

6 MINUTE FOR MISSION

BUILDING LIVES IN FAITH, SERVING IN THE SPIRIT OF PENTECOST

PHOTO: FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HOMEWOOD



“Most aren’t from great home situations, and they often come to the tutoring program after a stressful school day,” she says.

Another Homewood member, Chris Dederer, led a children’s choir and taught piano classes for nearly a decade at Jones Center.

He says an “inner desire to be missional” and a love of teaching prompted him to work with children who had few other opportunities to learn music. “I sought to lay a foundation in these children’s lives and give them an opportunity to see a positive male role model,” says Chris, a professional church musician. “I’m not sure how many of these kids have that in their lives.”

This year marks the 20th year of Presbyterians worldwide coming together to celebrate serving in the spirit of Pentecost, coming together to build lives in faith. The Pentecost Offering unites us in a church-wide effort to support young people in Christ and inspire them to share their faith, ideas, and unique gifts with the church and the world.

Nancy Jo Dederer, pastor of First Presbyterian, says congregations open themselves to the “joy of ministry” when they decide to serve children where they are. And doesn’t that ring true for us all. Indeed, it does.

With this in mind, I want to share a story with you that starts with another celebration — the 2008 celebration of 150 years of ministry at First Presbyterian Church of Homewood, Illinois.

Through the Pentecost Offering, congregations share Christ’s love in their communities and around the world. Please give generously and support the future of our young people.

As it looked toward future opportunities, the congregation decided one focus should be children considered at risk; those being served by the nearby Jones Memorial Community Center. A steady stream of First Presbyterian volunteers visit Jones Center weekly to tutor in the after-school program, work in the children’s library, and help with other activities. The commitment the congregation made to children during its anniversary year continues 10 years later.

Karen Maurer is a retired early childhood educator and volunteer, who tutors children in math and reading — and so much more. She says providing moral and emotional support alongside academics is crucial.

Let us pray ~

Gracious God, We pray that all children will be able to reach the potential you gave them.

We are grateful for those who work alongside children at risk and give them hope.

Give all of us the faith and courage to stand up for children and help build a brighter future for them.

Amen.