



The Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church

more than just Sunday morning

Issue 313 April 2018

How can we practically care for one another in difficult times?

In the course of our lives together as a faith community and as individuals we experience difficult times, when we need people to come around us and provide practical help.

We've all been told "If you need something give me a call." The offer is sincere, but how often does this offer result in practical care or real needs being met? The giver and receiver both have responsibility. The person who is offering to help may just need to step up and do something practical. The person who needs the care may have to actually place that call or in some other way make real needs known. Usually we don't get the call...and we feel justified that the other must not have needed our help.

I'll never forget arriving at my father's house after my mom had passed way. My brother and his family of 4 children were already there, and rather than scramble to figure out how to feed a dozen people aged 8 to 80, a friend had prepared and delivered a wonderful meal that fed the whole crew -- with some leftovers AND plastic ware to spare us from major clean up.

When we were all gathering we didn't have to worry about the common needs that we all have; it was such a practical help to have that meal. Their practical generosity was much more helpful than if they had just called my dad and asked if there was anything they could do. In fact, when we returned to La Crosse after the funeral, someone from our congregation had dropped off a frozen meal for us too! What a blessing! (continued on Page 2)

Summer Plans are Shaping Up

The summer of 2018 is not just a special time for Taylor as he experiences renewal leave -- but this is "our" summer for renewal as an entire congregation. The Lilly Foundation grant allows funds for the entire congregation to engage in a variety of renewing activities.

It's March and we've already done a lot of planning! The Haleys have been working on their route and equipment...and our Renewal Leave Team (Sally Friend, Bill Haviland, Sarah Smith, Gwyn Straker, and Libby Winga) is making exciting plans for our church to engage in activities in which we experience our bodies as God's gift to us.

Taylor already has pastors lined up to preach, including Executive Presbyter Chaz Ruark on the first Sunday in June. We have 4 others who will preach the rest of the time, including our Director of Youth Ministry, Alex Jerve -- and Former First Pres Pastor, Ron Gustafson on July 8 for Heritage Sunday. (Continued on Page 2)

Summer Plans (continued from Page 1) May 27 will be Taylor's last Sunday at the church until September. We will kick off our summer worship time together at 9am in a combined service -- as we will do for the rest of the summer. Following the service the team is planning:

- Taylor and Cami will show their bike across America route and talk about that and answer questions. The Haleys will have their van, camper and bikes there for folks to check out.
- We will enjoy a **healthy cookout at the Coach House**, using our outdoor and indoor spaces.
- we will have a **bike mechanic at church** to make sure bikes are in good order and helmets fit well. As one of our goals, we encourage folks to walk, run or bike to the church this summer – and we want everyone to be safe!
- We are working to potentially have adaptive bikes there as well for folks to try out.
- Make sure the kids bring their bikes -- we'll have a **bike rodeo** for kids -- which is sure to be wonderful entertainment for all. We will utilize church chairs but if you enjoy your comfy folding chair feel free to bring it along!

Beyond activities that kick off our summer theme of "Our Bodies as God's Gift to Us" on May 27, here's a quick peek into what else we are putting together for the summer:

- A "couch to 5k club" for anyone who wants to walk or run a 5k this summer. We hope folks in the group will meet Sunday mornings to run or walk together before or after worship as part of their training. Coaching will be available.
- We are planning for a meal or potluck together once per month during the summer. Plan to join us for:
 - *a healthy cookout on May 27 to kick off this special summer
 - *a meal together following VBS Sunday
 - *a meal following Heritage Sunday on July 8
 - *an all-church potluck on August 5
 - *a meal for our return celebration September 16
- Thinking about food and how that relates to health...we are looking into some healthy group cooking sessions that will allow folks to prepare and freeze meals for a week of healthy dinners.

If you have ideas please call the church office and we'll see if we can make it happen...or join our planning team! There's much more to come but we wanted you to start getting excited with us!

Caring...(Continued from Page 1) Let us be encouraged as a congregation to consider what practical help we might provide others during those times of stress and need. Rather than saying "Call me if there's anything you need," maybe we could be more practical with these types of statements or offers in a card that we might send:

- When would it be helpful for me to bring a meal?
- Would it work for me to stop tomorrow afternoon and run a load of laundry or mow or shovel your walk?
- Do you want to drop off your kids for a couple hours while you go to your appointment?
- I can drive you to doctor's appointments on Monday and Tuesday mornings
- I'm available on Saturdays if you want me to climb a step ladder and change lightbulbs or smoke alarm batteries or get items off high shelves
- I'm going to church (or Bible study or exercise class or a concert) on Sunday...do you want me to pick you up?

Oftentimes we are pretty independent and find it hard to ask for the help we truly need. And we think others are probably too busy to care about a ride or a lightbulb or a load of laundry. Think back about a time that you were able to offer practical assistance. Didn't that bring you joy and a warm feeling afterward, knowing that help was truly needed and appreciated? Let's be willing to make needs known and to receive help, so that we spread the joy of service.

Let's seize the opportunities before us to give and to receive -- and in turn share and multiply the blessing found therein

3MF in April: Barber-shoppers with a Special Style

Join us on Monday, **April 9th** at 11:00am for a special performance by Special Export, a barbershop quartet. Special Export Quartet has been singing in the Tri-state area for over fifteen years. They sing different styles of music but their favorites are doo-wop from the 50's and 60's. They also sing with the La Crosse Coulee Chordsmen Barbershop chorus.

Following the program, a delicious lunch 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, April 6, 2018.



A Great Conversation!

Last Sunday, March 25 we held "Coffee and Conversation with the Pastor" between worship services. The conversation focused on how we, as a church family, care for our homebound and hospitalized members and how we communicate about members who are ill or facing transitions. We had a great turnout for the conversation and we left with a stronger sense of being a congregation that is concerned about making sure every member is cared for -- especially in times of need.



There were three areas of concern that we discussed.

1. How do we care for members who can't worship with us?
2. Why doesn't the congregation get much information about people's health or hospitalizations at church or in the announcements?
3. Why don't we list people's names in the bulletin if they are hospitalized?

In terms of caring for members who can't worship with us, we learned that:

- when deacons are made aware they make sure that a deacon follows up with that person, calls or sends a note,
- deacons have a system for reaching out to homebound members about whether they want visits or communion
- deacons deliver baskets at Easter and Thanksgiving, and poinsettias at Christmas to our homebound members
- everyone in the congregation who is connected with a member is welcome to send a note or call or visit our homebound members when appropriate
- the pastor's primary responsibility is the care of those who are in transition, moving from home to nursing home, for emergencies, surgeries and at the time of death...and offering care in special circumstances, like when someone is in prison, or at the end of life

In terms of receiving information about people's health or hospitalization at church or in announcements, we learned that:

- when the pastor visits people or families in the hospital or when a member is near death, those times are a sacred space. It is not the pastor's role to disseminate information -- and in fact there is a moral obligation to hold confidentiality.
- the pastor is bound by legality and HIPAA laws, as is the hospital.
- If we, as members of the congregation, are close to that family it is appropriate for us to call or write a note to show we care, even if we don't know all the details of what's going on we can still pray.

In response to the question: "Why don't we list people's names in the bulletin if they are hospitalized?" we learned:

- it is a matter of confidentiality
- if listed in written form that becomes public and there's the potential for it to be a safety concern for that person or their empty home
- we want to ensure that we are able to care for one another in appropriate ways and keep the congregation informed as the individual would like

- the church and/or pastor or deacons cannot respond when someone is in the hospital unless we are informed of it. Please let the church know. Hospitals do work to gather that info but it is not foolproof and we encourage people to let us know themselves

Our discussion was very beneficial and we received a number of suggestions that the staff will discuss and try to come back with some helpful ways to move forward. Our ultimate goal is that we remain a caring community/fellowship.

One other take away from this time is that people seemed to appreciate just the opportunity to have a conversation together. Conversation and coffee with the pastor will begin to take place quarterly.

Spaghetti Dinner 2018 – March 4, 2018

What an incredible Spaghetti Dinner & Silent Auction! Thank you so much for participating this year's event with your attendance, "Extra Mile" donations, and exceptionally kind words! All the profits from this event contribute to the cost of students' participation in the high school mission trip to the Red Lake Nation Reservation in Minnesota, as well as the middle school trip to Surf City camp in Michigan.

I am humbled, and still a little shocked, by the sheer volume of people that participated in the 2018 Spaghetti Dinner. Over the course of the weekend of March 2-4, about 200 individuals participated in this fundraiser as guests, donors, adult volunteers, and benefitting students. Just look at all those students that participated (*see photo*)! Many of these youth are outreach-students and we were so happy to welcome their families as first-time guests to this event. Only God know how many times these students and their families have been in a church... probably many times for some and very few times for others.

The level of participation and how this event has grown is the result of your continued support, participation, and prayers. We are also grateful for the businesses and organizations that donated items of value for our auction: The Company Store, Commonweal Theater (Lanesboro, MN), McDonald's Courtesy Corporation, Kwik Trip, Mt. Olympus Parks & Resorts, Kwik Trip, the Weber Center, UW Badgers Athletics, Woodman's Markets, and Festival Foods. On behalf of the nearly 50 students and adult leaders that will participate in our 2018 summer trips... thank you, thank you, thank you! –Alex Jerve, Director of Youth Ministry



Thank You For Your Support!
Spaghetti Dinner & Silent Auction
First Presbyterian Church - La Crosse, WI

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 Bluff. 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.

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 on Easter.

You are Invited: Spring Clean Up

Grab your rakes, wheelbarrows and shovels and meet at church on Saturday, **April 21st** for our annual clean-up of the grounds. Leaves need to be raked, parking area cleaned up for the winter, and more. If the weather doesn't cooperate, we'll move inside and tackle indoor projects. We'll get started at 8:00am and work until noon, or until the job list is accomplished.



Opportunities for Study and Service

Volunteer Opportunity

Tuesday, **April 10th** 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, **April 4th and 18th**, as they continue their study of Romans. Contact Don (788-8012) for additional information.

Morning Circle

Morning Circle will meet Wednesday, **April 18** at 9:00am in the Gathering Area. All are welcome to come and join in the fellowship and study. Margaret Birchler will lead our study, Cloud of Witnesses: the Community of Christ in Hebrews." Please read Lesson 8. Jan Beckwith will be our hostess.

Koinonia Circle

Now is a great time to join in our evening women's Bible study. We meet once a month on the third Wednesday. We've decided that a potluck salad bar is the simplest and most delicious dinner option, so if that sounds good to you, please bring something to toss in the salad and join us for study. We will be beginning a new Bible study in April, topic to be determined. Koinonia will meet Wednesday, **April 18th** at 5:30pm.

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



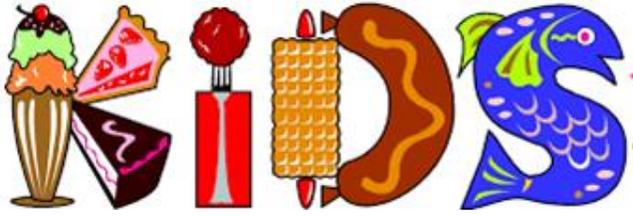
Holy C.O.W.

Holy C.O. W. will be on April 8th!

HOLY Children's Only Worship... Generally offered on the first Sunday of month BUT because the first Sunday of April is Easter, we'll slide Holy C.O.W. back one week to April 8th.

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.





Summer Fun Cooking Camps 2018

Plan now to enroll your child into one of our cooking camps this summer. Kids not only learn to cook cool recipes, they get to practice hospitality, sharing, and generosity through their cooking. Registration will begin May 1st.

CAMP DATES:

OLDER KIDS COOKING CAMPS:

July 10th-11th OR Aug 7th-8th

10:00 AM—2:00 PM

(rising 2nd graders-rising 5th graders)

YOUNGER KIDS COOKING CAMP:

July 24th-25th 9:00 am—11:00 am

(preschoolers age 3 & 4. Must be potty trained)



Thanks to all who brought candy for the Egg Hunt on Easter morning.
Children's Ministry appreciates your donation...

...and so do the children!

First Presbyterian Church

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Easter Worship Services and Activities

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.



Christ is risen.