



# The Bell

July, 2020

Monthly Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

Dear Members and Friends,

It is with VERY mixed emotions that I have submitted my resignation as Part Time Interim Pastor for First Presbyterian effective the end of July. I am planning to preach all four Sundays in July and be done by the 28<sup>th</sup>.

I have very mixed feelings about doing this because I have really come to appreciate all of you. Your commitment to the Mission of Christ, in feeding the hungry, and helping in whatever way you can, is huge.

But, I am going to need a hip replaced in the not too distant future, so would be out for at least a month and there are many things that I need to get done at home and at the cabin before that—if my hip will allow it. Right now the hip is doing well. (Prednisone does wonders, for a while at least.)

My plan is to come back once a month to preach, and to moderate session meetings—if we can do them on Sunday after Worship.

I want you to know I have really struggled with this, but at this point I believe this is what I need to do at this time.

Grace and Peace to you all,

PK

## **PNC MOVES FORWARD WITH SEEKING A CALLED PASTOR**

The Pastor Nominating Committee has had its first meeting with the Committee on Ministry liaison, Rev. Chris McCurdy of the United Presbyterian Church in Rice Lake.

The purpose of this meeting, which was held by Zoom because of the COVID-19 problems, was to introduce the committee to Pastor Chris and learn from him what the committee is to do in the future. In addition, Gary Shorrel and Jan Koepke were elected to chair this committee while Lynda Butek will serve as secretary. The PNC has decided to meet weekly on Monday evenings.

## SUNDAY WORSHIP RETURNS TO THE SANCTUARY

On June 21 we were at long last able to resume Sunday services in the sanctuary, albeit with many changes. Sixteen members and friends of the church attended that day with others joining in on Zoom.

Unfortunately like so many other things in this time of the virus, Sunday worship has returned but not to normal as we know it.

We have no singing – no hymns, responses or choir. From time to time we will have special music most often by recording. The hymnals have been removed from the sanctuary as have the pew Bibles. This isn't easy for us because we are a church that really enjoys its music. For the time being at least, we will have to sing in our hearts.

At least for the time being we have dispensed with Fellowship both before and after service as well as Passing the Peace. The collection plates are not being passed but will be at the door as people exit. We have also dispensed with bulletins. The worship service will be projected on the screens instead.

We are asking that everyone wear a mask and practice social distancing during the service. The entire sanctuary has been opened. Fortunately, we have a large sanctuary so we are able to keep at least 6' between worshippers. The ushers will remind you if the 6" rule isn't followed. Our primary goal is to keep everyone safe.

For the past three months we have broadcast our Sunday services via Zoom. This has proved so popular that we have purchased the program for the church and will continue to offer it in the future. It has certainly been beneficial during this pandemic but we have worshippers who go South or West for the winter who could worship with us via Zoom. From time to time, we have worshippers who are housebound who can also use the Zoom service to keep in touch.

If any of you have difficulty in connecting with the Zoom service, let the church know and we can help you navigate your way to us. In addition to offering the Zoom service to you at home it is also available in our church Library if you want to come to church but feel uncomfortable being in the sanctuary.

If any of you is in the high risk category (diabetes, asthma, COPD) we encourage you to stay home and Zoom in to the service. Above all, we want you to be safe and feel safe. If you feel uncomfortable coming to church for any reason, stay home. We want to see you but more importantly we want you to be safe.

As Pastor Ken told you in last month's Bell we had made plans for communion but those plans have changed. We still plan to serve communion but not as we have in the past and nor as we thought we would.

We have purchased pre-packaged communion juice and unleaven wafers which we will use for communion. The cups are sealed and the wafers on top of the cups are also sealed so nobody touches any of the elements. The cups fit in our communion trays which will be passed to each of you.  
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The communicant will be the only one touching the elements. While this method of serving communion may not be as we are used to, we feel it will be the safest way to proceed.

If anyone feels at all uncomfortable about taking communion, they are welcome to forego it. Our first communion will take place on July 5.

Being able to worship in our familiar sanctuary is something we all have missed and look forward to.

Your church staff appreciates your patience during the past three months as well as in the future as we navigate these very strange waters.

We also wish to thank Pat McGuire, Kevin Litten and Rick Keopke without whom our Zoom services would never have happened.

Pat graciously allowed us to use her Zoom account in the early days of the lockdown and Kevin put it all together for us. Rick Koepke has been there every Sunday navigating our way through Zoom. He also purchased the Zoom program for the church to use in the future. At a cost of \$15 a month, it seemed a small enough price to pay to give us this additional access.

## **IMPROVING SECURITY WITH NEW DOOR LOCKS**

In an effort to improve the security of the church, the Property Team is undertaking steps to improve the outside doors. They are in the process of replacing the doors used by the Open Door Clinic with refurbished metal doors.

The old doors were wood and have been damaged by the weather over the years. We will also be repairing the southwestern door to the sanctuary which has been a problem for years.

In addition, we will be rekeying all the outside door locks. The list of outstanding keys is woefully out of date to the extent that it includes people who no longer live here and even some who have passed away.

**If you need a key to get into the church, tell Tiffany and you will receive one when the rekeying is complete sometime in July. The inside door-locks will remain unchanged so it will be necessary for you to carry two keys to the church in the future – one to unlock the outside doors and one for the inside doors. If you do not notify Tiffany that you need a new key, your old key will not open the outside doors after the end of July.**

Presbyterian Men have contributed funds for the door replacement and repair and Presbyterian Women are funding the rekeying project.

## **WORK ON THE ROOF TO BEGIN**

The newly formed roof committee has agreed that the roof needs to be completely replaced rather than patched as we had hoped.

The estimate we have received is around \$65,000 but that does not include any additional damage that may be found under the shingles. We won't know the extent of that damage, if any, until the work begins. At that time, we should also have a further estimate of costs.

The Session has voted to allocate \$50,000 from our general fund to the roof replacement. That leaves at least \$15,000 remaining.

We will be mounting a fund raising campaign to make up the difference and if we should raise more money than we need for the roof, any additional will be applied to our existing mortgage.

Where will that money come from? We will explore the possibility of obtaining a grant to help with the expenses. It is hoped that the congregation can help. Many of us have received the Coronavirus stimulus checks and may not know what to do with them other than put them in the bank where they probably would accrue little or no interest. The roof project would be a perfect place to put that money. There wouldn't be any accrued interest but you would have the satisfaction of knowing that you helped the church in its time of extreme need.

In coming weeks you will hear more about the progress on the roof and our efforts to raise the money we need to complete the work.

## **MONTHLY SCHEDULES WILL CHANGE DUE TO THE VIRUS**

You will notice this month's Bell does not include the usual schedule for the month which would list the pastors, worship leaders, hospitality teams, and welcome desk volunteers. Given the current status of our services, The Bell won't include this schedule until we really get back to normal.

In the meantime, here's what you can expect for July.

Pastor Ken will continue his sermons on the Beatitudes through the end of July

We will attempt to stay with the hospitality list as published in your directory but if anyone on that list feels uncomfortable about coming to the church, someone else will be asked to fill in. This also holds true for the worship leaders and welcome desk volunteers.

Beginning in August we will have guest speakers every Sunday. Sandee Kosmo will be with us on August 2 and 16. Rich Estrem-Fuller will speak on August 9 and Gene Peissig will be our speaker on August 16 and 30.

Communion will resume on July 5 as outlined in the article on worship in the sanctuary.

**NEWS FROM THE MISSION TEAM...**  
**SUBMITTED BY BARB SHORREL**

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic we continue our mission to be a meaningful part of our community.

The Food Pantry continues to be open on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. We are not allowing any clients into the building. Our volunteers bag up groceries and place them in the cart. When a person comes to the Food Pantry, Gene Peissig takes their information outside and Gary Shorrel takes the cart full of groceries down to their car at the end of the ramp. We have lately been receiving free food through the USDA's Farm to Family program. This, plus dated food from Family Fare and Walmart, have allowed us to give more food per household than we have in the past. We will continue the current operation through the summer months, and the Food Pantry Board will be continually reevaluating the situation.

The Food Pantry has several freezers and refrigerators in our basement. We have been having trouble with one of the older ones, and it was proving to be unreliable. So, Anne and Tiffany went shopping a few weeks ago and found a good deal at Sears' Home Store. Gene Peissig and Jeff Buckli delivered it this past Friday, and took the old one to Sears for recycling. And this week we have been offered a freezer for just \$50. This person is moving and doesn't want the freezer. Gene and Jeff will again be acting as movers to deliver it to the church. THANK YOU GENE AND JEFF!

Another thanks to all who contributed to the Pentecost Offering. You gave a total of \$325. Of this total, 40% has been given to the Family Support Center.

The Mission Team calendar says that we would normally start promoting the Backpack Giveaway led by Valley Vineyard Church. We haven't heard what's happening yet. I imagine that until the school district decides how classes will operate, we will be in a wait-and-see posture. I guess that can be said for a lot of things during this crazy time.

Take care everyone. Please take the time to pray for our church and our community as we face the challenges created by the COVID-19.

**FORMER PASTOR HARBERTS PASSES AWAY**

Our former pastor, Merle Harberts, passed away on June 10. Pastor Merle led our congregation from April, 1968 to March, 1974.

After leaving our church, Merle served as pastor of the Presbyterian churches in Stanley and Phillips, WI and interim pastor of the church in Eau Claire. He retired from the Presbytery of Northern Waters in 2000. Despite being involved with other churches in the Presbytery, Pastor Merle continued to worship with us when he was in the area.

He leaves five adult children, Peter, Jeffery, Gregory, Ricci and Melissa.

It was his wish to have his memorial service conducted from our church by longtime friend and colleague, Sharon Johnson. We are happy to donor his wishes. At this time no date has been set for the service.