

THE CHURCH'S LIFE
News of the First Presbyterian Church
Oregon, Wisconsin

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MARCH 2009

PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Lent

Lent is a time to take the time
to let the power of our faith story take hold of us,
a time to let the events
get up and walk around in us,
a time to intensify
our living unto Christ,
a time to hover over
the thoughts of our hearts,
a time to place our feet in the streets of Jerusalem
or to walk along the sea and listen to his word,
a time to touch his robe
and feel the healing surge through us,
a time to ponder and a time to wonder ...
Lent is a time to allow a fresh new taste of God!

By Ann Weems, [Kneeling in Jerusalem](#), Westminster/John Knox Press

Lent begins on February 25. The Ash Wednesday Supper Service is from 6:00 – 7:00 PM in the Church's dining room. Supper is provided and all are invited! On March 1, the first Sunday in Lent, we will break bread together in the Sacrament of Holy Communion. The season of Lent will then build until we reach Holy Week (April 5-12) when we will remember Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem, his final days of public ministry, his death on the cross, and the fullness of joy which is found on Easter morning.

During the season of Lent we are reminded again that the way of the cross is the way to Easter, that death is the gateway to new life. I encourage each of us this Lenten season to reflect on those things in our own lives, or the life of the world, that we need to allow to die or that we need to let go of in order that God's glorious new life might come ... for us and for all. Let us prepare ourselves to experience that "fresh new taste of God" of which Ann Weems so poetically speaks.

Lenten blessings,

Clara D. Thompson
Pastor

YOUTH SUNDAY IS COMING

... March 8!

Who? YOU!

What? Youth Sunday

Where? First Presbyterian Church

When? 10:30 AM on Sunday, March 8

Why? Because we have an awesome God and awesome youth!!

Theme: "What is Love?"

Come and support our youth as they lead us in the worship of God

MONTREAT FUNDRAISER...

SUNDAY, MARCH 8

On March 8, in addition to being lead in worship by the youth, you will also have an opportunity to have the Montreat bound youth serve you lunch. Yes, come one, come all; it will be Y.U.M.M....I.E. (Youth Undertaking a Marvelous Montreat Meal ... Italian Emphasis).

Come and enjoy some "Northern" comfort food, topped off with fellowship.

Lasagna
Caesar Salad
Breadsticks
Éclair Dessert
Coffee, milk, lemonade

Donations will be used to help with expenses for the trip to Montreat this summer.

WHAT IS MONTREAT?

A number of our newer folks have said to me recently, "I keep hearing about 'Montreat' ... what *is* it?" Located just 20 minutes east of Asheville, NC, the Montreat Conference Center is one of three national conference centers affiliated with the Presbyterian Church USA, and is annually visited by over 35,000 people seeking physical and spiritual renewal in the beautiful mountains of western North Carolina. Montreat offers a wide variety of conferences throughout the year, and in the summer holds six different week-long Presbyterian Youth Conferences each based on the same theme. For a number of years now, our high school youth have, as a group, attended one of the Youth Conferences.

A Montreat Youth Conference is a special event – a gathering of young people from all over the country for a week of study, worship and recreation. Large group sessions together include singing, recreation, and keynote. In small groups, we will interact and explore this year's conference theme, "World on Fire." A variety of popular activities follows the worship service each evening.

There is a reason why our youth work so hard in order to be able to go to Montreat. At Montreat they experience their Christian faith in a new and different way, many have said they feel closer to God at Montreat, and their faith is both strengthened and deepened. For many, at Montreat they go to the mountain, never to return quite the same. This year's Montreat group would like to thank the congregation for all of its support as they prepare to embark on this wonderful adventure in faith.

WHY ARE THERE SO MANY FUNDRAISERS FOR MONTREAT?

Going to the Presbyterian Youth Conference at Montreat is not inexpensive. This year 18 youth and 3 chaperones will be going to Montreat from August 1-8, one of our largest groups ever. Each family is paying \$375 per youth (in addition to supplying all of the food and supplies for each of the fund raisers). This covers about half of the total cost of the trip. The annual church budget provides an additional \$1500 for leadership expenses. The rest is raised through a variety of fund raisers. Because of the generosity of the congregation in the past, we only have about \$3,000 more to raise by the middle of the summer. Thank you in advance for all of your continued support of our youth as they seek to raise the needed dollars to go and be a part of this wonderful faith-filled week!

MISSING SOMETHING?

There are several bowls, pans and a large platter in a box that need to go home. Please check the kitchen and see if any of these items belong to you.

NEW MEMBER CLASS OFFERED!

Have you been visiting First Presbyterian Church for awhile and would you now like to learn more about the life and ministry of the congregation? If so, you are invited to participate in a New Member Class, which will be offered this spring on Saturday, March 21, from 9:00 AM – 12:00 noon. The class, taught by Pastor Clara Thompson, will help you understand the uniqueness of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), what makes First Presbyterian Church of Oregon unique within the denomination, and how God may be calling you to get further involved in the ministry of Christ.

If you are interested in participating in this class, please contact Pastor Clara Thompson at 835-3082 or email her at clarafpc@verizon.net so that refreshments and materials may be available for you. If you are interested in learning more about membership within First Presbyterian Church but are unavailable on March 21, please let Clara know that as well.

VACATION CHURCH SCHOOL

This summer's Vacation Church School is going to be so exciting!!! The date is **Wednesday, June 24**. The time is 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM. The place is: **Our new property!!** All children who are 3 years old and out of diapers by June 1st, through this year's 5th graders, are welcome to be a part of the excitement as we discover "God's Backyard and Bugs" together. Mark your calendars and invite your neighbors and friends! Look for more information and a Registration Form in next month's Newsletter.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

If you can help with the preparations for the Spring Recognition Dinner on Friday, March 27 (11:30 AM – 1:30 PM), please sign up on Clara's office door. Volunteers are needed to help provide transportation, help set up on Thursday evening at 7:00 PM, waiter/waitress the tables beginning at 11:00 AM on Friday, and to help with dishwashing and clean-up. Thank you!

LOOKING AHEAD TO HOLY WEEK

For those who like to plan ahead, the following special services of worship will be held during Holy Week:

April 5 Palm Sunday 10:30 AM Worship

April 9 Maundy Thursday

7:00 PM Worship at People's United Methodist Church. Sacrament of Holy Communion will be celebrated

April 10 Good Friday

7:00 PM Worship at First Presbyterian Church, featuring a combined Presbyterian and Methodist Choir

April 12 Easter Sunday

8:00 AM Family-oriented Worship

9:00 AM Easter Breakfast

10:30 AM Worship

HOSPITALIZED

Annette Hayter and Chuck Teeter have both been in the hospital recently. Please continue to keep them in your prayers.

SYMPATHY

The prayers and sympathy of the congregation are offered to those who have suffered loss in recent weeks:

Joe and Barbara Ringhand Rueth, on the death of her Uncle Dan

Gary and Sue Osmond and family, on the death of Sue's aunt

BAPTISM

Kalub Joseph Michael Georgeson, son of Amy Lynn Seals and Damien Robert Georgeson, was baptized during morning worship on Sunday, February 8. What a joy to welcome a new child of God! Heartiest congratulations to Kalub and his family, including Grandpa Doug Seals, and Grandmas Jean O'Brien and Mary Seals.

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS

The Adult Class continues to provide variety and thought-provoking conversation on Sunday mornings from 9:15 – 10:00 AM. Join us in the lounge, adjacent to the sanctuary, and stretch your mind!

March 1 The Shack, led by Wendy McNall

March 8 & 15 “Personal strength and overcoming adversity,” led by Bob Ray

March 22 “Why are you a Christian?” led by Clara Thompson

March 29 “The ‘facts’ of the Passion,” led by Steve Johnson

April 5 “Q-urious?” led by Joy Bernholdt

April 12 Easter Sunday – no classes

April 19 “What Do Engineers Dream About?” led by Paul Thompson

April 26 & May 3
“Why go to church?”, led by Clara Thompson

May 10 “Travels of Paul,” led by Steve Johnson

ADULT CLASS

... read ahead!

The Adult Sunday School Class is encouraged to take a look at the New York Times best seller The Shack, by William P. Young, in preparation for class on March 1st. Wendy McNall will lead the discussion. Then, on March 8 and 15, Bob Ray will lead the conversation around the book A Hope in the Unseen, An American Odyssey from the Inner City to the Ivy League, by Ron Suskind. This book follows the two year journey of a prickly, religious honor student as he escapes from a blighted, Washington, D.C. terrain to find a home at Brown University. About personal strength and overcoming adversity, the book has been a favorite on U.S. campuses and in book clubs.

Don't have time to look at either of the books? NOT TO WORRY! You've already graduated!! Just come and enjoy the conversation. The Adult Class meets on Sunday mornings from 9:15 – 10:00 AM.

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

with a twist!

Sixty years ago, in response to the devastation of World War II, a Saturday evening nationwide broadcast asked Americans to give generously the next morning in their churches. A remarkable variety of national leaders and celebrities gave their efforts to the broadcast; more than 75,000 churches responded; and One Great Hour of Sharing was born!

In 2009, amidst a global economic crisis, we are invited again to be a part of this long effort to help provide for the needs of the world. This year our Session has decided to split our traditional Lenten Offering in the following way:

50% will go to the One Great Hour of Sharing offering. These monies will help support the Presbyterian Hunger Program, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, and the Self Development of People program of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

25% will help purchase science and environmental education supplies for a school in Costa Rica (Dolly and Grace Ledin are our “on the scene” local contacts)

25% will help purchase books for a local library in Guatemala (Phil Hanson is our “on the scene” local contact)

Please prepare to give generously to these worthwhile causes as we participate in the ecumenical One Great Hour of Sharing and also support two special international projects under the leadership of our own church members! The “**One Great Hour of Sharing with a twist**” offering will be received on April 5th, Palm Sunday. Special offering envelopes will be available in the April Newsletter.

FROM THE ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Highlights of the January 25th

Annual Meeting! For those of us who were present at the meeting, below are some good reminders of both the highlights of 2008 and the dreams/visions for 2009. For those who were unable to attend, you'll perhaps be interested in some of the creative ideas that were developed.

First, highlights from 2008:

- * Involvement of the youth in the youth service.
- * Progress made by the Building Committee.
- * Blue Christmas Service.
- * Walk through Holy Week.
- * Service at the Netherwood property in June.
- * Christmas Cantata with the children.
- * Vacation Bible School.
- * Coffee bar by removal of the pews making the church more welcoming.
- * Youth going to Montreat.
- * Rehearsal for the cantata.
- * Involvement with IHN.
- * Senior dinner.
- * Grief support group.
- * Children's time in worship.
- * Church Basement Ladies outing.
- * Choir and music.
- * "Knitting Club"
- * Children singing in worship.
- * Youth as liturgists.

And then, Dreams and Visions for 2009 and beyond:

- * Mission trip in addition to Montreat in 2010.
- * Increase in mission outreach.
- * Help people with snow removal, etc.
- * New flip chart--Chris Weigt and Jo Gregory will help.
- * Ways for people in the back pews and choir to see worship activities in the new building.
- * Church picnic outside.
- * Handbells.
- * Cooperative baby-sitting occasionally as a money maker.
- * New choir members, including youth.
- * Break ground for the new church.

All of these ideas will now be taken

to the Session for their discussion and possible action.

UPDATE FROM THE BUILDING COMMITTEE

The following update was given by Steve Jenson, Chair of the Building Committee, at the Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 25th:

As many of you know, First Presbyterian Church owns approximately 9 acres of land on West Netherwood Road that we purchased with the intent of building our new church on. During the early planning and design phase of this project it was determined that annexation of the property into the Village of Oregon was in our long term best interests. The flooding within the Village in 2007 and subsequent property damage brought about a moratorium on all annexation and development. This effectively put our project on hold until the Village had time to put a new storm water management plan together. On Monday, January 19, the Village Council gave us permission to submit a request for annexation. The process will take months & then we need to go through an additional procedure with Dane County, but we are moving forward.

Please continue to keep our efforts in planning for the church's future in your prayers.

FINANCIAL UPDATE – January 31, 2009

GENERAL FUND

Amount pledged year to date:	\$11,196.75
Pledges received year to date:	\$7,932.00
Per Capita bill:	\$6,215.75
Received to date:	\$1,762.85

BUILDING APPEAL

Amount committed:	\$809,252.00
Pledges received to date:	\$586,508.60

Can you help by meeting your financial commitment?

DIRECTORY CORRECTION

John and Tana Palmer
835-5034

EASTER LILY ORDERS

Look for the Easter Lily forms in the church bulletins during March. Please fill out the forms for the number of plants and the names of the loved ones to be remembered. Place the forms in an envelope along with a check made out to First Presbyterian Church. There will be a box in the entry way where the forms and check can be dropped. Thank you for helping to make our Easter celebration a beautiful one!!

BUD VASES NEEDED!

The Deacons are in need of bud vases for their Spring project. If you have any that you can donate, please leave them on the counter in the mailroom. Thank you!

EXTRA SPECIAL PRESCHOOL/KINDERGARTEN NEWS

We just love rolling up our sleeves and getting in the paint!!! The story of Jonah was so much fun to learn about and one Sunday we made paintings of the story. We used just our fingertips to paint the story as we heard it. Then the next week we got to paint our hands and put "our mark" on a very special item that a lucky church member will be able to purchase. We just can't figure out why our teacher gets "nervous" when we all have painted hands?!?!

Playtime is a favorite of ours and we talked about Jesus growing up and how he probably like playing with his friends too. We also decided he had to listen to his parents, just like us, and probably even had to do chores around his house!

Now for the really important stuff. There have been several new haircuts, 1 lost tooth that went under the pillow and money was received, currently there are several wiggly teeth and new green socks. In case you want to visit our class (and you are always welcome!) you can take your shoes/boots off but you must leave your socks on. That's the rule! Until next time....

IT'S A GIRL!

Nick and Jenny Johnson welcomed Avery Lynn Johnson on January 29, 2009. Avery was born at 3:46 PM; weighed 7 pounds, 11 ounces; and stretched 20 inches long. Congratulations to the entire Johnson family, including Grandpa Mike, Grandma Lori, and Uncles Chris, Pat, and Jake!

MARCH HAPPENINGS for 5th – 8th GRADERS!

The 5-8th graders are in for a real treat in their Sunday School classes during March. Check it out!

March 1st - All Sunday School activity

March 8th - Jeff Jones will talk about his job as a tiger trainer for the Cincinnati Zoo.

March 15th - Wendy Goist Jones will talk about her experiences as an EMT (Emergency Medical Tech). Learn to save a life as we learn how to use our church's AED (automated external defibrillator).

March 22nd - Mike and Christy Archer will talk about their experiences in the Air Force and the different and exciting places they have lived.

March 29th - Craig and Lisa Evers will talk about their professions. Craig works in advertising and sells commercials for Channel 57. Lisa coordinates training for the phone company TDS.

The 5th – 8th Grade Class meets every Sunday morning from 9:15 – 10:15 AM in Classroom #2. Come and hang out with fun youth and learn about some of the very interesting jobs some of our adult church members have!

NEW CHURCH DIRECTORY

The 2009 Church Directory is now available! Copies (standard size and large print) are on the table in the church foyer. Feel free to pick up as many as your household needs. If you would prefer that we mail one to your home, please contact the church office at 835-3082 and we'd be pleased to do so. IF YOU FIND AN ERROR in the Church Directory, *please* call the church office promptly so that we can make any necessary corrections. And if you move, change your phone number or e-mail address, please remember to keep the church office informed. Thank you!

FLOWERS IN THE SANCTUARY

Would you like to remember a loved one, recognize a birthday or anniversary, say thank-you, or simply spread some sunshine in the sanctuary on Sunday morning? Why not say it with flowers? Be creative and think outside the box...or, vase! You will find a sign-up sheet on the table in the church narthex. You can choose the date you will be bringing in your arrangements, plants, etc., and bring them to church before worship service on Sunday morning.

NEW FLOWER COORDINATORS

Special thanks to Connie Jenson and Connie Mitchell for stepping in as our new Flower Coordinators at church. They will be helping to provide floral arrangements for worship on Sunday mornings ... sometimes from their own beautiful gardens, sometimes from other sources.

Sincere thanks also to Karen Baker who has served as our Flower Coordinator for a number of years, and whose arrangements were always thoughtful, creative, and lovely. How blessed we are as a church family to be surrounded by such talented and artistic people!

MISSION PROJECT IN GUATEMALA

In the February Newsletter, we introduced you to a new Mission Project in Costa Rica. The following letter was received from Phillip Hanson, a member of FPC currently in Guatemala. Mission Committee has approved providing

\$200 from our Local Mission Fund for this project and additional funding from February Coffee Bar proceeds and one-quarter of the One Great Hour of Sharing offering.

Dear Church Family,

As most of you know, I am currently volunteering in Esquipulas, Guatemala. I arrived on Sept. 19th and will be staying until June 2009. My path to becoming a volunteer was not quick, but rather developed over many years with its roots in First Presbyterian Church. Growing up in FPC I was taught what it meant to be charitable, humble, honorable, honest, fair, and grateful. When the scary time came in college to decide what I wanted to do after graduation, I was reminded of those qualities and decided that I wanted to do something meaningful, beneficial, and helpful. It was then that I decided that volunteering would allow me to do all of those things, as well as put my faith into action.

I am volunteering through a program called the Benedictine Volunteer Corps (BVC). The BVC was started about 7 years ago at my alma mater, St. John's University. The program sends pairs of recent SJU graduates to different locations all over the world. Currently, there are volunteers in Chile, Tanzania, Israel, Rome, and Guatemala. In each location, the volunteers live as guests at a host monastery and have the freedom to create their own volunteer opportunities. Many of the volunteers begin by working at the host monastery and as their confidence and understanding of the local culture and needs of the region develop, so does their volunteer work.

I am part of the second group of volunteers to be sent to Esquipulas. At the beginning, I worked in the monastic gardens and citrus orchard. After about a month I taught English courses to High School Students during their "summer" break. Currently, my co-volunteer and I are trying to raise funds to purchase books for a local library.

The library we are trying to stock is not a normal library. The library is part of

the City of Joy, a mixed gender orphanage on the outskirts of Esquipulas. The project was started just one year ago on donated land and already has three completed homes, a Chapel, and a library (with two more houses and a trade school under construction). Additionally, and maybe more extraordinarily, the library is made out of trash. Last year's volunteers became connected with the orphanage and decided to build the library walls using plastic bottles stuffed with trash. They paid community members for the trash filled bottles, which not only provided them additional income but also helped with the ever present trash problem. They then used these bottles as the insulation in the walls of the library.

Because international shipping fees are expensive, we are asking for monetary donations, rather than actual books, so that we can purchase the books down here. We will be buying a wide assortment of books from children's books, to novels, to educational materials. Books cost between \$2-10 depending on the type. Our goal is to get as many books as possible. If additional money is raised, we would like to purchase a computer to put in the library (\$350). Any donation is greatly appreciated and will help provide kids with the opportunity to read and learn.

Paz,
Phil Hanson