



The Bell

February, 2021

Monthly Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

WE CELEBRATE THE TRANSFIGURATION OF JESUS FEBRUARY 14

The transfiguration of Jesus is a story told in the New Testament when Jesus is transfigured and becomes radiant in glory upon a mountain. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke describe it and the Second Epistle of Peter also refers to it although none of the accounts identifies the “high mountain” of the scene by name.

Since the third century, some Christians have identified Mount Tabor as the site of the transfiguration. Tabor has long been a place of Christian pilgrimage and is the site of the Church of the Transfiguration. However, there are other candidates for the site of the transfiguration including Mount Panium, Paneas or Banias, a small hill situated at the source of the Jordan, near the foot of which Caesarae Philippi was built, Mount Meron, Mount Hebo and Mount Hermon. While the location of the transfiguration is not important, the transfiguration itself is.

In the accounts told in the New Testament, Jesus and Peter, James and John go to a mountain to pray. On the mountain, Jesus begins to shine with bright rays of light. Then Moses and Elijah appear next to him and he speaks with them. Jesus is then called “Son” by a voice in the sky, assumed to be God the Father, as in the Baptism of Jesus.

When Jesus and the three apostles are going back down the mountain, Jesus tells them not to tell anyone “the things they had seen” until the “Son of Man” has risen from the dead. The apostles are described as questioning among themselves as to what Jesus meant by “risen from the dead”.

The transfiguration is one of the miracles of Jesus in the Gospels. This miracle is unique among others that appear in the Gospels in that it happens to Jesus himself. The transfiguration is one of the five major milestones in the gospel narrative of the life of Jesus.

In Christian teachings, the transfiguration is a pivotal moment and the setting on the mountain is presented as the point where human nature meets God: the meeting place of the temporal and the eternal, with Jesus himself as the connecting point, acting as the bridge between heaven and earth. The transfiguration not only supports the identity of Jesus as the Son of God, but identifies him as the messenger and mouth-piece of God. At the transfiguration, God, assigns to Jesus a special “honor and glory” and it is the turning point at which God exalts Jesus above all other powers in creation and positions him as ruler and judge.

The transfiguration also echoes the teaching by Jesus that God is not “the God of the dead, but of the living”. Although Moses had died and Elijah had been taken up to heaven centuries before, they now live in the presence of the Son of God, implying that the same return to life applies to all who face death and have faith.

FPC TO HOLD SUPPLEMENTAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The supplementary congregational meeting of the members of the First Presbyterian Church of Chippewa Falls will take place by Zoom on Sunday, February 7 immediately following the regular Sunday service.

The purpose of this meeting will be to review the 2020 Annual Report, to review the 2021 budget, to nominate and elect members to the Nominating Committee and review and vote on the minutes of the December 6 congregational meeting.

Because this meeting will take place by Zoom, names of nominees to the Nominating Committee can either be submitted during the meeting or mailed to the church office to arrive prior to the February 7 date. Only written nominations will be accepted prior to the meeting. All nominees must have agreed to serve on this committee prior to their nomination.

In addition, the congregation will be asked to vote on the following changes to the church by-laws. These changes reduce the number of Deacons from 8 to 6 and the number of people on the Nominating Committee from 7 to 5. These changes are suggested because our membership has decreased over the past year. Per the Book of Order, these by-law changes will be read from the pulpit twice during January.

The current wording of the by-laws is shown below with the proposed changes shown in italics and the suggested changes crossed out.

A-5.000

ARTICLE V The Board of Deacons

A-5.001 21) There shall be a board of deacons. The board will be composed of ~~eight (8) deacons~~ *six (6) deacons* and the pastor, who serves as an advisory member.

A-5.003 23) The deacon board shall be divided into three rotating classes, ~~one class~~ consisting of two deacons *each*. ~~and two classes consisting of three deacons.~~

A-6.000

ARTICLE VI Nomination and Election of Officers

A-6.004 28) A nominating committee of ~~seven~~ *five* members shall be constituted each year, for a one year term. ~~Two~~ *One* members of this committee shall be designated by the session, ~~one of whom~~ and shall be designated by the session as chairperson. *One member shall be a member of the Deacon board.* ~~Five~~ *Three* members of this committee, none of whom may be in active service on the session, shall be chosen by the congregation at the supplementary annual meeting.

The 2020 Annual Report and Congregational Meeting materials will be emailed to all members during January. If you do not receive your materials by January 26, please notify the office and copies will be supplied to you.

OUR MISSION PROGRAM LOOKS FORWARD

We will promote Carelink in February and One Great Hour of Sharing in March/April. If you wish to donate to either of these mission projects, send your check to the office with CareLink or OGHS in the memo line.

2021 COMMUNION SCHEDULE ADOPTED

In January, the Session agreed to the following communion schedule for 2021.

January 3	First Sunday and Epiphany
February 7	First Sunday
February 17	Ash Wednesday
March 7	First Sunday
April 4	First Sunday and Easter
May 2	First Sunday
May 23	Pentecost
June 6	First Sunday
July 4	First Sunday
August 1	First Sunday
September 5	First Sunday
October 3	First Sunday and World Communion Sunday
November 7	First Sunday
December 5	First Sunday
December 24	Christmas Eve

This schedule will not begin until we return to in-person worship, which is scheduled for Easter Sunday.

ASH WEDNESDAY FISH FRY AND SERVICE CANCELLED

The annual Ash Wednesday Men's Club Fish Fry and traditional service have become mainstays of life at FPC. But this year because of the pandemic and the church being closed to in-person worship, these two related events have been cancelled.

Last year was the first time we worshipped on Ash Wednesday with the members of Trinity United Methodist Church and Christ Episcopal Church both in Chippewa Falls.

The joining of these three denominations is not new in our community. According to our historical records, the three congregations began worshipping together, perhaps in the log cabin school house on the east bank of Duncan Creek. The three churches continue to worship under one roof until each could afford to build its own church.

The Presbyterian Church is the oldest protestant church in the community dating back to May 15, 1855 when it received its charter. This was only seven years after Wisconsin was recognized as a state.

Once the restrictions caused by the virus are lifted and we are able to return to in-person worship, the Ash Wednesday events will return bigger and better than before.

Presbytery of Northern Waters

Clearwater Forest Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Work Trip

March 7-13 and March 14-20, 2021



Why Volunteer?: In a typical year, we'd be heading somewhere South in February or March to work on storm damage. This isn't a typical year. With COVID-19 not yet under control, and vaccines just starting to be rolled out, long drives across state lines with people packed tight in vehicles and sleeping dorm style once we get there seems unwise. BUT. We have a safer alternative plan. Clearwater Forest, our camp in Deerwood, MN, is doing a major renovation project right now during the downtime, and can use our help. This will help provide a great camping experience for our kids - and us - into the future.

Requirements: must be at least 18-years old, be in good health, and have health insurance.

Jobs: We'll be doing some familiar jobs: setting tile, installing laminate flooring and RFP, painting, and probably some framing, drywall, door and window hanging, trim, etc.

Accommodations and Transportation: There will be a limit of 10 people to a building, so you can have your own room. Masks and social distancing will be required. It's close enough we can take our own vehicles, and not be crowded to and from. And we won't have to worry about motel stops on the way. We'll ask that you not come if you've had known exposure within 10 days before.

Cost: There will be \$100 per person per week to cover food, to be paid with registration. We'll be donating some supplies to help with our work out of reserves from previous years. There will be a Zoom informational/organizational meeting the middle of January.

When: In order to keep groups smaller, we're going on two consecutive weeks, March 7-13, and 14-20. You can pick a week, come for part of a week or stay more than a week if you'd like. We may recruit small groups for other time blocks as well. Please indicate your preference on the registration slip below.

Registration and Deposit Directions: Please submit your registration form and a check payable to: United Presbyterian Congregational Church: c/o Jim Deters, 214 Vaughn Ave, Ashland, WI 54806 Please include on the memo line: Presbytery Mission Trip. **Registration is due no later than January 29, 2021.**

Contacts: If you have any questions, please call Rev. Richard Blood at 218-343-4850, Rev. Jim Deters at 720-530-1073, or Paul Rigstad at 218-666-2646.

2021 Clearwater Forest PDA Work Trip Registration Form

Name _____ Deposit _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

E-mail _____

My preference is: March 7-13 _____ March 14-20 _____ Other: _____

FEBRUARY BRINGS GROUNDHOG DAY

February is always a rather drab month save for the happiness of Valentine's Day. But we often overlook another "holiday" in February – Groundhog Day.

The legend that has had people looking to Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania dates back to 1886. According to legend, if Phil, the groundhog, comes out of his hole and sees his shadow on February 2, it means there will be six more weeks of really nasty winter weather. If not, the rest of winter will melt away with spring not far behind.

This legend is a holdover from European folklore. Since medieval times, people watched hedgehogs, badgers, bears or wolves to see if they saw their shadows on February 2. Once people settled in America, the groundhogs took over.

According to the National Climate Data Center, (NCDC) the tradition became publicized in 1887 when a newspaperman wrote about local hunters who celebrated February 2 going groundhog hunting followed by a groundhog barbeque. He embellished the story with tales of the forecasting skills of Punxsutawney Phil. The rest is history.

When people continue a weather tradition like Groundhog Day, it is usually because it contains at least a grain of truth. Historically the grain of truth for Groundhog Day in America is related to El Niño, an abnormally warm tropical Pacific current which warps global wind and weather patterns.

Here it usually produces a warm winter starting along the West Coast and expanding eastward. By midwinter, the warmth of a moderate to large El Niño usually reaches the Great Lakes and Midwest. Then as the El Niño weakens, the warmth retreats and normal winter returns to the East.

In large parts of the East, this means that El Niño frequently produces a cool, early winter, warm mid-winter and cool late winter. If a large rodent like Phil was wandering around in the relatively mild mid-winter, there might be enough sunshine to see his shadow. Then El Niño would weaken and winter would literally come storming back.

Remember that the groundhog tradition persisted in America during the 1700s and 1800s during the last stages of the "Little Ice Age". What occasionally worked then might not work now. In fact the NCDC claims that since 1988, groundhogs have only been about 39% accurate in their weather predictions.

Regardless, we celebrate Phil every February 2 Will he or wont he? And you don't have to buy a card or present or roses for your honey unless you want to that is.

SCRIP CARD PROCEDURES CHANGE

In order to make it more convenient for members and friends to purchase scrip cards, a few changes have been made. Whenever the church is open, cards may be purchased in person, or you can send a check to the church (with "scrip" on the memo line), and your card will be mailed to you. The \$100 cards are the most popular and we will continue to order them on a regular basis. The \$50 and \$25 cards will be available on special order only.