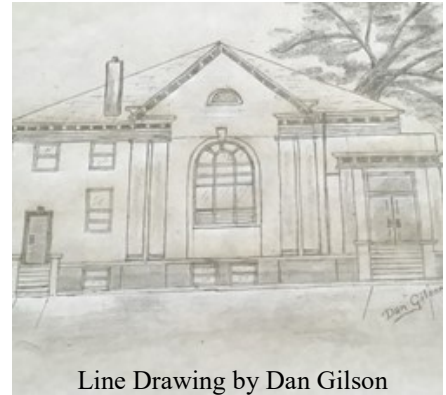


THE PUCC PERSPECTIVE

Presbyterian United Church of Christ Aurora, Nebraska

APRIL 2024



Line Drawing by Dan Gilson

PASTOR PENNY'S TWO CENTS....

The roar of the crowd, the excitement and thrill of the moment. The King is Coming! The King is Coming! The shouts rang out. The Pharisees scolded Jesus and said make this stop and he replied, If I tell them to stop, these very stones will cry out. What had just happened?

Could it be the Messiah? But he came in on a Donkey like King Solomon humble, not like King David on a white horse. What did all of this mean?

Jesus spoke as one with authority, did signs and wonders, miracles and healings like none that had ever come before him. His popularity was climbing by the minute and the disciples were right there in the midst of the chaos, the hype, the joy, the anxiety, the fear, the trepidation. They knew that all of their lives were on the line by going back into the Holy City. How does one prepare for the unknown?

There was no way to prepare for what was to happen. Jesus spent the whole week trying to get through to them, he told them plainly what was to happen, they didn't get it. Or did they and they just desperately did not want to hear it, and spent those precious few moments in denial and hope for another way. They spent the night of Pesach eating and drinking, singing psalms and reflecting on the night's festivities, tucking in their hearts that Jesus the Messiah, washed their feet. He broke bread and ushered in a new covenant that they were not fully grasping. They were human, the spirit was willing but the flesh weak. All they had to do was stay awake and they couldn't. Like the olives that are pressed three times until no more oil is left, Jesus went and prayed 3 times until it says his sweat was like blood. He had poured out all he had.

The frenzy, the chaos as the disciples were startled by the dim light of torches, the shouts and shadows of soldiers winding their way up that steep road where days earlier Jesus had just traveled on the back of a donkey. The chaos continued with a corrupt circus trial bent on a guilty verdict. His disciples scattered, scared and doing whatever it took to stay hidden and alive.

All of this led up to the unthinkable. The brutality, the inhumane torture the public display of humiliation. All while the same crowd that had yelled Hosanna! Now shouted "Crucify Him!", or watched in silent horror. As Yeshua hung on a cross in public display at the top of the hill, he endured the pain and agony of not just the physical but the overwhelming spiritual weight of sin. From the beginning of time until his coming again, all sin from all the ages rested on his shoulders.

This King, this Son of God, hung on the cross with a crown of thorns all blood bled out for 6 hours. When the Temple High Priest sacrificed the last lamb, he raised his arms and declared, "It is Finished." And the shofar blew. On that hill, Jesus hearing the sound of the final shofar with arms outstretched said, "It is finished." And died.

This was not in the disciple's plan, what had just happened? They gave up their lives to follow who they were just sure was the Messiah, the Son of God, but now what? What would they do? What would they tell their families and friends? How could they have been so sure and yet were they wrong?

As Christians we know that the story does NOT end with Jesus still hung on the cross. In fact, it does not end when he was laid in the tomb and the large hard stone rolled in front. Where was the Joy? Where was the Hope? Where was the answer to their questions?

The Morning of First Fruits. Early in the Morning, Mary and others went to the tomb to put spices on Yeshua's body, but the most phenomenal thing had happened! The big, heavy, cold stone was rolled away. Soldiers were lying like dead men on the ground and angels were there to Tell the Good News! "Christ is not here He has risen just like he said!"

Jesus, Yeshua is the First Fruits. Because of his death and resurrection, the final atonement was made for all and because he is consecrated, we too are all consecrated in and through him. It is in our Risen Savior that a **New Covenant** is established. It is through him that our **Joy is Restored**. Our **Hope is made New** and **Our Salvation** belongs to Him.

If you are finding yourself in a time of chaos, or overwhelming circumstances; maybe you have blended into the crowd and lost your voice; if you are feeling hopeless and searching for answers, know that you are not alone. Christ left his throne in glory to become man so we can relate to him. He felt joy, sadness, pain, heartache, weariness, love, companionship and even shed tears like you and I. Yet the enemy did not win, Jesus conquered the grave, sin and death and he did it all for YOU! He made a way to cross the great divide to the Father. He became that bridge, he became the atonement for each of our sins. And he became the salvation for all who will accept the free gift.

Jesus said "I am the door, I am the way the truth and life. No one comes to the Father, except through me."

If you have not accepted his free gift, I encourage you to do so and do it today. We are never guaranteed a tomorrow. And if you have, Go tell your family and friends. The only thing you can take from this world to heaven is another person.

Happy Resurrection Day & First Fruits

Shalom

Pastor Penny

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Facebook: Presbyterian United Church of Christ of Aurora NE



APRIL BIRTHDAYS &
ANNIVERSARIES

Apr 3 Mary Holling
Apr 15 Glenda Allen
Apr 17 Roger Holling
Apr 21 Pastor Penny Schulz
Apr 24 Vonnie Whiting
Apr 30 Zandee Nelson

Apr 6 Ray & Shelly Maul

Update your family & friends - send me an email
to lindap@hamilton.net or call 402-631-9422

PROCLAMATION

Rehearsals are now on
Tuesday evenings at 6:00 PM

FCC BIBLE STUDY

AFTERNOON Bible Study

April 8, 16, 23, 30—2:00 pm
Aurora Senior Center

Lisa Harper—8-Week Study

Wonderful Words of Luke

****Will not meet the 1st Tuesday of the
Month**

Liturgists & Ushers

Apr 7 Pat Pickering
Apr 14 Ray Maul
Apr 32 Mike Allen

Doug Kliever—April Ray Maul—May

Our **APRIL MISSION** will be dona-
tions to the Back Pack Program



God, we come to you today to offer prayers for our family and friends. We ask that you look after them today and keep them safe. As you take time for prayer each day, please include:

Don "Sonny" Hofmeister, Zandee Nelson, Dick & Janet Grosshans, Shirley Barnell, Jim Ptacnik, John Schulz, Tanna Skarniak. Skip & Mary Plock

We also pray for all those in our congregation and beyond who may be suffering from with illness or the stress of a family situation.

*We pray for those who suffer in silence
that they may feel our prayers.*

If you want to add someone to our prayer list, we don't need to have a last name or know their situation. They do not have to be a member of our congregation – we pray for all the people. All requests are by permission only. Please contact: Linda Ptacnik (lindap@hamilton.net or 402-631-9422 or fcc@hamilton.net) I will see that your requests are shared – as well as updates as they are received.

When I am out of town and/or unavailable, Tanna will be handling the e-mail requests. You may contact her at 308-391-9054 (eagleskarn@gmail.com.)

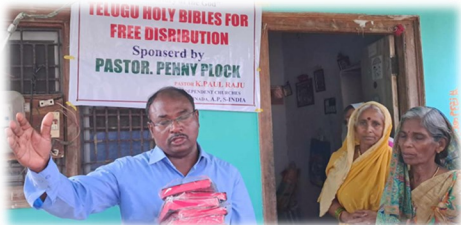


Soup Bowl Fundraiser



We had a great time. We had great support from the community. We sold all 104 of our pottery bowls most of which were under glazed by the Backpack Crew. We gave out 4 rain checks for bowls to be made in the near future. Jack Pickering donated 6 turned maple bowls for the Silent Auction. **We made \$2,500.00** for the Hamilton County Backpack Program. I think we will do this again next year.

On March 12th, we were impressed by a presentation given from Rebekah Miller from the Chosen People's Ministry as she went through the element for the Seder Meal that our Jewish brothers and sisters have been celebrating for thousands of years. There was no meal with this service, however it was very enlightening, educational and a perfect time to connect with our Jewish roots.



I want to personally thank everyone who donated and contributed to the Bible fund for Pastor Paul in India. Paul has been adding congregations to his fold at warp speed. Muslim and Hindu men and women are coming to Christ in unprecedented numbers and need Bibles. Thanks to your support \$600 was raised and 120 bibles in the Telugu language were purchased and distributed to many many families. You have given the most precious food anyone could give. The word of God that will feed them a lifetime!
—Pastor Penny

PROCLAMATION will play on April 28th at the Messiah Lutheran Church. The Service will be filled with music that will include a Combined Choir. **Our Morning services will be held at the Messiah Lutheran Church that Sunday.** Please plan to attend.

A COMBINED MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE was held at FCC on March 28th. The program, titled "The Room" by Dorothy Vanderlippe, was chosen by the Worship Committee.

If you were unable to attend, the entire service can be viewed:

Website: fccaurorane.org

You Tube: First Christian Church of Aurora NE

