



The Bell

March, 2020

Monthly Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

SESSION CALLS SPECIAL MEETING TO DISCUSS THE ROOF

For several years we have been aware that our roof needs serious attention. It leaks in the winter when there is lots of snow. It leaks whenever it rains hard. And now we are seeing leaks where there were none before. It's obvious if we are to stay in this building that something has to be done. But the question is "What?"

The Session has been wrestling with the roof question for a long time. We have solicited bids from commercial roofing contractors for replacing the roof with everything from traditional shingles to steel shingles. Every contractor seems to have a different fix and none of this is cheap. The bids the Session has received range from \$70,000 to almost \$300,000 to replace the entire roof (except for the spires) with either conventional shingles or steel. None of the contractors we have contacted has given us bids on patching the roof but that may be an option.

Since none of the Session members is an expert on roofing, we are attempting to enlist the advice of an independent roofing inspector who isn't trying to sell us something but will give us an educated opinion on how to proceed.

Since the costs are substantial whichever way we go, we need your input. For that reason, we are calling an informal congregational meeting to gather information. **This meeting will be held immediately following service on Sunday, March 8 in the sanctuary.** Since this meeting will be an informal one, it will be open to friends of the church, not just members. No official vote will take place. We plan to use this meeting to give you information on the roof and our possible options and costs and to get information from you on how you feel we should proceed given the costs involved. This will be your opportunity to weigh in on the long-term future of our church and this building.

Before we could form a Pastor Nominating Committee to seek our new called pastor, the Committee on Ministry of the Presbytery required we submit a five-year financial projection showing that we can support this church for at least the next five years. We submitted this projection, which was a conservative one, and were given the green light to proceed with forming the PNC. While we know we can support the congregation for at least the next five years, the projection did not take into consideration funding a new roof. It only dealt with the operating expenses of running the church.

Given the costs involved in replacing the roof, it seems logical that a capital fund raising campaign would be needed to raise the necessary funds. We do have some money to start this campaign but we would need additional funds from you. One of the questions you will be asked on March 8 is do (continued on following page)

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you feel we should proceed with putting a new roof on this building and if so, would you support it financially.

If you can't attend the meeting, we still need your input. Please send a letter to Pastor Ken at the church or call Lynda Butek at 715-861-3936 to let your feelings be known.

This is a decision that is critical to our well-being as a congregation and we have to get it right. In order to do this, your input is crucial.

Interim Pastor's Report 2019 First Presbyterian Church, Chippewa Falls, WI

NOTE: This was the lost report that I mentioned at the congregational meeting on February 9. I finally found it in an odd folder on my computer. I revised it to be current.

What a delight it has been to be here at First Pres. I am grateful for the spirit that I sense present here in this place. Thank you.

I must confess that I'm still trying to learn your names. Wearing nametags REALLY helps, and many of you do, for which I am grateful.

One of my first tasks as an Interim Pastor, is to get familiar with the way you all do things; try to figure out who's who in the congregation; how you all work together, what issues are there that need to be resolved (if any).

I have been here (officially) since October, but being here part time means that it takes longer to figure things out. Here's what I have observed so far:

Worship attendance has been pretty consistent, with about 40 (give or take a few) weekly. You do provide a warm welcome to each other as well as to visitors when they come. Occasionally we have some children.

You are blessed with very good musicians (Judy and Sherry in particular) who provide upbeat and inspirational music before, during and following our worship services. They keep the hymns moving along, which helps create energy. You have a small choir, but they also add quality to the worship experience as a whole.

While you are a fairly typical aging congregation, many of you are actively engaged in the ministries of First Pres. I can't count how many of you are tending to the Food Pantry on Tuesdays and Thursdays, but it seems like many of you are here helping set up, helping the clients who come etc. For a small congregation, your Food Pantry ROCKS! I hope you feel good about that, because you work it well, and it is effective. I also want to say these kinds of ministries is what the church needs to be about. It is being the hands and feet of Jesus.

Hosting the Open Door Clinic is another ministry of the congregation, although you aren't involved in this in a "hands on" way, you provide the space.

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The Deacons are active and visiting and serving communion to those who are unable to come to worship. You are blessed to have such a committed group of Deacons.

The Mission Committee is probably the most active and effective Mission Committees of any church I have served. Keep up the great work.

Session is dealing with some of the issues that need to be dealt with, and there are a couple of big things that they are looking at.

One is the roof, which so far this fall/winter hasn't leaked much, but it does need to be replaced sooner than later. Erik has gotten some bids that will cost between \$80,000 and \$200,000 approximately, depending on the kind of roofing material used. Session will be working on a plan to raise the money to cover the cost.

The other big financial issue that I see is the mortgage which is over \$300,000. Currently, you are only covering the interest and a small amount on the principle. Sooner or later, that will need to be addressed as well, but for now, that is on hold. As I look at your situation right now, those are the big financial issues that will need to be addressed and dealt with going forward.

In the coming months I hope to lead a two part "retreat" where we will look back at the best we have to offer. Then we will have a "retreat" where we spend some time looking back at where we've been, considering who we are today, and beginning to plan a way forward. The first "retreat" will be March 14, from 9 to 3PM. We will provide lunch and snacks. The second part will be either in May or early June to refine the information that we gather on March 14.

I call this process, "An Appreciative Inquiry" where we will look at the best we have to offer the community given who we are today. We will start off with Dewitt Jones' video "Celebrate What's Right with the World," which sets the tone for the whole day—celebrating what's Right with the church." This process should help give information for the PNC to work will as they develop the Mission Study in preparation for calling a new pastor.

I thank you for all that you are doing to serve this community in the name of Jesus.

Blessings,
Pastor Ken

CONGREGATION NAMES MEMBERS AT LARGE TO 2020 NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The members at large to the 2020 Nominating Committee were elected at the recent Congregational Meeting.

They are Corine Boos, Bonnie Gullickson, Margi Kohl, Gary Shorrel and Anne Welke. They will be joined by two representatives of the Session, one of whom will be chair. This committee will nominate church leaders for 2021.

THE CHOIR NEEDS YOU!

During all of February, we didn't have a choir singing on Sunday mornings. As you know the choir is small (two altos, two sopranos including our director, one tenor and two basses) and if even one person is missing, we can't sing.

Our church has always been known for its music and we want to continue to provide that but with the size of the choir today, it becoming very difficult to continue. We certainly appreciate the support the congregation gives us every Sunday but we need more than that. We need singers!

If you can carry a tune, please consider joining our ranks. You don't have to read music although that is a plus. Many of our members don't read music. You don't have to audition. You just have to show up and be willing to sing. We rehearse for about an hour every Wednesday from 6:30 to 7:30 and on Sunday from 9:30 to 10:00. If you want music in our church, you need to raise your voice and join the choir!

THANKS FROM THE BELL

It's been almost ten years now that I have been editing the Bell. I have to say for the most part it's been a labor of love thanks to you.

Strangely enough the winter months both last year and this year have been the ones filled with so many things to write about and contributions from you. Usually these months are the sparsest in terms of Bell material but not recently.

I want to thank so many of you for the help you have given me. I couldn't do what I do every month without you. I can always count on Barb Shorrel for a page on Missions and Tiffany for articles on church history and the Food Pantry and Anne Welke and Bonnie Gullickson for information on the Mission Coalition. And there are so many more who contribute every month, I can't begin to name them all.

I also have each of you to thank, not necessarily for what you contribute but for what you read. It warms my heart whenever someone tells me they read the Bell cover to cover, sometimes more than once. I don't mind doing the work to put it all together as long as I feel you are reading it and learning from it. And apparently you are. Thank you so much for that.

Now back to work. Another issue of the Bell to do.

Lynda Butek, Bell Editor

CARELINK, OPEN DOOR CLINIC REPORT YEAR-END STATISTICS

CareLink, which is available when the Food Pantry is open, reported 33 people needing assistance in December compared to 41 in November and 47 in October. The lower number is due in part to a lack of funds which caused the facility to be closed for a couple of weeks during December until additional funds were obtained.

In 2019, CareLink served 474 people, which is about even with 2018 when they saw 478 and about 50 less than 2017 when there were 537 people needing assistance. The lower numbers are due primarily to times that CareLink ran out of funds, which generally occurred in the November/December timeframe, and people getting better jobs and therefore not requiring Carelink as a service anymore.

Every three years, the CareLink computer does an automatic purge of patrons who have not visited CareLink in the past three years. Some of the people who were purged from the files had outstanding loans that were three years old as well. The decision was made to forgive those loans. CareLink is not a financial institution and there is no official due date on those loans. Rather, those loans were put in place to protect Carelink and insure cards are available for persons needing assistance versus those who feel CareLink is there to “support” them. In total 70 unpaid loans were purged from the system. It is hoped that if people who owe money get a better job and do not need the services or have moved from the area, they will repay the money due CareLink.

CareLink is totally dependent on donations from the community to do the work they do.

The Open Door Clinic, which is also housed in our building, reported 417 general medical visits in 2019. This is a 12% increase over the previous year. They provided services to a total of 1,376 patients in 2019. This included general medical care, psychiatry, chiropractor and physical therapy among others. The number of individual patient visits jumped from 557 in 2018 to 597 in 2019. Since the clinic opened its doors in 2006, it has provided over 18,000 patient visits to 3,506 individual patients.

On an average, the clinic served 12 patients each week in 2019 with three weeks when the clinic was not open. The majority of the patients seen in 2019 were from Chippewa Falls with the balance coming from Bloomer, Cadott, Cornell, Holcombe, Jim Falls, New Auburn and Stanley/Boyd.

In addition, the clinic provided influenza vaccines, and x-rays to their patients.

SPECIAL SUNDAY BRUNCHES RETURN

The special Sunday brunches we had last year were so well received, Presbyterian Women have decided to bring them back. They first of these monthly feasts will be on Sunday, March 22 following service in place of the regular fellowship time. A freewill offering will be taken with all children eating free.

Watch the Bell for information on upcoming brunch dates.

The Presbytery of Northern Waters



PRESBYTERY MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The Presbytery of Northern Waters held its Winter Stated Meeting at the United Presbyterian Church, Superior on Saturday, February 1, 2020. There were 55 people in attendance.

The featured speaker was Elona Street Stewart, the Synod Executive for the Synod of Lakes and Prairies. This is the synod of which Northern Waters is a member along with 15 other presbyteries. Before becoming Synod Executive five years ago, Elona served for over 20 years as the Synod's program staff person for racial ethnic ministries and community empowerment. Her topic was Indigenous Empowerment, Resilience, and Healing, speaking about current American Indian values, practices and achievements. Elona is the first and only Native American Synod Executive in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). She is also a candidate this year for Co-Moderator of the General Assembly.

The Committee on Ministry (COM), plans to write a letter encouraging all pastors and Ruling Elders to participate in the governance of the more inclusive Councils of the church, particularly the Presbytery. Attendance by both pastors and commissioners of the churches needs to improve. For example, of more than 54 minister members of the Presbytery, only 21 attended this meeting and of 49 churches in the Presbytery only 17 were represented by Ruling Elders.

The Overtures and Bylaws Committee (O&B) recommended approval of an addition to the Manual of Operations to establish a procedure for grants to be made the Church Development Fund. This addition was approved.

O&B also recommended approval of the request of the Session of the First Presbyterian Church, Eau Claire, to concur in two overtures initiated by other presbyteries to this year's General Assembly: one regarding gun violence and the other regarding divestiture of the church's investments from companies involved in fossil fuels. Both recommendations were approved after much discussion.

Treasurer Jay Wilkinson, discussed the year-end financial statements and the written report submitted by Finance Budget Committee Chair, Bill Gravelle. We ended the year with a surplus just over \$1,000 compared to a budgeted deficit of \$11,441. The primary reason is due to the better than forecast performance of investments in 2019.

Those scheduled to attend the Presbytery sponsored trip to work with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) were commissioned.

Next meeting: Saturday, May 7, 2020 at the First Presbyterian Church, Bayfield, WI.

March Schedules

March 1 – Sunday

Interim Pastor – Ken Ribe
Communion will be served
Worship Leader – Bonnie Gullickson
Hospitality Team 6 - Led by Mitch and Kathi Mandelert and Barb Meredith
Welcome Desk – Anne Welke
Flower Provider – Open

March 4 – Wednesday

Chef's choice by Team 3 – Kevin Litten and Marlys Daniels

March 8 – Sunday

Interim Pastor – Ken Ribe
Worship Leader – Erik Anderson
Hospitality Team 1- Led by Margi Kohl and Beth Cripe
Welcome Desk – Bonnie Gullickson
Flower Provider – Open

March 11 – Wednesday

HotDogs by Team 4 – Ruth Rosenow and Kathi Mandelert

March 15 – Sunday

Interim Pastor – Ken Ribe
Worship Leader – Kevin Litten
Hospitality Team 2 – Led by Lynda Butek and Marlys Daniels
Welcome Desk – Barb Meredith
Flower Provider – Open

March 18 – Wednesday

Lasagna or Surprise by Team 5 – Presbyterian Men

March 22 - Sunday

Guest Speaker – Gene Peisig
Worship Leader – Lynda Butek
Hospitality Team 3 – Led by Corine Boos and Larry Annett

SPECIAL SUNDAY BRUNCH

Welcome Desk – Marlys Daniels
Flower Provider – Open

March 25 – Wednesday

Barbeques by Team 6 – Anne Welke and Bonie Gullickson

March 29 – Sunday

Guest Pastor – Rich Estrem-Fuller
Worship Leader – Terry Weidenhoeft
Hospitality Team 4 – Led by Jon Beighley and Anne Welke
Welcome Desk – Holly Gintz
Flower Provider – Open

Be sure to join Presbyterian Women for the special Sunday Brunch on March 22. It promises to be delicious!