

February 21, Volume 23, Issue 04

# First Presbyterian Church

# FOCUS

Christians Serving, Learning and Loving

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3rd Sunday  
February

# Christians Serving, Learning and Loving

## Reflections

### A Fast of Compassion and Healing

***6 Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?***

***7 Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?***

***8 Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rearguard.***

***9 Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.***

Isaiah 58:6-9

It is somewhat strange to come into the season of Lent. Last year, during this season, is when our entire pandemic exile began. I was reading an essay by a woman who was describing her struggle with how to come into Lent when her family had already given up so much during the year, let alone the season. She was saying that it's been like a yearlong season of Lent. So how do we make this a useful time?

It might help to back up and examine the purpose of this season. Lent is a time for working on deepening our relationship with Christ Jesus and opening ourselves to new growth as Christians. It really is supposed to be a gift we give to ourselves for our own renewal and restoration. The practice of Fasting on Lent, whether it be a day or giving up items, are intended to create space in our lives that we can then fill with something better. A spiritual "cleaning out our closets" so that we can be free of habits and unfulfilling ways of living. What we choose to give up is not a sacrifice for God's benefit. It is what will move us and challenge us.

Isaiah was speaking to people who struggled with how to move from rituals that were about finding comfort in slavery, to experiencing the grace of God that liberates and frees us. The people to whom Isaiah was speaking were slaves, but they were also guilty of enslaving others. They suffered oppression, but their attitudes and hostility were oppressive to their own family and to their neighbors.

We tend to see and focus on the things which are wrong in this world: gross injustice, waste, lack of compassion, arrogance, bitterness, and violence. However, we do not have the ability to change the way others act or think. What we do have, this Lenten season, is an opportunity to focus on our own thinking and our own frame of mind. We recognize what is wrong in the world and we participate, in our own minds and hearts, in judgment, attack, blame, and guilt. Rather than focus on what we can't change, what we are invited to do is to use this Lenten season to work on what we can change within us, and to seek healing for our own source of hostility and unforgiveness.

The practices that we are sharing are one way to open our hearts and minds to a gift of renewal. You can find a copy of the materials on our website which you may use on your own.

We are called by God to be in fellowship with Him and with one another. We can't do that very well if we are filled with the noise and bitterness of past grievances and wounds. We can't do much about what is happening in the world, especially when we have the same battles and oppression, that is happening in so many places, in our own hearts. So, now is a good time to start. Welcome to the season of your renewal.

Peace,  
Pastor Jack

# Christians Serving, Learning and Loving

**02/21/2021** 1st Sunday of Lent

Sermon: "A Promise of Steadfast Love"

Theme: God's promise is that love will be the way in which the struggles and issues of humanity will be resolved.

Purpose: We will understand God's promise of unconditional love.

Scriptures: Genesis 9:8-17 The covenant of the rainbow.  
Mark 1:9-15 Jesus is baptized, the voice of God affirms him.

Questions:

What is God's promise to us? Does God promise that if we do the right things our lives will be easy and without troubles? What is the covenant of love that is reflected in baptism? How do we see the gift of God's promise that troubles will not destroy us? What does it mean to us to share the promise of God's steadfast love with a culture that is intent on judging, dominating, and controlling? How do we discover peace in the love of God without worrying about what we cannot control?

**Wednesday, February 24, 2021 "Awaken"**

Message: We are tired of meaningless living.

Theme: We open ourselves to God moving us from our prison of bitterness and despair as we affirm that we need Jesus to work within us to transform us.

Purpose: We will practice letting go.

Practice: Awareness that we live in the past.

Scriptures: Proverbs 30:1-9 Weary of foolishness, wanting to know the Lord and wisdom.  
Matthew 4:1-11 The Temptation of Jesus

Questions:

What causes us to be burned out and weary? How do we deal with feelings of dissatisfaction with our circumstances and our lives? How do we move from focusing on what is not satisfying to re-discovering our true joy in Christ? What causes us to be unhappy with our current state of living? In what ways will engaging in practices of fasting and prayer give us direction to change our lives? What do we need to do in order to begin to learn new direction for our mind and our soul?

**02/28/2021** 2nd Sunday of Lent

Sermon: "God Promises to Walk with Us"

Theme: God is always with us through trials and suffering, and leads us to grow in wisdom, confidence, and lasting peace.

Purpose: We will see that the covenant grows through hardships.

Scriptures: Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16 God calls Abram to walk with God and to enter a covenant.  
Mark 8:31-38 Jesus instructs the disciples that the Son of Man will undergo great suffering, be rejected, and killed, then after 3 days rise again.

Questions:

What does it mean for us to "walk with God?" Why are we surprised that we experience trials and difficulties? How much of our worry and hurt is because of our perceptions and beliefs rather than the reality of our experiences? What is the difference between experiencing the sorrow and suffering of the world and being absorbed in our own issues and resentments? What is the benefit of sharing with God a love for the world?



## Moving from Darkness into Light

### A Lenten Journey

We are putting together a Lenten season that is geared for our current challenges, with the continued issues of the Pandemic. We are ready to move from darkness into light, from fear and bitterness into wholeness and joy.

The schedule is as follows:

Lenten Service and Devotions	02/24/2021	6:00pm	"We are Tired of Meaningless Living"
Lenten Service and Devotions	03/03/2021	6:00pm	"We Live the Lives We have Chosen"
Lenten Service and Devotions	03/10/2021	6:00pm	"Love and Forgiveness are the Path to Living Differently"
Lenten Service and Devotions	03/17/2021	6:00pm	"God Has Given You All You Need"
Lenten Service and Devotions	03/24/2021	6:00pm	"Seek to Know God Daily"
Maundy Thursday	04/01/2021	<b>6:30pm</b>	"Washing Feet and Being Cleansed"

# Christians Serving, Learning and Loving

## Update from the Transition Team

The church is resilient. The pandemic has stretched our endurance and our imaginations. We have adapted with great strength and love. We need to let the Spirit lead us in careful discernment of how we care for one another. Until the following recommendations from the Wisconsin Dept. of Health Services and the Wisconsin Council of Churches are met, in Fond du Lac County, we wait and hope.

Safe Plan to Return to In-Person Worship
<b>When:</b> Vaccination rates are 70-85+% Viral Transmission - Cases <1/100K - Positive Tests <5%
<b>Then:</b> Implement our hybrid, phased plan to return - Face masks mandatory - Physical distancing - Low-touch environment - Outdoors or increased air exchange - Shortened time of service - No or minimized singing - Focus on sanitizing high-touch surfaces - Sign-in with sanitized pens, track attendance - Have a fallback plan for outbreaks - Communication plan

The team is working on our phased plan and as milestones are met, we will communicate that plan. If you have any questions for us, please submit them using this link [\(Click HERE\)](#). For your reference, here is the link to our metrics (Fond du Lac County Dashboard will soon be updated to include percentage vaccinated) [\(Click HERE\)](#).

We will be praying, singing and worshipping together at church once again. The church will persevere. God will not abandon us. Wherever we are, God is with us. Nothing on earth can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. Thanks be to God!

Faithfully - The Transition Team

Kristina Arellano  
Mary Bacon  
Debbie Cooley  
Deb Harrison  
Sandy Vahlsing

Staff

Pastor Jack Harrison  
Kris Bartelt

# Christians Serving, Learning and Loving



There is an impending crisis in our community, and you may be able to help.

If you haven't already, please consider donating some, *or all*, of your stimulus money to St. Vincent DePaul. SVDP can place your money where it is needed the most. **One Hundred Percent of the donated money goes to help those in need, as there are no administrative fees!**

Here's how you can help:

- You can mail your check to  
(Write "Save a Home" on the memo line):  
St. Vincent DePaul  
Attention: Hartzheim  
330 N. Peters Ave.  
Fond du Lac, 54935
- If you have a Paypal account, you can donate electronically on the SVDP website by clicking [here](#).
- You can deliver a check directly to their store
- You can send a check to the church office (Write "Save a Home" on the memo line)  
Your check will be forwarded to St. Vincent DePaul

**Your donation will only be used to pay rent or utilities bills.**

Please pray about this opportunity to be part of the healing that our community will need in the months to come.

The Serving Team

## Wednesday Activities

5:00pm

Soup Supper

5:30pm

Confirmation  
( In a breakout room of Soup Supper.)

6:00pm

Worship

6:30pm

Lenten Practices

6:30pm

Church Bingo  
(A separate link emailed to those who registered.)

## Remember the 3 W's



**WEAR  
A MASK**



**WASH  
YOUR HANDS**



**WATCH  
YOUR DISTANCE**



[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus)

CS19747-B 08/31/2020



## Virtual Activities During Lent

Soup Supper	5:00pm	Every Wednesday
Lenten Service	6:00pm	through March 24
Lenten Practices	6:30pm	

If you are on our email list a ZOOM link will be emailed to you.  
Otherwise, a link is available on our website:  
[www.fdlpresbyterian.org](http://www.fdlpresbyterian.org), under Church News.

## Thank You for Your Support

# THANK YOU!

**First Presbyterian Church**

raised:

**\$1,000 and 391 food items**

Thanks to your efforts this year, more dollars have been raised, more lives have been changed and the nation has seen the impact of people working together to help those in need. Thank you for working to transform the time around the Super Bowl into the nation's largest celebration of giving and serving.



February 7, 2021

*Alison Reese*  
**Alison Reese**  
Executive Director  
Souper Bowl of Caring

# Christians Serving, Learning and Loving

## Information @ Church

February 24 - Virtual Bingo      February 25 - Ruby's Pantry



**Day**                      **Wednesday**  
**Date**                      **February 24**  
**Time**                      **6:30pm**

Please click [here](#) to register.

A ZOOM link will be emailed to you, **after you register.**

Won't you join us?



## DRIVE-THRU DISTRIBUTION

- Food distribution will take place at **GRACE CHRISTIAN CHURCH**. Please enter on the **EAST** side.
- Pre-registration is **NOT** available. If you have a certificate, print it and bring it with you.
- Only two people per vehicle - they must be receiving food shares (no other family or friends)
- Trunk must be empty
- One pre-bagged food-share per family
- Food will be loaded into trunks by our volunteers
- Do not bring boxes, bags, etc. for food

<b>Where</b>	Grace Christian
<b>When</b>	February 25
<b>Open</b>	4:30-6:00pm
<b>Donation</b>	\$20.00 Cash Only

If you have any questions contact Grace Christian Church at: 920.923.5292 or [rachelrudzik@gccfdl.org](mailto:rachelrudzik@gccfdl.org)

If you are interested in volunteering, at Ruby's Pantry please complete an application at: [www.rubyspantry.org](http://www.rubyspantry.org).

## May 1 - Scholarships

Each year the Scholarship Committee is blessed to be able to award scholarships to our youth. The Scholarships are made available through generous donations from members of our church.

Scholarship recipients must have demonstrated a commitment to the church, have completed high school with average grades or above and will be enrolled in an accredited secondary educational institution. The church is very thankful to families supporting the Memorial Scholarships.

### Guidelines for all Scholarships:

1. Recipient must be a member of our church.
2. Recipient must have demonstrated a commitment to the church. This commitment has been defined as meeting the following criteria in the past calendar year:
  - church worship attendance a minimum of twice in the past calendar year
  - nurturing faith development in an activity of the Serving, Loving or Learning Teams (educational opportunities, mission activities, virtual worship participation, virtual coffee hour, bingo, etc.) at least twice in the past calendar year.
  - Recipient is enrolled in an accredited college or university.

Questions about participation can be directed to Mrs. Zander: [jjzander@fdlpresbyterian.org](mailto:jjzander@fdlpresbyterian.org)

The [application form](#) is available online and should be completed and submitted electronically by May 1, 2021. Interviews with all applicants may be scheduled to complete the process.





# Christians Serving, Learning and Loving

Every Week

## Midweek Podcast

Pastor Jack continues to reach out to us via Wednesday Podcasts. You can find the link to our podcast on our website:

[www.fdlpresbyterian.org](http://www.fdlpresbyterian.org)  
under Church News.

Previously aired podcasts can be found under Pastor Jack's Blog and Podcasts.



We worship "together" as we practice Social Distancing. Every Sunday, our service is on our YouTube channel. It is also provided in Podcast form.

We have a variety of liturgists, hymns, and special music. And, of course, a special message from Pastor Jack.

The links to our worship service and podcast are posted early Saturday evening on our website: [www.fdlpresbyterian.org](http://www.fdlpresbyterian.org)

Our YouTube channel can be found by clicking on this [link](#).

We hope you'll be able to watch or listen to our services.



Welcome to an exciting faith-filled year of educational opportunities at the First Presbyterian Church. Sunday School is full steam ahead at 10:00am, every Sunday! We meet via ZOOM.

Each week we will offer a virtual education hour that will include Talkback and Church School for children and youth.

We will begin our education time together, all ages. Then, we will separate into groups for Talkback, and Church school.

Watch your email for more information and a Zoom link!

## WASH YOUR HANDS.



## Virtual Coffee Hour

A Zoom link will be emailed to you. It's a great time of conversation and fellowship.

## Opportunities for Worship

- YouTube Every Sunday
- Podcast Every Wednesday
- Radio Sunday
- ZOOM 1st Sunday of the Month

Information on Worship, and many other activities can be found on our website:  
<http://www.fdlpresbyterian.org>

## TALKback



A Zoom link will be emailed to you.

# Christians Serving, Learning and Loving

## In February

### Deacon

Lew Smith  
lewsmith2568@yahoo.com

### Elder

Mary Bacon  
bitsinbacon5@gmail.com

## First Presbyterian Focus

Please send submissions for the Newsletter to:

fdloffice@fdlpresbyterian.org.



**Prayer**  
REQUESTS

If you need prayer, or know someone who does, please contact the church office at:

fdloffice@fdlpresbyterian.org.

## Prayers and Praises

Homeless and disbursed people, particularly those who are positive for the Covid-19 virus and struggling to find shelter

Pat D.  
Dan M.  
Peg D.  
Gib D.  
Arnold L.  
Ruth S.  
Lincoln D.  
Chastity G. and Joan S.  
Jesse F.  
Silas W.  
Chastity G.  
Roland H.  
Carol M.  
Jerry and Mary H.  
Bonnie and Jack H.  
Joyce J. - has returned home

Leisa Wagstaff – PCUSA worker for South Sudan unsure of when she will be able to return to South Sudan

### Prayer Partners

Send prayer requests to  
fdloffice@fdlpresbyterian.org

Rejoice: The gift of growing together in the body of Christ.

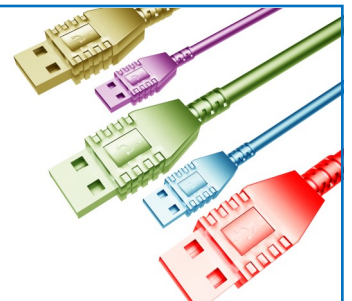
## Electronic Ways to Keep in Touch

Website [www.fdlpresbyterian.org](http://www.fdlpresbyterian.org)

Facebook First Presbyterian Church, Fond du Lac

YouTube First Presbyterian Church Fond du Lac

Zoom There is more information on our website: [www.fdlpresbyterian.org](http://www.fdlpresbyterian.org)



# Christians Serving, Learning and Loving

## Church Staff

Rev. Jack Harrison  
Pastor  
revjharrison@fdlpresbyterian.org

Jennifer Zander  
Director of Christian Education  
jzander@fdlpresbyterian.org

Kris Bartelt  
Worship Coordinator  
kbartelt@fdlpresbyterian.org

Mary Robotka  
Financial Assistant  
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Deb Zorn  
Communications Coordinator  
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## Volunteer Staff

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Judy Dassow  
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Dave Weber  
Custodian Assistant

## Elders on Session

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## Social Media and Website



First Presbyterian Church, Fond du Lac

[www.fdlpresbyterian.org](http://www.fdlpresbyterian.org)

first presbyterian church fond du lac