

MAY



Presbyterian Times

2019

First Presbyterian Church
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A Message from Our Pastor

Rev. Lou Ellen Hartley
Eastertide – The Season of Easter

In the new Book of Common Worship, we read, “As with Christmas, Easter refers not only to a single day, but to a whole season of celebration in the Christian year. The season of Easter spans the fifty days between the Resurrection of the Lord and the Day of Pentecost, and encompasses the Ascension of the Lord...The seven weeks of the Easter season make up a ‘week of weeks’ (seven times seven): a symbol in time of the fullness and abundance of God’s grace. In ancient practice, fasting and kneeling *were forbidden* during the weeks of Easter. In this most joyful season, we *celebrate* the great mystery of our faith – that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead.”

This is a season for us to remember that we are dead to sin, alive in Christ, and live in God’s grace.

That’s right. Eastertide is the anti-Lent, if you will. Instead of thinking about our own sin and death, we celebrate Christ’s victory OVER sin and death. Instead of resting in the grief of the cross, we celebrate life with God through Christ. Instead of sacrificial fasting for six long weeks, we embrace the abundance of God’s grace.

So, the question is, what will you do between now and Pentecost (June 9) to practice Easter? What will you include in your life to celebrate grace, forgiveness, and eternal life? Will you finally have coffee with your neighbor? Will you give thanks for your blessings before you ask for more? Will you extend kindness to strangers; encourage instead of criticize; participate instead of watching from the side lines? How will you find and share joy during this Easter season?

May the joy of Easter permeate every aspect of your life, and may you celebrate the abundance of God.

Peace,

Pastor Lou Ellen

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP AWARD

The Honorary Life Membership program was established in the Presbyterian Church to honor faithful service to the women's organization and to the church. Two ladies who have been a strength to the PW of First Presbyterian received the Lifetime Membership Award at the PW Spring Gathering. Please congratulate Jan Roberts and Karen Hudson.

NO ARTISTIC ABILITY REQUIRED

Please join the Presbyterian Women on Monday, June 3rd at 1:30 in the Journey Room. We will be decorating pillowcases for the children of Puerto Rico. This is a John Calvin Presbyterian Women's project. Most likely these children will not use these as covers for pillows but for keeping their belongings in. We have 24 cases to decorate (we will have designs stamped on some for you to color with fabric markers). So, bring ideas and fabric markers and other supplies for a fun afternoon.

Memorial Garden: Over the past several years there have been 63 engraved Memorial Bricks and 3 (without dates) placed in the Memorial Garden in memory of church members, family members, or, friends.

Each spring orders are taken for the Memorial Bricks. The orders are sent to the Phelps County Monument Co. for engraving (this process takes approximately 6-8 weeks). In the Fall the engraved bricks are placed in the Memorial Garden. Following a Sunday Worship Service, the congregation is invited to the Memorial Garden for a Prayer of Dedication for the newly placed bricks.

During the next couple of months, if you wish, you may place an order for a Memorial Brick in memory of a church member, family, or friend.

The cost of the brick is \$100.00, part of which pays for maintenance of the Garden.

Please contact Katie in the church office or Marilyn Schmidt if you wish to purchase a brick.

Notes from the Way Forward Committee

Jonathan Kimball, Chair

Back in January, we held a leadership retreat and decided to start moving forward with some changes to our building. We are finally done with the first phase. Well, “done” is probably too strong a word! Right now, the Sadler Lounge is where the pastor’s study used to be; the nursery is where the main office used to be; the main office is in the foyer near the chapel; and the pastor’s study is where the Sadler Lounge used to be. The library didn’t move, but some extra items were moved into it.

As you might imagine, this transition took a lot of work from a lot of people. I would first like to thank Katie and Tina, who worked very hard to make the transition as painless for the rest of us as possible. They will continue to work over the coming weeks and months to enhance the layout of the office area, to the benefit of everyone who uses it and everyone who passes through it. Next, I’d like to thank the trustees who assembled furniture, added locks to Katie’s desk, and helped in other ways. Thanks to Marilyn and Nora who helped make the nursery functional and welcoming, a key part of our goal in this transition. And finally, I’d like to thank the anonymous donor who made this move financially achievable. (The Session had voted to use reserves or whatever other funds were needed, but then the donor stepped up to relieve us of that burden.) As of this writing, Lou Ellen is still rearranging her new office to make it more functional for pastoral care and business meetings.

I’m looking forward to the impact this new arrangement will have on our operations. The office will be FAR more accessible for deliveries and visitors. The nursery will be MUCH more welcoming for visitors who have young children. We had a meeting the other day in the Sadler Lounge, and it was quite nice—smaller, but a better layout than the old lounge. There’s even an outlet right next to the table for my laptop!

My hope is that this can be the first step in a long process that makes our building more functional for our congregation. We must always remember that the building is meant to serve us, not the other way around; and that our primary responsibility is to welcome outsiders into fellowship with God’s people. That welcome comes in many forms, but they all amount to seeing the church (building, programs, worship, etc.) from an outsider’s perspective and adjusting to their needs. With God’s help, I’m confident that we can continue to improve and grow into God’s kingdom.

Preschool News:



Teachers return: August 1

Children return: August 8

For a year we have prayed, discerned, re-evaluated, and grieved. Now it is time to celebrate as we prepare to reestablish our ministry to children and families in our community.

More details will be forthcoming as we move into this time of great anticipation and preparation. Please keep this ministry in your prayers.

FROM THE OFFICE

Katie Sands, Office Manager

PRAYER REQUESTS

Please pray for: Bob Mallory (Spinal stroke, Deanne Jackson's father) Betty Lemp, Kelly Look (Surgery), Ken's parents, Ken Kwantes (stroke) and Irene Kwantes (Dementia), Mary Alofs (in rehab/ from fall) Ming and Sophia Leu (sabbatical in Singapore), Marcia Brewer; Neil & Myrita Davis (Myrita on hospice care); Chuck Bennett, Mary Williams; Kathleen Dean (ongoing respiratory issues). The prayer request list will start over about every two months. If you have someone who needs put on or taken off the list, please contact Katie in the office.

May Birthday wishes go out to:

4th Linda Rose, Ron Elliott,

8th Mary Alofs, Sharlene Morgan,

12th Jan Sletten,

14th Russell Fox, Caitlyn Sandquist,

17th Dean Sletten,

20th Rebecca Fox-Rantanen

26th Horace Jeffery,

31st Pam Cottingham



May Anniversary wishes go out to:

28th Ken & Mary Kwantes,

31st Ardel & Christine Rueff



From Frank & Carol Jessop

MINNIE REMEMBERS

God, my hands are old.
I've never said that out loud before,
but they are.
I was so proud of them once.
They were soft
like the velvet smoothness of a firm, ripe peach.
Now the softness is more like worn-out sheets
or withered leaves.
When did these slender, graceful hands
become gnarled, shrunken claws?
When, God?
They lie here in my lap,
naked reminders of this body
that has served me too well.

How long has it been since someone touched me?
Twenty years?
Twenty years I've been a widow;
Respected
Smiled at,
But never touched.
Never held so close that loneliness
was blotted out.

I remember how my mother used to hold me, God.
When I was hurt in spirit or in flesh,
she would gather me close,
stroke my silky hair
and caress my back with her warm hands.
O God, I'm so lonely!

I remember the first boy who ever kissed me.
We were both so new at that.
The taste of young lips and popcorn,
the feeling inside of mysteries to come.

I remember Hank and the babies.
How else can I remember them but together?
Out of the fumbling, awkward attempts of new lovers
 came the babies.
And as they grew, so did our love.
And God, Hank didn't seem to mind
if my body thickened and faded a little.
He still loved it and touched it.
and we didn't mind if we were no longer beautiful.
And the children hugged me a lot.
O God, I'm lonely.

God, why didn't we raise the kids to be silly
 and affectionate
as well as dignified and proper?

You see, they do their duty.
They drive up in their fine cars.
They come to my room and pay their respects.
They chatter brightly and reminisce.
But they don't touch me.
They call me "Mom"
 or "Mother"
 or "Grandma".

Never Minnie.
My mother called me Minnie.
So did my friends.
Hank called me Minnie, too.
But they're gone now,
And so is Minnie.
Only Grandma is here.
And God, she's lonely!

c.1974, Donna Swanson/ SPLINTERS OF LIGHT