

APRIL

Chip's Chatter

I thought this month's newsletter would be rather easy to write. April is, after all, the usual month we celebrate Easter and is the highest date in the Christian calendar. But as I began to write, I had several questions I needed to clear up. The questions were not about what we call Holy Week, that is Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Vigils, and Easter Sunday. I believe nearly all Christians have an excellent understanding of each of those dates.

I was referring to the apparent differences in the dates we celebrate Easter. Why does Easter fluctuate and Christmas remain constant? The other questions I had pertained to the tradition of the Easter Bunny and Easter Eggs. Like the cartoon character Bugs Bunny I want to ask What's Up, Doc!

The date issue is rather simple to answer. But before I go into it, we must remember there is a direct link between the Jewish Passover and the Christian Easter. You will recall, Jesus came to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover meal with the disciples before his betrayal, trial, and execution. So let's begin with the Jewish Passover.

The Jewish Passover date was established in the bible to commemorate the night the

angel of death passed over the Jewish homes that were marked with the blood of the lamb. The Passover is celebrated on the 15th day of Nisan. Remember, the Jewish calendar is different from the Gregorian calendar used today. Specifically, Passover begins on the night of the first full moon after the Northern Vernal equinox which occurs in the Gregorian calendar during March or April. What!?!? That's right, it is based on the lunar calendar!

The Council of Nicaea, (think Nicene Creed) met and established Easter as the first Sunday after the first full moon occurring on or after the Vernal Equinox. Sounds similar to the Passover. In fact, the word Easter can be translated to mean Passover or Paschal. Paschal means relating to Easter and the Passover. Hence, the first full moon following the vernal equinox is called The Paschal Moon. By the way, vernal equinox is another way of saying the beginning of Spring and is noted by the fact the hours of daylight and night are equal.

Christmas is a different matter since no one knows when Jesus was actually born. However, in the earliest days of the church, the church fathers established March 25th as the day Mary was informed

by the Angel that she would bear a son. Count nine months and you arrive at December 25th.

So now, what about the Easter Bunny, eggs, and for that matter, Santa Claus. It seems the early church tried to link pagan activities and events to Christian dates. Some speculate it was to get non-Christians interested in learning about Jesus. I will let the reader determine if this was a good idea or not. For you see, there is always a tendency to let these symbol characters overtake the real meaning of the Christian festive dates.

Christmas is easier since there was an actual St. Nicholas who took care of children. The leap to associate Santa Claus with Christmas is not too far off the mark. But what about this bunny and the eggs. My research indicated all sorts of information all across the spectrum. Most tend to theorize the bunny, with its tremendous ability to reproduce offspring, was used as a symbol of fertility. The egg, symbolized new life beginning. So, with Easter occurring in the spring when life is recovering from the long winter, the bunny and the egg seem like good symbols of Easter. Problem is, these were pagan symbols and in no way reflected the amazing event when Jesus arose from the dead on Easter Sunday morning! Some biblical teachers are so bold as to say the Easter Bunny et al is an abomination before God. Probably a bit harsh. But nonetheless, it fully detracts from the meaning of Easter. New life for the Christian begins with the Resurrection not with the arrival of some pagan bunny.

I must admit, I get a bit concerned in the overuse of the pagan symbols. You see, it is easy to mask the real meaning of why we

celebrate Easter, and for that matter, Christmas. You often hear, at Christmas, Jesus is the reason for the season. Where is the counterpart phrase for Easter? Instead, we eat candy, and hunt for Easter eggs. Shouldn't we be hunting for the empty tomb? Shouldn't we be thinking of the joy the women felt when they saw their risen Lord? Shouldn't we think of the great sacrifice Jesus paid for our sins? Shouldn't we celebrate that we are reconciled to the Father through our faith in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus?

So, you can choose which part of the Easter season you wish to celebrate. For me, I'm going to skip Easter egg hunts and chocolate bunny rabbits and instead, keep my eyes firmly fixed on the empty cross of Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.

Lent is a period in which to reflect on our lives and also prepare for the coming celebration of our risen Lord. May your Easter be one of celebration and may you shout from the roof tops on Easter Sunday morning, The Lord is Risen. The Lord is Risen indeed!





- 1 Richard Miller
- 10 Gloria Aylesworth
- 19 Ruth Andersen
- 20 Joan Forbes
- 20 Betty Hanson-Lehman
- 21 Cheryl Hiltz
- 24 Vera Weis
- 27 Norma Feay
- 29 Ginny MacKinnon

Service Chair: Libby Underhill and Dianne Roholt			
Duane and Mary Hayes	218-694-2290	Brenda Reed	751-2630
Brenda Miller	766-3053	Dianne Roholt	444-2859
Bob Naylor	444-7398		

Communion in March

Set-up: Joan Forbes and Vera Weis

Serving/helping with clean up: Set-Up: Mary Lou Miller; Vera Weis; Dixie Wirkus, Joe Forbes, Bill Beck

April: Bob & Nancy Weber

Serving/helping with clean up: Bob Weber, Gini Sande, LeRoy Hill, Brenda Miller, Joyce Ackerman

Head Usher:

	<u>Ushers:</u>	<u>Greeter</u>	<u>Liturgists:</u>
April 7			
April 14			Ruth Andersen
April 21			
April 28		Gini Sande	



We are once again doing Lent Services, We will be having Noon Lenten Service each Wednesday of Lent in the Chapel. We will not have a Wednesday Lenten Service, Wed., April 17 as that is Holy Week.

FINANCIAL REPORT—Month Ending February 29, 2019	
Total Income	\$5,770.90
Total Expenses	\$9,871.49
Net Income	(4,100.59)
Memorial Fund	13,507.42
Endowment Fund	75,044.89
Communion Served—30	

Sunday Worship Attendance Report

March 3 6
 March 17 50
 March 24 37

“Make the Change” Benevolence

The Outreach Committee would like to try something new this year as a way to inspire us to build a better community through giving. Beginning in February, there will be a fish bowl in the narthex. This fish bowl is for your loose change and is based on the idea that small change ó the extra coins lying around under couch cushions, in coat pockets, and in desk drawers ó can be used to make big changes in our communities.



For the months of February, March, and April, the change that is collected will go towards purchasing Easter hams for needy families. The Outreach Committee will partner with Churches United to ensure the hams go to those in need.



Supper Club
Will not meet the month of
April



Supper Club will not be meeting the month of APRIL

Please sign up at the church office: by email or the sign up sheet on Sundays: presbji@paulbunyan.net -or- by phone; 444-5016,

This is an evening full of joy, laughter and good food.

All are welcome!

4th Sunday Benevolence

One Great Hour of Sharing

presbyterianmission.org/oghs

Our 4th Sunday benevolence for April will be One Great Hour of Sharing. A gift to One Great Hour of Sharing enables the church to share God's love with our neighbors-in-need around the world by providing relief to those affected by natural disasters, provide food to the hungry, and helping to empower the poor and oppressed.

Around the world, millions of people lack access to sustainable food sources, clean water, sanitation, education, and opportunity. Each gift to One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) helps to improve the lives of people in these challenging situations. In fact, OGHS is the single, largest way that Presbyterians come together every year to work for a better world. One Great Hour of Sharing, received during the season of Lent, makes a difference in the world through three impactful programs: Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and Self-Development of People.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA)

Works alongside communities as they recover and find hope after the devastation of natural or human-caused disasters

Receives 32% of funds raised

Presbyterian Hunger Program (PHP)

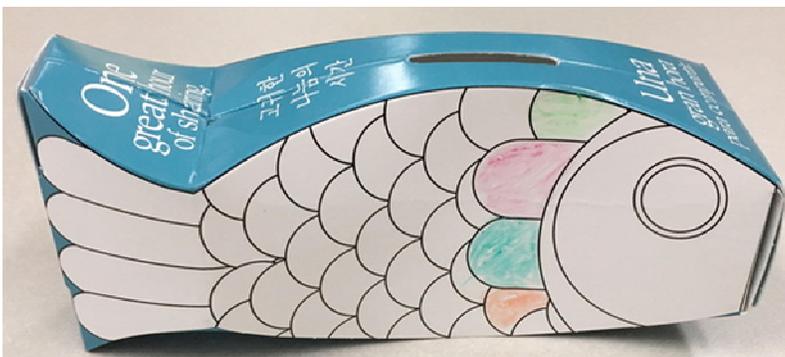
Takes action to alleviate hunger and the systemic causes of poverty so all may be fed

Receives 36% of funds raised

Self-Development of People (SDOP)

Invests in communities responding to their experiences of racism, oppression, poverty and injustice and educates Presbyterians about the impact of these societal ills

Receives 32% of funds raised



Look for the fish banks in the back of the sanctuary for a fun way to support this mission. The bank would be a great place for all that loose change you might have. You can even color your fish! Please bring all banks to the church by Sunday, April 28th.

Thank
you

Thank you for your cards, phone calls and prayers. Please continue to keep us in your prayers as we deal with the loss of Vicky.



Ginny MacKinnon



The First Presbyterian Church Choir has resumed. Our rehearsals will be at 9:00am before Church with Steve Saari leading.

If you wish to become a member of the choir, and we could use each and everyone of you, please contact Gloria Phelps at 218-308-1113 or the church office at 444-5016.

**First Presbyterian Church
Bemidji, MN
March 19, 2019**

The monthly stated meeting of the session of First Presbyterian Church was held in the church conference room on March 19, 2019 at 2:00pm. The meeting was opened with prayer by Moderator Pastor Chip Holt.

ELDERS PRESENT CONSTITUTING A QUORUM: Cheryl Hiltz, Libby Underhill,
Donna Dickinson, Palmer Berg, Linnea Mostad
ELDERS ABSENT AND EXCUSED:, Gloria Phelps
OTHERS PRESENT: Clerk of Session Mary Hayes

QUORUM DECLARED

ADOPTION OF AGENDA **Approved** with one addition to Other Business

MEETING MINUTES The minutes from the February session meeting were **approved**.

CORRESPONDENCE Received letter of thanks from Ginny MacKinnon.

CLERK'S REPORT was reviewed. The weekly Sunday worship attendance will hereafter be included in the Clerk's Report and also published in the monthly newsletter. The Head Usher is responsible for counting attendance at each service and reporting the figure on the collection report.

First Presbyterian Church, Bemidji, MN, Clerk's Report March 19, 2019

Weddings: none

New Members: none

Return to Active Membership: Carla Ellingson, Terri Murray

Request Transfer of Membership: none

Removed from Membership Roll: none

Communion: March 3-30 served

Serving: Mary Lou Miller, Dixie Wirkus, Joe Forbes, Bill Beck, Cheryl Hiltz

Membership as of February 19, 2019 77

FINANCIAL REPORT The financial report was distributed and reviewed. Note was made that the Memorial Fund account is a savings rather than a checking account. It was also clarified that the Endowment Fund account that contains \$75,044.89 is the interest from the permanent Endowment Fund. A discussion of Per Capita apportionment resulted in a plan to report in the monthly newsletter on the total per capita funds given compared to the amount due.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Administration/Personnel Chairperson: Donna Dickinson Committee Member: Cheryl Hiltz

All session members will participate in personnel matters.

Buildings & Grounds Chairperson: Palmer Berg Committee Members: Bob Naylor, Joe

Forbes, Bob Weber The CE roof will be assessed when the snow and water are gone.

Finance & Stewardship Chairperson: Cheryl Hiltz Committee Member: Donna Dickinson

Adult & Christian Education Chairperson: Linnea Mostad Committee Members: TBA Lin-

nea will poll the congregation to determine the best day and time for adult CE class. 9:00

on Sunday mornings was set previously, but choir practice will resume for that same time.

Outreach Chairperson: Libby Underhill Committee Members: Linnea Mostad, Cheryl Hiltz

First Presbyterian helped serve 36 meals at the Bemidji Community Table on Feb. 27.

Worship & Music Chairperson: Gloria Phelps Committee Members: Vice Chair Joan

Forbes, Barb McGregor, Vera Weis The committee will hold its first meeting in April.

OTHER BUSINESS

The Summer Recital Series will be held at First Presbyterian on June 12.

The Wednesday noon Lenten services have been sparsely attended and may be discontinued.

The Committee on Ministry has grouped Presbytery churches for better connections. Chip will

be the COM contact for one group. Doug Workman of Tower will be the contact for us.

Chip did a short presentation, "Seven Things All Churches Want" by Realm Ministries.

Next Meeting: April 16 at 2:00 pm.

The meeting was adjourned with the Lord's Prayer led by Pastor Chip at 3:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Hayes, Clerk of Session

Sundays
 10:00 Worship
 Service
 11:00 Fellowship

April 2019



SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT

	1	2	3 12pm-Lenten Service/Chapel 6:30pm-Calvary	4	5	6
7 Chip Holt Preaching Communion	8 5pm-Bells 6pm-Scouts	9	10 12pm-Lenten Service/Chapel <hr/> 6:30-New Member/Inquire Class <hr/> 6:30pm-Calvary	11	12	13
<u>14-Psalm Sunday</u> Chip Holt Preaching <hr/> Bells Playing <hr/> Pancake Breakfast by Scouts	15 6pm-Scouts	16 2pm-Session Meeting <hr/> 6:30-New Member/Inquire Class	17 6:30-Calvary Chapel	18 Maundy Thursday 7pm-Service	19 Supper Club Cancelled	20
21 EASTER Chip Holt Preaching	22 6pm-Scouts	23 2pm Session Mtg	24 6:30-Calvary Chapel	25	26	27
28 Tony Peffer Preaching	29 6pm-Scouts	30				