

The Bell

July, 2017

MISSION AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

First Presbyterian Church is deeply involved in caring for the people of the community it finds itself in. We are in the city for good. I thought I would take a moment to let you know more specifically what happens in a typical week. There are many miscellaneous items and people that we care for during the week. However, we mainly have four missions that are part of First Presbyterian. They are the First Presbyterian Food Pantry/commodities program, CareLink, The Open-door Clinic, and the new Tiny House project.

The Food Pantry is completely our ministry. We serve on average 30 families each week. Families are able to come once a month to our food pantry. Many families come because of a life circumstance that has recently changed. Most are working and one thing or another has happened in their lives that puts them over the edge. They come for that extra piece of support to help them make it through the month. There are a myriad of reasons why this happens - and illness, a car accident, loss of job, changing jobs, loss of insurance, caring for additional members of their extended family and others. These situations are similar to what causes people to come to CareLink and the Open-Door Clinic.

About half of the people who come to the Food Pantry come for the first time. Each family receives food commensurate with the size of their family. They are also able to choose from clothing, fresh food, and a variety of miscellaneous items that are donated by church members and friends of the Food Pantry.

The workload of the food pantry is divided up into several categories - those who order food, those who receive and put away food as it arrives, those who pack food in bags before distribution and those who welcome our guests with coffee, treats and love. They distribute the food and keep statistics. We serve several homeless people a month, and have bags with food that is ready-to-eat.

Our food pantry has taken on a new government subsidized program. It provides a set amount of commodities monthly for those who are over 62 years and meet the financial guidelines. We serve 17 families in this manner each month. We also provide assistance for those who have been released from prison. Many are without any resources at all.

We are always heartened by the individuals who come and the effort that they put forth to overcome their obstacles. Recently a person who was addicted to opiates and had lost his job, his family and
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essences of life started coming to the food pantry and developed a relationship with those there. He has put his life back together and is moving forward once again. Stories such as these bring such joy to all those who are part of the food pantry.

CareLink is an ecumenical ministry supported by 13 other churches and many individuals. They provide transportation resources, referrals to other community resources, and spiritual care when asked. They also provide assistance for emergency situations such as transportation to the hospital, a bus ticket to get home, emergency assistance for energy when possible. Carelink services 40 individuals every week from our church and is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 to noon to coordinate with the Food Pantry.

A Chippewa County individual, who has a driver's license is able to receive a \$25 gas card once every six months and the fourth visit is a micro loan. Once the micro loan is paid back, they are eligible for another gas card. Michelle Flint is the coordinator and is available to answer any questions you may have. She is here every Tuesday and Thursday morning to help the volunteers set up.

The Open Door Clinic is open every Tuesday night from 5:00 'til 7:30. This mission is the most extensive and complicated mission that operates out of our church. It takes 150 volunteers and nine doctors who volunteer their time to keep the clinic going. In 2016 they had 670 patients; 135 were brand-new patients. In the ten years they have been open, they have served 16,776 patients. As with the other two programs, Jill Cooper, their new coordinator, told me, most people come because of loss of insurance, changing jobs, or loss of job, a catastrophe that happens in the family, or finding themselves with the large financial burden.

The Tiny House project has built several tiny houses which are located next to churches in Chippewa. They are designed to house homeless people on a temporary basis until permanent housing can be found for them. While we don't have the space to host our own tiny house, our church provides space for all the miscellaneous items needed for the homes, many of which have been donated by our members. In addition we have several people who are deeply involved in the program and volunteer to help the project.

In addition, our church serves regularly at Agnes' Table and participates in many of the projects of the Mission Coalition including the latest Soles 4 Souls drive, backpack program, Lighten Your Load laundry project and rice packing. Our church also makes quilts for the Spirit of Christmas and sews hats and mittens for the needy during cold weather.

All in all the mission of First Presbyterian Church and those who use our space provides an amazing service to the residents of Chippewa County. There are many opportunities to serve in each of these organizations. They all would welcome and need volunteers.

Gratefully yours,
Pastor Karel

PRESBYTERIANS LOVE TO EAT!

Any of you who have eaten food served from other church kitchens, probably look at our facility with pride. We have a nice, well-appointed kitchen with a full complement of dishes, cutlery, pots and pans and serving equipment. But it's not to time to rest on our laurels. We must be vigilant to be sure we keep the high standards we have set for ourselves.

Food handlers in our kitchen like those in a commercial restaurant must wash their hands before handling food and wear gloves when touching the food they serve. We have gloves and a hand washing sink in the kitchen but they don't do any good if we don't use them every time.

We have always prided ourselves on our kitchen, our cooks and the food they prepare. While we have never had an incident involving food contamination, we want to keep up our spotless record. If we were to have an incident of food poisoning attributed to our kitchen, the resulting publicity is not the kind we want to have associated with our kitchen or our church not to mention the discomfort we would inflict on one of our church family.

The next time you work in the kitchen or eat food prepared in it, remember how important it is that we maintain a clean, safe food environment.

CHIPPEWA CHURCHES JOIN IN PURE WATER DAYS SERVICE

Every year our church participates along with other Christian churches in Chippewa Falls 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. Participating will this year's service will be pastors from Trinity United Methodist Church, Zion Methodist Church, Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, Central Lutheran Church, Christ Episcopal Church and FPC. 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 a come-forward intinction communion service and the traditional collection. You can designate your offering to go to FPC but all loose money will go to CareLink.

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.

In addition to communion servers, we will need at least two ushers who will also take the collection and 50 to 75 bars to serve after the service.

If you are able to bring bars and/or help in other areas, please contact Pastor Karel or Lynda Butek.

See you in the Park!

OUR PETS NEED BLESSING TOO

We know that God loves our pets just as much as we do. He created them, after all. Our pets, who rely on us for their survival, become like our children sometimes. We might want to bring them to church but aren't sure if that would be appropriate. We just want them to have the same blessings that we receive.

Well, if you're afraid people will look at you funny if you walk in with Fido some Sunday, then perhaps they haven't heard of St. Francis of Assisi. Francis' devotion to God was expressed through his love for all of God's creation. St. Francis cared for the poor and sick; he preached sermons to animals, and praised all creatures as brothers and sisters under God. St. Francis of Assisi, patron saint of animals and ecology, was born in Italy around 1181 or 1182.

We've decided to find the middle ground in this situation. Of course your furry, scaly, or feathered friends deserve blessings, however, we don't want someone's Fido snacking on someone's long eared Thumper. Bambi would be devastated once again.

So, on September 10 we will be doing a VIRTUAL blessing of your critters! Send Tiffany photos of you and your animal child that we can show during worship. They will then be individually blessed.

No more guilt for leaving Sparky at home on Sunday mornings!

Please start sending your photos to fpc1admin@sbcglobal.net.

*All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful:
The Lord God made them all.*

BELL STAFF GROWS!

The Bell staff has just doubled from one to two with the welcome addition of Tiffany Wogahn, our new administrative assistant. It was Tiffany who wrote the above piece on the blessing of the animals and you will see other items by her in the future.

For the most part, Tiffany will be doing feature articles for the Bell since these usually take some research and aren't as time sensitive as news items.

If you have an interest you would like to see addressed in the Bell, talk to Tiffany or me about it and we will see what we can do.

Welcome, Tiffany, to our Bell staff.

Lynda Butek, Editor

CONGRATULATIONS!

July birthday and anniversary celebrants include:

July 5 Brooke Brovold
July 6 Todd and Ellen Teske
July 7 Mason Johnson
July 8 Evelyn Jenson
July 10 Verene Crane
July 12 Keion Twyman
July 14 Darin Flater
July 15 Edith Ament and Deb and Jim Bieging
July 17 Cherie Andringa, Patricia Popple
July 19 Alex Hager and Eleanor and Jeff Owen
July 20 Scott Johnson
July 21 Chris Norseng
July 24 Doug Gullickson
July 25 Rick Koepke
July 26 Bill McDougall and Linda and Larry Annett
July 27 Ashley Annett
July 28 Jan Giedd, Karel Hanhart and Roxie Wolfe
July 31 Chelsea Rosenow

Special congratulations go to Bonnie and Doug Gullickson on the birth of their first great-grandson on May 27. The little fellow weighed in at 7 lb. 4 oz.

NEW DIRECTORY IN THE WORKS

Church staff is working hard on the new directory which will be published mid-August. It will include names, addresses, email addresses and phone numbers of members and friends of FPC as well as information about Shepherds and their flocks, hospitality teams and their schedule, welcome desk and Deacons' schedules. Also included in the directory will be the church staff, elected officers including their terms of service, congregational teams and their members.

We want this directory to be as complete and correct as possible and for that we need your help. Please check the current directory and if you find an error or change in your personal information, please let Tiffany know so she can put the new data in the directory. In particular we want the email addresses of all members. Correct information will help the staff and the Shepherds who use the emails on a regular basis.

In addition, each team needs to have the information they want to appear in the directory to Tiffany by early August. This should include the names of team members, the team purpose and any events the team plans for the coming year.

GOD AND LAWN CARE

God to St. Francis: Francis, you know all about gardens and nature. What in the world is going on down there on the planet? What happened to the dandelions, violets, milkweed, and stuff I started long ago? I had a perfect, no maintenance, garden plan. Those plants grow in any type of soil, withstand drought, and multiply with abandon. The nectar from the long-lasting blossoms attracts butterflies, honey bees, and flocks of songbirds. I expected to see a vast garden of color by now, but all I see are these green rectangles.

St. Francis: It's the tribes that settled there, Lord. The suburbanites. They started calling your flowers "weeds" and went to great lengths to kill them and replace them with grass.

God: Grass? But it's so boring! It's not colorful. It doesn't attract butterflies, bees, or birds, only grubs and sod worms. It's sensitive to temperatures. Do these suburbanites really want all that grass growing there?

St. Francis: Apparently so, Lord. They go to great pains to grow it and keep it green. They begin each spring by fertilizing grass and poisoning any other plant that crops up on the lawn.

God: The spring rains and warm weather probably make grass grow really fast. That must make the suburbanites happy?

St. Francis: Not exactly, Lord. Most of them mow it, rake it up and put it in bags.

God: They bag it? Why? Is it a cash crop? Do they sell it?

St. Francis: No, Sir. Just the opposite. They pay to throw it away.

God: Now, let me get this straight, they fertilize grass so it will grow, and when it does grow, they cut it off and pay to throw it away?

St. Francis: Yes, Sir.

God: These suburbanites must be relieved in the summer when we cut back on the rain and turn up the heat. That surely slows the growth and saves them a lot of work.

St. Francis: You aren't going to believe this, Lord. When the grass stops growing so fast, they drag out the hose and pay more money to water it so they can continue to mow it and pay to get rid of it.

God: What nonsense. At least they kept some of the trees. That was a sheer stroke of genius, if I do say so myself. The trees grow leaves in the spring to provide beauty and shade in the summer. In the autumn, they fall to the ground and form a natural blanket to keep moisture in the soil and protect the trees and bushes. It's a natural cycle of life.

St. Francis: You better sit down to hear this, Lord. The suburbanites have drawn a new circle. As soon as the leaves fall, they rake them into great piles and pay to have them hauled away.

God: No! What do they do to protect the shrub and tree roots in the winter to keep the soil moist and loose?

St. Francis: After throwing away the leaves, they go out and buy something which they call mulch. They haul it home and spread it around in place of the leaves.

God: And where do they get this mulch?

St. Francis: They cut down trees and grind them up to make the mulch.

God: Enough! I don't want to think about this anymore. St. Catherine, you're in charge of the arts. What movie have you scheduled for us tonight?

St. Catherine: "Dumb and Dumber", Lord. It's a story about....

God: Never mind, I think I just heard the whole story from St. Francis.