



The First Word

April, 2016

First United Methodist Church, Racine

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CHOSEN TO BEAR FRUITS THAT LAST:

The Old and New Testaments contain lots of references to the word “Fruits”. In the Old Testament, we read that the Jews observed the Feast of “**Firstfruits**” during harvest in obedience to God’s command. The priest thoroughly examined these “Firstfruits” for acceptable standards and qualities (Lev. 23: 9-10). The “Firstfruits” required was not limited to produce of the soil, but included a tenth/tithes of one’s income too. (**Deut. 26:1-19**). These offerings of first crop /produce, time, energy and service signified the grateful acknowledgements and deep gratitude of God’s endless providence for the people.

In the New Testament, Jesus Christ constantly reminded his disciples and would be followers that fruit bearing is key to his ministry and mission. Here’re some of Jesus’ sayings: “***This is my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves that you are my disciples.***” (**John 15: 8**); reason, “***You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit- fruit that will last.***” (**John 15:16**). Remember, the prophet Jeremiah refers to the Jewish nation as God’s “Firstfruits” amongst many nations and tribes on planet earth. (Jer. 2:3). The Apostle Paul refers to the first converts in the New Testament Church as the “Fruitfruits” of the church. (**Rom. 16: 5**).

In reference to the resurrection of the dead, Paul says: “***But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the “Firstfruits” of those who have fallen asleep.***” (**1 Cor.15:20**). The Risen Christ being “firstfruits” of those who have died brings to mind a couple of things:

1. It reiterates Jesus’ call upon his disciples and mandate that they bear fruit that last;
2. It further assures the believers that any investment in God’s ministry and mission lasts beyond the limits of time. I believe everything human is transient unless it is rooted in and dedicated to God’s purpose. (Matt. 6:19). Invest wisely and safely!

The talks about giving God the “Firstfruits” or being the “Firstfruits” of God’s redemptive work and acts of mercy are reminders to put God in the front seat of our lives, first place in our hearts, our love, our giving, our joys, our challenges, and even death. Putting God First above all and in all is the First mark of true Christian living and the best offering anyone can dedicate to God throughout the Lent and Easter Seasons. Remember, we are chosen to bear fruits that make a lasting difference in the lives of people in the name of the Risen Christ to the glory of God. As we transition from Lent and Holy Week into a joy-filled Easter, let’s not forget to keep an eye on the fruits of our faith and on how they impact lives around us daily.

Happy and a blessed Spring,
Rev. Jakes

THEMES FOR APRIL

Easter 2nd Sunday - 04/03/2016

Psalm 150: 1ff.

Acts 5:27-32

Revelation 1: 1-8

John 20: 19-29

Theme: The Post resurrection power and mandate

Easter 3rd Sunday - 04/10/2016

(Native American Ministries & Camp Sunday)

Psalm 30: 1ff.

Acts 9: 1-6, (7-20)

Revelation 5:11-14

John 21: 1-14

Theme: Welcome to Jesus' seashore banquet

Easter 4th Sunday- 04/17/2016

Psalm 23: 1ff.

Acts 9: 10-22

Revelation 7: 9-17

John 10: 22-30

Theme: Opponent turned Proponent

Easter 5th Sunday- 04/24/2016

(World Malaria Sunday)

Psalm 148: 1ff.

Acts 9: 36-43

Revelation 21:1-6

John 13: 31-35

Theme: Instruments of God's healing power

WE WELCOME AMANDA SCHNAARE

It is indeed a blessing and honor to introduce Ms. Amanda Schnaare as the new Coordinator for our Families Education and Nurture Ministry here at First Church. Amanda is a child of this congregation and has been teaching the Sunday School. You'll find her and her three daughters here each Sunday morning! Please join me and the rest of the congregation in welcoming her to this vital position. May God bless her and us as we work together to serve the Lord!

Native American Ministries Sunday is April 10, 2016

One tribe in North America has told this story for centuries: when people "pale as birch" crossed the great water in large canoes, they brought with them "The Black Book." However, the bringers of the physical Book could not have known what it would mean and look like to be Native and a follower of Jesus. Today Native Americans—with many unique languages, many unique cultures—honor their heritage, and live as Jesus-followers, led by a rotation of primarily Native American pastors.

Supporting the Ministry of Christ Among Native People

Most Americans today recognize that the history following the arrival of the large canoes bore little resemblance to the one all Christians identify as Creator. That's why the people of The United Methodist Church, Native and non-Native, are creating a new history. Through Native American Ministries Sunday, we're able to equip and empower Native American pastors, congregations and seminary students to do what only they can do: authentically worship and serve Jesus. As a member of The United Methodist Church, your gift, on this day, equips Native congregations—like New York's Onondaga Nation UMC and Nebraska's Native American Sacred Winds congregation—to worship and serve as only they can. This work, and hundreds of other ministries, are possible because you give.

Our Giving Allows Native Americans to Encounter, Worship and Serve Jesus

When you support Native American Ministries Sunday, you equip seminary students who will honor and celebrate Native American culture in their ministries. And you empower congregations that are finding fresh new ways to minister to their communities with the love of Christ.

Dr. Richard Twiss, a member of the Sicangu Lakota Oyate from the Rosebud Sioux Reservation in South Dakota, asked: "Will we be allowed to develop new ways of doing church that honor God's purposes for the creative expression of our cultures? Will new ministry partnerships and coalitions form? Will you help be a part of this wonderful process of reconciliation, restoration and release?"

Say yes – contribute on Native American Awareness Sunday, April 10

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Each Sunday

| | |
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| Morning Worship & Sunday School | 10:00 am |
| Fellowship Time | 11:15 am |
| Casa de Dios Worship Service | 5:00 pm |

Each Monday

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| OFFICES CLOSED | |
| Keith Griffin Choir Rehearsal | 6:00 pm |
| Casa de Dios Bible Study | 6:30 pm |

Each Wednesday

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| Kiwanis Club Luncheon | Noon |
| Praise team Rehearsal | 5:30 pm |
| Chancel Choir Rehearsal | 6:00 pm |

Each Thursday

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| Faith to Life Bible Study, Reep Room | 3:00 pm |
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Each Saturday

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| Sack Lunch Program | Noon |
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Monday, April 4

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| Crafting Conversations | 6:00 pm |
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Wednesday, April 6

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| Youth Group meeting at Faith | 6:00 pm |
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Sunday, April 10

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| Camp Sunday Presentation during worship | |
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Wednesday, April 13

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| First Alive Pot Luck & Program | 5:00 pm |
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Saturday, April 16

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| Controlling Community Violence | 9:00 am |
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Monday, April 18

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| Hot Meal at St. Luke's Episcopal | 4:30 pm |
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Tuesday, April 19

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| Church Council (Formerly Ad. Bd) | 7:00 pm |
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Wednesday, April 20

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| Youth Group Meeting at First Church | 6:00 pm |
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Thursday & Friday, April 21 & 22

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| Set up for Rummage Sale | 9:00 am |
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Saturday, April 23

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| Rummage & Bake Sale | 9:00 am – 3:00 pm |
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Saturday, April 30

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| Corie Michael Bridal Shower | 1:00 pm |
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YOUTH GROUP NEWS

We will meet at Faith UMC on April 6 at 6:00 pm. Our next meeting will be at First Church on April 20 at 6:00 pm when we will be baking for the Bake Sale and helping the ladies bring out the rummage.

Tickets will be on sale for Lasagna dinner May 6th at the Masonic Center. Donations for raffle baskets or completed raffle themed baskets needed.

Christian Disciple Farm dates are August 1-5th. More details to come.

HOT MEAL PROGRAM

First Church is responsible for the Hot Meal at St. Luke's Episcopal Church on Monday, April 18. If you can provide a casserole, please sign on the sheets located on the sanctuary tables. Please deliver your casserole to St. Luke's by 4:30 pm on April 18th and thank you for your help with this important outreach ministry.

FFRANC BREAKFAST APRIL 3

Dear members and friends,

You are invited to be a part of our FFRANC (Fellowship of Families, Relatives, Acquaintances, Neighbors, and Co-workers) breakfast on Sunday, April 3 at 9:00 am. We hope you enjoyed your Easter and are looking forward to the renewal of Spring and the planting season.

FFRANC Sunday offers opportunities for all members of our congregation, their families and their invitees to gather on the first Sunday of each month for a time of fellowship and to celebrate the blessings of special days in their lives over delicious breakfast. Those special days may include birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, newly wedded, first job, etc. We note that you have a special event happening in your life in April

April's FFRANC event will be sponsored by the people who were recognized as having special occasions in March. Thereafter, on the first Sunday of each subsequent month, people whose special days were celebrated in the preceding month, along with the entire congregation, will provide the breakfast for those celebrating in the current month. The FFRANC Breakfast has been a resounding success. Let's keep it going!

Again, we would like to encourage everyone to invite someone and be present at each celebration, even if you aren't able to bring a dish! We prayerfully look forward to a joyful celebration with you at each FFRANC Sunday, all in the name of Jesus Christ, the one in whom our joy is made complete!

Sincerely,

The Team on Hospitality

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY IN APRIL!!

- 1 - Jeanne Cape
- 2 - Gwenn Pfeiffer
Kelly Castro
- 3 - Fiona Craig
Lyle Meekma
- 4 - Jeanne Whiteside
- 5 - Samantha Fernholz
- 9 - Evelyn Schnaare
- 10 - Betty Oakley
- 14 - Casey Boehm
- 16 - Andy Madsen
- 17 - Zachary Cook
- 21 - John Christensen
- 23 - Amy Magnuson
- 28 - Courtney Johnson
- 29 - Irv Christensen

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY IN APRIL!!

- 6 - Bob & Rachel Trobaugh

ALTAR FLOWERS IN APRIL

- 3 -
- 10 -
- 17 -
- 24 - Dick & Marge Hannon

IN MEMORIAM

Ruby Tomasek - 3-19-16

FOOD BANK DONATIONS

The "Food Bank Item" for April will be jams and jellies. Bring your donation any time. Here is another fun donation to the food pantry: Donate birthday kits to local food pantries. Put a paper tablecloth, matching napkins and plates, candles, a box of cake mix, and canned frosting inside a disposable baking pan, which goes into an extra-large Ziploc bag. Choose a specific theme or just make it all-inclusive. Each kit is less than \$10. Give a needy person or child a happy birthday!

LOOSE CHANGE OFFERING FOR APRIL

will help send members to one of the Wisconsin United Methodist Camps. Simply place your loose change, or more, in the small brown envelopes found in the pew racks or on the sanctuary tables and place it in the offering plate. Be sure to be in church on April 10 to hear all about the many camping opportunities our Conference provides.

FIRST ALIVE WEDNESDAY

The second Wednesday of the month is First Alive Wednesday. This time it falls on Wednesday, April 13. We feature a potluck dinner starting at 5pm. The event, hosted by the Hospitality Team, is open to everyone. This is a time of fellowship, fun, and good conversation. Hope to see you there and don't forget to bring your favorite dish to share!

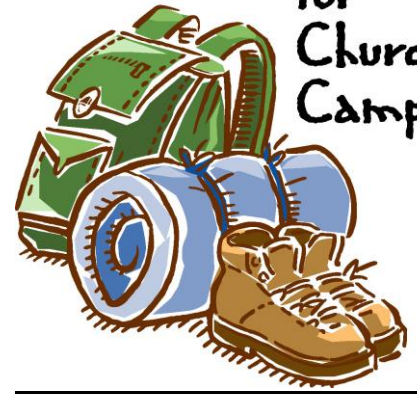
WE NEED YOUR RUMMAGE NOW!!

The United Methodist Women will sponsor a rummage sale on Saturday, April 23rd from 9:00 am - 3:00 pm in the Social Room. We need your help in providing items to sell. Please bring your clean, resalable items to church any time. No clothing, please.

Chairpersons Jean Harmon (886-5755) and Lenore Creuziger (633-4637) will also appreciate your offer to help with the **set up on Thursday and Friday at 9:00 am**, at the sale on Saturday and clean up. Contact one of them today!

Also, the youth group will be selling bakery at the sale so bring your donations of baked goods on Friday or Saturday morning. Thanks.

Sign up
for
Church
Camp



CAMP SUNDAY - APRIL 10

You'll want to be in worship on April 10th to hear about all the wonderful camping experiences offered by our Conference. Ask any of our previous campers and they'll tell you that camp has made a huge impact on their lives - especially the young and the youth - as they gain insight on their spiritual growth and understanding of this beautiful world God has given to all.

Carol Feest will again be directing Grandparent/child camp at Lake Lucerne June 26th - 29th and several of our members are planning to attend.

We are very blessed that First Church has in the past been able to provide funds (75% of the registration) for our members to attend one of these camps. We pray this practice will continue - and you can help by making your donation to the Loose Change Offering during April. If you want to know more, check out the Conference camps at www.WIUMCamps.org or pick up one of the camping brochures on the sanctuary tables.

SPRING HAS SPRUNG AT FIRST CHURCH

With the spring-like weather comes much activity at First Church. The roofers have been busy replacing our 50 plus year old roof – a project lasting a few more weeks – and your contribution to the Roof Replacement Fund is greatly needed. If you have not already done so, please consider returning your roofing pledge card as soon as possible.



ADDITIONAL SIGNS OF SPRING

The tulips that were planted as part of the celebration of our 100-year old building are sprouting up through the ground as the weather warms the earth. Check them out!!



OUR EXPERT GARDENER, SUE MILLS, HAS KEPT THESE BEAUTIES BLOOMING FOR OVER SEVEN YEARS!!



Take time this Spring to observe and enjoy the wonderful world God has given us and be sure to take care of these wonderful gifts.

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*FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
745 Main Street
Racine, WI 53403-1211*

The Mission of First United Methodist Church

- To provide a place for people to experience God and find inspiration for daily living.**
- To welcome all people as valued members of the community.**
- To encourage growth in faith and service on their spiritual journeys.**
- To work for social justice.**
- And to invite all to experience eternal life through Jesus Christ.**