



# The Bell

February, 2022

Monthly Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

## COVID-19 TAKES ITS TOLL AT FPC

Despite the fact that our members have been vaccinated and most if not all have received their booster shots, the virus has found its way into our church.

To date at least four of our members have tested positive for the virus. None of them reports serious effects of the illness but they have been forced to quarantine and those who have come in contact with them have isolated themselves too.

The need to quarantine has forced the closure of our Food Pantry on Thursday. At this point, the Tuesday Food Pantry remains open pending any future Covid cases. The Food Pantry board will decide what the future holds for that group and they will be notified accordingly.

In order to be extra cautious, the Session elected to close the church for in-person worship through the end of January. On January 31, that group will again discuss the pandemic and decide what we will do as a church for February. Members and friends will be notified by email or phone of Session's decision.

Our guest speakers for February have agreed to preach from the sanctuary in the event we are not open for in-person worship. They are Ken Ribe (February 6), Ed Williams (February 13), Terri Koca (February 20) and Rich Estrem-Fuller (February 27).

The installation and ordination of 2022 leaders and the Supplemental Congregational Meeting will take place whether we are open for in-person worship or worshipping by Zoom.

The Congregational Meeting will include the nomination and election of four members of the 2022 Nominating Committee. Please be thinking of people to serve on this committee. Nominees must have been briefed on their duties and have agreed to serve. Members of Session are not eligible for election as one of them will be elected by the Session to serve as chair of the committee.

We have discussed having the traditional Fish Fry and Ash Wednesday service with the Episcopal and Methodist church members. At this point, these will take place but if we see an upsurge in new cases in the county, it may be necessary to cancel them. Again members and friends will be notified by email or phone. The Ash Wednesday service will include Eddie Crise of Trinity United Methodist Church and Aaron Zook of Christ Episcopal Church.

## THE SEARCH CONTINUES

It's been quite some time since you have heard from the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) about the work they are doing to search for a new called-pastor for our church.

Their lack of communication is not a reflection of disinterest on the part of the committee but a lack of resources to help us find a pastor.

The first line of search is the Church Leadership Connection (CLC) which is a church-wide clearing house for Presbyterian churches seeking a pastor and pastors seeking a church. Shortly after the pandemic began, the CLC found they had very few if any candidates to refer to us. The main stumbling block for us seems to be the half-time salary we are offering. Then the CLC itself shut down and so our committee was forced to turn elsewhere.

They contacted the Presbyterian Seminary at the University of Dubuque in hopes they could steer some newly graduated or soon-to-be graduate students our way. Unfortunately, again because of the pandemic, the seminary had nothing to offer.

We then approached both the Methodist and United Church of Christ leadership in hopes we could find a local church with which to share a pastor.

The Methodists did not have anything to offer us but UCC suggested we talk to their church in Truax which was also seeking a pastor. Members of Session met with their leadership and for a time things looked promising but subsequently the Truax church decided they could only afford to pay a pastor a quarter-time salary. Fortunately for them they were able to find a retired UCC pastor who is willing to work for that reduced salary. That left us searching on our own again.

The PNC has decided to start all over again first with the CLC and then with the Dubuque seminary to see if their candidate pool may have increased now that the pandemic has been around for a while.

In addition, with your permission, we continue to entertain the possibility of hiring a Certified Ruling Elder or lay-pastor to serve our church. We have a willing candidate in Ed Williams who preaches for us every month and is continuing his studies to qualify as a CRE. Ed has been working with his mentor, Ken Ribe, and expects to complete his training in church polity (law) and reformed theology by the end of the summer.

So the search continues and fortunately we have a very capable and willing group of guest pastors who continue to preach for us every Sunday. This is not the rule in many Presbyterian churches so we consider ourselves very lucky. But while our guest pastors have been wonderful to work with, we need someone in the church to interact with our members and the community in general. For that we need a pastor and the search goes on.

If you have any suggestions for the PNC, please contact Gary Shorrel or Jan Koepke, co-chairs, Lynda Butek, Corine Boos or Deb Buckli.

## **FOOD PANTRY ASKS FOR DONATIONS**

The Food Pantry is in need of both plastic and paper grocery bags. If you can donate some, please bring them to the church during regular office hours, Tuesday through Thursday from 9 to 2.

Although we don't typically distribute clothing, we often make an exception during the cold winter months. If you have old but serviceable men's or women's coats, please consider donating them to the Food Pantry to be distributed to the needy.

As Pastor Ken reminded us on January 9, Luke 3: 10 says, "And the crowds asked him, 'What then should we do?' In reply he said to them, 'Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.'"

## **INSTALLATION/ORDINATION POSTPONED**

Because the January 9 service which was scheduled to include the installation and ordination of 2022 leaders was held virtually, the installation and ordination has been postponed until the February 6 service.

## **FPC TO RECEIVE SPECIAL PRAYERS**

It is the custom of the Presbytery to pray for churches in the area every year. FPC is on the prayer schedule for February 27. On that day we will receive special prayers from our sister churches.

## **PER CAPITA ASSESSMENT FOR 2022 IS DUE**

Now that the new year has begun, it's time to start thinking about paying our per capita assessments.

The assessment for 2022 is \$32 per member. This represents \$8.98 for the General Assembly, \$5.50 for the Synod, and \$17.52 for Presbytery for general operating expenses of the church as a whole.

## **PRESBYTERY SCHEDULES WORK TRIP TO LOUISIANA**

The annual Spring Disaster Assistance Work Trip sponsored by our Presbytery will go to Hammond, Louisiana.

The trip which will be held from February 19 to 27 will aid the residents of Hammond which suffered flooding in 2016 only to be hit by more damage from hurricane Barry in 2020 and in 2021.

If you are interested in assisting in the work in Louisiana, refer to the information shown here in the Bell and complete the registration form.

More information is available from the Presbytery office in Superior.

**Presbytery of Northern Waters  
Hammond Louisiana Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Work Trip  
February 19- 27, 2022**



**Why Volunteer to Assist Hammond:** Southern Louisiana experienced extensive flooding in 2016, followed by more damage from hurricane Barry in 2020. In August of 2021 Louisiana was hit once again.

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

**Abilities:** Experience is helpful but not necessary! Experience and/or a willingness to learn the following, are needed: drywall, flooring, painting, siding, gutting, and roofing.

**Accommodations and Transportation:** We will be staying at First Presbyterian Church of Hammond, Louisiana. We will be provided with high-quality air mattresses, a shower trailer and kitchen. Sleeping bags will be needed. *The church can accommodate a maximum of 20 volunteers, so please register soon!* We will carpool down and back. The trip will take two days each way with an overnight stop at a hotel.

**Cost:** The total cost is approximately \$350 per person. A non-refundable deposit of \$125 per person should be included with your registration.

**Registration and Deposit Directions:** Please submit your registration form and a check payable to: Presbytery of Northern Waters at 5201 E 2nd St, Superior, WI 55808. Please include on the memo line: Presbytery Mission Trip 2022. ***Registration is due by January 25, 2022.***

**Contacts:** If you have any questions, please call Rev. Richard Blood at 218-343-4850, or Rev. Jim Deters at 720-530-1073. We will meet in mid-January for a pre-trip orientation session.

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**2022 PDA Work Trip Registration Form**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Deposit \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail \_\_\_\_\_



## REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR RAISES DONATIONS

For Advent we asked the congregation to participate in a reverse Advent calendar for our food pantry. Those who were interested were given a canvas bag and a list. Each day listed a different item that you could toss into the bag. The bags were to be returned by the Christmas Eve service to be blessed before going to the pantry.

The Episcopalians heard about what we were doing and wanted to participate. They came up with a list of their own but with the same idea of putting an item a day in a bag. They gave mostly hygiene products which we can also use! They had a special blessing at their church before bringing them over on Christmas Eve in time for our service.

We have included a photo of ALL the donation bags in the chancel waiting to be blessed. We are so grateful for the generosity of our church and the members of the Episcopal Church who also participated.

We are all working together in this city for good!

