

SEPTEMBER

Chip's Chatter

öFinding the Magic Pillö

Declining church membership is being felt by many main stream denominations with ours as one of them. Many people keep asking how to reverse this trend. They seem to be looking for the ömagic pillö that will make everything better.

Years ago, declining membership was blamed on the style of church music. People insisted churches needed to have öPraise Bandsö including lots of guitars, drums, and loud singing. Traditional hymns were discarded and replaced by music whose lyrics are hard to hear and understand. Some churches even added smoke and flashing lights! What happened next was disappointing. It split larger churches since they were now offering a Traditional Service and a Contemporary Service. The stage was now set for what became known as öWorship Warsö with each side pitted against the other.

Oddly enough, today's Millennials are now saying they feel short changed and are desiring a Traditional worship service. Their only request is to update the language in some of the great hymns. For example, öHow Great Thou Artö becomes öHow Great You Areö. They expect only one thing; be authentic in your faith. That is to say öpractice what you preachö or live out your faith authentically. These are not at all unreasonable requests. In

fact, I wonder if the öContemporary Serviceö will go the way of bell bottom trousers!

Today, we keep looking for the ömagic pillö. Some insist modern technology is the answer saying we must put message boards in our sanctuary in order to draw young people. Sadly, social media, smart phones, fancy Web sites, large screens, are all seen as the only possible answers. These ötoolsö never consider the most important part of any church: The building and maintaining of relationships inside and outside the church.

Over the past 15 months, I have been doing a lot of research as to what builds or re-builds a church. I have consulted with over 30 pastors within and outside our denomination. I have read material on subjects like ö6 Reasons People are Leaving Your Churchö, ö7 Things All Churches Wantö, öFive Reasons Church Members Attend Less Frequentlyö, ö11 Reasons to Keep Screens out of the Sanctuaryö, and the list goes on. What is most interesting is electronic ötechnologyö is never listed as a reason people join a church.

The number one response from pastors on how to build or re-build a church can be summed up in one word: Relationships. As I wrote in last February's Newsletter, people learn and receive information by visual, auditory, and touch. As one of the articles written says: öAt its core, the information (preaching) should be about how to know

God and enter into a personal relationship with Him through His Son, Jesus Christ.ö Did you catch that? Our main objective is öto bring people to know God and enter into a personal **relationship** with Him through His Son, Jesus Christ.ö It is our relationship with new and returning guests, established members, and faith seekers that sets the stage for growth and helps lead them to Christ.

A few days ago I attended the weekly pastor's text study and the subject of relationships came up. The discussion began with someone making this observation: We have made relationship with God about "doing" and *not about "being."*ö The idea is the more obedient we are, the deeper our relationship with God becomes. Sounds pretty legalistic to me. Instead there is nothing that deepens our relationship with God than just being in his presence. Our sanctuary is a great place to start. That is why the maintenance of our "architectural integrity" is so critical. The architects of our church recognized this requirement. Our church is so beautiful because the architects designed it with all elements needed to remind us of God. No visual technology is needed because it has already been built into our church.

Finally, the study group also remarked God is actually a participant in our worship, for it is here that we meet God. Someone noted we tend to "minister to" people rather than "**minister with**" people. There it is again, ministering **with** is about relationships.

Last month I spoke with one of our smallest congregations facing declining membership and an aging congregation. Their Pastor, a non-Presbyterian, asked me to seek information from the Presbytery as to how to reverse this trend. I was asked if PC(USA)/Presbytery had any helpful checklists, activities, ideas, etc. that one can use? Taking this pastor's concern to the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry, I learned of a program initiated by General Assembly in 2012. The goal of the program was to start 1001 "New Worshiping Communities" in the next ten years. The end of the ten years would make it 2022. This is a grass roots movement and I believe much can be used by established churches facing decline

A report on the progress was prepared in the Spring of 2018. I thought you might be interested in some of the details.

- * 534 New Worshipping Communities (NWC) have been raised up across the PC(USA)
- * Half of the NWCs have 30 or more regular

participants

- * Top priorities of NWCs are:

Building Relationships

Worship

Serving Others

- * 78% of NWC participants were not attending a PC(USA) congregation

* Largest age group in the NWCs is 26-45 year olds

- * 91% of NWC leaders disciple participants in their community using these methods:

One-on-one mentoring (The top method)

Small Groups

Bible Study

Service Projects

Discipleship Courses

* 97% of NWCs engage in some form of Evangelism

Invite others to church (74%)

Social media (73%)

Community Service (66%)

Host events open to the community

(51%)

Contact visitors to welcome them

(47%)

Print Literature (45%)

Local mission work (41%)

Send people into the community

(23%)

Booths at community events (22%)

Welcome gifts for visitors (18%)

International mission work (12%)

(Note how many of these FPC is already doing!)

* 68% of NWC participants are under the age of 45

When I arrived at FPC, I felt we needed to stabilize our church and to let Bemidji know we were still here and open for business. We have seen a great deal of improvement in both those endeavors. Now, it is time to examine just how we go about building relationships. Over the next few months, we hope to look closely at what we believe God's mission for our church is and start thinking of ways to become a church "in the process of re-building."ö I would hope that if you are asked to become part of this process, you would gladly accept and watch how God moves in our church.



- 10 Jeannine Brooks
- 13 Susan Cronemiller
- 23 Libby Underhill
- 26 Carol Close



Communion in August: Set Up: Joan Forbes, Vera Weis

Serving/helping with clean-up: Cheryl Hiltz, Barb McGregor, Libby Underhill, Gloria Phelps

Communion in September: Set Up: Joan Forbes, Vera Weis

Serving/helping with clean-up: Joe Forbes, Joyce Ackerman, Joan Forbes, Mary Lou Miller, Betty Hanson-Lehman

Head Usher: Gloria Phelps

	<u>Ushers:</u>	<u>Greeter</u>	<u>Liturgists:</u>
September 1	Cheryl Hiltz	Donna Enfield & Ray Hamblin	Joe Forbes
September 8	Cheryl Hiltz	Barb McGregor	Betty Hanson-Lehman
September 15	Cheryl Hiltz	Donna Dickinson	Libby Underhill
September 22	Cheryl Hiltz	Gini Sande	Dianne Roholt
September 29	Cheryl Hiltz	Gini Sande	Ruth Andersen

THE FRONT OF OUR SANCTUARY with BEAUTIFUL FLOWERS



FINANCIAL REPORT—Month Ending July 31, 2019		Sunday Worship Attendance Report	
Total Income	\$23,569.86	July 29	38
Total Expenses	\$20,164.41	Aug 4	43
Net Income	\$ 3,405.45	Aug 11	40
Memorial Fund	\$12,275.25	Aug 18	48
Endowment Fund	\$84,760.21	Aug 25	38

September Service Chair: Vera Weis 751-2595

Betty Hanson-Lehman	751-2133	Jan Kuleta	751-1732
Richard & Mary Lou Miller	333-1323	Carol Severn	444-9251
Velma Ward	444-5471	Dixie Wirkus	553-0796



The total cost is \$19,198.00 for our new audio system and to date, we have reached our primary goal! **YEAH GOD!!**

If you would like to make an additional anonymous donation of any kind, please see/contact Pastor Chip.



Our church choir is back singing.

If you love to sing, come and join us. We rehearse at 9am on Sundays before church. **We need you and welcome you!!**



SUPPER CLUB

5:30 on September 20 at Mi Rancho on Anne Street.



Supper Club will be meeting Friday, September 20th at 5:30 at Mi Rancho.

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

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

All are welcome!

The Benevo- lence for Sep- tember goes to Bemidji Meals on Wheels.



If you have any questions re-
garding Meals on Wheels, you
can contact Joe or Joan Forbes
at 751-3965

What is Meals on Wheels?

The Meals on Wheels service delivers hot meals to seniors in their homes or in community centers across the United States. The organization consists of more than 5,000 independent local programs, and more than 2 million people volunteered through Meals on Wheels .

Donors and the Older Americans Act provide funding for Meals on Wheels. The organization also asks recipients to pay for meals if they are able, although payment is not required. In addition to providing food for individuals who can't leave home, Meals on Wheels notes that its delivery service provides a valuable safety check for seniors who live alone.

How does Meals on Wheels determine eligibility?

Meals on Wheels determines eligibility on an individual basis, with priority given to individuals who are at least 60 years old and have a health condition that prevents them from shopping for or preparing their own meals. Younger persons with qualifying conditions are accepted as well.

Meals on Wheels programs are in place in nearly every city in the United States. The organization provides not only meals, but also companionship, transportation, pet food deliveries and home repairs to many eligible participants. However, in areas where many seniors live in poverty and isolation, waiting lists for service are often long. According to current data, 9.3 million Americans over the age of 60 struggle with hunger, 14.8 million are living alone, and 17.6 million have trouble paying for their basic needs.

serving up smiles





Our session at work for you

**First Presbyterian Church
Bemidji, MN
August 20, 2019**

The monthly stated meeting of the session of First Presbyterian Church was held in the church conference room on August 20, 2019 at 2:00 pm. The meeting was opened prayer by Moderator Pastor Chip Holt.

ELDERS PRESENT CONSTITUTING A QUORUM: Gloria Phelps, Palmer Berg, Linnea Mostad, Libby Underhill, Donna Dickinson

ELDERS ABSENT AND EXCUSED: Cheryl Hiltz

OTHERS PRESENT: Clerk of Session Mary Hayes

QUORUM DECLARED

ADOPTION OF AGENDA Approved

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

CORRESPONDENCE Letters of thanks from a church member and First City Singers were received.

CLERK'S REPORT was reviewed and corrected. Communion servers on August 4 were Cheryl Hiltz, Barb McGregor, Libby Underhill, Bob Weber and a volunteer.

Clerk's Report

First Presbyterian Church, Bemidji, MN, Clerk's Report August 20, 2019

Weddings: none

Baptisms: none

Deaths: Marion Christianson - April 3, 1928-July 27, 2019 Memorial Service at Beaux Arts Center on the BSU

Campus, Chip Holt CRE officiating. Inurnment at Greenwood Cemetery, Bemidji.

New Members: none

Return to Active Membership: none

Request Transfer of Membership: none

Removed from Membership Roll: none

Communion: August 4 40 served Serving: Cheryl Hiltz, Barb McGregor, Libby Underhill, Bob Weber and a volunteer.

Membership as of August 20, 2019 74

Sunday Worship Attendance

July 21 - 37 July 28 - 38 August 4 - 43 August 11 -40 August 18 - 48

FINANCIAL REPORT The financial report was distributed and reviewed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Administration/Personnel Chairperson: Donna Dickinson Chip's finalized contract was received from Pres-

bytery.

Buildings & Grounds Chairperson: Palmer Berg Updates on repairs were presented. The clerk of session will draft a letter of thanks to the Scouts for their work painting the black outdoor railings.

Finance & Stewardship Chairperson: Cheryl Hiltz No report

Adult & Christian Education Chairperson: Linnea Mostad Seekers group for fall is in the planning.

Outreach Chairperson: Libby Underhill Community Table will be served on August 21.

Worship & Music Chairperson: Gloria Phelps A report of a presentation by a congregant requesting message boards for the sanctuary was given. **Recommendation to Session:** The project proposed by a congregant titled "Message Board Installation" to be terminated and the project will not go forward. **Approved. Recommendation to Session:** A letter from the Clerk of Session, on behalf of First Presbyterian Church, be sent to the member advising of the Worship Committee's recommendation and the Session's approval. **Approved.**

OTHER BUSINESS

Church members may park in the church parking lot during weekdays.

Jarad Syrstad and Kate Bartlett are seeking church membership. Chip has provided them with membership training.

Chip's request for the purchase of R.C. Sproul lecture series on I Am Statement for \$16 was **approved**.

To prepare to do premarital counseling, Chip has chosen "Prepare Enrich". The material and online training cost of \$225 will be taken from his education account. **Approved.**

A session retreat for discussion and idea sharing will be scheduled. As a precursor, Chip shared information from the book "Piloting Churches" regarding church vitality and sustainability with a focus on relationships.

Next Meeting: September 24 at 2:00 pm. in church conference room. Chip will moderate.

The meeting was adjourned with the Lord's Prayer led by Pastor Chip at 4:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Hayes, Clerk of Session

OUR OWN



FLOWER CHILD

I don't know how many of you know that we have our very own Flower Child amongst us in the congregation. Jan Kuleta has a supercalifragalisticexpalidoshus green thumb. In the fall she supplies us with her beautiful flowers for the sanctuary. We do so appreciate you Jan.

Sundays
 10:00 Worship
 Service
 11:00 Fellowship

September 2019



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 Chip Holt Preaching Communion	2-Office Closed 	3	4 6:30 Calvary	5	6	7
8 Chip Holt Preaching	9 6:00 Scouts	10	11  6:30 Calvary	12	13	14
15 Chip Holt Preaching	16 6:00 Scouts	17	18 6:30 Calvary	19	20 5:30 Supper Club	21 
22 Tony Peffer Preaching	23 6:00 Scouts	24 **2pm-Session Meeting	25 6:30 Calvary	26	27	28
29 Chip Holt Preaching	30 6:00-Scouts					

The church is back on regular hours. Monday-Friday 10am til 2pm.