

In the October Bell I wrote to you that the state of First Presbyterian was good. I detailed how we surpassed the goals we set for ourselves last year.

In this Bell article I would like to tell you about our leadership plans for 2017. The mission of our church and its leadership is to discern, celebrate, and participate in what God is doing through our church. We have continually kept this in mind. We ask ourselves what God is calling us to do and be in light of what we see God doing in our Church. Why are we here in this place anyway? How do we define success?

Our work together is not necessarily to develop new programs and activities for our church as much as it is about rediscovering and cultivating our church's core and life-giving practices.

In advance of our February Deacon and Session retreat a small group of leaders have identified areas we would like to look at, challenges we would like to address. As we did last year, we will look at the broad categories at the retreat and write two or three specific goals and detail how we plan to accomplish them. The areas we have chosen to look at are:

1. **Our church's faith practices and ministries** - *focuses attention on faith formation - how our members' faith is shaped and strengthened through their participation in the faith practices and ministries of our church (prayer, meditation, Bible study, worship, discipleship, fellowship, stewardship, evangelism, outreach, etc.).*
2. **Cohesive ministry teams** - *recognizes the importance of ministry teams in achieving the overall mission of any congregation.*
3. **Tangible resources serving Christ** - *looks at how our facilities and financial resources generated are enabling us to fulfill the ministry and mission that God calls the church to do.*
4. **Walking the Talk** - *recognizes that all areas of the church's life and ministry are to contribute to fruitfulness and faithfulness – the Good News being proclaimed in word and deed.*

Our seven session members and nine deacons will meet at the Cook-Rutledge Mansion the first or second Saturday of February and begin our work. Included in the meeting will be a faith practice consisting of a four- part Bible study and team building experiences as way of walking the talk.

I am giving you these details as one of our overall goals continues to be communication. Our congregation needs everyone's prayers, ideas, and support. Please keep our new leaders Allan Peterson, Erik Anderson, Gary Shorrel, Jeannette Miller, Lynda Butek, Rick Koepke, and Deacons Margi Kohl, Corine Boos, Kathi Manderlert, Bonnie Gullickson, Dick Kemp, Pat Andress, Barb Meredith Marlys Daniels and Anne Welke in your prayers especially in the coming weeks as we listen to God's call and discern our response.

In Christ,

Pastor Karel

CONGRATULATIONS!

We are happy to celebrate the following birthdays and anniversaries in January.

January 7	Alivia Radke
January 8	Peggy Fleming
January 10	Gwen Bauman and Erika Cooley
January 12	Mitchell Haglund and Sara Abendroth
January 13	Jodi Meyer
January 15	Richard Rosenow
January 18	Ruth Jean Crane
January 25	Jonathan Beighley
January 28	Deborah McDougall
January 30	Charlie Teske

FPC SERVES AT AGNES' TABLE

The Presbyterian Men's group donated the funding this Fall for the Agnes' Table meal at Trinity United Methodist.

Vance & Margi Kohl, Anne Welke, Marlys Daniels, Dianne Comerford, Jean & Gene Peissig, Bonnie & Doug Gullickson, Linda Hanhart, Corine Boos, Susan Boyer and Gwen Bauman prepared and served the visitors on November 29.

If you wish to participate in future Agnes' Table evenings, please contact Holly Gintz.

WANTED: USED INK CARTRIDGES

The Men's Group is still collecting and redeeming used ink cartridges. Only small ones; no big cylinders. There is a drop slot on the tower.

We have been able to collect between \$10 and \$60 each time we redeem the cylinders so this is certainly worth our time and effort.

2017 COMMUNION SERVERS ANNOUNCED

Since we have new officers and a new year, the communion schedule for 2017 has been put together and appears in his month's Bell.

All communion servers will receive their own copy of this list so they can schedule their attendance accordingly.

NEW HOSPITALITY LEADERS ANNOUNCED

The changing of officers in December means some of the Hospitality Leaders will also change. The Hospitality Leader List is as follows:

Team 1	Margi Kohl and Erik Anderson
Team 2	Anne Welke and Lynda Butek
Team 3	Gary Shorrel and Corine Boos
Team 4	Pat Andress and Jeannette Miller (no change)
Team 5	Dick Kemp and Kevin Litten
Team 6	Bonnie Gullickson and Barb Meredith (no change)
Team 7	Al Peterson and Kathi Mandelert
Team 8	Marlys Daniels and Rick Koepke (no change)

The teams themselves will remain unchanged. The February Bell will contain a new Hospitality Schedule you can place in your directory.

Effective immediately Hospitality Leaders will receive reminder phone calls instead of cards. This change will save us over \$50 a year. Every little bit helps.

Thank you, friends, at FPC:

Once again I find myself one handed and on yet another healing journey. Surgery went as expected and I'm on the mend. On the coldest day of the week your flower gift arrived spreading warmth only a bouquet of flowers can spread. Yesterday Miss Margi delivered candies and cookies from the Presbyterian Women's cookie day event and more beautiful flowers. The cookies and candies are delicious! The flowers a wintery mix tucked in a sleigh. Thank you for thinking of me, your cards, flowers and most of all your prayers. None the less I won't be playing piano or guitar any time soon!

While everything takes me three times longer, Todd has been a trooper cooking and perfecting his hair styling techniques (don't tell him I told you that!). He's looking forward to seeing the new Star Wars movie. During an earlier December snow storm, we gathered for a baby shower and celebrated our daughter and her husband's upcoming birth of their first born child, a baby boy. Yes! After five grandbaby girls -A BOY! We're so excited and can't wait to meet and hold him sometime in March!

With the lights hung (no small feat as the tree is a 50' maple), the porch decorated, the Christmas pillow dated, the Christmas tree lights glowing, presents wrapped, the candles lit, and baby Jesus tucked in a blanket of snow, we celebrated Christmas December 11th with all of our children gathered. We are so blessed!

Longing for long hot summer days, the fragrance of flower gardens and quick healing I wish you all such a Merry Christmas and I hope to see you all soon! *Cherie*

TURNING SWORDS INTO PLOWSHARES

Editor's Note: The following is an excerpt from Pastor Karel's sermon of September 4. It is particularly interesting in view of the widespread dissention so apparent in our country today. It shows us that in a time of even greater discord, Christians were able to come together to do God's will.

The moderator of the Presbyterian Gen. Assembly wears the moderator's cross, which is actually two identical crosses welded together.

Some of you may know that the Presbyterian Church was at one time split between the South and the North which happened because of the Civil War. Though the Civil War was long over, it took 122 years for the reunion of the church to occur. The two crosses welded together is a symbol of that reconciliation. There was even a confession written called the confession of 1969 which emphasizes the importance of reconciliation as a basic tenant of the Christian faith. I'd heard about that but I have not heard the story behind it.

Soon after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, fear of and discrimination against Japanese Americans swept across our country.

In Chicago, a Christian congregation made up of Japanese-Americans, who were leasing a chapel, had their lease revoked and they went to church after church trying to find a chapel to rent in which they could worship.

They spoke to the pastor of the Fourth Presbyterian Church, who took the request to the session. The elders shared all their concerns about the risks involved and when the pastor realized the request did not have the numbers to pass, he did not allow it to come to a vote. He raised the issue again at the next session meeting, but the passions against the idea still held the majority, so the pastor saw that the motion was tabled again.

At the third session meeting, a person who worked with the Christian education program came to the session saying, "I cannot continue to teach our children about Christ's commands here if the session of this church does not allow our sisters and brothers in Christ to worship here." The motion passed, barely. They knew the risk of violence and ridicule. They knew the risk of losing members. But they also knew the risk of having their faith become meaningless.

Throughout the war, the pastor and many from Fourth Presbyterian Church gathered outside the church early every Sunday morning to escort their Japanese brothers and sisters safely through the shouts and threats into the sanctuary of the chapel.

After the war, the Japanese gave the pastor a gift of money to express their deep appreciation for his standing with them in the time of trial. The pastor did not feel he could keep the money, so he purchased two identical crosses and presented them to the moderators of the separated Presbyterian denominations.

Those two crosses now become one and are a double story of reconciliation and discipleship. That's a form of carrying the cross, of counting the cost and saying, "yes!".

Pastor Karel

NEWS FROM THE OPEN DOOR CLINIC

The Open Door Clinic (ODC), a community supported non-profit organization in Chippewa Falls, WI reports good news from their annual patient survey. The results show an overwhelming majority of patients at the ODC say they have seen improvements in their health. Ed Ebert DO, volunteer physician and board member notes, "It is our mission and privilege to provide basic health care for the medically uninsured in our community."

Moreover, 75% of mental health patient respondents indicate that the clinic has helped them move toward self-sufficiency. All survey respondents who needed assistance with housing, food sources, insurance information, and/or employment agreed that the ODC helped them in these critical areas. Mary Meyers, RN, ODC Coordinator notes, "The survey responses show that the Clinic is fulfilling its mission and goals very well." She also acknowledges that the survey findings show that an alarmingly high percentage of patients surveyed would skip health care or go to the Emergency Room for care if the ODC wasn't available. Meyers concludes, "Our many volunteers should be justifiably proud of the work they do and their positive impact on community health and health care costs."

Over 140 volunteers, ranging from physicians to patient greeters contribute to the success of the clinic. In 2015 volunteers donated 4,311 hours of their time. Since opening its doors in 2006 over 3100 patients have received health care at ODC. Although the number of patients seeking care at ODC has declined since the enactment of the Affordable Care Act, the clinic remains a crucial link to care for those who continue to have challenging health problems and no insurance. Former patient Kathy Phillips notes, "People in the Chippewa Valley are extremely fortunate to have a place where they can go for help."

Ten percent of Chippewa County residents were uninsured in 2016 which equates to 5,300 people who are uninsured and at high risk for not receiving adequate health care. The ODC was established to address this health care gap in 2006 by a group of concerned health care providers and community members led by Dr. Tom Chisholm. The clinic's mission then and now is to provide basic health care services and a connection to community resources to low-income Chippewa County residents without a health care alternative.

We are happy to house the ODC on the basement level of our church. The clinic is open Tuesdays, 5:00-7:30 p.m. The ODC is a walk-in clinic serving those without insurance whose income is less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. Call 715-720-1443 for more information.

MISSION COALITION WORKS ON MANY PROJECTS

The December meeting of the Mission Coalition, which was held at Trinity United Methodist Church, featured guest speaker, Maddy Parker, who spoke on the Bread of Life Ministry. For the last two years Parker has gathered 25 people who make 120 loaves of bread of various types to be sold with the proceeds going to Feed My People. Who doesn't love homemade bread?

The "Lighten Your Load" family laundry mission is in need of money. It takes \$300 a month to continue this project which helps needy families do their laundry. If you can help with this project, please contact Anne Welke or Bonnie Gullickson.

Two tiny houses are now occupied at Landmark Church. Trinity Methodist has voted to host another house once church members, neighbors and the planning commission approve. Chi Hi and Bloomer High Schools have agreed to build tiny houses but they need trailers on which to build them. Mike Cahoon has put out the word that they are in need of two heavy duty trailers, 8 X 12 or 8 X 16, dual axle 350 lbs. or triple axel. Hay wagons are too tall. Unfortunately, we have no place to put a tiny house on a permanent basis but we can help build one or supply trailers on which to build one.

Collection boxes to hold 15 household items for those in need will be distributed on January 26 as part of the "Giving Families a Fresh Start in 2017" program sponsored by the Chippewa Council of Homelessness and Hunger. The council hopes to have 100 boxes once the program is completed. Area churches are gathering and packing the needed items. Our church hopes fill ten boxes at the cost of about \$30 each. If you wish to give, you can contribute money toward a box or select items from a list posted on the Mission bulletin board. The deadline for contributions toward these boxes is January 20. That will give our representatives time to purchase items and pack the boxes. For more information or to contribute, contact Bonnie or Anne.

The coalition will meet again on January 9 at our church at 5 PM. All are welcome.

POINSETTIAS DECORATED THE SANCTUARY

The following poinsettias were purchased during the holidays to decorate the sanctuary.

1. George and Sara Abendroth in memory of Forrest, Sr., Lorna and Forrest Jr. Froberg
2. Ray and Pat Andress in memory of Mark Elliot Andress
3. Elizabeth and Gordon Cripe in memory of Anita and Wilbert Voegeli and grandson Nathan Peterson
4. Alvina Drumm in appreciation of Beth Cripe
5. David and Patricia Gutknecht and family in loving memory of David J. Gutknecht and Emma B. Mika
6. Barbara Meredith in memory of Bob, and in honor of family
7. In memory of Sharon W.
8. Anne Welke in memory of, Alice & Wilder Crane and Wilder Crane, Jr. and Frank and Mabel Hamilton and in appreciation of my church family