



The Bell

September, 2020

Monthly Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

PNC MOVES TOWARD FINDING A NEW PASTOR

So much in life is “Hurry Up and Wait” and that’s where the Pastor Nominating Committee is right now - not so much the “Hurry Up” part but certainly the “Wait” part.

With the PNC back to its full force of five, they have completed the Ministry Information Form (MIF) which will tell prospective pastors about our church and our community. The MIF includes information about our church including the size of the membership, the languages we speak, the ethnicities represented and the type of community we serve.

In addition the MIF includes essay questions about the congregation’s vision for ministry, how the church addresses the emerging needs of the community, how we hope the new pastor will help us reach our vision and mission goals, what characteristics we are looking for in a new pastor and what his or her tasks, assignments and areas of responsibility will include. Obviously the essay questions take the most time and thought to complete but they are finished.

The MIF is in the hands of the Session which has to approve it before it goes on to the Presbytery for further review before it is sent on to the Church Leadership Connection (CLC) in Kentucky for processing.

While we are busy putting together our MIF, prospective pastors are working on their PIFs which will be used by us to determine if that person fits what we are seeking. The PIF includes information about the prospective pastor, his background, education, experience and vision for ministry.

Both the MIFs and the PIFs will be sent to the CLC where they will be input into their database and matched for similarities. Only after that matching is complete will we (and prospective pastors) receive the results. The matching, since it is done by computer, doesn’t take long once the CLC receives the forms.

When the matching is complete, the PNC will begin to receive the PIFs from prospective pastors which they will review and rank according to what we are seeking. Until we start getting matches from the CLC, the work of the PNC is in the “Wait” mode. But once the matches start coming in, it will be “Hurry Up” again. The PNC will keep us informed of their progress but don’t expect to hear anything from them until they get back to “Hurry Up” status.

If you have any questions, please refer them to Gary Shorrel, PNC chair; Jan Koepke, Co-chair, Corine Boos, Lynda Butek or Deb Buckli. Keep in mind the work of the PNC is confidential so they may not be able to answer all your questions but they will answer what they can.

RE-ROOFING PROGRESSES

If you have been to the church, you have seen that the roof project is moving right along. The first phase is complete ahead of schedule and we are moving on to the second phase.

The first phase involved the majority of the roof which needed new shingles. We contracted with CS Construction of Eau Claire to remove and dispose of the old shingles and underlayment and apply new materials. That part is done.

The second phase involves the flat sections of the roof along the north side of church near the parking lot. Flat roofs unlike pitched roofs are covered in a waterproof rubber membrane rather than shingles. Many companies that apply shingles don't do flat roofs too so we were forced to get separate bids to complete the job.

Erik Anderson, who has been leading the effort to roof the church, has requested bids from three companies and those should be available early this month. Since the first phase of the roofing is ahead of schedule, the flat roof portion should be completed before the snow flies.

Once the old flat roof materials have been removed, we will be able to see if there is any further damage we need to address to keep us warm and dry in the future.

SERVICE HOURS CHANGE

Be sure to note on your calendar that September 6 is the start of our winter service hours.

Pastor Rich Estrem-Fuller, who will be our speaker that day, would love to have you come early but the service won't start until 10:15.

FAMILY FARE OFFERS A VARIETY OF REBATE PROGRAMS

Last month we reported that Family Fare has reinstated the rebate program for churches revolving around the food receipts collected from their members and friends. This receipt program is only one of the ways we can get money back from Family Fare.

For some time we have been collecting the UPC codes from Out Family products and turning them in for cash. This program still continues and Margi Kohl continues to collect the bar codes to be redeemed. We also participate in the Family Fare scrip program which gives us a rebate for Family Fare credit cards that we purchase and you in turn purchase from the church to use to buy your groceries.

So keep buying those scrip cards and turning in your Family Fare receipts and UPC codes. They mean money in our bank account.

CHURCH OFFICE REMAINS OPEN FOR BUSINESS

Our Administrative Assistant, Tiffany Wogahn, is scheduled for surgery on September 16. The doctors tell her she will be in the Marshfield Medical Center in Eau Claire for about three days then she will convalesce at home for at least another week. But life at the church will go on maybe not as usual but it will go on.

Tiffany will do much of her work from home. Several of our ladies have volunteered to work in the church office from 9 to noon Monday through Thursday answering the phones and doing whatever needs doing. Corine Boos has agreed to make herself available to send out the Bell and any other email messages we may need during that time. This arrangement while not ideal will allow us to continue to serve our members and the community even though Tiffany won't be in the church.

NO RALLY DAY THIS FALL

As you have probably figured out by now, Rally Day won't be happening as usual. Thanks to the Coronavirus, we don't have anything to Rally.

We don't have a choir. We don't have Wednesday night suppers. We don't have Sunday morning Bible study. But never fear. Once the virus loosens its grip on all of us, we will be able to have all these things.

Once we see that our regular activities can return, we will have a belated Rally Day to celebrate.

THAT'S OUR GENE

As most of you know, it is our custom to pay guest speakers for preparing the sermon and preaching during the Sunday service. Most of them put the money in the bank or purchase something they need or want. But not our Gene Peissig.

Yes, we pay Gene too because not only does he prepare and deliver the sermon on his Sundays but he prepares the whole worship service, prayers and all. Most guest speakers only do the sermon.

Paying Gene isn't so easy though. He always complains about being paid. And he always seems to find ways to return the money to the church either by just returning it, not cashing our check or donating the money to the Food Pantry. We can't seem to stay ahead of him when it comes to keeping that money. And once again he's done us one better.

He and Jeff Buckli have been working on our poor, sad looking lawn area. Their latest project is tearing out the old dead or over-grown shrubs, but they realize that will leave gaps that need to be filled in with new plants.

That's where Gene's speaking money comes in. He plans to purchase new shrubs which he and Jeff will plant in place of those they remove. So when you see new, beautiful shrubs around the church, know they come from Gene.

What's new with the Mission Team?

Submitted by Barb Shorrel

Here we are in September and still taking precautions due to COVID-19. It has certainly thrown the proverbial monkey wrench into all of our plans. Yet we continue forward making adjustments as we go, social distancing and wearing masks.

PEACE AND GLOBAL WITNESS OFFERING—SEPT 6-OCT 4: It is time to remind you of our third special offering of the year. We collect the Peace and Global Witness Offering on World Communion Sunday the first Sunday of October. (Yes, October is right around the corner!) This offering is used in many different ways from programs pastoring women who are incarcerated to helping educate the people of Malawi about HIV and Aids. We are able to keep 25% of the collection to support peacemaking in their community. In previous years we have given our 25% share to the Family Support Center in Chippewa Falls. I have posted their Summer Newsletter on the tower in the Narthex if you are interested in taking a look at how they have had to retool during the pandemic. No matter what is going on in our community, people still need help. The Family Support Center is there to provide that help in many ways. We will again support them with our share of the Peace and Global Witness Offering.

MISSION COALITION PROJECTS: The Mission Coalition has not been meeting during the pandemic. We were glad to hear that the backpack giveaway at Valley Vineyard did happen, but unfortunately, we did not hear about it in time to get the word out effectively. We are still waiting to hear whether or not there will be a Soles 4 Souls event, so don't bring any shoes to the church until you hear more.

HALLOWEEN TRUNK OR TREAT is also cancelled as there will be no downtown trick or treating this year. (Boo-hoo!)

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY: We continue to be open on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. Only volunteers are allowed in the church. We pack up groceries into carts and haul them to the end of the ramp where clients are waiting in their cars. We wear masks with the exception of those who have a medical issue; but we do social distance to the best of our ability.

This June and July we have seen an increase in individuals who are visiting us for the first time. The number of households we serve has fluctuated a great deal since the beginning of the year. We continue to see younger households rather than households with individuals over 60. Since January we served an average of 191 households per month: almost 600 individuals per month. Of those 600, on average, 225 are aged 0-17; 294 are aged 18-59; and 78 are aged 60+. These figures are from the stats that we collect from those who come to the Food Pantry.

This past Wednesday, we hosted a gathering of Chippewa Falls area food pantries to share ideas. We heard about changes in the way the Salvation Army would be handling their food pantry going into the future. They hope to partner with Chippewa County Food Pantries to help each Food Pantry. We will be learning more about that in the next few weeks. We also heard from a representative from the Chippewa County health department about COVID-19 and what to expect if one of our volunteers tests positive. This meeting was very helpful, and we hope to meet again as we were not able to cover everything on our agenda. Thanks, Tiffany, for organizing this event.

IT'S OUR CHURCH

By Lynda Butek

Hardly a week goes by that someone doesn't thank me for all I do for this church. I certainly appreciate the thanks and kind wishes but I'm not the only one doing my part and helping us move forward during this difficult time.

There are people like Margi Kohl who, despite all that is going on in her life, is still always there to give advice or just listen. And she is ready to volunteer to do things she doesn't have to do whether it be sitting at the welcome desk or helping to prepare communion or most recently volunteering to sit in for Tiffany when she has her surgery. Margi is always there.

Esther Frazier is another of those special people. She's always there on Sunday. She can be counted on to serve as worship leader even on very short notice if necessary. Since the Covid-19 situation has kept Dick Kemp out of the church on Sundays, Esther has been taking care of getting the collection money to Carla to go to the bank. Does she have to do this? No, but she does it graciously and willingly.

Every Sunday you will see Kevin Litten in the church. Every time I ask him to act as worship leader or serve communion, he answers, "I will be in church and will do whatever you need."

And then there's Marlys Daniels. She falls down. She gets up, has surgery and is back the next week working at the Food Pantry. Did anyone else expect her to be back so soon? No. But maybe we should have known Marlys.

And we can't forget the Shorrels. How could we? They do so much. Gary is the chair of the Pastor Nominating Committee and on the church Nominating Committee and hauls carts of food to waiting clients of the Food Pantry. He didn't volunteer for those roles but he serves willingly and tirelessly. Barb served for so many years as our Treasurer before taking on the role of chair of the Mission Committee. For a church of our size, we have a phenomenal Mission program, thanks to Barb's leadership.

Don't bother to call Anne Welke at home, she probably won't be there. More than likely she'll be at the church packing groceries, helping run the Food Pantry or serving on the Mission Team.

That brings me to our faithful, and often unsung hero, Gene Peissig. He's another one who is always here. Call the church on Monday morning at 8 AM and Gene will probably answer the phone. He too hauls carts for the Food Pantry and helps unload and stow away food we get from Feed My People. He helps Winston clean the church. He preaches whenever we ask him. He does just about anything we ask him to do. And he isn't even a member of our congregation any longer. But he doesn't let that stop him.

I know I have only touched the tip of the iceberg that is our church family but these are the people who come to my mind first.

Why do I do what I do? Why do we do what we do? We do it because it's our church, our responsibility and our pleasure. My mother always said the more you put into something, the more you get out of it. As usual, Mother was right.