



The Bell

July, 2019

Monthly Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

THE STATUS OF OUR SEARCH FOR A NEW PASTOR

By Lynda Butek, Clerk of Session

Many of you have asked what is happening with our search for a new pastor. Although the Session hasn't talked about this a great deal with the congregation, we have been working diligently to fill this vacancy.

We decided to wait until the end of May to see how well we could handle the day-to-day concerns of the church ourselves and give us a better idea of the work facing us and a new pastor. So far, so good.

As you know, we have been successful in getting some very interesting guest pastors and have more lined up through the end of September. Unfortunately, the pool of guest pastors is small, that goes for Lutherans, UCC pastors and Methodists as well as Presbyterians. This has made our search challenging to say the least. But we don't have to invite only ordained pastors. We have already had two lay people speak to us and have offers from two more for the future so we will continue to have what we hope are interesting and inspiring services on Sunday.

We send out regular eBells telling you about events and issues that come up and we will continue to keep you up-to-date on happenings at FPC.

Since Karel left, we have handled the business of the church using only the volunteer resources we have at hand. We are still having committee meetings, thanks to our hard-working committee chairs. The Deacons continue to visit the shut-ins and take communion to those who wish it on a regular basis. Since congregational care is a very important part of our ministry, we could not function in this way without our dedicated Deacons. Since they are ordained, they can serve communion as they do in the church but the elements must be blessed by an ordained pastor. The Deacons have been coordinating their home visits with our regular communion days and when they run low on blessed elements, we have had the help of two pastors to consecrate additional elements.

Our goal has been to continue business as usual as much as we can and so far we seem to have been successful.

We had the usual Ash Wednesday service, thanks to the help of the Methodists. We are planning a picnic for August and will be participating in the ecumenical service in Irvine Park also in August. So much for what we have done. What are we doing to find a new pastor to lead us in the future?
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The Session has decided, with the help of the Committee on Ministry (COM), to seek an interim pastor to help us prepare for a called pastor. The Book of Order states that the Interim Search Committee comes from the Session and since our Session is so small, we decided all of us would constitute that committee and search for an interim pastor.

With that goal in mind, we have formulated and submitted to the COM our Ministry Information Form (MIF) which states what we are as a church and what we seek in an interim pastor. The COM has approved our MIF and it has been published on the Church Leadership Connection website where it will be matched with Personal Information Forms (PIF) submitted by pastors looking for an interim position in a new church. We have already received matches in just the short time our MIF has been on line. Now that our intention to find an interim pastor has been made public, we can expect to receive self-referrals as well as matched PIFs. We will continue to update you on our progress in finding an interim pastor.

Meanwhile, several of you have volunteered to be on the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) which will seek and present to the congregation a candidate for called pastor. Before this process can begin, we must have approval from the COM just as we did for the interim search.

The COM has requested that the Session give them more information on the church and its financial status. We are prepared to do that in time for their next meeting in August. Until the COM has approved our request to seek a called pastor, we cannot move forward but we expect that will happen sooner rather than later.

Once our request to form a PNC has been approved, we will, with your help, complete the committee and present them to the congregation for election. Then they can begin their work to find a called pastor.

Presbytery Vice-Moderator, Rev. Chris McCurdy from Rice Lake attended the June Session meeting and wisely pointed out that selecting a new pastor is rather like getting married but without the benefit of a lengthy courtship. We have to take our time and do it right or we will be doing this again far sooner than we would like.

When the PNC searched for and found Karel, we hoped he would be with us for many, many years but that was not to be.

We were spoiled in having Barry for as many years as we did but his long tenure here is not the norm in the Presbyterian church. It's not uncommon for pastors to move on within five to seven years of taking a position. And that may be the case with our next called pastor. But regardless of how long he is with us, we have to find the best person we can for our church and our future.

With your help and prayers, and with the guidance of the Lord, that is just what we will do!

A-PICKNICKING WE'LL GO

Mark your calendars! Wednesday, August 14, will be the date for this year's church picnic. There will something for everyone to do and eat.

The picnic will be held in the small pavilion near the splash pool in Irvine Park. Setup begins at 4:00 and we hope to serve by 5:30. The picnic will last until just before dark.

It is a pot luck so bring a dish to share. The meat will be provided and there will be a free-will donation to cover the cost. Bring your own table service and beverage.

While this is an FPC event, you are encouraged to bring a friend to enjoy the afternoon. There will be games to play, good friends to talk to, strategic discussions on the church to contemplate, maybe even baby or grandbaby pictures to share. We will be recruiting volunteers to help set up, grill, everything. Think about how you can help.

JUST A REMINDER

As in past years, FPC will be participating in the Pure Water Days ecumenical service in Irvine Park on August 11.

The Sunday service on that day will begin at 10 AM when we will join other protestant churches for this special service. **There will be no service at the church that day.** We will join the congregations from Trinity United Methodist, Zion Methodist, Our Saviour's Lutheran, Central Lutheran and Christ Episcopal Churches in this special service.

Rev. Aaron Zook from the Episcopal Church will deliver the sermon and the music will be provided by Our Saviour's Lutheran Church. First Presbyterian Church will provide the communion elements but another ordained pastor will officiate at the table.

In addition to communion servers, we will need at least two ushers who will also take the collection and 50 to 75 bars to serve after the service. We are loaning several of our smaller tables for the service. If you have a pickup truck to help haul them to the park, or if you can help, please contact Lynda Butek.

NOT TOO EARY TO START SAVING YOUR SHOES

Just a reminder that the Mission Coalition has designated September as Soles for Souls month this year.

As we have done in the past, we will be collecting your old or maybe new shoes for this project. If you have shoes that you no longer wear, that may be worn, that may be faded or maybe you can only find one of the pair, put them aside for the Soles for Souls project.

What you don't wear may mean everything to someone who has no shoes at all.

From the Mission Team...

We collected the Pentecost Offering on June 9. Thank you for your contribution to this special offering focusing on youth and young adults. The total collected was \$362. We were allowed to keep 40% locally and selected the Family Support Center to receive our local share of \$144.80. The remaining 60% (\$217.20) was sent to the Presbytery for disbursement to the PC(USA).

The fifth Sunday in June “shake the can” collection is going to the Food Pantry.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

National Night Out in Chippewa Falls: National Night Out in Chippewa Falls is hosted by the CFPD Alumni Association “to promote police community relationships and neighborhood camaraderie to help make communities safer. At the event citizens can learn about resources available within Chippewa Falls and Chippewa County.” This event will take place on Tuesday, August 6 at the Northern Wisconsin State Fairgrounds from 5-7.

And we will be there! Stop by our booth and say Hi. We will be highlighting our Food Pantry mission and the Open Door Clinic—our contribution to the community of Chippewa Falls.

ONGOING EVENTS:

- The family-size Tiny House is still being constructed at Christ Episcopal Church. If you can lend a hand, give Tiffany Wogahn a call.
- Soles 4 Souls will happen in September.
- We are looking forward to Trunk or Treating on Halloween.

FOOD PANTRY NEWS:

The Food Pantry Board is experimenting with adding some evening hours. We started by opening the Food Pantry during the Open Door Clinic on the first Tuesday of the month. The June 4th event went well. We did this to help out working people who can not use our day time food pantry. The next evening event will be Tuesday, July 2.

COMMUNION ON THE MOON

Fifty years ago on July 20, two human beings changed history by walking on the surface of the moon. But, what happened before Buzz Aldrin and Neil Armstrong exited the Lunar Module is perhaps even more amazing, if only because so few people know about it. Buzz Aldrin took communion on the surface of the moon. Some months after his return, he wrote about it in Guideposts magazine.

Aldrin was an elder at his Presbyterian Church in Texas during this period in his life, and, knowing that he would soon be doing something unprecedented in human history, he felt that he should mark the occasion somehow. He asked his minister to help him and so the minister consecrated a communion wafer and a small vial of communion wine. Buzz Aldrin took them with him out of the Earth's orbit and onto the surface of the moon. He and Neil Armstrong had only been on the lunar surface for a few minutes when Aldrin made the following public statement:

"This is the LM (Lunar Module) pilot. I'd like to take this opportunity to ask every person listening in, whoever and wherever they may be, to pause for a moment and contemplate the events of the past few hours and to give thanks in his or her own way." He then ended radio communication, and there, on the silent surface of the moon, 250,000 miles from home, he read a verse from the Gospel of John, and he took communion.

Here is his account of what happened:

"In the radio blackout, I opened the little plastic packages which contained the bread and the wine. I poured the wine into the chalice our church had given me. In the one-sixth gravity of the moon, the wine slowly curled and gracefully came up the side of the cup. Then I read the scripture: 'I am the vine, you are the branches. Whosoever abides in me will bring forth much fruit ... Apart from me you can do nothing.'

"I had intended to read my communion passage back to Earth, but at the last minute [they] had requested that I not do this. ... I agreed reluctantly."

"I ate the tiny toast and swallowed the wine. I gave thanks for the intelligence and spirit that had brought two young pilots to the Sea of Tranquility. It was interesting for me to think that the very first liquid ever poured on the moon and the very first food eaten there were the communion elements."

"And, of course, it's interesting to think that some of the first words spoken on the moon were the words of Jesus Christ, who made the Earth and the moon - and who, in the immortal words of Dante, is Himself the "Love that moves the Sun and other stars."

How many of you knew this? Too bad this type of news doesn't travel as fast as the bad does. Share with others you know.

The nicest place to be is in someone's thoughts; the safest place to be is in someone's prayers, and the very best place to be is in the hands of God. Amen.

The foregoing was sent in by Elder George Fleming.

The Presbytery of Northern Waters



PRESBYTERY MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The Presbytery of Northern Waters held its Spring Stated Meeting at the First Presbyterian Church, Phillips, WI on Saturday, May 4, 2019. Presbytery meetings are more about connecting with friends and colleagues than about conducting business, even though it is necessary to do the business, as well.

Moderator Mary Voss and the Council are encouraging each congregation to decorate a fabric square with a message of the mission of their church so these can be incorporated into a mission quilt to be shared among the churches.

The featured speaker was the Reverend Rhonda Kruse, Midwest Mission Engagement Advisor from the Presbyterian Mission Agency. She spoke about Per Capita Apportionment and Mission. Per Capita is a fundamental way that we work together and share in the work of the whole church. Most of our per capita payments go toward expenses of the Office of the General Assembly.

A major portion of Rhonda's message regarding mission centered around the current program of promoting the Matthew 25 initiative (Matthew 25:40)

Reverend Kruse commended seven congregations as "4 for 4" congregations which participated in all four of the denomination's special offerings. In addition, the Presbytery was commended for contributing to all four special offerings from the collections taken during our Stated Meetings.

In addition to numerous reports from Presbytery committees, the annual review of our financial statements by independent accountants (the firm of Anderson, Kuiti, & Asuma, CPAs of Duluth) was received.

The Reverend John Mann was received by the Presbytery from the Church of Scotland from which he retired recently. Reverend Mann was previously a member of the PCUSA (most recently the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area) and has returned to retire in the US along with his wife, the Reverend Lindsay Biddle who was received into membership in the Presbytery previously.

Unfortunately, Ann Gerlich who has been a faithful servant of the Presbytery for 2 ½ years and longer for Pioneer Parish, is leaving us at the end of May due to a transfer for her husband to the Madison area. Ann's ministry with us was celebrated and all present agreed that she will be greatly missed.

On Friday afternoon before the meeting, the Presbytery offered the Boundary Training led by the Reverend Deb DeMeester from our synod staff. This will be repeated at Glen Avon Presbyterian Church, Duluth from 1-4 p.m. on May 9.

Next meeting: Friday and Saturday, October 25-26, 2019 at Presbyterian Clearwater Forest, Deerwood, MN.

July Schedules

July 7 – Sunday

Guest Pastor – Sandee Kosmo

Communion will be served

Worship Leader – Kevin Litten

Hospitality Team – Team 3 led by Corine Boos

Welcome Desk – Marlys Daniels

Flower Provider – John Jenson in memory of Evelyn

July 14 – Sunday

Guest Pastor – Sandee Kosmo

Worship Leader – Jon Beighley

Hospitality Team – Team 4 led by Jon Beighley and Anne Welke

Welcome Desk – Holly Gintz

Flower Provider – Open

July 21 - Sunday

Guest Pastor – James Mohr

Worship Leader – Bonnie Gullickson

Hospitality Team – Team 5 led by Larry Annett and Kevin Litten

Welcome Desk – Bonnie Gullickson

Flower Provider – Chuck Norseng commemorating Chris' birthday

July 28 - Sunday

Guest Pastor– Rich Estrem-Fuller

Worship Leader – Terry Wiedenhoeft

Hospitality Team – Team 6 led by Chuck Norseng and Barb Meredith

Welcome Desk – Margi Kohl

Flower Provider – Open

The Deacons could really use some help in the kitchen on Sunday mornings. Margi Kohl, Anne Welke, Bonnie Gullickson and Corine Boos to mention only a few are busy doing double and sometimes triple duty in the kitchen and at the Welcome Desk and can use an extra pair of hands or two to help. If you can pitch in on a Sunday, please let Margi know. Don't be surprised if she hugs you!