

First Church News

VOLUME 7 ISSUE 2

FEBRUARY 2018

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Ash Wednesday is the first day of the season of Lent. Ash Wednesday is one of the principal holy days for the Western Church. Most commonly observed by Catholics, Anglicans, Episcopalians, and Lutherans. Ash Wednesday falls on the seventh Wednesday before Easter. Ash Wednesday begins a season of fasting and repentance (commonly known as *Lent* in preparation for the Easter celebration.

The Origins of Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday's origins are tied to its history and the time of year during which it occurs. It follows the season of Epiphany, which culminates with Shrove Tuesday, which is also known as Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday). The solemn proceedings that occur on Ash Wednesday bring the focus back to the sacrifice of Christ and the mission of the Church. The observance most likely comes from the biblical Day of Atonement. In Leviticus 16, the Lord establishes an annual day of repentance for the Israelites as a lasting ordinance for all their generations. Since the blood of Jesus represents atonement, the heart of Ash Wednesday is a humbling of oneself through fasting and prayer.

On this day, Christians come before a priest to receive the sign of the cross, marked in ashes on their foreheads. Over the next month, they are encouraged to fast, pray, and seek repentance for their sins. Reflection upon one's life during the previous year receives extra attention, and a greater commitment to God and the Church is offered.

This ceremony originated around the eighth century and extends back to the custom during biblical times of people humbling themselves with sackcloth and ashes. The prophet Daniel speaks of seeking the Lord for the release of his people from Babylonian exile with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes (Daniel 9:3). Jonah 3:6 states: "When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust."



Palmer Berg	February 6
Duane Hayes	February 6
Donna Dickinson	February 14

February Service Chair:

Brenda Miller	766-3053		
Darrel and Kathy Bahr	444-8695	Dona Mae Naylor	751-5466
Bill Beck	586-2770	Bob and Nancy Weber	751-5328
Joe and Joan Forbes	157-3965	Vera Weiss	751-2595

Prayer Chain



We are available to all members who need a spiritual lift for themselves or for a loved one who is ill or just needs the prayers of his or her friends. Call the church office at 444-5016 or Libby Underhill at 444-9774.

Pastoral Care

If you or someone you know is in the hospital, please give the church a call and let us know. Because of the privacy laws now in place, pastors can no longer have access to files. We'll be glad to visit you. If you've been ill at home and would like to talk with a pastor, let us know that also. If you would like communion brought to you, let us know. If you'd like to talk over some personal issues or seek pastoral help, let us know. We invite you to communicate your needs to us and we'll do what we can to help. Call the office at 444-5016. During our time of transition, church officers are available to visit with you and assist in arranging pastoral care.

IMPORTANT DEADLINES TO REMEMBER



If you have items for the **Newsletter**, Please call or email the office by **Wednesday, February 21st for the March Newsletter.**

Bulletin items need to be into the office by the Wednesday prior to the Sunday you wish it to appear.

To avoid confusion, please send information for the bulletin and newsletter to the church office via email at presbji@paulbunyan.net. If you don't have email, call the office at 444-5016 or stop by the office during office hours, Monday—Friday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

FINANCIAL REPORT—Month Ending December, 2017

Total Income \$	\$12,060.31
Total Expenses	\$ 9,869.78
Net Income	\$ 2,190.53
Memorial Fund	\$13,300.32
Endowment Fund	\$69,944.07

Communion Served—28

From the Church Office**Communion in January: Set-up:** Vera Weis , Joan Forbes,**Serving/helping with clean up:** Vera Weis, Brenda Miller, Joan Forbes, Gini Sande, Linnea Mostad**Communion in February: Set-up:** Joan Forbes, Vera Weis**Serving/helping with clean up:** Duane Hayes, Mary Hayes, Libby Underhill, Joyce Ackerman, Donna Dickinson**Head Usher:** Bill Beck

	Ushers:	Greeter	Liturgists:
February 4		LeRoy Hill	
February 11		Gini Sande	
February 18	Dixie Wirkus		Dianne Roholt
February 25		Dixie Wirkus	Ruth Andersen

**Supper Club @ MI RANCHO****Supper Club** will be meeting at Mi Rancho, 677 Anne St NW at 5:30 February 16thPlease sign up at the church office: by email; presbji@paulbunyan.net —or— by phone; 444-5016, on or before Wednesday, February 14th

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

All are welcome!

The *right* way to take on Lenten spiritual practices

By Chip Hardwick | Presbyterians Today

Isaiah 58:1–12 is one of the suggested lectionary texts for Ash Wednesday, Feb. 14.

Lent is a great time to focus more fully on our spiritual lives. For centuries, the church has encouraged us to give up something that brings us pleasure, so that we can be more in touch with Jesus' self-denial. More recently, Christians have taken on new spiritual practices such as practicing intentional hospitality or reading the Scriptures more faithfully as a way of prioritizing God's ways over our ways.

We don't give up chocolate for Lent to prove to ourselves we have the willpower to do so. We give up chocolate because practicing self-denial prepares us for another step in our Christian walk. We don't read the Bible every day leading up to Easter to pat ourselves on the back and say, "This is what good Christians do." We dig into the Scriptures because that strengthens us to do something else. It's not enough to take on these practices in and of themselves. Their real value is that they equip us to go further in our faithfulness.

So, what is the next step that we are prepared to take? What's the end for which the spiritual practices serve as a means? The passage from Isaiah makes it clear: We do these spiritual disciplines to live lives that glorify God and extend God's blessings to others.

In our passage from Isaiah, God asks the Israelites, "Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free ... to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them . . . ?"

We add spiritual practices in Lent as a means for the Spirit to strengthen us so we can humble ourselves and put others before ourselves to help them experience the abundant life that Jesus offers them — a life of material, physical and spiritual sufficiency and goodness. When this happens, we realize that Lent isn't just a great time to focus on our own spiritual lives — it's a fantastic time to focus on others, too.

The Rev. Chip Hardwick is the former director of Theology, Formation & Evangelism for the PC(USA).

February's 4th Sunday Benevolence: Bemidji Community Table



The mission of the Bemidji Community Table is to provide meals and promote an "open table" atmosphere for those in the community needing fellowship who might otherwise go hungry.

The Bemidji Community Table has been serving members of the community with meals for over 20 years. Their guests include elderly who may have difficulty preparing meals for themselves, individuals lacking adequate cooking facilities, families lacking adequate food supplies and those seeking an evening meal for other reasons.

The Bemidji Community Table organizes four meals a week at two area churches to anyone who is hungry, there are no income guidelines or forms required. Monday and Tuesday meals are served at Mount Zion Church, and Wednesday and Thursday meals are served at United Methodist Church. The meal is free to anyone who comes through the doors. Thus an open table! Bemidji Community Table anticipates serving nearly 18,000 meals this year with about approximately 20% of those meals being provided to individuals under 18 years of age.

First Presbyterians have volunteered at this local mission by helping to prepare and serve meals. Our next time to serve is **Thursday, February 22nd**. You can also help by volunteering your time and/or giving of your donation to this needed mission. Please contact Libby Underhill if you would like to help serve.

Resources:

www.bemidjisoupkitchen.org

<http://www.bemidjipioneer.com/news/local/4076128-helping-feed-community-all-are-welcome-bemidji-community-table>

Annual Meeting Follow up



Newly elected Elders are Cheryl Hiltz for a two year term, Bill Beck for a one year term, and Duane Hayes for a one year term.

The 2018 Nominating Committee members will be Elders Cheryl Hiltz and Leroy Hill, and Members at Large Nancy Weber, Betty Hanson-Lehman and Joe Forbes.

Copies of the 2017 Annual Report are available in the church office.

Your church leaders at work for you

First Presbyterian Church Bemidji, MN January 9, 2018

The monthly stated meeting of the session of First Presbyterian Church was held in the church conference room on January 9, 2018 at 1:00 pm. The location and time were changed from Coleraine at 12:00 due to the Commission on Ministry members being unable to attend. The meeting was opened with prayer by Moderator Rev. Arlin Talley.

ELDERS PRESENT CONSTITUTING A QUORUM: Duane Hayes, Bill Beck, Bob Weber, Leroy Hill,
Donna Dickinson

OTHERS PRESENT: Clerk of Session Mary Hayes

QUORUM DECLARED

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

MEETING MINUTES

The minutes from the December meeting were accepted.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Two letters from Northwoods Caregivers will be given to Outreach.
The upcoming Presbytery meeting will be held in Duluth Feb. 3. We can send a commissioner.

CLERK'S REPORT was accepted.**January 9, 2018****Weddings:** none**Baptisms:** none**Deaths:** none**New Members:** none**Return to Active Membership:** none**Request Transfer of Membership:** none**To Inactive Membership Roll:** none**Removed from Membership Roll:** Jan and Glen Gross at their own request. Mary Settle at her own request.**Communion:** January 7, 2018 28 served Serving: Vera Weis, Joan Forbes, Brenda Miller, Gini Sande, Linnea Mostad**Membership as of December 12, 2017: 113****FINANCIAL REPORT** was accepted.**COMMITTEE REPORTS****Administration/Worship**

The proposed budget for 2018 was accepted as adjusted. Rev. Talley clarified that continued participation in the Pastors Pension is for 'vacancy dues'. If a church does not plan to seek a full time pastor, that amount may be adjusted. He will check on this with the pension board on our behalf as we are using pulpit supply.

Supper Club will meet at Ruzy's on Friday, Jan. 19 at 5:30.

Nominating

Recommendations: Cheryl Hiltz's name to be presented to fill the 2019 session vacancy left by the resignation of Jan Gross; Bill Beck's name to be presented to fill a one year term for one 2020 opening. A candidate for the other 2020 opening is still being sought.

OTHER BUSINESS

The pulpit supply list for 2018 was reviewed. Note was made that Rev. Krehl Strenger may serve communion.

Next Meeting: February 13, Tuesday, 1:00 pm at church with Rev. Arlin Talley moderating.
The meeting was closed with prayer at 2:26 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Hayes, Clerk of Session

Sundays
 10:00 Worship Service
 11:00 Fellowship

February 2018



SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT

				1 Meals on Wheels	2 Meals on Wheels	3
4 Communion Krehl Strenger preaching	5 5:00 pm Bell Choir 6:00 pm Boy Scouts	6	7 6:30 pm Calvary Chapel	8	9	10
11 Chip Holt preaching	12 5:00 pm Bell Choir 6:00 pm Boy Scouts	13 1:00 Session Meeting	14 Ash Wednesday 6:30 pm Calvary Chapel	15	16 Supper Club 5:30 pm @ Mi Rancho	17
18 1st Sunday in Lent Chip Holt Preaching	19 5:00 pm Bell Choir 6:00 pm Boy Scouts	20	21 6:30 pm Calvary Chapel	22 Bemidji's Community Table	23	24
25 Rick Weinert Preaching	26 5:00 pm Bell Choir 6:00 pm Boy Scouts	27	28 Food Shelf 6:30 pm Calvary Chapel			