

THE BURNING BUSH

Dear Colleagues in Ministry,

By the time you receive this newsletter, we are gearing up for our Easter. It feels good to be worshipping in person again. I have missed seeing your faces over the past year. I have missed the running and playing of children in our building. I have missed fellowship time and mission dinners and funeral dinners and all the chances for celebration and fellowship over the past year. I know that things are still different at church right now. We still must wear masks and maintain social distancing. We still aren't having fellowship times nor any meals. But things are slowly returning to normal.

Over the next few months, Session will continue to look at how things are going in the county and region as we make decisions on when we can relax the rules. We will, as we have been for the past year, make our decisions based on the advice of scientists and on what we feel God is calling us to do for our community. I am sure that not everyone agrees with all our decisions. I am also sure that there are no guidebooks or plans written out on what the best decisions are...how I wish there were!!! We have listened to the Holy Spirit guide us in our decision making. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we continue our journey together. I hope and pray that the end of this pandemic lockdown is near.

I must tell you that I am excited after our last Session meeting. We started dreaming about and planning events for the congregation. For instance, we talked about having a modified VBS this year, maybe in late July. Parents, please let me know what week works best for you for VBS. We planned for our Easter Egg Hunt and Easter service. The Deacons began planning for Communion again. The Farmington Council of Churches will begin looking at having our movies in the park mission this summer once we get the "all clear" to have larger gatherings. I hope we can have the 4th of July community party and the Spoon River Drive this year. There are a lot of things on the horizon for our congregation and I am excited that we are starting to plan for things again. These plans, of course, are contingent upon how the pandemic is doing and how many people are getting vaccinated. I know that we are all looking for a sense of normality after this difficult year.

That being said, a question we need to ask ourselves is, "Should we go back to the way things were before COVID?" Are there things we could let go of as a congregation because they are no longer life giving? Are there things that we can start doing now that we were afraid of doing before the pandemic? Everything has changed over the last year. It is my hope that we don't waste this golden opportunity to examine who we are and who we want to be as a congregation. If you have thoughts and ideas regarding this, please don't hesitate to let me know.

As always, be safe, take care of yourself and others. Wash your hands. Wear your masks. Get the vaccine when it's your turn.

Blessings, Pastor Andy

SNIPPETS

by Pat

PRESBYTERY MEETING – Michelle Lane attended the February Presbytery Meeting via Zoom. The last hour featured a presentation from Rev. Jimmie Hawkins who works at the Offices of Public Witness at the UN. This office advocates for the PCUSA. They have folks who focus on domestic issue and others who focus more internationally. They meet with different politicians to advocate for causes, etc., that reflect the teachings of Christ and the particular Presbyterian focus. They promote equality and offer resources on their website for everything from racial justice to advocating for the homeless, etc. *They have fellows each summer and if young adults are interested in this sort of advocacy, they should go to the website to look into applying for a spot. The presentation was interesting and one of the big points brought up during the Q&A was the idea of letting the young people in church take the lead and let us know what causes they are interested in to really engage them.*

DEVOTION: Brady's devotional YouTube video still didn't work, so he explained that it was about a friend that visited a hospital patient. The patient asked his friend the question "Who are You?". The friend kept replying with answers like husband, friend, coach, white male and finally saying he was a Christian. The patient wondered why Christian was his last statement instead of his first. The patient also asked his friend if he had really prayed for him. During the friend's last visit, he had told the patient that he would pray for him. The answer: no, he hadn't prayed for him. The friend left with many things to think about. We also would probably have to think about what our Christianity means to us, is it first in our lives? **Pastor Andy sent the video to the Elders and Clerk. Very powerful video that everyone should watch. This clip is part of "Overcomers by Kendrick Brothers". (Next Month's Devotee will be Tammy.)

MINISTRY TEAM REPORTS:

- **Worship Team – Liz & Tammy (co-chairs) & Tony**
 - The Session voted to reopen the Church for in-person worship with the State mandates of mask wearing and social distancing being observed. Will also use the same recording method for seating.
 - Will use the prayer chain and email to get the word out to folks.
- **Christian Education Team – Beth (chair) & Tammy**
 - Easter Egg Hunt – Will plan to have an Egg Hunt this year weather permitting. If the weather is bad, the Eggs will be distributed to the kids anyway.
 - The Session voted to approve purchase of palms to be used on Palm Sunday. Considering having the kids parade around outside with the palms, maybe also going to the Nursing/Assisted Living Homes.
 - VBS – Going to plan for holding VBS in some form, the end of July timeframe. Will use the same theme that was planned for 2020, as the starter kit was purchased.
- **Stewardship/Finance/Memorial/Personnel Team – Steffanie (chair) & Michelle**

- Finance - As stated above, the Church received the PPP Government Loan of \$13,392 thanks to the work of Kathy Welch and Cindy Daniels. It will be used for salaries and utilities.
- Kathy is also working with Ameren to see why the Church utility bill went from \$300 in Feb. of 2020 to over \$1000 for Feb. 2021.
- Stewardship/Memorial – Nothing to report.
- Personnel – At this time, the Secretary will remain off work and the Janitor will continue on the once-a-month schedule.
- **Technology Team – Brady (chair) & Michelle**
 - To help with the internet connection in the Sanctuary, Brady took the old router from the office and hooked it up in the Sanctuary. This seems to have helped with the connection for worship.
 - Michelle is working with Tadd to get the Website updated. She told the new Elders that they needed to send a picture to Tadd so that he could put it on the Website.
- **Nominating Team - Elder (chair), Deacon, Cozy Hoover, Crystal Gomes & Pat Welker**
 - Michelle & Tammy will decide which of them will chair this Team.
- **DEACONS' REPORT:** Meeting 2-20-21
 - Attending – Chris Evans, Alissa Holder, Melissa Herron, Sue Lane, Lynsey Vermillion, Marianne Taylor and Pastor Andy.
 - Secretary Report – Submitted to Church office after last meeting, by Melissa Herron.
 - Treasurer Report – Nobody turned in receipts yet from December activities for shut-ins and the Food Basket for a family. If turned in, we will reimburse from our account. It has been a long time since we have written a check from our account. Alissa's name is on the account. Chris will call the Bank and see if two people need to sign the check to reimburse or if Alissa can just sign by herself.
 - Voted on officers for this year. Chris Evans will stay as chair, Melissa Herron as secretary and Alissa Holder as treasurer.
 - Cards sent since we last met. Chris 3, Marianne 1, Lynsey 1 and Alissa 10. Reminded the Deacons that there were cards in the office. There are also stamps donated by Pat Welker, for each Deacon to use.
 - December update – A huge thank you to all that donated their time and funds during the holiday seasons for decorating, shopping, delivery, etc.
 - Update from Pastor Andy – At March 9 meeting, the Session will discuss possibility of Church services changing to in-person by end of March.
 - Communion – We discussed the possibility of prepackaged Communion elements. We also discussed Communion baggies for those that could not attend service.
 - Paraments – Pastor Andy has been doing it but Sue Lane will take over this duty.
 - Liturgist – We discussed the possibility of having a liturgist when we return to normal service.
 - We have been working on an updated list of addresses and phone numbers for our members. When Lynsey gets back in the office, we will continue to work on this. Chris will scan and send a current list to Pastor Andy to give to Sue Lane for use in sending cards
 - Will try to have the next meeting the week of March 15.

- Also approved the purchase of 12 Easter Lilies at \$8 a plant. We will give out the lilies first come first serve and ask that they reimburse the church for the cost.
- Submitted by Chris Evans
- **PASTOR'S REPORT:**
 - Worship
 - I continue to lead worship online via Facebook Live.
 - I led the postponed Ash Wednesday worship service with Pastor Jon Dainty and the Stephans.
 - We will host and plan the Good Friday service.
 - I continue to lead a weekly devotional on Wednesdays at 1pm on Facebook Live.
 - Pastoral Care
 - I continue to call several members throughout the week to check in on them.
 - I also responded to text messages and Facebook messages for Pastoral Care.
 - Presbytery
 - I attended the February 13, 2021 meeting of the Presbytery on Zoom.
 - I attended the February 28th meeting of the coordinating team of Committee on Ministry.
 - I am now the Moderator of the Session for Peterburg, Central Presbyterian Church
 - I continue to meet with the Administrative Commission of Greenview.
 - Administrative
 - I attended the Deacons meeting on February 4
 - I updated the officers contact information sheet.
 - I sent out the March Burning Bush and the weekly announcements.
 - I continue to count and drop off the food pantry items.

OLD BUSINESS:

- By Laws/Manual of Operations – Pastor Andy and Pat continue working on these.
- Baptism – Pastor Andy to call the Stobaugh's to set a date.
- Confirmation Classes - on-hold until further notice.
- Complete – Pastor Andy has ordered/received the final speaker to use up the Presbytery Grant to purchase equipment for Movies in the Park with the Council of Churches.
- Complete – opening the sanctuary for in-person worship March 14.
- Suspension of Secretarial position and Church cleaning changed to once per month until further notice.
- Can-a-thon is Sunday March 14.

NEW BUSINESS:

- _The Session voted to approve the purchase/costs of books for Pastor Andy; Abundance: Creating a Culture of Generosity and Engage!: Tools for Ministry in the Community. The cost of \$33.15 will come from the Pastor's Discretionary Line.
- The Session voted to approve the use of our tax ID number by the Bank of Farmington to allow updating of the Council of Churches Bank Accounts. Pat Welker is turning over the Treasury duties to Pastor Andy, per approval of the Council.

HOORAY-HOORAY

Pat Welker

Church is open again, and I am so happy about that. We have had three worship services in-person so far. I sure prefer to be in the sanctuary during worship much better than over Facebook. FB was fine when it was necessary, but just not the same. It is so good to see people again even though we are all wearing masks.

If you haven't attended yet, please consider coming back and worship with us. It is really much better and I feel very safe the way it is being handled. Things are getting closer to normal so let's all participate and enjoy each other again.

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

TREASURERS: Kathy Welch and Cindy Daniels

FINANCIAL SECRETARIES: Mickie Ulm and Gayle Lucas

CLERK OF SESSION: Pat Welker

Pastor Andy Contact Information

Manse Address: 68 N. Gold St. Farmington, IL 61531

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 Updates

Food Pantry

Thank you to everyone for supporting the Farmington Food Pantry. In the month of March, our congregation donated 224 items, weighing 137.89lbs to the pantry. We also donated \$120, as of March 28. Our running totals for 2021 are: 453 items, weighing 314.75lbs; and \$370. If we keep up our trend, we will exceed 1,200lbs and \$1,200 in donations by December 31, which I think are good goals for us to set this year. Thank you so much for your generosity!

Please note our collection day for non-perishable items is the last Sunday of the month. The next collection day is April 25. Please place your items in the grocery cart for Pastor Andy to count and deliver to the Food Pantry. As always, your financial donations are appreciated.

Also, a big thank you to everyone who helped donate and stuff the trailer for this year's can-a-thon. It was a major success. If you missed your chance to fill the trailer in March, you have one more opportunity. Lisa and Wally Newcomb will be at the Farmington County Market on April 10, 2021 from 10:00am-1:00pm.

If you find yourself needing to use the Food Pantry, they are open on the 3rd Wednesday of each month (April 21) from 12:30pm-1:30pm. The Food Pantry is located at New Hope Fellowship Church 1102 N State Route 78, Farmington IL 61531. You don't even have to get out of your car. This mission is open to anyone in the Farmington school district. This is a difficult time for everyone but there is help available.

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, IL 61531, or can be sent directly to the church at 83 N. Cone St. Farmington, IL 61531

One Great Hour of Sharing

Thank you to everyone who donated to the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering on March 28. If you did not get your offerings in by March 28, do not worry! You may still bring in your offerings during worship on Easter or drop off your banks in the office during the week. You can also mail your offering to Mickie Ulm at 516 Idlewhile Ct. Farmington, IL 61531. As of March 28, \$162.25 has been donated to OGHS, including 1 fish bank.

Monthly Calendars

April 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Maundy Thursday 6:30pm, Communion	2 Good Friday service 6:30pm	3
4 Easter Sunday 10:30am Communion	5 Pastor Andy Vacation	6 Pastor Andy Vacation	7 Pastor Andy Vacation	8 Pastor Andy vacation	9 Pastor Andy vacation	10 Pastor Andy vacation Canathon County Market: 10am-1pm
11 Dean Warner. Worship 10:30AM Pastor Andy vacation	12 Office Hours 9:30am-12pm	13 Office Hours 9:30am-12pm Session 7pm	14 COM Zoom meeting for Pastor Andy	15 Office Hours 1pm-5pm	16	17
18 Worship 10:30am	19 Office Hours 9:30am-12pm	20 Office Hours 9:30am-12pm	21 Office 1pm- 5pm Devotion 1pm Food Pantry from 12:30pm-1:30pm	22 Office Hours 1pm-5pm	23	24
25 Sunday worship at 10:30am	26 Office Hours 9:30am-12pm BB Deadline	27 Office Hours 9:30am-12pm	28 Office Hours 9:30am-12pm	29 Office Hours 9:30am-12pm	30	May 1 st

May 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2 Sunday 10:30am Communion	3 Office Hours 9:30am-12pm	4 COM Zoom meeting for Pastor Andy	5 Office Hours 1pm-5pm Devotion 1pm	6 Office Hours 1pm-5pm	7	8
9 Worship 10:30AM	10 Office Hours 9:30am-12pm	11 Office Hours 9:30am-12pm Session 7pm	12 Office Hours 1pm-5pm Devotion 1pm	13 Office Hours 1pm-5pm	14	15
16 Worship 10:30am	17 Office Hours 9:30am-12pm	18 Office Hours 9:30am-12pm	19 Office Hours 1pdm-5pm Devotion 1pm Food Pantry 12:30-1:30pm	20 Office Hours 1pm-5pm	21	22
23 Sunday worship at 10:30am	24 Office Hours 9:30am-12pm BB Deadline	25 Zoom Presbytery meeting	26 Office Hours 1pm-5pm	27 Office Hours 1pm-5pm	28	29
30 Sunday worship 10:30AM	31 st Office closed for Memorial Day	June 1 COM meeting for Pastor Andy	June 2 Office Hours 1pm-5pm	June 3 Office Hours 1pm- 5pm	June 4	June 5

Joys & Concerns



April Birthdays

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

May Birthday

1 Emily Phillips 11 Emma Evans; Ethan Evans; Crystal Gomes 15 Jayme Johnson 22 Blake Johnson 24 Craig Duley 29 Pastor Andy Sonneborn

April Anniversaries

8 Joe & Melissa Herron

May Anniversaries

25 Jay & Steffanie Ulm 27 Kent & Kathy Kowal

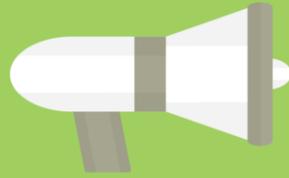
† Prayer Request †

Joys: Gracie Duley was named Student of the Month; Ed Goggin, Karen Wilson's son, is set to go home after a long stint in the hospital; a joy that we are worshipping together in person again; Tim and Mickie were able to be with all their children after they were vaccinated

Concerns: Corbin Rutledge is having upcoming tests to help determine what is going on with his continuing seizures; Dave Waggoner is struggling with side effects from a cancerous tumor and the aggressive treatment; Linda Staley, return of her cancer; Lynsey Vermillion's mother broke her leg and her father is still awaiting surgery; Chris Evans' nephew Joseph Christensen is going through 7 weeks of radiation for a rare form of thyroid cancer; Steffanie Ulm grandmother, Duck, fell and broke her arm; Mary's daughter Tracy Smith is having tests done at the end of the month; Sharon Slaughter, Kathy Welch's cousin, is in the ICU in Macomb following surgery; Pat Welker is asking for prayer for Carol Robert's daughter Jenny, she had a double mastectomy; Rosalie Williams is waiting to have a heart procedure done until after her blood issue is resolved.

Bereavement: Larry Roberson's brother-in-law passed away; Donna DeGroot's brother-in-law passed away; Darren Berry's mother, Marcia Berry, passed away; family of Seth Whitmer.

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



UPDATES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

We try to keep our BB prayer list as current as possible. Please notify the office to update a prayer request listed, to add a new prayer request, or to remove a prayer request.

Please contact us at 309-245-2914 or at firstpresfarmington@gmail.com

Check out the "Farmington Council of Churches" Facebook page. Make sure to like the page so that you receive notifications and updates. We will use this page to post community events and information. This is also where you will also be able to watch the Council's Facebook Live worship services.

Did you know that our church is on Facebook and YouTube? Like and Subscribe to our pages to keep up-to-date on the latest happenings!

The Deacons are in the process of updating their contact lists for their card ministry. If you have moved in the last year or changed your phone number, please reach out to one of the Deacons listed above. They are also updating the birthdays and anniversaries, so they may reach out to you to make sure we have the correct information.

We thank you for sending in your tithes and offerings, especially during this time of crisis. You may either bring your tithes and offerings to worship or you may send your tithes and offerings directly to Mickie Ulm, our financial secretary. Her address is 516 Idlewhile Ct. Farmington, IL 61531.

Sermon topics and Scripture for April:

April 4: Easter Sunday "Up From the Grave He Arose" (Mark 16:1-8)

April 11: 2nd Sunday of Easter Dean Warner preaching

April 18: Third Sunday of Easter "Touch and Feel" (Psalm 4, Luke 24:36-48)

April 25: 4th Sunday of Easter "Love in Action" (Psalm 23; 1 John 3:16-24)

If you would like to add something to next month's Burning Bush, please submit it to the office by the last Monday of the month. For May's BB, that would be April 26. We prefer receiving it by email at firstpresfarmington@gmail.com or by dropping it off in the office.

**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, on Facebook Live and in person

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)**

