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Volume 51 Number 3

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The Season of Lent

The Season of Lent is a 40-day period (excluding Sundays) of preparation for Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection. It begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Easter Sunday. Lent is a time of self-reflection and faith renewal. Many people give something up for the

Lent



season as a way of growing closer to God and thinking about God’s call to us as disciples. If you read below, you’ll see that we have some suggestions for some things you could give up this year.

Lenten Dinner and Program

Once again, we will offer a Lenten dinner and program on Wednesday nights. The first dinner will be Wednesday, March 13, and the last one will be Wednesday, April 10. A simple soup supper starts at 6:15 followed by a program at 7:00 with the whole night ending by 8:00. A free will donation will be taken during the meals to cover the cost of the food with any extra funds being given to a worthy cause yet to be determined.

This year, our program will center around a church-wide challenge to “**give up plastic for Lent.**” The idea began when the Church of England started a “Lent Plastic Challenge,” asking members of the church to make an effort to reduce their use of plastic packaging and other products that are quickly disposed after only one use. Our Wednesday night programs will center around a number of environmental concerns that connect with our faith. {see related article on page 3 in this edition of *Tower Notes*}

Ash Wednesday will be observed on March 6 with a Taizé worship service in the chapel at 6:45pm. During this traditional service of music and prayer, we will offer an opportunity to be marked with ashes as we prepare for the Lenten season. Lenten meals will not begin until the following week, on March 13.

Volunteers are needed to provide soups, set up, clean up, or help with the dishwasher. Sign-up sheets are in the Gathering Room.

Please also sign-up for the first supper on March 13 us to determine how much food is needed.

NEW Tower Notes article due dates: Tower Notes are mailed on the 4th Wednesday of the month. Articles for the March 27th issue are due **by Noon on Wednesday, March 20.**

Calendar

Sunday, March 3

Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

First Sunday

9:45 Christian Education

11:00 One Table Worship Service

Monday, March 4

6:00 Peacemaking Meeting

6:30 Mission Meeting

7:00 Worship & Music Meeting

Tuesday, March 5

5:00 Tower Ringers Practice

Wednesday, March 6

Ash Wednesday

10:30 Backpack Assembly

1:00 Year thru the Bible Class

4:00 String Band Practice

5:15 Choir Practice

6:45 Taizé Ash Wednesday

Worship Service

Thursday, March 7

Office Closed

9:00 Volunteers at Good Sam

5:00 Soul Friendship Group

Sunday, March 10

Daylight Savings Time Begins

8:45 NewSong Worship Service

9:45 Christian Education

11:00 Sanctuary Worship Service

6:00 Just Flicks *The Untold Story*

Monday, March 11

10:00 Prayer Shawl Group

3:30 Administration Meeting

5:00 Adult Ministry Meeting

5:00 Finance Meeting

6:30 Facilities Meeting

Tuesday, March 12

5:00 Tower Ringers

Wednesday, March 13

10:30 Backpack Assembly

1:00 Year thru the Bible Class

4:00 String Band Practice

5:00 Evangelism & Membership

5:15 Choir Practice

6:15 Lent Soup Supper

7:00 Environmental Issues Class

Thursday, March 14

Office Closed

9:30 Parish Visitors

Sunday, March 17

8:45 NewSong Worship Service

9:45 Christian Education

11:00 Sanctuary Worship Service

Monday, March 18

7:00 Session Meeting

Tuesday, March 19

4:00 Health Ministry Meeting

5:00 Tower Ringers Practice

Wednesday, March 20

10:30 Backpack Assembly

1:00 Year Through the Bible Class

4:00 String Band Practice

5:15 Choir Practice

6:15 Lent Soup Supper

7:00 Environmental Issues Class

Thursday, March 21

Office Closed

Saturday, March 23

9:00 Deacons' Work Day

Sunday, March 24

8:45 NewSong Worship Service

9:45 Christian Education

11:00 Sanctuary Worship Service

Monday, March 25

10:00 Prayer Shawl Group

Tuesday, March 26

5:00 Tower Ringers Practice

Wednesday, March 27

10:30 Backpack Assembly

1:00 Year Through the Bible Class

4:00 String Band Practice

5:15 Choir Practice

6:15 Lent Soup Supper

7:00 Environmental Issues Class

Thursday, March 28

Office Closed

10:30 First Friends/FUM

5:30 Women's Night Out/Doherty's

Sunday, March 31

8:45 NewSong Worship Service

9:45 Christian Education

11:00 Sanctuary Worship Service

Monday, April 1

6:00 Peacemaking Meeting

6:30 Mission Meeting

7:00 Worship & Music Meeting

Tuesday, April 2

5:00 Tower Ringers Practice

Wednesday, April 3

10:30 Backpack Assembly

1:00 Year Through the Bible Class

4:00 String Band Practice

5:15 Choir Practice

6:15 Lent Soup Supper

7:00 Environmental Issues Class

Thursday, April 4

Office Closed

9:00 Volunteers at Good Sam

5:00 Soul Friendship Class

Parish Nurse Hours

- Every Sunday Morning (times vary)
- Every Tuesday in March: 1-3 p.m.
- Friday, March 8: 11-12 p.m.
- Thursday, March 14: 10:30-11:30 a.m.
- Wednesday, March 20: 12-1 p.m.
- Friday, March 22: 12-1 p.m.
- Monday, March 25: 11-1 p.m.

The parish nurses are also available by appointment.

Lindsay Holler – (217) 791-4199

Connie Requarth – (217) 972-6304

Upcoming Blood Drives

First United Methodist Church

- Saturday, March 2, 7-11am.

Decatur Red Cross
Blood Donation Center
(2674 N Main St.)



- Tuesday, March 5, 12-6pm
- Friday, March 8, 12-6 pm
- Tuesday, March 12, 12-6pm
- Tuesday, March 19, 12-6 pm
- Tuesday, March 26, 12-6 pm
- Saturday, March 30, 10-2 pm
- Tuesday, April 2, 2-6 pm
- Tuesday, April 9, 2-6 pm

1st Pres String Band Gigs

Mar. 14 - 2 p.m. Primrose

Mar. 15 - 3 p.m. Imboden Gardens

Mar. 21 - 2:30 p.m.
Generations at
McKinley Ct.

Mar. 22 - 2 p.m. Piatt Co. Nursing
Home in Monticello

Mar. 29 - 2 p.m. Eagle Ridge

Mar. 30 - 2 p.m. Decatur Public
Library - Madden Room for
Lincoln Homestead Fundraiser



Organ Recital Hosted by St. John's

St. John's Episcopal Church will host an Organ Recital on Sunday, March 3rd at 3:00 pm. This will be the second of a series of our Ministry of the Arts. Mr. Dale Rogers will perform works by Bach, Lubeck, Mendelsohn and Langlais, among others. There is no charge for this event. A light reception will follow. St John's is located at 130 West Eldorado St. (Parking on Church Street) Call 428-4461 with any questions.

Giving Up Plastic for Lent

Have you ever thought about all the plastic in your life? Where does it all go when you throw it away?

A whopping 79% of plastic waste goes to landfill or ends up in the natural environment. Half of the 300 million tons of plastic produced each year is used only once. Between 4.8 and 12.7 million metric tons of plastic material end up in the oceans every year. More than 40% of plastic is used to create packaging, including the hundreds of billions of plastic bags used around the globe. Each minute, one million are used, and the typical bag is used for 15 minutes before being discarded.

As Christians, we believe that the earth is God's creation and that we are charged with its care. Instead of giving up sweets or television viewing or other such things during this coming season of Lent, we're challenging every member of the church to use as little plastic as possible.

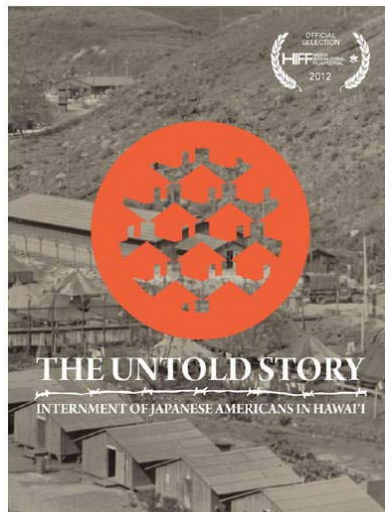
Here are some simple things you can do to reduce your use of plastic:

- Use reusable shopping bags instead of plastic ones.
- Use the washable mugs and cups instead of disposable ones.
- Don't use a straw at restaurants.
- Bring a reusable water container instead of purchasing disposable plastic water bottles.
- Find reusable containers for soaps, lotions and other toiletries.
- When you shop, consider how much packaging is used on the product.

Our Wednesday night Lenten dinners and programs will focus on our stewardship of creation and will look at how we all might be more compassionate towards this beautiful world with which we have been entrusted. Start planning today for something you might do during Lent to make a positive impact on God's good earth.

Just Flicks Announces Another Film Event

On Sunday, March 10, at 6:00 in the Dining Room, Just Flicks will explore the internment of Japanese-American US citizens.



Our featured selection, "The Untold Story," takes a haunting look at the internment of Japanese Americans on the Hawaiian Islands. This 2012 documentary has a special connection to Just Flicks. Craig and Jan Mandernach received a copy of this film as a personal gift

from its producer, Carole Hayashino, whom they met while vacationing in Hawaii. They told her about Just Flicks, and she presented them with the DVD.

In addition, the Mandernachs will show another documentary focusing on internment at the Heart Mountain Relocation Camp in Wyoming. This camp functioned from August 12, 1942 to November 10, 1945, two months after the end of the war with Japan.

Dear Members of First Presbyterian,

This is a well overdue. Thank you for all that you have done to help with my recovery from five surgeries. I appreciated the cards, the visits, the lunches and the prayers. Not to mention those of you who came to my rescue when I fell and could not get up. During most of my recovery someone would bring me lunch. These lunches were delicious, and it was so nice to have visitors because I was alone most of the days. This church is an amazing place. It is filled with God's love which is represented in all of you for your time and prayers. I will be ever grateful for your compassion.

Thank you also for your continued support for the children at By Grace Orphanage and its foundation Stand Up For Grace. The children are well fed, healthy and even have some new friends due to your donations, contributions, letters and prayers. I thank God every day for helping me find such a great church and getting to know many of you.

Thanks,
Pixie Fennessey

Justice Restored Study Group

Everyday Issues will be hosting a study group on Sunday mornings from 9:45 to 10:30 for 6 weeks (March 10 through April 14). We will be looking at incarceration in America and what can be done to try to make changes in it. We will be using the book, "Justice Restored: 10 Steps to End Mass Incarceration in America." Ten books have been pre-ordered and are available for \$14 each. More can be ordered if needed. See Christl or Dick Virgin to purchase a book.

In addition, a video on Healing Justice and other articles will be used. We will also have local law enforcement, a local judge and a representative from the local women's prison joining us at times to help us have a local and state perspective on these issues. All are welcome, but it would be helpful to know of anyone's interest so please sign-up in the Gathering Room no later than March 1.

Parish Nurses Hired

Session received the resignation of Shelli Perry, our Parish Nurse, the end of January. Lindsey Holler and Connie Requarth were hired to share the position. Their hours, availability, and phone numbers will be listed regularly in the bulletin and *Tower Notes* so that you can reach them when you have a medical concern. Please stop by on Sunday and welcome them to their new ministry for this church.

Sunday Fellowship Time Volunteers Needed

Beginning in April we will have a sign-up sheet for volunteers to provide snacks in the Gathering Room before the Sunday services.

The Volunteer would provide any snacks they choose which will be served from 9:15 until after the 11:00 service, and then clean up afterwards. We all need to participate in this tradition if we wish for it to continue. This activity enhances our fellowship time for our members and guests. Volunteers may choose to be reimbursed for up to \$30 by submitting their receipts to Christl. Please contact Becky Gauble (791-1564) or Pat Watts (412-2344) if you have any questions.

New Ranges Installed

Two new ranges were installed in the Dining Room kitchen on Thursday, February 21. **Many thanks** for the anonymous donation making this possible, to the selection committee including Linda Castleman, Lori Jensen, Susan Moore, and Trish Spinner, and to Steve Taylor for the handiwork required before installation.



Tower Notes Goes Monthly!

Enotes come to your inbox every Friday. The information there has been increased to let you know the full calendar for the following week. Other important items are listed briefly at the bottom. Over the years, we have added a web site, Enotes, and a Facebook page. The bulletin insert also carries weekly specific information.

Since we have added several avenues to provide information, Session voted to move the *Tower Notes* to a monthly publication. The due date for articles is listed on Enotes. Very little information is submitted for *Tower Notes* and the information still provided can usually be covered concisely. Think about submitting an article from your committee to let the congregation know what you are doing by way of the monthly edition of *Tower Notes*.

String Band Practice



Beginning March 6, practice will resume every Wednesday at 4 p.m. in the Dining Room. Persons of **all playing levels are welcome** and you may practice without feeling obligated to participate in any of the gigs. Come on out and have a good time while you practice your skills! (There is no practice when the 1st Pres String Band has a gig scheduled for a Wednesday.)

Organic, Locally Grown Produce Sale

Jubilee Farms Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) shares for 2019 are now on sale. The season will run 16 weeks, June through September, with a drop off in Decatur if minimum sales are met. The typical weekly share consists of 6 to 8 different offerings of vegetables, fruit, and eggs. Payment is due by April 1.

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

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

Returning members get a 10% discount by typing the code COMINGBACK on the website.

You may also purchase shares to be donated, which will be

given to families in need and local non-profits.



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](#)".

From the desk of Pastor Jean

In our year through the Bible, the Israelites under Moses' leadership have escaped from Egypt and are now entering the time of 40 years of wandering through the wilderness. They are striving to reach the "Promised Land" that God spoke of to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I think that perhaps the Church Universal, including Presbyterians and First Presbyterian of Decatur, also seem to be in a time period of wandering through the wilderness. The glory days of the Mainline denominations of the 1960's and 1970's seems to have passed, and an unknown future lies ahead.



At times, we too seem to be wandering in circles, going here and there, trying to figure out what "Church" will look like in the years to come. Questions such as: Are we relevant? How should we worship? Who should we include? and Where should we worship? are at the forefront of the conversations that are taking place. At our Officer's dinner on February 18th the Session and Deacon boards wrestled with some of these types of questions. Below are the questions asked and some of the responses from the meeting.

QUESTION: *What challenges do we see ahead for our congregation as we seek to carry out God's call to us in this place? What direction do we need to go to meet these challenges?*

CHALLENGES: Aging congregation, Expensive building, Same people doing too many things in the church, Lack of youth programs and leadership, Need for redefining the church for our new age, Need to find helpful ways to hand off church to the next generation, Letting go of power within the church, Grief and fear preventing hopeful thinking, Need for better social media presence.

RESPONSES: Partner with other community groups and churches, Open church up to neighborhood, Seek more diversity, Open up building as a warming center in the winter, Yoking with other churches, Take the church out to others instead of expecting them to come in, Make church available for homework/computer lab for Elmwood residents, The need to prioritize our ministry

QUESTION: *What have we done, as a congregation, in the past year to help further our goals of "Seeking Justice, Spreading Kindness, and Embracing Inclusion?" What are other ways in which our church has furthered the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ?*

ANSWERS: Engaging with residents of Elmwood Apartments, Collecting items for Oasis, Mitten tree, Backpacks for kids, Good Samaritan Inn, Peacemaking Awards, Prayer Shawls, Meals to the homebound, Our outside sharing library, Supporting Stand Up for Grace, Being involved with the Muslim community, Opening our building to A.A., Opening the church to a group advocating for reduced gun violence, Care notes and Christmas cards, Food and Fellowship, Assisting with funeral meals, Mission money support to community and global partners, Opening the church to wide variety of groups, Mission trip, Involvement in March for our Lives.

Indeed, there are many routes that we can take as God's wandering people today. At times it seems like a great struggle to slog ahead on an uncertain path. As we continue however, we do so knowing that we are God's, choosing to follow God's words spoken to us through the prophet Micah in verse 6:8, "He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you, but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with God?"

March Birthdays

Lawton Eytchison – 1
Anna Mae Carlson – 2
Jean Wollenberg – 3
Glynda Hagymasy – 4
John Weakly – 4
Abigail Bales – 5
Patti Weakly – 5
Karen Yepsen – 5
Bruce Mason – 6
Mac Moore – 7
Bob Wollenberg – 7
Lance Gauble – 8
Shirley Moore – 9
Sally Wachter – 9
Chrissy Ellis – 11
Corey Anderson – 12
Nancy Law – 12
Christl Smalley – 13
Tom Griffith – 16
Anne Hostetler – 16
Phyllis Mulligan – 16
Ellen Noblitt – 17
Richard Sublett – 17
Sue Weinstein – 18
Sherri Arnold – 19
Jaylyn Hale -- 19
Kim Derigo – 20
Corey Moniot – 20
Carlos Porter – 20
Bev Ritter – 20
Kirk Schmidt – 20
Gayle Bruckner – 21
Linda Castleman -- 21
Brett Eisenhauer – 21
Phyllis McPherron – 21
Doug Nicholson – 23
Lexie Bales – 25
Donna Washburn – 25
Larry Wiesner – 26
Leighton Davidson – 27
Stu Ellis – 31
Gib Maines – 31

Hanging files and manila folders

In the work room on the shelves below the counter, the church has a plethora of used/ good condition hanging files and manila folders that you are welcome to take and use as needed.



Take Note

Taizé Ash Wednesday Worship Service: Wednesday, March 6 at 6:45 p.m.

First Friends: Thursday, March 28 at 10:30 a.m. Guest Speaker Mark Sorenson on “Ferris Wheels”

Women’s Night Out: Thursday, March 28 at 5:30 p.m. at Doherty’s.

Bill Grieve has moved to Hickory Point Christian Village, room 109

Nadine Wimmer’s new e-mail address is anwimmer42@gmail.com

Judy Kuypers has moved to room 217 Senior Star, 600 S. Edward Dr., Romeoville, IL 60466, which is near her son Marshall and his wife Elise.

Congratulations to Claire and Craig McCormick on the birth of their daughter Eliana Rae at 3:05 a.m. February 25, 2019. She weighed in at 8 lbs. 3 oz. and was 20 ¾” long. Proud grandmother is **Judy Kuypers** and proud great-grandmother is **Susie Marshall**.

Helping Others

First Sunday: March 3. Bring non-perishable food donations for the Northeast Community Fund food pantry.

First Thursday at Good Sam: March 7. Help Prepare (9-10:30 a.m.) or Serve (11-1 p.m.)

Oasis Day Center Needs: Hand warmers, brown jersey gloves, men’s & women’s deodorant and disposable razors.

First Pres Good Neighbor Box: Donate books, gloves, scarves, hats, socks, bottled water, food items, hand warmers, etc. to the green “Good Neighbor” box located on the Prairie St. side of the church

Quarters for Elmwood: for residents to use in their laundry facilities

Dove Box: Personal Items, sample size products

Box Tops for Education: sent to Kemmerer Village

Used Ink Cartridges: recycled for a refund

Peacemaking Coffee & Olive Oil: Supporting small farms in the USA and abroad.

Stand Up For Grace: Monetary donations to provide basic needs to By Grace Disabled and Orphan Center

Volunteers Needed

Childcare Volunteers: Sundays 10:45 – noon. Sign-up in the Gathering Room*

*Note: Authorization for Background required.

Prayer Concerns

Condolences

Angela McIntire & Family on the death of her stepsister Kathleen Gipson on February 25.

Health Issues:

Lori Shimizu’s cousin
Brian MacKay
Naomi Davis
Christi’s friend Brenda
Alice Nicholson’s sister
Esther
Earl Carpunky
Ruth Warfield’s grandson
Alex Voerman
Kevin & Bethany, brother & niece of Linda Castleman
Carol Houston
Jack Herbert, Pat Watts’ friend
Austin Wells, George Wells’ nephew
Bob Lundin
Marty Cushman
Walt Lohmann’s father
Walter Sr.

Care Facilities:

Louise Bear
Brenda Aymer’s father
Larry Boyer
Julia Bright
Linda May’s mother
Nellie Brookhouzen
Pauline Carter
Marguerite Curtis
Doris Fiala
Verlyn Rosenberger’s brother Elvon Fulton
Bill Grieve
Mary Ann Grohne
Judy Kuypers
Gib & Gini Maines
Judy Steele’s mother
Jean Peak
Peggy Madden’s husband
Richard Phillips
Betty Zeaman

Pray for these members of our church family and all our loved ones.