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February 14, 2018

Volume 50 Number 3

Christl Smalley, Compilation; Rick Koetje, Editor

The Lenten Season at First Presbyterian Church

Lenten Soup Suppers: Soup Suppers begin on Wednesday at 6:15 p.m. Several soup options will be available along with bread for the simple meal. The soup suppers will continue through March 21.

Sign-up sheets will be out, or call the office if you plan to attend so we know how much soup and bread to have available.

A free-will donation will be taken and any proceeds will go towards the Adult Mission Trip to Ferncliff, Arkansas in June.

Anyone wishing to volunteer to prepare soup, set-up, and/or clean-up for these meals should contact Cathy Force – 217-521-7131 or cathyforce@comcast.net.

Ash Wednesday Service: There will be a brief Ash Wednesday Worship Service at 7:00 p.m. in the Dining Room. The Sanctuary Choir will be providing a musical selection.

Lenten Book Study: This year the Church has decided to focus its Lenten studies around “Waking Up White” by Debby Irving. The discussions will be led by Pastors Bob & Jean and beginning at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 21 and continuing every Wednesday evening through March 21.

Anyone interested in participating is encouraged to purchase the book (or e-book) which is available on-line. If you don’t have access to a computer or are uneasy with ordering on-line, call the church office and we will be glad to assist you in obtaining a copy of the book.

Childcare during Lent: Childcare is available for newborn through age 12 during these Lenten Events by contacting Kathy Beube in advance at 217-620-7563.

Palm Sunday: On Palm Sunday, March 25, there will be children’s procession with palms at both services.

Maundy Thursday: Worship is planning a Maundy Thursday service on March 29 at 7 p.m. in the Chapel with a foot washing scenario to be included.

Easter Sunday: Easter Sunday will begin with a light breakfast being served beginning at 9 a.m. in the Dining Room. All Christian Education classes will be canceled. The One-Table service will be held in the Sanctuary. Watch for sign-up sheets for the breakfast!

Tower Notes article due dates: Articles submission dates are the 2nd & 4th Monday by noon for the edition that is mailed out the following Wednesday. Thank you!

Quarters for Elmwood



"Yes, we are still collecting quarters for the residents at the Elmwood. They have been very appreciative of our help! The jar will be out most Sundays and we will take the quarters to the DOVE coordinator every few weeks."

Thank You,
Your Peacemaking Committee

Help Support Stand Up For Grace

Corey Anderson will be in the Gathering Room on Sunday, February 18 to help with registering Kroger Plus Cards to benefit SUFG. Use your card and help SUFG – it's that easy. There is no fee to you. Bring in your card or your card number to register it on Sunday!

On Thursday, February 22, **First Friends** will meet at First Pres at 10:30 to view pictures of Bruce Nims' recent epic travels on foot in the Alps of Switzerland and Italy. Bruce is Entrepreneur in Residence at Millikin. First Friends meets on the 4th Thursday of the month Jan-October, alternating locations between First United Methodist Church and First Pres.

The Women's Night Out group meets every fourth Thursday of the month, January through October, at a different dining establishment each month for good food and lively conversation. In February they meet on **Thursday, February 22, at 5:30 p.m. at Benny's** (east Pershing Rd). Call or e-mail the office to sign up so that we may reserve enough space for everyone!

from the of Pastor Jean

Welcome to the Season of Lent. Lent is a time of reflection and preparation before the celebrations of Easter. By observing the 40 days of Lent, Christians replicate Jesus Christ's sacrifice and withdrawal into the desert for 40 days at the very beginning of his ministry. At our Ash Wednesday service we will be reading from the Gospel of Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21, which encourages us not to practice our piety before others in order to gain recognition of our great faith, but rather to go into our "secluded room" and shut the door to be alone with God, one on one.

Jesus says "And when you come before God, don't turn that into a theatrical production either...Do you think God sits in a box seat? Here is what I want you to do: Find a quiet, secluded place so you won't be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to sense his grace." (The Message Version of the Bible)

So, what does it mean to go into a quiet secluded place so that we can be alone with God? I think Jesus is trying to tell his disciples and followers that prayer is a way to know God in a private more personal way. Prayer should not be a public performance or a way of showing others we're religious. Rather, prayer helps us to find a place to be in the presence of God. The "secluded place" he mentions may not be a place in your physical home so much as place inside yourself. A secluded place or inner room of the soul, a place where God is waiting to sit with you. This Lenten Season I invite you to find your quiet secluded space, where you just sit in the presence of God, waiting and listening for what God has to say to you. May we each get to know God's love more deeply so that we may more fully enter into Jesus' Passion and Resurrection.

First-Ever Photo Book Published

Rick Koetje is pleased to announce the publication of *Open Skies: Beauty, Serenity, and Inspiration*. This coffee table photo book of 26 pages includes various images that delight the eye and soothe the soul.



Conceived as a possible dream for retirement, the book project became available through online publication now instead of later. Following the sequence of day, the photos begin with sunrise, moving to the open skies of blue and clouds, and ending with sunset.

Locations include our very own Lake Decatur on the front cover, scenes along the Mississippi River, the skies along Blue Ridge Parkway, majestic mountains in the Rockies, an oceanside sunset, and the river bridge at Quincy.

For more information that includes preview pages and pricing, see <http://www.blurb.com/b/8521365-open-skies>

This is available in both soft and hard cover editions.

Receive 16 weeks' worth of organic, locally grown produce!



Rev. Cyndy Ash is offering CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) shares of produce from her farm, Jubilee Farms United Church of Christ.

CSA's are a win/win for both the farm and the consumer. The farm receives much needed funds pre-season to make necessary purchases, as well as allowing the farm to create a plan and budget. The consumer receives extremely fresh produce, knows exactly where their food is grown and is exposed to different types of produce in harmony with the local season.

The typical weekly share consists of 6 to 8 different offerings (vegetables, fruit and eggs), from May through August. There will be a weekly drop-off location in Decatur, or on-the-farm pick up is always welcome, too.

You may also purchase shares to be donated, which will be given to families in need and local non-profits.

FULL Share (3-4 people) = \$400

HALF Share (1-2 people) = \$200

Payment is due by April 1. CSA shares can be ordered through <http://jubileefarmsclinton.com/community-supported-agriculture-csa-shares/> or mail a check to Jubilee Farms, 9116 Texas Church Road, Clinton, IL 61727.

More information is available at the website above or on Facebook under "Jubilee Farms United Church of Christ".

Caring Ministries of First Presbyterian Church:

Parish Visitors Ministry

Parish Visitors listen, support, and encourage those with specific needs as identified by deacons, ministers, friends, or family; calling on those confined to homes, hospitals, in assisted living or rehabilitation centers. Prayers, sending cards, phone calls, and home visits are made to the person as a reminder that the church is there in their hour of need. Building relationships and being mindful of confidentiality is a key factor in the success of this ministry. This ministry meets the **first Wednesday of each month at 9:30 am in the Gathering Room**. Anyone interested in learning more about the ministry is welcome any month. Members of the Parish Visitors Ministry include **George Batson, Kathi Bondurant, Tom Force, Jean Gift, Connie May, Cathy Meadows, the Parish Nurse when that position is filled, and Pastor Jean Wollenberg**. Susie Marshall, Parish Nurse Phyllis McPherron, and Betty Zeaman have recently retired from the committee. Each of these individuals have made significant contributions to the ministry of the Parish Nurse Ministry.

Prayer Chain Ministry

The Prayer Chain Ministry offers a more confidential method of support to those in our church family who are less inclined to share personal difficulties with the entire congregation. The ministry will add the specific prayer request to their daily prayers. Prayer requests may be given to Lori Jensen (217-429-3400 or lori.jensen1@comcast.net), Yvonne Lewis (217-423-8727), the church office (217-429-4195 or fpdec@comcast.net), or any member of the Prayer Chain. Remember, these requests are kept confidential unless you request they be shared with the congregation. Members of the Prayer Chain Ministry include **Gayle Bruckner, Marty Cushman, Jean Gift, Lori Jensen, Yvonne Lewis, Susie Marshall, Angela McIntire, Verlyn Rosenberger, and Harriet Sadowski**. This is not a closed group, and we welcome more people praying with us. If you would like to be a part of the Prayer Chain, please contact Lori Jensen or Yvonne Lewis.

"Labor of Love" Prayer Shawl Ministry

After a devotion, the group shares conversation, concerns, and prayers for others as they knit or crochet shawls, baby blankets, and lap robes. After a congregational blessing in a worship service, these creations are given to members, family, and friends to let them know they are in our thoughts and prayers. Many recipients say it is like receiving a warm hug from the congregation. This ministry meets at 10 a.m. in the chapel on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month. Beginners to experts are encouraged to drop by any week. Members of the *"Labor of Love"* Prayer Shawl Ministry include **SuEllen Brauer, Cathy Force, Chris Foster, Carol Fuller, Lori Jensen, Jan Mandernach, Susie Marshall, Kay Mason, Sally Mathieson, Connie May, Karen Reynolds, Jane Spires, Carol Sudduth, Betsy Tietz, and Sue Weinstein**.

Health Ministries

Members of the Health Ministry Team promote and participate in the health and healing ministry of First Presbyterian Church. Team members are nurses and others with health-related interests. The team advises, supports and works with the Parish Nurse, and reaches out and is available to the congregation regarding health concerns and issues. You will find one or more members in the Gathering Room on Sunday, or you may contact anyone on the team should you feel the need. Members of the Health Ministry Team include **Kathi Bondurant, Ralph Czerwinski, Jackie Lawton, Yvonne Lewis, Connie Requarth, Harriet Sadowski, Pat Smallwood, Cheryl Thompson, Donna Washburn and the Parish Nurse when that position is filled**.