



The Bell

January 2020

Monthly Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

THE VIEW FROM HERE

Happy New Year! It's hard to believe that 2020 is here already, but it is. I've been trying to get my feet on the ground here in Chippewa Falls for the last two months, and am trying to get to acquainted with you all. I am learning most of your names, and hope that I can address all of you by name by the end of January. Name tags do help, so please, wear them.

In January or February, I hope we can have a leadership retreat with Elders and Deacons, with the hope that that will provide a base for a congregational retreat later on. The purpose of the retreat will be to try to answer 5 questions. (Borrowed from a life friend-Dick Daniels). He says:

“The most important leadership assignment is a calling to regularly step away from the operational noise of mission, vision, values, and strategy to the quiet place of organizational reflection. It is a contemplative process that is more about thinking than talking. It's more about a pause than a plan. It's more about reflection than results. So, what will you think about when you climb solo to that 30,000 foot vantage point and take time to see around the 2020 corner what others do not yet see?”

Five Questions for a New Decade

When Did You Last Ask...?

Questioning is the ability to organize our thinking around what we don't know.
The Right Question Institute

The Context Question

What did we used to do?

The Reality Question

What are we doing today?

The Change Question

What should we be doing differently?

The Priority Question?

What should we be doing next?

The Letting Go Question

What should we stop doing?”

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Trying to answer these questions will help us move forward into whatever the future has for us. I hope you will all give some thought to these questions.

Looking forward to learning together with you in the New Year.

Grace and Peace,
P.K.

HOLY BUILDINGS – OUR CHURCHES

“Let this Church be more than just an impressive building. Let it be a place where people enter the presence of a majestic God. Let it be a house of worship, of prayer, of meditation, and of celebration before God. Let it be a haven of rest for the weary, a place of healing for the wounded, a place of comfort for the grieving, and a source of hope for the despairing and forgotten.” - Clarence Thomas

As we look back on the history of this church, this holy building, we can see that every generation since 1855 has both faced challenges and made progress. It grew during the boom times of the late 19th and late 20th centuries. It had difficulties during the depression and post-World War II periods. Today as our country faces demographic changes and population decline we are faced again with difficulties.

Good works can be accomplished without a building. But not the kind of works, in our city for good, that we have chosen to provide. Just as we received this building from church members long dead, we hope to pass it along to church members not yet born. We feel at home here because the architectural design reflects the character of God. Its memories are our shared ones, not all good yet they make us who we are today.

It is my hope that the generations now and in the future will realize the emptiness in their hearts is something that only God can fill, by returning to the holy buildings of their ancestors. Brothers and sisters, we are family in our holy building. There is purpose here, there is happiness, and there is history. We all need a sense of each to be complete people.

Kevin Litten

POINSETTIAS GRACED OUR CHURCH DONATED BY:

Beth Cripe in memory of Gordy; Barb Meredith in memory of Bob and in appreciation of family; Corine Boos in memory of loved ones; Pat and David Gutknecht family in memory of David Joseph Gutknecht, Emma B. Mika, and Sister Frances Elizabeth Schmitz; Anne Welke memory of Mabel and Frank Hamilton, Wilder and Alice, Wilder Crane Jr. and in appreciation for my family-children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren; Kathy and Jesse Torres in memory of Bob and Virginia Carvell and Salvador Torres and Bonnie and Doug Gullickson in memory of family members

REFLECTIONS ON 2019

By Lynda Butek, Clerk of Session

Almost a year has passed since Pastor Karel left us and I think during that time, we have learned a lot about ourselves and our church and grown in the process.

We have learned that we can make it on our own. We chose to tough it out for the first few months using only our small paid staff and our many willing volunteers. I can't say it has been easy but perhaps this early period was necessary for us to realize what we are made of and what we can do when we have to.

We have had some great guest pastors (I refuse to call them "supply pastors" because that sounds like something you would buy at the hardware store) who have been so supportive of our efforts. They haven't once looked down on us because don't have a called pastor but instead they have reached out their hands and said "How can we help?"

You might expect this from a Presbyterian pastor but keep in mind for most of this last year, we have heard from Sandee Kosmo (a Lutheran) and Rich Estrem-Fuller (a Methodist). They have embraced our congregation in ways I wouldn't have expected and we have welcomed them in return. We haven't seen the last of them either since they will be preaching from time to time in the coming year.

The Deacons stepped up and filled the void in calling on shut-ins and delivering communion to them. And in the process, they came to know some of the people they don't see every week on a more intimate basis and they liked it and them. Frankly, we couldn't have done what we have done without our dedicated Deacons.

The Mission team, small as it is, has moved this church into the role of one of the principal sources for help for the needy in this community. Granted there are things we cannot do like host our own tiny house but we haven't let that stop us because there are so many more things we can do.

Our Food Pantry has grown and expanded to include CareLink and offer more than food. One of the great things about our Food Pantry and its volunteers is that they have responded to what their patrons need be it warm clothing, shoes, hygiene products. They haven't decided on their own what we should offer. They have listened to what is needed and tried to fill that need.

We have continued the traditions we have had over the years which have become part of what we are. With the help of Terri Koca from Trinity United Methodist, we held the Ash Wednesday service and will do so again in 2020. We participated in the ecumenical service in the park in August. We even had our annual church picnic thanks to Kevin Litten and his eager helpers. We continued what has become the traditional Trunk of Treat event on Halloween. It expanded this year and the plans are to expand it even more in 2020.

Now we have Ken Ribe, our interim pastor, who provides continuity and a path forward for us to finding a called pastor. Pastor Ken or PK, as he likes to be called, has some changes to make in the coming year but as I have told him – this is his church as much as it is ours. The changes he has planned will hopefully bring us closer to God and what He has planned for us.

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We have formed the PNC which will begin the process of searching for our called pastor. It will take time so be patient with them and the process they must follow, but with the help and guidance of the Lord, they will find the right man.

I look at 2019 as a year of “green” or growth in a liturgical sense. It has been a year of looking at ourselves and what we are and what we want to become. Now the time has come to start becoming that church. We made it through the year of soul-searching and now we have to tackle our future.

We need to reactivate many of our committees. We need to address the serious issue of the leaking roof. We need to increase our membership rolls and hopefully attract more families and young people.

I never cease to be surprised at how many people who have lived in this community for years don't know where we are. We are the oldest protestant church in Chippewa Falls but many people only know us as the church next to Gordy's. Whose fault is that? It's ours. We have a wonderful church. We have a congregation that is filled with loving and caring people. We have a beautiful building. We have to tell people about what we are, what we have to offer and where we are.

Mathew 5: 15-16 says “No one after lighting a lamp puts it under a bushel basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.”

It's time to ditch the basket and let our light shine for all to see and follow.

FPC HOLDS CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The regular congregational meeting of FPC took place on Sunday, December 8 following the regular service. The purpose of this meeting was to elect church leaders for the coming year, to vote on a proposed change to the church by-laws and to elect the Pastor Nominating Committee.

Corine Boos, Margi Kohl, Kathi Mandelert and Marlys Daniels were elected as Deacons for the coming year. Vance Kohl was elected to the Endowment Fund Board for a second term and Kevin Litten was elected to the Financial Review Team also for a second term. The following members were elected to the Pastor Nominating Committee: George Abendroth, Lynda Butek, Jan Koepke, Barbara Meredith and Gary Shorrel.

The church by-laws were revised to read:

- A-7.001** **34)** Three persons shall review the books and accounts of the congregation and the corporation, including all its organizations. They shall prepare a report of all such accounts for distribution to the session as of the close of the fiscal year. The report shall be made during the first quarter of the following year. One person shall be elected each year for a term of three years. The board will elect a chairman who will be responsible for calling meetings and preparing the presenting the final report.

FPC SCHEDULES SUPPLEMENTARY CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The annual supplementary meeting of our congregation will be held following the service on Sunday, February 9 as specified in Article 3.002 of our church by-laws.

The purpose of this meeting will be to present the annual reports from the committees of the church and the 2020 budget. The Nominating Committee will be dismissed and a new Nominating Committee for 2020 elected. If you are interested in serving on this important committee, please notify Pastor Ken or Lynda Butek prior to the February 9 meeting.

The committee chairs will be notified the first week in January that their reports are due no later than January 17.

BAZAAR AND HAM LOAF DINNER SPELL SUCCESS

The Presbyterian Women wish to thank all those who gave their time to the recent ham loaf dinner and bazaar.

Although the crowd was smaller than usual, perhaps due to the unseasonably cold weather, the afternoon and evening were a success thanks to the many hands who made things run smoothly.

There are a few ham loaves left from the dinner. If you would like to purchase a loaf or even half a loaf, please contact Bonnie Gullickson. Half loaves will be sold for \$8 and the whole loaf will sell for \$15.

2020 BRINGS A CHANGE OF COLOR TO FPC

It's time to change colors again. During Advent we used purple which was replaced by white for Christmas Eve and the first Sunday of Christmastide, December 29.

White remains the color for Epiphany and the Baptism of the Lord on the first two Sundays of January then we revert to green to denote the season of growth.

Green will remain in the sanctuary through the first three Sundays of February to be replaced by white for the Transfiguration of the Lord Sunday, February 23.

Then we go back to purple for Lent which takes us through March.

We will install new leaders in January but since all of those you elected have already been ordained, we will maintain the color of the season for that special day.

NEWS FROM THE MISSION TEAM...

SUBMITTED BY BARB SHORREL

CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING: We just finished our Christmas Joy Offering. We will report the amount in the bulletin when the final figure is available. Thank you for giving to this special offering.

JANUARY HAS BEEN SELECTED BY THE MISSION COALITION AS CARELINK MONTH:

We host CareLink at our church on Tuesday and Thursday mornings at the same time as the Food Pantry. CareLink provides \$25 gas cards for persons who have immediate travel needs. It might be for a doctor's appointment or to get to a job. Our goal is to raise at least \$250 to purchase 10 gas cards.

On the first Sunday of January, you will see that the Christmas tree in the sanctuary has not been put away. Instead, it will have envelopes clipped to its branches. Please take an envelope and place your name on the envelope, put cash or a check inside, and then place it in the Offering plate. All funds will go through the church accounting system, so the amount you donated will show up on your end-of-year statement. At the end of January, we will send the total amount to CareLink.

Checks should be made out to First Presbyterian Church with Carelink in the memo line.

NOISY SUNDAY ON DECEMBER 29: The contributions on this day went to CareLink.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MISSION COALITION AS REPORTED BY ANNE WELKE:

- Soles 4 Souls visited Chippewa Falls on December 3 with lots of coats. We met at the Chi Hi cafeteria to distribute 600 coats and 250 pairs of children's tennis shoes. Thank you to FPC volunteers for your participation.
- Mayo Clinic has provided a grant in the amount of \$8500 for Hope Village.
- A trailer was donated for the base of another Tiny House.
- The total collected from the Mission Coalition for Lighten Your Load was \$1,121.
- The next meeting of the Mission Coalition will be January 6. The speaker will be from the Drug Task Force.

LATHER WITH LOVE WILL BE PROMOTED IN FEBRUARY: This Mission Coalition project collects laundry detergent, dishwashing soap, shampoo and hand soap for distribution at local food pantries (including ours). More info in the February Bell.

**Wishing you many
blessings in the new year.**

January Schedules

January 5 – Sunday

Interim Pastor – Ken Ribe
Worship Leader – Bonnie Gullickson
Hospitality Team 6 - Led by Chuck Norseng and Barb Meredith
Welcome Desk – Barb Meredith
Flower Provider – Open

January 8 – Wednesday

Lasagna or Surprise by Team 5 – Presbyterian Men

January 12 – Sunday

Interim Pastor – Ken Ribe
Communion will be served
Worship Leader – Erik Anderson
Hospitality Team 7 – Led by Mitch Mandelert and Kathi Mandelert
Welcome Desk – Ann Welke
Flower Provider – Open

January 15 – Wednesday

Barbecues by Team 6 – Anne Welke and Bonnie Gullickson

January 19 – Sunday

Interim Pastor – Ken Ribe
Worship Leader – Kevin Litten
Hospitality Team 8- Led by Beth Cripe
Welcome Desk – Bonnie Gullickson
Flower Provider – Open

January 22 – Wednesday

Chef's Choice by Team 7 – Ryan and Sara Reemtsma

January 26 - Sunday

Guest Pastor – Rich Estrem-Fuller
Worship Leader – Lynda Butek
Hospitality Team 1 - Led by Margi Kohl
Welcome Desk – Barb Meredith
Flower Provider – Ppen

January 29 – Wednesday

Chef's Choice by Team 8 – The Teskes