

Presbyterian News

First Presbyterian Church of Paw Paw, Michigan

Volume 85, Issue 3

March 2017

These Forty Days

"Paczki – Price Reduced!" The sign greeted me as I entered the grocery store and saw the table of boxed, cream-filled donuts. A woman had loaded at least eight boxes into her cart. "Must be having a Paczki party!" I thought. I almost asked her if I could come.

What does Lent mean to you? Is it the traditional time of "fasting" after a time of abundance – of giving up rich foods, coffee, Facebook or other vices? Do you think of the darkness, the penitent purple, and the guilt of confessing our sinful nature? Do you look forward to the fish fry at the end of each week? (I do!) Are these forty days marked by the anticipation of warm weather, new life and the hope that spring will arrive in time for Easter morning? (Or will we be hiding eggs in the snow?)

Each year when this particular set of forty days rolls around, I am reminded of the importance of all the standard, traditional associations with Lent, but also of the newness that begs to be discovered each time we make this journey. That newness can be found in a surprising place – the texts of the Bible; in the Gospels and the writings of those who witnessed the events we are once again called to remember.

These stories are the focus of our Lenten Bible Study, "Hosanna," which begins this Sunday, March 5, after worship. Each lesson of this 5-week study focuses on the events of Holy Week from the perspective of different writers of the Bible. You might be surprised to discover new perspectives, like the view that writers of the Bible were not so much concerned with historical accuracy, but with telling a particular story about the meaning of God and God's relationship with people.

You might find surprising that what it means to "remember" is not just an act of thinking about something that happened in the past, but "a way of recalling that includes the participants in the old story." This is what we hope to do each time we celebrate these Forty Days; each time we recount the old story, have our foreheads be marked by the ashes, eat the bread, drink the wine, speak the words of betrayal and pray the prayers of forgiveness. And in being a part of what is not so much old as timeless, we become something new.

May we make the journey together.

In Christ,

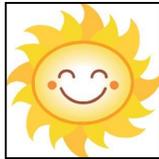
Tiffany

**Discovering new things with Loretta
Brunner, member since 1944!**



**"What do you remember most about
our church, Loretta?" "Being with the
children in Sunday School, helping in
the kitchen, worship - all of it!"**

Let the Children Come...



Ever wondered what the kids do on Sunday mornings? We share communion with them every first Sunday, but what do they do in between? Actually, there's a whole lot of exploring going on!

Kids (ten and younger) arrive downstairs hungry, energetic, cantankerous, shy, silly, and always very **real**. Their comments are uncensored and definitely not politically correct. They ask whatever questions pop up... "appropriate" or not. **No wonder Jesus encouraged us to approach God as little children do!**

It's wonderful! God can handle ANY question, especially the ones that come from deep in our hearts. God knows what's in our hearts before we ask, so there's nothing to fear! The kids hear words like "soul," "grace," "Spirit," "disciple," "forgiveness" during worship. In Children's Gathering, we figure out what the words *mean*. These kids know a lot! They can tell you that: a **soul** is the place where God lives inside each of us. There is NOTHING that can separate us from God's love. *Grace* and *forgiveness* are free gifts. Lately, we've been talking about what it means to *follow Jesus* in order to know God.

Questions we're exploring: *What is the church other than a building? What's a Christian? Who were the first disciples? (How many can **you** name?) How can **I** be a disciple? What's God's MOST important rule? How can I possibly love and forgive a person who is mean/bad/ scary/not like me?*

In the next few weeks, we'll play *The Temptation Game* and experience *Question & Answer Time with Jesus*. We'll be preparing for our own Lenten Journey, culminating in a special intergenerational event planned for Palm Sunday, April 9, after worship. It'll be a great chance for you to connect with God's children of all ages.

Spiritual Formation

Prisoner Re-Entry Program

We continue to deliver backpacks to the incoming citizens at the Red Arrow motel, and have tweaked the contents a bit based on needs. We are now adding a "These Days" magazine to the bags, and also a bowl, as well as the plate, cup and silverware. If someone donates miniature candy bars, we'll add a couple of those too. The bags distributed after Trunk or Treat were really popular! If you are doing Spring cleaning, and find any water bottles in good condition, we can certainly put them to good use – just drop them off upstairs in the Youth room.

Thanks to the generous support from the congregation, this program has helped 42 folks so far, and the need does not seem to be dissipating. So, keep up the good work, and thanks for all you do!

"Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

Wendy Mickle

Deacon's Potluck

March 16th is the next Potluck. This month has no theme, just bring a dish to pass. But, if you feel the urge, bring an Irish dish. Don't forget your tableware and your appetite.





The NCAA tournament starts Thursday, March 16th, with the selections being made the previous Sunday, March 12th. Complete your bracket (from the newspaper, on line, or we'll have some blanks printed up for distribution in the church office), and return it back to the church (e-mail or fax is fine, too) by Thursday, March 16th at noon. Our resident bookie (Tom Baney) will be compiling the results and giving updates as the tournament progresses. The entry fee is a donation to Eleanor's Pantry.

Please join us as we dance our way through the tournament, arriving in Phoenix for the Final Four in April! It's a lot of fun – who knew Presbyterians were so competitive! Last year's winners, Tom Baney, Chris Tapper and Bill Buhl, are standing ready to defend their sports expertise!

Any questions, please call the church office,

Presbyterian Women Bible Study

Each month the Presbyterian Women are studying another woman of the Bible. We met Ruth and Naomi in January and in February, we visited the story of Esther. In March, we will be taking a look at Eve. Won't you join us on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 10:00 a.m., as we learn about the women of Bible.



Lenten Fair

Please join us on Palm Sunday (April 9th) at the gates of Jerusalem (outside of Fellowship Hall), directly after the worship service. We will enter the gates into a Lenten Fair with foods, games, activities and areas reminiscent of a marketplace in Jerusalem the day Jesus entered.

There will be



to make, plus

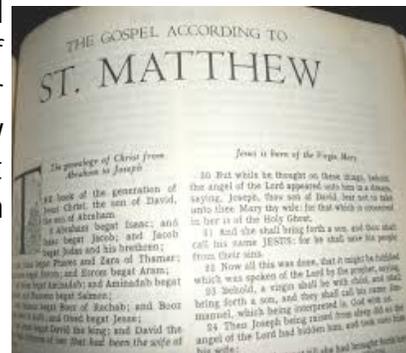


to create. There will be a unique way to pray, as well as ways for children to play. It will definitely be child friendly! Watch the upcoming newsletters for more information, and mark your calendars to join us for this unique experience!



Adult Bible Study

The Adult Bible Study class is studying the Gospel of Matthew. We have finished the Beatitudes and are continuing to finish the Sermon on the Mount as we work our way through this gospel. Please join Royal and Judith Haefner and a dedicated group of friends in faith for lively discussions every Sunday morning at 8:45 a.m. in the Church Library.



EASTER FLOWERS



It's March and time to think about our flowers for Easter Sunday. Last year the Deacons changed from using all Easter Lilies, as has been the tradition for years, to a combination of Lilies, tulips and daffodils. This change was made to ensure no one would be uncomfortable with the strong fragrances that some flowers have. Last year the change was well accepted and we are planning to provide the same multiple arrangement of flowers, based on the plants available.

Flower orders can be placed through the church office with a \$10 donation for each plant or you will find order blanks in the bulletins the last week of March through the 9th of April. All order blanks will include a spot for naming the person/s you are remembering and/or honoring and flowers will be available after the Easter Church service on Sunday, April 16th.

Thank you in advance for your participation in this Deacon project. As always, any leftover funds will go to Deacon projects.



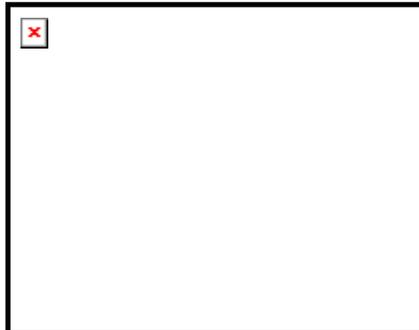
THRIFT SALE TIME



It's TIME to start setting items aside for our annual thrift sale/bake sale, planned for Saturday April 29 in Fellowship Hall (and other areas of the church). Each year some changes seem to be appropriate and this year is no different. Probably the biggest change will be the elimination of clothing from our sale. We're aware this will be a sad note for some but the decision was based on changes in our church and community.

Clothing takes a lot of time and space to sort, label, and arrange the large variety of clothes we receive for the sale. The number of people available to take care of this task has dwindled to the point where we have chosen to look for another way to better use these clothing items. With these thoughts in mind, we are recommending that any clothing items you may have planned be donated instead to the new Clothes Closet that is being organized through United Christian Services. Clothing items in gently-used condition with out stains or tears may be donated by contacting Alison Harrop at UCS: (269) 888-4673, alison.ucs@gmail.com UCS is in the process of developing a system to get these items to those most in need, those whether from the loss of a home by weather or fire, the loss of a job, or simply a need for clothing.

So start sorting and watch for more news in the April Newsletter.



Montaña de Luz – Let’s Put Quarters to Work! Reminder!!

Our quarter jars for the Montaña de Luz project will be collected on the first two Sundays in March. Snowbirds who receive this letter can participate by sending a contribution of any size to the church and marking the memo line Montaña de Luz. For more information about Montaña de Luz you can visit their web site at montañadeluz.org.



Cents-Ability Offering

The Mission Commission encourages you to save your pennies and loose change each month to contribute to our denominations Cents-Ability offering taken the third Sunday of the month. Our offering this month will be taken on the 19th of March. Monies taken in are split three ways with 25% going to Eleanor’s Pantry, 25% going to United Christian Services, and 50% going to the Presbyterian Church World Hunger Fund.



United Christian Services

Members of churches and agencies in our area have picked up the work of supporting the needy in our community. The group is seeking 501 (C)(3) status so that it can accept contributions and seek financial assistance. They are nearing finalization of its non-profit status. A little under \$5,000 in support was provided to the community by UCS in January. UCS has formed a board of directors of which Pastor Tiffany McCafferty has been included. The power of many makes UCS a place of hope and help in our community.

CROP WALK 2017 will be Sunday, April 30.

There will be a CROP organizational meeting for all who can attend on March 13 at the First Methodist Church.



Join Us –

We are all at the work of mission

The Mission Commission invites you to join us for a meeting and to help plan new ways to serve others as we reach out to share God’s love in this world. Our meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month at 6:30 in the Sr. High classroom. No special skills are required other than a willingness to be involved in this ministry. The next meeting is scheduled for the 2nd of March. Members at large are always welcome to attend meetings as we are all joined as the church called to be the hands and feet of Christ.



One Great Hour of Sharing

During the season of Lent the PCUSA along with several protestant denominations support *One Great Hour of Sharing* as our opportunity to give dollars to areas in need. This year the period for collecting offerings for OGHS is from March 1 through Easter Sunday on April 16th. The Mission Commission has set a goal of \$750 from our congregation.

The following information comes from the website: Onegreathourofsharing.org.

One Great Hour of Sharing is an offering that makes the love of Christ real for individuals and communities around the world who suffer the effects of disaster, conflict, or severe economic hardship, and for those who serve them through gifts of money and time. Today, projects are underway in more than 100 countries, including the United States and Canada.

While specific allocations differ in each denomination, all use their One Great Hour of Sharing funds to make possible disaster relief, refugee assistance, development aid and more. Contributions to One Great Hour of Sharing make a difference in the lives of real people. Leaders of impacted communities identify the needs of their people. Priorities for short, medium and long-term solutions are then made for the purpose of improving the quality of life for individuals and the communities. Around the world, One Great Hour of Sharing continues to respond to needs equally critical as when it was first created.

[Give Generously to One Great Hour of Sharing.](#)



Clerk's Report

The Session met Tuesday February 21, 2017. We welcomed new Elder Mar Tucker who will be ordained and installed at a later date.

Administration reported that the 2016 Financial Review was completed in January and that the church is in compliance with recommended policies and procedures.

Building and Grounds reported that exterior locks on the church doors will be replaced in the near future.

The **Formation** staff and Commission have developed activities for a Lenten Journey Spirituality Fair to be held after worship on Palm Sunday, April 9. Other groups will be contacted about sponsoring an activity at the fair.

Deacons are planning a summer church picnic for mid to late July, possibly at Maple Island Park.

Mission Commission reported on activities of United Christian Services (UCS). UCS is also seeking volunteer to attend "Coffee and Bagels" at Freshwater on Monday mornings from 9:30 – 11:30. There will be several service organizations on hand to UCS will do walk-in intake for folks needing assistance. If you have interest in this mission opportunity please contact Pastor Tiffany or Tom Shoemaker for additional information.

We will be doing a new Church Directory with photos of all church members and friends. Pat Conner and Sue Winter are working on this, you will be hearing more about this in the weeks ahead.

Next month the Session and Deacons will begin meeting on the same evening (third Thursday) and will have a joint opening worship and sharing.

A **CONGREGATIONAL MEETING** was held on February 26, at which annual committee reports were received; Bill Welling was elected to serve as Elder; Royal Haefner and Susan Erion were re-elected to the Nominating Committee, and the 2017 Budget was approved. Copies of the full annual report can be obtained by contacting the church office.

- Judith Haefner, Clerk of Session

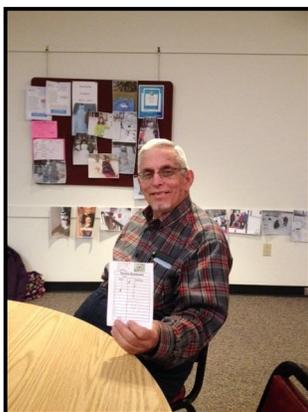
- 03/01 Tom Smith
- 03/02 Marlene Tucker
- 03/03 Jim Dutcher
- 03/04 Andy Thorburn
- 03/08 Theresa Yarbrough
- 03/08 Lexis Boothby-Shoemaker
- 03/08 Adeline Bradish
- 03/11 Ann McGrew
- 03/12 Andrea Kusmack
- 03/14 Harvey Hop
- 03/14 Kathy McGuire
- 03/14 Haylee Thompson
- 03/14 Nolan Beck
- 03/15 Danna Dent
- 03/15 Steve McCloskey
- 03/16 Harold Duringer
- 03/18 Jean Taylor
- 03/25 Maizie Seeber
- 03/28 Watson Kusmack
- 03/29 Dick Schallhorn
- 03/29 Wayne Martin
- 03/29 Colleen Stiles
- 03/30 Nathan McCloskey
- 03/31 Kalley Zabonick

- 03/17 Dave & Pat Conner
- 03/19 Fred & Diane Triquet
- 03/19 Timothy & Jennifer Combs
- 03/22 Jeff & Laura Wells
- 03/26 Alan & Nicole Colgren
- 03/31 Jim & Sally Brinkman



Editor's Note: The birthdays and anniversaries are Computer generated. If we are missing your special day or our information is incorrect, please notify Sue in the church Office at 657-3111 or email: firstpres1@btc-bci.com.

Euchre Night Winner February 25, 2017



Jim vanWestrienen was the winner of the night, with 26 points. Congratulations Jim!



March Greeters:

- March 5 - Jerry & Barb Dundon
- March 12 - Bill & Les Buhl
- March 19 - Barb Kruse & Dee Henderson
- March 26 - Dan & Tammy Hulst

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120 Pine Street
Paw Paw, MI 49079

Return Service Requested

Presbyterian News

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- **March 1st** - Ash Wednesday service at 7:00 pm.
- **March 4th** - Betty Faul's memorial service. Visitation at 10 a.m., service at 11.
- **March 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th** - "Hosanna" Lenten Study in the Library after worship.
- **March 12th** - Dedication of Montana de Luz offering and installation of Elders in worship.
- **March 16th** - Potluck dinner at 6:30 pm. Bring your favorite dish and place settings.
- **March 25th** - Men's Breakfast - 8:00 to 9:00 am in Fellowship Hall. Jerry Dundon cooks - all men are invited to enjoy food and fellowship.
- **March 25th** - Euchre Night. Games start at 6:30 pm. Bring a plate to pass.
- **March 28th** - Single Ladies Night Out - We will meet at "Taste" restaurant in South Haven. We will carpool from church, leaving at 5:00 pm.

- **On-going**: Paperback books in good condition and with appropriate content are being collected by Presbyterian Women to be donated to the county men's and women's jails.

• **SAVE THE DATE: APRIL 29TH — THRIFT/BAKE SALES!!**