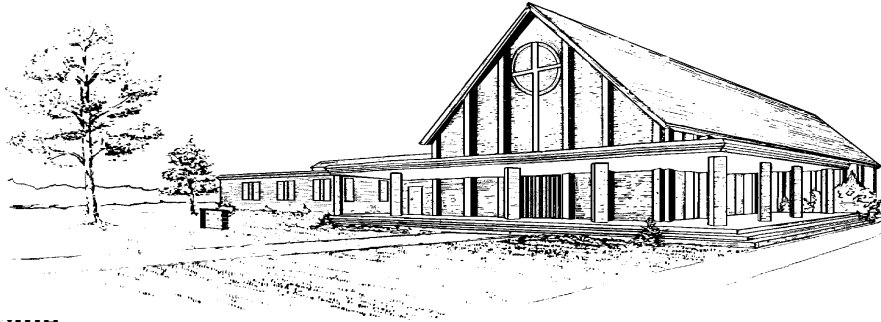


STEEPLE CHIMES

Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church of Greenlawn

ISSUE: Two Hundred Twenty-Nine

JANUARY 2020



Pastor's Message

By New Year's Day, many of us have begun to "pack up" Christmas. But Christmas is not over until God says it's over. For cradled in Christmas is the Incarnation of God.

Mystic and theologian Meister Eckhart (1260-1328) hinted at the significance of the Incarnation, the deeper meaning of Christmas, when he asked, "What good is it to me if this eternal birth of the divine Son takes place unceasingly but does not take place within myself? And what good is it to me if Mary is full of grace if I am not also full of grace? What good is it to me for the Creator to give birth to his Son if I do not give birth to him in my time and culture?"

The Incarnation begins with Jesus but it does not stop there; it flows also unto us and through the world God has made. For the Incarnation was never only about the baby Jesus but about the Cosmic Christ. The unity of matter and spirit, at one ever since God decided to manifest God's self in the creation (the Cosmic Christ), now becomes visibly so through the Incarnation of the Jesus. Through the Incarnation we are helped to see the essential union of the material and the spiritual worlds, how everything material incarnates the Divine. In the Incarnation the visible world becomes for us the doorway to the invisible world, the pointing finger to Immanuel, God With Us, the One who has come and the One who shall come again in the Resurrection.

The Resurrection is already present within the DNA of Incarnation. Christmas foreshadows, or rather, fore-lightens, Easter. For God not only emptied himself for us and for our world when Jesus yielded up his life, God also emptied himself in the first instance, and at even greater cost, by becoming human. Any why? We might say that love made Him do it.

John's Gospel proclaims that God so loved the world that He gave His only Son (John 3:16). In giving up his only Son, God also gave himself up as Father. All this expressed God's love and solidarity with the created world. Because of the Incarnation, we can know that God is at home with materiality and finitude. Bodies matter to our God, ours and God's own. How not? For the Creation itself is God's embodiment. Creation is the body of God.

Christmas is not over until God says it's over. For cradled in Christmas is the Incarnation of God.

See you in church,
Pastor Fred

Don't Buy That Gym Membership Quite Yet

Don't even think of visiting a fitness center this week. But don't fret, it should thin out by February when the New Year's Resolutors have cleared out.

New Year's resolutions, as declarations of our unaided will, prove peculiarly ineffective. We may have resolved to stop a bad habit, say, or may even have succeeded for a short time, but our resolution in and of itself generally proves powerless to help us stay stopped. In fact, the more we struggle, the more entrenched our bad habits sometimes becomes. As for new (and better) habits, they generally take more than a month to establish, and without continued practice, slippage is fairly inevitable. And so it may not shock us to read that 88% of those who set New Year's resolutions fail. (The Calvinists among us suspect that New Year's resolutions may be made precisely by those people who have serious reservations about actually keeping them.)

Our resolutions, however neat and tidy, generally lack the power to resolve what remains unresolved in us. The apostle Paul, an early writer on the subject of 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 winning in the Resolution Ring 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'll 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. In contact with that Power, that Name above all other names, 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 sore struggles and our deep disappointments, confident that everything that comes to us is somehow meant for us, confident too, that the victory over everything that binds us up or puts us down has already been won.

Submitted by Pastor Fred

Annual Meeting of the Congregation

The annual meeting of the congregation will take place immediately after worship on January 26, 2020. The meeting is called to receive the Annual Report, to dismiss the 2019 Nominating Committee, to elect the Nominating Committee for 2020, and to conduct other business as necessary.

Reports for the annual meeting are due in the church office on Monday, January 13, 2020. Please submit all reports in Microsoft Word or Excel to

fpcgoffice@gmail.com

ATTAINMENT

~Ella Wheeler Wilcox

Use all your hidden forces.
Do not miss the purpose of this life,
and do not wait for circumstance
to mold or change your fate.
In your own self lies destiny.
Let this vast truth cast out all fear,
all prejudice, all hesitation.
Know that you are great --
great with divinity.
Do dominate environment, and enter into bliss.
Live largely, and hate nothing.
Hold no aim that does not chord
with universal good.
Hear what the voices of the silence say.
All joys are yours if you put forth your claim.
Once you let the spiritual laws be understood,
material things must answer and obey.

Instead of being critical of people in authority over you and envious of their position, be happy you're not responsible for everything they have to do. Instead of piling on complaints, thank them for what they do. Overwhelm them with encouragement and appreciation!

~Joyce Meyer

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~Joyce Meyer

Submitted by Betty Chatfield



PRAYER CORNER
JANUARY 2020

A WALK WITH JESUS

~Anon

If you could take a walk with Jesus If He could spend some time with you,
Would you walk through fields of flowers, Sprinkled with the morning dew?

If you could take a walk with Jesus, Would you walk beside the sea?
Or, would you walk out in the forest So you could rest beneath the trees?

If you could take a walk with Jesus, What would you say to him?
Would you spend the time complaining, About your family and your friends?

If you could take a walk with Jesus, Would you grumble about your job?
Would you choose your words with caution, As you walked with the Son of God?

Now before you give your answer, Give careful thought to what you'll say.
Though you may not have noticed, Jesus walked with you today.

"For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope." Jr 29:11 NLT

THANK GOD FOR LITTLE THINGS

~Helen Steiner Rice

Thank you, God, for little things that often come our way,
The things we take for granted but don't mention when we pray,
The unexpected courtesy, the thoughtful, kindly deed,
A hand reached out to help us in the time of sudden need—
Oh make us more aware, dear God, of little daily graces
That come to us with "sweet surprise" from never-dreamed-of places.

"Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now, and don't get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes."
Mt 6:34 The Message

OOOPS! ...taken from actual church bulletins and announcements

The Fasting and Prayer Conference includes meals.

Scouts are saving aluminum cans, bottles, and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.

The sermon this morning: "Jesus Walks On the Water". The sermon tonight: "Searching for Jesus".

Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.

Don't let worry kill you off – let the Church help.

Miss Charlene Mason sang "I Will Not Pass This Way Again", giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.

Please place your donation in the envelope along with the deceased person you want remembered.

The church will host an evening of fine dining, super entertainment, and gracious hostility.

Pot-Luck Supper Sunday at 5:00 pm – prayer and medication to follow.

The ladies of the church have cast off clothing of every kind. They may be seen in the basement on Friday afternoon.

This evening at 7PM there will be a hymn singing in the park across the street. Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin.

The pastor would appreciate it if the ladies of the congregation would lend him their electric girdles for the pancake breakfast next Sunday.

The Low Self Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7PM. Please use the back door.

Submitted by Leonora Colletti

2019

LIVING NATIVITY



First Presbyterian Church of Greenlawn



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facebook.com/First-Presbyterian-Church-of-Greenlawn

Sunday Worship And Sunday School

10:30 AM

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
Debbie Eitel, Fellowship Director
Leonora Colletti, Director of Music
Margaret Negrelli, Clerk of Session
Jim Dean, Treasurer
Betty Chatfield, Financial Secretary
Susan Perrotta, Benevolence Treasurer

This is *Your* Church

Church is not something
you go to,
It is a family you belong to.

Ask yourself :
“*How is God calling Me to His Service?*”