

Old Stone Church - September 2022



God
is still
speaking,

Words From Wang – “Autumn Blessings”

For many of us, fall is the favorite of the four seasons; and for so many different reasons. The month of September signals the end of another summer season but also reminds us of the most inevitable transitions that occur with life in general. As legend has it, the last tune played by the band aboard the Titanic was a hymn tune entitled “Autumn.” The most familiar text associated with the tune is “Nearer My God to Thee.”

The author and spiritual mystic, Edward Hayes writes, “each time the season of autumn blazes out with golden beauty, another year is sinking in the ocean of time. Yet autumn is not just a season of the year, it has a timeless quality. It speaks of a season of our lives, of our times of transition, of the passing of institutions and eras.” Well, if this doesn’t speak to us as church members, then I’m not sure what does. But the wonderful thing about autumn is it’s ability to touch us, inspire us, and bless us even as the leaves die and fall off the trees; even as the colder winds begin to blow; even as the light of day narrows each day.

As was experienced by the passengers aboard the Titanic, “the nearness of death has the power to call forth a keen awareness of what is truly important in life,” Hayes continues. And I love this next line, “Blessed are those for whom autumn’s golden hymn of death is a reveille. Blessed are those who are awakened to how short is the time left in theirs for acts of generosity, service, and affection.”

As we all continue to emerge from isolation and pandemic fears, we couldn’t be more aware, and therefore mindful of, these truths. And I continue to yield to Edward Hayes’ profound insight; “Blessed are those for how the lessening of the hours of light and the smell of burning leaves is a reminder to value more keenly the gifts of their lives...and as an aid to see their problems and pains in their correct proportion.”

Note: This would be the perfect opportunity to entice readers to consider attending the “Autumn Blessings” retreat being offered the first week of November where we will share and discuss a similar theme as this column. (see blurb under “Crooked River Ministries.”)

May the changing season, therefore, be more like an opportunity to give thanks for and prioritize our lives as we remember all things bright and beautiful, all things wise and wonderful, and how the Lord God made them all. See ya’ in church.

Pastor Bob

Worship Opportunities (September)

September 4: The 13th Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture: Luke 14:25-33

Sermon theme: *Strategic Plans*

Note: The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be served



September 11: The 14th Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture: 1 Tim. 1:12-17

Sermon Theme: *Mercy*

September 18: The 15th Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture: 1 Timothy 2:1-7

Sermon Theme: *The Next Thing to Godliness*



September 25: The 16th Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture: Psalm 146

Sermon Theme: *The Stuff of Legacies*

Note: American Indian Ministry Sunday (UCC)

October 2: The 17th Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture: 2 Tim. 1:1-14

Sermon theme: *Cowards, Please Excuse Yourselves*

Note: The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be served



Flames of the Spirit: “Hearts on Fire”

At the beginning of the Pentecost season, at OSC we launched our second year of a three-year campaign called *Flames of the Spirit*. We are currently in the early months of this year’s theme, “*Flames of the Spirit: Hearts on Fire*.” We can now welcome 1st Cong (Pec) into this initiative.

Our focus text is **Luke 24:30-32)** *When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. 32 They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us[a] while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?”*

With our new shared ministry covenant we look forward to planning joint activities and events to further our mission and outreach as the “Crooked River Ministries” as well as establishing community partners in and around both parishes.

We hope that these new endeavors will help to inspire all of us to do some personal witnessing (a.k.a. elbow evangelism) and instill in people a desire to invite their friends, family, and neighbors to church programs. Remember, faith is not taught, rather faith is “caught.”



SMAC

Crooked River Ministries - SMAC

As per our shared ministry covenant, we are happy to announce the formation of the Shared Ministry Advisory Committee (Not to be confused with the shared ministry task force); which we are informally referring to as “SMAC.” The Old Stone Church reps are **Chelsea Burns, Jason Plessner, and Steve Herdklotz**. The Pec church is finalizing the selection of their three reps.

This team will meet as needed throughout the year to help oversee our joint operations with 1st Congregational (the Pec church) and participate in planning the many joint ventures. This will include establishing numerous community partners that we hope will be able to collaborate with us as we further our mission (a mission statement will be one of our first tasks). Please be aware of the events already in the works. May God bless the Crooked River Ministries!!

Crooked River Calendar of Events

September 17 - Crooked River Coffee House (Pec)

Our first coffee house/open mic night will be at 1st Congregational (Pecatonica) on September 17 in the church fellowship hall downstairs and will benefit the Pec Food Pantry. Sign up to perform will begin at 6:00 p.m. with music starting at 6:30. Music, poetry reading, comedy, whatever your talent, please join us. Or, simply come to enjoy. Admission to the coffee house is a non-perishable food donation of any size. Refreshments will be offered throughout the duration. If you wish to volunteer to help host or serve please let church leadership know.



October 8 - Crooked River Coffee House (Rockton)

The above will also be offered on Saturday October 8 but in the dining room at the Old Stone Church. Same format and time frame. This event will benefit the Rockton Food Pantry.



November 2-4 - Autumn Blessings Adult Retreat (Cedar Valley Retreat Center)

Save the dates! Nestled in the heart of Washington County and Wisconsin's Kettle Moraine region, Cedar Valley facilities are located on 100 acres of natural beauty. Cedar Valley is part of the United Church Camps, Inc. (United Church of Christ); one of three outdoor ministry sites in the Illinois Conference. We will gather at 4:00pm on Wednesday November 2nd and conclude our time together after lunch on the 4th.

Pastor Bob is planning programming for attendees to dig a little deeper in their faith, but will allow ample time for fellowship and to enjoy God's sanctuary that is Cedar Valley. The rooms for overnight lodging are quaint and include private bathrooms. The country-style dining room offers delicious homemade breakfasts, lunches, and dinners—all included in the overnight rates! A more detailed flier will be available very soon. Feel free to read about Cedar Valley by going to ucci.org.

December 9 - John Denver Christmas Concert (Pec)

The 2nd annual John Denver Christmas concert will take place on Friday, December 9th in the sanctuary of 1st Congregational Church, Pecatonica at 7:00 p.m. More details forthcoming.



December 10 - Chicago Day

How about a trip to Chicago? This event is being considered and would include bus transportation (maybe coach!) into Chicago with a stop on the Miracle Mile; Christmas lights and display on Michigan Avenue, the museum of Science and Industry, restaurants, etc.

Crooked River Ministries Present:

Crooked River Coffee House and Open Mic Nights

Saturday September 17th
1st Congregational Church of Pecatonica
633 Reed St. Pecatonica, IL

Saturday October 8^h
The Old Stone Church
101 E. Union St. Rockton, IL

**Admission: non-perishable food items to benefit the
Pecatonica and Rockton Food Pantries**

The doors will open at 6:00 for open mic sign-up. Performers can plan 2-3 pieces but it will depend on how many want to play, sing, recite, etc. Things will wrap up by 9:00 p.m.

Assorted hot/cold beverages and snacks will be served



Questions call 815-624-6212 or email
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2nd Annual Bag Night

Special thanks to all who helped make our 2nd annual bag night another successful event last month. We probably served food to 50-60 people. Everyone enjoyed the music and good fellowship, and our food pantry took in a fair amount of food donations. Congrats to Sheli and Harold who took first place in the bag tournament. We'll be beginning plans for next year very soon in order to make it an even bigger and better!



Huzzah! A Successful Trip to the Bristol Renaissance Faire

We had 28 people register for our second planned event as part of our shared ministry - which was enough to justify chartering the bus with First-Student Transportation. We had representation from both churches, but numerous guests as well, including two people from Roscoe Methodist Church. Our destination was the Bristol Renaissance Faire located in Bristol, WI.



Judging from the enthusiastic responses from those who attended, people really enjoyed our trip to the Ren Faire which included a brief stop in from of Pastor Bob's house in the "real" Bristol, WI. One Faire employee said there were probably 20,000 people in attendance that day!! It definitely showed with the long food lines but that didn't discourage our group; some of whom are already talking about going back next year. Stay tuned! Huzzah!

October is Stewardship Month

October is the time of year we dedicate to promoting stewardship with our annual fall pledge drive. Our Church Council uses the results of our annual drive to determine our Church's budget and ministries for the coming year.

The theme for this year's campaign, **HEARTS ON FIRE!**, corresponds with the second-year theme of the three-year *Flames of the Spirit* program adopted at our 2021 OSC Leadership Summit. It's a perfect fit for our October stewardship drive. Autumn is a favorite season for many, igniting our hearts with its invigorating air and flaming color; comforting smells of pumpkin spice, apple cider, and woodsmoke; and harvest festivals and holidays that remind us to be thankful and generous.

Watch for upcoming news and join us on Sunday, October 2nd, as we kick-off our 2023 Stewardship Drive!



Old Stone Church

HEARTS ON FIRE!

2023 STEWARDSHIP DRIVE

September

Birthdays

1st- Vickie Halom
4th- Chris Fleissner
5th- Jaci Coomer
17th- Tom Christenson
22nd- Jean Leach
25th- Bob Plessner



September

Anniversaries



13th- Bob & Joan Plessner
16th- Dick & Jean Truman
21st- Mike & Lindsey Lancaster
22nd- Chris & Andrea Gantz



September 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Pantry 9-11	2 Girl Scouts 5:30p	3
4 communion	5	6 Worship 7pm	7 Grief Group 10:30	8 Pantry 9-11	9	10
11	12	13 Council 7pm	14	15 Pantry 9-11	16 Girl Scouts 5:30p	17 Coffee House (pec) 6p
18 S.S. Begins	19 Boy Scouts 6p	20	21 Grief Group 10:30	22 Pantry 9-11	23	24
25	26	27	28	29 Pantry 9-11	30 Old Guys 8:30	

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