

February 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
Communion 9:00am—Chancel Choir Rehearsal 9:30am—Traditional Worship 9:30am—Noon—Family Worship	12:00pm—Bible Study 1:30pm—Crafty Ladies 7:00pm—Glorify Ministry Group	12:00pm—Board of Deacons Meeting 12:15pm—Zimmer Forum at Silver Lake College	5:30pm—Community Dinner 6:00pm—Be-Tween Youth Group 7:00pm—Praise Band Rehearsal 7:00pm—Bel Choir Rehearsal	6:30pm—Chancel Choir Rehearsal	9:00am—Senior Breakfast at Felician Village Bistro	
9:00am—Chancel Choir Rehearsal 9:30am—Traditional Worship 10:30am—Fellowship Time 11:00am—PRAXIS Worship 12:00pm—Annual Meeting with polluck to follow	10:15am—Serve Ministry Group 12:00pm—Bible Study	12:00pm—Bible Study 1:30pm—Crafty Ladies	5:30pm—Community Dinner 6:00pm—Be-Tween Youth Group 7:00pm—Praise Band Rehearsal 7:00pm—Bel Choir Rehearsal	6:30pm—Chancel Choir Rehearsal 6:30pm—Educate Ministry Group	17	18
9:00am—Chancel Choir Rehearsal 9:30am—Traditional Worship 10:30am—Fellowship Time 11:00am—PRAXIS Worship 5:15pm—Monthly Migration Dinner	12:00pm—Bible Study 1:30pm—Crafty Ladies	7:00pm—Session Meeting	ASH WEDNESDAY 5:30pm—Community Dinner 6:00pm—Be-Tween Youth Group 6:30pm—Ash Wednesday Service at St. James Episcopal Church 7:00pm—Praise Band Rehearsal 7:30pm—Bel Choir Rehearsal	6:30pm—Chancel Choir Rehearsal	24	25
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26	27	28	29	23	24	25



A Family of Believers

The Messenger

Volume XIX, Issue 2, February 2012



GALATIANS 5:13, NIV

Inside...

Glorify Ministry Group	Items.....	2—3
Educate Ministry Group	Items.....	4—5
Serve Ministry Group	Items.....	6—7
Support Ministry Group	Items.....	8
Reach Ministry Group	Items.....	9
Care Ministry Group	Items.....	10—11
Library Corner...		12

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Seed To Sow

February 5 is our next Family Worship Sunday we will be remembering the meaning and power of the Lord's Supper. For many of us we have learned about the Lord's Supper over a lifetime and may not have paused to think about it in a long time. This month let us take some time to reflect on this holy sacrament...



First, Presbyterians refer to the Lord's Supper (along with Baptism) as a "sacrament." A sacrament is a visible sign of God's grace. Sacraments are a sign of God's grace towards creation and seal on the covenant that sins are forgiven and eternal life is ours in Christ.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper has many names that speak to different facets of its meaning:



† **The Lord's Supper** – This phrase reminds us that this is God's table and we are graciously invited to partake in. We come with humility and gratitude.

† **The Eucharist** – This title comes from the Greek and means "thanksgiving." This term reminds us that the sacrament it is to be a time of thanksgiving and joy for our sins have been forgiven and eternal life can be ours.

† **Communion** – This word reminds us that as we celebrate the sacrament we are in community with believers of every time and every place; as well as, being in community with our Lord Jesus. Presbyterians follow a third path on the meaning of the Lord's Supper:

† **The Roman** understanding is that Christ is physically present in the bread and cup; that is, the elements literally become the body and blood of Christ.

† **The Anabaptist** position is that the Sacrament is merely a reminder of Christ's love for creation.

† Presbyterians say that Christ is present in the elements spiritually but not physically. The bread remains bread, the wine remains wine; but we are lifted-up into the holy grace of God and nourished to go and be active disciples. In this process we remember the sacrifice that Jesus made for us and the power of the resurrection as we move boldly forward in the name of Jesus.

There is so much more that we can converse about the Lord's Supper; indeed volumes have been written about it. For now let us simply know that the Lord's Supper is the joyful feast of the people of God!

Pastor Matt



- Glorify Ministry Group -

Meetings are at 7:00 p.m. the first Monday of the month in the Church Library.

Worship is the primary way we express our joy and thanksgiving to the God who created us, loves us, and forgives us. The Glorify Ministry Group coordinates all Ministry Teams that allow us to have incredible worship experiences as well as other means of expressing our gratitude to God.

Glorify Ministry Group Facilitator Elders—Théo Lynne Hoffman and Nancy Schueffner



Traditional Worship

9:30 a.m.

Worship Highlights



(PRAK-sis) *life intersecting with faith*

11:00 a.m.

February 5, — What is the Lord's Supper? At 9:30 a.m. we will reflect on the meaning of the Lord's Supper and then at 10:15 a.m. we move to the Fellowship to make bread and engage in other activities to help us remember about the power of the Lord's Supper. At 11:00 a.m. we will continue our discussion with Praise and Discussion. Our main text will be: Luke 24:13-35 – Are You On Fire?



February 12

Mark 1:40-45 – Do You Choose Healing?

February 19, *Transfiguration Sunday, Communion*

Mark 9:2-9, 2 Kings 2:1-12 — After the Transfiguration

February 22 — 6:30 p.m. at St. James Episcopal Church



This ecumenical service is shared between St. Francis of Assisi Roman Catholic Church, St. James Episcopal Church and First Presbyterian Church. The service will include placing of ashes on the forehead. The focus of the evening will be Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 — *Our Homecoming*

The Season of Lent Begins

This Lenten Season we are going to rediscover who Jesus is by looking at the struggles the Early Church underwent in defining who Jesus was, as declared who and what he was not – that is, what they declared to be heresy.

February 26, *Lent 1*

John 14:28-31

Arianism Heresy — Jesus is less than God but more than human.



- Glorify Ministry Group (Continued) -

Music Musings



Over the years in my career as a church musician, I have worked in churches in six different states. Each church had its unique identity; two were United Methodist Churches and six, including our congregation, are Presbyterian Churches. All needed the same things in terms of organizing a music office: desk, chairs, phone, computer, printer, and other things which are common to many offices. Our church is no different.

Now, in terms of **strengthening the music office**, I encourage each of you to think of what you could do for the music office.

- Furniture to move into the music office, as well as, furniture to relocate elsewhere
- Shelving to be installed
- Robe closet to be reconfigured to improve storage
- Cataloguing of the music library – if you can type and do data entry – consider giving an hour each week to this project

The **second part of this strengthening comes in the form of volunteering your time to the actual rehearsals of the choirs**. All of the groups can benefit from the dedication of your time and talents. The Handbell Choir would benefit from the addition of four ringers. The Chancel Choir could sing more challenging music if we have a solid core of singers. The Fold/Praise Team is always interested in more participants.

Like Samuel heard God calling him, please consider this as a call from God to participate in the Praise and Worship of our God. We are not asked to give up much but to share our time and talents with all. If you, yourself, are interested, speak to one of the directors; if you know of someone who does not have a church home, but is interested in becoming a part of our church family of musicians, please invite them to make themselves known to one of the directors. **It takes all of us to make a successful Music Ministry!**

Ann Strome Gold, Music Coordinator

News from the Praise Team



The Praise Team was able to update the drum head with new ones and now the drums sound much better. We also welcome Kathy Stites and Nicole Taddy on vocals to the Praise Team. If you are interested in joining, please talk with Phyllis Schippers or Tim Maatman prior to rehearsal on Wednesday nights at 7:00 p.m. or after church on Sunday.

Worship CD Available

Audio CDs of Sunday Morning Traditional Worship are available. CDs, as well as players, are available to our homebound members. Please call the church office to schedule the delivery.





- Educate Ministry Group -

Meetings are at 6:30 p.m. the third Thursday of the month in the Church Library.

No matter what age we are, we are always learning; so First Presbyterian Church provides opportunities for each person to grow their faith. The Educate Ministry Group coordinates Ministry Teams that address educational activities and nurture the use of spiritual gifts.

Educate Ministry Group Facilitator Elders—Gloria Creagh and Diane Moon



As February is a month we associate with love, Life Path students will learn of Jesus' love for His children by creating Peter as the Rock for His church to be built upon and continue to flourish through generations and generations of followers to come. Students will learn about Peter's mission and some of his astounding work as the first pope. We will focus on the Bible verse: Peter said, "God has shown that no person is better than any other." Acts 10:28


Men's Bible Study

The group meets the **third Wednesday** each month for breakfast from **7:00—8:00 a.m.** at the Felician Village Bistro. Come and join us!

The Fr. Bill Zimmer Forum *A Book Group for People of Faith -*

The next forum will be held on **Tuesday, February 14 at 12:15 p.m.** at Silver Lake College, 2406 Alverno Road, Manitowoc. Brian Shaw, Retired Teacher and Basketball Coach, will talk about his book *Hoops and Homilies*.

Monday Noon Bible Study

BIBLE STUDY  The Monday Noon Bible Study is held in the Church Library. **ALL ARE WELCOME** – no Bible experience required so bring your lunch, your Bible and come and discuss how God's word can transform us!

Brittany's Coffee Corner

The winter months often leave us feeling lethargic and wishing to curl up in a cozy blanket with a good book or a marathon of movies to watch; however, I am blessed to have the opportunity to intern at this congregation with parents who exude a vitality and enthusiasm for sharing their faith with their children. Thank you for introducing me to your families and allowing me to teach your children. I have learned many important lessons in my few short months of working here.



Bible verse for reflection:

"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed throughout the world. For I am longing to see you so that I may share with you some spiritual gift to strengthen you or rather so that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith both yours and mine".

– Romans 1: 8-11

Christian Education Task Force

This past fall members of our church family were asked to fill out a survey in regards to our Christian Education programming at First Presbyterian Church. Members of the Christian Education Task Force have joined the Christian Education Committee so that we can work together to address the concerns, suggestions and ideas that came to light in the surveys.

In the next several months we will be discussing goals and ideas for the Christian Education programming at First Presbyterian Church. We will keep everyone apprised of our work in the future months.

If you would like to be a part of this process please contact either Gudrun Wetak or Jeanne Wilcox, members of the Christian Education Task Force.



- Educate Ministry Group (Continued) -

Make Your Plans to Attend Synod School

The 2012 Synod School will be held July 22-27 at Buena Vista University in Storm Lake, Iowa. This year's theme is "Singing the Lord's Song in a Strange Land".

Synod School is a special learning and personal enrichment experience for all ages. The week is designed for laity and clergy, individuals and families. Classes and activities are available for adults, youth and children—some separately, some intergenerational—to stretch the mind, nurture the soul, and offer hope.



Carol Howard Merritt, author of *The Tribal Church: Ministering to the Missing Generation and Reframing Hope: Vital Ministry to a New Generation* and cohost of the *God Complex Radio* podcast with G.A. Vice Moderator Landon Whitsitt, will be the convocation speaker for the event.

Watch for more information in *The Messenger* and *Weekly Messenger* or go to www.lakesandprairies.org.

The Alphabet Prayer

Many of us need to be more like the little girl whom the farmer found lost in his meadow. The farmer said to her, "Do not cry; I'll take you home."

The little child snuggled up to him, and with a smile, said, "I knew you would; I was waiting for you."

"Waiting for me?" said the man. "What made you think I was coming?"

"I was praying you would," she said.

"Praying? When I first heard you, you were saying A-B-C-D-E-F-G. What was that for?"

She looked up again and said, "I'm just a little girl. I was praying all the letters of the alphabet and letting God put them together the way he wanted to. He knows I was lost, and he knows how to put words together better than I do." —*Homiletics*

The Bible As A Letter



Soren Kierkegaard, a brilliant 19th-century philosopher, said this about the Bible: "The Bible should be read as a letter from God with our personal address on it."

How true! The Bible tells us who's behind our amazing lives. The Bible makes clear the source of our existence and explains how we're to live out our lives on Earth. The Bible gives us the best rules for living with others and for living in our own skin.

Scripture tells us of the wisdom of saints and the foolishness of scoundrels. It explains how God tries to relate to us. It guides us and provides strength and courage through our daily lives.

The Bible tells how God walked among us on Earth in the person of Christ. Most importantly, it details how Christ revealed God's immeasurable love for all humankind.

Finally, the Bible assures us that God not only cares for us here and now but will care for us in the hereafter. Forever and forever!

Thoughts for Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day, a time when thoughts turn to love. But what is love? Is it a box of chocolates, or a pretty valentine? Is it a red rose, or maybe a dozen? Is it a peck on the cheek, a fond embrace, or a big bear hug?

Well, sometimes love is known in those ways. But love, real love, is how we relate to God and to one another if life is what it ought to be — Beautiful!



- Serve Ministry Group -

Meetings are at 10:15 a.m. the second Monday of the month in the Church Library.

We are committed to hands-on mission projects and financial benevolence so the kingdom of Heaven can be exhibited to the world. The Serve Ministry Group coordinates all Ministry Teams that mobilize the church's resources and coordinate the church's benevolence to serve those in need; locally, nationally, and internationally.

Serve Ministry Group Facilitators—Elder Laura Fries, Deacons—Jim and Sharon Clark

Christmas Joy Offering Results



Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Christmas Joy Offering in 2011. We collected \$402 for the offering. Fifty percent of the receipts to the Christmas Joy Offering will be distributed to the Presbyterian Church USA Board of Pensions for assistance programs that provide support to retired and active church workers, their spouses and families. The other fifty percent supports Presbyterian related racial ethnic education through the National Ministries Division of the General Assembly Council.

Alternative Gift Market

The members of the Serve Ministry Team extend our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to all who participated in the 2011 Alternative Gift Market.

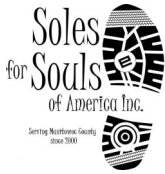
We hope the donations you made toward the gift market were meaningful to the people to whom you gave. We trust and pray that the charities that received the donations will use them to improve the lives of those less fortunate.

With grateful thanks for the generosity, we are pleased to announce the results of the 2011 Alternative Gift Market. The total amount raised was \$4,645! The results are as follows:

- Soles for Souls - \$1,280
- Domestic Violence Center - \$795
- Habitat for Humanity - \$ 120
- The Crossing - \$120
- Hope House - \$ 285
- RAYS (Youth Services) - \$270
- Peter's Pantry - \$475
- Lakeshore Cap—CASA - \$145
- Salvation Army - \$155
- Wounded Warrior Project - \$170
- Kaktovik Presbyterian Church - \$5
- Charity:Water - \$630
- Newborn Care Kits - \$5
- Emergency Hygiene Kits - \$5
- School Materials Kits for Orphans - \$35
- Goat or Sheep - \$45
- Vaccinations - \$ 17
- Treatment for HIV/AIDS - \$8
- Treatment for Malaria or TB - \$20
- Malaria Nets - \$5
- Food & Care for Orphaned Children - \$55

- Serve Ministry Group (Continued) -

Thank You from Soles for Souls!



The Soles for Souls Advisory Board would like to thank this congregation for their generous support through the Alternative Gift Market this year. You have supported us since our first shoe give-a-way in the year 2000 and we really appreciate your generosity. Your donations to Soles through the Alternative Gift Market of \$1,280 will help us to give away 1,300 pairs of shoes this summer to needy youth in Manitowoc County. We really appreciate your assistance over the past 12 years, and thank you for helping us get ready for our 13th year! God Bless you all!

Peace,
The Soles Advisory Board

Rejoice and Praise

The Serve Team completed applications for several Winnebago Presbytery 2012 Local Mission Grants earlier this year. The results are in! Manitowoc First Presbyterian church was chosen for the various grants: Manitowoc County Domestic Violence Center - \$3,000, Manitowoc County Habitat for Humanity – \$1,000 grant, Peter's Pantry - \$3,000 grant. The money received will be used to help these worthy ministries.

Save Your Box Tops, Soup Labels and Aluminum Can Tabs!



Please remember to save your General Mills Box Tops for Education and Campbell's Soup labels. Simply cut them out and drop them off in the church office.



Also, we can help Manitowoc County Habitat For Humanity earn money by bringing in our aluminum can tabs.



There is a brown basket that is labeled with a Manitowoc County Habitat For Humanity logo in the hallway, or you can take them directly to the Manitowoc County Habitat for Humanity office.

Knowing Where To Look

I was blessed by God as I served today.
He let me look at my heart, and what he had to say.
For I found written there, by the hand of God. These words so true,
for me and you, if we just abide.

There is not a needy soul, that you can't supply their need.
For God will put it in your hand, if your heart is right indeed.

True value of life is not found in what you keep for self.
True value is found in giving away until there is nothing left.

By putting on the yoke of Christ you will find this to be true.
For each command he's given us is only for the good of you.

~ Daniel Younger ~

Tackle Hunger! Souper Bowl of Caring 2012

Thousands of churches across the country will Tackle Hunger on Super Bowl **Sunday, February 5**, through the Souper Bowl of Caring Offering.



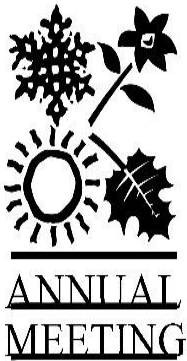
On Super Bowl Sunday we invite you to bring non-perishable food items to church and drop **\$1** (or more) in the soup pot as you leave worship. All the proceeds will go to Peter's Pantry.



- Support Ministry Group -

In order for the ministry of Jesus to be the most effective at First Presbyterian Church we need to have the best staff, secure finances, and excellent facilities. The Support Group coordinates all teams that address the administrative, facilities, and financial needs of the congregation.

Support Ministry Group Facilitator Elders—Rob Peaslee, Judie Stuntz and Carol Wheelock



The annual meeting of congregation will take place at noon on Sunday, February 12. This will be a potluck meeting. We will receive the annual report, hear about the Legacy Garden's Program, Discussion Topics for 2012, and thank our past Elders and Deacons.

Don't Forget To Pay Your Per Capita

If you checked the box on your 2012 pledge card, please remember to pay the Per Capita of \$30.50 for each member. These funds are needed for First Presbyterian Church to meet our 2012 budget! These funds keep us connected to the Presbytery of Winnebago, Synod of Lakes and Prairies and the General Assembly — they pay for administrative costs and allow our mission dollars to go 100% to mission.

A Parable

There's a story about a church member on vacation. While hiking through a forest, he was caught in a sudden summer downpour. To escape a drenching, he crawled into a hollow log. There, safe from the rain and lulled by its steady sound, he soon fell asleep.

When the man woke, he found that the rain had swelled the wood of the log. He was stuck. Try as he might, he couldn't get out, and realized he might die there.

The man's life began to pass before his eyes. He thought of his unpaid church pledge and how little he had given. This made him feel so small that he was able to crawl out of the log with ease.

Thank You

A special thank you to the 89 families who made a pledge for the 2012 year. The total pledges for 2012 is \$160,550. Please continue to remember your pledge commitment throughout the year.

What Attracts People To Church?



Why do people select a particular church? A convenient location? Yes. A good speaker in the pulpit? Yes. Inspiring music? Yes. An attractive building? Yes.

But a more essential element in attracting visitors, new-comers and prospective members is friendliness — both in the pew and throughout the community. Where there is a warm, dynamic congregation with an enthusiasm that's contagious, visitors will usually be found, and will return.

A church can buy many advantages with money, such as nice buildings, trained leadership, effective advertising and an abundance of supplies for spiritual and social use. But old-fashioned friendliness, of which the world is sorely in need, can't be purchased with money. It comes only from the hearts of dedicated people who love God and enjoy helping others feel at home in their church.



- Reach Ministry Group -

Meetings are at 6:15 p.m. the third Wednesday of the month in the Church Library.

Reaching out to the community with the grace of Jesus and encouraging newcomers to become active members of First Presbyterian. The Reach Ministry Group coordinates all Ministry Teams that address evangelism, new member recruitment, and member fellowship.

Reach Ministry Group Facilitator Elders — Don Lewellen and Merritt Wilcox

Monthly Migration Dinner

On **Sunday night, February 19 at 5:15 p.m.**, our **Migration Dinner** will take us back in time to a period when our country was divided North from South. We will learn some interesting historical details while sharing a dinner prepared using recipes from the **Civil War era**. Cost is **\$10 for adults...kids under 12 are free!**. Come step into our time machine and enjoy an evening of fellowship and good food; and you may just learn a little something at the same time.



Come Have Breakfast

A monthly social event is open to anyone who wants to have fun conversation over breakfast. This group meets the **second Friday** of every month at **9:00 a.m.** in the Bistro at Felician Village.

Wednesdays

5:30 – 7:00 p.m.

Dinners are FREE!

Donations Welcomed

Who Owns You?

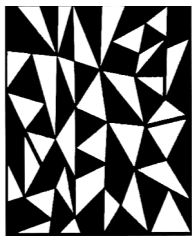
When Buddy Ebsen was a young actor, MGM studio chief Louis B. Mayer called him into his office. Mayer said, "Ebsen, in order to give you the parts you deserve, we must own you." Ebsen answered: "I'll tell you what kind of fool I am, Mr. Mayer. I can't be owned." What about you? Who owns you? Surely, a Christian can be owned by only one person, the Lord Jesus Christ!

The Soul Winner's Prayer

Oh, give me, Lord, Thy love for souls,
For lost and wand'ring sheep,
That I may see the multitudes
And weep as Thou didst weep.
Help me to see the tragic plight
Of souls far off in sin:
Help me to love, to pray, and go
To bring the wand'ring in.
From off the altar of Thy heart
Take Thou some flaming coals,
Then touch my life and give me, Lord,
A heart that's hot for souls.
O Fire of Love, O Flame Divine,
Make Thy adode in me;
Burn in my heart, burn evermore,
Till I burn out for Thee.



Can You Find The Five Pointed Star?



The star is hiding in the conglomeration of triangles. Are the soul winners in your church as hard to find and are you numbered among them?

"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

—Daniel 12:3

—Eugene M. Harrison



- Care Ministry Group -

Meetings are at 12:00 p.m. the second Tuesday of the month in the Church Library.

Caring for our members is an important part of what it means to be a Family of Believers.

We are here to visit one another, provide support during times of grief, reach out to homebound members, and keep members who live out of town connected to our ministry.

Class of 2012

Jane Abbott
Rudy Baumann
Mary Fordney
Julie Schreiter
Judy Sobush

Class of 2013

Verna Hansen
Anne Howard
Karma Lanning
Sue Sieracki
Ruth Westberg—Vice Moderator

Class of 2014

Debbie Belland
Jim Clark—Vice Moderator
Sharon Clark—Secretary
Todd Gorter
Lauryn Hibbard



**Board of Deacons
Meeting at Noon
Tuesday, March 13, 2011**

Caring For Others

Attention members and friends of First Presbyterian Church! Please help by giving us names of church members and friends who you feel would appreciate or benefit from our care, support and visits. Please contact one of the team members listed below if you have any concerns.

**Sue Sieracki—758-2591
Faith Morgan—686-1187**

Overseas Coupon Program

Another batch of coupons were recently mailed to the Marine Corps base in Iwakuni, Japan which we adopted for the Overseas Coupon Program. The church collected 2,416 coupons, valued at \$3,322.19. This brings the 2011 total to 6,589 coupons valued at \$8,908.99. Thank you to those church members who help out with this ministry.

Wanted: Food for Mother Hubbard's Cupboard



The Board of Deacons is always accepting food for Mother Hubbard's Cupboard. Please feel free to drop off non-perishable food items at anytime throughout the year. She is located in the hallway by the church office. Food is given to area pantries.

Continue to Pray for Our at Home and Care Facility Members!



Rose Mary Cox, Phillis Cummings, Donna Gotchy, Marian Hoida, Marge John, Marge Miley, Charles Robinson, Shirley Wegforth

New Baby Girl



Congratulations to **James** and **Sara Wick** on the birth of their daughter, **Gray Lillian Wick**. She was born on Tuesday, January 24 in Calgary, Canada. She weighed 5 lbs. 8 oz. and was 18 inches long. Grandparents are Diane (Wick) and Peter Hansen.

Church Office Contacts

Matt Sauer, Pastor

Email: matthewsauer@sbcglobal.net

Cathy Wallander, Church Secretary

Email: firstpresmtwc@sbcglobal.net

Ann Gold, Music Coordinator

Email: fpcmusicministry@sbcglobal.net



- Care Ministry Group (Continued) -



Birthdays for February

- 6—Ruth Colburn
- 6—Marge Keller
- 6—Cathy Wallander
- 8—Todd Gorter
- 9—Jeremiah Gamble
- 9—Peter Klein
- 10—Dennis Kaldor
- 11—Carol Houston
- 12—Isabel Hassemer
- 12—Joshua Sauer
- 14—Brent Borgwardt
- 14—Mark Klaiber
- 16—Jill Hendricks
- 16—Sue Sieracki
- 19—Michael Weller
- 20—JoAnn Weinert
- 22—Doug Wetak
- 23—Theo Hoffman
- 24—Jane Kuchenbecker
- 26—Kristin Borgwardt

- 26—Kristin Schroeder
- 26—Casey Sieracki
- 27—Kim Gorter
- 27—Bonny Kallweit
- 28—Jonathan Gamble
- 28—Majorie John
- 28—Faith Morgan



Celebrating an Wedding Anniversaries for February

- Anniversary 3—Buzz & Judy Schroeder
- 12—Randy & Lynn Kirt
- 15—Phil & Judy Kinzel
- 24—Kevin & Wendy Ramminger
- 27—Steve & Donna Reed

† Christian Symbols †

Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei is a Latin term meaning Lamb of God. It represents the risen Christ who triumphs over death. In John 1:29, John the Baptist called Jesus “the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.” The Lamb carries a white resurrection banner with a cross of red. The banner representing the body of Christ, is attached to a cruciform staff, representing the cross on which Christ died.



Have a Heart

Valentines of every size and description adorn store windows and other places of business this time of year. The holiday has become a time for love to enthroned as a virtue, with the heart symbolizing the romance of our lives.

But the heart symbolizes not only love, but life itself! Without a heart, our bodies cannot survive.

Consider God’s words to Samuel: “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).

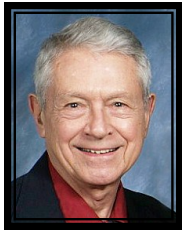
The heart — that inner countenance — shows what we really are. Samuel was to seek one of the sons of Jesse to be the new king. David, even though he was the weakest physical specimen, was the one selected. His heart was great.

Love looks deeper than outward appearances, and we can thank God for that. Don’t be swayed by a mere valentine — have a heart!

**The deadline to submit
articles for the
March 2012
The Messenger Newsletter
is
Wednesday,
February 15, 2012**



Library Corner by Pete Stuntz

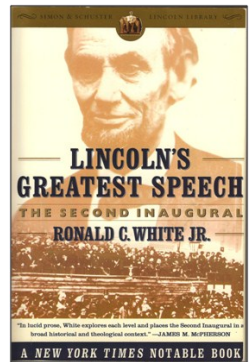


My return to this page as an armchair theologian was prompted by the gift to the library of the book *“Lincoln’s Greatest Speech: The Second Inaugural”* from long-time church and Lincoln Fellowship member, Dale Brassler. The author, Ron White, a professor of religious history, signed and presented the book to First Presbyterian Church. Although the book was lauded as a “rich harvest of religious, political, and social insight” into Lincoln’s speech, what was really impressive was the president’s growth in theological insight that culminated in his second inaugural just a month before his assassination. How so?

Former slave and social reformer Frederick Douglass commented that “the address sounded more like a sermon than a state paper.” In contrast to self-laudatory second inaugural remarks by most presidents, Lincoln refrained from repetitive use of “I” and detailed “progress of our arms,” but asked the audience “to think with him about the cause and meaning of the war.”

Lincoln’s four-word sentence *“And the war came”* showed that despite the best intentions of political leaders, the war could not be understood “simply as the fulfillment of human plans.”

Lincoln’s conviction of slavery as a moral evil was balanced by his fidelity to uphold the Constitution, which sought only to “restrict the territorial enlargement” of slavery. Avoiding inflammatory rhetoric, *“Neither party expected for the war, the magnitude, or the duration, which it has already attained.”* He concluded, in an 1864 letter to Kentuckians, that “If God now wills the removal of a great wrong, and wills also that we of the North as well as you of the South, shall pay fairly for our complicity in that wrong, impartial history will find therein new cause to attest and revere the justice and goodness of God.”

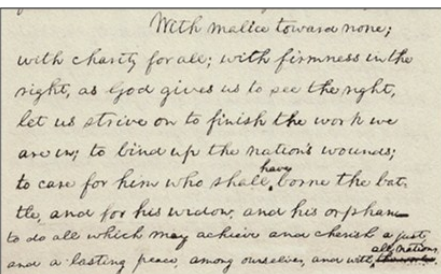


Acknowledging that *“Both (sides) read the same Bible,”* Lincoln paraphrased verses from Genesis and Mathew the irony of asking *“a just God’s assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men’s faces, but let us judge not that we be not judged.”*

Lincoln was drawn to Presbyterian preachers in Springfield IL and Washington DC, who were “thoughtful and reasonable in their approach to faith.” From them he learned of the Westminster Confession of Faith statement that a “living” God is defined by both gracious action and terrible judgment. Thus he spoke, *“The Almighty has His own purposes...willing to remove the terrible offence of slavery...and He gives to both North and South this terrible war.”*

Lincoln invited his fellow citizens to self-analysis instead of self-congratulation as he spoke of both the evils of Southern slavery and Northern self-righteousness and quoted from Psalm 19:9, “...the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.”

Finally, he moved from judgment to hope, armed not with enmity but with forgiveness (see his handwritten last paragraph at right). *“With malice towards none; with charity for all”* was his vision for a post-Civil War America, striving *“to finish the work we are in.”* Besides his hope for *agape* form of love, he also stood for *“firmness in the right as God give us to see the right,”* thus balancing malice and charity with firmness, in the treatment of those who were defeated, to *“achieve a just, and a lasting peace.”*



Amidst mixed reviews, the bedrock of Lincoln’s character was humility. He spoke against “God Bless America” theology in the face of evil and hypocrisy in its own house, and chose to accept responsibility and to reach out for justice and reconciliation.



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