

The Bell

September, 2025

Monthly Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

FALL BRINGS NEW CHALLENGES

Good day and God's blessings upon you. I hope this finds you doing well. The weather has finally started to get nice if nippy. It feels more like fall every morning, even though we do not officially hit that mark until September 22.

Well, even with the season not changing till the end of September, you can feel the change in the air with the coming of Labor Day on the September 1 and the kids here in Chippewa Falls going back to school on the September 3. That means for the next three months, things start to ramp up for our church year. Vacations are over and people start to return to their normal routines.

We will continue with our first-Wednesday-of-the-month dinners starting on the September 3 as Lynda has indicated elsewhere in this Bell.

We will also start again with our dinner church potluck hosting duties on the second Wednesday of the month or September 10 with a presentation from an organization called Safe Families for Children that tries to help families before they go into the Child Protective System. I believe that this is an organization that was designed for churches to get us back into the requirement that Jesus gave us to love our neighbor as ourselves. This has been relegated to the secular world for far too long.

Through our Food Pantry, we will be donating 25 bags of food to Love Chippewa, the yearly event where individuals who need some extra help can come and receive those services that lots of families cannot afford above the basic needs of life. See more information on this event in later pages of the Bell.

We are always looking for volunteers to help, so if you are interested, please grab a card off the table in my office and let them know or let me know and I will be happy to put you in contact with the coordinator.

God bless you all and as we go into the Fall, may we all remember that Jesus Christ is constantly walking with us through all the changes in our seasons on earth and in our life.

Ed

FROM THE MISSION TEAM...

Submitted by Barb Shorrel

With fall approaching, it is again time for our third special offering—the Peace and Global Witness Offering.

This offering allows us to use 25% of contributions to support peacemaking and reconciliation in our own community. The Mission Team has met and decided to give our portion of this offering to the Open Door Clinic. In addition, the money raised from the August noisy Sunday event will also be donated to the clinic.

The theme for this year's offering is "Pursue What Makes Peace." I read a post on Facebook a while back that spoke about actions that bring peace. Considering all that is going on in the world, we all feel so helpless to feel that we can do anything to bring peace. This short post encouraged us to do the little things—make contact with the person in the grocery line with a smile, bring a neighbor fresh-baked muffins, just because, or volunteer at a shelter or food pantry. These things bring a sense of peace to our community. It may seem small, but peace really begins with us right in our own community. I am reminded of the Michael Jackson song, "Man in the Mirror." Let's all look in the mirror and determine how we may be hindering peace and make a change.

Contributions to this offering can be made by a check written out to FPC with Peace and Global Witness in the memo line. The dedication of this offering is on World Communion Sunday, October 5.

Backpack Giveaway

We collected \$157 for the Backpack Giveaway in August. Presbyterian Women added another \$143 to bring our contribution to \$300.

Lighten Your Load

Our portion of the annual Lighten Your Load offering to help with laundry costs came to \$100. That's a lot of quarters!

ONE MORE TIME

Mother Nature must be a Presbyterian or if she isn't, at least she seems to be looking out for us. The forecast for good weather seems to be in our favor so we are planning to go to Erickson Park on Wednesday, September 3 for our last picnic of the year. If, by some chance, the weather should change, we will move the picnic to the church but at this point, everything looks favorable for the park.

Bring your favorite potluck dish to pass, a beverage if you want one and a chair if you wish. We will have plates, cups, utensils, napkins for everyone. The picnic starts around 4:30 so be sure to be there for lots of good food

ANNIVERSARY PLANS PROGRESS

The first meeting to discuss the 175th anniversary celebration was held on August 20. This meeting was to start thinking about what we might want to do in 2030.

It was decided this will be a year-long event for the whole community, not just our church. We hope to have a meeting of the entire Presbytery here in conjunction with the signing of our church charter on May 15. If this happens, it will be the first Presbytery meet here in our church since Barry Boyer's retirement.

In addition we are thinking about publishing a new history book along the lines of the one Fred Horak did in 1998. We may have more church plates made in addition to pens and stickers to be given to the children.

We hope to include a tour or tours of the church during the year. That would give us a chance to show off the building to the community and let them hear our organ, which will play (no pun intended) a large part in the celebration.

This is just the start so if you have any ideas, let Pastor Ed or Lynda Butek hear them so we can add them to the ever-growing list.

PFC TO PARTICIPATE IN LOVE CHIPPEWA FREE EVENT

As we have done in the past, we'll be joining area churches in holding a one-day free clinic at which anyone can receive medical care, eye care, dental care, chiropractic care, haircuts, and oil changes. Everything is free of charge on a first-come-first-served basis. A free hot meal will be served and clothing and groceries will be available to take.

This event will be held at the Chippewa Falls Senior High School, as it was last year. It offers us a lot of room to spread out and offer more services. It will be held on September 27 from 9am-noon.

Once again, First Presbyterian Church Community Food Pantry will be donating 25 bags of non-perishable food items to this project. Pastor Ed and Tiffany Wogahn will be volunteering again and more volunteers are needed. If you'd like to volunteer, please visit

<https://www.lovechippewa.org/register/>. Email info@lovechippewa.org with any questions or for more information.

If you'd like to take advantage of some of the services being offered, please come early!

THE CHIPPEWA FALLS YEARS

By Irene Robertson

Editor's note: As Pastor Ed mentioned in the August Bell, we have received a letter written by Irene Robertson, wife of former pastor, Wallace Robertson. The Robertsons served our church from 1938 to 1941 and Mrs. Robertson's letter goes into detail about life in Chippewa Falls and at the church.

Due to the length of the letter, portions of it will appear in subsequent issues of the Bell.

Our first week in Chippewa Falls the doorbell rang and a couple asked Wally to marry them. She was in a bridal gown. However, Wally hadn't registered yet with the county clerk, so he told the couple to come back in an hour. Our neighbor, Lloyd Crane, drove Wally to the court house while I hurried to make our living room look festive with vases of flowers. We had two mock orange (syringa) bushes and hydrangea bushes and they were just what I needed. The couple came back and the wedding took place in front of our fireplace. Lloyd and I were the witnesses (the first of many times I served in this capacity).

The Manse was a square, two story stucco house with four bedrooms and bath upstairs and a living room with fireplace, dining room, den (which was Wally's office) and kitchen and powder room, plus a screened-in porch which overlooked a nice yard and ravine. The basement (cellar) was large and had a coal bin and stoker to keep the furnace running. It also had a gas water heater which was defective and almost killed me one day when I had been doing laundry. I began to feel sick and faint. I managed to get up the stairs to lie down on the couch. Copper fumes were coming from the water heater. Luckily I recovered and the water heater was replaced.*

A couple of anecdotes from our first weeks: Wally was on a step ladder taking off the storm windows. A man came up our walk (I can't remember what he was selling) and, seeing Wally on the ladder he asked "Sonny, is your Dad at home?" At age 24 Wally did look like a high school student. One day the doorbell rang and a little boy who lived down the street from us asked if Wally would come out and play with him! Incidentally, one of the admonitions Dr. and Mrs. Benjamin (Dr. Benjamin married us) gave us was "Don't let the congregation call you by your first names." Well, within a few weeks everyone was calling us Wally and Irene. However, we were careful not to do the same with the "old" couples.

Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin, population 10,000, was a wonderful place to start our ministry. I say "our" because Wally said we were doing it together even though he was the ordained minister. I was his helper. I didn't feel competent nor did I know what would be expected of me. I had so much to learn but there were such dear people who were willing to teach me. Here are some of the names of people who helped: Ruth and Earl Gunderson, Dr. Richard and Libby Rodgers, Ich and Stella Crane, Lloyd Crane and his father, L. D. Crane, Marty and Hazel Hine, Vic and Gertrude Johnson, Frank and Minta Martin, Roy and Lucille Hanson, Fred and Amy Horak, Mable Cook, Fred Cook, Owen Crane, Wilder and Alice Crane, Julian Clark, the Crissingers, "Auntie" Bowe, Alberta Hogseth (choir director), Pearl Hanson, Harriett Anderson, Bert and Anita Jaggard, Mr. and Mrs. Calder, Esther and "Doc" Dorland (dentist), Charles and Elizabeth Ainsworth.

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A few of the things I learned from Ruth Gunderson, how to preserve fruits and vegetables and how to make bread; from Esther Dorland, how to make sugar cookies – and I still use her recipe; from Lloyd Crane, how to prepare a dinner and have everything hot; Pearl Hanson, who gave me her recipe for poppyseed cake, a recipe I still use, and many tips from others. Before I was married I knew nothing about cooking. My mother was an excellent cook, but my time in the kitchen was spent washing the dishes and I had never cooked a meal. Wally had been going up to Chippewa Falls, by train from Chicago each weekend for four months, and many families had entertained him for dinner. He wanted to show his appreciation by inviting them to dinner at the Manse. My memory of the first few months was one of anxiety, desperation, frustration and doing dishes. Our guests usually stayed a long time to visit. That was pleasant, but it meant cleaning up afterward. But I learned a lot and even turned out to be a fairly good cook.

Our next door neighbor was L. D. Crane, whose wife was confined to a wheelchair because she had rheumatoid arthritis. Their son, Lloyd, who was about our age, lived with his parents and he was a wonderful friend to us. When Wally invited the choir to come to the Manse for refreshments after choir practice, I decided to try to make a cake. The people I worked with at Allis Chalmers Mfg. Co. had given me a Sunbeam Mixer for a wedding gift and I found what looked like an easy recipe for chocolate cake. I guess I beat it too long. It was a disaster and I was in tears. Wally wasn't home and we had no car, so I called Lloyd and he came to the rescue. He went to the store and bought cookies and ice cream. He also played a trick on us. He put a small bottle of liquor in the icebox along with the ice cream. We didn't discover it until sometime later and were chagrined. We wondered what the ice man thought when he saw it.**

L. D. Crane was very philosophical and he and Wally had great chats over the fence. L. D. had a great sense of humor and always had a story to tell. He also raised pheasants and treated us to pheasant dinners. Someone else treated us to duck. They dropped off two ducks, not dressed. Wally invited some people to come to dinner. I was left with two ducks and didn't have a clue as to what to do with them. A cookbook said to pour hot, melted wax on them to get the feathers out. I think I cried the whole day, but managed to prepare the ducks and the dinner was a success, but I DID NOT eat any duck.

*Copper is frequently used in gas water heater systems for several key reasons: its excellent heat conductivity allows for efficient heating, and its durability and resistance to corrosion make it a reliable material for hot water and gas lines. Breathing in copper dust and fumes may cause an acute syndrome of metal fume fever (MFF). Severe poisoning can cause liver failure and death.

** Before the advent of modern refrigerators, many homes had iceboxes which relied on regular deliveries of ice by the local ice man. He would place the fresh ice in a special compartment at the bottom of the icebox and the cold air from it would keep the food cool.

Editor's note: Watch for more of Irene's story in the Bell in coming months.