



# The Bell

March, 2023

Monthly Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

## REFLECTIONS ON ASH WEDNESDAY

by Ed Williams

Good afternoon and God's Blessings to you. Sitting here after getting rid of wave one of our Ash Wednesday snow, which I am sure many of you did as well, I was thinking that with us having to cancel our Fish Fry, and then the service as well, I was unable to share the purpose of Ash Wednesday with you and what we can do to align our will with God's will for us.

Please pray with me first: Pour out your Holy Spirit, O God, and prepare our hearts to accept your word. Silence in us any voice but yours, that, hearing, we may also obey your will through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen

The book of Common Worship says this about Ash Wednesday: "Ash Wednesday begins the season of Lent with a public act of confession. Acknowledging that we have all sinned and fallen short of God's glory, we repent and return to our loving creator. Acutely aware of our failure and frailty, we express our utter reliance on God's saving grace. Ashes are an ancient symbol of repentance, sorrow, and sacrifice. Traditionally, the ashes for this service are made from previous years' palm branches thus the ashes and palms together frame the season of Lent."

Our Gospel reading for Ash Wednesday was from the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 6, verses 1-6 and 16-2. Please pray and then read them. Jesus is still giving the Sermon on the Mount so it is worth listening to.

Our verses for Ash Wednesday are Jesus' directions for how to give alms, or donate your time, money, services, or resources to others. Proverbs 19:17 says it clearly, "Whoever cares for the poor lends to the Lord, who will pay back the sum in full."

Then Jesus talks about praying. That when you pray, do your praying in private. No need to stand on a street corner and pray a long prayer. God can hear us even if it is in private and in quiet.

Then Jesus talks to us about fasting. During Lent, it is customary to give up something, like a food that is not good for you, or a behavior that you want to stop. Jesus tells us not to contort your faces or boast about what you have given up. In the first century, some of the religious leaders made a big deal about showing how hard it was to fast and let the world know. According to the Gospels, when Jesus prayed and fasted – he was alone, in "secret"! His prayer and fasting become channels through which he comes closer to his Father. Prayer and fasting align his will with his Father's will. They can do the same for us.

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I would like to make another suggestion as well. You can also add something to help you get closer to the Father and come more in line with his will - praying and reading his word daily.

Here at First Presbyterian, we will be studying these verses through Lent, but you can also do it with a daily devotional like the Daily Bread which we have here for you to take, or any other devotional that gets you into alignment with God's word.

He finishes the teaching for Ash Wednesday with what it all means. Save up treasures in heaven, not down here on Earth. I have said it before. There is no tow hitch on the hearse when they take us to the cemetery. We can't take it with us. "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Ash Wednesday gives us the opportunity to look to the lasting, truly rewarding gain in our lives that comes from our relationship with God which, on this day, is defined as living in trust that all is well. Whatever gets in the way of that relationship is swept away by looking to the care of others, praying, and denying one's own greed. The Gospel promises rewards in accord with these disciplines. May God Bless you all during this season of Lent. Amen

### **From the Mission Team...**

Submitted by Barb Shorrel

The season of Lent has begun and as we have in past years, we ask for your contributions to the first special offering of the year, One Great Hour of Sharing. Members and friends have supported the three programs of One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) for over 70 years.

"The three programs supported by One Great Hour of Sharing - Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and Self-Development of People - all work in different ways to serve individuals and communities in need. From initial disaster response to ongoing community development, their work fits together to provide people with safety, sustenance, and hope."

The Mission Team will be offering more information on how these programs affect people's lives in their time of need. Stay tuned.

**Lighten Your Load** helps persons to do their own laundry. Volunteers hand out coins for the machines at the Express Mart laundromat on Bridge Street. If you wish to help, put your quarters into the tube in Fellowship Hall.

**Carelink:** During the month of January, we promoted helping Carelink to purchase gas cards. You generously donated \$859. 89. THANK YOU!

## **ALMOST TIME TO CHANGE YOUR CLOCKS**

This year Daylight Savings Time returns at 2:00 AM on Sunday, March 12 but it's a good idea to set your clocks ahead before going to bed on Saturday night so you don't miss Sunday service. So regardless of what Phil, the groundhog, predicted, Spring is ready to – well – SPRING.

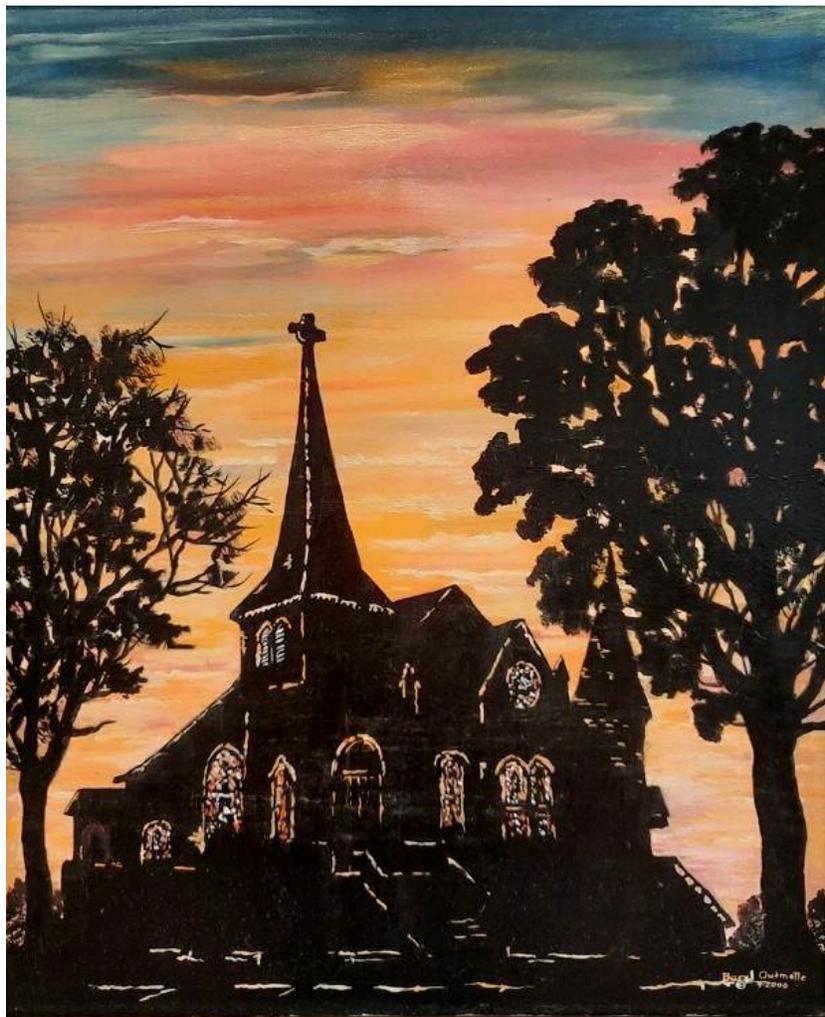
## FPC RECEIVES OUIMETTE PAINTING OF THE CHURCH

In last month's Bell, you heard about the retrospective exhibit of the art of Beryl Ouimette. The show, which was curated by her daughter Beryl Ouimette Jr. featured paintings which had been in storage and many of which hadn't been seen for decades.

Little did we know at that time that we would be the recipients of one of those paintings.

Beryl Ouimette painted the picture of our church which is shown below. Her daughter has now donated this painting to be hung in the church. It will soon be displayed in Fellowship Hall.

We now have a painting of the original church created by Evelyn Jensen and our church as it stands today created by Beryl Ouimette. We have come the full circle.



## **WEDNESDAY NIGHT DINNER MOVED**

Because of a conflict in scheduling, the traditional Wednesday Night Supper will not be served on March 1 but will be postponed until the following Wednesday, March 8. But it promises to be worth waiting for since the Teskes will be cooking their famous (at least in Chippewa Falls) spaghetti and meatballs.

Please to join in the fun of game night at 4:00 followed by spaghetti at 5:00.

## **EASTER WEEK SERVICES PLANNED**

In keeping with the theme of ecumenism, Trinity United Methodist, Christ Episcopal and First Presbyterian churches are once again joining together for Holy Week services.

The traditional Maundy Thursday Service commemorating the Last Supper will be held at FPC and will include the leaders of all three churches. It will be held on April 6.

Good Friday service, which will be held at Trinity United will begin with a mime group called the Silent Messengers. They will present the passion of Christ which will be followed by a traditional Good Friday service on April 7.

Rounding out the services will be one at Christ Episcopal which will begin with a vigil followed by worship again conducted by the leaders of the three churches. That service will be on April 8.

All services will begin at 5:00. More information will be available in the April Bell.

## **PW PLANS HAM LOAF DINNER**

Presbyterian Women have planned a special ham loaf dinner for Wednesday, March 22 from 4:30 to 6:00.

The meal will cost \$11 and include the traditional PW ham loaf and all the fixin's. Put the date on your calendar. Ham loaf is always special!

## **EASTER LILIES TO DECORATE THE CHURCH**

It may seem early, but Spring and Easter are rapidly approaching.

As we have in the past, this year FPC will purchase Eastern lilies to decorate the chancel on Easter morning. These flowers can be purchased by the congregation and taken home following the service. Any plants that are not removed on Easter Sunday will be given to shut-ins.

Each plant costs \$10.00. If you wish to order plants, you can use the order form in this issue of the Bell or you can send your check to the church office with "Lilies" in the memo line and plants will be reserved for you.

## EASTER LILIES

We are now taking orders for Easter lilies that will grace the chancel on Easter morning, April 9. The cost is \$10.00 per plant. Please fill out the order form. Return to the church office as soon as possible. Submit your order:

- 1) during office hours (9:00 to 2:00 Monday, Tuesday or Thursday)
- 2) by mailing to the church

The plants may be picked up after the Easter service. The plants not picked up at that time will be distributed in the community.

I want to purchase (how many) \_\_\_\_\_ Easter Lilies for display in our church during Easter at \$10.00 each. Write Easter Lily in the memo section of your check.

I would like designation(s) in the church bulletin to read:

In Memory of:

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

In Appreciation for:

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

In Celebration of:

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

(other title) \_\_\_\_\_:

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

From:

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