



The Bell

October, 2020

Monthly Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

ON FORGIVENESS AND GRACE

By Gene Peissig

In early September, Rev. Sandee Kosmo delivered a sermon on forgiveness. That evoked an ongoing conversation between Sandee, Lynda Butek and me.

There are two theological terms that are difficult for us to understand; they are forgiveness and grace. In order to understand either of them, you need to think outside the realm of human logic and see them through the eyes of God, because they both deal with God's divine love. Let's first look at "forgiveness".

To forgive does NOT mean that you condone, nor absolve, nor forget what the offender did to you. You are telling the offender that you wish to release your anger, hatred and resentment in order to become the loving person that God intends you to be. In the case of the Holocaust survivors, they can forgive what was done to them and their families but not erase what was done. They can give up their anger and hatred and move on. To forgive someone is more beneficial to the forgiver than the forgiven. The benefit to the forgiven is the knowledge that the person they wronged no longer hates them and that they should remember to never do that again.

Now let's look at "grace". Grace is contrary to our human understanding. We live in a merit-based world. We get what we earn. If you do your homework, you will get good grades. If you put forth the effort, you will achieve your goals.

There are two principles that apply to the merit system; justice is when you get what you deserve; mercy is when you don't get what you deserve. Grace doesn't fit because grace is when God gives you His love that you did nothing to deserve. You cannot earn grace. There is nothing you can do to increase or decrease it. You can't pay it back. You can only pay it forward.

Random acts of kindness are ways to pay grace forward. We need to work on that now more than at any other time. With Covid-19 separating us and the nasty political mid-slashing, we need more love and kindness in our lives.

I'm going to close with a quote from the funny papers "Pickles". Opal is talking to Earl trying to give him some culture, which is a lost cause. "Johann Wolfgang von Goethe once said, 'One ought every day to at least hear a little song, read a good poem, see a fine picture and if possible, speak a few reasonable words.'"

If you want to spread God's love, do those simple tasks and you will be making the world a better place.

WHEN DO YOU WANT TO BEGIN?

Every year the Session is asked to review the Sunday service time. Usually the request is to standardize on 9:30 year-round or 10:15 year-round. To date the Session has voted to maintain two service times as we have in the past. This year, they decided to bring the decision to the congregation to determine what time works best for you.

Do you want to maintain two service times (9:30 during the summer and 10:15 during the winter) as we have in the past? Would you rather standardize on 9:30 year-round? Would you rather standardize on 10:15 year-round? Would you like to standardize on some other time altogether?

Please think about what works best for you and your family and cast your vote by phoning the church office or by writing your preference down and putting it in Tiffany's box in the church office. Please submit your votes during October so the Session can make the decision at their November 1 meeting.

FPC SEEKS TO FILL LEADERSHIP POSITIONS FOR 2021

We have reached the time of year when we think about replacing the leadership of our church for the coming year.

The Nominating Committee consisting of Kevin Litten, chair, Jon Beighley, representing Session, Anne Welke, Margi Kohl, Gary Shorrel, Bonnie Gullickson and Corine Boos have been tasked with finding people to fill vacancies on Session, the Board of Deacons the Endowment Fund Board and the Financial Review Team.

In all they are looking for three Elders for Session, two Deacons, two for the Endowment Fund Board and one for the Financial Review Team.

If you are interested in volunteering for any of these positions or want more information about what would be involved, please contact one of the Nominating Committee members.

The Nominating Committee will present its recommendations for congregational vote early in December.

SESSION NAMES REPRESENTATIVE TO ODC

When Bob Denman passed away last winter, there was never any doubt that he left a big hole in our congregation. Bob had been on Session as well as serving as Clerk of Session and the Session representative on the Open Door Clinic board.

The Session was hard-pressed to find someone else to serve as clinic representative until Marlys Daniels' name was mentioned. Not only does Marlys have a medical background but she works at the clinic and she jumped at the opportunity to serve on the board. In her new capacity, Marlys attends the board's monthly meetings and serves as a liaison between the clinic and the church.

PREPARING FOR ALL SAINTS' DAY

For the last decade, All Saints Day at FPC has been marked with special ribbons. Every year, congregants write the name of someone who has passed away on a ribbon which is added to what has become a very long hanging which adorns the church on All Saints Day and the next Sunday.

This year, many of the congregation are not worshipping in the church and wouldn't be able to fill out a ribbon in person but we have a plan for that.

If you are coming to church that day (November 1) you can fill out a ribbon as usual. If you will be worshipping from home, call the name you wish inscribed on a ribbon into the office and a ribbon will be prepared for you.

Every name will be read by Pastor Ken and every ribbon will be added to the hanging for the future celebration of saints.

GUEST SPEAKERS SCHEDULED THROUGH YEAR-END

The schedule of guest speakers has been completed through the end of the year.

Pastor Ken Ribe will join us on the first Sunday of every month beginning in October. Not only will he speak during the service but he will moderate the Session meetings following the service.

Rev. Sandee Kosmo will be with us on October 11, November 8 and 29 when she will start off the Advent season.

Pastor Rich Estrem-Fuller will be our speaker on October 18, November 22 (Christ the King Sunday) and December 20.

Rev. Jim Mohr will be our pastor on October 25 and Pastor Gary Hedding will speak on November 15 and December 13, Gary is rather new to FPC having spoken to us only once in August. He is a retired Lutheran pastor who recently moved to Chippewa Falls and is a neighbor of Larry Annett.

Rounding out our guest speakers for the year is Gene Peissig who will be with us on December 27.

HARBERTS SERVICE POSTPONED

Due to the Covid-19 restrictions on the number of people gathering indoors, the memorial service for Rev. Merle Harberts has been postponed until Spring when it can be held outside, perhaps in Irvine Park. The family expects between 60 and 75 people which is more than our church can accommodate and still practice social distancing.

Once the date, time and place have been finalized, you will be notified.

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTERS NEEDED

Most of us haven't begun thinking about Advent and Christmas but they are rapidly approaching. We will be lighting the Advent candles in the sanctuary beginning November 29.

In the past, we have asked families to light the candles but since there are only a limited number of people and few families attending worship in the sanctuary on Sundays, this year we are asking for volunteers to perform this task. It's very easy. There are a few lines to read and candles to light.

If you would like to be part of this Advent tradition, please let Lynda Butek know by mid-October so she can make the arrangements

CHURCH SUFFERS BREAK-IN

As many of you know, the church was broken into sometime during the night of Wednesday, September 16.

Fortunately, the burglar took nothing of value and was apprehended the following day and remains in custody. He has since confessed to breaking into our church as well as into the Legacy Center and Bargain City in Chippewa, the Albertville Bar in Howard and the Wander Inn in Wheaton.

Lead investigator, Drew Zehm, said the Chippewa Falls Police keep a close watch on the Island Street side of the church because they see it every time they go out on a call or patrol. But the Central Street doors (where the break-in occurred) are not watched in the same way.

For that reason, Session has asked the Property Team to investigate how we can monitor the Central Street doors with cameras or motion detectors to minimize our exposure in the future.

Watch the Bell for an update on progress in this area.

FPC TO HOST RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVES

We have been asked by the American Red Cross to host blood drives in the Fall and early 2021. The first of these events will take place on Monday, November 23 from noon to 6 PM followed by one on February 3 as the same time.

It will be necessary to sign up on line before the drive to reserve a time. There is no age limit but donors must be over 16 years of age. There will be places for 25 donors at each of these events which will be held in Fellowship Hall.

Giving blood takes about an hour in total which includes completing the paperwork before the donation and having a little snack afterward. The actual donation takes only about 10 to 15 minutes.

Watch the bulletin boards and the Bell for more information.

FROM THE MISSION TEAM...
SUBMITTED BY BARB SHORREL

SOLES 4 SOULS...

We are collecting shoes for Soles 4 Souls through October 8. Please bring your shoes to the church during office hours (check for current times) or to worship on Sunday. It is helpful if you would keep the pairs together. Shoes can be old or new; hardly worn or run down. Thanks to all of you who have already donated.

PEACE AND GLOBAL WITNESS OFFERING... We celebrate World Communion Sunday on October 4. This is also the day designated to collect this Special Offering of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. You received a letter about this along with bulletin inserts highlighting a couple of ways in which your contribution is used. When you contribute to this offering, 25% of the funds are designated to remain in our community. We will be giving our local share to the Family Support Center.

FOOD PANTRY UPDATES... We received a grant of \$1500 from Feed My People (who applied to an agency of the state of Wisconsin on our behalf) to purchase an industrial style refrigerator. Anne Welke and Barb Shorrel visited Benedict's Refrigeration and purchased one. It was delivered on Wednesday, September 23. The Food Pantry needed to kick in about \$235, but this was really a good deal. The refrigerator will help us to continue to provide fresh fruits and vegetables to the people who visit our Pantry.

NOVEMBER WILL BE ASIAN MISSION MONTH... In November we will be supporting the efforts of our Asian missionary friends. Watch your mail for more information. We received another newsletter about this mission dated July. It will be posted along with the previous newsletter on the "Tower."

If anyone has ideas that the Mission Team might consider, please feel free to email or call Barb Shorrel.

We hope that you are all doing well. Remember that God is with us no matter what.

NOT EVERYTHING IS A NO-GO

In the Spring, long before any of us had heard of the Coronavirus, we were contacted by the Menomonie Singers who have performed in our church in the past. They wanted to come back because they love the acoustics in our sanctuary and enjoy the wonderful accompaniment our organ provides. A date was selected. Session approved. Singers were rehearsing. The program was printed. Publicity was written. And then the bottom fell out.

The program wasn't cancelled. It was postponed and will be rescheduled when the virus scare is a thing of the past.

So we have things to look forward to even in the midst of all the chaos of Covid-19.