

The Bell

October, 2017

WE ARE STEWARDS OF CREATION

During the Sundays of September, we have been talking about God's gift of creation and of our responsibility to care for it.

In the book of Genesis we are reminded that God created the world and pronounced it to be very good. The first Sunday we celebrated our connection with a virtual blessing of the animals. The second Sunday was Land Sunday. We have been given the land, which feeds us with its fruit and beauty and which connects us to God and to each other. Last Sunday was Wilderness Sunday when Pat Andress reminded us of the many wilderness areas in our community and not only the opportunity they give us to commune with nature but also the people who selflessly donated the lands and their connections to First Presbyterian. One such person, Joe Joas, who gave a piece of land to the Chippewa County Land Conservancy, also directed an annual amount be given to our endowment fund.

October we will shift our focus to the stewardship of Chippewa First Presbyterian and our mission. Our Food Pantry fund drive started on September 24 and will end on October 15, which is World Food Day. All of our donations up to \$5,000 will be matched by Feed my People food bank.

We will also begin our annual stewardship campaign. Our financial support of our church is a reflection of our love for God as well as an expression of our maturity as disciples and our real priorities in life.

1 Chronicles 29:9. Then the people rejoiced because these had given willingly, for with single mind they had offered freely to the LORD; King David also rejoiced greatly.

Matthew 6:21. Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

2 Corinthians 9:7. Everyone should give whatever they have decided in their heart. They shouldn't give with hesitation or because of pressure. God loves a cheerful giver.

In these three passages we find a recurring theme also found elsewhere in the Bible—giving is a heart decision. In 1 Chronicles, King David challenged the assembled people of Israel to support the building of the temple.

Giving is a matter of the heart. Can you love without giving? We are blessed with friends and family whom we dearly love. We express our love for them in many ways. We give ourselves by investing time in the lives of those we love. We share in their joy and special celebrations with gifts.

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This month we will give you an opportunity to express your love for God, a sign of your gratitude to God for all you have received. It is an important way through which you partner with God to fulfill a Divine mission. You honor God as your source and provider and this results in your spiritual growth and changes your heart.

Your giving pleases God, because we are created in God's image, and God is loving and giving.

In Christ,

Pastor Karel

PRESBYTERIANS STRESS WORLD PEACE AND GLOBAL WITNESS

While the earthly ministry of Jesus was in a specific age and place, the peace He shared is limited by neither time nor geography. As followers of Christ, our call to witness and work for peace begins in our own neighborhoods and extends to the ends of the earth.

The first Sunday of October we celebrate World Communion Sunday. We celebrate communion with our brothers and sisters in Christ around the world. This is also the Sunday on which we receive the Peacemaking offering.

More than 30 years ago, the Presbyterian Church identified peacemaking as the believers' calling, emphasizing the connection between peace and justice.

Twenty-five percent of the Offering stays in our local congregation and 25 percent is retained by our mid council. The ways congregations engage this work speak to the strengths of each congregation and the context where they see the need.

The offering strengthens the collaboration of the Peacemaking Program and the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations with the reconciliation work of global partners through World Mission.

International funds may go to places like South Sudan. Many (3.4 million) are struggling in the face of widespread violence and having to flee their homes for safety. About 270,000 live in refugee camps with little food and clean water. Anger builds toward rival ethnic groups and the violence continues. Money we donate goes to help ecumenical organizations trying to build up peaceful and democratic societies.

The Chippewa Valley has so many agencies who are trying to help those less fortunate. Last year we donated to the Family Support Center. While it's a wonderful agency that does a lot of good, we'd like to help another agency this year. Is there anything you feel passionate about? How about the Literacy Volunteers, or a Senior Companion Program? There are many that can use this 25% locally. Let the Mission Committee know if you have a group you're passionate about helping and maybe we can donate to them this year!

CHANGES ARE COMING

For the past few months, you have been receiving the Bell both through the mail and by email. Beginning in February, 2018 this will change.

The February Bell and all those after that issue will be sent out **ONLY** by email. Now, we know there are some in the congregation who don't have email. Those people will continue to receive the Bell by First Class mail rather than bulk mail.

Why are we making this drastic change? It's a simple case of money.

On an average, sending out the Bell by bulk mail costs us over \$800 a year. That's based on this year's costs which will probably go up in 2018. This includes monthly postage, paper and the cost of the annual permit which itself is \$265.00. Including the monthly mailing costs, that means postage is the single highest portion of our costs, topping \$700. So if we don't use Uncle Sam's Post Office, we save big bucks.

Even sending out a few Bells every month by First Class mail, we will save over \$600 each year. That may not seem like a lot but when we are faced with a deficit budget as we are, every savings we can make helps.

If you absolutely must have a hard copy of the Bell every month, you have some options. You can print out the Bell on your home printer. You can pick up a copy at the church. Every month extra copies are placed in the racks in the Narthex and in the back hall across from the Pastor's office.

This is a step we have been contemplating for some time and have resisted taking but the time has come.

I welcome your comments. You can email me at fpc1bell@att.net or see me after church on Sunday.

Lynda Butek, Editor

SCRIP CARD PROGRAM ALIVE AND WELL

We may no longer have the Gordy's scrip cards to sell but that doesn't mean that our scrip program is dead. Far from it.

We still have Kwik Trip scrip cards available. Kwik Trip offers a 5% rebate on gas and 10% on merchandise purchases **to the church** so if you shop at Kwik Trip, think about purchasing a scrip card from PFC which will help us and cost you nothing extra.

If you have a scrip card from Gordy's that you haven't redeemed yet, you can still do that but the cards are no longer available for sale.

MISSION COALITION DOES MORE THAN HELP WASH CLOTHES

Editor's Note: Tom Drehmel of Central Lutheran Church works with the Mission Coalition. He has shared this amazing story from the Lighten Your Load project with us.

One June 17 Tom received an email from Sander Engelsgerd letting him know that Arlan Berquist had a washing machine to give away and asking if he knew of anyone that could use one. Normally the answer would be "No." How many people come up to you and say, "I could use a washing machine"?

But, then Tom got to thinking about a young lady he had met at "Lighten Your Load" earlier that month. She was a young, divorced mother in her early 30s with seven children. She brought in several sacks of soaking wet laundry. When he asked what happened, she said her washing machine broke down and filled her laundry room with water, soaking all her dirty laundry in the process. She lived in Stanley and worked in Eau Claire or Chippewa cleaning motel rooms.

Tom listened to her for half an hour or more as she told of her struggles with seven children, her divorce, the abuse she endured, keeping food on their table and now a broken washing machine.

Tom said it was overwhelming listening to her story. It was one of those stories where you can't just say, "Go to church and it will all be better." However, she has faith in God through all of this, which is amazing in itself with all she has been through. He did his best to give her encouragement, but where do you start?

Then Tom got this email about the washing machine. He thought, "Maybe it starts with a washing machine to replace the one that broke along with a prayer for God to give her strength through all the turmoil in her life."

Tom was able to get the woman's contact information from the laundromat, which he passed along to Sander and Arlan. They contacted her and she was still in need of a washing machine.

On June 19 the washing machine was delivered to this young lady. She was surprised, happy and thankful.

While all her problems aren't solved by one washing machine, maybe this will be the start of good things for her. We can only hope so.

PW SET ANNUAL BAZAAR

The Annual Bazaar will be held on November 8, from 4 to 7 PM.

Volunteers are needed to help in various areas, such as set up, kitchen help and serving and cleanup.

There will be a bake table, so baked goods will be welcome. The candy shop will welcome your homemade sweet treats. Craft items will be gratefully accepted, and there will also be a book corner. All donations of your talents will be welcome. Apple crisp will be the dessert, so if you are able to bring some, let Bonnie Gullickson know.

KEEPING OUR FOOD PANTRY STRONG

Fighting hunger in our community remains a top local mission of our church. Again this year we are holding our annual fundraiser in conjunction with Feed My People where Feed My People will donate a pound of food for every dollar we raise up to \$5,000. This year's challenge period is from Sunday, September 24 to Sunday, October 15.

The pantry's annual budget is about \$12,000, nearly all of which is spent on purchasing food from Feed My People. The 2000 plus hours it takes to run the pantry each year is supplied by volunteers, supplemented by 2-3 hours a week from the church's administrative assistant.

Our pantry distributes over 60,000 pounds of food each year to hundreds of local families. Each guest receives a prepackaged bag of staples: canned goods, pasta, cereal, milk vouchers, etc. People can also select from fresh fruits and vegetables donated from Feed My People and local gardeners.

Although the pantry is being utilized more than ever, the number of parishioners supporting this local mission has declined. Therefore, we ask that you not only consider your own contribution, but that you think of friends and other family members outside First Presbyterian Church who might consider making a donation. Funding this local mission remains a vital service our church provides to our less fortunate neighbors.

Thanks for helping make our church "In The City For Good."

Larry Annett-Food Pantry Volunteer
Tiffany Wogahn-Food Pantry Assistant

SESSION APPROVES 2018 COMMUNION SCHEDULE

The communion schedule for next year has been okayed by Session. The dates in 2018 are as follow:

January 7	First Sunday, Epiphany and Baptism of the Lord
February 4	First Sunday
February 14	Ash Wednesday (come forward)
March 4	First Sunday
April 1	First Sunday and Easter (come forward)
May 6	First Sunday
May 20	Pentecost (come forward)
June 3	First Sunday
July 1	First Sunday
August 5	First Sunday
September 2	First Sunday (come forward)
October 7	First Sunday and World Communion
November 4	First Sunday and All Saints Day
December 2	First Sunday, Advent 1 and Tis the Season
December 24	Christmas Eve (come forward)

PRESBYTERIANS ALL

Our new treasurer, Traci Anderson, is no stranger to us or to FPC.

Traci was born in Omaha, Nebraska but grew up in Chippewa and at FPC. She moved with her family when she was a year old and has been in Chippewa Falls ever since.

Traci was baptized at the First Presbyterian Church of Omaha but confirmed and married at FPC. Her two sons, Ky and Rees, were baptized here and grew up in our midst. Traci's husband, Erik, is active in FPC work, serving on Session and participating in many activities of the Presbyterian Men including the annual Ash Wednesday fish fry.

After attending Chippewa Falls schools, Traci moved to Missouri for two years of study at Cottey College for Women in Newcom where she carried a double major in French and psychology both of which served her well in later life. She completed her college education at UWEC and received a degree in education.

Traci taught French and business courses at McDonnell High School through 1998 and accompanied her students on 13 trips to France where they had a chance to try out their prowess in French as well as learn first-hand about the French culture.

Following her teaching career, Traci worked with the Red Cross as coordinator of training and recruitment of volunteers for emergency services. This work encompassed Red Cross chapters in 17 Wisconsin counties.

She also worked with a branch of the Department of Homeland Security preparing hospitals for personnel response in the case of natural or man-made disasters. She served as the coordinator for hospitals in northwest Wisconsin working in this important area.

In 2005 Traci moved to IDEX in Eau Claire where she served as a trainer and mentor of trainers throughout the United States and Canada. Among other things, IDEX is known for its expertise in fire and safety products including the Jaws of Life® family of rescue and recovery tools. Their projects range from life-saving rescue operations, dispensing fresh juice to children to fueling aircraft.

Traci finally retired in 2015 to spend more time with her family and pursue her many hobbies. She loves to fish and can often be found at the family's cabin in Cable, WI. She also knits and grows orchids as well as sings tenor in our choir and the Valley Gospel Choir where she serves on the board of directors.

We thank Traci and dedicated volunteers like her without whom we couldn't function as well as we do as a church.