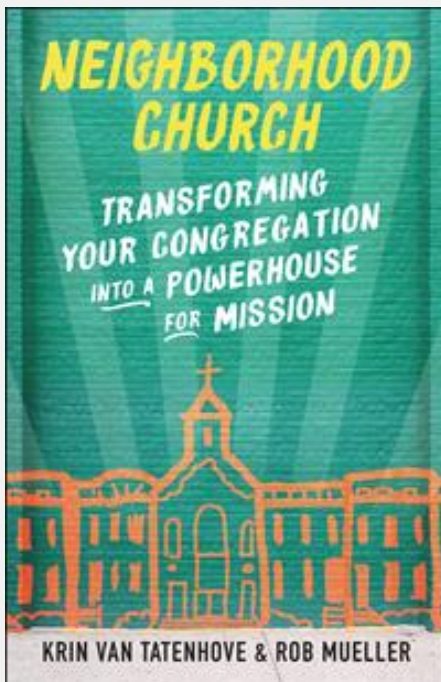




April 10, 2019

REMINDER: If you have articles or information that you think would be appropriate for *The Homesteader*, please send them to Jes at the Presbytery!
hpoffice@homesteadpres.org

Get Lost in a Book



How can we embody the values of love, grace, and justice? As faith communities, how can our collective embodiment of these values shine even brighter? The answers to these questions must always unfold right here, right now, exactly where God has planted us. Neighborhood Church acts as a resource to inspire churches to become a vibrant and engaging community partner with the families and neighborhoods living around them. The need for transformation is acute. Congregational decline continues across all mainline denominations. The abandonment of the church by the millennial generation is ubiquitous; no denomination is escaping it. This is, in part, a consequence of disconnection from our communities.

Response Team forms after 2019 Floods

This scripture verse is one we have quoted often to those dealing directly or indirectly with the aftermath of melting snow, rain and flash floods since mid-March in Homestead Presbytery. God's Word continues: "Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult... the Lord of hosts is with us." (v. 2-3, 11a)

God is our
refuge and **strength,**
a very present **help**
in times of
trouble.

Psalm 46:1

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) has sent an initial assessment team to Homestead Presbytery and a Presbytery Disaster Response Team is being formed to oversee the ongoing clean-up and repair that will be needed for many months to come.

Many within the Presbytery have already responded with clean-up buckets, personal hygiene kits, physical labor and initial acts of kindness and contributions – all of which are appreciated and needed. And we thank you for being Christ's hands and feet here on earth!

Site visits are currently happening to continue to assess needs and offer emotional, spiritual and mental support to those "on the ground and living in and through the midst of disaster"; plans are being formulated to establish work camps/sites, and the initial grant to Homestead Presbytery has been submitted to PDA.

Here are things that YOU (and those you know and love) can do right now:

1. **Pray** (and pray again – after all, the power of prayer is in the One we pray to --- NOT in those of us praying)
2. **Contribute financially** as you are able:
 - *to PDA (#DR000191)
 - *to Homestead Presbytery (for disaster relief)
3. **Help**
 - *provide geographically-wise housing/meals sites for work groups helping in the disaster areas in coming months
 - *make arrangements to work days/weeks (when such needs are clearly known) – individual and as groups
 - *volunteer for various sub-committees within the Homestead Presbytery Disaster Relief group being formed

As more information becomes known and is gathered, it will be forwarded via email to Homestead Presbytery via the email list. If you know someone to add to this list, please provide the information to the Homestead Presbytery Office (hpoffice@homesteadpres.org).

More information/contact can be secured from coordinators:

Gary Haller: phone: 817-757-2980 – txhaller2@att.net

or

Sue Babovec: phone: 515-490-3982 – chaplainsueb@hotmail.com

Selected verses from Isaiah 43 complete this initial report: God says, "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you, when you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. You are my witnesses, says the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know that I am He. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me. Thus, says the Lord, who makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters, I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."

Financial Help for Pastors affected by the blizzard or floods is Available!!



Nebraska Presbyterian Foundation

Ordained and Commissioned Pastors (active or retired) who have been impacted by the blizzard or floods and are now facing a personal financial crisis, our Kessler Emergency Assistance Fund may be able to help.

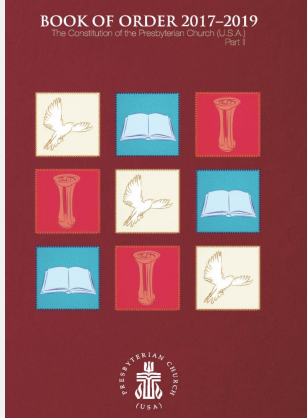
The Fund can gift up to \$2500 to active or retired pastors who have or are currently serving a Nebraska congregation and currently live in Nebraska. Surviving spouses are also eligible to receive up to \$1500 when the previous criteria is met.

For more information, contact Audrey Richert at NPF (402.420.9877) or visit our website by clicking below.

[Visit our website](#)

GA223 Proposed Amendments of the Book of Order

Not all of the presbyteries have voted on the Book of Order amendments, but enough have voted that the outcome of all the amendments has been determined. All of the amendments have been



approved, except for Amendment 18-C. Amendment 18-C was defeated. To read the amendments, go to:

<http://oga.pcusa.org/section/ga/ga223-proposed-amendments-book-order/>

Housing allowance decision elicits cheers, and relief

-April 2, 2019, Board of Pensions, News Archive



The Board of Pensions received word during its Board of Directors meeting last month, prompting muffled cheers and widespread relief. The clergy housing allowance had been ruled constitutional.

On March 15, 2019, in *Gaylor v. Mnuchin*, a three-judge panel of the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals unanimously ruled that excluding a housing allowance from a minister's taxable income does not violate the establishment clause of the First Amendment.

The decision overturned a 2017 federal district court ruling that Section 107(2) of the Internal Revenue Code, which provides the exclusion, is unconstitutional because it was a unique benefit for ministers. The appellate court disagreed, finding that section 107(2) has a secular purpose, putting ministers on an equal footing with certain secular employees receiving employer-provided housing. Section 107(1), the exclusion for tax-free in-kind housing, such as a manse, was not at issue in the case. [Read More Here](#)

Words to Remember

"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea."

- *Psalm 46:1-2*

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