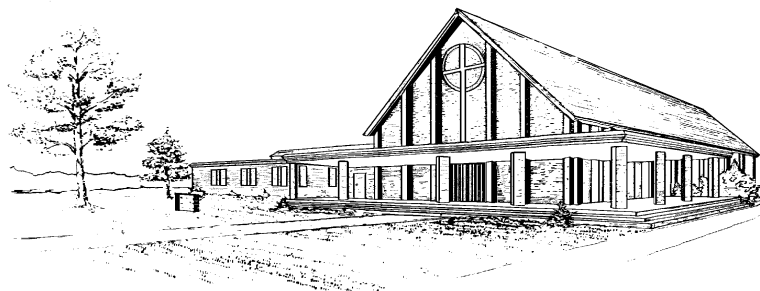


STEEPLE CHIMES

Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church of Greenlawn

ISSUE: Two Hundred Nineteen

FEBRUARY 2019



Message From the Pastor

After our celebrations of the Epiphany (1-6-19) and the Baptism of the Lord (1-13-19), and until Ash Wednesday (3-6-19), the church enters what is called “Ordinary Time.” “Ordinary” here does not mean unexceptional, vanilla or boring, but signifies a season in which the church year is measured out in *ordinal* numbers. And so the Sundays in between are counted out as the Sundays “after Epiphany” or Sundays *in ordinary time*.

But I like the idea of “ordinary” time in that other sense too. For if at the Epiphany, God became manifest in Jesus Christ, perhaps humanity in its ordinariness also became manifest. Maybe in the afterglow of the Epiphany, the not-God-ness of humanity comes into sharper relief. Maybe to live after Epiphany in ordinary time is to receive the invitation to give up all our pretensions about ourselves and to embrace the good news that we are, well, simply human.

To recognize ourselves as not-God gives us freedom in a culture that is relentless in placing upon us the burden of self-improvement. To see ourselves lovingly as not-God is to see ourselves as we are intended, and to discover God at work in the world, as theologian Paul Lehmann put it, “to make and to keep human life human.”

I appreciate that the Latin words for humankind (*humanus*) and the basic creational stuff of the earth (*humus*) have the same etymological root. From that root also comes our English word “humility,” which suggests that to be humble and, yes, even humbled, is to exhibit a certain *groundedness*. Humility, neither thinking too highly or lowly of ourselves, but seeing ourselves as we really are, takes note of where our power ends and God’s power begins.

To live humbly is to be relieved of the burden of thinking ourselves the center of the universe. To see God as our center is for us a revolution of consciousness and being. In humility, we begin to break free of the gravitational pull of ego and become buoyant in our care of others. Humility, seeing ourselves as we are rather than as we would wish to be, gives us escape velocity from our orbits of self-concern and allows us to move more fully toward those whom God gives us to love.

As we receive the gift of humility, we increasingly accept that whatever comes to us is somehow meant for us. Humility fosters gratitude for the gifts we were never meant to secure on our own.

My prayers for our congregation this February are that we might see ourselves as we truly are, and not as we wish we were; that God may use us, *ordinary* folks, just as we are, to be his church in these extraordinary times; that as we accept our own humanity, we shall also come to more fully accept the humanity of Christ’s church, trusting that the imperfect witness of the church does not limit God’s grace; and that through the biblical practices of hospitality, forgiveness, friendship, service and generosity we may celebrate the sovereign power of God’s love, even if, as a power made known in weakness, it is a power not everywhere noticed, named or celebrated.

See you in church,
Pastor Fred

Disappointed in the Church?

How not? It's full of hypocrites. Yet, as we were reassured from the very start, there is always room for one more! And, as we were also told, our Gospel was never really about the perfect church anyway- there is none- but the perfect love of God made known to us in Jesus Christ.

Psychiatrist and contemplative Gerald May put it this way: "The trouble people have with the church, then, is in most cases trouble with love. For some the trouble is manifested by a wistful longing that is never really expressed. For others it is a romance in which one has felt rejected and terribly hurt, and against which one has become hardened and defensive. Both happen largely because of confusing divine love with human love. Of all places, one would expect to find unconditional love in church. Yet the church is made of people, and though they are good people who may truly seek to be channels of divine love, their humanity is inevitable. Sometimes in the name of their faith they become truly callous and spiteful just as any human beings can. And thus they can deeply wound other souls who mistakenly expect from them a love without bonds." [*Will and Spirit*, Gerald G. May, M.D., pg. 145-146 (New York: HarperCollins, 1982)].

Perhaps it is our unquenchable thirst for something more, even or precisely in the midst of our disillusionment about Christian community, that is itself proof that God is in us and with us. Perhaps our desire for what we are not and perhaps can never be for one another as a church is itself a sign of God's presence among us. For it is God who is the source of our searing ache, our yearning, our vision of wholeness, our homesick tears, and our longing for home.

Submitted by Pastor Fred

The One Who Always Comes

Rabbi Menachem Mendel tells somewhere of his childhood days when he used to sit on his grandfather's lap. His grandfather played a game with him which he asked his grandson, "Where is *Zeide* (Grandfather)?"

In response to his question, little Menachem touched his grandfather's nose. But the old Rabbi said, "That is *Zeide's* nose, but where is *Zeide*?" When he clutched at his grandfather's beard, he received the same response: "that is *Zeide's* beard, but where is *Zeide*?"

At this, little Manachem, in a fit of brilliance, left his grandfather's lap, and ran into the next room where he shouted, "*Zeide!*" At his grandchild's command, the old rabbi went into the room, at which point the exuberant child pointed and shouted, "*There* is *Zeide!*"

I think it pleases God to be the One who comes to his beckoning children. But as we mature in faith, it must also surely please him when we come at his call. Perhaps in the end, our calling and his coming and his calling and our coming are one and the same. Or as Meister Eckhart put it, "The eye with which we see God is the same with which God sees us. Our eye and God's eye is one eye, and one sight, and one knowledge, and one love." (Meister Eckhart)

In prayer, we discover the unity of our "yes" to God, and God's "yes" to us. Arising out of our acceptance of God's prior acceptance of us, our "yes" is a "yes" to life, a "yes" to love, a "yes" to transformation. However weak our "yes" may sometimes feel, we discover in prayer that God's "yes" is stronger than anything in its way, even our best defenses against God's grace and mercy.

In prayer, we open ourselves not to ready answers, but to the divine indwelling which answers all our questions with his Presence, God's "yes" to the world he created in love, and "yes" to the creature he fashioned out of dust and promise.

Submitted by Pastor Fred

Make a Joyful Noise at First Presbyterian Church of Greenlawn



KARAOKE KOFFEE HOUR on Sunday, February 10.

Hymn-sing joins karaoke. Sing a solo song on the mic karaoke style or sing favorite hymns together. Do both! We will meet in the Narthex following service for a congregational trial run. Contact Leonora Colletti for song requests. Contact Larry Foray for details. No sign-ups necessary.

Call For Coupons!

For the Deacon Food Pantry
~ We are accepting Manufacturer Coupons ~

Any unused coupons will be donated to The Elwood Library where coupons are being collected and sorted for military families in need

~ Please NO Store coupons or fast food restaurant coupons!

The coupon collection box is located

on the table outside the

Church Office.

February Youth Happenings

Want to know more about the Church Youth Group?
Contact Youth Director Debbie Eitel at
debbie_eitel@ibi.com

Sunday Feb. 10 Bowlmor Bowling 2-4 PM (Formerly 300)

Meet at Bowlmor located at 895 Walt Whitman Rd on Route 110 -
Melville - Just North of the Northern State Pkwy -

Exit 40N - behind Bertucci's

Cost is \$6.69 per game

(We usually play at least 2 games)

Shoes are \$5.69 ~ Come out and join us and bring a friend!



Town of Huntington ~ Snow Berm Removal Program

The Town of Huntington has a snow berm removal program which is designed to assist those persons who have disabilities and limited income and no other means of removing the snow berm at the end of their driveway. The program can only accommodate a limited number of residents. If you are in need of this service, or know someone who might be in need, contact:

Town of Huntington
Office of Handicap Services
100 Main Street, Huntington, New York 11743
631-351-3233
for an application.

Applications can also be found on the Town of Huntington website:
<http://town.Huntington.ny.us>

Broken Pieces...

Today I was walking in the supermarket and suddenly I heard a noise of things breaking. I turned down an aisle and saw a group of people staring at an older lady who had hit a shelf containing plates and glasses with her cart. Many had fallen to the ground and broken. Kneeling on the floor embarrassed, the lady was frantically picking up the shattered pieces, while her husband peeled off each bar code saying; "We have to pay for all this." What a sad scene. Someone had a mishap and all eyes were on her. When I knelt beside her to help a man also knelt beside us and said, "Leave it, we will pick this up. Let's get your information, so you can go to the hospital and have that wound in your hand looked at." The lady looked at him and said, "But I have to pay for this." The man said, "No ma'am, I'm the manager & we have insurance for this. You don't have to pay anything. Let's get you taken care of."

For those of you who have read this far, I'd like you to close your eyes and imagine God doing the same for you. Collect the pieces of your broken heart from all the missteps and blows that life has thrown at you. God will heal your wounds and your sins and mistakes will be forgiven. This is the warranty called grace, that when you accept God as your only savior, the manager of the existence of the universe (GOD) will tell you: "Everything is already paid for....go on your way!"

PS – Remember Jesus died for your sins

Source – unknown

Submitted by Debbie Eitel



Food Pantry
Donations Needed

Our Shelves Are Almost Bare!

Please remember our
Deacon's Food Pantry

As you shop for food for your family!
Cereal, fruit juices, pasta, pasta sauces, and
salad dressings are
currently needed.

The Deacons thank you for your continuing
generosity and support!



PRAYER CORNER
FEBRUARY 2019

LORD, MAKE US STRONG

~Norman Vincent Peale

Our Heavenly Father, we ask You to forgive us
for anything we may have said, thought, or
done that isn't compatible with Your spirit.

Continue to make us stronger that we may be
able to with-stand temptation and weaknesses of
any kind. If there are shadows in the mind, lift
them now by the power of Your spirit.

Bless us with a courageous, strong and loving
heart. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen

“Remember how far you've come, not just how far you have to go.
You are not where you want to be, but neither are you where
You used to be.” ~Rick Warren

MY KITCHEN PRAYER

~Unknown

Bless my little kitchen Lord; I love its every nook.

And bless me as I do my work, wash pots and pans and cook.

May the meals that I prepare be seasoned from above
with Thy blessing and Thy grace but most of all Thy love.

As we partake of earthly food the table Thou has spread
we'll not forget to thank Thee Lord for all our daily bread.

So bless my little kitchen Lord and those who enter in
may they find naught but joy and peace and happiness therein.

Amen

THOSE WE LOVE

~Author Unknown

Those we love don't go away;
They walk beside us every day.

Unseen, unheard but always near.
Still loved, still missed, and very dear.

Wishing us hope in the midst of sorrow,
Offering comfort in the midst of pain,
both today and tomorrow.

Joy is love exalted;
Peace is love in repose;
Long-suffering is love enduring;
Gentleness is love in society;
Goodness is love in action;
Faith is love on the battlefield;
Meekness is love in school;
and temperance is love in training.

~Dwight L. Moody

Submitted by Betty Chatfield

CHOIR PRACTICE: SUNDAYS before service @ 10:00 am
Catch the singing vibe to praise God by singing with XLTD (exalted).
Contact Leonora Colletti, organist, for details

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name." Psalm 103:1



THIS IS YOUR CHURCH NEWSLETTER!

SUBMISSIONS TO STEEPLE CHIMES

UP-COMING EVENTS, MESSAGES, POEMS, PRAYERS, VERSES OF INSPIRATION, SUBMITTED BY OUR readers are **ALWAYS welcome!** Did you find God somewhere in your life today? Tell us about it! We welcome your submission to Steeple Chimes! It's EASY to do:

- ◆ Send email to fpcgoffice@gmail.com with your submission. Please put "Steeple Chimes" in the Subject!
- .. Drop printed material in the Steeple Chimes mailbox, next to the entrance to the parlor!
- .. Clippings are welcome, just please provide a note as to the source!



Submissions to Steeple Chimes are due on the third Monday of each month. This date is to help get Steeple Chimes to you before the beginning of the next month!

First Presbyterian Church of Greenlawn



497 Pulaski Road
Greenlawn, New York 11740
Phone: 631-261-2150

Sunday Worship

10:30 AM

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." (Matt 19:14)

Pastor Fred's Office Hours

are from 11:00am through 5:00 pm Monday through Thursday... unless visiting or attending meetings. Outside the above hours, please call (631) 626-3702 for appointments and consultations.

OUR STAFF

Rev Frederick H. Woodward, Pastor

Linda Siegmann, Administrative Assistant

Debra Eitel, Youth Director

Leonora Colletti, Organist

Margaret Negrelli, Clerk of Session

Jim Dean, Treasurer

Betty Chatfield, Financial Secretary

Nancy MacIntyre, Benevolence Treasurer

This is Your Church

As Christians, we are called to serve God by serving others. Here at Greenlawn, many members respond to that call by volunteering their time and talents in one or more of the activities that support our church and community. Volunteers care for our church and facilities, participate in our worship and music services, nurture each other in times of need, and reach out to lend a helping hand in communities near and far.

Ask yourself :

*"How is God calling **Me** to His Service?"*