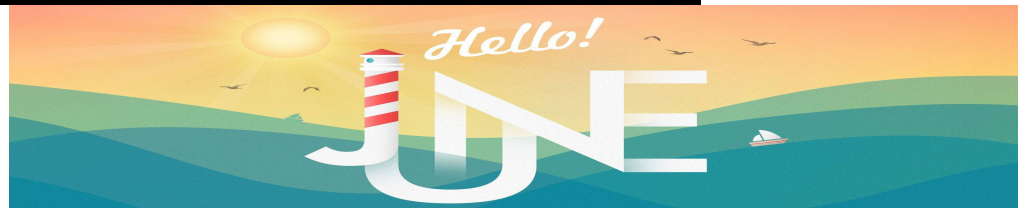


# First Church News

Volume 12 issue 6

June 2023

## Chip's Chatter



I have had this thought rolling around in my head for the last couple of months. It is a serious question we all need to ask. Here it is: Is the church still relevant or is it (or has it) become(ing) irrelevant?

I am especially prompted to think about this idea based on the events over the last several years, but more importantly over the last few weeks and months. A lot of us today tend to blame the reduction in church attendance as a post COVID result. But I ask, there has to be more to it than post Covid. It is well accepted most church attendees during COVID found "TV church." Following the re-opening of worship, several (30%) are not returning to in person worship but have instead, developed a habit of TV church (or perhaps no church attendance at all). Certainly, the post COVID explanation is easy to understand. But I wonder if there is far more going on here than we first thought.

For most of us, church attendance, and just as important, church participation was an integral part of our culture and our family life. Church was very relevant. In many churches, Sunday morning services were discussed "over the water cooler" on Mondays. From 1974 until 1978, while serving in the USAF, I was a member of a small Presbyterian Church in Tacoma, WA. I sang in the choir. My commander was a frequent attendee. Many times, on Monday morning, he would come into my office to comment on Sunday's music and how much he liked it!

For the last nearly 40 years I have noticed a change. Rarely do we talk about Sunday's worship experience with our friends, let alone

our families. Over these last years it seems discussion of church, beyond Sunday, was frowned upon. Some even try to claim the government prohibits such conversations. I worked for a private company following my flying career. The company clearly stated it was a Christian company. Church was very relevant to the owner. Once a week we held a Bible study in the conference room. Many of my co-workers objected stating it was illegal!

How does this lack of relevancy translate to today's world? For me, I see it in the tremendous disregard of ethics and values. As Christians, not only do we need to "talk the talk," but also "walk the talk." By that I mean we don't need to "preach" our values, nor do we need to constantly give our "testimony" to others. Instead, it is by our conduct that we are known. People who are ethical and have firm values are people we naturally gravitate towards. So I ask, "Where are the ethics and values demonstrated in our society today?" Shouldn't our leaders be walking examples of outstanding of ethical and value-based behavior?

A few days ago, concrete evidence came to light indicating many leaders at the highest levels of our government are sorely lacking in ethical and value-based behavior. They may even be guilty of crimes, but there seems little desire to prosecute them. I am just as upset as the next person when I read a report that took 6 years to come to a conclusion showing a false accusation and the involvement of other leaders perpetrating this lie.

But I digress. It seems to me we have become a ship without a rudder. We have become a society in which church and values and ethical

behavior are a thing of the past. I suggest the decline of membership and related attendance has far more to do with the church becoming irrelevant than did the recovery from COVID. Some of us who are students of end-times prophecy see this as a possible indication of the approaching Rapture of the church and the Glorious Second Coming of Jesus. We are truly living in turbulent times as prophesized.

I believe the most profound impact on creating this idea that the church is irrelevant comes from the segment of Christianity that strongly promotes cultural accommodation. I recently heard a speech on this subject and the presenter offered specific dates and decisions towards cultural accommodation. There is a saying that goes "If you allow everything, pretty soon you will stand for nothing." That is what cultural accommodation taken to the extreme does.

Is there anything we can do about this development of an "irrelevant" church? I believe the answer is YES. We need to stand up for our Christian values. We need to challenge our leaders to do the same. We need to get involved, especially at the local level. But we need to do it as kind and loving people challenging the leaders. When the School Board insists on teaching "mush" to our children we need to attend School Board meeting and voice our opinion. Furthermore, we need to read and study our Bibles. Take every opportunity to learn, regardless of our age. Our Seekers group is a good place to start. Really listen to the teachings at Sunday morning worship. Ask questions if you don't understand.

But there is one thing above all else. We need to pray. We need to pray for our leaders, our nation, and the world. We need to pray for a spiritual revival in the land. In so doing, we will stand up for God. If we fail, I don't want to contemplate what will happen. Here's what

scripture says from the words of the prophet Ezekiel 22:30-31:

<sup>30</sup> *"I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one. <sup>31</sup> So I will pour out my wrath on them and consume them with my fiery anger, bringing down on their own heads all they have done, declares the Sovereign LORD."* Who is the intercessor in standing at the gap? God seeks intercessors not because he needs us, but because he has chosen to govern through the prayers of his people. Intercession is not an option. It's God's way of working. Ezekiel 22 shows us that intercessors "who would build up the wall and stand in the gap" are critical.

Here is a warning from God found in 2 Chronicles 7:14. It also comes with a word of hope. A word of hope so desperately needed in these times of upheaval.

<sup>13</sup> *"When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people, <sup>14</sup> if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land."*

My prayer is that, together, we can make the church relevant again to our friends, our community, our state, and our nation.

Pastor Chip



# Around our Community



First Presbyterian Bell Ringers

Joan Meulebroeck, Pastor Genelle Netland, Linnea Mostad, Bev Novak, Nancy Weber, Libby Underhill, and Nicholle Bieberdorf

Thank you everyone so much for coming to my birthday party, and for the gifts and cards. Since I have been in D&D, I have had some visitors, and a lot of cards from Church members.

I know this thank you is very late, but wanted to thank you again.

Joan Forbes

## The Bemidji Area Church Musicians present

Musician/s of St Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Recital

May 31, 2021, 12:00 pm

A free will offering will be received.

A luncheon will be served following the concert. There will be a charge for the luncheon.

## Coffee Fellowship Update

Beginning in May, coffee fellowship will follow the church service on the first and third Sundays.

Table Fellowship (potluck) will move to a quarterly schedule. The next two Table Fellowships will be:

Sunday, July 2<sup>nd</sup> (picnic theme)

Sunday, October 1<sup>st</sup> (harvest theme)



**FINANCIAL REPORT—Month Ending 2/28/2023****Monthly requirement to meet our budget \$10,705.00**

Total Income	\$ 6,288.09
Total Expenses	\$ 11,237.81
Net Income	\$ (4,949.72)

**Thank you** for supporting our church**Sunday Worship Attendance  
2023**

<b>April 30</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>May 7</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>May 14</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>May 21</b>	<b>26</b>



10 Barb McGregor  
17 Mary Lou Miller

**June Head Usher: Gloria Phelps****Liturgist**

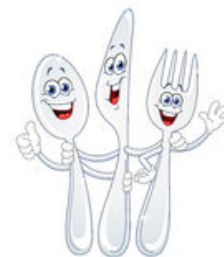
June 4	Libby Underhill
June 11	Linda Wagner
June 18	Shirlee Harold
June 25	Mary Hayes

**Greeter**

Ken Paulson
Gini Sande
Barb McGregor
Linnea Mostad

Communion setup: Jan Burger and Kathy Burger

Serving Communion: Barb McGregor and Donna Dickinson

**Supper Club****5:30, at****Rutgers*****Supper Club will be meeting on Thursday, June 15 at 5:30pm***

Please call Dianne Roholt directly at 444-2859 for your reservations!

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

**All are welcome!**



## Scout Troop #25 is our Benevolence for the month of June



Scout Troop 25 of First Presbyterian Church in Bemidji continues to grow! We have meetings every week, campouts every month, and we throw in extra day outings and service projects here and there. Over the last 12 months, we have had 11 new Scouts join our Troop. We have also had a few age out or find other things to do. Overall, we have grown to a membership of 35 Scouts. We also continue to have a strong contingent of adults who continue to be wonderfully committed to the success of our program.

We have had lots of fun outings in recent months. In August, we took 14 scouts and 4 adults on a canoe adventure through the Boundary Waters. In October, we held our annual “Bushcraft” campout southeast of Bemidji. At Bushcraft, the Scouts sleep in shelters that they construct themselves and cook over fires rather than stoves. In December, we spent a weekend in Duluth touring an art museum, the maritime museum, and the lift bridge, and we did a service project cleaning a large church.

In January, we held our annual Lock-In at the church. In February, we attended the Klondike Derby near Virginia, Minnesota. At the Klondike, the Scouts competed against other Troops in various Scout skill competitions. We camped at nearby Camp Leander in the deep snow — all scouts and adults making snow shelters and spending a brisk night out. We had a back-up shelter if it was needed, but just like last year, every Scout camped outside all night! It was another nice weekend for building self-confidence!

In March, we held a sledding campout at Shingobee Recreation Area near Walker. In April, we had about 20 Scouts at our annual “New Scout” campout at Camp Nushka on Cass Lake.

During the fall, we also had fun with Welding merit badge. Ehren and Britt Inkel were kind enough to teach us and let us practice welding in their garage. During the winter, we did skating merit badge, and we are just finishing up architecture merit badge right now.

Every spring, we introduce our new Scouts to Scouting and camping, and we are now starting up Cycling merit badge for the summer. At the end of the summer, the troop will take a 50 mile bike ride on the Mesabi Trail, all to be completed within 8 hours.

This June, one of our Scouts is on staff with NYLT (National Youth Leader Training), and 4 or 5 of our Scouts will attend this week-long training near Duluth. NYLT has been a wonderful program and has helped several of our Scouts in recent years gain strong leadership skills.

In July, we will spend an adventurous week at Camp Wilderness. We have about 20 Scouts signed up to attend summer camp this year.

As you all know so well, Scouting is a tremendous program for growing responsible, strong, independent, and resourceful young people who will be the leaders of our future. Thank you, First Presbyterian, for being our sponsor and for your support of our Bemidji kids!

Greg Roberts  
Scoutmaster, Troop 25, Bemidji

# Your session at work

## First Presbyterian Church

**APPROVED: 5-16-23**

**Bemidji, MN**

**April 17, 2023**

The monthly stated meeting of the session of First Presbyterian Church was held in the Conference Room on April 17, 2023, at 1:00 pm. The meeting was opened with prayer by Moderator, Pastor Chip Holt.

## ELDERS PRESENT CONSTITUTING A QUORUM:

Cheryl Hiltz, Linnea Mostad, Terri Murray, Bev Novak, Gloria Phelps, and Libby Underhill.

## QUORUM DECLARED

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA** - MSP to approve

**MEETING MINUTES** - MSP to approve the minutes from the March Session meeting as corrected.

## CORRESPONDENCE

Note from Marlene Zech

Correspondence sent to Waste Management regarding end of service contract. This is the third request to quit billing and to pick up their dumpster.

## CLERK'S REPORT

First Presbyterian Church, Bemidji, MN, Clerk's Report - April 17, 2023

**Weddings:** None

**Baptisms:** None

**Deaths:** None

**New Members:** None

**Return to Active Membership:** None

**Request Transfer of Membership:** None

**Removed from Membership Roll:** 0

**Communion:** April 2, 2023: 31 served

**Membership** as of April 17, 2023: 66

## Sunday Worship Attendance:

March 26th: 23	April 2nd: 31	April 9th: 49	April 16th: 28
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**FINANCIAL REPORT** - Finances from March were reviewed.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Administration/Personnel** Chairperson:

Bev Novak; Chip will be gone April 19 - 25th for study leave and vacation.

**Buildings & Grounds** Chairperson: Terri

Murray; a contractor has examined the needed cement work around the building including steps and windows. An estimate is forthcoming. Guardian Pest Control will spray the exterior in June.

**Finance & Stewardship** Chairperson:

Cheryl Hiltz; no report

**Adult & Christian Education** Chairperson:

Linnea Mostad; an update on Seekers was given.

**Outreach** Chairperson: Linnea Mostad reported that First Presbyterians served at the Bemidji Food Shelf the 4th Friday in March. Acoustics, a musical group, has requested a place to stay while in the area. This would include the church serving three meals/day for three days. After discussion, this request was declined.

**Worship & Music** Chairperson: Gloria Phelps; Bell Choir will play Mother's Day. The church will host a Church Area Musicians' program this summer. Date to be determined.

## OTHER BUSINESS

**Computer Committee:** Chairperson:

Cheryl Hiltz; no report

**Kitchen Fellowship Committee:**

Session Contact Person: Cheryl Hiltz; A recommendation from the committee to have Table Fellowship follow a quarterly schedule was approved. Coffee Fellowship will continue the first and third Sundays. Table Fellowship is scheduled for July 2<sup>nd</sup> and October 1st.

**NEW BUSINESS**

No report at this time on the submitted grant to the Neilson Foundation.

An advertising offer from a local radio station was discussed. Offer was declined.

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, May 16th**, at 1:00 pm. in the conference room. Chip will moderate.

**MSP** to adjourn with prayer at 3:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Libby Underhill

**I LIKE TO CALL IT PRAYER**

To seek the heights and depths of thought  
And pause in silence there;  
Some call it meditation...  
I like to call it prayer.

To look out on the troubled world  
And find the true and fair;  
Some call it contemplation...  
I like to call it prayer

To give oneself for others.  
To lift and love and share;  
Some call it consecration...  
I like to call it prayer.

To sense a silent, reverent awe  
At beauty everywhere;  
Some call it adoration...  
I like to call it prayer.

Helen Lawrie Marshall

**Peaceful Shores**

*Lazy Day  
In the sun,  
A breeze begins to blow,  
There she sits  
On the shore;  
A boat upon the water.*

*Rocking gently  
With the waves;  
A peace  
She has to offer.  
I place myself  
Within her shell;*

*My mind  
Starts to wander.  
Nothing to do,  
Nothing to know'  
Just silently  
Rocking to and fro.*

*Here she sits  
Just her and I;  
Rocking gently  
With the tide;  
A boat upon the water.*

A poem from "A collection of Poetry Volume 1"  
by Terri Lea

**Sundays**  
**10:00 am**  
**Worship**  
**11:00am**  
**Fellowship**



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
						
4 Pastor Chip- communion Fellowship	5 Meals on Wheels	6	7	8	9	10
						
11 Pastor Chip	12 9:30am Meadows Mtg.	13	14	15  5:30 pm Sup- per Club at Ruttgers	16	17
18 Pastor Chip  Fathers Day	19	20  1:00 pm Session Mtg	21	22	23	24
25 Pulpit Supply	26  7pm Scouts	27	28	29	30	



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