



The Bell

March, 2024

Monthly Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

FPC IN THE MIDST OF LENT

God's blessings upon you. Welcome to Lent. Actually, by the time you get this, we will be approaching the third week of Lent. For those of you that were not at the first Sunday in Lent, let me share a little bit of my Sermon with you.

“Ash Wednesday is considered an act of public confession. Acknowledging that we have all sinned and fallen short of God's glory, we repent and return to our loving creator. Acutely aware of our failure and frailty, we express our utter reliance on God's saving grace. The ashes that were used came from palm branches that were used on Palm Sunday so that they together frame the season of Lent - the beginning and the end.

The season of Lent is a time for growth in faith through prayer, spiritual discipline, and self-examination in preparation for the commemoration of the dying and rising of the Lord Jesus Christ. Starting with Ash Wednesday, it is a period of 40 days. It helps us recall what Noah went through with the flood in Genesis, Moses at Sinai prior to the burning bush, and Jesus' time of testing in the wilderness. The Sundays of Lent are not counted among those days, as every Lord's day is a celebration of Christ's resurrection. It ends on Holy Saturday, the start of the Great Vigil of Easter.”

When I read this over, what it says to me is that we have an opportunity to look at our life, the direction that we are headed in and change it if we need to or continue down the road that we are on.

I also said in my sermon that instead of taking something away from our lives for these 40 days, which I am very bad at doing, let us add something to it - a daily devotional, or perhaps just reading a chapter of scripture a day or just reflecting on the life that God has given us and writing down all that is great in our lives. Whatever you want to do, this season gives us that opportunity.

God bless you and your family.

If you would like to talk, please come and see me and I would be happy to give you ideas during this Lenten season. We are always here for you.

God's blessings,

Ed

HOLY WEEK SERVICES CONTINUE TO GROW

The traditional Holy Week services in Chippewa Falls have now grown to include six churches. Our Saviour's Lutheran Church will be included in this year's services along with Trinity United Methodist, Zion Methodist, Lake Hallie Methodist, Christ Episcopal and First Presbyterian.

The Maundy Thursday service will be here in our sanctuary beginning at 5:00 on Thursday, March 28. That service will include communion and washing of the feet. Deacon Rose Ruthy from Christ Episcopal Church will deliver the sermon.

On Good Friday, March 29, the first service will be at Zion Methodist Church beginning at noon. Pastor Eddie Crise of Trinity United Methodist Church will deliver the sermon for that service as well as the later service at 5:00 at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church. That service will include music by an ecumenical choir of church singers from the community.

No services are planned for Saturday and services will return to normal in all the churches on Easter morning.

Quick notes from the Mission Team...

Over the past 75 years one thing you can count on during Lent is the One Great Hour of Sharing special offering. This offering received during Lent helps to improve people's lives from all over the world during challenging times. It is a time when we have the opportunity to share God's love with our neighbors in need.

Your contribution will go to three mission programs operated by the Presbyterian Church (USA).

- The Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) receives 32% of the contributions. It is to help communities affected by devastation from natural and man-made causes.
- The Presbyterian Hunger Program (PHP) receives 36% of the contributions. It is a mission to "alleviate hunger, care for creation, and systemic causes of poverty so that all may be fed."
- The Self-Development of People (SDOP) receives 32% of the contributions. Their mission is to respond to communities experiencing oppression, poverty, and injustice; and to educate Presbyterians about how the people in those communities live.

Please give what you are able. To give, make out your check to First Presbyterian Church with OGHS written on the memo line. This offering will end on Easter Sunday.

JANUARY PROMOTION FOR CARELINK—Thank you to everyone who contributed from our Carelink Tree in January. Carla reported that we raised \$560. That is enough to purchase 22 gas cards.

CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING -- Total contributions totaled \$550. Thanks again!

FPC HOLDS ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The annual Congregational Meeting was held on February 11 when the 2023 annual report was adopted along with changes to the Endowment Fund by-laws.

In addition Barbara Williams, Bill Martin, Chuck Norseng and Anne Welke were elected to the 2024 nominating committee. They are joined by Elder Larry Annett, who was elected by the Session to serve as committee chair.

The nominating committee is charged with developing a slate of leaders for 2025. This slate will include two Elders, one Deacon, one member of the Endowment Fund Board and two members of the Financial Review Team.

EASTER LILIES TO DECORATE THE CHURCH

It may seem early, but Easter is rapidly approaching.

As we have in the past, this year FPC will purchase Eastern lilies to decorate the chancel on Easter morning. These flowers can be purchased by the congregation and taken home following the service. Any plants that are not removed on Easter Sunday will be given to shut-ins.

Each plant costs \$10.00. If you wish to order plants, you can use the order form in this issue of the Bell or you can send your check to the church office with "Lilies" in the memo line and plants will be reserved for you.

NOISY SUNDAY CANCELLED IN MARCH

The fifth Sunday in March would normally be our next Noisy Sunday but since that day is also Easter Sunday, we will cancel Noisy Sunday until June.

But, if you have some extra change, you can always put it , albeit quietly, in the collection plate on Sunday.

IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN

Yes, it's time to reset the clocks to Daylight Savings Time. The actual start of the time change is 2:00 AM on Sunday, March 10 but it's a good idea to set your clocks ahead before going to bed on Saturday night. That will guarantee that you will come to church on time

EASTER LILIES

We are now taking orders for Easter lilies that will grace the chancel on Easter morning, March 31. The cost is \$10.00 per plant. Please fill out the order form. Return to the church office as soon as possible. Submit your order:

- 1) during office hours (9:00 to 2:00 Monday, Tuesday or Thursday)
- 2) by mailing to the church

The plants may be picked up after the Easter service. The plants not picked up at that time will be distributed in the community.

I want to purchase (how many) _____ Easter Lilies for display in our church during Easter at \$10.00 each. Write Easter Lily in the memo section of your check.

I would like designation(s) in the church bulletin to read:

In Memory of:

1) _____

2) _____

In Appreciation for:

1) _____

2) _____

In Celebration of:

1) _____

2) _____

(other title) _____:

1) _____

2) _____

From:

Return to: First Presbyterian Church Phone: 723-5717
130 West Central Street
Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin 54729-2345

PAT AND RAY ANDRESS TO BE LAID TO REST

When Ray Andress passed away on August 2, 2023, his final wish was to be laid to rest beside his wife, Pat. With Pat's passing on February 8, 2024, that wish can be fulfilled.

Pat and Ray celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary one month before Ray passed away. They were married on July 5, 1958 in our church where Pat grew up.

The couple will be interred at Forest Hill Cemetery in Chippewa Falls in a private ceremony at a later date.

In the meantime, the family suggests memorial contributions be made to the American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation in recognition of the 50th anniversary of the event in which Pat competed five times in the 1980s.

WHAT'S OLD IS NEW AGAIN

When Katherine Griffis was with us as interim pastor, she felt Lent should be a time of simplicity to the point of austerity. With that in mind, she asked Jeannette Miller to make new paraments and linens for the sanctuary to be used during the Lenten season. Now after a dozen years in storage, we are again using those pieces.

The banners on the walls of the sanctuary are plain beige fabric but Jeanette embroidered the parament on the pulpit and the linens that will cover the communion elements with a sheaf of wheat.

In keeping with the theme of simplicity, the usual silver communion service will be replaced during Lent with terra cotta plates and a simple earthenware chalice and pitcher will also be used.

When we again celebrate communion on Easter Sunday, the familiar paraments and communion service will return.

TKE COMPLETES ELEVATOR REPAIR

The elevator repair has been completed at long last.

On Wednesday, February 21, two elevator technicians from TKE, a division of TK Corporation, the company that built and installed our elevator, spent four hours working to install four new guide shoes on the rails on which the elevator car runs.

According to them, our elevator is one of the oldest they have worked on, having been manufactured in 2002 and probably installed when the church was remodeled in 2005.

Now that the repair has been done, we should enjoy many smooth rides in the elevator in the days to come.