



The Bell

March, 2021

Monthly Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

LENT – A TIME OF PRAYER AND REFLECTION

We are in the midst of Lent, a time of prayer, fasting and self-examination in preparation for the celebration of the resurrection of the Lord at Easter. It is a period of 40 days — like the flood of Genesis, Moses' sojourn at Mount Sinai, Elijah's journey to Mount Horeb, Jonah's call to Ninevah to repent and Jesus' time of testing in the wilderness. (The Sundays in Lent are not counted in this reckoning of the time between Ash Wednesday and Easter, as every Lord's Day is a celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.)

In the early church, Lent was a time of preparation for the celebration of baptism at the Easter Vigil. Therefore, at the beginning of Lent (Ash Wednesday), we are reminded that our possessions, our rulers, our empires, our projects, our families and even our lives do not last forever. "You are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19). You have heard those words during our Ash Wednesday services in past years.

Fasting during Lent was more prominent in ancient times than today, however, many Christians still commit to fasting, as well as giving up certain luxuries in order to replicate the account of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ's journey into the desert for 40 days; this is known as one's Lenten sacrifice. In modern times, observers give up partaking in vices and often invest the time or money saved in charitable purposes or organizations.

It is the power of the resurrection on the horizon ahead that draws us into repentance toward the cross and tomb. Through the intervention of God's resurrection, lifelong changes in our values and behavior become possible.

By turning from the end of the "old self" in us, Lenten repentance makes it possible for us to affirm "Death is no more!" and to aim toward the landscape of the new age. Faithfully adhering to the Lenten journey of "prayer, fasting and almsgiving" leads to the destination of Easter.

During the final week, Holy Week, we hear the fullness of Christ's passion, his death, and resurrection. From Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem and on to Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday, all of Holy Week focuses on the passion. As his followers, we travel Christ's path of servanthood through the Lord's Supper and the suffering of the cross toward the glory of Easter, all of which underscores the inseparable link between the death and resurrection of Jesus.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING RESULTS IN BY-LAW CHANGES, COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Two sections of our church by-laws were changed at the recent congregational meeting.

The first changed the number of Deacons from eight to six and revised the section on election of deacons to reflect this change.

The second change involved the Nominating committee and changed the number of members from seven to five.

This change also included a provision that one member of the committee would be a Deacon and there would be only one Session member rather than the previous two. Assuring that a Deacon is on the committee allows for any new candidates for the Deacon board to learn just what it means to be a Deacon and the work that group performs.

The exact wording of these changes was included in the congregational meeting materials emailed to you earlier this year and read from the pulpit during February.

The members at large for the 2021 Nominating Committee were chosen at the recent congregational meeting.

They are Margi Kohl, Marlys Daniels, Gary Shorrel and Erik Anderson. These four will be joined by an active member of Session who will be designed as committee chair. The Session member will be appointed at the next Session meeting.

JUST WHAT IS PER CAPITA?

Every year we hear a lot about per capita but just what is that to us as members of the church. Is Per Capita Apportionment the equivalent of Membership Dues? Is it a tax? Definitely not.

The history of Per Capita Apportionment goes back to at least the mid-1800's. A plan of mileage was adopted by the General Assembly to defray the costs of commissioners attending the General Assembly meeting. Uses of per capita apportionment have been broadened through the years. One of the major uses still remains, to cover the expenses of those we send to represent us at meetings of our governing bodies. Another important use is to operate our judicial system.

For 2021, the per capita apportionment for us is \$32.00 per member ("per capita" is Latin meaning each head or person), broken down as \$17.52 for the Presbytery of Northern Waters, \$5.50 for The Synod of Lakes and Prairies, and \$8.98 for the General Assembly. These amounts will allow each of these governing bodies to conduct their essential functions, the bare minimum that makes us Presbyterian.

This year's per capita amount is based on the number of members at the end of 2019. If you haven't paid your per capita, now is the time to help fund the important work of the church.

EASTER LILIES TO DECORATE THE CHURCH

As we have in the past, this year FPC will purchase Eastern lilies to decorate the chancel. These flowers can be purchased by the congregation and taken home following the service. Any plants that are not removed on Easter Sunday will be given to shut-ins.

Each plant costs \$8.00 which is less than last year. If you wish to order plants, you can use the order form in this issue of the Bell or you can send your check to the church office with "Lilies" in the memo line and plants will be reserved for you.

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

A special offering for One Great Hour of sharing will be taken on Easter Sunday.

This ministry supports three programs – Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, which provides relief to those affected by disasters, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, providing food for the hungry and Self-Development of People which gives support toward the self-development of poor and oppressed communities.

32% of these funds go to helping restore communities after disasters while 36% goes to reducing hunger and the remaining 32% to providing resources and education to oppressed and disadvantaged communities.

If you would like to participate in this offering, you can make your contribution on Easter morning or anytime during March by sending your check to the office with "One Great Hour of Sharing" in the memo line.

IT'S EASTER BONNET TIME

It's time to pull out your Easter bonnets, Ladies, and spruce them up for Easter Sunday when we will have our annual Easter Bonnet Contest.

As we did last year each lady who enters her hat for consideration will have her name placed in the drawing. Three winners will be drawn and those ladies will each receive a prize.

In addition, \$1 will be donated to the FPC Food Pantry for every entry in the contest. Matching donations are most welcome. If you wish to make a matching donation, please contact the church office.

Every year the number of hats worn increases so this year we should have a bevy of beauties.

EASTER LILIES

We are now taking orders for Easter lilies that will grace the chancel on Easter morning, April 4. The cost is \$8.00 per plant. Please fill out the order form. Return to the church office as soon as possible. Submit your order:

- 1) during office hours (9:00 to 2:00 Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday)
- 2) by mailing to the church

The plants may be picked up after the Easter service. The plants not picked up at that time will be distributed in the community.

I want to purchase (how many) _____ Easter Lilies for display in our church during Easter at \$8.00 each. Write Easter Lily in the memo section of your check.

I would like designation(s) in the church bulletin to read:

In Memory of:

1) _____

2) _____

In Appreciation for:

1) _____

2) _____

In Celebration of:

1) _____

2) _____

(other title) _____:

1) _____

2) _____

From:

Return to: First Presbyterian Church Phone: 723-5717
130 West Central Street
Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin 54729-2345

THANKS GO TO THE ENDOWMENT FUND BOARD

The Endowment Fund and its board of directors are really the unsung heroes of FPC.

Every year the fund receives money from the Joas Fund and from contributions from individuals and invests these funds on our behalf. For the past several years they have made these investments with T. Rowe Price but in recent months, the fund we have invested in has been changed to our benefit.

While we are unable to touch the principal in the fund, we can and do use the earnings from that principal. Since November 20 the church has received \$36,190 from those earnings. That money is used for general church expenses.

We are indebted to the founders of the fund who set it up for us in the first place, to the Joas fund for adding to it every year and to the Endowment Fund Board for keeping close tabs on the earnings which we can access and use to fund the work of the church.

The members of the Endowment Fund Board are Vance Kohl, Church Norseng, Barb Shorrel, Gwen Bauman and Larry Annett (Session liaison).

TINY HOUSE PROJECT FORGES AHEAD

Six years ago, Mike Cohoon and the Mission Coalition of Churches dreamed of a Tiny House Village where the homeless of Chippewa Falls could live until they could afford permanent housing. The closure of Harmony House left many of the community's homeless with no roof over their heads. But the tiny houses could solve that problem at least temporarily.

To date nine (soon to be ten) tiny houses have been built using volunteer labor and donations and housed at various churches throughout the city but the plan always was to purchase land and relocate the homes to what was to become Hope Village.

That dream is becoming a reality with the recent purchase of two parcels of land at the edge of town on Highway 178. The current plans call for five twin-homes and three 6-plexes to be used as low income and transitional housing in addition to the current tiny houses. A building located on one of the parcels will be remodeled to include showers, laundry facilities, a kitchen, and a meeting room. In addition, there is a plan to build a small workshop and resale store. There will be a garden area, a greenhouse, and a small playground.

FPC wanted to house one of the tiny homes; we don't have the outdoor room to do so, however, we have utilized our basement storage capacity to provide space for bedding, small appliances, building materials and all the things needed to complete the houses. Many of our volunteers have helped with the actual building of houses at other churches. So when we look at the tiny houses, we know we had a hand in their creation.

MARCH COMMUNION TO BE HELD VIRTUALLY

On Sunday, March 7 we will do something the same yet different. We will celebrate communion but since the service will be held by Zoom, it will be virtual communion.

You are free to use a cracker, piece of bread or something similar for the body of Christ and any kind of juice as the blood of Christ.

Pastor Ken will be our speaker that day and will say the traditional words of communion from his home in Minnesota.

This will be new for us, but nonetheless meaningful. Communion is an important rite of the church we haven't been able to celebrate since December.

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS BEGINS MARCH 14

Don't forget Daylight Savings Time starts at 2:00 AM on Sunday, March 14. Remember to turn your clocks back or you will be early for service that day.

Enjoy the morning sunlight or at least daylight.

NEW SHEPHERD LIST INCLUDED

In this month's Bell you will find the current Shepherd list. This is slightly revised from the one you received in the directory. Please print that page and insert it in your directory.

PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE UPDATE

The work of the Pastor Nominating Committee has slowed to a halt.

The Church Leadership Connection has our Ministry Information Form (MIF) and has sent us the corresponding Personal Information Forms (PIF) they had received but none of those panned out.

We have contacted the Presbyterian Seminary at the University of Dubuque and sent them our MIF which they have posted on line and sent to the one candidate who is graduating this spring. To date we have received no further word and the seminary is closed at this time due to the pandemic.

We think the Coronavirus has hindered our search. There seem to be very few candidates looking for a new church but we continue to work and pray that the right person will come our way.

