



# The Bell

February, 2022

Monthly Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

## MARCH 2 MARKS ASH WEDNESDAY

Ash Wednesday begins the start of **Lent** in the Western church and takes place 46 days before Easter Sunday. While Ash Wednesday is observed mainly by the Roman Catholic Church, it is also celebrated by some Protestant denominations including Methodists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians and Lutherans.

The name of the day comes from the custom that churchgoers are marked on the forehead or the back of the hand with a cross of ash to symbolize death and regret for past sins. The tradition of marking with ashes began in the early church even before the birth of Christ as a way for persistent sinners to outwardly show their desire for repentance. By the end of the 10th century, the custom had spread to all the faithful.

Today the ashes are traditionally created from burning the palms used in the church on **Palm Sunday** the previous year. This is true in our church as well. Palm Sunday marked the arrival of Jesus into Jerusalem after his 40 days and nights in the desert. His road to the city was paved with palm branches laid down by his followers.

"Sackcloth and ashes" is a familiar phrase derived from the medieval custom of humbling oneself before God or a church community to beg forgiveness, but the symbolic use of dust or ashes dates even further back -- to the time of Moses and the Old Testament -- as sign of penitence and mourning.

Today, the custom continues each year on Ash Wednesday, as a priest or minister marks the sign of a cross in ashes on the foreheads of the faithful, followed by the solemn intonation: "Remember that you are dust and unto dust you shall return".

The observance of Lent itself dates back to the fourth century. The word Lent comes from the Old English word *lencten*, meaning spring.

In the Middle Ages, fish and meat were strictly forbidden during the Lenten fast. Today, more relaxed rules mean that modern Christians are more likely to give up their favorite desserts or pastimes during Lent.

Read further in this Bell to see how FPC will celebrate Ash Wednesday this year.

## **ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE AND FISH FRY PLANNED**

The traditional Ash Wednesday worship service will again take place in our sanctuary on March 2. The service, which will begin at 6:15, will include communion and imposition of the ashes. As we did two years ago, the service will be shared by worshippers from Trinity United Methodist and Christ Episcopal churches in Chippewa Falls.

Rev. Eddie Crise of Trinity United Methodist will deliver the meditation. Rev. Aaron Zook of Christ Episcopal will assist with communion and the imposition of the ashes as well as deliver the prayers and benediction. Gene Peissig will be worship leader for that service. Special music will be presented by singers from the Methodist and Presbyterian choirs directed by Bill Bocian, Methodist choir director.

As we have done in the past, the service will be preceded by the Fish Fry hosted by the Presbyterian Men. The dinner will include fish, Denman baked beans, cole slaw, dessert and beverage. The cost for adults is \$10. For children 5 to 12 the cost is \$5 and children under 5 eat free.

Dinner will be served beginning at 5 PM with the last serving at 5:45.

## **CONGREGATIONAL MEETING COVERS SEVERAL ISSUES**

The February 6 Congregational Meeting saw Elders, Larry Annett and George Abendroth and Deacon Mary Jo Reemstma installed (and in George's case ordained) to serve for the coming three years.

In addition the 2022 budget was reviewed and the 2021 Annual Report received. Treasurer, Carla Ingalls, was on hand to explain how the budget was formulated and answer any questions concerning that document. She said the current operating funds are more than adequate for the hiring of a new pastor. In addition she said the 2022 income was based on past income, taking into consideration the current trend toward somewhat lower contributions.

The final item of business was a revision to the church by-laws which allows for five or more Deacons to serve rather than the six required in prior years.

The next Congregational Meeting will be held in December when the new slate of leaders will be presented.

## **REV. ESTREM-FULLER TO SPEAK ON TRANSFIGURATION SUNDAY**

Rev. Rich Estrem-Fuller will be in our pulpit on February 27, Transfiguration of the Lord Sunday

That Sunday celebrates the transfiguration of Jesus upon a mountain where he becomes radiant in glory. It is on that day that Jesus is called "Son" by a voice from the sky, assumed to be God. The transfiguration is one of the miracles of Jesus in the Gospels and it is the only one that happens to Jesus himself.

## **DAYLIGHT SAVINGS RETURNS MARCH 13**

Don't forget, Daylight Savings Time begins at 2 AM Sunday, March 13. Set your clocks ahead one hour before you go to bed or you will miss Sunday service.

## **WORK TRIP POSTPONED**

The Presbytery-sponsored work trip originally scheduled for February 19- 22 has been postponed until later this year due to a shortage of workers caused by concern over the Omicron variant of the Covid-19 virus.

The trip is on the back burner for spring possibly at Clearwater Forest instead of Louisiana which was the scheduled February location.

## **2022 NOMINATING COMMITTEE SELECTED**

The 2022 Nominating Committee was elected at the February Congregational Meeting. The committee members are Margi Kohl, Chuck Norseng, Barb Shorrel and Dick Kemp. They will be joined by Lynda Butek, who is the Session representative to the committee and as such will chair the group.

The committee will meet in the fall to formulate a slate of leaders which will include three Deacons, one Endowment Fund Trustee and one member of the Financial Review team.

But it's not too early to start thinking about possible candidates for these positions.

## **SPEAKERS SET FOR SPRING SERVICES**

Guest speakers have been lined up for March and April. They include:

Eddie Crise	March 2, Ash Wednesday
Ken Ribe	March 6
Gene Peissig	March 13
Terri Koca	March 20
Ed Williams	March 27
Ken Ribe	April 3 and Easter, April 17
Rich Estrem-Fuller	Palm Sunday, April 10
Terri Koca	April 24

Spring will bring Rev. Sandee Kosmo back from Arizona and we can expect to see her in our church during May.

## **FPC TO MARK THE LITTLE KNOWN HOLIDAY OF PURIM**

The jolly Jewish holiday of Purim is celebrated every year on the 14th of the Hebrew month of Adar. Purim 2022 begins on Wednesday night, March 16 and continues through Thursday, March 17. It commemorates the salvation of the Jewish people in the ancient Persian empire from prime-minister Haman's plot to destroy all the Jews, young and old, infants and women, in a single day.

The word Purim literally means "lots" in ancient Persian. Purim was named this since Haman had thrown lots to determine when he would carry out his scheme, as recorded in the book of Esther.

The Persian Empire of the 4th century BCE extended over 127 lands, and all the Jews were its subjects. When King Ahasuerus had his wife, Queen Vashti, executed for failing to follow his orders, he arranged a beauty pageant to find a new queen. A Jewish girl, Esther, found favor in his eyes and became the new queen, though she refused to divulge her nationality.

Meanwhile, the Jew-hating Haman was appointed prime minister of the empire. Mordechai, the leader of the Jews (and Esther's cousin), defied the king's orders and refused to bow to Haman. Haman was incensed, and he convinced the king to issue a decree ordering the extermination of all the Jews.

Mordechai galvanized all the Jews, convincing them to repent, fast and pray to God. Meanwhile, Esther asked the king and Haman to join her for a feast when Esther revealed to the king her Jewish identity. Haman was hanged; Mordechai was appointed prime minister in his stead, and a new decree was issued, granting the Jews the right to defend themselves against their enemies.

On Purim in Jewish homes throughout the world it is customary to read the book of Esther (once on the eve of Purim and again on the following day), give monetary gifts to at least two people, send gifts of two kinds of food to at least one person and celebrate the Purim feast which often includes wine or other intoxicating beverages. It is also customary for children (and adults, if they desire) to dress up in costumes.

There is a spirit of liveliness and fun on Purim that is unparalleled on the Jewish calendar. On the day before Purim, it is customary to fast, commemorating Esther's fasting and praying to God that He save His people.

In addition to the miracle of Jewish survival despite the efforts of their enemies, Purim celebrates God's intimate involvement in every aspect of this world.

On March 13, Gene Peissig will discuss Purim in his sermon and the book of Esther outlines in detail Haman's plot and the role Queen Esther played in thwarting it and saving her people.

## MARCH BRINGS ST. PATRICK'S DAY

We celebrate St. Patrick's Day on March 17. The patron saint of Ireland, St. Patrick, was born in Roman Britain in the late 4th century. He was kidnapped at the age of 16 and taken to Ireland as a slave. After more than six years as a prisoner, Patrick escaped. According to his writing, a voice—which he believed to be God's—spoke to him in a dream, telling him it was time to leave Ireland.

To do so, Patrick walked nearly 200 miles from County Mayo, where it is believed he was held, to the Irish coast. After escaping to Britain, Patrick reported that he experienced a second revelation—an angel in a dream told him to return to Ireland as a missionary. Soon after, Patrick began religious training, a course of study that lasted more than 15 years.

After his ordination as a priest, he was sent back to Ireland with a dual mission: to minister to Christians already living in Ireland and to begin to convert the Irish. (Interestingly, this mission contradicts the widely held notion that Patrick introduced Christianity to Ireland.) By the time of his death on March 17, 461, he had established monasteries, churches, and schools. Many legends grew up around him—for example, that he drove the snakes out of Ireland and used the shamrock to explain the Trinity. Ireland came to celebrate his day with religious services and feasts.

On St. Patrick's Day, which falls during the Christian season of Lent, Irish families would traditionally attend church in the morning and celebrate in the afternoon. Lenten prohibitions against the consumption of meat were waived and people would dance, drink and feast—on the traditional meal of Irish bacon and cabbage.

It was emigrants, particularly to the United States, who transformed St. Patrick's Day into a largely secular holiday of revelry and celebration of things Irish. Cities with large numbers of Irish immigrants, who often wielded political power, staged the most extensive celebrations, which included elaborate parades. Boston held its first St. Patrick's Day parade in 1737, followed by New York City in 1762. Records show that a St. Patrick's Day parade was held on March 17, 1601 in a Spanish colony in what is now St. Augustine, Florida. The parade, and a St. Patrick's Day celebration a year earlier were organized by the Spanish Colony's Irish vicar Ricardo Artur.

Since 1962 Chicago has colored its river green to mark the holiday. (Although blue was the color traditionally associated with St. Patrick, green is now commonly connected with the day.) Irish and non-Irish alike commonly participate in the “wearing of the green”—sporting an item of green clothing or a shamrock, the Irish national plant, in the lapel. Corned beef and cabbage are associated with the holiday, and even beer is sometimes dyed green to celebrate the day. Although some of these practices eventually were adopted by the Irish themselves, they did so largely for the benefit of tourists.

Homesick Irish soldiers serving in the English military marched in New York City on March 17, 1772 to honor the Irish patron saint. Enthusiasm for the St. Patrick's Day (continued on following page)

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parades in New York City, Boston and other early American cities only grew from there.

Over the next 35 years, Irish patriotism among American immigrants flourished, prompting the rise of so-called “Irish Aid” societies like the Friendly Sons of Saint Patrick and the Hibernian Society. Each group would hold annual parades featuring bagpipes (which actually first became popular in the Scottish and British armies) and drums.

In 1848, several New York Irish Aid societies decided to unite their parades to form one official New York City St. Patrick’s Day Parade. Today, that parade is the world’s oldest civilian parade and the largest in the United States, with over 150,000 participants. Each year, nearly 3 million people line the 1.5-mile parade route to watch the procession, which takes more than five hours.

## From the Mission Team...

Submitted by Barb Shorrel

### FOOD PANTRY NEEDS DIAPERS!

We have had a few families visit our food pantry with infant children. They often are in need of diapers. We have been able to get some from Feed My People for free but they usually can only send us size 6. You can help us out by purchasing a package of diapers in sizes 1-4 or by donating money for us to purchase packages. You can drop off packages of diapers during regular office hours or you can contribute funds by noting that your contribution is for diapers. We appreciate any help that you can give us.

### ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING...

We will soon begin the season of Lent in the Christian community. For Presbyterians, this is also the time when we consider giving to One Great Hour of Sharing, the first of four special offerings. During worship on select Sundays, you will be hearing about how this money is used to help people throughout the world. We will dedicate this offering on Palm Sunday. However, you may give at any time. There will be special envelopes in the pews beginning the first Sunday after Ash Wednesday. As always make your check out to the church with One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) on the memo line.

Do any of you remember those fish boxes that we gave out to the Sunday School children during Lent? Do you remember trying to put them together? Well, in the spirit of nostalgia, we are going to have them available for anyone who wants them this Lenten season. They will be available the Sunday after Ash Wednesday and you can fill them with your loose change. We will have them already put together for you! You can return them on Palm Sunday.

God bless us during this Lenten season.

## **WE CAN CALL THEM “TEAM MILLER”**

Anyone who knows Jeannette Miller has certainly heard her speak of her daughter, Karla. Over the years Jeanette has related Karla's many accomplishments including earning her doctorate and becoming a tenured professor at the University of Oxford in England.

Karla's specialty is neuroscience, the study of the structure of the brain and nervous system while Jeanette excels in embroidery and stitchery.

Working in collaboration with her mother, Karla created four pieces of art that reflect both the neuroscientist's brain imaging work and the creative stitchery which Jeannette has practiced for years.

Modern neuroscience is based on the concept that the brain is divided into many regions which have specialized tasks. The brain has sections dedicated to vision, language and memory.

Karla worked with Jeanette to combine science and the art of stitchery to create computer-generated models of the brain that would depict the various sections of the brain and their respective functions using embroidery.

Karla acknowledges that her mother was her inspiration and encouraged her to follow her dreams and obtain a top-rate education. Karla's interest in the brain started in her teens and continued during her undergraduate degree at the University of Illinois.

She received the PEO Scholar Award during her doctorate studies at Stanford University and used it to attend Oxford where she studied with people from all over the world.

Beyond the monetary value, the Scholar Award application program made a large impact on Karla's research career because it was the first time she had to justify her own original research project. The PEO award was just the first of many grants Karla received to further her research.

In her own right, Jeanette was initiated into PEO in 1981 in Fort Dodge, Iowa. She has since been member of chapters in Illinois, North Dakota and Wisconsin and is currently a member of Chapter K Towson, Maryland.

Jeanette and her surgeon husband, Bruce, were members of our church for many years prior to Bruce's death. Even though Jeanette has since moved to Maryland to be near her sons, she has maintained her close relationship with and membership in our church where she served on the Session and as worship leader.

Prior to her retirement, Jeanette was a nutritionist and is an excellent cook. She shared her love of embroidery and stitchery with FPC, making items to sell at the PW bazaar. She also served as chair of the candy booth each year.