

PASTOR'S CORNER

This is a continuation from last month's Sermon on the Mount.

Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? Or how can you say to your neighbor, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' while the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor's eye.

"Do not give what is holy to dogs; and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under foot and turn and maul you.

"Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? Or if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children,

how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him! "In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.

"Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction, and there are many who take it. For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles? In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will know them by their fruits.

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many deeds of power in your name?' Then I will declare to

them, 'I never knew you; go away from me, you evildoers.'" "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its fall!"

Amen!
Easter is April 9th.
Pastor Ray Lantz



PRESBYTIDINGS

March 2023
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 GIVE AND TAKE OF LENT BY THE EDITORS OF PRESBY- TERIANS TODAY MAGAZINE

We use the season of Lent to prepare our hearts and minds for the mystery of the resurrection. But we all do that differently. Some churches place ashes on the foreheads of worshipers on Ash Wednesday; others don't. Some "lock up" their "Alleluias" until Easter morning, and others host a weekly fish fry.

What is Lent?

Lent is a Christian season of practice, celebrated by some Christians though not all. It's not a prescription for holiness, but an invitation to relationship. Lent has its roots in the very early church. During Lent the Scriptures remind us of God's expectations for Israel, Jesus' temptation in the wilderness and his journey to the cross. Since many Catholics traditionally give up meat on Fridays during Lent, they eat fish—and invite the community to join them. The practice has spread to Protestant churches as well. But the fish fry isn't just about giving up meat. It's also about taking on the practice of being in a com-

munity as people gather over a meal.

Why do we celebrate/observe Lent?

Lent is a time for us to focus on Jesus and our Christian discipleship. What does it mean to follow the One who lived, died and rose from the dead for our salvation? Lent is a chance for us to practice, every year, focusing on God in Christ. We remember God as immersed in earthly life with our earthly practices.

One of the most common Lenten practices is fasting. This can mean giving up certain foods or habits like expensive coffee or cigarettes and donating the money to helping others. By fasting, we practice denying the self not just for the heck of it or to drop 10 pounds, but for the purpose of shifting our attention to Jesus. It's a question of vision, of focus.

How many days is Lent?

Lent is 40 days long, from Ash Wednesday to Easter Saturday. But if you count the days on the calendar, that's more than 40. That's because Sundays are excluded. They're considered "mini-Easters," since they're the day of resurrection. So, no fasting on Sundays!



Should everyone observe Lent in the same way?

Actually, I don't think "should" is the right word. We are called to do what we do together as a people, a community, a congregation, so we practice Lent together. But even though we practice it together, we do so as individuals. Each person in the group may not be called to do the exact same thing.

Should we eat less chocolate and drink more beer?

The fruitful question to ask is: What am I called to do during Lent, as a faithful Christian? Being a "good Presbyterian" will tend to focus our energies on fitting a measure that doesn't keep us focused on God.

But as Presbyterians, we are called to dwell in Scripture, to be immersed in it. To let the words, poetry, images, commands, stories and hymns seep into our hearts and imaginations. During Lent, Presbyterians can deepen their Presbyterian spirituality and Christian discipleship by sitting with Scripture so that we intensify our efforts to focus on the living God in Christ, to whom Christians bear witness.

MARCH 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3 <i>World Day of Prayer</i>	4 <i>RECYCLE</i> <i>9 a.m. Bible Study at Holly Brook</i>
5 <i>10:30 a.m. Worship</i> <i>John 3:1-17</i>	6	7	8 <i>International Women's Day</i>	9	10	11 <i>9 a.m. Bible Study at Holly Brook</i> <i>Before retiring, set your clocks up one hour.</i>
12 <i>10:30 a.m. Worship</i> <i>Daylight Savings Time Begins</i> <i>John 4:5-42</i>	13	14	15	16	17	18 <i>9 a.m. Bible Study at Holly Brook</i> <i>RECYCLE</i>
19 <i>10:30 a.m. Worship</i> <i>John 9:1-41</i>	20 <i>Mr. Rogers Day</i> <i>EVERYONE be kind to EVERY-ONE!</i>	21	22	23 <i>5:30 Session</i>	24	25 <i>9 a.m. Bible Study at Holly Brook</i>
26 <i>10:30 a.m. Worship</i> <i>John 11:1-45</i>	27	28	29	30	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 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.

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

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

THE NEW FLOWER CHART IS up on the bulletin board outside of the secretary’s office.

Next Session meeting will be Thursday March 23, 2023.

March was named for the Roman God of War: Not all of the months were named for their numerical spot in the calendar, however. March itself borrows its name from the Roman god of war – Mars. With March typically marking the beginning of warmer weather, warriors would begin to train and fight once more as the frost thawed and the ground became easier to work on. This is such a cool fact about March!

Daylight Savings Time begins in March, blessing us all with an extra hour of daylight after months of long, long nights and short, short days. It’s designed for the benefit of agricultural workers, such as farmers, and for the benefit of our mental health in general. Researchers believe the extra hour of sunlight can make a massive difference to your overall mood, and we’re certainly not going to argue with more sun!

It’s host to the Vernal Equinox: Though not a term you hear banded about often, the [Vernal Equinox](#) is the time of year when the day and night are equal in length. This occurs when the sun is directly above the equator and occurs during March for those living in the Northern Hemisphere. If you’re in the Southern Hemisphere, you have our condolences – best hold out until September.

And sometimes Easter Sunday!: The exact date Easter falls on varies year by year, but on occasion it can come around as early as the 22nd of March. While initially a holiday dedicated to the memory of Jesus Christ and his resurrection, its cultural meaning has shifted to include chocolate eggs and gift-giving bunnies. We’re not complaining when chocolate is involved.

‘If March comes in like a lion, It will go out like a lamb.’: OK, OK – this is a list of March facts, and this isn’t technically a fact, but we’ve all heard the proverb before, so we’re rolling with it.

BIRTHDAYS
AND
ANNIVERSARIES

March

02: Neil Nelson
04: Meladee Ferguson
17: Karen Ladd
18: Sharla Williams
18: Janice Swanson
29: Ruth Davis

April

06: Charlie Kerchenfaut
24: Barb Kirkpatrick
25: Harry and Dorri Groom
27: Ron Clow
28: Tim Swanson

Second Sunday Offering
Mar 12: One Great Hour of Sharing
Apr 9: Gibson Area Housing Rehab Foundation

Ushers
Mar: Ron and Mary Clow
Apr: Jeanette Hensley and Sharla Williams

Communion Servers
March 5: Charlie Schultz and Tim Swanson
Apr 9: Jean Williams and Sharla Williams

March was the first month in the Roman calendar: This’ll probably be news to you unless you happen to have been born around 150BC. The Roman Calendar started its year in March, spanning 10 months all the way through to December.

THANK YOUS AND MORE

Dear First Presbyterian Church: I'm truly fortunate to witness every day how the giving spirit of groups like yours can change the world. No matter how much circumstances change, one thing remains the same: people continue to show generosity and dedication to the families we serve.

Which is why I want to extend my sincere appreciation for your group's recent contribution of \$500 to Heifer. Your compassion makes a permanent difference in so many lives. I am reminded of the quote by Mr. Fred Rogers: "All of us, at some time or other, need help. Whether we are giving or receiving help, each one of us has something valuable to bring to this world. That's one of the things that connects us as neighbors – in our own way, each one of us is a giver and a receiver." And to magnify the joy of your gift, an additional group of generous donors has matched your donation, doubling the impact of your gift!

Each day, we witness the need of families in the poorest corners of the world, who are simply trying to figure out how to get by. Hard-working parents wonder if they will have enough food to feed their children at the end of the day. . . . If they can afford school or medication . . . if their homes can withstand natural disasters.

Thanks to your group of Heifer donors, moms are building businesses and earning steady income to feed their children . . . dads are running their own family farms instead of having to find work far away . . . you are providing nutritious food, education and hope for the next generation.

I hope you know how much we, and the families who are touched by your generosity, appreciate you all. Our work would not be possible without you by our side.

With appreciation, Christy Moore, Senior Vice President of Marketing for Heifer International


To the Amazing People at the First Presbyterian Church, I am ever so thankful for the kindness you all have shown me. Most of the time I have a hard time accepting help. But when you all reached out I knew I had to say yes. I lost my residence due to the flood in August of 2021, and it skewed my progress. My glasses were one of the few items saved from the water, that being said, they were worse for wear. Sadly, most places would not accept my healthcare and glasses were far too expensive. I don't know where to start, the other gift you all gave me allowed me to purchase clothes, food, and start a new job at the hospital! For how much kindness you all have shown me, it has facilitated quite the paradigm shift into a positive outlook. I am excited to thank you all face to face. Thank you all so much! Sincerely, Caleb Rogers

Thank you so very much for the very generous gift!! We are a new troop, and still growing, and this monetary gift will help in many ways! This troop is brand new and the girls are first time Scouts and we are so excited to see where scouting takes these young girls. Again, thank you very much!! Lora Russell, Troop 2011, Gibson City Daisys and Leighton, Nora, Ivory, Marie, Emily, and Lora

Below is a current picture of Reese Kietzmann who was a student of Sharla Williams. His family home in Danforth recently burned down and the Church sent the family a donation. His mother Tracey York Kietzmann and Reese both want to thank the church for our ginormous donation. It was such a blessing.



Money from the Jerry Wissmiller Memorial Fund and Dale Ashmore Memorial Fund was used to purchase Lions Club Pancake Breakfast tickets that were then handed out to clients at the Gibson Area Food Pantry. Both of these amazing men were members of the Lions Club and always sold lots of tickets for their Fundraiser. See picture below.



Gibson City Lions Club
46th Annual
Pancake and Sausage Breakfast
All you can eat - Featuring Whole Hog Sausage
and **Biscuits and Gravy**

Gibson City Elementary School Cafeteria
Sunday **February 26, 2023**
8:00 a.m. till **12:45 p.m.**

Adults: \$8.00
Children 6-12: \$4.00
Children under 6: Free

Proceeds go to benefit the Gibson City
Lion's Club Community Projects

SECOND SUNDAY COLLECTION FOR MARCH ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING - PRESBYTERY USA

Three programs are supported by One Great Hour of Sharing - the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and Self-Development of People - all work in different ways to serve individuals and communities in need. From initial disaster response to ongoing community development, their work fits together to provide people with safety, sustenance, and hope. Typically received during the season of Lent, each gift to One Great Hour of Sharing supports efforts to relieve hunger through the Presbyterian Hunger Program, promote development through the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People, and assist in areas of disaster through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. If you wish to donate, make sure and include One Great Hour of Sharing on your check. Session will add \$500 to whatever is collected for this Program. Remember your impact on giving: **Restoring Hope, Feeding the Hungry, Empowering the Oppressed**

Meladee had a surprise visit in her office from the Head Start students on February 9th. Nothing makes you smile more than the love shown by 4 year olds. Of course, they each left with a treat as Meladee is always prepared for visits.



Gibson City Restoration Association:

Mary Clow attended the Gibson City Restoration Association annual meeting held on February 1, 2023. As most of you know, in June of 2022 our Church donated \$5,000 to the organization which is trying to save the Loy Building downtown. The money we donated was to be spent on hiring a grant writer. Mary sent out bids on their behalf and Jon Thomas Consulting from Washington, DC was awarded the contract. Currently the consulting firm has applied for 12 grants. A grant for \$5,000 was awarded from Earmark Illinois. Two "no award" letters were received. Nine grants are pending. In February, six more grants were applied for. An open house of the Loy Building will be held in March or April and State and Federal legislators will be invited in an effort to obtain their support in upcoming legislation. In June, the Association purchased the building for \$8,000 and earned enough money from their Saturday Garage Sales to pay for the building. They continue to fundraise money from the weekly Queen of Hearts weekly drawing and held a Cash Bash Fundraiser. Some work has begun with a tear off of the addition on the back of the building. They are waiting for a structural study to be completed in order to determine what restoration steps with which to proceed.



Danny Heustis, pictured above, is the winner of our Word Search Puzzle for the month of February. There were ten (10) entries this month (Val Hunt, Janice Swanson, Sherry Tomlinson, Denise Birky, Jean Williams, Sharon Collings, Danny Heustis, Jodi VanSwol, Phil Noellsch, and Jeanette Hensley). Anyone receiving this newsletter is eligible to win a \$20 gift card to County Market. Please see the **GREEN** colored card sheet in the center of this newsletter to play. Turn it in to the church office by March 25th! Not at the church: Mail it or place in the black box outside the east church door.

Be certain to read the Bible verses attached to the puzzle each month.

I FOUND EVERY WORD LISTED IN THE MARCH PUZZLE. Meladee

Mary Clow and Sharla Williams were thrilled to hug and see Anneliese Kerchenfaut at church on Sunday February 19th. Anneliese attends Michigan State University where a shooting on campus occurred earlier in the week in which 3 students were killed.



Lunch at the Horsch Radish was enjoyed by all after the annual February 5th Congregational Meeting and Corporation meeting.



**Good food, good people, good times!
We are family!!!!!!**

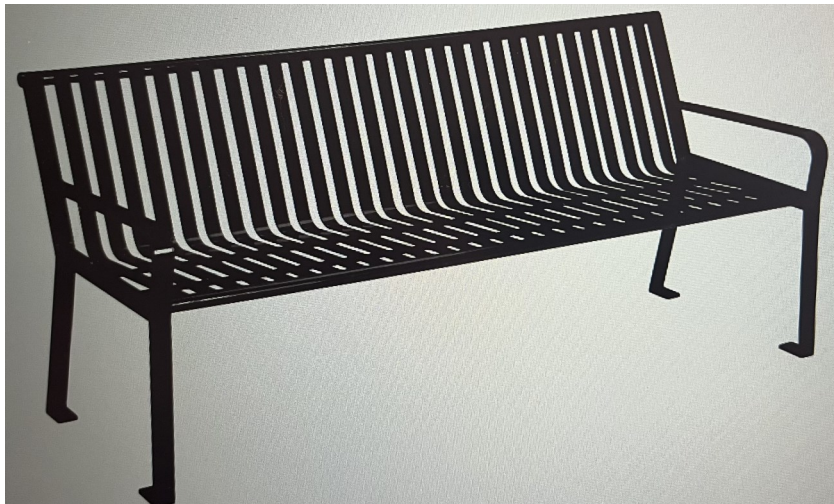


Lent is a chance for self-discipline: Of course, whether Easter itself occurs during March or not, Lent most certainly does. Lent lasts for six weeks before Easter and is usually symbolic of self-discipline, with believers choosing to sacrifice something they enjoy or refrain from certain activities in memory of the sacrifice Christ made for humanity and his fast in the desert.



Downtown Gibson City Black Bench Beautification Project

Session approved a donation of \$4,000 from the Mission Fund and a donation of \$4,000 from the Hank & Phyllis Brickman Memorial Fund to the City of Gibson to help with the Downtown Black Bench Beautification Project. The City will be purchasing several black 6 foot outdoor steel slat park benches with backs and several black outdoor 36 gallon slatted steel trash cans with rain bonnet lids. The total cost will be over \$10,000 and they will be soliciting donations from other organizations for the remaining dollars.



Gibson City Mural Project

Session approved a donation of \$10,000 to the Gibson City Chamber of Commerce for the downtown mural project. Alderman Suzie Tongate organized a Mural Project Committee of several businesses and organizations. Mary Clow represents our church on this Committee. Donations will be pooled to create a Mural Fund with all donations held by the Chamber of Commerce. Mural prices are based on size, design detail, need for lifts and will run from \$1,000 to \$10,000 each. A spring start is eyed, and the murals will take several weeks to complete. Businesses loaning their wall for murals will not be expected to finance the murals but will need to sign a contract releasing liability for the art work. The first mural is expected to go on Jelco’s south wall, and the second mural will be outside the new A Renee building.

Dress A Boy Around the World Project – Gibson Girls HCE

Session approved a \$300 donation to the Gibson Girl HCE Organization in December to help them purchase material for their “Dress A Boy” Around the World Project for 2023. As some of you may remember, we also donated money to their “Dress A Girl” Around the World Project in 2022. The project is part of the Hope 4 Women International Organization that is a Nondenominational Christian Organization that hopes to help every little girl around the world receive a dress, so they know they are worthy of respect and loved by God. Remember the Dress A Girl label is sewn on the front of the dress to indicate to predators that the girl is under the care of this Organization and a pair of underwear was placed in one pocket and a bracelet in the other pocket. So, this year, the Gibson Girls are making shorts for Boys. Again, a special label will be placed on the shorts and a pair of underwear will be provided along with a small rubber bouncing ball for the boys. Mary Clow, Sharon Heavilin and Jean Noellsch are members of the organization. To the right is a picture of Ellen Hankes who is spearheading the program for the Gibson Girls holding up the first pair of shorts that will be used as a sample for other shorts.



A beautiful flower arrangement of white flowers was delivered to our church for our February 12th Sunday service in honor of Fred (Ted) and Dorothy Huston who were married in the church manse on Valentines Day in 1937. Several members remember the Hustons and how involved they were with the church. Mary Clow found a picture of the 1923 men's Sunday School class which identified Fred Huston as the second person from the left in the front row. Their son, Alan Dale Huston, contacted our church, had the flowers sent and provided a picture of them in their later years. Dorothy Huston had just finished frying chicken and was on her way to the church for a meeting when she died along the highway. The Hustons had three sons, Alan Dale, Dennis R. and Fredric Jr. (now deceased).



MISSION COMMITTEE SUGGESTIONS – FEBRUARY, 2023

Starting Balance January 31, 2023.....	\$14,000.00
Mike Rutledge Funeral.....	\$ 500.00
Madison Oliver for food for her family.....	\$ 200.00
Partial Rent Madison Oliver's Landlord.....	\$ 170.00
Tracy Kietzman (house fire) - Former student of Sharlas.....	\$ 500.00
Andrea Goin (Vonna's granddaughter with MS).....	\$ 1,000.00
Gibson High School Class of 73 – 50 year class reunion.....	\$ 500.00
Upgrades to Enhance the Gibson City Scout Cabin.....	\$ 2,000.00
Gibson City Bench/Trash Can Project.....	\$ 4,000.00
Presbytery USA International Disaster Relief Turkey/Syria.....	\$ 4,000.00
World Central Kitchen – Meals for Turkey/Syria.....	\$ 4,000.00
Gibson City Chamber of Commerce – Murals.....	<u>\$10,000.00</u>
Year to Date February.....	\$40,870.00

PRAYER FOR SYRIA AND TURKEY

By Rev. Edwin González-Castillo, Presbytery Disaster Assistance Director

“God of mercy, we join in prayer for our siblings in Syria and Turkey, and all other regions affected. In the face of the terrible images that come to us, we ask that your Spirit, O God, once again move in the midst of chaos and destruction. May your Spirit be with the first responders, neighbors putting their lives at risk to help those around them, and anyone assisting during this time of emergency. May you provide protection, energy, and strength through your presence. Be with them as they search for loved ones, guide them during the long hours and allow them to find hope through your Spirit. Dear God, as the days go by, provide wisdom and discernment to the local government agencies. May they be instruments of your grace as they care for the people affected. That they may receive help and support from countries near and far, and that, as they provide assistance, may there be enough for everyone. As the stories are shared, and the recovery process begins, may your Spirit be with those who will be called to listen and to be agents of peace and hope.

**APPLY FOR A GRANT FOR AN AED
AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATOR**

The First Presbyterian Church of Gibson City will be awarding up to FIVE grants in the amount of \$2,000 each for the purchase of an AED (Automated External Defibrillator) for any Gibson City Non-Profit Organization, Group, Sports Team or Club. Grant Applications will be accepted until March 31st. If you are interested, please mail the information listed below to the First Presbyterian Church, 401 North Church, Gibson City IL 60936 (217-784-5422)..

- Overview of your organization including phone & email address
- Statement as to why you need an AED/Where the AED will be used or located
- Your plan on how you will train individuals to operate the AED
- Your plan on how you will maintain your AED

***** This ad will be in the Ford County Chronicle and on WGCY Radio*****



