

# First Church News

Volume 1 issue 3

March, 2024



## Chip's Chatter

As we enter the month of March, we are headlong into the Lenten Season. Easter is early this year and we will celebrate Easter on March 31. For Christians, this is the greatest day of the church year. We celebrate Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday and then we follow the days of Holy Week leading to the crucifixion, death, and resurrection on Easter Sunday morning. What a day that is for all of us! But what about the other Sundays of the year?

The Presbyterian Church (USA) Book of Common Worship states this: "We gather to worship God on the Lord's Day (Sunday) because the Gospels testify that Jesus rose from the dead early on the first day of the week. The Lord's Day is also called the "eighth day" of creation, a sign of the new creation that has begun with Christ's resurrection. While we may worship God on any day and at any time, the Sunday service in particular is a celebration of Christ's resurrection and an anticipation of the fullness of God's coming reign."

I'm not sure if you caught this fact. Each Sunday service is a celebration of Christ's resurrection. You see, we should celebrate each and every Sunday as if it were Easter Sunday morning. Think about this, we meet in the presence of the living Lord. The Lord

who first appeared to the disciples of the first day of the week. Resurrection day! While we do other things during worship, all of the activities are designed to keep this one thing first and foremost in our minds. The pattern of our worship supports the celebratory feeling.

When we think of our Sunday service as a celebration of a continuing Easter, I think it changes our entire mindset. We sing louder. We listen more intently to the liturgist readings. We begin to notice the hymns we sing support the lessons of the day. The hymn selections have words that emphasize the first and second readings as well as the Gospel message. With a celebratory mindset, we learn an awful lot of theology just by singing the great hymns of the faith. With a celebratory mindset, we find we want to learn even more about Jesus.

But what happens on the other days of the week? It really doesn't matter as we remind ourselves the joy of Easter continues throughout all the days of the year. In fact, you can have a home version of worship by following the outline of events from our weekly church bulletin. The **bold letters** below are the major sections of our Sunday service. Perhaps you can have daily devotion time and occasionally have a more detailed "worship" service in your home.

We **prepare for worship** – It can be as simple as sitting quietly at home in your comfortable chair.

We can have a **call to worship** – Typically

drawn from sentences of scripture.

We can **sing a hymn or read a Psalm** – We should all memorize at least 2 verses of the great hymns.

We can have a **prayer** – A prayer giving thanks and praise to God.

We can have a **confession and pardon** – We must confess our sins, both known and unknown.

We can have a **prayer for illumination** – Call on the Holy Spirit to empower the reading and understanding.

We can **read scripture** – If you use daily devotionals, they are a great source for finding scripture.

For the **sermon**, we could and should meditate on the scripture we have just read.

We can **affirm our faith** – Use the Apostle's Creed.

We can have a time for **prayers of intercession** for others and also specify our own needs.

We can be of **service to the world** – We go forth to love and serve the Lord in daily living.

While a celebratory mindset is great, it can also be taken to the extreme. One of the great things I have learned through the years is this advice: "Guard against extremes." I have worshiped in many different churches. Some are traditional and others are more contemporary using praise bands and standing while singing. In both cases the congregations were celebrating. Sadly, a couple of contemporary churches I experienced had gone "over the top." These churches had praise bands and excellent music, but they also had flashing lights and even a smoke generator as they sang. The sound was deafening and at a level that could cause hearing damage. In essence

the churches that did this were actually putting on a performance and a show. What was missing in these churches was a time of dedicated, serious prayer. Prayer is at the heart of worship. It is a gift from God. Prayer is also the primary way in which we participate in worship.

The Presbyterian Book of Confessions contains "The Westminster Confession of Faith." This confession was written in the 1600's and contains this comment on worship: "But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshipped according to the imagination and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scripture." (para 6.112)

I think the key here is "balance." Just as we need balance in our lives, we especially need it in worship. Just as we need balance between work and play, we need it for prayer and worship. People living in religious communities strive for a balance between the work of the community and prayer. We can also say the same thing about our worship experience. Sometimes it is good to celebrate Sunday morning. But it is equally important to spend some of the time in serious prayer and contemplation. Here's a good example of what I am talking about. I was once part of a church of 4,000 member. Each Sunday service lasted 90 minutes; 45 minutes of praise music and 45 minutes of preaching/teaching. The service opened with a greeting and prayer and went straight to contemporary praise music. About half way through the music time, the music transitioned to a softer style and slowed down. Many of the songs had deep meaning and even reminded us of the price that was paid for us. The song time would end and prayers of intercession we made. After that time the preaching/teaching began. If you came to church at the beginning of worship you might have



## Minnesota again hits a new record number of food shelf visits

More Minnesotans visited food shelves in 2023 than any year in recent history. More residents are also relying on food stamps than any year since 2016 as stagnant wages and rising costs bust budgets.

More Minnesotans are finding themselves in dire need. From Brooklyn Center to Bemidji, food shelves saw a record number of visits in 2023 compared to any year in recent history, according to new state data released this week by Hunger Solutions Minnesota.

The state recorded more than 7.5 million food shelf visits, breaking 2022's record by more than 2 million visits — a more than 30% increase. More Minnesotans also received food stamps in 2023 than any year since 2016, with an average of 447,000 residents a month enrolled in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

"We know folks are still struggling from the impacts of the pandemic," said Tikki Brown, assistant commissioner of children and family services at the Minnesota Department of Human Services. "Seven million visits is incredibly high ... we want to make sure we can help address that."

A small fraction of the rise in food shelf visits last year could reflect that some food shelves have revised their policies to let people visit more often, getting less food per visit, according to Hunger Solutions, which runs a food helpline. But the number of pounds of food that was distributed in 2023 also rose 10% from 2022. Brown said that SNAP outreach has also improved, so more families who qualify for food stamps are enrolling.

In 2023, Minnesota recorded the highest average number of people receiving food stamps in recent years. The record for the Supplementary Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), or food stamps, was in 2013, with more than 530,000 recipients.

In 2022, the Food Shelf served 9,219 families comprised of 28,894 individuals

In 2024 they served 11,913 families comprised of 35,510 individuals

On average, 70 families are served every day the food shelf is open.

Customers can only come to the food shelf once every calendar month with two extra emergency visits (14 visits a year).

We are an emergency food shelf and provide services through TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program).

Our customers only receive enough food to last them 3-5 days (or approx. 10 meals worth).

70% of customers only come to the food shelf 1-4 times.

Almost 600,000 pounds of food were distributed in 2022 and in 2024 it was 755,338 pounds of food.

A majority of the food distributed at the food shelf (about  $\frac{2}{3}$ ) is purchased with monetary donations.

BCFS was started in 1982 when six area churches-including E Free!-joined together to feed hungry people. It has since grown to include 16 area churches.

We are not affiliated with any government agency. We are a faith-based organization that operates on grants and donations.

It takes about 150 volunteers each week to run our Food Shelf

**FINANCIAL REPORT—Month Ending 1/31/2024****Monthly requirement to meet our budget \$10,705.00**

Total Income	\$12,419.21
Total Expenses	\$ 9,950.63
Net Income	\$ 2,468.58

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

Dec 24th	37
Dec 31st	24
Jan 7th	22
Jan 14th	12
Jan 21st	27

**March Birthdays**

10	Jenny Miller
19	Henry Holt

**Head Usher: Cheryl Hiltz**

<b>March 3:</b>	<b>Mary Hayes</b>	<b>Linnea Mostad</b>
<b>March 10</b>	<b>Linda Wagner</b>	<b>Gini Sande</b>
<b>March 17</b>	<b>Ruth Anderson</b>	<b>Barb McGregor</b>
<b>March 24</b>	<b>Dianne Roholt</b>	<b>Bev Novak</b>
<b>March 31</b>	<b>Libby Underhill</b>	<b>Len Paulson</b>

**Communion Prep:** Mary Hayes and Duane Hayes**Communion Serve:** Mary Hayes and Duane Hayes**Kitchen: Chair:** Brenda Miller with Betty Hanson-Lehman, Shirlee Harold and Cheryl Hiltz*Supper Club*

this month will be at

**Brigid's Pub: 317 Beltrami Ave****At 5:30**

Please call Dianne Roholt directly at 218-444-2859 for your  
reservations!

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

**All are welcome!**

(Chips chatter—continued from pg 2)

thought it was a rock concert. But a little later, you would think you were part of a traditional, mainstream service. It was easy to see why they had 4,000 members. This church had balance.

As we proceed through Lent to Palm Sunday, Holy Week, and Easter, let us all strive for balance in all that we do.

Blessings

*Chip*

### *Wrinkles of Time*

*Age and time  
Taught us to be wise  
By the beholder;  
Paths of Worry,  
Happiness and sorrow,  
To look in the mirror-  
Shows the faces of tomorrow.*

*Lines of wonder  
Struggle and strife,  
Lessons learned  
A heart that cries;  
History has taken  
Us all for a ride,  
The mirror reflects-  
Wrinkles of Time*

By: Terri Murry

### **Our Lenten Services have begun.**

They will be held in the chapel on the third floor. They will begin around 1:00 following the Seekers Meeting.

They will run until the 20th of March as Palm Sunday is March 24 and Easter is March 31st.

You can sign up for Easter Lilies beginning this Sunday the 25th and again on March 3rd with the final Sunday will be March 10th. The cost this year will be \$9. There will be someone in the back of the sanctuary to help you.





# Your session at work

**First Presbyterian Church**     **Approved**  
**Bemidji, MN**  
**January 16, 2024**

The monthly stated meeting of the session of First Presbyterian Church was held in the Conference Room on January 16, 2024, 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 December Session meeting.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

Thank you note from the Bemidji Food Shelf for the church's recent donation.

Thank you note from Lutheran Social Services (Meals on Wheels) for the church's recent donation.

## **CLERK'S REPORT**

First Presbyterian Church, Bemidji, MN, Clerk's Report - January 16, 2024

**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:** January 7, 2024: 22 served

**Membership** as of January 16, 2024: 64

December 24th: 37	December 31st: 24	January 7th: 22	January 14th: 12
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**Sunday Worship Attendance:**

**FINANCIAL REPORT** - Finances from December were reviewed.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Administration/Personnel:** Chairperson: Bev Novak; no report

**Buildings & Grounds:** Chairperson: Terri Murray; shared an estimate from DBS to fix the basement wall; will be seeking an additional quote.

**Finance & Stewardship:** Chairperson: Cheryl Hiltz; the 2024 budget was presented and discussed. **MSP** to approve.

**Adult & Christian Education:** Chairperson: Linnea Mostad; Next session of Seekers will start in late January, early February. The topic will be chosen shortly.

**Outreach:** Chairperson: Linnea Mostad reported that First Presbyterians will serve at the Bemidji Food Shelf on January 26th.

**Worship & Music:** Chairperson: Gloria Phelps; Nancy Weber has joined the Worship & Music Committee.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

**Computer Committee:** Chairperson: Cheryl Hiltz; no report.

**Nominating Committee:** Chairperson: Cheryl Hiltz; the committee nominates the following to serve as elders for the upcoming terms – Cheryl Hiltz (1 year term), Linnea Mostad (3-year term). **MSP** to approve.

**Kitchen Fellowship Committee:** Coffee fellowship will resume after every Sunday service beginning January 21<sup>st</sup>.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Joshua St Germaine from ZippySites presented options for an updated church website. Discussion followed.

Chip announced that he has been asked to serve as Vice Moderator for the Presbytery of Northern Waters. This is a three-year term.

Boy Scout Troop #25 has asked to use the church kitchen and fellowship hall for their annual Pancake Breakfast on Sunday, March 24<sup>th</sup> (Palm Sunday). **MSP** to approve.

There is a need for a third check signer for the church. Linnea Mostad agreed to be the third signer. **MSP** to approve.

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 20, 2024**, at 1:00 pm. in the conference room. Chip will moderate.

**MSP** to adjourn with prayer at 2:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Libby Underhill  
Clerk of Session

If there is any one in the congregation that wishes to bring flowers for the Sanctuary please let the office know or talk to Gloria Phelps. We want to keep fresh flowers in the Sanctuary as often as we can.

**Coffee fellowship is returning to every Sunday beginning immediately. Please come and enjoy the continued fellowship with coffee and a treat**



Seekers is ongoing again Wednesdays. It will be in the conference room beginning at 12:00. The subject for this class will be the **Book of Acts**

and runs for 10 weeks.

Also, Lenten services will be running every Wednesday following seekers at 1:00pm and runs through March 20.

See you there!!



We are small  
but we are faithful

**Sundays**  
**10:00 am**  
**Worship**  
**11:00am**  
**Fellow-**  
**ship**



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3 Pastor Chip Communion Fellowship	4  7pm Scouts	5	6 Seekers 12pm  6pm Calvary	7	8	9
10 Pastor Chip Fellowship	11  7pm Scouts	12	13 Seekers 12pm  <b>Ash Wed, 4pm Service</b>	14	15	16
17 Pulpit Supply	18  7pm Scouts	19  1pm Session	20 Seekers 12pm Lent srv 1pm  6pm Calvary	21  Supper Club 5:30 PEO 5-7pm	22	23
24 Pastor Chip Palm Sunday Pancake Break- fast	25 Holy Week  7pm Scouts	26	27 Seekers 12pm Lent srv 1pm  6pm Calvary	28  Maundy Thurs Service 7pm	29  Good Friday	30
31 Pastor Chip Easter Sunday						



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