

PASTOR'S CORNER



Lenten Bible Study

All are invited to join me for a weekly Lenten book study starting Wednesday March 2, 2022 at 6:30PM for an hour.

We will be using Jill Duffield's *Lent in Plain Sight, A Devotion Through Ten Objects*.

Each week we will discuss 2 objects:

- Week 1: dust & bread,
- Week 2: cross & coins,
- Week 3: shoes and oil,
- Week 4: coats & towels,
- Week 5: thorns and stones,
- Week 6: Review

Please plan to attend. Invite family, friends and maybe a stranger or two. The more that come the faster the hour goes. Coffee and treats will be provided.

See you on every Wednesday night in March, (and one in April)

Pastor Ray Lantz

Picture from Holly Brook's Saturday morning Bible Study led by Pastor Lantz.

Continued from front page . . .

As part of its strategy to become a vital congregation, the church decided it needed to be present in the digital community and committed to hiring a media contractor. Before the pandemic, Elkins Park paid an offsite media contractor to manage its church website and social media accounts and to make slideshows and videos of church events to share online. Pre-COVID, the media contractor did not attend worship. However, since COVID, the job has changed to onsite, adhering to the necessary precautions to keep everyone safe. "We feel it's important to use technology to do that. I don't see how a church can survive today without a strong media presence," said Karen Sheehan, an elder at Elkins Park. Neither does she think that technical responsibilities should fall to a pastor. "Every church should look into hiring someone who has media skills to take the burden off the pastor," Sheehan said, "even if the pastor has the skills." Danielle Mink, the technical and communications director at Unity Community Church in Pittsburgh, started as a part-time hire in 2002 when she was in eighth grade. Today she is full-time with benefits. "The challenge now is creating meaningful connection for the people who are only online," Mink said. "Churches that have hired someone to do media discover that they can always find more for that person to

do," said the Rev. Derek Campbell of Unity. When it comes to tech job descriptions, there is no one-size-fits-all for churches. Media and tech jobs can range from five hours a week to full-time with benefits. Responsibilities for media personnel can include website maintenance, social media posting, video production and live-streaming as well as creating slides for worship, maintaining equipment and licenses, and scheduling volunteers. Compensation generally begins at \$10 an hour for the smallest congregations. But whatever the details might be, one must be in all tech job descriptions: A church's digital media message must complement its mission and should not feel like a corporate media post.

Second Presbyterian Church in Nashville, Tennessee, is reworking its associate pastor job description to include media proficiency so that the media are infused with spirituality. "We want to be sure the technology creates a worshipful experience," said the Rev. Dr. Mary Louise McCullough. Fusing technology and faith to create a powerful online worship experience requires both technical and theological knowledge.

Online worship benefits

The benefit of online worship is it allows members to participate in what Ramsey calls "the church of their heart." For some, the church of their heart is the congregation they attended during their youth, before they moved away or became homebound in old age. "Online worship has also been a great way to reach our shut-in members," said Scrivner. But he says young people like online worship because it allows them to find a congregation that shares their values. "Our understanding of what it means to be a member is changing," he said. What isn't changing is the realization that "there is no going back to just in-person worship," said McCullough. While volunteers and staff scrambled to get the church online, the current task is to discern what is sustainable and remain flexible in planning for whatever God has next. (Sue Washburn is an interim pastor near Pittsburgh.)

PRESBYTIDINGS

MARCH 2022

Pastor Ray Lantz



Worship: 10:30 a.m.

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

Website: www.firstpresbygibson.org

Meladee Ferguson: Administrative Assistant

Mary Clow: Ministry Coordinator

The cost of connecting in new ways

By Sue Washburn | *Presbyterians Today*



It's been two years since COVID-19 entered our lives. During that time, our world has changed — and with it the church — as ideas of what church is have been reshaped by live-streaming worship and Zoom meetings and Bible studies. With COVID and its variants still factoring into everyday decisions and plans, congregations are just now beginning to understand the long-term impact the virus will have on not only a church's mission, but also on its infrastructure. What kind of technology and staffing will be needed as churches move forward? Should pastors, many of whom figured out how to get online with a phone, be expected to continue with those responsibilities indefinitely? Or does the church staff need to change for a post-COVID world?

The Rev. Christy Ramsey, stated clerk and general presbyter of the Presbytery of Nevada, has been an advocate of media in ministry for decades. He says each church did what it could to keep

people connected to God and to each other in the throes of the crisis, but now comes the more complicated question: What next? What are realistic expectations in terms of sustainability as the added responsibility of technology brings with it additional costs and job responsibilities? "Some churches had lots of money and staff and could get online with all of the bells and whistles," he said. Other congregations repurposed the equipment they already had. He vividly remembers the day he went to one small church. "The internet didn't work because it hadn't been used for a year and a half, but once that was running, they got an old TV and put it up on chairs so that the tiny congregation could sing to YouTube videos," said Ramsey. Another church in the presbytery mailed out the weekly sermon via the Postal Service and asked people to read it on Sunday at exactly 10 a.m. to create a unified time of worship. The big questions, though, Ramsey points out, aren't necessarily about technology. They are about connection and what tools will be needed for that connection — and, at what cost.

Change is here to stay

While many churches were creative with outreach during the pandemic, the challenge now is to incorporate the changes into common practice. Do congregations have enough volunteer support to continue live-streaming? Is there financial support for equipment upgrades? Will churches change the staffing requirements as music directors need to research which hymns or anthems the live-streaming license covers? And then there's the big question: Does the pastor need to be technologically savvy in addition to being theologically trained? The Rev. Dr. Joseph Scrivner, pastor of Brown Memorial Presbyterian Church in Tuscaloosa, Al-

abama, first went online from his home when the pandemic started. "I've jokingly said, 'I'm the chair of the audio visual committee,'" said Scrivner. The one-person committee started when he picked up an iPad at home. While Scrivner took responsibility for recording his sermons, the church officers stepped up their engagement with pastoral care. "Their resiliency has been a blessing, and the members modeled mutual pastoral care for one another," he said. The Rev. Jessica Crane-Munoz, pastor of Sunrise Presbyterian Church in Great Falls, Montana, took a new call during COVID, inheriting a volunteer who sets up the live-streaming weekly. At her former church, she prayed weekly that a volunteer from the church would show up and learn how to push the buttons. The congregation now has a regular volunteer to get the church online every Sunday. However, she worried about the day when the volunteer was sick or not available since no one else knew the necessary steps for live-streaming.

All hands on deck

Both getting and staying online require an "all hands on deck" approach. Not all pastors have the skills of Scrivner and Crane-Munoz, and some congregations rely solely on volunteers to get them online. Many congregations are still not able to get online because of the steep learning curve and the lack of internet or reliable cell service. As solo pastors, Scrivner and Crane-Munoz were both good with technology and able to lead the move to online. For both, there's been give-and-take between the expectations of the pastors and volunteers. But in the suburbs of Philadelphia, Elkins Park Presbyterian Church decided to go a different path even before COVID.

Continued on back page . . .

March 2122

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2 <i>Ash Wednesday</i> <i>6:30 Lent In Plain Sight Bible Study</i>	3 <i>Chamber of Commerce Luncheon</i>	4	5 <i>9 a.m. Bible Study at Holly Brook (if COVID free)</i>
6 <i>10:30 a.m. Worship</i> <i>Luke 4:1-13</i>	7	8	9 <i>6:30 Lent In Plain Sight Bible Study</i>	10	11	12 <i>9 a.m. Bible Study at Holly Brook (if COVID free)</i> <i>Before retiring turn your clocks ahead 1 hour</i>
13 <i>10:30 a.m. Worship</i> <i>Luke 13:31-35</i> <i>Daylight Savings time begins</i>	14	15	16 <i>6:30 Lent In Plain Sight Bible Study</i>	17	18	19 <i>9 a.m. Bible Study at Holy Brook (if COVID free)</i>
20 <i>10:30 a.m. Worship</i> <i>Luke 13:1-9</i>	21	22	23 <i>6:30 Lent In Plain Sight Bible Study</i> <i>5:30 p.m. Session</i>	24	25	26 <i>9 a.m. Bible Study at Holly Brook (if COVID free)</i>
27 <i>10:30 a.m. Worship</i> <i>Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32</i>	28	29	30 <i>6:30 Lent In Plain Sight Bible Study</i>	31		

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

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCH . . .

Please note: The previous week's sermon will broadcast at 7:45 a.m. every Sunday morning on WGCY.

Please note: Online Live Sunday Services will be available on our Facebook Page noted below:

First Presbyterian Church of Gibson City

https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=142499619134911&ref=br_rs

Meladee's working hours: Meladee will be in the church office from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

New Email Addresses: As part of the hardware and software upgrade for our church's technology, there are email addresses as noted below:

Pastor Ray:
Ray@firstpresbygibson.org
Meladee
Office@firstpresbygibson.org

THE NEW FLOWER CHART IS UP IN THE SOUTH ENTRY.

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES		<i>K. P. Duty</i>	<i>Communion Server</i>
		<i>Feb: Danny & Vonna Heustis</i>	<i>Feb: 27: Sharla Williams & Tim Swanson</i>
		<i>Mar: Ron & Mary Clow</i>	<i>March 6: Ron and Mary Clow</i>
March		<i>Second Sunday Offering</i>	
<p>02: Neil Nelson 04: Blake Alexander 04: Meladee Ferguson 11: Maddox Alexander 18: Sharla Williams 18: Janice Swanson 29: Ruth Davis</p>	<p>April 06: Charlie Kerchenfaut 24: Barb Kirkpatrick 25: Harry and Dorri Groom 27: Ron Clow 28: Tim Swanson</p>	<p><i>Feb 13: Food Pantry/ Shepherd's Closet</i> <i>Mar13: One Great Hour of Sharing</i></p>	
		<i>Ushers</i>	
		<i>Feb: Danny & Vonna Heustis</i>	
		<i>Mar: Ron & Mary Clow</i>	



Free at home covid tests are available at covidtests.gov. You just fill out the form on line and they will mail 4 individual tests to your home. It is easy and quick to do.

Recycling has returned on the 3rd Saturday of each month. This month is Saturday, March 19th.

Wednesday, March 2 is Ash Wednesday. Pastor Ray will be providing the Imposition of the Ashes from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. on that morning. The church will be open so come in for a prayer or you can stay in your car and he come out to you.

MISSION COMMITTEE SUGGESTIONS—FEBRUARY 2022

Starting Balance	\$ 21,000
Olive Hawthorne/Milayla Jones recovery from car accident	\$ 2,000
GCMS Booster Club	\$ 2,500
Shepherd's Closet	\$ 1,000
Gibson City Police for canine expenses	\$ 1,000
Subtotal.....	\$27,500

Next Session meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 23rd at 5:30 p.m.

THANK YOU!

Pastor Ray, Elders and members,

I would like to first apologize for how long it has taken me to write this thank you. No excuses except I have sat at my computer trying to come up with the proper words to express my gratitude for your gift and I just sat staring into the empty Word document screen.

So now I will try to convey just what your gift means to me, if I can see to type from all the tears.

When I saw your letter to me, I thought, "Oh, how nice, a Christmas card or thinking of you card" from the church in Gibson City. When I opened it, I saw something fall on the floor, noticed it was a check, so I thought immediately you had once again given money to Because of Cody. I picked the check up and noticed it was made out to me. I thought, "O no, it needs to be made out to Because of Cody." So, I then started reading the letter. I was completely shocked. I had to read it a couple of times so it would sink in.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart. There really are not any words to justify a thank you. This will help in so many ways. I have not been working since October 25, 2021, and will not be going back to work until I get a new kidney and am doing well. That could be in a few months or many years. Time will tell.

My youngest son, Jeff, and I will be leaving Monday, February 14th, around 3:30 p.m. (after my dialysis) for the University of WI in Madison. We will get settled into our hotel and then the next morning we will head to the hospital. Testing will start at 11:20 a.m. with a chest x-ray. Then off to different appointments, a new one every hour till 5 p.m. It will be a full day. I have done all the tests that my pre-transplant coordinator told me I needed to do, so praying I will not have to do any more tests. If everything is ok and no more tests are needed then she will take all my files to the transplant committee on Monday, February 21st. She said they will

let her know within 15-30 minutes if I am a good candidate for a kidney transplant. She will call me that day or the next to let me know. If I am a good candidate, then Jeff can start on his testing to see if he is a match. We do know for sure though that Jeff and I are the same blood type and his (GFR Kidney #) is 96. It needs to be 80 or higher to be a donor. So that is GREAT!!! We have decided to stay the night Tuesday too. It will just be a very long day and don't want to drive the three and one half hours home. So right now, we will be using some of your gift to me for our hotel rooms, which will make our trip and stay so much easier.

Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago cancelled my appointment I had on January 14th because of Covid. They finally called on February 9th to re-schedule. The new appointment is February 22nd at the hospital. Jeff and I have talked, and WI is just moving so much faster so if Jeff is a match we will be choosing University of WI for my transplant.

I am doing ok. I have a chest/neck port that was put in at the hospital in October. That is for dialysis. I had a new fistula put in my left arm back on November 18th. It had matured enough to use on January 3rd. The man that tried using it did not follow the surgeon's directions and completely messed up my arm. Thank the Good Lord he did not ruin the fistula. Just took about three weeks of a lot of PT to get it ready to use again. I have now had 4 dialysis treatments using the new fistula with one of the tubes. Taking it slow so using my first port for the other tube and using the smallest needle. They tried to use the new one this past Monday for both tubes, but the second tube was just running to slow so they took it out. Tried a second time, but still did not work. My arm is bruised, but ok. We will just let it mature more before we try again. Back to doing PT again. So, lots of progress is being made now. Started this

whole process September 1, 2021 so about time things are moving.

One thing is for certain, I am thankful for my faith and my good up bringing in your church. My prayers are what keeps me calm and focused on what needs to be done. God is good. Plus talking to my mom every day helps me loads. I am having a hard time learning to accept help, but I am learning. I started driving myself to dialysis back in January so that helps a lot. I pretty much just stay home, safer that way.

Again, thank you so much for your generous gift of money. I am truly blessed to have all of you looking out for me. Between God and your church, my friends and family, I am truly BLESSED! Love to you all, Judy Jo Hunt Arbour



FPC Session, Thank you for the Christmas gift of Gibson Bucks. Very much appreciate the thoughtfulness. I enjoy my extended FPC family. Thank you, Phil Noellsch

Thank you! Thank you for your donation to Diaster Relief-USA Disasters & Emergencies. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance deeply appreciates your support of its ministry and mission. Your act of open-hearted giving blesses those who walk the hard road to recovery, letting them know that others walk beside them and that God brings hope amid the chaos created by disasters.

The Mission Committee recently approved money to purchase something for the Head Start students. Mary Clow obtained the sizes of the students from the teachers and bought them all two pair of pajamas each and a Giddy Buggy flash light for fun. There are currently six boys and one girl in the program.



The Mission Committee has approved a \$1,000 donation to the Gibson City Police Department to help pay for dog food and training for Lexa, the canine partner of Officer Hunter Johnson. Officer Johnson is the son of Chad and Stacy Johnson and the great grandson of Val Hunt.



Wow! First on the behalf of the GCMS Athletic Booster Club I send a big 'Thank You' to you, First Presbyterian Church Elders, and to the all members. Thanks for honoring us with this donation and placing this trust with our Booster Club team. I can ensure you that the money will be put to good use and we definitely will share with you what that money will be used for. Please let me know if you have any questions. Blake Warren, GCMS Booster Club President



At the February 15th Gibson Area Food Pantry meeting Mary Clow was approved to represent our church on the Board once again for 2022. Mary reports for the calendar year 2021 an average of 114 households each month were served which included 309 individuals. The individuals included an average of 97 children and 78 seniors. Of the households, 41% identified as disabled. Approximately 50 deliveries to households were made each month and there was an average of 37 volunteers for each distribution cycle. There were 39 cities served with Gibson City representing 53% of those served. Thank you, Mary, for your dedication to the very needed mission and to those members of the church that help on the distribution Saturdays when we are scheduled to assist. Since the start of the Food Pantry in 2014, 444,000 meals have been served.

Winter is on my head, but eternal Spring is in my heart. Victor Hugo

NEWSLETTER IDEAS AND UPCOMING CHANGES

We are always looking for ideas to keep our newsletter interesting and informative. If you have any suggestions, contact Mary or Meladee. All ideas are welcome.

We have completed articles on all of our members who wished to share their story on the "Know Your Members" section of the newsletter. We thought about changing that section to "Know Your Members Pets" past or present. Contact Mary or Meladee if you are interested in telling us about your past or present pet (children with fur). We are also open to doing some research on a favorite Christian song or prayer. If you have a favorite you would like to know more about, please let us know.

We are also starting a new contest this month – A Christian/Bible Crossword Puzzle which will be printed in the newsletter each month. You will have until the 15th of the following month to complete the puzzle and turn it into Meladee. All correct puzzles will be placed in a hat and one winner will be drawn for a \$25 gift card or \$25 Gibson Bucks each month. Good Luck!

A lasagna dinner with a Valentines theme was served to members before our annual Congregational meeting on February 13th in the Fellowship Hall. A big thank you to Ron and Mary Clow and Danny and Vonna Heustis for all their hard work and efforts. It was great getting together and talking about how 2021 went and what direction we want to go in 2022. Also thank you to Phil Noellsch and Meladee Ferguson for their work in getting our financial and corporation reports ready.



GCMS's Anneliese Kerchenfaut celebrates senior night prior to Wednesday's boys basketball game. Kerchenfaut is the daughter of Rick and Aizza Kerchenfaut. While at GCMS, Kerchenfaut has been a football cheerleader for three years and a basketball cheerleader for one. She also has been involved in FFA, Student Council, the Spring Musicals and girls basketball and is a part of the Prairieland CEO Program. After high school, Kerchenfaut will attend a four-year university studying international business. Kerchenfaut "say live in the now." Her dad Rick's favorite cheer is "Shelley" and is a big fan of Guns and Roses.



Thank you Charlie Kerchenfaut for helping shovel the walks in front of the church so our members would be safe in leaving after the Congregational meeting.



A big thank you to Danny Heustis and Tim Swanson who helped with the clean-up after the Congregational meeting.