

Unity Presbyterian Church

Yoke Newsletter ~ March 2016

Church Calendar:

<http://unitypresbyterian.net/page/calendar>

Prayer Concerns:

<http://unitypresbyterian.net/prayer.php>

From Pastor Andrew :

Sign On the Tree

You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear.

(Acts 10:36-40)

Are you ready for EASTER? I am certainly ready for spring. This has been a mild winter compared to the long, cold, and windy season I experienced last year in Nebraska. I'm not even sure it has gotten "cold" here by comparison. As the weather is starting to turn towards the season of rebirth I am reminded of growing up in Cincinnati, OH. Just off our front porch was a Dogwood tree. Every year right before Easter it bloomed. It was a sign that spring had arrived and new life was stirring. There is a story about the Dogwood tree and its connection to our faith...

Legend of the Dogwood Tree

In those days, when Jesus walked the land, the dogwood tree was as tall and mighty as an oak. Outside the walls of Jerusalem stood the tallest of the dogwoods and it was extremely proud of its size and strength. "Something wonderful is going to happen to me," it said to anyone who would listen. "I'll probably become the mast that holds the big sail on a grand ship, or the main timber supporting a great house." One day they came with axe and saw to fell this mighty tree, but it was not formed into the mast of a mighty ship. It wasn't carved into the timbers for sheltering a great household. The huge dogwood was cut down and split roughly. The tree was horrified. All its dreams of glory were smashed, and it groaned in agony as two boards from its trunk were bound and nailed together to become the cross on which Jesus was to die.

As Jesus dragged the heavy beams through the streets towards Calvary he took pity on the tree. "You will never be put to such use again," he told it. "From this day on, your shape will change, even as will the world's. You will become slender and sway easily with the breeze. Instead of acorns, you will bear flowers in the shape of a cross with two long and two short petals. In the center of the outer edge of each petal, there will be nail prints, brown with rust

and red with bloodstains to show the world how you have suffered. Last of all, the center of your flowers will be marked as a crown of thorns to remind people forever more, that you and I spent our last moments together.” And so it was. And so it is.

What a beautiful story. I love its interpretation of the dogwood’s natural beauty entwined with our faith. Spring is coming and new life is stirring, whether it is fresh buds on the trees or a hint of green in the grass the signs are there. Easter is coming and soon we will be cheering and waving palms. But the celebration won’t last long and soon we will be weeping in the shadow of the cross, but then on Easter morning we will be shouting ALLELUIA, ALLELUIA, ALLELUIA!

The sign on the tree says Christ is coming and NEW LIFE is stirring!

May the Peace of Christ be with you,
Rev. Andrew Black

Worship Schedule

March 6th — Fourth Sunday in Lent

Service of Word and Table

Sermon: “Ambassadors of Reconciliation” Rev. Andrew Black

Inspired by 2 Corinthians 5:16-21 & Luke 15:11-32

March 13th — Fifth Sunday in Lent

Sermon: “Extravagant Offering” Rev. Andrew Black

Inspired by John 12:1-8

March 20th — Palm Sunday

Sermon: “From Parade to Passion” Rev. Andrew Black

Inspired by Luke 19:28-40 & Luke 23:1-49

March 24th — Maundy Thursday

Living Last Supper

Simple Meal and Communion Service 6:30pm

March 27th - Easter Sunday

7:00am Sunrise Service

Homily: “Stones” Rev. Andrew Black

Inspired by Luke 24:1-12

10:30am Easter Cantata & Communion

“The Alleluia Tree” by Mark Hayes and Susan Boersma

Unity Presbyterian Church Choir

Easter Challenge for the Potts Food Pantry

It is wonderful to see how excited our children get about collecting for the Potts Food Pantry. We are teaching them the importance of giving through faith, and each week when they bring the strollers and baskets around during worship they are actively participating in Christ's mission to care for one another. Through Lent we practice this mission through the spiritual discipline of Almsgiving.

What would it mean for our food pantry if each week we continued to bring something to stock the shelves. Just one item per person per week. By just adding a few items to your weekly shopping list and dropping them off on Sunday morning we can greatly increase the efforts to feed those of our community in need. In doing this we also continue to teach our youngest disciples the importance of giving all year long. Keep watching the weekly bulletin insert for suggestions on the items the Food Pantry needs most.

We don't need to offer just tangible gifts, but also gifts of time and service. The pantry needs YOU. There is a great deal of time and effort that goes into operating the food pantry each month. There is food to purchase, stock, pack, and distribute. Our current dedicated group of volunteers are amazing, but they need YOUR help. Please let Pastor Andrew, Dawn Chapman or Jan Buffington know if you are interested in doing something to help us continue to answer Christ's call to care for and love our neighbors. ~Pastor Andrew

Book of Confessions — Confession of Belhar

Last September I wrote about the confessional nature of The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and how it is important to openly declare what we believe to be true. In October I shared some information about the Nicene Creed with the goal to share something about the Confessions our denomination affirms in our Book of Confessions. I use these confessional statements during worship for the Affirmation of Faith. During Lent I have been using an affirmation that comes from the Confession of Belhar which hasn't fully been adopted by the PCUSA.

In June 2014 the 221st General Assembly voted to send a proposed amendment to the Presbyteries that would add the Confession of Belhar to the Book of Confession. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has voted through its presbyteries to add the Confession of Belhar to The Book of Confessions. A two thirds majority of the presbyteries voted to affirm the amendment. The final step will be a vote at the 222nd General Assembly meeting June 18–25, 2016 in Portland, Oregon.

This confession has its roots in the global south.

“The Dutch Reformed Churches in South Africa traditionally had Three Standards of Unity: The Belgic Confession (1561), the Heidelberg Catechism (1563) and The Canons of Dort (1618-1619). In their original European context these documents asserted that Protestant Christians were not anarchists, but were good citizens, willing to obey the government of the land. These confessions from the 16th and 17th centuries were used in the 19th and 20th centuries in South Africa to justify obedience to a government that imposed strict separation of the races and domination by members of the white race. The system was called by its Afrikaans name, “Apartheid.” The Confession of Belhar was written as a protest against a heretical theological stance by the white Dutch Reformed Church that used the Bible and the Confessions to justify the harsh and unjust system of Apartheid.”**

Including this confession in our Book of Confessions affirms our denominations commitment to unity, reconciliation, and justice. A copy of the Confession of Belhar can be found at <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/belhar-confession/>

**** From the Essay Belhar Confession historical context by Jack Rodgers, pcusa.org**

HOLY WEEK ACTIVITIES ~ from the Worship Committee

*During Holy Week, Unity will observe **Maundy Thursday, March 24, beginning at 6:30 p.m.** with a simple meal and sharing Holy Communion as a part of that meal. Dramatic readings will be used in place of a regular liturgy.*

*On **Easter Sunday, March 27, sunrise service will begin at 7:30 a.m.**, in our outdoor sanctuary (weather permitting) with service of Holy Communion.*

***Easter 10:30 a.m.** Service, also with celebration of Holy Communion, will feature a choir cantata, Alleluia Tree by Mark Hayes.*

*Between Easter services, a breakfast is **being planned**, along with an **Easter Egg Hunt!***



PIPE ORGAN DONATION ~ Fantastic news, Unity has received donations totaling \$6,432 of the \$7900 needed. Please prayerfully consider if you would be able to contribute or pledge to the final amount of the new organ installation which is, \$1,568, let Jan Buffington, Financial Secretary, know of your wishes.

MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

A thank you note was received from the **Good Cheers Member's Club** we host each year in February when they have their annual meeting. They appreciated the homemade soup, sandwiches and the desserts. The Good Cheer Club consists of legally blind or blind members. They are looking for members and drivers, if you know of anyone who would like to join or help drive them contact, John Stroot, 1-765-832-9275.

Souper Bowl Sunday the winners were, **Gale Fouts**, first place and **Luann Modesitt** second place. The total donated to the Potts Pantry was \$203.00. There were several soups and desserts making a fun day for the members of the congregation. See pictures in the church mouse section.

Blanket Sunday

Our congregation came through again! We delivered two baby blankets, one pillow, fourteen blankets, and six sheet sets to the Light House Mission. Thanks for your help!

Mr. & Mrs. Michael J. Conolty have a new address: 418 North Court Street Quitman, GA 31643. They have bought a 120 year old house in Georgia near Valdosta. Please change your address book. (Erma Whetstone's daughter and son-in-law)

On Sunday Paul Ellison lifted up the family of one of his students who recently lost everything in a house fire. Please keep them in your prayers during this difficult time of transition. If you would like to do something to help, Unity is collecting donations to assist the family with some immediate needs.

Items that will help are Towels, washcloth, deodorant, & kitchenware. There is also a request for clothing: **Man:** Dress shirt 26, T-shirts 6XL, pants 50, underwear 3XL, shoes size 12, Suit jacket 76; **Woman:** Blouse 22-24, pants 24, T-shirt 3XL, shoes 10W, **Boy:** T-shirt 5XL, pants 52, underwear 3XL shoe size 15. **Boy:** Dress shirt 24, T-shirt 4 XL, pants 48, underwear 3XL, shoes 14, Suit jacket 64.

Please contact Unity Presbyterian Church 812-299-2206 for information on how you can help

Morning Glories

The Morning Glories will meet Tuesday, March 8, at the church. We will study lesson seven, "Streams of Mercy – Forgiveness." Join us for Bible Study, fellowship, and remember your sack lunch!



View from the Inside - by Camille Church Mouse

We've had record highs, snow, sleet, and rain! Welcome to Indiana. Turn around and the weather will change! I ate very well in February.

I filled up on pancakes (which heat up well later) at the

Pancake Supper on Fat Tuesday. I tried every soup at the Souper Bowl Cook-off and took leftovers home. Gale

Fouts and Luann Modesitt took home the fabulous prizes for having the most votes. See pictures ► We vote with our money, see the baskets, and taste all the delicious soups on the counter in the crock pots.



We entertained the Good Cheer Club and it was great!

Of course, the highlight of our month was our new (but old) pipe organ. Andrea almost raised the roof on the first Sunday it was played. PLEASE DO NOT EVER POLISH THE ORGAN PIPES, I overheard the technician's concerns about this with a member.

Easter Sunday will be the cantata and the music will be for your soul. Close your eyes and listen. Easter is March 27 and it is a joyous season. Read your newsletter and bulletin for future events.

Last but not least – Spring will come!! God's blessing and joy to all of you!

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

The wording below is a reprint of a Heloise column. In the past we have collected cards and sent them to be reused. We would like to start this again. There will be a container in the back of the church for your cards. Let's see how many we can send!

It's the perfect time of year to collect greeting and holiday cards and send them off to St. Jude's Ranch for Children. The Recycled Card Program has been doing a super job of teaching children work skills for more than 30 years!

The ranch is home for children who have had a hard life and may be homeless or may have been abused. The children recycle old greeting cards into new cards that sell in the retail store and online, and the profits benefit the residents.

Here's what to do: Tear off the fronts of greeting cards — don't send the whole card! All card fronts are welcome: birthday, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah, thank-you cards, etc. Birthday and thank-you cards are especially nice since they are used all year long. Check that there is no writing on the back side of the front. Here are some other guidelines:

Disney, Hallmark and American Greetings cards can't be used because of copyright issues.

The best size is 5 inches by 7 inches, but all are welcome.

Green Corner

Here are some interesting recycling facts to keep in mind. Enjoy!!! They may inspire you to recycle more!

Recycling one aluminum can saves enough energy to run a TV for three hours -- or the equivalent of a half a gallon of gasoline. 350,000 aluminum cans are produced every minute!

More aluminum goes into beverage cans than any other product.

Once an aluminum can is recycled, it can be part of a new can within six weeks.

During the time it takes you to read this sentence, 50,000 12-ounce aluminum cans are made.

An aluminum can that is thrown away will still be a can 500 years from now!

There is no limit to the amount of times aluminum cans be recycled.

To produce each week's Sunday newspapers, 500,000 trees must be cut down.

Recycling a single run of the Sunday New York Times would save 75,000 trees.

If all our newspaper was recycled, we could save about 250,000,000 trees each year!

If every American recycled just one-tenth of their newspapers, we would save about 25,000,000 trees a year.

During World War II when raw materials were scarce, 33% of all paper was recycled. After the war, this number decreased sharply.

If you had a 15-year-old tree and made it into paper grocery bags, you'd get about 700 of them. A supermarket could use all of them in under an hour! This means in one year, one supermarket goes through 60,500,000 paper bags! Imagine how many supermarkets there are in the U.S.!!!

The average American uses seven trees a year in paper, wood, and other products made from trees. This amounts to about 2,000,000,000 trees per year!

The average household throws away 13,000 separate pieces of paper each year. Most is packaging and junk mail.

Each ton (2000 pounds) of recycled paper can save 17 trees, 380 gallons of oil, three cubic yards of landfill space, 4000 kilowatts of energy, and 7000 gallons of water. This represents a 64% energy savings, a 58% water savings, and 60 pounds less of air pollution!

The 17 trees saved (above) can absorb a total of 250 pounds of carbon dioxide from the air each year.