



First Press Magazine

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From Pastor Laurie

“Is the Lord among us or not?” That’s what the Israelites named the spot in the wilderness where Moses struck the rock and water came gushing forth to satisfy God’s thirsty, quarreling, chosen people (Exodus 17:7). As we move forward through Lent this year, we are faced with a new and unknown challenge: the scope and impact of the coronavirus pandemic. Walking through this uncharted wilderness may prompt us to ask this question, as well. As your pastor, I want to assure you of two things: Know that the health of our community is of utmost concern to our session, staff and to me. We are doing all that we can to stay current with public health guidelines, follow best practices for hygiene, and exercise an abundance of caution and care in responding to this situation. And at the same time above all, let us remember and rejoice that “nothing in life or in death can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord,” (Romans 8:38-39)



I also invite you to let the good news gushing forth from every page of this issue refresh and encourage you: Rejoice in the abundance of adding eleven new members bringing our total membership to 300; the record-setting Souper Bowl of Caring offering; the faith of our children and youth expressed in their Ash Wednesday service; and in the Deacons’ amazing bounty of food and festivity at our annual Everybody’s Birthday party. These stories add up to the answer we know to be true, “Yes, certainly the Lord is with us.” Easter is God’s answer. On April 12th this year, we will be ready to shout, “Hallelujah!”

Holy Week

4.5	Palm/Passion Sunday	9:30 a.m. Palm Procession
4.9	Maundy Thursday	7:00 p.m. Communion & Tenebrae, Service of Darkness
4.10	Good Friday	Noon Ecumenical Mid-day Worship
4.12	EASTER	7:00 a.m. Courtyard Sunrise Service 9:30 a.m. Easter Service

First



Press

The Magazine of First Presbyterian Church — Marshfield

Spring 2020

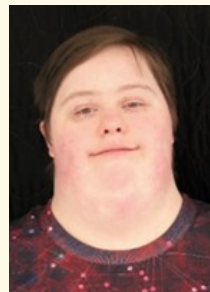


Beginnings

Welcome our newest members!



Ted and Kelsey Krohn came to Marshfield after they were married in 2015. Their daughter, Dorothea, will be baptized this Easter. They want to work for a sustainable future so that “Dottie” can enjoy creation’s wonders just as they have.



Mandy Yohn was born in Marshfield and confirmed at Faith Lutheran. She appreciates how welcoming and inclusive FPC is. She would like to play handbells, assemble bulletins, and help with inside cleanup.



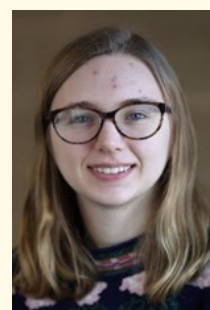
Olivia Anderson is a sophomore at MHS. She has completed Confirmation with her statement of faith and is now ready to join the FPC family. She has already been helping in Sunday School as a shepherd. You will find her faith statement on page 4 of this issue.



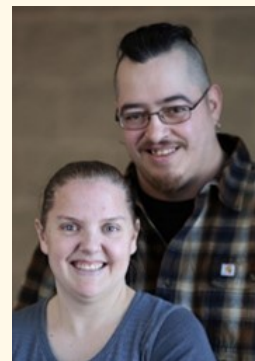
Chris and Sharon Schneider started attending FPC last fall. They have two grown sons and one of them is getting married in August. They look forward to becoming involved in the life of FPC.



Gil and Kathy Nimm recently moved to Marshfield after Gil’s retirement. They are Emmett Cooper’s grandparents. Kathy would like to serve as a Deacon and Gil is interested in the Building and grounds committee.



Johnna Dykstra has moved to Marshfield to work as a Lab Technician at Prevention Genetics. A “P.K.” (pastor’s kid), she is looking to us to be “voluntold” how to serve the FPC family just as she was when she was growing up.

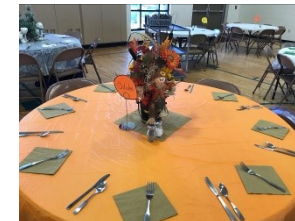


John and Sarah Lenten have been attending FPC for over a year. That’s their son, Samuel, getting baptized in the inset below. They look forward to helping with Outreach projects, Soup or Socks, and N.O.W.



Samuel Lenten, son of **John and Sarah Lenten**, was baptized on Sunday, January 26, 2020.

Happy Birthday Everybody! 120 Celebrated Everybody’s Birthday on February 23rd Thank you, Deacons!



Faith Stories Karen Mitchell



Karen grew up Presbyterian, but switched and remained Lutheran for many years after attending Wittenberg University in Springfield, OH. A network of friends in Colorado where she lived after graduation led her into the faith community. Each friend had a dream. Anne dreamed of starting a pre-school in the inner city. The school she started is still going strong though Anne is now retired. Kathy dreamed of starting an organization dedicated to helping women succeed, and did exactly that. As for Karen, the dream was to join an international medical mission in the 3rd world.

After ten years of going on short mission trips to Honduras with Missionary Health Service, Karen felt the call to be there full time. She retired as a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner on the very day that completed her twenty years at the clinic, securing the cake, the watch, and the full retirement package. Her well-laid plans were already in place to spend the

next three years in Honduras. Those three years changed her life forever by the deep assurance that she was exactly where she was supposed to be. It was a much stronger feeling than she had ever felt before. That feeling is the first thing that comes up when Karen attempts to describe her faith.

Upon her return, she began attending FPC, drawn by its commitment to social service and its treasuring of other religions. In fact, she chaired the Outreach committee before she was even a church member! Certainty of God’s leading is harder to obtain now. She rises early, makes coffee, lights a candle, and grabs her journal. A string of beads leads her in prayer for guidance, for the health of friends and family, for victims of war and natural disaster and for daily essentials: joy, gratitude, energy, and enthusiasm. She practices gratitude for what she calls mundane things: a warm bed, good coffee, a circle of friends, snowshoeing in the sun. And she finds somehow that she is right where she is supposed to be.

Green Team - Faith in Action

This year we celebrate the 50th anniversary of Earth Day. On April 22, 1970 twenty million Americans joined together to demand better care for our planet. The result of this action, taken by ten percent of the US population, brought us the Clean Air Act, Clean Water and Endangered Species Act, and the establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency. Wisconsin has strong ties to Earth Day. **Gaylord Nelson**, former Governor and Senator of Wisconsin, is the father of the Earth Day movement.

Despite this progress, climate change has begun to impact our planet and promises devastating consequences in the future. Individually, we can make small changes to our daily lives that reduce our footprint such as: reducing our plastic consumption, recycling, carpooling, and using re-usable shopping



bags. The celebration of Earth Day is a reminder to us of the global change we can enact by joining together. Gaylord Nelson once remarked “The ultimate test of a man’s conscience may be his willingness to sacrifice today for the future generations whose words of thanks cannot be heard.” This April let us all take to heart the ways we can reduce our carbon footprint and join with our families, friends, neighbors, and fellow Americans to care for our beautiful home, Earth.

The FPC Green Team

Did You Know?

While our custodian **Skip** was out for two weeks in February with a back injury, several of our members jumped into to help out with a lot of excellent cleaning and shoveling. **Jim & Dolores Aue, Carolyn Opitz, Don Zais, Ken Wichlacz, Randy Mess, and Dave Hirsch** rolled up their sleeves and got the job done. We are also pleased to report that Skip's injury, has healed, and he is back on the job, thankfully.



Close-up

Christy Rens

Christy was born into the Presbyterian faith. Both her grandfather and great-grandfather were Presbyterian pastors. Her grandfather was the first director of Ghost Ranch, a famous Presbyterian retreat center in Abiquiu, NM. After college, her father moved nearby to work at the national laboratory in Los Alamos, NM, where Christy grew up.

Christy and her husband Troy moved to Marshfield in 1999. They serve Abbotsford area residents at the dental clinic they established and now run. The birth of their first child led them to join a church. Friends, Tom Smiley, Don and Mary Miech, and John Crump, all members of FPC at the time, convinced them to visit their church. Gerri Toyama’s warm greeting on that first visit sealed the deal.

Raised in New Mexico, Christy saw the effects of poverty and the need for a coherent federal immigration policy firsthand. Her adopted brother of African-American descent gave her an intimate perspec-

tive on the effects of racism. Christy values the emphasis FPC places on issues of social justice, the embrace of other religious traditions, and the unre-served welcome FPC extends to all. She remembers a saying of her grandfather, “There is a reason there is not just one kind of wildflower. There are thousands, and, together, they make a beautiful field.” Church provides the opportunity to create familial relationships across multiple generations that can last a lifetime which is especially important for families that have moved far away from family ties.

The challenge that young people transitioning to adulthood face is close to Christy’s heart. She would like to see more cooperation between Marshfield churches to bring programs to area youth that individual churches cannot support alone. Such programs could equip our kids much better than schools and other public institutions to faithfully address questions about sex, drugs, and other challenges they will face as they move out into the wider world.

A Super Souper Bowl of Caring

Soup or Socks food pantry was founded by FPC members to address the needs of our neighbors that were not being met by existing organizations. First Presbyterian Church has provided space for S.O.S. since the church inhabited the building on Chestnut Avenue in downtown Marshfield. Our new building, built in 2003, was specifically designed to continue to provide space for this vital community resource. Our members continue to contribute to the team of volunteers that make everything S.O.S. does possible.

Last summer our Outreach committee conducted a survey of local agencies which FPC helps support and learned that two of the food drives that S.O.S. depends upon to stock the shelves, the Stamp Out Hunger drive and the Boy Scouts Scouting for Food drive, were struggling to meet the demand that has risen sharply in recent years.



Sorting food in Minneapolis

Earlier that spring, our intrepid youth group had sorted and boxed 2000lb of food for a pantry in Minneapolis as part of its Urban Immersion experience. The food had been collected by a donation bag system developed by a church in the twin cities area. The system allowed pantries to specify which items



were most needed at that particular time. The provided bags also increased the likelihood that food would come freshly purchased from a grocery. (S.O.S. loses up to 1/3 of the food donated by most food drives due to expired dates).

The Outreach committee elected to have bags printed with the logo and then donate them to S.O.S. to see if the system we saw working so well in Minneapolis would work as well here. The vote coincided with the **Peace and Global Witness Offering**, one of four special offerings conducted by PCUSA. This special offering allows for 25% of the total collected to remain with the participating congregation. Outreach elected to apply that

25% toward the total cost of the bags. Twenty-five per cent isn’t much, so most of that cost would likely have to be made up from Outreach funds.

In what may be described as a visible sign of God’s awesome abundance and the generosity of this congregation, the total for this offering swelled to triple the total of past years. Astonishingly, what was expected to be a small part of the total cost of the bags ended up nearly covering the entire cost!

Did You Know?

This year’s Souper Bowl of Caring brought in \$1299.16 and nearly 400 food items!



S.O.S. donation bags have now been distributed to virtually all the churches that support S.O.S. and each was given discretion as to how the bags will be used. Our church chose to “kick off” the bag program with the annual Souper Bowl of Caring.



SOS bags ready and waiting to be filled and returned



Well over 50 bags went out on the Sunday before the Super Bowl and more during that week. They all came back on Souper Bowl Sunday and were carried to the communion table in front of the church.

After worship, the bags were carried down the hall to surprise S.O.S. staff on Monday morning. Director Cheryl Hartl left this message on the S.O.S. Facebook page, “**A great way to start a Monday! Orange bags all the way down the hall.**”

Souper Bowl of Caring (continued)

As hoped for, the estimated cost of donations made through the bag system has exceeded the cost of the bags which means that the bags have paid for themselves in donations, and the bags will continue to be used many times in the years to come. In fact, FPC member Jennifer Anderson has already used the bags to conduct a drive at the Research Institute yielding over 800 donated items and \$130 in cash. If you wish to conduct a drive at your work place, please contact Cheryl Hartl at Soup or Socks or the FPC Outreach Committee.

But the Souper Bowl of Caring story is not over. Someone suggested that folks bring in their

coin jars to dump noisily into the big metal soup pots that the kids stand by the doors and hold up at the end of worship. This is real money that accumulates slowly. It is often forgotten about and rarely is considered in the household budget. The response was fantastic (and so was the job of counting all those coins!)



Olivia Anderson's Profession of Faith

Olivia began Confirmation in the middle of the class last year, shortly after her family began attending FPC. However, it wasn't until this fall when she became ready to make her Profession of Faith and become a member of FPC. We celebrate Olivia's faith and think you will agree that her profession was worth the wait.



When I think of God, the first three words I think of are thoughtful, loving, and generous. I believe God is thoughtful with what he does because he gives everyone a purpose, and a path that will lead them there. That path may be rocky for some and a hard journey to get where he wants you to be, but for every person, he puts thought into how he creates them and makes everyone just a little different because no two people are the same. I also think of loving when I think of God because I believe God had so much love to share. When he created the world, he created a species in his likeness to love and care for. No matter if you mess up or sin in your life, he will always forgive you and forgiveness takes love. I also think generous when I think of God. When I do something generous, I feel closer to God, and I personally believe that I feel that way because God is acting through me.

I think that First Presbyterian has a lot to

offer me with so many different ways to volunteer around the community and the different organizations we are connected to, like S.O.S. I also think I have a lot to offer the church. I am a strong-willed young woman with many goals to get involved and become a more dedicated disciple of Jesus.

I believe that in the short time I have been at First Presbyterian Church, I have grown in my faith with God more than I have ever felt. I feel God's presence with me every day and openly share that I believe in God which is something I never used to do. This church has helped me become more open to what I believe and has many values that I believe in. I also admire that we have open discussions about hard topics many people do not usually talk about, and we aspire to listen to everyone's point of view and experiences without judgment. I have grown in my faith so much since I started coming to this church and I hope to grow even more by becoming a member.



Ash Wednesday Service Features Youth



This year's Ash Wednesday service featured the youth of FPC. Kate Schilling and Keller Bredemann read the scripture lesson. Antonio Koehn and Jake Schilling provided music. Charlotte and Oliver Johnson, Carlos Koehn, Jake Schilling and Isaac Eberl performed a play depicting Caiaphas, the high priest, and his fellow priests grappling with the problem of Jesus when Nicodemus arrived with a different perspective. A procession of kids, Kate Schilling, Nathan Courteau, Elliot Johnson, Carly Schilling, Colby Bredemann, and Noah Schilling each took two candles symbolizing "no" to selfishness and "yes" to following Jesus. They blew the "no" candle out and placed the still lit yes candle on the altar.

