

# The Bell

January, 2026

Monthly Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

## THE NEW YEAR IS UPON US!

God's blessings upon you and Happy New Year. I hope the end of the Christmas season brings a New Year that will be a bit calmer.

I wanted to talk about our annual opportunity to help our church Universal with our Per Capita giving. Now, we as First Presbyterian Church of Chippewa Falls have decided to pay the entire Per Capita for our church. Our Per Capita is \$3000.00 dollars this year. It is based on our membership and the amount set by the Presbytery of Northern Waters.

As a reminder, Per Capita is the fundamental way in which all the nearly 10,000 congregations and mid councils of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) connect, participate and share in the work of the wider church.

Per Capita is the primary source of funding for the Office of the General Assembly, Synod and Presbyteries around the country so as to mutually and equitably share the costs of coming together to discern the Spirit's leading for the future.

We would ask, if you feel the tug on your heart, that you pay a portion, which is \$38.00 dollars per person. We would be very appreciative and you would be helping the church so that we could put that money to other programs here in the future. Regardless of what you do, the church will pay the Per Capita assessment.

God bless you and your family in this New Year.

We hope that as things calm down in this New Year, you will have the opportunity to ponder on the gift we have just been given, in the form of a little baby, before we go into the next season, where we watch what happens to that little baby once he grows up and saves us all. God bless you all.

Ed

## **CONGREGATION ELECTS LEADERS FOR 2026**

At the recent Supplemental Congregational Meeting, the congregation elected Corine Boos to serve on Session, Beth Cripe, Chuck Norseng and Anne Welke to serve on the board of Deacons, Gary Reich to serve as a Trustee of the Endowment Fund Board and Scott Legwold to serve on the Financial Review team.

These new leaders have been installed and are ready to take their places for the coming year.

## **SESSION RESCHEDULES ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**

The Book of Order specifies that each church will have an Annual Congregational Meeting to receive the annual report and conduct such other business as is necessary. The timing of that meeting is left to each individual church.

Our church by-laws stipulate (A3.002) that this meeting will be held no later than the second Sunday in February. Because Ed will be out of town on the Mission Trip for much of February, the congregation has voted to change the date of this meeting for 2026 only to February 22.

## **TOO MANY COOKS SPOIL THE BROTH**

But too few cooks may mean there is no broth. In terms of the First-Wednesday Night suppers, that's where we seem to find ourselves as the new year starts.

Marlys Daniels and Kevin Litten are working on the menu for January. Bonnie Gullickson and Anne Welke are in the kitchen in March and Barb Shorrel will make her tacos in May. But other than that, we are without cooks for February and April.

We have some options though. If we can find some willing cooks to provide food in February and April, we are good to go. Or we could do potlucks those two months.

Please contact Lynda Butek with your preference so we can plan accordingly.

## **WHAT GOES UP MUST (UNFORTUNATELY) COME DOWN**

We had lots of fun putting up all the Christmas decorations but now we have to take them all down.

The plan is to leave the decorations up through Epiphany, which we are celebrating on January 4 this year. But they all have to come down that week so we are ready for Baptism of the Lord Sunday, January 11.

The actual untrimming day has not been set yet but it will probably be Wednesday or Thursday, January 7 or 8. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Lynda Butek or Gene Peissig.

## **JANUARY IS CARELINK MONTH**

Traditionally we celebrate CareLink as our designated donation recipient throughout January. This year will be no different but things will be a bit different.

In the past we have fastened donation envelopes on the Christmas tree in the sanctuary. But this year, since we don't have a tree in the sanctuary, the donations envelopes will be in the Narthex.

As in the past, each envelope will be marked with a donation amount. If you wish to give to CareLink, select an envelope, put the corresponding donation inside and drop it in the collection plate.

CareLink supplies gas cards to people who need help getting to a doctor's appointment or job interview. The only way CareLink raises money is through donations from area churches and individuals. Unfortunately their funds are often depleted before they can be replenished. Any amount you can give will be greatly appreciated.

## **GENERAL ASSEMBLY APPROVES SPECIAL OFFERING SCHEDULE**

Over the past few months, you have been hearing about the changes the General Assembly has set out for the annual special offerings all churches take.

Beginning in 2026, there will be only three special offerings - One Great Hour of Sharing, World Communion Offering (formerly called the Peace and Global Witness offering) and Christmas Joy Offering. The Pentecost offering has been eliminated.

All current recipient causes will continue to be funded through the churchwide special offerings. Specific ministries like children-at-risk, youth and young adults will be part of the Christmas Joy Offering.

Beginning this year, the individual churches will no longer automatically receive portions of these offerings but instead, all the funds will go to the General Assembly where they can be accessed through the new grant program. A church can apply for a grant for its local ministries as long as those ministries align with the causes supported by the new offering. The Presbyterian Mission Agency is currently working on creating an accessible grant process that centers on equity, creativity and flexibility.

In the future overall causes rather than programs will receive funds from these offerings. This does not mean that currently funded programs will no longer receive funding, but the new program is aimed at inviting more congregations, mid-councils and individuals to support churchwide special offerings while they discover new ways to do God's work in the world. Think outside the box.

Over the next year, this new concept will be redefined and tweaked as necessary. Watch your Bell for future updates on this process.

First Presbyterian Church  
2026 Hospitality Team Schedule

Updated 12-17-2025 tw

<b>Team 1</b> <u>Anne Welke</u>	<b>Team 2</b> <u>Barb Williams</u>	<b>Team 3</b> <u>Chuck Norseng</u>	<b>Team 4</b> <u>Bill McDougall</u>	<b>Team 5</b> <u>Barb Shorrel</u>	<b>Team 6</b> <u>Corine Boos</u>
John Jensen Bill Martin Donna Martin Larry Annett Esther Frazier	Jan Koepke Winston Baker Scott Legwold Ed Williams Rick Koepke	Ruth Rosenow John Hillery Kathy Torres Jesse Torres Lynda Butek	George Abendroth Sara Abendroth Gene Peissig Kevin Litten Jean Peissig Deb McDougall	Ellen Teske Todd Teske Bonnie Gullickson	Marlys Daniels Ryan Reemtsma Sara Reemtsma Barbara Ray Bob Bodeau Mary Jo Reemtsma

<b>Jan '26</b>	<b>Tm</b>	<b>Feb '26</b>	<b>Tm</b>	<b>March '26</b>	<b>Tm</b>	<b>April '26</b>	<b>Tm</b>	<b>May '26</b>	<b>Tm</b>	<b>June '26</b>	<b>Tm</b>
4	5	1	3	1	1	5	6	3	4	7	3
11	6	8	4	8	2	12	1	10	5	14	4
18	1	15	5	15	3	19	2	17	6	21	5
25	2	22	6	22	4	26	3	24	1	28	6
				29	5			31	2		
<b>July '26</b>	<b>Tm</b>	<b>Aug '26</b>	<b>Tm</b>	<b>Sept '26</b>	<b>Tm</b>	<b>Oct '26</b>	<b>Tm</b>	<b>Nov '26</b>	<b>Tm</b>	<b>Dec '26</b>	<b>Tm</b>
5	1	2	5	6	4	4	2	1	6	6	5
12	2	9	6	13	5	11	3	8	1	13	6
19	3	16	1	20	6	18	4	15	2	20	1
26	4	23	2	27	1	25	5	22	3	27	2
		30	3					29	4		

Welcome Center Contact Person: Marlys  
Scrip Card Lead: Corine B.,

## THE CHIPPEWA FALLS YEARS

By Irene Robertson

Editor's note: Following is the fifth installment of Irene Robertson's letter about the years she and her husband, Rev. Wallace Robertson, spent in Chippewa Falls between 1938 and 1941. Mrs. Robertson's letter goes into detail about life in Chippewa Falls and at the church.

Due to the length of the letter, portions of it will appear in subsequent issues of the Bell.

Dr. Richard Rodgers was our doctor and he and his wife, Libby, became our close friends. They helped us in many ways. Libby was a wonderful cook and we enjoyed many dinners at their beautiful home. One time we were invited to dinner and Dick asked me if I'd like to go up in his airplane. I had never been in any plane, but thought it would be fun. So I went with him. It was fine at first; then he started to show me loops, banking, etc., and that "did me in". When we came down I was so sick that he took me right home. Dinner was cancelled! In later years we traveled quite a bit on commercial planes, but flying never became my favorite way to travel. Now, at age 82, I have flown twice with Ken Zino, our son-in-law, and loved it. He now has a twin engine Cessna. He is a careful, excellent pilot.

A year after we were settled in Chippewa Falls, Bob and Ruth had their first child - Bobby Wiesen. (Editor's note: it appears Bob and Irene were related and Bobby is Wally and Irene's first nephew.) They lived in West Milwaukee where Bob was teaching. Bobby was born on May 3, 1939. I was eager to see him, so when Mr. Leahy, a former teacher in West Milwaukee High School, was in the Chippewa area, he offered me a ride to West Milwaukee to see Bobby. He was the handsomest baby I had ever seen.

The Rodgers had a springer spaniel and when she had puppies they invited us to take our pick of the litter. We chose the runt of the litter because she wouldn't get too big. We named her Becky and I loved taking her for walks. She had a bad case of distemper after we'd had her for a while and I nursed her back to good health.

When I was pregnant with David, Becky ran away one cold, snowy day and I tramped in snow and ice for hours looking for her. I had to abandon the search to go home and prepare dinner for guests. Some thought I was crazy to go out looking for her. They were right for I soon ran a high fever and developed pneumonia and was very sick. A practical nurse came to take care of me until my mother could come. One day Wally said he saw Becky coming up our long walk. She was very dirty but Wally let her in and she breezed past him, ran upstairs to my bedroom and jumped up on the bed. How did that dog know where I was? Sometime later there was an interesting item in the local newspaper about the first female to defy the rule that no female could come on to the altar of a Catholic Church. It was a female springer spaniel and she (fit) Becky's description. A following article identified her as a Presbyterian dog. The author of the item was a friend of Wally and loved teasing him about Becky coming to the Catholic Church.