



The Bell

March, 2026

Monthly Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

God's blessings upon you. We are now in the month of Easter and I know in this month's Bell is our entire Holy Week schedule. Please consider joining us for our services as we celebrate the most important week in history and what its meaning has had for our entire world.

I would like to share a little bit about our Northern Waters Presbytery Annual Mission Trip. For the second year we went to Asheville, North Carolina. We worked again with Fuller Center Disaster ReBuilders. Their mission is to provide long-term rebuilding efforts and essential support to homeowners who have suffered damage to their homes due to natural disasters. However, our work goes far beyond just rebuilding homes—we are committed to restoring hope, strengthening communities, and creating lasting impact wherever they serve. The impact that this organization is having on the Black Mountain, Asheville, and Swannanoa area is enormous. We only witnessed a very small portion of what they did. This was my second year going and my wife Barb's first year.

This year we worked on two trailers that had received damage during Hurricane Helene. At the first one we were doing a repair from the original work Fuller Center had done last year. We needed to replace the original floors that had been put in because the homeowner, "Sarge", was in a heavy wheelchair and it had damaged the floor, so we installed a hardwood floor that could take the weight.

"Sarge's" real name is Cliff Stewart and he is a Disabled Vietnam Veteran. He served from 1968 to 1972 when he was injured. He shared some of his story with us and he was deeply wounded, not just physically but also mentally from his experience over there. He was very appreciative that we were able to help him.

In the second trailer, we finished a bathroom that had received roof damage during Hurricane Helene. The homeowner was not there as she had slipped on the ice two weeks earlier and broken her ankle and was staying with family. We worked with Gary and Jacqueline Reich who have done this Mission Trip many times and this was the only time they remembered that they had been there to see the finished project when they left. Being able to be the last set of Jesus' hands and feet made this a very rewarding Mission Trip.

Both Barb and I are very grateful that we could participate this time. Thank you to all of you who donated to the trip and to all of you who offered up prayers as we drove down and back.

God Bless you all and your family as we get ready to celebrate our Lord and Savior's ultimate act of unselfish love for us and the entire world. God bless you all.

Ed

HOLY WEEK COMES EARLY THIS YEAR

As usual Holy Week begins in our church on Palm Sunday when we will celebrate the traditional service complete with palms.

This year the Maundy Thursday service will be celebrated at Trinity United Methodist Church in a different way from services in the past. Instead of the living Last Supper, Trinity will host a potluck supper beginning at 5:00 followed by an ecumenical service at 6:00.

This service will include Eddie Crise, pastor of Trinity United Methodist Church, Ed Williams, pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Paolo Vasquez, pastor of Zion Methodist and Lake Hallie Methodist churches, Deacon Rose Ruthy representing Christ Episcopal Church and introducing Rev. Chad Anderson, the new pastor of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Chippewa Falls.

Ed Williams will deliver the sermon at this service which will include a freewill offering to benefit Carelink.

Good Friday will see two ecumenical services including the same five pastors named above. The noon service will be at Our Saviour's followed by another service at Zion Methodist at 3:00. Rev. Anderson will deliver the sermon at both these services.

Holy Week will culminate with a traditional service in our sanctuary including communion. There will only be one service this year since Easter falls early in the year and colder weather may keep us indoors.

CONGREGATION ELECTS NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Four at-large members have been elected to the 2026 nominating committee. They are Anne Welke, Kevin Litten, Bill Martin and Bonnie Gullickson. They will be joined by one member of Session who will serve as committee chair.

The work of this committee won't begin until Fall when they will come up with a slate of leaders for 2027 to serve on Session, the board of Deacons, the Endowment Fund Board and the Financial Review team.

MORE FISH IN OUR FUTURE

Presbyterian Men have scheduled a special fish fry for the first Wednesday night supper in March.

According to chief chef, Rick Koepke, they had just enough fish left over from Ash Wednesday to take care of the regular Wednesday night group. In addition to the fish, we will have the usual potatoes and vegetables.

Dinner will be served on a first-come-first-served basis beginning at 5:00 on March 4. On the following Wednesday, March 11, Dinner Church will resume this time at Lake Hallie United Methodist Church, 12146 22 Ave., Chippewa Falls. As usual, this will be a pot luck evening beginning at 5:00.

EASTER LILIES TO DECORATE THE CHURCH

It may seem early, but Easter is rapidly approaching.

As we have in the past, this year FPC will purchase Easter lilies to decorate the sanctuary on Easter morning, April 5.

Typically these plants have been ordered from Family Fare but because of the store closing in April this year our lilies will come from Christensen's which is our source for regular Sunday flowers. The price will be \$12. If you wish to purchase flowers which you can take home after the Easter service, please complete the order form in this issue of the Bell.

Any plants that are not removed on Easter Sunday will be replanted by one of our Food Pantry volunteers or given to shut-ins.

Lily order forms will be available in the church office during regular business hours or at the Welcome Desk on Sunday mornings beginning March 8.

2025 ANNUAL REPORT ARE STILL AVAILABLE

The 2025 Annual Report which was approved at the February congregational meeting is available in the office for those who didn't attend the meeting. Copies are available while they last during regular business hours.

IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN

Yes, it's time to reset the clocks to Daylight Savings Time. The actual start of the time change is 2:00 AM on Sunday, March 8 but it's a good idea to set your clocks ahead before going to bed on Saturday night. That will guarantee that you will come to church on time.

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING RUNS THROUGH MARCH

March brings the first church-wide special offering with the One Great Hour of Sharing. This event runs through March and culminates on April 5.

Around the world, millions of people lack access to sustainable food sources, clean water, sanitation, education and opportunity. The work done in support of the causes supported by One Great Hour of Sharing – disaster, hunger, poverty, climate change, and immigration/migration and refugees – serves individuals and communities in need. This work provides people with safety, sustenance and hope.

Typically received during Lent, this offering helps to improve the lives of people in these challenging situations.

During March you will hear more about this special offering from members of our mission team.

EASTER LILIES

We are now taking orders for Easter lilies that will grace the chancel on Easter morning, April 5. The cost per plant is \$12. 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 Monday, Tuesday 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 planted or distributed in the community.

I want to purchase (how many) _____ Easter Lilies for display in our church during Easter. 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) _____

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THE CHIPPEWA FALLS YEARS

By Irene Robertson

Editor's note: Following is the seventh installment of Irene Robertson's letter about the years she and her husband, Rev. Wallace Robertson, spent in Chippewa Falls between 1938 and 1941. 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.

The highlight of our four years in Chippewa Falls was the birth of our first child. We expected our baby about the end of June, 1940. Wally and his Dad were hoping it would be a boy. I hoped their wishes would come true.

Wally's Mom and sister came to Chippewa to help me but Mother Robertson wasn't feeling very well, so I made her rest. Little did she realize that this baby was going to arrive about three weeks late. I think I made her nervous because I was so active. I remember how upset she was when I reached up to pull a chain to put out a light. Old wives tales said that could strangle the baby. One night I dropped a shoe on the wooden floor of our bedroom and she came to the bedroom very concerned that something was wrong. I'm sure she was relieved when David finally decided to arrive. Of course he chose 5:00 AM to let us know he was coming.

We called Dr. Rodgers and he told us to go right to the hospital. Lloyd Crane drove us to the hospital and Dr. Rodgers met us there. Wally had to leave to preach at the summer Fisherman's Service at 7:00 AM but Dr. Rodgers stayed with me the whole time. David was born about 9:30 – between the two church services. What a thrill it was to hear Dick Rodgers say, "It's a boy".

Dod Robertson was busy installing reduction gears in aircraft carriers on the east coast. He had said to wire him if it was a boy, but just send a letter if it was a girl. David Wallace Robertson weighed 7 pounds 12 ounces and he looked rather scrawny to me. David was breast fed and soon began to fatten up.

In those days mothers stayed in the hospital with their babies for three weeks, and by the time we came home David had stopped needing night-time feedings, and he slept through the night. What a joy he was to us and to the congregation.

The nuns at the hospital had taken very good care of me, and one nun in particular was a fan of Wally's. She was very impressed when she discovered that Wally brought me a fresh rose every day. She thought it was very romantic – and I agreed.

David was baptized on August 14 and Dr. and Mrs. Benjamin came along with Grandma Robertson and Grandpa and Grandma Wiesen. I can't remember whether Betty and Aunt Jessie came. Dr. Benjamin had married us, and we were delighted that he would come to baptize David. David behaved very well during the baptism. He, too was a handsome baby, like his cousin Bobby. We had a friend who was an amateur photographer and he took MANY pictures of David.