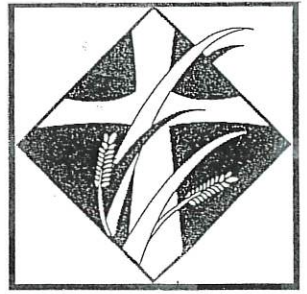




June, 2026

The Prairie Press



Volume 18, No. 10

Richard Schutte Is Our New Bookkeeper, Office Assistant

by Pam Hatfield,
Personnel Chair

I would like to introduce Richard Schutte, who is our newest member of the RPPC staff.

Richard began as our Bookkeeper and Office Assistant on April 27, and will be working 20 hours per week.

Richard has years of experience in the financial realm, including being Chief Financial Officer for a privately-held manufacturer in Kenosha and a large not-for-profit agency in Milwaukee.

He began his career in a public accounting firm. He holds a degree in Accounting from UW-Eau Claire and is a Certified Public Accountant and a member of the Wisconsin Institute of CPAs.

On Richard's application cover letter, he stated, "Although I may be over-qualified, this part-time opportunity is exactly what I'm looking for at this stage of my ca-

reer."

As a golf enthusiastic, Richard also wrote that he is "on the back 9" of his career and is looking forward to working part-time at RPPC.

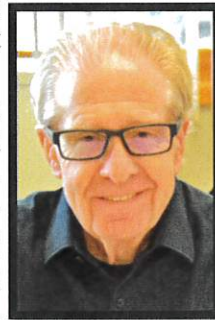
Richard and his wife Karen moved from Milwaukee to Janesville in 2020 to be closer to their daughter, son-in-law, and granddaughter.

Richard grew up in a small town and, after living in Milwaukee for a long time, has found that a home in the country has been perfect for them at this stage of their lives.

He says he now actually has time to work on house projects, which he says he enjoys.

Richard says he is looking for-

(Continued on page 3)



Richard Schutte

Presentation On Scams, Frauds Scheduled

"Common Scams and Frauds" will be the topic of a presentation at 11 am (following Worship) on Sunday, June 14, in the Fellowship Hall.

Jeff Kersten is an Outreach Specialist for the Bureau of Consumer Protection within the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection.

Jeff will discuss the details of common scams, the warning signs of a scam, and what to do if you or someone you know falls victim to a scam or a fraud.

He will offer helpful factsheets from his bureau.

As Wisconsin's lead agency for consumer protection, their focus is on providing information and education, mediation for complaints, investigation of cases, and enforcement of statutes designed to

(Continued on page 3)



The members of The Prairie Pals created a bulletin board to all honor mothers, with pictorial tributes to many of their own moms.

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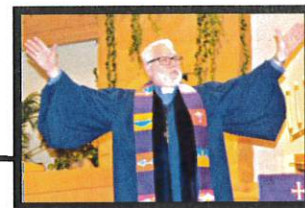
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Introducing A World-Wide Mission

by Rev. Bruce

Rev. Kimmy Briggs, of the Outreach Foundation will be our morning Worship leader on Sunday, June 28.

For 45 years, the Outreach Foundation has engaged in a beautiful, simple, and profoundly transformative mission. They connect Christians in the United States with church partners around the world.

The Outreach Foundation fuels the global mission of Christ by growing trusted relationships. That mission comes to life in remarkable ways. Through their partners, new leaders are being trained in seminaries from Egypt to Cuba to Pakistan.

New churches are being planted and built in Mexico, Kenya, and Syria. Ministries of compassion are providing food, water, medicine, and hope to refugees from Ukraine, Iran, Syria, and South Sudan.

Vulnerable children are finding safe places to live and thrive in Lebanon, Zimbabwe, and beyond.

Rev. Briggs, Associate Director for Mission at the Outreach Foun-

dation, lives in Madison, WI, will preach while Krista and I are on a vacation to Colorado.

Ordained in 2014, Kimmy served congregations in Georgia and Montana for 11 years before joining the staff. She earned her Bachelor of Arts from Whitworth University and her Master of Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary.

She first traveled to Egypt with The Outreach Foundation in 2015, planting a love for the global church that would grow over the years. She joined the board of Trustees in 2022 and continues to develop relationships with church leaders around the world.

She will share the wonder of what God is doing in places we've never visited. She will bring a global Christian perspective of faith and courage.

The heart of their work is not statistics or projects. Rather, it is the people. It is the long-term friendships formed across cultures and continents. It is the shared joy of discovering that God is at work in every corner of the world.

With Session approval on May 19, we will be taking a free-will offering during Worship to support the mission of The Outreach Foundation. If you will not be in Worship on June 28 and would like to make a donation beforehand, simply make out a check to RPPC with "Outreach Foundation" in the memo line.

Grace and Peace,
Rev. Bruce

Pastor's Schedule

Rev. Bruce will observe the Sabbath on June 3, 12, and 19.
Vacation June 22-28.

Preaching Schedule

June 7, 2nd Sunday After Pentecost

Genesis 12:1-9; Psalm 33:1-12; Romans 4:13-25; *Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26; Hosea 5:15-6:6; Psalm 50:7-15.

"Faith That Reaches Out"

June 14, Third Sunday After Pentecost

Genesis 18:1-15, (21:1-7); Psalm 116:1, 10-17; Romans 5:1-8; Exodus 19:2-8a; *Matthew 9:35-10:15 (9-23); Psalm 100.

"The Mission Begins"

June 21, Fourth Sunday After Pentecost

Genesis 21:8-21; Psalm 86:1-10, 16-17; Romans 6:1b-11; Jeremiah 20:7-13; *Matthew 10:24-33, (34-39); Psalm 69:8-11, (12-17), 18-20.

"Faith For A Fearful World"

June 21, Fourth Sunday After Pentecost

Genesis 21:8-21, (21:1-7); Psalm 86:1-10, 16-17; Jeremiah 20:7-13; *Matthew 10:24-33 (34-39); Psalm 69: 8-11, (12-17), 18-20.

"Faith For A Fearful World"

June 28, Fifth Sunday After Pentecost, Rev. Kimmy Briggs

Acts 2:1-21; or Numbers 11:24-30; *1 Corinthians 12:3b-13; or Acts 2:1-21; John 20:19-23; or **John 7:37-39; Psalm 104:25-35, 37.

"Yes, Even To Samaria (Oh, And to the Ends of the Earth)"

(Continued on page 5)

How To Contact Us

The Prairie Press is a publication of the congregation of the Rock Prairie Presbyterian Church.

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rockprairiechurch.org

Letters To The Editor

Dear Editor:

Thank you very much for your generous donation! It was so very thoughtful of you!

Blessings,
Twin Oaks Shelter
Residents and Staff

Dear Editor:

Thank you so much for letting our club use your tables for our plant sale.

We raised over \$2,400 for local charities.

With Gratitude,
Janesville Home &
Garden Club

Richard Schutte . . . (Continued from page 1)

ward to getting back into playing golf. He also enjoys reading.

He is a member of the board of the Janesville Farmers Market—he was recently elected to the office of treasurer of that organization.

When asked to describe himself, Richard said, “I’ve always thought of others before myself. I like to look to others and ask how I can help. I’m looking to live and enjoy each day.”

Please welcome Richard when you see him in the office!

Letter Policy

The PRAIRIE PRESS welcomes letters from our members and friends.

We will print them all, as space permits.

Send or email or drop off your letter to the Church office,

attn: **The PRAIRIE PRESS**

Dear Editor:

On behalf of our clients, the ECHO staff and the Board join me to thank you for your recent donation of \$500.

Your support has meant that people in need in our community have received help with the most basic of human needs: food, housing, transportation, and other general well-being services.

ECHO doesn’t just provide goods and financial services. We also provide case management, mentoring, and various educational opportunities (right on site).

We do this in cooperation with other non-profits, financial institutes, and other agencies, as well as with our own staff.

We have many excellent partnerships in the community that serve people with immediate needs and help them obtain skills for long-term independence.

Sincerely,
Jessica Locher,
Executive Director

(The following is not a letter I actually received, but it could have been.—Ed’ note)

Dear Editor:

I have a tenant, Bethany, who has

been renting from me for eight years.

Single mom. Nurse.
Two kids. Model tenant.

She called me last night. “I have breast cancer. I start chemo next week. I’m going to work as much as I can, but I don’t know if I can keep up with the full rent.”

I didn’t hesitate.

“You’re not paying rent during treatment. Focus on beating this thing.”

“I can’t let you do that!”

“Bethany, you’ve paid me on time for eight years. You’ve never asked for anything. I’m not going to make you worry about rent while you’re fighting cancer.”

She went through six months of chemo. Didn’t pay rent. I didn’t ask for it.

And she beat it.

Went back to work. Caught up on her rent over the next year.

She told me, “You’ll never know what it meant to me not to have to stress while I was sick. I could focus on my kids and my health. You gave me that gift.”

She has been cancer-free for two years now. Still my tenant. Still paying on time.

Scams, Frauds . . . (Continued from page 1)

protect consumers and fight fraudulent and deceptive practices that harm both consumers and honest businesses.

Come to Worship at 9:30 (note change to Summer Worship schedule), and bring along a sack lunch or snack to enjoy prior to the start of the presentation.

The program will last approximately 45 minutes.

The requested item for the Food Pantry Cart for June is boxed mac and cheese.

Let’s fill up the cart and help our less fortunate and struggling neighbors as we show God’s love by sharing our own blessings.



June 2026

July 2026

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

June 2026

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
May 31	Jun 1	2 6:30pm Christian Ed Committee Meeting	3	4 NO Choir - summer break	5 11:00am Funeral For Betty Kuranz	6
7 9:30am Worship - summer schedule	8 3:00pm NO Finance Committee Meeting	9 3:00pm Building & Grounds Meeting 6:30pm Worship Committee Meeting	10 6:30pm NO Outreach & Communication Committee Meeting	11 NO Choir - summer break	12 10:30am Prairie Pals	13
14 9:30am Worship - summer schedule 11:00am Scam & Fraud Presentation	15	16 6:30pm Session Meets	17 10:30am Fireside Concert	18 NO Choir - summer break	19	20
21 Donuts for Dads! 9:30am Worship - Communion - summer schedule	22	23	24	25	26	27
28 Rev. Kimmy Briggs "The Outreach Foundation" 9:30am Worship - summer schedule	29	30	Jul 1	2	3	4

Rev. Bruce . . . (Continued from page 2)

Thank You for Giving To The Lord

As we move into June, the gardens grow, the grass is mowed, and God's glory flows.

We give thanks for those who . .

- Invited guests to the Sky Carp game;
- Assisted with changing the chancel decorations;
- Provided canned vegetables and other food items for the food pantries;
- Cleaned the gutters and down spouts;
- Picked up the marker poles from the driveway;
- Fold bulletins each week;

- Welcomed Richard Schutte, our new bookkeeper;
- Greeted guests in Worship;
- Taught Christian Education classes for youth and adults;
- Assisted with the memorial service for Earl Marquis.

We give thanks for God's gift of faith that continues to grow. We know God's love glows through these acts of service in Christ's Holy Name.

Synod School 2026

The Synod of Lakes and Prairies hosts a week-long educational event at Buena Vista University in Storm Lake, Iowa, each summer.

This year's theme, "Love In Between," will be the focus at the July 26-31 event.

If you'd like more information on the 89 class offerings, the catalogue is available in the church office or online at

<https://www.lakesandprairies.org/synodschooll>

Summer Worship

Remember that during June, July, and August, our Worship is at 9:30 am each Sunday.

Lost and Found

There are several coats hanging in the closets at church. If you are missing one, maybe check next week. At the end of the summer, we will donate the coats to someone in need.



During Worship on May 10, Sunday School Teacher Katie Blija presented a Bible to second grader Reed Fosmoen. The Bible had been wrapped in several layers of paper representing the many aspects of The Bible, which Katie explained to Reed as he unwrapped his gift. (Lane Barlass was unable to be in church that day, but he received his Bible, too.)

We Can All Be Coaches

My son is the kid who never gets the ball. He's slow, he's awkward, and he often spends the game staring at the clouds.

In the final game of the season, the score was tied and, for some reason, the ball landed right at his feet. He panicked and kicked it--straight into our own goal.

The silence was deafening. I saw my son's lip tremble. But before the other kids could say a word, Coach Dave was on the field. He didn't look up at the scoreboard. He picked my son up and put him on his shoulders..

"Did you see that power?" he shouted to the team. "If we can get him to aim that at the other goal next year, we will be unstoppable!"

He turned a moment of shame into a legend.

Winning is a temporary feeling but believing in a kid is a permanent gift.



by Bo Plank

New Opportunity To Make A Lasting Impact

The Rock Prairie Church Legacy Fund has received a generous contribution to begin the establishment of a restricted category gift dedicated to supporting our mission work in the community.

This is an exciting step forward in strengthening how we live out our commitment to serving others.

You may be wondering what a "Restricted Gift" is. In simple terms, it's a donation set aside for a specific, ongoing purpose.

Under our Endowment Policy, restricted gifts must meet a minimum threshold of \$25,000. These gifts can come from one individual, a family, or a group of donors who share a passion for a particular ministry.

Once that threshold is reached, dividend and interest earnings can be distributed annually to support the designated mission work—while the principal remains intact.

This allows the fund to provide consistent, long-term support and extend its impact far into the future.

A Generous Beginning

We are grateful to Julie and Bob Fulton for their contribution of \$20,000 to launch this initiative. Their generosity not only provides immediate momentum but also sets an inspiring example of faithful stewardship and vision.

How You Can Be Part Of This

This effort is just getting start-

A boy named Eli had missed the day they handed out team jerseys.

His family had just moved—again. Third school in two years.

He showed up to photo day in a plain white t-shirt. Standing slightly apart from the rest of the

ed—and there is an opportunity for many to be part of it. By contributing to the Legacy Fund and designating your contributions for mission work, you can help grow this restricted gift to meet and exceed the \$25,000 threshold.

Every gift, no matter the size, moves us closer to creating a sustainable source of support for these important ministries.

Imagine The Possibilities

What might God do through this collective effort? If the initial \$20,000 were to grow to \$50,000—or even \$75,000—the annual support generated could make a meaningful and lasting difference for our mission partners.

It brings to mind Jesus' story of the loaves and fishes, where what seemed small became more than enough in God's hands.

In much the same way, our combined gifts can multiply into something far greater than any one of us could accomplish alone.

We'd Love To Connect

If you have questions, would like to learn more, or are considering a gift, we encourage you to reach out. Members of the Legacy Fund Board would be happy to talk with you, including Bo Plank, Lynn Gustafson, Frank Liston, Tom Ward, Cathy Wagner, or Rev. Bruce.

Thank you for your continued generosity and for being part of a church that is committed to caring for others—today, and for generations to come.

What Makes A Good Teammate?

team, like he'd already accepted being left out of the frame.

My son walked over, pulled off his own jersey, and handed it to Eli.

"Wear mine—I'll stand in the back."

The photographer stopped setting up. The coach went quiet.

Eli put on the jersey. My son stood in the back row in his white undershirt, grinning like it was nothing.

When the photo came back, it was the best team photo I had ever seen—because somewhere in the back row is a kid in a white t-shirt who made room for someone else.

That's my son. I frame that picture every year.

The coach called me that evening. "Your boy," he said. "I've been coaching fifteen years. I've never seen anything like it."

RPPC June Birthdays

June 1 Lindi Paull

June 3 Jean Paszkiet

June 3 Kathy Toebaas

June 3 Jan Marquis

June 7 Adam Hale

June 9 Chris Zhe

June 16 Marilyn Waters

June 18 Chris Stried

June 25 Marti Everts

June 30 Char Behling

'We're All Just Walking Each Other Home'

I almost threw a punch in the checkout line last Tuesday—not because I'm violent but because, at 74, I finally woke up.

I'm a retired mechanic from outside Milwaukee. I live alone in a small house that smells like dust and silence.

My wife Ellen passed away six years ago. My kids? They're busy in New York and Atlanta, chasing careers and raising grandkids I mostly see on FaceTime.

Recently, I realized I had become invisible. Just "that old guy" blocking the aisle with his cart, counting pennies because Social Security doesn't stretch as far as it used to.

Every Friday, I go to the big superstore on the edge of town. It's the highlight of my week—which tells you everything you need to know about my life.

That's where I met Mateo.

He was the cashier at Lane 4. Young—maybe 22. He had an eyebrow piercing and tattoos running down his arms, sleeves of ink disappearing under his blue vest. To a lot of folks from my generation, he looked like trouble.

His English carried a heavy accent. He'd say, "Did you find everything okay, sir?" and most people wouldn't even look up from their phones. They'd just shove the credit card into the machine.

I watched people treat him like furniture.

A woman in a fancy coat huffed, "Can't you go faster?"

A man muttered, "Learn the language or go home."

Mateo never flinched. He just kept scanning, smiling, and saying, "Have a blessed day."

Three weeks ago, I was standing behind a young mother. She

looked exhausted—dark circles under her eyes, a baby crying in the cart. She was buying store-brand diapers and two jugs of milk.

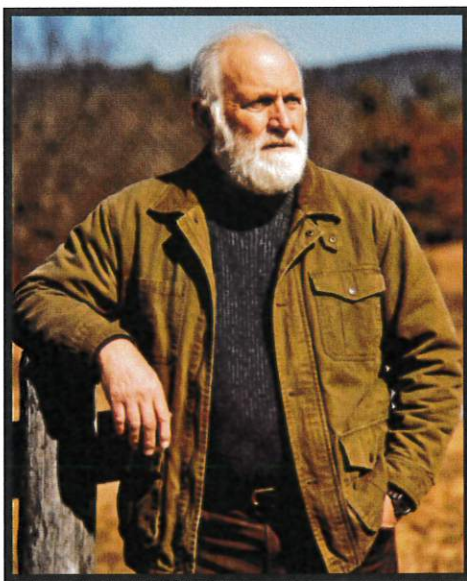
When she swiped her card, the machine buzzed.

Declined.

She turned red. "I . . . let me put the milk back," she stammered, holding back tears. "I get paid on Monday."

Before I could reach for my wallet, Mateo was already moving.

He didn't make a scene. He did-



n't announce it. He simply pulled a crumpled ten-dollar bill from his pocket, scanned it, and handed her the receipt.

"It is covered, miss," he said quietly. "Go feed the baby."

She stared at him, shocked, whispered thank you, and hurried out. The next customer immediately started complaining about the wait.

But I saw what Mateo had done.

That night, I sat in my recliner staring at the wall. Here was this kid—working for minimum wage, getting treated like dirt—giving

away his own money to a stranger.

Meanwhile, I'd spent the last five years feeling sorry for myself.

The next Friday I wrote a note on a napkin. When I got to his register, I slid it over. It said:

"You are a good man. I saw what you did."

Mateo read it. He looked up, and for the first time, his professional mask slipped. His eyes filled with tears.

"Thank you, Mr. Frank," he whispered.

We started talking.

I learned he works two jobs and takes online night classes to become a paramedic.

"I want to save lives," he told me. "My parents sacrificed everything to get me here. I cannot waste it."

Then came last Tuesday.

The store was packed. Tensions were high—these days, everyone seems on edge. A large man in a baseball cap slammed down his items onto the belt.

Mateo made a small mistake. He had to void an item. It took an extra 30 seconds.

The man exploded,

"Are you stupid?" he shouted, loud enough for three lines to hear. "This is America. Why do they hire people who can't even run a register? Go back to where you came from."

The air went still.

People stared at the floor. The cashier next to us looked terrified.

Mateo just stared at the scanner, his hands trembling slightly.

My heart pounded. My whole life, I've been the "keep your

(Continued on page 8)

Be 'Good Company' . . . (Continued from page 7)

head down" type. Don't make waves. Mind your business.

But this was my business.

I stepped forward. My joints ached, but I stood as tall as my 5'9" frame would allow.

"Hey!" I barked. My voice cracked—then steadied.

The man turned. "What?"

"He works harder in one shift than you probably do all week," I said, pointing at Mateo. "He's studying to save lives. He helped a mother buy diapers when she had

nothing. What have you done today except yell at a kid?"

The man's face turned red. "Mind your business, old man."

"Decency is everyone's business," I said. "You want to be tough? Be tough enough to show some respect."

The line fell silent.

Then a woman behind me started clapping. Slowly, others joined. Another person nodded. "He's right," someone muttered.

The man grabbed his bags and

stormed off, still muttering under his breath.

I looked at Mateo.

He wasn't trembling anymore. He stood straighter, shoulders back. He met my eyes and nodded.

A quiet understanding passed between us—between a 74-year-old retiree and a 22-year-old trying to build a future.

I walked to my car, shaking.

I cried in the parking lot—not out of sadness but, because for the first time in years, I felt alive.

I felt like a human being again.

Yesterday, Mateo handed me my receipt. On the back, in neat handwriting, he had written:

"My father is far away. Today, you were like a father to me."

I'm sharing this because we are living in angry times. We are told to hate each other. We are told to pick sides.

But here's what I learned in that checkout line:

You don't have to fix the world.

You don't have to solve every problem.

Sometimes, all you have to do is change the air in the room.

Be the one who speaks up.

Be the one who sees the person behind the name tag.

Because at the end of the day, we're all just walking each other home.

Make sure you're good company.

Volunteers Walk To Lessen Hunger

by Rick Faber

On a beautiful April 26 Sunday, seven members of Rock Prairie joined many other walkers from other churches and organizations in donating their time and money to the Church World Service Crop Walk, held at Cargill United Methodist Church.

Church World Service uses 75 percent of the donations to alleviate hunger and to provide seeds and livestock for people afflicted by hunger worldwide, with the other 25 percent going to local hunger-fighting resources, such as ECHO.

RPPC walkers included Sandi Fogle (and her dog), Cathy Wagner, Rick Faber, Jackie and Bill Da-

vis, and Marge Smith-Peterson and Jerry Peterson.

Between on-line and in-person donations, Rock Prairie raised over \$1,600!

Thanks to everyone who walked, donated, or encouraged Rock Prairie's efforts.



Last Sunday of April
at Cargill United Methodist Church
Registration starts at 1pm

**CROP
HUNGER WALK**
ENDING HUNGER ONE STEP AT A TIME



JOIN THE MOVEMENT AT
WWW.CROPHUNGERWALK.ORG/JANESVILLEWI

Communion Schedule At RPPC Varies

Rock Prairie Presbyterian Church welcomes all who proclaim Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior to celebrate Communion with us.

The Sacrament of Communion is celebrated monthly at Rock Prairie, although, rather than always celebrating Communion on the first Sunday of the month, we celebrate it on a Sunday that has some logical connection to Communion.

The date of a particular month's Communion is published in The PRAIRIE PRESS and also online.



There is a display of RPPC shirts in the Fellowship Hall, with information on pricing. See Sandi Fogle if you would like to make a purchase.

I am grateful for:

The taxes I pay because it means I am employed.

My huge heating bill because it means I am warm.

The piles of laundry and ironing because it means I have clothes to wear.

The space I find at the end of the parking lot because it means I am capable of walking.

The lady behind me in church who sings off key because it means I can hear.

'Muffins For Moms'—A Celebration Of Special People In Our Lives

by Lindi Paull

Sunday morning May 10, we celebrated our Mothers and others

with balloons and lots of muffins of all sizes and flavors!

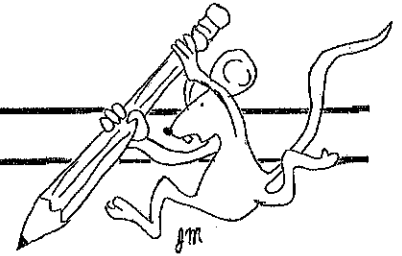
There was something delicious

for everyone.

We are so blessed to have these special people in our lives!







The Church Mouse

Dear Friends,

Here's a bit of humor to brighten your day . . .

During a recent ecumenical gathering, a secretary rushed in shouting, "The building is in fire!"
 The Methodists gathered in a corner and prayed.
 The Baptists cried, "Where is the holy water?"
 The Quakers quietly praised God for the blessings the fire can bring.
 The Lutherans posted a notice on the door declaring the fire was evil.
 The Roman Catholics passed the plate to cover the damage.
 The Jews posted symbols on the door, hoping the fire would pass.
 The Congregationalists shouted, "Every man for himself!"
 The Fundamentalists shouted, "It's the vengeance of God!"
 The Episcopalians formed a procession and marched out.
 The Christian Scientists concluded that there was no fire.
 The Presbyterians appointed a chairperson who was to appoint a committee to look into the matter and submit a written report.
 The secretary grabbed a fire extinguisher and put the fire out.

+ + + + +

—The Church Mouse

(This is a "Church Mouse" taken from the archives of over 30 years of columns printed in The PRAIRIE PRESS. I will be reprinting these old but still relevant and meaningful pieces until someone from the congregation comes forward and volunteers to carry on the tradition of The Church Mouse.—Ed's note)

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