

March

Chip's Chatter

Living Lent

The end of the month has really caught up with me and I find myself saturated with many activities surrounding the life of our church. I thought I could simply write an article about Lent and what it means and move the monthly newsletter off my plate. I wanted to provide a simple guide for Lenten practices in the Presbyterian/Reformed tradition. Yikes, was I surprised to learn about the Reformers approach to Lent!

I soon discovered in Reformed churches, liturgical seasons may not play a large role. The liturgical seasons, however, give us the opportunity to focus on various portions of the life of Jesus. Presbyterians tend to follow the church liturgical cycle and our Standard Common Lectionary follows that pattern. The church year always starts in December with Advent; a time in which reflect on Jesus' Second coming as well as His first coming and proceeds through Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Holy Week, Easter, and the Season after Pentecost.

I found some great guidance in the Presbyterian Book of Common Worship: "The season of Lent is a time for growth in faith through prayer, spiritual discipline, and self-examination in preparation for the commemoration of the dying and rising of the Lord Jesus Christ." It further states: "Reconciliation is a key theme in the season of Lent — reconciliation with God and with one another through the grace of Jesus Christ."

The season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday. On this day we are reminded that everything we have, even our lives do not last forever. During our Ash Wednesday service, you may receive ashes placed on the forehead and hear the words: "You are dust, and to dust you shall return." Lent lasts 40 days, not including Sundays. It can be likened to the Great Flood, Moses' time at Mt Sinai, Elijah's journey to Mt. Horeb, Jonah's call to Ninevah to repent and Jesus' time of testing with Satan in the wilderness.

Now things get interesting. The Reformers had strong thoughts on the observance of Lent. Their main objection seemed to evolve around some sort of "mandated" ritual or practice. The most common example of this is the practice of "fasting". The Reformers asked why we would give up some practice (perhaps sinful) only during Lent but then immediately return to the practice once Lent was over. Further, commanding certain rituals and practices during Lent detracted from our Christian liberty. We must remember God has identified those things which are sinful and should be under the practice of self-denial all year.

In addition, there is the idea that we elevate ourselves to a high spiritual level than others who do not do so.

Enter the other side of the discussion. Lent is to be devoted to prayer, spiritual discipline and self-examination in preparation for Easter. I think this is key to our own individual practices of Lent. You see, it tells us to clear our minds of the clutter of this life in order to focus on the coming of Easter. Taking that approach, we can easily give up lawful things in order to concentrate on prayer and spiritual discipline. This is not wrong. I would agree to giving up anything that clutters my spiritual relationship with the Father. But, I need to de-clutter each and every day and not just during Lent. The liturgical cycle gives us some direction on where we need to focus our spiritual growth throughout the year.

Lent underscores the paschal mystery by showing the way to Easter is through Jesus' redemptive work on the cross. As Paul tells us, we must die with Christ who was raised for us. We obtain a new life as the old life/self has passed away. In the new life, we embrace and are reminded, especially during Lent, of the need to daily surrender the old life.

For me, Lent is a time to examine those things in my life which produce the clutter that blocks my continued growth and relationship to Jesus. One of my practices is to devote a few days of silent meditation and prayer during a time of retreat. I am always with other people who practice the season of Lent differently than my own customs. I always enjoy the discussions on what and why these people have chosen to do so. As I listen to their stories, I sometimes can identify yet another part of the life I need to de-clutter.

One of the recent developments in Reformed thinking is the approach called balance. I believe this is how we need to approach Lent. It is a balance between prayer, meditation, spiritual discipline and self-examination using whatever means we need to draw closer to Jesus. If, by giving up something for a time, it enables you to focus on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, then I see nothing that conflicts with the Reformers' ideas. The key is balance.

May your Lenten season be one of unprecedented spiritual growth and recognition of our need for a Savior. It is with God's gift of Grace through His Son that makes sense of this.

I would like to invite all First Presbyterian Church members to a Taize service to be held at Calvary Lutheran Church on Sunday evening March 10th at 7PM. It will be like the Advent Taize Service, full of music, prayers and readings. A truly inspirational service. It is at Calvary Lutheran but First Presbyterian is helping sponsor it. All are welcome and hope to see you there. Pastor Chip

Volunteers

We are in need of your help. We are asking you to help fill the spots for greeters, liturgists, and ushers. You don't need to worry if you have not done it before as we will give good instructions. The sign up sheets are down in the fellowship hall on the desk and pens are there also.

Please help out your church and volunteer!

We are also looking for someone to help out in IT and with the sound board. Please call the church office if you are interested.



- 1 **Bill Beck**
- 7 **Joe Forbes**
- 10 **Jenny Miller**
- 13 **Pat Matheny**



Service Chair: Dianne Roholt			
Gloria Aylesworth	751-7841	Betty Hanson-Lehman	751-2133
Jan Kuleta	751-1732	Richard & Mary Lou Miller	333-1323
Dixie Wirkus	553-0796		

Communion in January

Set-up: Joan Forbes and Vera Weis

Serving/helping with clean up: Duane & Mary Hayes; Libby Underhill; Joyce Ackerman; Donna Dickinson

Set-Up: Joan Forbes and Vera Weis

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

Head Usher: Donna Dickinson

	<u>Ushers:</u>	<u>Greeter</u>	<u>Liturgists:</u>
March 3	Brenda Miller		Betty Hanson-Lehman
March 10	Joe & Joan Forbes		
March 17		Gini Sande	
March 24			Ruth Andersen
March 31			



Supper Club
Sparkling Waters
Friday, March 15th @ 5:30



Supper Club will be meeting Friday, March 15th at Sparkling Waters. Please sign up at the church office: by email or the sign up sheet on Sundays: presbji@paulbunyan.net -or- by phone; 444-5016, on or before Wednesday, March 13th.

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

All are welcome!

FINANCIAL REPORT—Month Ending January 31, 2019

Total Income	\$10,177.77
Total Expenses	\$11,311.51
Net Income	(\$ 1,133.74)
Memorial Fund	\$13,500.69
Endowment Fund	\$74,779.72
Communion Served—34	

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.

Lent

We are once again doing Lent Services, starting with Ash Wednesday, March 6. The Ash Wednesday service is scheduled for 5PM with soup and bread to follow in the fellowship hall. We will also be having Noon Lenten Service each Wednesday of Lent in the Chapel.



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.

4th Sunday Benevolence Bemidji Community Food Shelf



As the month of March approaches it brings the March Food Share campaign. Many of our neighbors are experiencing food insecurity. One way we can help is to donate generously during March. We all know that our monetary donations are somewhat matched by the state formula, not 100% matched, but enough to make a significant difference. Another way to help is to “rotate your stock” meaning to go through your cup-

boards and donate anything there that you’ve had for a while. Don’t worry about expiration dates. Donate the item and let the Food Shelf figure it out. Another way to help is to clip and save Our Family UPC labels. Every label you clip means 5 cents for the Food Shelf. It all counts up! So in summary, please keep our Food Shelf in your plan of giving. The Food Shelf thanks you and so do I.

Linnea

Music of Mozart Concert, Sunday evening, Jan 27 presented by students of BSU and hosted by Arianna Hady, our intern. Unfortunately the weather did not co-operate and was quite stormy. Those who attended did enjoy.



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

The monthly stated meeting of the session of First Presbyterian Church was held in the church conference room on February 19, 2019 at 2:08pm. The meeting was opened with prayer by Moderator Pastor Chip Holt.

ELDERS PRESENT CONSTITUTING A QUORUM: Cheryl Hiltz, Libby Underhill, Donna Dickinson,
Palmer Berg

ELDERS ABSENT AND EXCUSED: Linnea Mostad, Gloria Phelps

OTHERS PRESENT: Clerk of Session Mary Hayes

QUORUM DECLARED

ADOPTION OF AGENDA **Approved** with additions to Other Business

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

CORRESPONDENCE Letter from KFC, 2 requests for active membership status, apportionment info from Presbytery.

CLERK'S REPORT was accepted.

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

Weddings: none

Baptisms: none

Deaths: none

New Members: none

Return to Active Membership: none

Request Transfer of Membership: none

Removed from Membership Roll: none

Communion: Feb. 3 34 served

Serving: Donna Dickinson, Joyce Ackerman, Libby Underhill, Duane & Mary Hayes

Membership as of February 19, 2019 76

FINANCIAL REPORT The financial report was distributed and reviewed. The format for session financial reports was agreed upon. Comparisons between formats will be made quarterly. Line items in the reports will be grouped by committee headings if possible. Investment values have risen \$31,219 in the last month. **MSP** to correct two posting errors in the Memorial Fund account by moving the funds to the general fund. Note was made that these two posting errors were included in the 2018 Annual Report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Outreach The report was reviewed. The importance of having a 'Minute for Mission' speaker for each 4th Sunday benevolence was emphasized. A new benevolence has been started. The 'Make a Change' jar near the entrance to the sanctuary will collect change for quarterly benevolences. The current one is for Churches United Easter ham distribution.

OTHER BUSINESS

MSP to appoint Mary Hayes as Clerk of Session for 2019.

MSP to appoint Cheryl Hiltz as church Treasurer for 2019.

MSP to return Carla Ellingson and Terri Murray to active membership status.

MSP to transfer \$500 to the Kitchen checking account in accordance with the 2019 budget.

MSP to change the committee structure to: Administration/Personnel, Buildings & Grounds, Finance & Stewardship, Outreach, Worship & Music, and Adult & Christian Education. The MOO (Manual of Operations) will be updated accordingly. An elder will chair each committee. The chairpersons will be responsible for recruiting at least two other committee members. Volunteers will be sought. Discussion included having all committee chairpersons be part of Administration/Personnel.

The committee chairpersons so far will be Palmer, Buildings & Grounds; Cheryl, Finance and Stewardship, with Donna as a committee member; Libby, Outreach; Gloria, Worship & Music.

An Ash Wednesday service will be held at 5:00 pm. Lenten prayer services will be held on Wednesdays at noon and will include Psalms, scripture, Prayer and Lord's Prayer. The community will be invited. A Maundy Thursday service will be held at 7:00 pm.

MSP to authorize Chip to use the church credit card to purchase a vacuum at Home Depot at a cost not to exceed \$150.

First Presbyterian will host Net of the North on March 21 from 11:30-1:00. Lunch will be served. Church keys will be assigned to the new elders. One key still needs to be collected from an outgoing elder. A lock box for the custodian's key will be placed in a protected spot.

MSP for bank account signatories for Checking, Money Market, Endowment, and Kitchen to be as follows: Checking, Money Market, Endowment- Donna Dickinson, Cheryl Hiltz, Gloria Phelps
Money Market – Joe Forbes

Kitchen – Joan Forbes, Brenda Miller

All accounts – Online Read Only Access – Bookkeeper Lyn Johnson

All accounts – Online Complete Access – Treasurer Cheryl Hiltz

Scout Troop 25 is now a Linked Troop having male and female members.

Chip did a short presentation on the article "Six Reasons People are Leaving Your Church". A visioning

meeting for elders will be held in the future.

Next Meeting: March 19 at 2:00 pm.

The meeting was adjourned with the Lord's Prayer led by Pastor Chip at 3:55pm.

Sundays
 10:00 Worship
 Service
 11:00 Fellowship

March 2019



SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT

					1	2
3 Chip Holt Preaching Communion	4 6pm-Scouts	5	6 Ash Wednesday Service @ 5pm Bread & Soup follows. 6:30-Cal vary Chapel	7	8	9
10 Chip Holt Preaching Ordination/ Installation of Linnea Mostad	11 6pm-Scouts	12	13 12:00pm Lenten Prayer Service/Chapel 6:30-Calvary Chapel	14	15 Supper Club 5:30 @ Sparkling Waters	16
17 Chip Holt Preaching	18 6pm-Scouts	19 2pm Session Mtg	20 12:00pm Lenten Prayer Service/Chapel 6:30-Calvary Chapel	21 11:15-1:30 Net of the North	22	23
24 Tony Peffer Preaching	25 6pm-Scouts	26 .	27 12:00pm Lenten Prayer Service/Chapel 6:30-Calvary Chapel	28	29	30
31 Chip Preaching						