an abiding part of everyone's lives. Let it come to life!"

I was revived to see the Cuban church living out the text above and their theme for this year even amid the most trying times. I encourage us to pray for our sister church and for all the churches in Cuba and to contemplate and discern how we can live out the words of Rev. Ochoa Padilla.

First Presbyterian Church

716 College Avenue
Racine, WI 53403
262.632.1686
firstpresracine.org

Pastor

Rev. Darren Utley
PastorDarren@firstpresracine.org

Parish Nurse

Peggy Taylor
PeggyParishNurse@yahoo.com

Organist & Chancel Choir Director

Alejandro Alumbros
piano3842@gmail.com

Handbell Choir Director

Fumi Nakayama
fnakayama@carthage.edu

Worship Music Leader

Mark Paffrath
mark@markpaffrath.com

Media Tech Specialist

Steve Comeau
steve@spliceaudio.com

Sexton

Gloria Zember
gcs.connects@gmail.com

Nursery

Patricia Peterson
triciapeterson13@yahoo.com

Financial Secretary

Theresa Revis
fsoffice@firstpresracine.org

Digital Media Coordinator

Shelley Maurer
shelley@firstpresracine.org



Music & Arts Initiative

Art is always in season. But, is there some art you'd like to rehome? During the summer *Music & More* will be holding an art sale before and after each Thursday concert in the Chapel Art Gallery.

Here's how this works. Bring the art that you'd like to sell to the gallery just inside the gallery doors to the right. Attach your name and suggested price. We will display your art in the gallery. Proceeds will be donated to Music & More Scholarships or, if you request proceeds be returned to you, *Music & More* will keep 20% of the purchase price.

Let's share art together!

Questions? Email Pat at:
pbadger@prairieschool.com

Happy Anniversary!

Alejandro Alumbros & Ami Bouterse
May 19, 2001
Ken & Fumi Nakayama
May 24, 1997
Royce & Barbara Earnest
May 26, 1990
Jeff Leavell & Georgia Herrera
May 27, 1989
Russ & Kathy Wortley
May 27, 1989

Happy Birthday!

1 Linda Schubert
2 Victoria Vollman
3 Ken Schacht
6 Royce Earnest
7 Logan Humphreys
Julian Grunewald
9 Sandy Hawley
11 Alejandro Alumbros
13 Ken Nakayama
16 Carrie Massey
Austin Moulds
20 Megan Humphreys
25 Jenny Humphreys
26 Jennings Leavell
27 Mike Wahlen
Debbie Yale
31 Harold Ralston

Greeters

3 Bev & Ginny
10 Bud & Katie
17 Nancy & Linda
24 Ritters
31 Bev & Ginny

Ushers

3 Brookes
10 Larry & Sharon
17 Steve S & Ken
24 Dave & Alan
31 Brookes

Liturgists

3 Sharon C
10 John B
17 Mary B
24 Ko K
31 Ken S

Fellowship

3 Ken and Jen
10 Brookes
17 Ritters
24 Leavells
31 Holles
5/31 A joint potluck with OBUUC!



Celebrating 33 Years of Music & More

Music & More Season 33 kicks-off with a special evening concert on Sat. May 9, at 7:00^{PM}. The 90-minute concert, "Spring Sampler," features vocals and piano from "Caritas" (Greg & Kathy Berg and Kate Potter Barrow); violinist Jesse Gomez with Heather Lopp on piano; and singers/songwriters Mark Paffrath & Zachary Scot Johnson. Early Bird Tickets are \$15 through May 2, and can be purchased in the church office or online at www.firstpresracine.org

Ten FREE noontime concerts will be held on Thursdays from June 4 through Aug. 6, noon to 1:00^{PM}. The concerts are fun and fast-paced with three varied acts performing each week. The summer freewill offering will benefit the *Women's Resource Center* and *Health Care Network*.

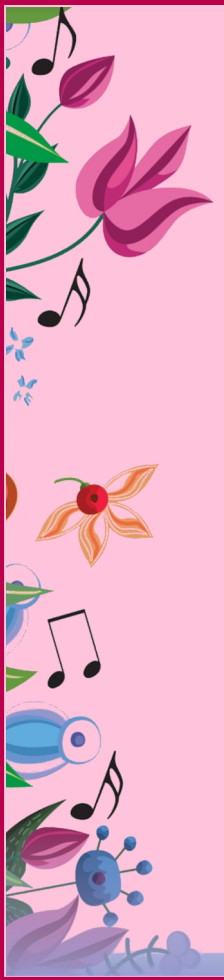
We look forward to welcoming these new acts in June: Riley Saenim (Wisconsin Poetry Out Loud Competition Winner 2025); The Prairie School Jazz Combo (trumpets & saxophones); pianist Jim Sodke; vocalist Elizabeth Steffensen; and pianist Dean Gunnarson.

Please consider making a donation to support this outstanding program. Donations of any amount are needed and appreciated! We depend on contributions from individuals and businesses to pay for musicians (125 last year!), advertising, and other concert expenses. As the series grows, so do our expenses. Donations may be given IN HONOR or IN MEMORY of someone, or to mark a special occasion. Donors will be acknowledged in our concert programs that are updated weekly.

Platinum	\$1,000 and above	Supporters	\$100 to \$299
Sustainers	\$500 to \$999	Friends	\$1 to \$99
Patrons	\$301 to \$499		
Sponsors	\$300		

It's easy to donate securely online (see link above, in first paragraph). Click on PayPal and select Music & More from the drop-down menu. Or, send a check to the church. Thank you!

Volunteers are needed throughout the season. Contact Georgia Hall for information.



June Performers for Music & More

June 4

Carolyn Wehner - vocal & piano
Riley Saenim - poetry
Waiting for Eddie Band -
vocal, piano, guitar, bass, drums

June 11

Spirit of Racine Music Makers - vocal & piano
Nancy Maio Trio - violin, guitar, drums
The Prairie School Jazz Combo -
trumpets & saxophones

June 18

Jillian Bruss & Friends - vocal & piano
Jim Sodke - piano
Mark Paffrath & Liz Steffensen - vocal & guitar

June 25

Sweet Melody Strings - hammered dulcimers
Dean Gunnarson - piano
Bouterse-Alumbreros Family - vocal & piano



Missions Initiative

One of our Hand of Hope recipients this year is the Cuba Partners Network, and it is the Presbyterian organization that maintains the connection and support with the church in Cuba. I am hoping to attend their conference this year because I know that Ary usually attends. I hope you will support the Hand of Hope campaign this year for all the good it will do in our community and all the way to Cuba.



Because

So I can't save the world—
can't save even myself,
can't wrap my arms around
every frightened child, can't
foster peace among nations,
can't bring love to all who
feel unlovable.

So I practice opening my heart
right here in this room and being gentle
with my insufficiency. I practice
walking down the street heart first.

And if it is insufficient to share love,
I will practice loving anyway.

I want to converse about truth,
about trust. I want to invite compassion
into every interaction.

One willing heart can't stop a war.

One willing heart can't feed
all the hungry.

And sometimes,
daunted by a task too big,
I ask myself,
What's the use of trying?

But today, the invitation is clear:
To open the heart like a lilac in May,
knowing freeze is possible
and opening anyway.

To take love seriously.

To give love wildly.

To race up to the world

as if I were a puppy,
adoring and unjaded,
stumbling on my own exuberance.

To feel the shock of indifference,
of anger, of cruelty, of fear,
and stay open.

To love as if it matters,

as if the world depends on it.

©—Rosemerry Trommer Wahtola



Things are springing up, and you're invited to the First Presbyterian / OBUUC Combined Fellowship on Sunday, May 31, 2026.

Planned by the "sowers" from both congregations, this Sunday is a special chance to mingle and learn more about each other. The day will unfold in this way:

9:30-10:00^{AM} — First Presbyterian Sunday Service

10:15-11:15^{AM} — Combined Fellowship of All of US!***

11:30-12:00^{PM} — OBUUC Sunday Service

***In addition to bringing yourself—snacks, salads, sundries, cookies, pies, vegetables, fruits, and treats are mightily anticipated and warmly welcome.

More details to come.

Hand of Hope / One Great Hour of Sharing

WHAT DOES THE LORD REQUIRE OF YOU? "...TO DO JUSTICE..." MICAH 6:8

The prophet Micah calls for a life that is focused on justice and mercy. It's a call to action, urging us to live out our faith in a way that reflects God's love, to put justice into practice. This year our Hand of Hope/OGHS campaign will benefit the following four recipient organizations. Your donation will help to answer God's call to us: "To act justly...to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

Royal Family KIDS Camp: RFK serves foster children ages 7-11 from Racine County who have been removed from their homes due to neglect, abandonment, or abuse. These children experience not only physical trauma, but significant emotional trauma from their families of origin. The trust that should be built between a caring parent and child has been broken, diminishing a child's sense of self-worth. Royal Family KIDS steps in through a week-long summer camp created specifically to help foster children heal. Because neglect is such a defining part of these children's lives, RFK maintains a two-campers-to-one-counselor ratio, ensuring each child receives the attention, affirmation, and care they have been missing. This 100% free to participants camp provides a safe, nurturing environment where children can simply be kids—enjoying swimming, fishing, boating, woodworking, crafts, games, and special sessions that creatively address some of the challenges they face. <https://racine-rfk.org/>

Women's Resource Center: The mission of Women's Resource Center is to provide crisis intervention, advocacy, education and prevention services for a diverse population of victims or individuals at risk of Domestic Abuse and/or sexual assault, by promoting positive changes for individuals served and the broader community in Racine County. <https://www.wrcracinewi.com/>

Cuba Partners Network: Founded over thirty years ago by member congregations, the Cuba Partners Network has a long and rich history of encouraging and supporting vital partnerships between the Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA) and the Presbyterian-Reformed Church of Cuba (IPRC). We are committed to developing relationships which are grounded in companionship, cultural humility, and co-development - whether between congregations, presbyteries, the IPRC Synod or the Ecumenical Seminary in Cuba (SET). Companionship is visible in regular WhatsApp calls and chats between Cuban and U.S. church members who pray for one another. Cultural humility is listening first and speaking last, taking time to learn about one another's reality instead of making assumptions. Co-development is operating in partnership, with each partner bringing their own gifts to the table, planning together, doing together. The Cuba Partners Network works closely with PC(USA) world mission entities through Global Ecumenical Liaison, Central America and the Caribbean Basin, Rev. José Manuel Capella-Pratts and Elder Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri. <https://www.cubapartnersnetwork.org/>

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS): We are all aware of the many ways our church works to ensure that all of God's people can flourish. One Great Hour of Sharing is centered in the call to do just that, to do our part to create justice so every person can truly live. The Offering supports the causes of hunger and poverty alleviation, disaster relief, community development, climate change, immigration/migration and refugee advocacy. These vital areas of ministry — chosen by the General Assembly — go a long way to ensure that every person is able to live into the fullness of life that is God's promise to all of us.

You can give securely on-line by visiting our website at firstpresracine.org, choose "Donate", click on the PayPal icon and choose OGHS/Hand of Hope. Checks can also be added to the offering collection on Sundays (made out to First Presbyterian Church with a note in the memo area OGHS/Hand of Hope). **Donations will be accepted through June 21, 2026.** At the conclusion of the campaign, checks will be distributed to these worthy organizations.

Your generosity is deeply appreciated.

With love and gratitude,
Mission Initiative Committee

*Looking for something out of the ordinary to see?
Do you enjoy musicals?
Are you a history buff?*



Then you need to see *The Hello Girls*, a musical production from the Kenosha Unified Theater Arts and music direction by our own musician extraordinaire—**Alejandro Alumbrosos!**

KUSD Theater Arts—“From New York to Paris, from ragtime to jazz, *The Hello Girls* chronicles the story of America’s first women soldiers in this new musical inspired by history. These intrepid heroines served as bilingual telephone operators on the front lines, helping turn the tide of World War I. They then returned home to fight a decades-long battle for equality and recognition, paving the way for future generations. *The Hello Girls* was commissioned and premiered by NYC’s Prospect Theater Company to celebrate the centennial of these groundbreaking women.”

Dates: Thurs., April 30 at 7^{PM}, Fri., May 1 at 7^{PM}, Sun., May 3 at 2^{PM}

Location: Bradford High School, 3700 Washington Road, Kenosha
(Enter through SW doors facing 39th Ave.)

Tickets: \$15 General Admission, \$10 Seniors/Students/Staff

<https://www.kusd.edu/district/departments/fine-arts/fine-arts-tickets/>

Review from Shelley—

On Sunday, April 26, Sandy and I had the pleasure of seeing this wonderful musical starring students from Kenosha high schools. It was fun, emotional and an actual learning experience. We had never heard of The Hello Girls, but we do now. With its intermission, it’s about 2-1/2 hours long. Do yourself a favor and go see this entertaining musical!

Prayer

Until the dawn, we will summon our courage. We will walk toward the light.
We will believe in a better tomorrow. We will tell stories about the way the sun feels.

We will dream new dreams.

We will say, “Here I am,” when God calls.

Until the dawn, we will hold onto love, for it is love that guides our way.

©—Rev. Sarah Speed | A Sanctified Art