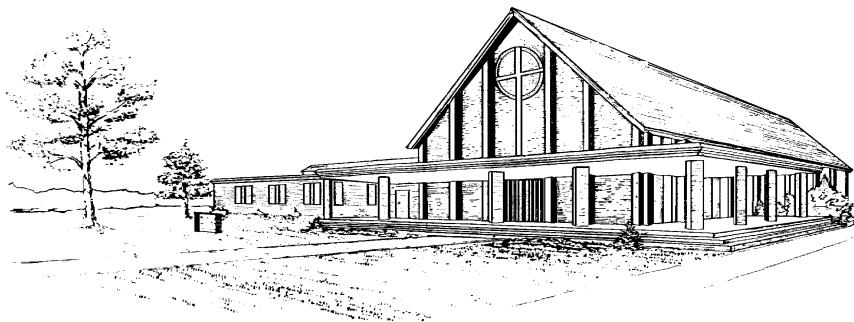


STEEPLE CHIMES

Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church of Greenlawn

ISSUE: Two Hundred Seven

JANUARY 2018



Message From the Pastor

Legendary Green Bay Packers football coach Vince Lombardi emphasized fundamentals. At the beginning of each training season, he would hold up the pigskin and instruct his team, “This, gentleman, is a football.”

As we begin the new year, we may recall that in a similar vein, God has lifted up Jesus Christ, instructing us, “This is a human being.” If we want to know what it means to be human, we look to Jesus. The one who is truly human, Jesus shows us not only who God is, but also defines for us the meaning of authentic humanity.

As we seek to be human as Jesus was human, we pray not only for faith *in* Jesus, but also for the faith *of* Jesus, who “did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a slave, being made in human likeness” (Phil. 2:6-7). Taking always the lower place, not the higher, his was the path not of ascent, but of descent, the way not of addition, but of subtraction. The way John of the Cross put it, “To come to the knowledge you have not, you must go by a way in which you know not. To come to the possession you have not, you must go by a way in which you possess not. To come to be what you are not, you must go by a way in which you are not.”*

As we seek to imitate this Christ in his downward mobility, we recognize not only that our lives do not belong to us, they are not really even *about us*; we are about Life. Spirituality, as Jesus helps us to understand it, means to free us from self-preoccupation, free us from our sense of self-importance and ego. Instead of projecting and protecting our small, separate self-image, we can live instead from our true self, hidden with Christ in God.

And as we continue to celebrate the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ, may we heed God’s demonstration of what it is to be human. As we imitate the life of Jesus, may his embodiment help us to see God’s real presence everywhere, in matter as well as spirit, indeed in the whole of creation. Trusting that “If humankind could have known God without the world, God would never have created the world,” (Meister Eckhart), may we discover that to love God with the self-emptying love with which Jesus loved the Father is to love the world God sent his Son to save.

See you in church,
Pastor Fred

*(John of the Cross, *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, in *John of the Cross: Selected Writings*, ed. Kieran Kavanaugh (Paulist Press: 1987), 44-45.)

The Problem with New Years' Resolutions

New Years resolutions, like other promises that we make to ourselves, often bear no fruit. Perhaps that is because we are trying to harness God's power for our own ends, while failing to rely on the wisdom and strength offered by the God we are coming to know in Jesus Christ.

As declarations of my unaided will, resolutions have never worked particularly well for me. I may have resolved to stop a bad habit, say, and I may even have succeeded for a short time, but my resolution of itself has always proved powerless to help me to stay stopped. In fact, the more I have struggled, the worse it has sometimes become. When it comes to self-improvement programs, I am like the man who set out with his shovel to dig his way out of a deep hole.

It's the same, I think, with our efforts to start a new habit, which generally takes more than a month to establish. The problem, I think, is that our resolutions, however neat and tidy, generally lack the power to resolve what remains unresolved in us. In a paradoxical way, we may find ourselves focusing on our liabilities, giving them even more power, and a greater hold over us. The apostle Paul, one of the earliest writers on New Year's resolutions, put it this way, "I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.... For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no the evil I do not want to do- this I keep on doing." (Rom. 7:15, 18b-19).

If the house always seems to win when we wage bets against what resists change in us Maybe it is time to take our chips elsewhere. If winning is not working out for us, it may be time to throw ourselves headlong into losing. For as Jesus said, "For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it" (Matt. 16:25).

Maybe in the seemingly choiceless choice of surrender, in the magnificent defeat of small self, we will come into contact with a Power greater than all the powers and principalities at work outside us and within, the Power of God for life in Jesus Christ. And in contact with that Power, maybe our New Year's resolutions will fall away like scales from our eyes, and we'll be free for everything that comes our way in this new year, even our struggles, confident that everything that comes to us is somehow meant for us, confident too, that the victory over everything that binds us in chains or puts us down has already been won.

Submitted by Pastor Fred





2017 Living Nativity Cast of Characters

Thanks to all who contributed towards making this evening so special!
A special Thank You to Debbie Eitel for all her organizing and planning
and Gary Prentiss for the delicious dinner.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT:

On January 21, 2018, we are having our annual meeting of the congregation when we will be receiving the Annual Report and electing new church officers for 2018. The annual meeting of the congregation will take place immediately after worship.

Reports for the annual meeting are due in the church office before Monday, January 15, 2018. Our office administrator asks that all reports be submitted to fpcgoffice@gmail.com in Microsoft Word.
From the Moderator of Session

January Youth Happenings

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



Fri-Sun Jan 19 - Jan 21

Annual Ski Retreat Weekend

Tuscarora Inn, Pa. (7-12 Graders)

A weekend of fun and fellowship. Learning more about our relationship with our Lord and Savior.

PRAYER CORNER
January 2018

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PRAYER FOR THE NEW YEAR

~Robert Louis Stevenson

Lord, we thank Thee for this place in which we dwell;
For the love that unites us;
For the peace accorded us this day;
For the hope with which we expect the morrow;
For the health, the work, the food,
And the bright skies that make our lives delightful;
For our friends in all parts of the earth,
Give us courage, gaiety, and quiet mind.
Spare to us our friends, soften to us our enemies.
Bless us, if it may be, in all our innocent endeavors.
If it may not, give us the strength
To encounter that which is to come,
That we may be brave in peril,
Constant in tribulation, temperate in wrath
And in all changes of fortune,
And, down to the gates of death,
Loyal and loving one to another. Amen.

May mercy, peace, and love be yours in full measure. Jude 1:2 GNB

Every end is a new beginning, like the chapters in a book,
By faith we reach out expectantly turn the page and take a look.
Each volume has a specific size each complete in our Lord's sight,
He writes His love in many ways, in sunny days, through darkest night.
He's cast us each as our life's hero, it's up to us to act the part,
Find the faith to walk rejoicing, sing His goodness in our heart.
Of course we'd sometimes like to linger in pleasant resting places,
But time goes on and comes the challenge of tomorrow's untried races.
Since we cannot see and do not know the next step He has planned,
Boldly make a new beginning and trust the ending to His hand.

~Anon

TO ACHIEVE YOUR DREAMS, REMEMBER YOUR ABCs

~Wanda Hope Carter

Avoid negative sources, people, places, things, and habits.

Believe in yourself.

Consider things from every angle.

Don't give up, and don't give in.

Enjoy life today; yesterday is gone, and tomorrow may never come.

Family and Friends are hidden treasures. Seek them and enjoy their riches.

Give more than you planned to give.

Hang on to your dreams.

Ignore those who try to discourage you.

Just do it!

Keep on trying. No matter how hard it seems, it will get easier.

Love yourself first and most.

Make it happen.

Never lie, cheat, or steal. Always strike a fair deal.

Open your eyes and see things as they really are.

Practice makes perfect.

Quitters never win, and winners never quit.

Read, study, and learn about everything important in your life.

Stop procrastinating.

Take control of your own destiny.

Understand yourself in order to better understand others.

Visualize it.

Want it more than anything.

“Xccelerate” your efforts.

You are unique of all God's creations. Nothing can replace you.

Zero in on your target and go for it!

Jesus Loves Me

A pastor was once asked what the greatest lesson was that he had learned in his 50 years of church work. He gave it some thought and boiled it down to just one thing that made the most difference in his life and sustained him through all his trials. What he said was, "The one thing I could always rely on when tears and heartbreak and pain and fear and sorrow paralyzed me...the only thing that would comfort was this verse.....

Jesus loves me this I know,
For the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to Him belong,
We are weak, but He is strong.
Yes, Jesus loves me, the Bible tells me so.

When he finished, the church was quiet. You could actually hear his footsteps as he shuffled back to his chair. I don't believe I will ever forget it. A pastor once stated, "I always notice that it was the adults who chose the children's hymn *Jesus Loves Me* (for the children of course) during a hymn sing, and it was the adults who sang the loudest because I could see they knew it the best."

Here is a new version just for us who have white hair or no hair at all, for us over middle age (or even those almost there) and all you others.

Jesus loves me this I know,
Though my hair is white as snow,
Though my sight is growing dim,
Still He bids me trust in Him.

Though my steps are oh, so slow,
With my hand in His I'll go,
On through life, let come what may,
He'll be there to lead the way.

When the nights are dark and long,
In my heart He puts a song,
Telling me in words so clear,
"Have no fear, for I am near."

When my work on earth is done,
And life's victories have been won,
He will take me home above,
Then I'll understand His love.

I love Jesus, does He know?
Have I ever told Him so?
Jesus loves to hear me say
That I love him every day.

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

Sunday School

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

Catherine Mahler, Director of Music

Debra Eitel, Youth Director

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?"*