

# The Bell

August, 2017

## HE WORKS IN MYSTERIOUS WAYS

The brand new pastor and his wife, newly assigned to their first ministry, to reopen a church in suburban Brooklyn, arrived in early October excited about their opportunities. When they saw their church, it was very run down and needed much work. They set a goal to have everything done in time to have their first service on Christmas Eve.

They worked hard, repairing pews, plastering walls, painting, etc, and on December 18 were ahead of schedule and just about finished.

On December 19 a terrible tempest - a driving rainstorm - hit the area and lasted for two days.

On the 21st, the pastor went over to the church. His heart sank when he saw that the roof had leaked, causing a large area of plaster about 20 feet by 8 feet to fall off the front wall of the sanctuary just behind the pulpit, beginning about head high.

The pastor cleaned up the mess on the floor, and not knowing what else to do but postpone the Christmas Eve service, headed home. On the way he noticed that a local business was having a flea market sale for charity, so he stopped in. One of the items was a beautiful, handmade, ivory colored, crocheted tablecloth with exquisite work, fine colors and a Cross embroidered right in the center. It was just the right size to cover the hole in the front wall. He bought it and headed back to the church.

By this time it had started to snow. An older woman running from the opposite direction was trying to catch the bus. She missed it. The pastor invited her to wait in the warm church for the next bus 45 minutes later.

She sat in a pew and paid no attention to the pastor while he got a ladder, hangers, etc., to put up the tablecloth as a wall tapestry. The pastor could hardly believe how beautiful it looked and it covered up the entire problem area.

Then he noticed the woman walking down the center aisle. Her face was like a sheet. "Pastor," she asked, "where did you get that tablecloth?" The pastor explained. The woman asked him to check the lower right corner to see if the initials 'EBG' were crocheted into it there. They were. These were the initials of the woman, and she had made this tablecloth 35 years before, in Austria.

The woman could hardly believe it as the pastor told how he had just gotten "The Tablecloth". The woman explained that before the war she and her husband were well-to-do people in Austria. When the Nazis came, she was forced to leave. Her husband was going to  
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follow her the next week. He was captured, sent to prison and she never saw her husband or her home again.

The pastor wanted to give her the tablecloth but she made the pastor keep it for the church. The pastor insisted on driving her home. That was the least he could do. She lived on the other side of Staten Island and was only in Brooklyn for the day for a housecleaning job.

What a wonderful service they had on Christmas Eve. The church was almost full. The music and the spirit were great. At the end of the service, the pastor and his wife greeted everyone at the door and many said that they would return. One older man, whom the pastor recognized from the neighborhood, continued to sit in one of the pews and stare, and the pastor wondered why he wasn't leaving.

The man asked him where he got the tablecloth on the front wall because it was identical to one that his wife had made years ago when they lived in Austria before the war and how could there be two tablecloths so much alike?

He told the pastor how the Nazis came, how he forced his wife to flee for her safety and he was supposed to follow her, but he was arrested and put in a prison. He never saw his wife or his home again in all the 35 years between.

The pastor asked him if he would allow him to take him for a little ride. They drove to Staten Island and to the same house where the pastor had taken the woman three days earlier.

He helped the man climb the three flights of stairs to the woman's apartment, knocked on the door and he saw the greatest Christmas reunion he could ever imagine.

True story - submitted by Pastor Rob Reid who says God does work in mysterious ways. The Lord will bless you and guide you and protect you as you go along your way. His love is always with you. His promises are true, and when we give Him all our cares, we know He will see us through.

So when the road you're traveling seems difficult at best, just remember God is with you. When there is nothing left but God, that is when you find out that God is all you need.

## **AGNES' TABLE THANKS YOU**

On June 22, Barb Meredith, Margi and Vance Kohl, Kathy Torres, Winston Baker, Susan Boyer, Deb Buckli, Marlys Daniels, Diane Comerford, Bonnie and Doug Gullickson, Anne Welke, Gene and Jean Peissig, Corinne Boos prepared and served a fine meal for Agnes' Table. Our Presbyterian Women's group donated the funds.

Thank you for following Jesus' directive to feed the hungry—You have helped to make our world a better place!

Holly Gintz, Coordinator

## **WEDNESDAY NIGHT SUPPERS IN JEOPARDY**

Many of us have come to enjoy and look forward to our Wednesday night suppers. Not only do they give us the chance to step out of our kitchens and perhaps enjoy a meal we wouldn't think of ourselves but they give us an opportunity to socialize with others from our church.

But the Wednesday night supper preparers' list has become shorter and shorter to the point where we may have to shorten the number of meals we offer unless we get additional help.

It's not hard. It's not time consuming. It's not expensive.

You might choose to order a pizza or sub sandwiches or make spaghetti. The church will pay for the meal so take that concern off your list.

If we don't have more teams sign up or at least have individuals join existing teams, we will be forced to shorten our schedule to perhaps once a month and end the meals altogether at the end of April. This isn't what we want to do but without your help, this may be what we have to do.

You know Presbyterians love to eat! And we have some awesome cooks in our congregation. Now's the time to show what we can do. If you want to help, call Erik Anderson.

## **MANY HAPPY RETURNS!**

Celebrating birthdays and/or anniversaries in August include:

August 1	Randy Facklam
August 2	David Gutknecht and Michael Hager
August 4	Lily Krenz and Bruce Rosenau
August 5	Karolanne and Dan Duffenbach
August 6	Rees Anderson
August 7	Gary Reich and Gary Shorrel
August 9	Deb Bieging
August 10	Chuck Norseng
August 11	Linda Annett
August 12	Larry Annett and Barb and Gary Shorrel
August 14	Tim Anderson and Joe Teske
August 16	Lynda and Bill Butek
August 17	Traci and Erik Anderson and Earl Boos
August 20	Rachel Hager
August 21	Patti Stiles
August 22	Tanner Whelan
August 28	Matt and Carmi Simonson
August 29	Ky Anderson
August 30	Evelyn and John Jenson and Dave and Connie Cooley
August 31	Lucia Gasper

## **MISSION COALITION CONTINUES THEIR WORK**

The June shoe drive was a huge success. All the shoes were delivered to Zion Methodist Church where they were sent to the Twin Cities to join other church collections.

On Wednesday, September 21, we will host a spaghetti meal prepared by Todd Teske. The proceeds from this supper will go to the Hope Village tiny house program. Even though we don't have a place for a tiny house of our own, we are working with other churches in the Mission Coalition group to further this program.

Todd will prepare the meal but he will need help from the congregation. We need cookies and lots of helping hands to make this meal a success. If you can lend a hand, please contact Bonnie Gullickson or Anne Welke.

Once again Valley Vineyard Church is organizing a bookbag giveaway on August 20 from 1 to 3. Not only do they need supplies to put in the bags and/or money to purchase supplies but they need volunteers to distribute the bags on August 20. If you can help with this project, please contact Bonnie or Anne.

## **SESSION ELECTS NEW TREASURER**

Traci Anderson, long time member of FPC, has been unanimously elected by the Session to serve as our new treasurer. Traci's initial term of service will be for one year, August 1 to August 1.

August will be a transition month and Barb Shorrel will still be doing what she has been doing including training in Traci on the reports and items about the job.

Jacquie Reich will no longer be doing accounts payable, so Barb will do them through the week of August 21.

Our grateful thanks for Barb for the hard work she has put in over her tenure as Treasurer. And a hearty Welcome to Traci.

## **CHIPPEWA CHURCHES JOIN IN PURE WATER DAYS SERVICE**

Once again our church will be participating along with Trinity United Methodist Church, Zion Methodist Church, Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, Central Lutheran Church and Christ Episcopal Church in the ecumenical service in Irvine Park as part of Pure Water Days.

This year's service will be on Sunday, August 13 at 10 AM at the band shell in the park. Aaron Zook of Christ Episcopal will deliver the sermon. FPC will provide the music and the other pastors will share the responsibilities throughout the service.

There will be no regular service at FPC that day, so plan to attend the service in the park. There are benches available or you can bring your own chairs to sit on the hill.

## NEWS FROM FINANCE...

FROM BARB SHORREL

### BILLS, BILLS, AND MORE BILLS...

We all enjoy getting mail, but sometimes it seems that all we get are advertisements and bills! The same is true for the church. Have you ever stopped to think about what it costs to operate our church? Sure, you can list electricity and heat; supplies like paper, soap, and coffee; the salaries of employees; and the mortgage. However, I think that you would be surprised at what other expenses we pay.

For example, do you know that in 2016 we paid...

- \$307 for inspection of our 9 fire extinguishers and the 2 inspections of the kitchen fire suppression system. (Sometimes it is more if the extinguishers need to be recharged.)
- \$635 to keep the elevator operating (includes inspection, testing, and license as required by state law). We also paid \$362 to fix a problem last year.
- \$360 for monitoring emergency systems (required because we do not have a sprinkler system).
- \$124 for our church music copyright license (No, we are not exempt because we are a non-profit).
- \$3,335 for lease and maintenance of the copier.
- \$536 for paper
- \$1,672 for postage including the meter (We pay .47 per stamp when we use the postage meter instead of .49 if we were to use stamps).
- \$4,712 for property and liability insurance
- \$955 for workers' compensation (We must follow the same rules as any other employer in the private sector).

And a couple of the larger expenses...

- \$13,302 for electric, gas, garbage service, and water/sewer.
- \$22,063 for the mortgage.

Our total expenses in 2016 were \$167,873. So, in 2016 we needed \$460 per day to provide the worship and the programs that we strive to do. We have been working each year to reduce expenses. In 2015, the expenses totaled \$191,652; in 2014, \$207,740. Each year however, it is becoming increasingly more difficult to find places to save money. This year we have an expense budget of \$157,107. As of June 30, we have spent \$73,326, or a bit less than 47% of that amount.

The Session and Finance Team will soon be creating a budget for 2018. It is important that you are aware of this process. If you have any helpful suggestions, please contact a Session member. If you have any questions, you may contact me during this transition period of changing treasurers. I will be available after August 7 through the Fall.