

THE BURNING BUSH

From the Pastor's Desk...

"...and remember, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Mt. 28:20

Our long days of fasting and Lent are over, the Easter hype is finished, the friends and families have returned home giving way to "low-tide" Sunday (the first Sunday after Easter.) The kids are still on sugar highs and the teachers are having their hands full in the classrooms. There seems to be a void after Easter—a let-down so to speak.

I remember after graduating from seminary and stepping out into the field I wondered how I would accomplish this great task that God had called me to do. I felt so unworthy and ill-equipped. I had the best education PCUSA could provide. I felt like my brain could not hold anymore. Fact was, it was a long time before I wanted to read again! Life was going to be different from here on. I had to hold onto the words of Jesus, the last ones he spoke to his disciples, "Lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age."

That promise must have been precious to Jesus' first disciples. Jesus was setting a task before them that would require their greatest efforts and more. Certainly they could not do it if they had to do it alone. But they didn't. They had his word. And thus, they, and I, set out on our missions. His words mean strength for service, strength for what was beyond what they themselves possessed or could muster.

Henry Ibsen said it best. "The strongest man in the world is he who stands most alone." If Christ is with us, we have strength for the task. You see, the task is not yet completed—far from it. Now it is ours, and Christ is with us to give us strength to make disciples for him to cooperate in the interest of the Kingdom of God.

When Jesus promised to be with his disciples, through good times and bad, they would find many blessings where there seemed to be only troubles. So through whatever becomes our lot, Christ assures us, he is with us, and if somehow our troubles make us more aware of him and more obedient to him, there cannot but be blessings in them. Christ remains our friend forever and wants only the best for us.

Over the years I find I dwell less and less on the disappointments and sorrows and have found that from them have come great joys. Besides, as Calvin Coolidge said, "If you see ten troubles coming down the road, you can be sure that nine will run into the ditch." I marvel that I have been able to accomplish more than I could have ever done on my own. Like the disciples, we make mistakes because we are not perfect, but Christ gave them direction for their efforts. They and those who followed turned the world upside-down, for "nothing was able to separate them from the love of God in Christ Jesus."

Yes, Easter is over, but the blessings were worth the journey! Now let us go forward with those Alleluias echoing all along the way. Christ is Risen. He is risen indeed and with us always!

Pastor Linda

SESSION SNIPPETS

BY PAT WELKER

Notes from Mar 8 Session Meeting:

MINISTRY TEAM REPORTS

CHRISTIAN ED: Bonnie & Jodi – VBS curriculum is being ordered.

FELLOWSHIP/MISSION: Jodi & Jay – The Steak Feed was a big success. Jodi is looking for ideas for future meals. If you have any ideas or desires, please let her know.

Next up for Fellowship is the Palm Sunday lunch and Easter Egg Hunt. The meal will be a potluck so get your recipes ready.

NOMINATING: Jodi & Sam; Trustees Clark Evans or Jane Rutledge (for John Black); Deacons, Kay Fairburn or Cozy Hoover and at-large members Steffanie Ulm & Michelle Lane – nothing to report

STEWARDSHIP/FINANCE/MEMORIAL & PERSONNEL: Kathy, Bill & Jodi – nothing to report

WORSHIP: Jay, Sam & Kathy – Going to work on involving the entire congregation in the worship, including the young people.

TECHNOLOGY: Bill & Jay – The team is looking into a needed computer for the sanctuary that will work with the video screens and make things easier and better.

ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP REVIEW: Pat & Kathy – nothing to report

DEACONS' REPORT

The Deacons met on February 28. Michelle Lane opened the meeting with prayer. Deacons Cozy Hoover, Beth Martin, Kay Fairburn, Michelle and Marianne Taylor were present.

The Secretary's and Treasurer's reports were read and approved.

54 were served Communion on Feb. 7

The Deacon's present sent 37 cards and made 9 visits in February

NEW BUSINESS

Communion will be served on Maundy Thursday and Easter with Cozy and Michelle in charge.

Easter flowers will be available from Hy-Vee again and should be delivered by Palm Sunday.

We will meet on Palm Sunday during Fellowship to fix Easter baskets for shut-ins.

Correspondence was received from a family who was a victim of the downtown fire in October. Michelle sent help to them from the Deacons. Next meeting will be March 20. Meeting adjourned by Michelle.

TRUSTEES' REPORT

The Trustees met on February 10. The meeting was held in the Manse. Present were Tim Ulm, Dale Peterson, Clark Evans, Kent Kowal and Sam Rutledge.

The Manse was toured, making a check list of final preparatory work, including the basement and garage. Clark will put up extra lights in the basement. The Trustees decided to wait until Spring before removing the paneling in the back basement room, where water has come in.

The tour of the office led to a decision to accept the offer of heaters for the office. Gas heaters were the choice. Clark will select and install with help.

The tour of the belfry led to questions and possible solutions---blocking off the tower from the inside to deter bats and cold and a similar solution surrounding the rope for the bell.

Other work projects in the CE Building left the Trustees exhausted.

Work to begin next week in the Manse and continue throughout the other areas into March.

The Trustees met on Mar. 6. Present were Jane Rutledge, Dale Peterson, Tim Ulm and Kent Kowal.

MANSE—Carpet all swept, garage cleaned out, garage door working, plumbing & tightening for leaks all done. Waiting on city to turn on water to be turned on for a final cleanup.

Trustees will meet Wednesday, March 9 in the belfry with ladders and flashlights in order to determine a cause of action for the bats. Will also check the screens in the dormers.

Tim reported water meter readings from Delano O. that tracked 3+ weeks of water usage that showed nothing unusual in the usage.

Dale noted that Stormy Luna was painting three Sunday School rooms as a Community Service Project.

Work day was set for Saturday April 23 with a rain date of April 30.

PASTOR'S REPORT

February was off to a running start beginning with a meeting with Pastor Jon Dainty to plan the Ash Wednesday service. It is always a joy to work with Jon. We agreed to have the service reflect three way participation type of worship. The congregation, Jon and I. Looking back, I feel it went really well, though Jon has bigger thumbs than me and I could see whom he has “ashed” very well! Of course, I was surprised myself when I arrived home and looked in the mirror. He got me good.

A service was provided for the folks at Farmington Country Manor. We sang several songs with a message about Lent and the hope and promises that Jesus made.

What a great day it was on Feb. 21st to receive into our membership Sarah and Michael Perardi and Ryan Stobaugh. It appears they have begun a great work as two more families are on the horizon with lots of Baptisms besides. This is a once in a lifetime experience for me. In my near twenty years in ministry I have never had so many all at once. I thank God every day for putting me in this place and time to be so blessed. I know you feel the same way.

I spent the day with a dear friend at Unity Point Hospital as she began aggressive chemo. We are the sisters neither of us had. I would not have wanted to be anywhere else on that day. Her sons were in need of support for the shock that appeared just 3 weeks before. They are all in for a long haul as she looks forward to chemo in the coming eight months. I have added Charlotte Gates to our prayer list. I continue to work with Mary Ulm as well.

I continue to meet with new member prospects and prepare them for the Baptism of their children.

I have met with Blackhawk Presbytery's COM members to understand how they operated in comparison to Great Rivers. Coming out of Whitewater Valley and the Chicago Presbytery I am amassing a lot of knowledge. These Presbyteries are all under the umbrella of Synod of Lincoln Trails, but it seems that is about all they have in common. I would recommend that the new Pastor gains a good understanding of our Presbytery in comparison to the one previously served. It will make a big difference. That person will need to adapt to the way it is done here. I know from experience that a change like this can be difficult for a Pastor and Session.

And what about that Steak Feed! Wow, what a great time and wonderful meal. I know our Church will make a difference for people in a Third World Country and perhaps a better way of life. Our Mission Team does an outstanding job, don't forget to thank them.

For February, I logged 149 miles, Communion served to 4 shut-ins, several correspondences, phone visits, 1 hospital visit and 2 counseling Sessions as well as 116 hours.

The Session voted to approve payment of \$66.56 in reimbursable expenses (95 regular miles at \$0.54 for \$51.30 + 54 medical miles at \$0.19 for \$10.26 + \$5 for ashes for Ash Wednesday Service)

NEW BUSINESS

1. Jodi wants to get an adult Bible Study going. It is in the infancy stages of development but would welcome any help and/or suggestions on what people would like to see along these lines.

2. MARCH 8 PRESBYTERY MEETING REPORT: Those who attended the meeting were very impressed and inspired by the guest speaker they listened to. He was very encouraging to all to get the entire congregation involved in the worship service. This should really focus on the young people and get them involved in all aspects of worship whether that be via music, liturgists, taking the collection, telling of their activities and accomplishments. Worship should focus on Jesus, not on lights or action as many of the mega Churches are stressing. We should be focusing on covenant and values.

We need your used printer cartridges! Recycling them provides the fund for office supplies. Your contributions are very much appreciated!



Jackets and coats are available through the Kid's Coat Closet for students of Farmington Central School District #265. Please contact the church office at 245-2914 or Kathy Welch at 245-4286.

Shepherd's Pie crockpot

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| 1 1/2 lbs chuck roast, trimmed and cut into 2" pieces | 2 large russet potatoes, peeled |
| 2 large carrots, chopped | 2 c frozen peas |
| 1 large onion, chopped | 1/2 c milk |
| 1 c beef broth | 2 T butter |
| 1 c dark beer (Guinness) | 4 oz sour cream |
| 2 T Worcestershire sauce | |
| 2 T tomato paste | |
| 2 T flour | |
| 1 1/2 t salt | |
| 1 t pepper | |

Combine: beef, carrots, onion, broth, beer, Worcestershire, tomato paste, flour, salt and pepper in a 4-6 quart crockpot. (You can nestle the potatoes in the liquid, but I prefer to mash them myself.) Cover; cook until tender on low for 7-8 hours or on high 4-5 hours. Stir in the peas; cover and warm until heated through, 2-3 minutes. Mash: potatoes with milk, butter, sour cream, 1/2 t each of salt and pepper. Serve: stew topped with mashed potatoes. Serves 6.

This is the recipe Pastor Linda used for the wonderful meal after worship service on Maundy Thursday. Enjoy!

APRIL 2016

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3 Food Pantry & Communion Sunday	4 Den mtgs 6:15PM	5	6 Choir Practice 7-8:00PM	7	8	9
10 Council of Churches mtg 12:30PM @ Baptist Church	11 Den mtgs 6:15PM	12 Tiger Den mtg 6:15PM Session mtg 7PM	13 Choir Practice 7-8:00PM	14	15	16
17 April Birthday Celebration @ Fellowship Time	18 Pack mtg 6:15PM	PEO Dinner 6:30PM	20 May Burning Bush deadline NOON Choir Practice 7-8:00PM	21	22	23
24 Congregational Meeting after worship	25 Den mtgs 6:15PM	26 Tiger Den mtg 6:15PM	27 Choir Practice 7-8:00PM	28	29	30



3 Brian Elliott
 16 Colby Evans
 21 Kevin Phillips
 22 Keith Garlish
 24 Leigh Ann Stephens

Farmington Central High
School presents

SHREK! THE MUSICAL

Friday, April 8, 2016 at 7 PM
 Saturday April 9, 2016 at 7 PM
 Sunday April 10, 2016 at 2 PM

The Burning Bush – April 2016

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
83 North Cone Street
Farmington IL 61531-1248



Blessings on:



COME WORSHIP WITH US SUNDAYS!

Sunday School classes for all ages 9:30AM

Fellowship Time 10:30AM

Worship Service 11:00AM

Join us for a great message and God's word! Enjoy wonderful music and fellowship between Sunday School and Worship Service

“In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” (John 1:1)

