



The Bell

February, 2016

FIRST
Presbyterian
CHURCH

The Bell
A monthly newsletter

PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Our journey through Lent begins!

As we travel the path through these forty days, we listen to the journey of Jesus. His path winds its way ultimately to the Upper Room, the cross upon which he died, and to the empty tomb on that Easter morn. We are called upon to find meaning for ourselves in a mood which offers reflection, self-examination, meditation, and commitment.

Often times Lent is associated with giving up something or fasting, but it is mainly about our spiritual journey.

Lent can be, for each of us, a time of growth. A time when we can take a look at ourselves, as we are, and work toward that which God wants us to become. It is also a time to celebrate the great abundance of God's love and compassion. Lent is a time for a spiritual journey.

This year let each of us allow that journey to be a journey of GROWTH! Let us not stop hunting until we discover a deeper and richer relationship with God, and with our neighbor. This journey can take on a variety turns when we pause and reach deep within ourselves to find our connections, our path, and our growth as Christians.

Our Lenten theme in worship will be "Bread for the Journey" - nourishment we receive from God's great love and compassion. There will be a devotional pamphlet available for families to take home and share during Lent.

"Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." Says the Lord (Isaiah 43:18-19).

Blessings,
Pastor Karel

CONGREGATION MEETING SLATED FOR FEBRUARY 7

The first Congregational Meeting of 2016 will be held on February 7.

This meeting will include approval of the minutes of the last meeting, an explanation and review of the 2016 budget, which was approved by Session on November 15 and the renewal of the call for Pastor Karel for the coming year.

In addition, the 2015 Annual Report will be presented for discussion. The reports will be available after service on January 31 and in the office the following week.

The meeting will take place immediately following the regular service and be followed by the traditional potluck.

This is an important meeting since we will have the opportunity to review and discuss the budget for the coming year.

THANKS TO THE AGNES' TABLE CREW!

Once again the congregation of FPC has shown their help and goodwill to the community, and again our Presbyterian Women donated the funds to make our most recent service at Agnes' Table possible.

Corine Boos, Barbara Walters, Pat Andress, Marlys Daniels, Bonnie and Doug Gullickson, Susan Boyer, Pastor Karel and Linda Hanhart, Barbara Meredith, Jean and Gene Peissig, Gwen Bauman, Lea Dirks gave time, effort and friendly smiles while preparing and serving meals on January 7 for Agnes' Table visitors.

Through this effort, we have followed the Lord's directive to feed the hungry! Thank you.

Holly Gintz, Coordinator

CARELINK NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

There is a great need for Carelink volunteers. Carelink is open from 10 until 1 each Thursday at FPC. Please see Pastor Karel if you're interested

UNITY UNITED METHODIST TO PRESENT THE LAST SUPPER

As in previous years, Trinity United Methodist Church will present a reenactment of the Last Supper on Maundy Thursday, March 24.

If you are interested in participating in this program, please contact Pastor Karel or the Methodist Church directly for more information.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY RETURNS

We will continue to join together as a family of God for fellowship and a meal after which you are invited to participate in a Bible study or join the choir for rehearsal as they prepare for worship.

The next Bible study begins on February 3rd and will continue through Easter. We will be reading, discussing and sharing our combined wisdom as we read through “Making Sense of the Bible, Rediscovering the Power of Scripture Today” by Adam Hamilton. There is a short video and then we will engage in the topic of the day.

There are two main sections. The first is about “The Nature of Scripture”. There are three lessons in this section: “The Old Testament”, “The New Testament” and “Questions About the Nature of Scripture”.

The second section is about “Making Sense of the Bible’s Challenging Passages”. There are also three lessons in this section: “The Bible and Science”, “Violence, Suffering and Other Troubling Issues” and “Wrestling with Issues of Sexuality and Relationships”.

Though this class is designed to be a six-week course, we have found that people much prefer to make a schedule as we go along that fits those who participate. You are welcome to join in for one or many Wednesday nights.

IT’S ALMOST THRIFT SALE TIME!!

Our annual thrift sale is scheduled for March 4 and 5.

Please bring your unwanted, unneeded, and unused treasures to the church on Tuesday evening, March 1, or when you come to help sort and arrange items Wednesday and/or Thursday; March 2 and 3.

The coffee will be on all day, and chances are very good there will be *something* for lunch to help get us through the day!

There will be a sign up sheet at the Welcome desk in the Narthex, so you can sign up for the time that suits your schedule best.

There will be more details in the March Bell.

SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS SAYS THANK YOU TO FPC

As part of our ongoing mission effort, FPC has made quilts and warm clothing for those less fortunate. For our efforts this winter, the Spirit of Christmas of Chippewa County has sent the following thank you:

“On behalf of the Spirit of Christmas of Chippewa County, we extend our sincere thanks for having a Gift Giving Tree or Gift Collection at your business or organization. In turn, we thank you for your assistance in helping us help others.

During the 2015 Christmas season, through your generosity and the generosity of others, we were able to serve 552 families and 1,391 children through Chippewa County. Direct assistance was provided to these families with donated gifts of new toys, games, bikes, quilts, blankets, clothing and gift packages.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please feel free to contact us at Spirit of Christmas, Box 831, Chippewa Falls, WI 54728. Your participation is truly appreciated and we hope that you will continue your support again next year.”

Mary Cranford and Jill Herriges, co-chairs

ASH WEDNESDAY FISH FRY AND SPECIAL SERVICE

The Annual Ash Wednesday fish fry sponsored by the Presbyterian Men will be served on February 10 from 5:00 to 6:00 with the last dinners being served at 5:45.

The menu this year will feature fried fish, baked beans, cole slaw, rolls, dessert and beverage. Tickets are \$8.50 for adults and children under three will eat free.

Reservation sheets and sign-up sheets to help set up, cook, serve and clean up are available in the Narthex.

Be sure to reserve your dinner early because this is always a very popular event that sells out early.

The traditional Ash Wednesday service featuring communion and the imposition of ashes will follow at 6:15 allowing a quiet time following dinner.

As in the past, this service will be held in conjunction with Trinity United Methodist Church. The sermon will be given by Methodist Pastor Terri Koca.

CELEBRATE THE TRANSFIGURATION OF JESUS

In the Presbyterian Church we speak often of the Baptism of the Lord and Pentecost but very little is said about the Transfiguration of the Lord, which this year falls on February 7.

The Transfiguration of Jesus is spoken of in the New Testament as the time when Jesus is transfigured and becomes radiant in glory upon the mountain.

The gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke say Jesus, Peter, James and John go to a mountain thought to be Mount Tabor to pray. Once on the mountain, Jesus begins to shine with bright rays of light. Then Moses and Elijah appear next to Him and He speaks with them. Jesus is then called "Son" by a voice in the sky, assumed to be God the Father. In Mark 9:7 the voice says, "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!"

The Transfiguration is one of the miracles of Jesus in the Gospels but it is unique in that the miracle happens to Jesus himself. The Transfiguration is one of the five major milestones in the life of Jesus as told in the Gospels. The others are His Baptism, Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension.

In Christian teachings, the Transfiguration is a pivotal moment, and the setting on the mountain is presented as the point where human nature meets God - the meeting place for the temporal and the eternal, with Jesus himself as the connecting point, acting as the bridge between heaven and earth.

The transfiguration acts as a further revelation of the identify of Jesus as the Son of God.

The Transfiguration not only supports the identity of Jesus as the Son of God but the statement "listen to him", identifies him as the messenger and mouthpiece of God. The significance of this identification is enhanced by the presence of Elijah and Moses, for it indicates to the apostles that Jesus is the primary voice of God and instead of Elijah or Moses, and He should be listened to, surpassing the laws of Moses by virtue of His filial relationship with God.

When Jesus and the three apostles go back down the mountain, Jesus tells them to not tell anyone "the things they had seen" until the "Son of Man" has risen from the dead. The apostles are described as questioning among themselves as to what Jesus meant by "risen from the dead".

The Transfiguration also echoes the teaching by Jesus that God is not "the God of the dead, but of the living". Although Moses had died and Elijah had been taken up to heaven centuries before, they now live in the presence of the Son of God, implying that the same return to life can apply to all who face death and have faith.



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FOOD PANTRY

In partnership with Feed My People

Submitted by: Cherie Andringa

Our Pantry helps the homeless. Because of our willing volunteers and donors the Pantry offers many of life's necessities. These needs are especially acute for the homeless. Our pantry not only provides food to the homeless but helps them find a place to stay and blankets, shoes, hats, mittens (many made by our congregation).

A homeless person displaced from a flood area down south came to us for food. We helped her find a place to stay, gave her warm blankets. She applied for a job posted on our poster board. She was hired and now has her own apartment here in Chippewa.

Thank you to everyone who gave to the Alternate Gift Giving in December. The total given was \$85.

Monthly Statistics -December 2015

First Presbyterian Church Food Pantry helped **1229 households** during the month of December. We helped 338 people with 5,160 pounds of groceries and other personal items. Of the 338, 166 were children and 15 were over the age of 60, 157 were aged 18-59.

A Volunteer Celebration will be held on Wednesday, February 3 at 12:00 with a lunch, and fellowship at FPC.

FPC Food Pantry Committee Meetings are held the 3rd Wednesday of the month. Our next meeting is Wednesday, February 17, 10:00 am.

Monthly Averages	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>
† Individuals served:	274	306
† Families served:	89	109
† Pounds distributed:	3560	5015
† Costs:	\$541	\$799

MISSION COALITION CONTINUES ITS WORK

The Chippewa Falls Mission Coalition is again collecting soap for their annual "Lather with Love" project. There will be a box in the Narthex through February to collect laundry, dish, bar soaps and shampoo to be distributed to the local food pantries. In addition community churches will be collecting money to be divided among the pantries.

Members of our congregation served a dinner of ham and scalloped potatoes to 50 people at Barnabas House in January. Gene Peissig, Holly Gintz, Marlys Daniels, Bonnie Gullickson and Anne Welke helped make this happen. Barnabas House has been taking in people for the night as a warming house during the winter.

Valley Vineyard Church is seeking help this summer with a free picnic in Irvine Park. This is intended to be an ecumenical gathering of churches in Chippewa.

A free clinic will be offered February at the Cook Chiropractic office, 2029 County Highway I, Chippewa. This clinic will offer free vision screening, eyeglasses, chiropractic and ear medical care, a meal and prayer. Information will be made available to people who visit the FPC Food Pantry.