

The Bell

May, 2025

Monthly Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

PASTOR'S THOUGHTS ON EASTER SUNRISE

God's blessings upon you. He Has Risen! He Has Risen Indeed! Hallelujah!

In Holy Week we celebrated the most important week in history and the meaning that has had for our entire world.

The sunrise service was wonderful and thanks again to Jacqueline and Gary Reich for opening their home so that we could have a beautiful sunrise service with good singing and fellowship and watching God's creation as it came to life in the wee hours of the morning dawn.

This year 15 or so worshippers came to the Reich's to worship and watch the sun rise over Lake Wissota. It was cold but the nip in the air was evened out by the fire Gary had started. He had made three wooden crosses which were set up to remind us of Christ's crucifixion. They stood silhouetted as the sun rose.

We started the service by singing the first two verses of "Christ the Lord Has Risen Today!", then my sermon based on Luke 24:1-12, called "The First Witnesses: The Women", in which I talked about how the men did not believe the women, and how Jesus revealing his resurrection to the women first, the least of these, demonstrates to us that we need to spread the Gospel to everyone, but most importantly, the least of these in our community and world, just like Pope Francis did during his final days on Earth. The sermon culminated with the sunrise at 6:13. It was spectacular!

After a few minutes, we said the Lord's Prayer and finished with the last two verses of "Christ the Lord Has Risen Today!" During the last line, the speaker turned itself off, and we finished the service a cappella with these last words, "Risen Christ, triumphant now. Alleluia. What a beautiful finish to a beautiful service. I hope we can continue with this tradition next year and beyond.

God bless you all and your family as we now continue to celebrate our Lord and Savior's act of unselfish love for us with the feelings of great things to come for the rest of the year. God bless you all.

Ed

WEDNESDAY NIGHT SUPPERS CONTINUE

The last of our Wednesday Night Suppers will be April when we celebrate Cinco de Mayo with Barb Shorrel's tacos. Sorry, no mariachis or sombreros but we will have Mexican decorations and food. As usual, dinner will be served beginning at 5:30.

If the weather cooperates (as it didn't last year), we will move outside to Erickson Park for at least one picnic during the summer before resuming church dinners in September.

JUST A REMINDER - SYNOD OFFERS SUMMER SCHOOL IN IOWA

Buena Vista University in Storm Lake, Iowa will be the site of the 2025 Synod of Lakes and Prairies school from July 20-25.

The school, which will offer a full schedule of courses for all ages focuses on training for Commissioned Elders, continuing education for pastors, church educators and other church professionals, particularly new Clerks of Session.

There are also programs for children and youth on mission, study and fellowship. Childcare for infants and toddlers is available. Classes range from folk dancing to international relationships, from Bible study to pickleball. There's something for everyone. A complete list of classes is available in the church office.

It's not far but it has lots to offer everyone.

IT'S BASEBALL SEASON

Clearwater Forest is offering an opportunity for the entire Presbytery of Northern Waters to attend a baseball game between the Twins and Rangers on June 12 at 12:10 PM. That's a Wednesday so it won't interfere with church services.

Tickets are \$32.98 and they have booked 80 tickets. Deadline for purchasing is May 22. Our seats are located where one us may well catch a home run ball so baseball gloves are recommended.

To purchase tickets, go to clearwaterforest.org and scroll down for options. Choose Twins Tickets and follow the directions to make your purchase.

WHITE IS THE COLOR OF EASTERTIDE

In February we discussed the significance of the changing colors in the sanctuary.

With the coming of Easter, we have changed once again to white. White will remain the color of choice through Eastertide, which will take us all the way to Pentecost, June 8. Don't expect to see any change of colors until that date then we go to green for a time of growth. That will take us through the remainder of June, all of July, August, September, October and almost all of November.

FROM THE MISSION TEAM...

Submitted by Barb Shorrel

The month of May is a quiet one at FPC but lots of things are happening in June so it only seems right to alert you to the June happenings so you can plan accordingly.

June brings Pentecost as we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit and the birthday of the church on June 8 this year. On that day, we wear red and remember the Ascension of our Lord. We also collect the Pentecost Offering. This will be the final year that this offering is collected as the PC(USA) is making some changes to the Special Offerings for 2026.

The Pentecost Offering is focused on youth and young adult programs. We are allowed to keep 40% of our collection. The Mission Team has decided that we will give our local share to the Family Support Center to continue their work with educating families on parenting skills as well as advocating for those facing abusive relationships.

The remaining 60% is divided in the following ways...

- 25% is allocated for the Young Adult Volunteers program. This program trains volunteers ages 19-30 to engage in mission at 8 sites in the U.S. and around the world. "YAVs work with local agencies to address root causes of poverty and reconciliation while exploring the meaning of their Christian faith."
- 25% supports ministries with youth. This includes the Presbyterian Youth Triennium, an event for high schoolers held every three years. This year it will be held July 28-31 in Louisville.
- 10% is devoted to children at-risk and supports to improve education and provide safe havens such as the La Escuelita Learning Hub, the after-school program sponsored by Beechmont Presbyterian Church in Louisville.

Your contribution, no matter the amount, is appreciated. Please make out your checks to First Presbyterian Church and write "Pentecost Offering" on the memo line. Traditionally we begin collecting the Pentecost offering and talking about it in May but the actual collection day is June 8.

Noisy Sunday—June 30: On the fifth Sunday, we collect our coins and shake the bucket making a loud noise. This collection will be added to the 40% collected from the Pentecost Offering for the Family Support Center.

RESERVE JUNE 11 FOR DINNER CHURCH AND LEARN ABOUT MIGRANT WORKERS ON WESTERN WISCONSIN DAIRY FARMS. We will hear a special presentation from Puentes/Bridges. This non-profit's "mission is to build bridges between the community that migrates to work here and our rural and farming community." This group organizes annual trips to Mexico to bridge the cultural gap between farmers and their employees and the physical gap between the workers and their families.

Ruth Rosenow participated in one of these trips. Rich Rosenow's cousin is active in this organization and employs migrant workers on his dairy farm near Mondovi. This event is an opportunity to hear about the importance of migrant workers to our dairy farmers in western Wisconsin.

This is our traditional Ecumenical Dinner Church and is a potluck supper. We will plan to eat at 5:00 and the presentation will begin at 5:30. Hope to see many of you there.

FOLGERS COFFEE DRINKERS STILL NEEDED!

Last month the call went out for the black lids from Folgers Coffee cans. So far we have collected seven lids but we need at least a dozen to complete our project.

We put these lids under the Easter Lilies and Christmas poinsettias to catch overflow water which we certainly don't want on our wooden floor. We used what we have at Easter but we need more.

If you buy Folgers (the large size cans), bring the lids to the church and leave them in the Ushers' Closet off the Narthex. At the rate we are going, we will have more than enough by the time we need them for Christmas. Fortunately we drink Folgers here at FPC so our own kitchen is a source for lids too.

FLOWERS NEEDED FOR THE CHANCEL

Now that Easter is behind us and the Easter lilies are gone, we are looking for donations of flowers to decorate the chancel on Sunday.

We already have donations through most of May but after that, the pickins' are pretty slim.

The Flower Book is open on the Welcome Desk every Sunday. All you have to do is fill in your name next to the date you want the flowers and the dedication you want to appear in the bulletin, pay your \$35.00 to Esther and we will do the rest.

Remember, if you purchase flowers, you should take them home after the service or designate where you would like them to go (to a shut-in for instance).

STAMP OUT HUNGER

The annual Stamp Out Hunger food drive sponsored by the US Postal Service will be on Saturday, May 10. All you have to do is leave your donation of non-perishable food in a bag near your mailbox on the second Saturday in May, and your letter carrier will do the rest.

All the food donations are collected and distributed to the local food pantries. Every year our own Food Pantry receives many pounds of food this way which we add to our own resources.

MISSION COALITION TO MEET IN MAY

As they have done in the past, the Mission Coalition will hold its annual meeting in Fellowship Hall on Monday, May 5 from 5 to 6 PM.

TIME TO SAY THANKS TO MOM

May is the month we officially honor our mothers and all mothers as well.

Mother's Day is celebrated world-wide dating back for many centuries. The modern American version of the holiday is attributed to Anna Jarvis who organized the first Mother's Day service of worship and celebration at Andrews Methodist Episcopal Church in Grafton, West Virginia, which serves as the International Mother's Day Shrine today. Earlier days to honor mothers have been celebrated over thousands of years in many European countries.

Jarvis' campaign to make Mother's Day a recognized holiday in the United States began in 1905, the year her mother, Ann Reeves Jarvis, died. Ann Jarvis had been a peace activist who cared for wounded soldiers on both sides of the American Civil War, and created Mother's Day Work Clubs to address public health issues. She and another peace activist and suffragist, Julia Ward Howe, had been urging for the creation of a "Mother's Day For Peace" where mothers would ask that their husbands and sons were no longer killed in wars. Forty years before it became an official holiday, Ward Howe had made her Mother's Day Proclamation in 1870, which called upon mothers of all nationalities to band together to promote the "amicable settlement of international questions, the great and general interests of peace." Anna Jarvis wanted to honor this and to set aside a day to honor all mothers because she believed a mother is "the person who has done more for you than anyone in the world".

In 1908, the U.S. Congress rejected a proposal to make Mother's Day an official holiday, joking that they would also have to proclaim a "Mother-in-law's Day". However, owing to the efforts of Anna Jarvis, by 1911 all the states observed the holiday, with some of them officially recognizing Mother's Day as a local holiday (the first being West Virginia, in 1910). In 1914, Woodrow Wilson signed a proclamation designating Mother's Day, held on the second Sunday in May, as a national holiday to honor mothers.

Although Jarvis started Mother's Day as a liturgical service, she became resentful of the commercialization of the holiday, and it became associated with the phrase "Hallmark holiday ". By the early 1920s, Hallmark Cards and other companies had started selling Mother's Day cards. Jarvis believed that the companies had misinterpreted and exploited the idea of Mother's Day, and that the emphasis of the holiday should be on sentiment, not profit. As a result, she organized boycotts of Mother's Day and threatened to issue lawsuits against the companies involved.

Mother's Day remains one of the biggest days for sales of flowers, greeting cards, and the like; Mother's Day is also the biggest holiday for dining out and for long-distance telephone calls.

Moreover, churchgoing is also popular on Mother's Day, yielding the highest church attendance after Christmas Eve and Easter. Many worshippers celebrate the day with carnations, colored if the mother is living and white if she is dead. The practice of wearing carnations on Mother's Day was observed here at FPC when our own Bob Denman honored his deceased mother by wearing a white carnation on Mother's Day.

Today, here at FPC, we honor not only mothers but all our ladies by giving them carnations on Mother's Day.