

THE BURNING BUSH

Dear Colleagues in Ministry,

Believe it or not, we are quickly approaching the Season of Lent. In fact, depending on when you read this newsletter, we will already be in the Season of Lent. Lent officially begins on Ash Wednesday, which is February 17 this year. Lent always creeps up on me too quickly. I feel like I finally get to take a breather after Christmas and New Years and the congregational meetings, and then “Bam!” here comes Lent. We are entering the season of the Church year when we prepare ourselves for Holy Week and Easter. Lent is a sacred time in the life of our Church. It is meant as a time for us to take stock of where we are in life, and for us to reexamine our lives and habits as individuals, as a community, and as a congregation. Where could we use more grace in our lives? Where could we show more grace? Where do we need to relinquish the sense of control that has us wound so tightly? In what ways can we improve ourselves and our community? Yes, Lent is a sacred time of self-reflection.

Lent is also a time of self-denial. We are called during Lent to reconsider those habit that we know are bad for us. Often, people give up drinking caffeine or eating chocolate for Lent. Our Catholic siblings don't eat meat on Fridays. There is nothing wrong with doing any these things as a spiritual practice. These spiritual practices of self-denial and sacrifice are meant to bring us closer to God. So, I ask you, what if, instead of chocolate or caffeine, we gave up needing to be in control all the time? What if we gave up the anger we've been holding onto for too long? What if we gave up our sugar addiction for Lent? There are many things that we could give up during Lent that would hopefully bring us closer to God. What are those things for you?

Finally, Lent is also a time of increased generosity. We are called to examine those things in our communities that hold us back from loving God and loving our neighbors more fully. How could we help the “least of these” in our community? How could we support people through our advocacy with city, state, and national leaders? Could we volunteer at the Food Pantry or at the Farmer's Closet? Could we have a community action day where we clean up our community? Could we start a Community Garden? There are so many ways we could improve our community and deepen our relationship with God.

Let us take this time of Lent to explore all the ways that God is calling us to examine ourselves. Let us use this time of Lent to improve ourselves and our relationships with God and with each other. Let us get to work the Lenten season. Amen.

Blessings, Pastor Andy

SNIPPETS by Pat

Snippets from January 12 Session Meeting via Zoom:

Since this is the first meeting of 2021, one of our newly elected Elders, Beth Martin, attended the meeting.

Communion Dates for 2021 are January 3, February 7, March 7, April 1 (Maundy Thursday), April 4 (Easter), May 2, June 6, July 4, August 1, September 5, October 3 (Worldwide Communion), November 7, December 5 and December 24 (Christmas Eve).

MINISTRY TEAM REPORTS:

- **Worship Team – Liz & Tammy (co-chairs) & Tony**
 - No report/changes.
- **Christian Education Team – Beth (chair) & Tammy**
 - No report/changes.
- **Stewardship/Finance/Memorial/Personnel Team – Steffanie (chair) & Michelle**
 - Michelle went over the Financial Reports in the absence of Kathy Welch.
 - Memorial & Stewardship: nothing to report.
 - Personnel: Diana returned to playing the organ in January. We want to thank Beth for volunteering to play for free while Diana was recovering. Barb began her once a month cleaning in December.
 - Finance: Cindy Daniels confirmed that the government has cleared the PPP loan.
 - Pastor Andy is going to handle the duties of running the camera during on-line worship. Brady will not have to be in attendance.
- **Fellowship and Mission Team – Tony (chair) & Steffanie**
 - No report/changes.
- **Evangelism Team – Liz & Tammy (co-chairs) & Brady**
 - No report/changes.
- **Technology Team – Brady (chair) & Michelle**
 - Pastor Andy brought up the problem of internet coverage dropping off in the sanctuary. Midwest Fiber Tech has been investigating and recommends a coax line be run from the office to the box near the organ/choir loft. This will bring more internet power to the sanctuary. The Tech suggested that our people run the cable (cost around \$30) which will save money, because the Tech will only need ½ hour of paid time to do the necessary connections. The Session voted to approve doing this.
- **Nominating Team - Liz (chair); Kevin Phillips, Ben Vermillion, Cozy Hoover, Linda Riley**
 - Liz reported that she is staying on another term as Elder. This completes the Nominating Team job for 2020

DEACONS' REPORT: Deacon's Meet in December. Their report will be available at February Session Meeting.

TRUSTEES REPORT: Nothing at this time.

PASTOR'S REPORT:

- Worship
 - I continue to lead worship online.
 - I led worship on December 21, 2020 and December 24, 2020. Both of these were well attended on Facebook.
 - On January 3, 2021, I led Communion during our online worship service. We had 105 engagements with this worship service on Facebook.
- Pastoral Care
 - I have been following up with several people recovering from various illnesses including COVID-19
 - I took a bunch of donated clothes to various agencies in the area.
 - I continue to follow up with people who are grieving in this time.
- Presbytery
 - I continue to serve on Committee on Ministry
 - I continue to serve on the Greenview AC
 - I will be a reader for the ordination exams in 2021
 - I resigned from the Kemmerer Village Board.

OLD BUSINESS:

- By Laws/Manual of Operations – Pastor Andy and Pat continue working on these.
- Baptisms & Confirmation Classes on-hold until further notice.
- Presbytery Grant for use by the CofC Movie in the Park. Pastor Andy is going to order the final speaker, which will use up remainder of Grant.
- Congregational/Annual Meeting – On Sunday, January 24, there will be a combined Congregational Meeting to elect/ordain officers for the Class of 2021 and Annual Meeting to review the Annual Report, elect At-Large members of the Nominating Team and approve Pastor Andy's Terms of Call. This will be a Zoom Meeting with availability to call in and vote for those without computers. If mitigations are lifted/adjusted to allow in-person meetings, that will also be considered.
- The longest night service was held December 21st via zoom.
- Suspension of in-person worship until further notice.
- Suspension of Secretarial position and Church cleaning changed to once per month until further notice.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Michelle volunteered to be the Commissioner for the Zoom Presbytery Meeting to be held Saturday, February 13 from 9:30am-3:00pm.
- The Session voted to approve receiving Mary Ulm into Membership via Transfer.
- One Great Hour of Sharing and Presbyterian Women's Blanket Sunday to be discussed at the next meeting. Hopefully we will be meeting in-person by that time.
- The Elders decided which Ministry Teams they wanted to serve on. See the Team Reports above to see who's on the Teams.

GUEST MINISTER

During Pastor Andy's Christmas vacation, Dean Warner filled the pulpit. He does a really good job and presents a good sermon. His message is easy to understand and has good meaning. I would like to thank him for providing worship for us via Facebook. One thing, I will be really happy when we can meet in person once again. Facebook worship is good in a pinch, but sure not as meaningful as being together in the pews.

THANK YOU

I had sent a note to Wilma Brentz so she called me so I thought I would update everyone on how she is doing: She said she is doing very well after her hip replacement. She wants to thank everyone for the cards that were sent to her. She said they really meant a lot to her and she enjoyed hearing from everyone. She said she doesn't get out much but does occasionally go to the store and beauty shop. Her sons visit quite often so they can check on her and help with what needs done. She also has a lady that comes in once a week to help with cleaning and laundry. Her washer/dryer are in the basement and her sons told her to not go down there, which is probably good advice. So she just wanted to say thanks to everyone. Keep her in your thoughts and prayers.

ANNUAL MEETING INFORMATION

The Annual Meeting was held on January 24. It was a unique meeting as the Active Member participating were as follows: 21 via Zoom, 7 in the Sanctuary and 11 had voted ahead via paper ballot.

The Class of 2023 election had the following elected and installed: Tony Rolando, Liz Johnson and Beth Martin as Elders; Sue Lane and Melissa Herron as Deacons; and Kevin Phillips and Joe Herron as Trustees.

Since this is the first time Beth has served as an Elder, she was also ordained.

The 3 At-Large members elected for the 2021 Nominating Ministry Team will be Cozy Hoover, Crystal Gomes and Pat Welker.

Pastor Andy's Terms of Call were approved. It was noted that there was a raise in his salary and Board of Pensions because the Presbytery chose to increase the minimum salaries for Ministers.

The 2021 Annual Report was approved as presented.

Per the Book of Order, which has the rules for conducting Church Business, says that Congregational/Annual Meeting Minutes have to be approved by the Congregation, unless they approve having the Session approve them. They did vote to have that done.

There was also approval to keep this in effect until changed at some later date. So from now on, all Congregational/Annual Meeting Minutes will be able approved by the Session. This will make it a much cleaner operation.

Check out the "Farmington Council of Churches" Facebook page. Make sure to like the page so that you will get notifications and updates. We will be posting community events and information. This is where you will also be able to watch our Facebook Live worship services during Lent. See the announcements section for dates and times of upcoming Lenten worship services

Pastor Andy Contact Information

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Church Address: 83 N. Cone St. Farmington, IL 61531

Cell Phone (Call first): 217-994-8588

Office Phone: 309-245-2914

Email: revandysonneborn@gmail.com

Mission Giving Updates

Food Pantry

Thank you to everyone for supporting our Farmington Food Pantry. So far, we have donated 162 items, weighing 117lbs. We have also donated \$100 to the pantry, at the time of writing this note. Thank you so much for your generosity!

When our church is worshipping in person, our Food Pantry Sunday will be the last Sunday of the month. When we are not worshipping in person, weather permitting, the grocery cart will be set outside on the corner of Fulton and Gold, also on the last Sunday. If the weather is bad, I will have the north door to fellowship hall unlocked from 10:00am-2:00pm. You can come inside and place your donations in the grocery cart.

Souper Bowl of Caring 2021

Normally, we collect food for the Food Pantry on the last Sunday of the month. This month, we will collect food on February 7, 2021. This is because February 7 is a special day called Souper Bowl Sunday, when churches around the country donate food to the Food Pantry. We ask that everyone help support the Farmington Food Pantry through donations of food and money on February 7th. Weather permitting, the grocery cart will be on the corner of Fulton and Gold, otherwise, you can find the grocery cart in the fellowship hall, which will be unlocked from 10:00am-2:00pm

Per Capita for 2021

The Per Capita amount for each member of the Farmington Presbyterian Church for 2021 is \$35.25. This is not an assessment or dues, but a covenantal relationship with the greater Church. This amount is not in our 2021 budget, but paid as collected from each member to the Presbytery of Great Rivers. This money is used by the Presbytery and the denomination to fund all of its administrative and mission projects. We partner with other churches in our Presbytery and are called to share Christ's love by partnering in Service, Uniting in Worship and Risking in Ministry.

45 out of 104 members paid their per capita in 2020, approximately 43%. All organizations need money to enable them to perform and provide all that is expected from them. We are asking that everyone consider the important work of the Great Rivers Presbytery and support it by paying the 2021 Per Capita apportionment. Per Capita giving may be mailed directly to Mickie Ulm at 516 Idlewhile Ct. Farmington, or can be sent directly to the church.

MONTHLY CALENDARS

FEBRUARY 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Office Hours 9:30am-12pm	2 Committee on Ministry - Pastor Andy Zoom meeting	3 Office Hours 1pm-5pm Devotion 1pm	4 Office Hours 1pm-5pm	5	6
7 Worship 10:30am Communion	8 Office Hours 9:30am-12pm	9 Office Hours 9:30am-12pm Session 7pm	10 Office Hours 1pm-5pm Devotion 1pm	11 Office Hours 1pm-5pm	12	13 Presbytery meeting on Zoom
14 Worship 10:30am	15 Office Hours 9:30am-12pm	16 Office Hours 9:30am-12pm	17 Ash Wednesday 6:30pm online Office Hours 1pm-5pm Devotion 1pm	18 Office Hours 1pm-5pm	19	20
21/28 1 st and 2 nd Sundays of Lent Worship 10:30am	22 Office Hours 9:30am-12pm	23 Office Hours 9:30am-12pm	24 Office Hours 1pm-5pm Devotion 1pm	25 Office Hours 1pm-5pm	26	27

March 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Office Hours 9:30am-12pm	2 Office Hours 9:30am-12pm	3 Office Hours 1pm-5pm Devotion 1pm	4 Office Hours 1pm-5pm	5	6
7 3 rd Sunday in Lent Worship 10:30am Communion	8 Office Hours 9:30am-12pm	9 Office Hours 9:30am-12pm Session 7pm	10 Office Hours 1pm-5pm Devotion 1pm	11 Office Hours 1pm-5pm	12	13
14 4 th Sunday in Lent Worship 10:30am	15 Office Hours 9:30am-12pm	16 Office Hours 9:30am-12pm	17 Ash Wednesday Office Hours 1pm-5pm Devotion 1pm	18 Office Hours 1pm-5pm	19	20
21 5 th Sunday in Lent Worship 10:30am	22 Office Hours 9:30am-12pm	23 Office Hours 9:30am-12pm	24 Office Hours 1pm-5pm Devotion 1pm	25 Office Hours 1pm-5pm	26	27
28 Palm Sunday worship at 10:30am	29 Office Hours 9:30am-12pm	30 Office Hours 9:30am-12pm	31 Office Hours 9:30am-12pm			



February Birthdays

5 Jane Rutledge 9 Gary Suydam; Alexis Haynes 11 Nyle Staley 13 Kari Berry
17 Ryan McMaster 18 Linda Riley 20 Michelle Lane 21 Rachel Elliott; Denise Lane
22 Kaitlyn Stobaugh; Brea Marinich 23 Melody Martin 27 Marj Guidi

March Birthdays

1 Paula Monari 11 Marianne Taylor 23 Colton Evans 24 Tim Ulm 27 Diana
Rolando

March Anniversaries

23 Tadd & Monica Swanson



† Prayer Request †

Ongoing Prayers: MG-muscular disease; Blake Melz (Tim Melz' son) age 11, undiagnosed health issues; Corbin Rutledge, health; Dave Waggoner, struggling with side effects from a cancerous tumor; Cole, 5 days old, surgery to repair damage in the throat (family friend of Swansons); Marilyn Garrett with long term illnesses. (Melody Martin's music teacher; Melody Martin, more medical tests; Cooper, diagnosed with autism (Jodi Phillips' grandson, Blake's son); Herb Stufflebeam, treatment for non-Hodgkin's Marginal Zone Lymphoma; Tom, a friend of Mary Ohaver Moermond; Mike Link (friend of Mary Ulm); Jodi Phillips' co-worker's daughter, Kassidy (continued issues with Leukemia); Linda Staley, return of her cancer; Glenene Benson, recovery from back surgery

Those in Assisted Living: Marj Guidi, Courtyard Estates; Dianna Threw, Sue Utsinger at Farmington Country Manor; Leigh Ann Taylor, The Loft; Eileen (Diana's mom) Red Oak Estates, Canton.

ANNOUCEMENTS



Region 2, our region of Illinois, is now out of mitigation standards and back in Phase 4. Session will meet on February 9th to come up with a plan for reopening worship. We will send out information by phone, email, and Facebook once details have been finalized.

We are trying to reach the goal of having 100 subscribers on YouTube. If you haven't subscribed to us on YouTube, please log in and do so. Reaching this goal will help us unlock new features on YouTube.

The following is the current info (as of the date of publication) regarding COVID-19 vaccinations. This information comes directly from the Fulton County Health Department.

- If you are 65 and over, please call Graham Hospital at 309-649-6823. They are still sorting through a large volume of calls and it may take several attempts to be able to schedule a vaccination
- If you qualify for group 1A or 1B, please visit covidvaccination.dph.illinois.gov and register online or call 309-647-1134
- You can also contact the HyVee in Canton at 309-647-0712 as they are now distributing vaccines through their pharmacies.

Lenten Worship Services

- Ash Wed: 6:30pm at on Facebook Live
- Maundy Thursday: 6:30pm at First Presbyterian Church and on Facebook Live
- Good Friday: 6:30pm on Facebook Live
- No Easter Sunrise service or breakfast
- Easter: 10:30AM at First Presbyterian Church and on Facebook Live

First Presbyterian Church Officers 2021

ELDERS: Tammy Duley, Michelle Lane, Steffanie Ulm, Brady Johnson, Tony Rolando, Beth Martin, and Liz Johnson

DEACONS: Lynsey Vermillion, Alissa Holder, Chris Evans, Marianne Taylor, Melissa Herron, and Sue Lane

TRUSTEES: Tim Ulm, Clark Evans, Ben Vermillion, Jay Ulm, Joe Herron, and Kevin Phillips

**The Burning Bush
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
83 North Cone Street
Farmington IL 61531-1248**



COME WORSHIP WITH US:
First Presbyterian Church of Farmington, IL
Worship Service is at 10:30AM, Sunday
mornings, in person & on Facebook Live

Video of worship service will be posted on:
YouTube: First Presbyterian Church of
Farmington, IL
&
On the website:
www.firstpresfarmington.com

Blessings on:

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

