The Bell

November, 2026

Monthly Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church Chippewa Falls. Wisconsin

As I have been reflecting on my last four years here, I have been reviewing what we as a church have been able to do here in the Chippewa Valley and it has been very good. I felt a review of the last four years may be helpful to show how First Presbyterian has changed since I have been your pastor.

The journey to become your Commissioned Ruling Elder started in 2021 when Ken Ribe, our last Interim Pastor, asked if I still wanted to go down the CRE path that I had actually started back in 2016 with Pastor Barry Boyer when I was still a member of New Hope Presbyterian Church and he was the Interim there.

It took a bit to get to the point where you hired me in 2023, but once that happened, I jumped in with both feet trying to get to know everyone in our community and remind them that we are here and doing great work.

It's interesting that my first meeting in Chippewa was with the Chippewa Falls Mission Coalition and my last meeting as your CRE will be with them on December 7 here at First Pres. How time flies when you're doing God's work.

But going back to my beginning here, in May, 2023, I was Commissioned to be your CRE and Ken Ribe preached his last sermon here before he returned this summer – three years later – to preach to us again.

2023 had a lot of firsts. It was then I led my first Easter vigil with the help of the other churches in our community. For the first time, we worked with Love Chippewa donating 25 bags of food for people in need and volunteering there until this year when it was scaled back to just services and no food. Since FPC once again had a regular pastor, we resumed the worship leader meetings which had stopped during the time we relied on guest pastors. Barb and I became members of First Presbyterian Church. I led my first Christmas Eve service.

2024 was another year dedicated to making our church better recognized in the community. We participated in the annual ecumenical church service in Irvine Park during Pure Water Days. That led to volunteering at One Fest for the last year it was here in Chippewa Falls. We started an ecumenical church dinner with two other churches, Trinity United Methodist Church and Christ Episcopal Church and now we have added two other churches, Zion Methodist and Our Saviours Lutheran Church.

We continued going to National Night Out to let the community know that we are here and inviting

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them to join us. Our Trunk or Treat event during Halloween, which began before my arrival here, continues to thrive and we moved it inside so weather was not a factor and this year was our biggest yet with 15 organizations coming to give candy and spread the joy of God to over 200 little ones and their families.

2025 brought more opportunity to spread the word of God and we added an additional way to do that with the purchase of our digital sign for the west side of our church so patrons of Family Fare could have our events presented to them on a daily basis. Unfortunately, Family Fare closed so the traffic is not as great but we still are able to share our message of helping God's children with events at the church.

We have once again brought music back into our church services with the addition of praise music and a small – but mighty – choir. Our Music Director, Sherry Friedel, and her husband, Mario, present praise songs on a regular basis and the small choir brings music back into what was once known as the music church. In addition, Mario and Sherry have moved their jam sessions from a store-front on Bridge Street to our church where musicians of all levels of talent can practice and "jam" in our Fellowship Hall.

One aspect of the church life that never ended but certainly changed is the Food Pantry. Covid 19 restrictions moved the operation inside where it has stayed even after the pandemic. Our primary food supplier, Feed My People, moved their weekly delivery to Monday mornings which meant we had to change our pantry hours, but with God's help it works. It not only works but continues to grow from what was only a few bags of groceries given to a few families every month to hundreds of pounds of food given to dozens of families twice a week. Covid 19 forced many churches to close but FPC never did and its Food Pantry continued to help needy families through it all.

2026 was another great year with the addition of several new church members and a capital campaign that is allowing us to refresh our building so we can go another 175 years. The year 2030 willl find us celebrating 175 years in Chippewa Falls. We are the oldest protestant church in Chippewa Falls.

We continue on with the mission of our church, "Living in Faith, with Purpose, for Community". As we close this year out, and move into 2027, I know our church is positioned for another wonderful year of God revealing to us what we are to do, in his name.

God bless you all.

Ed

PORK STEAKS AND DUMPLINGS ARE IN OUR FUTURE

Just when it seemed our First Wednesday Night suppers might be a thing of the past (due to a lack of cooks), Trudy and Charlie Crawford have come to our rescue.

On November 4 they will provide a special supper of pork steaks and dumplings. Diners are asked to bring desserts to complete the menu.

SESSION SCHEDULES CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The annual Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, November 15 immediately following service.

The purpose of this meeting will be to elect new leaders to serve on Session, the Board of Deacons, Financial Review and the Endowment Fund Board.
The slate of nominees is: Lynda Butek for Session, John Hillery for the Board of Deacons, Bill Martin for the Endowment Board and Rick Koepke on the Financial Review Team.

The new leaders will be ordained and/or installed in their new roles in December.

ORDER POINSETTIAS FOR THE HOLIDAY

Now is the time to order your poinsettias for Christmas. We plan to decorate the church with the usual Christmas wreaths, banners and trees and we will have poinsettias in front of the communion table.

If you want to purchase a poinsettia to decorate the sanctuary and later take home, you can use the order form in this issue of the Bell. At this point we do not have prices for the plants but we will notify those who purchase them as soon as the cost is available. If the price is more than the donor wishes to pay, we can cancel the order. As usual, the plants will decorate the sanctuary on Christmas Eve and if they aren't picked up by the purchaser after that time, they will be delivered to our shut-ins.

SHOPPING FOR OTHERS

While you are shopping for your own holiday cooking and baking, consider adding the things on this year's Reverse Advent Calendar to your list. The list appears in this month's Bell and is also at the Welcome Desk in the Narthex.

The donations will be blessed as part of our traditional Christmas Eve service before becoming part of the food to donate to others through the Food Pantry. Bring your donations to the church right before Christmas Eve and place them on the west steps to the chancel.

SPIRIT OF GIVING FOCUSES ON THE NEEDY

As we have done in recent years, FPC will be collecting gifts for the Spirit of Christmas project. The special donation box has arrived and items can be placed it in through November 29.
Donations of children's books, toys, underwear, socks, diapers Size 2-4, puzzles, stuffed animals and blankets/throws will be given to needy families in the Chippewa Falls area.

A FALL AFFAIR

By Tiffany Woghan

Once again, Presbyterian Women will be cooking up a storm in the kitchen in November - a ham loaf storm!

The ladies have been plotting, scheming, and planning this annual Fall Affair for months! We've decided to go back to the name we used decades ago as it has become less of a bazaar over the last few years and more of a community event – a tummy-filling, treasure -finding, silent-auction affair in the fall.

Join us on November 11 from 4:30 pm-6:30 pm for our famous ham loaf dinner (ham loaf, scalloped potatoes, coleslaw, green beans, a roll, dessert and a drink.) We're charging the same price as last year, $15. Small ham loaves will also be available for sale and to take home as long as they last.

There will be a book sale, a quilt sale, bake sale and a quilt silent auction.

We are asking for very gently used hardcover books to be donated to our cause. We could also use some yummy treats to be sold at the bake table.

Please contact Jan Koepke with any questions on the books and talk to Marlys Daniels with any questions concerning the baked sale.

Thank you for supporting a Fall Affair to remember!

FEED MY PEOPLE SPOTLIGHTS FPC FOOD PANTRY

The Fall Hunger Herald, which is the Feed My People newsletter, featured our own Food Pantry complete with a picture of Chuck Norseng, who has been volunteering at the pantry since 2018.

The accompanying article explains something of the behind -the-scene workings of the pantry as seen through Chuck's eyes.

If you would like to see the entire article, it has been posted on the bulletin board.

IS YOUR DIRECTORY INFORMATION UP TO DATE?

The 2027 church directory is in the works and should be ready for distribution by year-end.

Check your information and if it needs updating, let Tiffnay know as soon as possible so she can make any necessary changes.

JUST A REMINDER

Be sure to set your clocks back one hour on October 31 in preparation for the end of Daylight Savings Time at 2:00 on Sunday morning. If you forget and come to church early, there will be coffee, Bible study and you can even help set up communion.

THE RESTORATION PROJECT CONTINUES

The crew from Market and Johnson are hard at work scraping, sanding and priming the outside of the church for its new "look".





Reverse

Advent Calendar

Each day add an item to a box or bag.

On Christmas Eve bring the bag or box to church to be blessed and given to the food pantry.

December 1-box of cereal
December 2-peanut butter
December 3-cookies
December 4-boxed potatoes
December 5-macaroni and cheese
December 6-cans of pears
December 7-canned tomatoes (diced)
December 8-canned tuna
December 9-bag of chips
December 10-can of Beef Ravioli
December 11-canned fruit cocktail
December 12-peaches
December 13-canned chicken
December 14-box of crackers
December 15-package of rice
December 16-can of green beans
December 17-package of pasta
December 18-spaghetti sauce
December 19-can of chicken noodle soup
December 20-can of tomato soup
December 21-can of corn
December 22-can of beef strew
December 23-spaghetti noodles
December 24-3 rolls of toilet paper

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHIPPEWA FALLS **ORDER FORM**

POINSETTIAS

We are now taking orders for poinsettias that will grace the chancel area this Christmas season. Please fill out the order form. Return to the church office with your payment as soon as possible. Submit your order:

1) during office hours (9 to 2:00) Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays)
2) by mailing to the church
3) or, put order and payment in offering plate on Sunday

(Remember to write "poinsettia" in memo blank on your check.)

The plants may be picked up after the Christmas Eve service. Of the plants not picked up, some will be saved for the following Sunday and others distributed in the community.

I want to purchase (how many) _____ poinsettias for display in our church chancel during the Advent/Christmas weekend.

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

Amount Paid $_____
CK#
Cash