

PASTOR'S CORNER

I have been staring at my iPad screen filled with anxiety because I can't think of enough ideas to fill a whole Pastor's Corner article. So I have decided to write what comes into my mind this morning and not worry about length.

Am I discouraged that no one in the Gibson area jumped at the chance to use the bus shuttle service that we offered in December and January? **Yes!** Unfortunately, I have more questions than answers. Was it a bad idea? What can we do better? What should we do differently? Should we do it again, when the weather is

nicer? Why do we care? Should we give up because one idea did not work out? Do I see signs of the Spirit here? **Yes!** When two or more of us meet together in worship or fellowship, the Spirit's presence can be felt all around us. Your love of Christ is shown by your faithful worship. Most of you-all do not miss a service except when ill or out-of-town. Your love for each other is shown by the hugs I see each 'passing of the peace'. Your love of our service as the body of Christ is shown when the call goes out for help: whether at the church remov-

ing decorations; the food pantry helping the less fortunate; or monetarily supporting any of the church's missions.

We at First Presbyterian are being blessed by God in so many ways. I am never going to believe that he has forgotten us. Like those who believed in Isaiah's prophecies of Messiah, I know that God is doing a 'new thing' through this church.

I wish I had the answers to all questions. Right now, faith is enough.

In Christ's peace,
Ray

Continue from front page . . . Their efforts will be sustained by personal and congregational patterns and practices of prayer and worship, learning and reflection. They will be stewards of God's abundant gifts in service to God's children here and everywhere. They will demonstrate to the world God's promises and life-giving power in this age and the world to come.

PRESBYTIDINGS

February 2020

Pastor Ray Lantz

Worship: 10:30 a.m. Cookies and Coffee: 11:30ish

This Newsletter is a publication of First Presbyterian Church of Gibson City IL.

Website: www.firstpresbygc.org



BUILDING CHURCH VITALITY

American life has changed radically over the past generation. The Christian share of the U.S. population is declining across every region, age and demographic group, and the number of adults who do not identify with any organized religion is growing. As a result, the church is no longer at the center of American culture. Some say the church is no longer relevant at all. As much as this new reality is alarming, it is also an opportunity for our congregations, worshiping communities and mid councils to wake up and seize the moment.

What is congregational vitality?

You might think that the vitality of a congregation or worshiping community is based on the number of members, the scope of programs, the size of financial gifts or some other statistics. Not so—at least not entirely. Rather, a community's vitality is primarily its spiritual strength and its capacity for purposeful mission. Congregational vitality is evident in a worshiping community when its structural systems, finances and discipleship practices are aligned in such a way that the community is actively engaged in the mission of God in their local community and the world, and they are powerfully focused on growing as disciples in the way of Jesus Christ. Faith comes alive when we boldly engage God's mission and share the hope we have in Christ.

What must we do to revitalize our own congregation?

To some extent, many local churches

find themselves spiritually exhausted, financially fragile and structurally unsound. Sometimes congregational life is discouraging—both for pastors and other church leaders who see apathy in their members, and for members who see the numbers in the pews declining year by year.

The Presbyterian Mission agency of the PC (USA) has made a profound commitment to help you turn things around.

We propose that there are seven marks to help you determine your current level of vitality—and then various processes for self-assessment, discernment and renewed commitment to the habits that foster an energetic engagement with the Spirit's work in the world. Here are the seven marks:

1. A commitment to forming disciples over every member's lifetime. This leads first to personal transformation, as people joyfully go forth into the community and tackle the issues facing today's culture.
2. Embracing the call to evangelism. We show forth the love of Christ by our actions and our lives even more than by our words. Our relationships are genuine and caring. People know we are Christians by our love.
3. An outward focus. Our church is not a place to escape from the world, but rather our gateway to our community where we may be the hands, feet, heart and mouth of Jesus Christ for people who are suffer-

ing or marginalized.

4. Empowering every member to discover their individual calling and the gifts God has given them so they can go forth and serve.
5. Spirit-inspired worship that challenges, teaches, transforms, convicts and energizes us so when we sent out, we have experienced the wonder of God and are changed for the better from when we arrived.
6. Caring relationships modeled on God's love. We open our doors and hearts to all people, and we build relationships modeled on God's love, which leads to genuine reconciliation and peace.
7. Congregations with healthy systems. Our mission focuses are clear. There is fiscal responsibility and accountability. We have thoughtful decision-making structures. Our leaders and staff enjoy a sustainable balance of work/rest time.

The theology of congregational vitality God's gifts of Word and Sacrament establish and equip the church as the body of Christ in the world. The mission of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church flows from baptism, is nourished at the Lord's Supper, and serves to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to all. Worshiping communities experiencing congregational vitality will find themselves following Jesus into places of injustice and struggle bearing light and hope, demonstrating love and mercy, and working faithfully for justice and peace.

Continued on back page.

February 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 Recycle 9 am Bible reading at Holly Brook
2 10:30 a.m. Worship Communion Matthew 5:1-12	3	4	5 9:45 Pastor Ray reading to HS students	6	7	8 9 am Bible reading at Holly Brook 8 a.m. FPC to work food pantry at old Alco building
9 10:30 a.m. Worship Matthew 5:13-20	10	11	12 9:45 Pastor Ray reading to HS students	13 5:30 Deacons	14 	15 Recycle 9 am Bible reading at Holly Brook
16 10:30 a.m. Worship Matthew 5:21-27	17 President's Day—church office will be closed HA Blood Mobile Pastor Ray on Vacation	18 Pastor Ray on Vacation	19 Pastor Ray on Vacation	20 Pastor Ray on Vacation	21 Pastor Ray on Vacation	22 Pastor Ray on Vacation
23 10:30 a.m. Worship Pastor Ray on Vacation	24 8-? Life Line Screening Pastor Ray on Vacation	25	26 9:45 Pastor Ray reading to HS students Ash Wednesday	27 5:30 Session	28	29 9 am Bible reading at Holly Brook

Pastor Ray will be preaching on the scripture listed in bold on each Sunday.

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCH . . .

Pastor Lantz will be on vacation from February 17th through February 24th.

A Lenten Soup Supper will be served followed by a Lenten Service of Worship on Wednesday, March 4th at the First Presbyterian Church. Times to be announced at a later date. Lenten Soup suppers will begin on Wednesday, March 4th and continue on March 11th, 18th, 25th, and April 1st and perhaps April 8th. All Soup Supper locations will be announced in the church bulletin and the March Newsketter as soon as they are known.

Mark your calendars for our first **GAME NIGHT** to be held on Wednesday, April 22nd (Earth Day). Snacks and drinks will be provided. More information to follow.



There will be **NO** bus service for February. If you need a ride please call the church office at 784-5422 and we will arrange pick-up for you. Bus service will resume at a later date and information will be shared at that time. Thank you.

A Thank You . . .

Dear Phil,
Here is my check for 4th quarter of 2019. Meladee is good to mail the Presbytids to me so I can keep up on the activities and fellowship. I am so glad Ray Lantz is leading the congregation. My best wishes to all for a wonderful year. I miss all of you, but have made wonderful friends here at Hoosier Village in Indianapolis.

Thanks for all you do,
Beverly Swanstrom

Comments made in the year 1957

- “I’ll tell you one thing, if things keep going the way they are, it’s going to be impossible to buy a week’s groceries for \$20.
- “I’m afraid to send my kids to the movies any more. Ever

since they let Clark Gable get by with saying “damn” in ‘Gone With the Wind,’ it seems every new movie has either “hell” or “damn” in it.”

- “If cigarettes keep going up in price, I’m going to quit! A quarter a pack is ridiculous.”
- “When I first started driving, who would have thought gas would someday cost 29 cents a gallon. Guess we’d be better off leaving the car in the garage.”
- “If they think I’ll pay 50 cents for a hair cut, forget it.”
- “I read the other day where some scientist thinks it’s possible to put a man on the moon by the end of the century. They even have some fellows they call astronauts preparing for it down in Texas.”
- “It won’t be long before young couples are going to have to hire someone to watch their kids so they can both work.”
- “Thank goodness I won’t live to see the day when the Government takes half our income in taxes. I sometimes wonder if we are electing the best people to congress.”

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

February	March
03: Addison Kerchenfaut	02: Neil Nelson
11: Karen Mott	04: Blake Alexander
15: Charles & Cheryl Schultz	04: Meladee Ferguson
16: Jean Williams	11: Maddox Alexander
19: Anneliese Kerchenfaut	17: Dail Kirkpatrick
23: Ruthie Lantz Dripps	18: Sharla Williams
	18: Janice Swanson
	29: Ruth Davis

K. P. Duty
Feb: Danny & Vonna Heustis
Mar: Carla Ashmore

Communion Set-Up
Feb 2: Barb Kirkpatrick
Mar 1: Vonna Heustis

Second Sunday Offering
Feb 9: Food Pantry/ Shepherd’s Closet
Mar 8: One Great Hour of Sharing

Ushers
Feb: Danny & Vonna Heustis
Mar: Ron & Mary Clow

Communion Servers
Feb 2: Rick Kerchenfaut and Trudy Lantz
Mar 1: Ron & Mary Clow

