

The Newsletter
of First Presbyterian
Church



Lent: An Invitation to Connect

Cami and I are in a season of life where we find ourselves pulled in many directions. We both work irregular hours. Sometimes Cami goes to work at 6am and gets home around 8pm; other times she goes to work at 6pm and gets home around 8am -- while I have evening meetings and weekend commitments. Add a bit of travel in there and our schedules make connecting a real challenge at times. We have found that we need to be intentional about not only seeing one another, but actually being present to one another.

As I thought about the ways Cami and I have to work to be together and present to one another, I thought of the season of Lent. In the busyness of life – work, raising children, studying for classes, taking care of the house, working out, volunteering in the community, caring for parents, investing in friendships -- we might feel we are losing touch with God.

Lent provides us with the invitation to connect with God and re-connect with God in ways beyond going to church. Here are some tangible ways we might reconnect with God during this season.

- Go for a prayer walk around your neighborhood, praying for each neighbor individually by name
- Absorb worship-producing art; Meditate on God's Truth as revealed in the arts (painting, film, music, dance, etc)
- Create something as an act of worship
- Practice "prayer breaks" throughout the day, pausing for a few moments of prayer every hour. Set an alarm on your phone to help you remember
- Practice solitude on a regular basis, getting away from people, phones, social media, and chores for a quiet respite to "be still and know that [He is] God" (Psalm 46:10)
- Wherever you go, sit next to the loneliest person in the room and show them they're valued in Christ
- Act out Bible stories with your children
- Go through old picture albums and reflect on how God moved in different seasons of your life. Think about people God used, conversations that drew you closer, successes and failures, special events
- Keep a list of prayer requests, and each time you tell someone "I'll pray for you," put them on the list; then pray!

This is only a start. What comes to mind for you? What have you done in the past that has drawn you closer to God? What have you always wanted to try...and now may be just the right moment to begin? Drop me a note to let me know how it's going -- or share your journey with a friend or the person next to you in worship this week.

3MF in March: What's New with WisCorps

3MF, First Presbyterian Church's Ministry to Mature Members and Friends, will meet Monday, **March 12th** for a presentation on WisCorps - a Conservation Corps that trains young adults while enhancing our environment. We'll hear from the Executive Director of WisCorps, Matthew Brantner about the valuable service to local communities provided by WisCorps while the young adult participants gain valuable life and employment skills. Teams of 4 to 5 Corp members are led by an experienced crew leader.



Following the program, a delicious lunch with a St. Patrick's Day theme will be served (\$7). Please sign up in the Gathering Area or call the church office (784-4248) to make a lunch reservation by Friday, March 9th, 2018.

Holy Week Worship Services and Activities

Palm Sunday Worship Services, March 25th. We'll celebrate Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem with the waving of palm branches.

Palm Sunday Processional All children and youth are invited to help on **Palm Sunday** with the palm processional on Sunday, **March 25th**, at the 8:30 & 10:30 service. Please meet downstairs in Fellowship Hall 10 minutes before the service begins and we'll pass out the palms and give the students instructions for the processional. The children will process at the beginning of each service and then join their parents.

Maundy Thursday Worship Services, March 29th— we will offer two worship services—at 12:00 p.m. noon and 7:30 p.m. At this service we remember the night before Jesus died when He shared a “last supper” with His friends, washing their feet as a sign of the new commandment. Nursery childcare is available for children 3 and younger.

Good Friday Worship Services, March 30th - at Noon and 7:30pm. Called “good” because of all the wonder and meaning that flowed from this day. These services are an invitation to walk with Christ. Using the Christian tradition of praying through the stations of the cross we will keep vigil with Christ, experiencing His journey to the cross. Nursery care available for children 3 and younger.

Good Friday Kids' Movie and Pizza Party Hey kids, join us on Good Friday, **March 30th**, in the Coach House, 11:30 am-1:00 pm, for a movie, pizza lunch and an egg hunt. Parents are welcome to attend the Good Friday service here at the church at noon or join us for the movie and pizza lunch. This event is for children 4 yrs. old through 5th grade. Nursery care available for children 3 and younger. Sign up in the Gathering Area or downstairs.

Easter Sunrise Prayer Service This Easter we will join with other Christians atop Granddad Bluff, and celebrate Jesus' passing from death to life! The 6am service will be one of dawning light, prayer, scripture reading and reflection.

Easter Worship Services on **April 1st** are a joyous celebration of Jesus' resurrection. The services will be held at 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. in the sanctuary.

Sunday School There will be no Sunday School or Children's Church on Easter Sunday,

Easter Morning Brunch Between the worship services all are invited to an Easter Morning Brunch hosted by the elders of the church in Fellowship Hall.

Easter Egg Hunt Following the 10:30 worship service, children, ages 1-11 are all invited to gather in Fellowship Hall for the Annual Easter Egg Hunt.

Easter Candy Donations



Easter Candy donations cheerfully accepted for our **Annual Easter Egg Hunt on Easter morning.** We need individually wrapped candy by March 25th so the youth can fill the plastic eggs. Drop donations off at church or bring on Sunday mornings.

Easter Sunrise Prayer Service

This Easter, while it is still dark, we will join with other Christians from the Coulee region atop Granddad Bluff, and celebrate Jesus' passing from death to life! The service will be one of dawning light, prayer, scripture reading and reflection. This service begins in the darkness of early morning. In kindling new fire and lighting the Christ candle, we are reminded that Christ came as a light shining in darkness (John 1:5). From atop the bluff, as the sun rises, we will behold a visible reminder that Jesus Christ is the light which is dawning on La Crosse, our region, and the world.



The service, coordinated by the Coulee Region Prayer Consortium, will start promptly at 6am. Please arrive early enough to walk from your car to the observation area of Granddad Buff. We are asking worshipers to bring their own chairs and to dress appropriately for the weather (it can be windy atop the Bluff). There is a small parking lot closer to the observation area. When that is full, parking will be available along the southern side of the road.

Lenten Season Worship Services

The Ecumenical Lenten Wednesday Noon Worship series provides an opportunity for us to gather in worship with our neighboring congregations. The noon service is followed by a soup and sandwich lunch (\$5.00). The offering collected at the worship services will be donated to the Hunger Task Force.

Date	Location	Preacher
March 7	First Congregational, 2503 Main St.	Rev. Timothy Ashley
March. 14	First Presbyterian	Rev. Kent Cormack
March 21	Christ Episcopal, 831 Main St.	Pastor John Parkyn

Lenten Concerts

The American Guild of Organists is offering a series of concerts on consecutive Sunday afternoons during the Lenten season:

- **Sunday, March 4** at Our Savior's Lutheran Church, 612 Division St. Performers will include: Patrick Burkhart, Trevor Dupey, Randy Lyden, Dean Whiteway Louise Temte
- **Sunday, March 11** at St. John's UCC, 630 West Ave., Tom Haag, performing
- **Sunday, March 18** here at First Presbyterian. Performers will include Lieba Schwalbe, Sofia Stutesman and 2 other organ students as well as 2 trumpet students.

The concerts are free. A free-will offering is accepted in support of the chapter's educational outreach. All concerts begin at 3:00pm and are followed by a reception.

One Great Hour of Sharing: Being Repairers of the Breach

Around the world, millions of people lack access to sustainable food sources, clean water, sanitation, education, and opportunity. The three programs supported by One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) – *Presbyterian Disaster Assistance*, the *Presbyterian Hunger Program*, and the *Self-Development of People* – all work in different ways to serve individuals and communities in need. The OGHS provides us a way to share God's love with our neighbors in need. We will be collecting the offering throughout Lent and on Easter.



Opportunities for Study and Service

Volunteer Opportunity

Tuesday, **March 13th** is First Pres' night to help with the free meal at Our Savior's Lutheran Church. If you would like to help serve this free meal, please come at 4:30pm. Stay to eat and help with the clean-up. Call Jan at 788-5884 to help.

Men's Morning Bible Study

The men's Bible study plans to meet from 6:00 to 7:00 am in the work room on alternating Wednesday mornings, **March 7th and March 21st**, as they continue their study of Romans. Contact Don (788-8012) for additional information.

Morning Circle

Morning Circle will meet Wednesday, **March 21st** at 9:00am in the Gathering Area. If you would like to join in the fellowship and study, please come. We will continue our study of Hebrews. Please read Lesson 7. Jan Beckwith will be our discussion leader.

Koinonia Circle

Join us for the Bible study, *Twelve Women of the Bible*. Each study stands alone – so even if you can't make every meeting, it's an easy study to slip into. Koinonia will meet Wednesday, **March 21st** at 6:00pm. We'll enjoy a simple supper, catching up with each other and study.

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Flowers for Easter Worship

If you would like to provide flowers for our Easter worship, please return the form below along with payment. Flowers may be offered in memory or in honor of a loved one. You may choose to take your flowers home with you or they may be donated to our Deacons, who will deliver them to a homebound member. Orders must be received by the church office by Sunday, **March 11th**.

Name _____ Phone _____

Choice: _____ # of Easter Lilies 13.25 ea.)
_____ # of Mums (\$15.25 ea.)
_____ # of Hydrangeas(\$23.25 ea.)
_____ # of **Flowering plants for homebound (\$9.ea.)

For Recognition: _____ In memory/honor of: _____
Or _____ a gift to the church

After Easter Worship: _____ I will take the flowers myself
Or _____ The Deacons may deliver to the homebound



****EASTER TIME GIFTS** – Our Deacons have recognized that for some homebound members and friends, a large flowering plant is too much for their living space. This Easter, you may contribute funds for the purchase of smaller flowering plants to be taken to these homebound members and friends.

Soup & Ice Skating at Onalaska Omni Center

Date: Sunday, **March 11**

Time: 5:00 pm– 7:00 pm

Place: Omni Ice Skating Center, 255 Riders Club Road

Join us as we have an evening of skating inside the Omni Center ice-skating rink. We will have homemade soup to enjoy in a private room right off the rink. It's a great time to visit and catch up with church family and have fun with your own family too. You don't have to be a skater to enjoy the evening.... If you just like soup and good conversation, join us for that in our warm, comfy room.

Cost for skating is \$3 for kids, \$4 for adults. No costs for just coming to watch the skaters and eat soup. Skate rental available for \$3.00. Sign-up ahead of time so we know how much soup to bring. You can also sign-up to bring sides dishes or desserts. Both sign-ups will be in the Gathering Area and Sunday school area soon. You can also contact Cindi at 784-4248 or cindi@firstpreslax.org to make a reservation.



Vacation Bible School Dates Set

Vacation Bible School will take place **June 11th-15th**.

Our theme this year is **Shipwrecked: Rescued by Jesus**

We will meet in the afternoons from 12:45 pm to 3:30 pm.

Please get the dates on your summer calendars now and look for more information to come in the next couple months. Registration will begin April 15th. There are a multitude of opportunities for members of the congregation to support VBS through volunteering – some projects and tasks have to be accomplished prior to VBS week and many volunteers are needed to help during that week. Please be watching for more information on these volunteer opportunities



Holy C.O.W.

NO Holy C.O. W on March 4th

HOLY Children's Only Worship...Generally offered on the first Sunday of month during Children's Church time at the 10:30 service, our children get to sing, praise, laugh and worship together in the chapel. The Holy Cows band (Alex and youth students) will lead the worship time and there will be quirky skits and videos that will enhance the worship experience for the children. See you next month!



Holy Cow

Spaghetti Dinner & Silent Auction
March 4, 2018 **Student Fundraiser for Red Lake Mission Trip & Surf City 2018**
12:00-1:30PM in Fellowship Hall, First Presbyterian Church



The trips that make a difference...

...Start with the event that makes them possible!

have 40 students signed up for our 2018 summer trips! These trips make a difference in the lives of our students and the Spaghetti Dinner makes them possible, as our students work to earn your financial support. Will you save the date (*and your dollars*) for this wonderful fundraiser? You'll be helping our next generation strengthen their relationship with Jesus Christ, while learning how to live out their faith.

Spaghetti Dinner Tickets:

Adult (ages 13+) = \$10 at the door	Takeout Meal = \$10 at the door
Child (ages 6-12) = \$7 at the door	Small Child (ages 5 & under) = Free

2018 Youth Summer Trips:

Red Lake Mission Trip: In early July, our high school students and adult leaders will travel to the Red Lake Nation Reservation in northern Minnesota for a week of Christian service and cultural immersion with its native population

Surf City 2018: In late July, a large group of middle schoolers and adults will travel to western Michigan for a fun-packed week of camp. At Surf City, students have a wonderful time, all-the-while strengthening their faith in Christ.