

Good News Newsletter

First Presbyterian Church of Decatur

March 2015

Pastor's Pen:

It occurs to me that I often mention the weather in these newsletter articles. It also occurs to me that I do so for at least a couple of different reasons. One is that the weather is so tied to our moods and how we view the world on a certain day. On a warm, sunny day, the world is more welcoming and brighter, and we may feel much more up to taking on the tasks of the day. On a cold, cloudy day, the world is bleak and unfriendly, and we may feel much more like staying inside, buffered from the harsh environment blowing right outside our door.

Another reason for the weather musings is that weather seasons are closely tied to church seasons. Advent leads to Christmas, which recalls winter and fresh fallen snow. Our current church season, Lent, in Old English, literally means “spring”, and the Old German is a derivation from a word describing the lengthening of days.

So, as I write this, I find myself again thinking about the weather. Perhaps it is because today happens to be a sunny day and I awoke to a room filled with warm sunlight. Perhaps it is an admission of my own longing for spring, a longing I’m sure we all share. The days are lengthening, and we will soon turn our clocks forward. The days don’t seem to be getting warmer, but as the seasons turn, warm temperatures will return as well.

Lent as “spring” sheds a different light on the holy season. As I said at the Ash ‘Thursday’ service and in the sermon on a past Sunday, Lent truly is a season of joy. There is a special note of introspection, penitence, and preparation through prayer as we liturgically and spiritually approach Jerusalem and Christ’s passion that can feel burdensome and dark. Lent as “spring” and as joy is a spiritual and liturgical reminder that resurrection is coming. As sure as winter gives way to spring, so to does Lent give way to Easter; ashes to an empty tomb.

The challenge, dear friends, is not to rush through Lent to get to Easter. The challenge is to take Lent as a spiritual journey, giving up the easy to spot good news of that Easter Sunday, and taking on the difficult task of revealing the good news in the rejection, ridicule, and trials of the one who comes to free us from all things, including death itself.

Blessings on your Lenten journey,

Rev. Will

March Calendar

1st	10 a.m. Worship	9 a.m. Sunday School
2nd	5:45 p.m. Bible Study	
	7 p.m. Session Meets	
8th	10 a.m. Worship	9 a.m. Sunday School
9th	5:45 p.m. Bible Study	
10th	7 p.m. Presbyterian Women Meet	
15th	10 a.m. Worship	9 a.m. Sunday School
16th	5:45 p.m. Bible Study	
22nd	10 a.m. Worship	9 a.m. Sunday School
29th	PALM SUNDAY	
	10 a.m. Worship	9 a.m. Sunday School
	3 p.m. 5th Sunday of Praise at First Reformed Church	

Worship Volunteers

	Mar 1	Mar 8	Mar 15	Mar 22	Mar 29
GREETERS/	Klimzack Family	Keith & Loretta Eileen Thomas	Tom & Barb Connie McIntyre	Dave & Ruth Roxanne	Joe & Tina Maxine
USHERS					
LITURGIST	Jack Hovenkamp	Karen Makay	Mark Johnson	Chuck Cabbage	Brown Grosvenor
Acolyte	Davis	Aaron West	Leah	Alex West	Jackson
NURSERY	Jon & Lori	Missy & Kennedy	Matt & Lisa	Shannon & Laurie	Brenda & Theresa

Deacon of the Month - Elaine Hovenkamp

March Birthdays and Anniversaries

3rd	Robert Krueger	20th	Missy Klimczak
	Amy Leighton	23rd	Bob Johnson
6th	Brenda Visuri	26th	Opal Krum
16th	Chuck Cabbage	30th	Erika Southworth
	Amy Druskovich	31st	Lauren Leighton
19th	Gale Congdon		

Presbyterian Women Reconvene

Our first get-together of 2015 is March 10, at 7 p.m. Our guest speaker from Benton Harbor will tell us about the vital work they do feeding the hungry in their city. The Soup Kitchen, Inc. (the Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen) began operations on March 8, 1980 serving three meals a week. The Soup Kitchen, an independent non-profit corporation, now serves a large, healthy noon-time meal every day of the year. 54,473 meals were served last year. Please come and join us. Hostesses are Jan Roeder, Judy Kish, and Linda Newell.

Youth Collection for DHS

Sunday February 1st the children of First Presbyterian Church had planned a Souper Bowl of Caring soup luncheon after the service. Unfortunately, because of the bad weather, the Sunday service was cancelled. So the next Sunday the church youth collected generous donations after the service. A donation of \$260 will be given to the local food pantry of Decatur Human Services.

Thanks to all who gave to the children's mission "To Feed the Hungry".

Bell Choir

March brings Saturday morning 9 a.m. rehearsals of our children's bell choir. It will be under the direction of Amy Druskovich assisted by Charlene Krikke. This is a big commitment by the children (and parents) participating, and will be such a wonderful addition to some of our worship services.

Mark your Calendars

Maudy Thursday service, sponsored by the Decatur Ministerial Association will be held Thursday, April 2 at our church. Service will be at 7:00 pm. Communion will be celebrated.

Good Friday Service will be held Friday, April 3 at First Presbyterian Church in Paw Paw. Time is to be determined. We will arrange a meet up time in our parking lot to carpool.

On **Easter Sunday**, we will have our early morning breakfast! Please come and join in food and fellowship before service. Contact Dave Vliek if you are able to help cook or clean.

What is One Great Hour of Sharing?

Immediately following World War II, Protestant church in the United States made appeals for the relief and reconstruction of devastated areas, primarily in Europe and Asia. In 1949 the leaders of several denominations formed a committee to organize an appeal to support their churches' separate campaigns.

A radio program call "One Great Hour" was broadcast on March 26, 1949, over major networks and many independent stations. The broadcast closed with a request that listeners attend church the following morning and make a sacrificial contribution. No exact measure of receipts was possible, but it was estimated that more that 75,000 churches participated.

The next year, the offering was repeated, for the first time using the name "One Great Hour of Sharing". As denominations changed and merged, One Great Hour of Sharing has varied from 8 to 29 participating communions. While each denomination allocates its gifts differently, all use their funds for ministries of disaster relief, refugee assistance, and development aid. Today, projects supported by One Great Hour of Sharing are under way in more than 100 countries, including the United States and Canada. In recent years Presbyterians have given about \$7.5 million annually. There are envelopes in your box for this offering or please use a pew envelope.

Our 775 Pipe Church Organ

The organ was originally a very small Kimball organ, manufactured in Chicago. Although the organ was probably dated somewhere between 1915 to 1925, it was not built for the church but was installed later, around 1945-1950. The console of the organ probably wore out so was rebuilt by Reisner Organ Supply out of MD. The re-installation of the organ was not good. It was found a lot of tape, coat hangers and string held things together. In 1986 the Lauck Pipe Organ Company was contacted and it was decided to build a new organ for the church. The following items from the old organ were incorporated: the console, seven ranks of the pipes, the expression shutters, and the blower. Many new items were built in at the cost of \$22,000. In 1998, and in 2005 more upgrades were made. In 2007 an appraisal was made of the organ. It reads" **On this day of July, 2007, the pipe organ instrument located at the First Presbyterian church in Decatur, Michigan. The Instrument has been appraised for its current replacement cost. The appraised value at this time is \$214,000.00"** . We don't know where the organ was making is music the years before we installed it, but we are so lucky to have this, and people have had the foresight in our church to see that it is maintained so well.

Highlights of February Session Minutes

Report of Clerk

- The Presentation of the 2014 Annual Statistical Report.
 - Membership Age Distribution Analysis.
 - =<25 4.3% of congregation
 - 26-45 11.3% of congregation
 - 46-55 10.4% of congregation
 - 56-65 29.6% of congregation
 - >65 44.4% of congregation
 - The 2014 average attendance was 73.46 communicants.
- Mark Johnson reported that the 2014 Annual Statistical Report has been submitted to the Presbytery of Lake Michigan prior to the stated deadline of February 6th.

Pastor's Report

- The church has been recognized by Michigan Interfaith-Power and Light for our environmental sustainability.
- Rev. Christians has been named Moderator of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry in the Presbytery of Lake Michigan.

Worship and Music Committee

- Two very capable candidates have been interviewed to fill the Director of Music position. Neither candidate meets all the requirements of the Director of Music. However, they will be considered to fill the organist position, and, perhaps, grow into the Choir Director role.
 - Linda Triemstra & Scott Rumley
 - A decision will be made prior to the March 2nd Session Meeting.

Endowment Committee

- Chuck Cabbage reported that the current balance of the endowment fund is \$25,622.00. When a subsequent account is liquidated and deposited into the endowment fund, the balance is estimated to be \$37,600.00
- Steve Kiser will be available to give a short presentation to the congregation on the final Sunday in April.

Old Business

- George Barfield is requesting the Men's Group and possibly the Mission Committee to volunteer some time to the Decatur Head Start.
- George will be invited to the next Session meeting so that he may provide more information regarding this request.

New Business

- The congregation will be informed of weather related service cancellations by the following methods:
 - Mass Text, Television announcement, Facebook posts, email.
 - The Clerk of Session and Pastor will determine if a cancellation is warranted. The decision will be made by 8 a.m. of the Sunday in question.
- The next Session Meeting will occur on March 2nd, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.
- A motion was moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was supported and approved. The meeting was adjourned with prayer at 8:35 p.m.

Report Submitted by

Mark Johnson

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Clerk of Session