

Old Stone Church - April 2023



WORDS FROM WANG – *“Faith Through Honest Doubt”*

I think it is safe to assume that by now all of you reading are fully aware that we are well into the 3rd year of my time here as the designated term interim minister. And it has been quite the journey up to this point. I am also assuming that it has become evident that the option of extending my contract beyond the 3-year term is not being entertained.

The plan therefore is to engage the Illinois Conference in conducting a search for a settled pastor and be conducted in what will hopefully be a timely fashion. That ball is rolling and you will soon be receiving a report regarding next steps which will also include a proposal on the ratification of the shared ministry that is currently being practiced between the Old Stone Church and the 1st Congregational Church of Pecatonica. If that agreement does become permanent (as it should), then the search will be conducted as an official act of the Crooked River Ministries; namely, the two churches working together to find their new spiritual leader.

This news will no doubt (pun intended) be received as news that may be difficult to bear given the challenges of transitional times and the task of conducting a search. All we can ask at this point is that you continue to have faith in God and in the process. Because even when there is a level of doubt in our minds we can still trust that God is up to something and that in the larger scheme of things, that something is always good for God's people.

The Easter story teaches that death is never the final word; that life always prevails in the end. And this is what keeps us coming back; celebrating like every morning is Easter morning.

The author of John's gospel provides a theme of overcoming doubt where Thomas is informed by the other disciples, *“We have seen the Lord.” But Thomas said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.” (John 20:25)*

May we, therefore, strive to be among those who believe without seeing the whole picture; that we may trust even if we don't fully comprehend. And, furthermore, may we support any and all decisions made for us without doubting that these decisions are truly being made in the best interest of the church and it's many ministries.

We pray that God may help us to be positive examples of the resurrection power, a power that is truly something that we know in our hearts even when there seems to be no tangible evidence. May the doubting spirit that is present in so many of God's people be transformed into understanding and opportunity; into hope and promise; and into yet another Easter miracle. May all prayers be offered in the name of the great transformer and redeemer, Jesus Christ. And let the people say “amen.”

See ya' in church.

Pastor Bob

Worship Opportunities (April)

April 2: The 6th Sunday in Lent (Palm Sunday)

Scripture: Matthew 27:11-66

Sermon Theme: *On the Wings of A Dream*

Note: *The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be served*



April 6: Maundy Thursday

6:00 – Dinner

7:00 – Worship (around tables following dinner)

Note: *The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be served*

April 7: Good Friday

Community Good Friday services:

3:00 p.m. at Old Stone Church, Rockton

6:30 at 1st Congregational Church, Pecatonica



April 9: Easter Sunday

Scripture: John 20:1-18

Sermon Theme: *They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love*

April 16: The 2nd Sunday of Easter

Scripture: Luke 24:13-35

Sermon Theme: *Recognizing the Living Christ*



April 23: The 3rd Sunday of Easter/Earth Day

Scripture: Psalm 23

Sermon Theme: *Sacred Groves: Green Pastures and Soul Restoration*

April 30: The 4th Sunday of Easter

Scripture: John 10:1-10

Sermon theme: *Voice Recognition*

Note: This is a “fellowship first” Sunday and will take place in fellowship hall.



May 7: The 5th Sunday of Easter

Scripture: John 14:1-14

Sermon Theme: *Global Positioning System*

Note: *The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be served*





“Crooked River Ministries is a collaboration between First Congregational Church of Pecatonica and the Old Stone Church of Rockton. Our Mission is to work together to expand ministries beyond the walls of our churches and includes forming community partnerships.”

Our March coffee house/open mic night (our 4th) was a huge success with more new talent and a really good turnout. Both churches realized decent profits from concession sales and donations in both the February and March coffee house events. The shoe collection was also successful and will continue, but we are still waiting for the state of Illinois to provide us with a “charitable trust” account number so that we can enlist the support and direction of a professional fundraising company that specializes in shoe drives. We do hope to make that announcement very soon. Hopefully we can officially roll this out sometime after Easter.



Thanks to the extended Plessner family for making our **Family Game Day** happen. However, we had more adults attend than kids so we'll just have to regroup and hope that our next event might bring more families with kiddos together. We do really want to see our shared children and youth programming succeed, but it can't without your participation to make it happen. Namely, families with kids (from both churches) who desire to have youth fellowship and Christian education as part of our shared ministry. So, remember that we are stronger together!! Please support this worthy ministry.

Upcoming Events:

Mario Brothers Movie – Saturday, April 15

Plans are underway to go together as a group to see a matinee show of the new Super Mario Brothers movie on Saturday, April 15, with the inclusion of dinner (somewhere near the theater) immediately after the show. Ticket price should be about \$7.50 per ticket. If you are interested in attending this event, please contact Jason Plessner by email, plez95@aol.com or phone, 815-713-0980. Please let friends and family know. This will be a great family event!



More information will be coming soon on a joint trip this summer to the **Fireside Theatre in Ft. Atkinson for dinner together and to see a performance of Mary Poppins**. This will be open to anyone in either church and guests as well.

Please note that “Crooked River Ministries” now has a Facebook page and we need everyone to “like” and “follow” us on FB. It's quite easy to do!! The Pec church will be introducing their new website which will help to promote all of our joint events, also. You can visit at pecatonicaucc.com.

We remain excited about the possibilities that exist as we explore and envision opportunities that our shared ministry provides. Please feel free to approach any members of the team with ideas or questions.

For 1st Cong. – Kathy Spataro McGinty, Dawn Lucas, and Sally Landin

For OSC – Jason Plessner, Chelsea Dorr, and Steve Herdklotz

And Pastor Bob, of course.



Bible Study *To Be Continued* (April and May)

Having completed a video series on *understanding the Bible*, the consensus is that we continue having sessions on the alternating Wednesdays with the grief group. We will delve into the weekly lectionary scriptures (the ones that the pastor preaches on during Sunday worship) with thought provoking commentaries and lively discussions.

Note: the weekly lectionary texts are noted in the “worship opportunities” section of each monthly newsletter.

The following dates are for April and May (all Wednesdays from 10:30-12:00):

April 12 and 26

May 10 and 24

Participants are welcome to join in anytime even if you have not attended previous sessions. Just let Pastor Bob know by emailing him at pastorbobscrockton@gmail.com or by speaking to him by calling the church office.

Mothers and the Earth



Mothers and the Earth Concert – on stage in Antioch, IL

If you enjoyed last year's concert that Pastor Bob and friends presented in Rockton, featuring John Denver songs, then you are welcome to witness it again but on stage at the PM&L Theatre in Antioch, IL. Two performances are being offered, Saturday May 13 at 8:00 p.m. and a Sunday matinee on Mothers Day, May 14 at 2:30 in the afternoon. Tickets will be \$15 and will help support the theater's capital campaign.

For more information and to purchase tickets please visit their website at pmltheatre.com and to browse other season shows. PM&L Theatre is community theater at its best.

Special CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Special Congregational Meeting – April 23

Assuming you have all read “Words From Wang,” in this newsletter edition, we are happy to announce plans to move forward with a recommendation to ratify the shared ministry agreement between Old Stone Church and 1st Congregational Church of Pecatonica. We are technically still in the “one-year trial” period as per our covenant which was implemented June 1 of 2022. However, given the need to begin the search process for a settled pastor it became imperative that we act sooner than later.

All of that said, the Shared Ministry Advisory Committee and a couple additional reps from each church council met on March 29 with the Rev. Dr. Stephanie Perdew who shared important information regarding the search process. We then formulated a plan to provide a resolution to make the shared ministry covenant official. This would allow us to engage the Illinois Conference in the search process as “Crooked River Ministries” and seek a candidate interested in a full time call thus increasing the odds of finding the most qualified and committed pastor to serve both churches well into the future.

Each church will hold meetings of the congregation to present, discuss, and vote on the resolution. All members of both churches are strongly encouraged to attend and support our joint efforts. The meetings will take place following worship at each church on April 23rd. We pray for God’s continued guidance in this very important action and process.

April Birthdays

6th– Marlene Street
13th– Hannah Middleton
15th– Lindsay Rudy
19th– Gordon Pierson
19th– Steve Gleasman
19th– Steve Franklin
27th– Mary Miller
28th– Russ James



Don't Forget to Vote!



April 2023

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|-------------------------------|-----|-------------------|-------------------------|---|-------------------------|-----|
| | | | | | | 1 |
| 2 Communion Palm Sunday | 3 | 4 Worship 7pm | 5 Grief Group 10:30 | 6 Food Pantry 9-11 Maundy Thursday 6pm | 7 Good Friday | 8 |
| 9 Easter | 10 | 11 Council 7pm | 12 Bible Study 10:30 | 13 Food Pantry 9-11 | 14 Girl Scouts 5:30p | 15 |
| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 Grief Group 10:30 | 20 Food Pantry 9-11 | 21 | 22 |
| 23 Cong. Mtg | 24 | 25 | 26 Bible Study 10:30 | 27 Food Pantry 9-11 | 28 | 29 |
| 30 Fellowship First | | | | | | |

Old Stone Church
 101 E. Union St
 Rockton, IL 61072
 (815) 624-6212
 Email: oldstonechurch@oldstonechurch.net
Oldstonechurch.net



Old Stone Church Staff:

Pastor Bob Wang: (262) 945-8475
Lindsey Lancaster: Office Administrator
Bob Estrada: Custodian

