

March 21, Volume 23, Issue 06

# First Presbyterian Church

# FOCUS

Christians Serving, Learning and Loving

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3rd Sunday  
March

# Christians Serving, Learning and Loving

## Reflections

### How to Be Angry and Healthy

***<sup>5</sup> Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act.***

***<sup>6</sup> He will make your vindication shine like the light, and the justice of your cause like the noonday.***

***<sup>7</sup> Be still before the Lord, and wait patiently for him; do not fret over those who prosper in their way, over those who carry out evil devices.***

***<sup>8</sup> Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath. Do not fret—it leads only to evil. <sup>9</sup> For the wicked shall be cut off, but those who wait for the Lord shall inherit the land.***

Psalm 37:5-9

In one of our recent Lenten Practice Workshops, we talked about how anger impacts our relationships with God and with others. This was in the context of speaking about the challenges of learning and practicing forgiveness. It is important to note that being angry is not a sin, it's to be expected. Anger is a reaction to what we experience. Some of our experiences are misperceptions; other experiences are exaggerated. Some experiences are accurate perceptions of what is wrong. Anger is natural, but what we do with the anger is what separates a mature and wise person from someone who is foolish and vulnerable to self-destruction.

Part of the problem is that we need to learn how to have the strength and capability to deal with anger before it occurs. Denial and self-distraction can only go so far in reducing our reactions or "keeping our cool." It becomes a question of our width of perception and our depth of understanding of the risks and issues. Anger has a way of narrowing our focus, physically and mentally. When we are very angry, we tend to be solely focused on what we perceive to be the problem. Then, we are unable to see other resources around us for dealing with that problem. At times this causes us to seriously misjudge the situation. When we are upset and angry, we tend to become focused on our own needs. At times moving into a "survival at all costs" way of thinking. If later, we discover that the threat wasn't what we thought it was, it can lead to humiliation and difficulty in mending relationships.

Those who "Wait upon the Lord" and work to practice widening their awareness through intercession and gratitude are less likely to be caught up in a narrow vision, or to be caught up in survival thinking. Those who have developed a sense of confidence in God's steadfast love and are secure in their identity, as a beloved child of God, do not feel that it is up to them to fight every battle. They can see themselves in relationship to a larger picture of what is happening when there are problems.

The Psalmist, in the passage above, is wise in distinguishing the difference between people who are caught up in wrath and emotion, and those who can draw understanding and strength from their knowledge of God. That's why we do this entire time of Lent. It enables us to have a foundation of peace and security that steadies us and enables us to be wise in dealing with the many challenges we may face. Take time during these last weeks before Easter to find the strength that will sustain you through all the year.

Peace,  
Pastor Jack

# Christians Serving, Learning and Loving

## Coming Up in Worship

### **03/21/2021 5th Sunday of Lent**

Sermon: "God Promises that We Shall Bear Fruit"

Theme: The process of death and resurrection is our path to transformation and renewal which will bear the fruit of the law of God written upon our hearts.

Purpose: We will grow in affirming God's way of death and resurrection.

Scriptures: Jeremiah 31:31-34 God will write the law within them on their hearts, and all will know the Lord.  
John 12:20-33 Jesus explains that he will be glorified in the same way that a grain of wheat had to die in order that it can bear much fruit - which is also a call to all who will follow him.

#### Questions:

What does it mean for us to "lose our life?" What are we needing to lose in order to experience freedom and release? Why do we attempt to hold onto the faults and mistakes of others? How does our focus on the past and remembering of grievances harm our ability to enjoy the joy and peace of today? How do we let go of our fears and suspicions of what we cannot control? How do we embrace the knowledge of God rather than fill our minds with awareness of hurts and wrongs?

### **Wednesday, March 24, 2021 Practice Daily (or don't bother)**

Message: "Seek To Know God Daily"

Theme: Our daily work of centering and developing our relationship with Christ becomes a foundation of inner peace and wisdom that guides us through our day.

Purpose: We will appreciate the power of daily practice.

Practice: Our Morning Affirmation and statement of purpose.

Scriptures: Philippians 2:1-11 Have the same mind that was in Christ that he did not count equality with God as something to be exploited.  
John 12:34-50 The unbelief of the people and the revealing of Jesus' teaching to those who will receive it and live by it.

#### Questions:

What difference does a daily practice of centering and devotion make in our lives? What does it mean to have a daily practice for developing our relationship with God? Why do we often find devotions and practices boring or irrelevant? What do we need to do in order to find a way to move our own mind and heart to a place of healthy relationships with God and others? What does it mean to have a mind of humility and love? How do we learn to live in a place of humility and joy?

# Christians Serving, Learning and Loving

## **03/28/2021 Palm Sunday**

Sermon: "The Promise of Humility"

Theme: The power of humility is to center us in power as we are able to bear witness to God's work of transformation and healing in the world.

Purpose: We will hear a call to know and live Christ's humility.

Scriptures: Isaiah 50:4-9                      The Lord has given me the tongue of a teacher, to sustain the weary with a word. A humble and gentle spirit.  
Mark 11:1-11                                  Jesus enters Jerusalem in humility riding on a donkey.

Questions:

What is a true life of humility? Is humility truly a sign of weakness? How do we live in the fullness of healthy relationships and freedom? How is being comfortable with ourselves and happy to be in our relationships related to humility? What was Jesus offering the people by riding into Jerusalem on a donkey? What do we seek to offer to the world through our own compassion and humility? How do we live with joy even when our humility is rejected?

## **Thursday, April 1, 2021**

Message: "Washing Feet and Being Cleansed"

Theme: We become the "body of Christ" together when we put aside our egos and share the love and service of Christ with each other and the world.

Purpose: To bring to completion our path of seeking Christ's love and peace in our Lenten Practices.

Practice: To see Christ in each person.

Scriptures: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26              The sacrament of the Lord's Supper - the new covenant of Jesus' blood.  
John 13:1-17, 31b-35                          Jesus washes the disciples feet, and commands them to love one another.

Questions:

What does Jesus' command that we love one another mean for us in practical terms? How do we take what we have learned through Lent and use it to see each other differently? How do we learn to live in trust and fellowship with one another even though there is danger of betrayal and disappointment? What does it mean to be Christians together? How do we serve Christ and serve the world together?

# Christians Serving, Learning and Loving

## Pandemic Update from the Transition Team

Frequently asked questions:

### 1. When will we come back together for worship?

At the current rate of vaccination, we hope to have some in-person gatherings as early as July. This will be based on the following 7-day average statistics for Fond du Lac County:

Vaccination rates at 70-85+% (“Herd Immunity”)  
(The following statistics are signs that the vaccines are outpacing the variants.)  
Viral Transmission Cases <1/100K  
Positive Tests <5%

### 2. When can other groups get together?

(Coffee Hour, Meals, Fellowship Groups, Meetings, Study Groups)

Due to the duration of these meetings, the probable closer contact, and method of presentation (i.e. circle vs. lecture), there is increased risk of infection. These groups will be able to meet:

When staff and their families have been vaccinated.  
When the standards stated above have been met.  
When we have demonstrated successful and safe practices during in-person worship services.

### 3. Other churches are having worship, why can't we?

We are committed to following the guidelines from the WI Department of Health and the Wisconsin Council of Churches for determining when it is safe. We believe the church to be more than the building and do not wish to risk lives and our community to return to in-person gatherings too soon. We offer a prayer of thanksgiving for the resources we have, the belief in the resilience of the church body and that God is at work during these uncertain times.

We thank you for your continued prayers, patience, and support. We pray that you can safely connect with family and friends and take time to relax. Stay tuned for more questions and answers.

For your reference, here is the link to our metrics (Fond du Lac County Dashboard soon will be updated to include percentage vaccinated) ([Click HERE](#))

If you have any questions for us, please submit them using this link ([Click HERE](#))

**Transition Team:** Kristina Arellano, Mary Bacon, Kris Bartelt, Debbie Cooley, Deb Harrison, Pastor Jack Harrison, Sandy Vahlsing

**Session:** Mary Bacon, Debbie Cooley, Jim Dassow, Nancy Hilbert, Laurie Leestma-Christie, Don Vahlsing, Clerk of Session Dave Erickson, Brian Conran



## Moving from Darkness into Light

### A Lenten Journey

We are ready to move from darkness into light, from fear and bitterness into wholeness and joy. You can join us on our Lenten Journey, at any time.

The schedule is as follows:

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"



## 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.

Wash your hands. Wear your mask.  
Help prevent the spread of Covid-19.

# Christians Serving, Learning and Loving

## Information @ Church



March 28 -

One Great Hour of Sharing  
Collection - **noon and 2:00pm**

As is our tradition, First Presbyterian Church will collect monetary donations and Fish Banks on **Palm Sunday, March 28**. The collection will take place at the east entrance of church, under the canopy. You can drop off your donations and/or Fish Banks between **noon and 2:00pm**. (COVID-19 protocol will be in place.)

We will also have palm branches available. Everyone will have an opportunity to participate in a "drive-by" Palm Sunday Procession. Details for the procession will be given when you drop off your donations and pick up your palms.

If you have already given to OGHS either electronically or by another means, we thank you. (You can still participate in the procession, if you would like.)

All donations give hope, feed the hungry, and empower the oppressed.



April 12 -  
Loaves and Fishes



The Loaves and Fishes Board recently met. Loaves and Fishes will resume serving meals with curbside pickup/carry out only, beginning Monday, April 5.

Due to the pandemic, there are changes in procedures with added health/safety protocols to follow. Group members will be required to wear masks and gloves.

First Presbyterian Church will be serving Loaves and Fishes on Monday, April 12, from 4:00-7:00pm. If you are available to help prepare, serve, or clean-up after the meal, or if you are able provide a dessert, please contact the Jennifer Zander:

[jzander@fdlpresbyterian.org](mailto:jzander@fdlpresbyterian.org)

April 18 -  
Grade School Bibles

It is the tradition, at First Presbyterian Church, for each elementary student 3<sup>rd</sup> grade or above, to receive a Bible, as a gift, from our church family. The gifted Bible



recognizes that these students are now old enough to study Scripture on their own. This year students will receive their Bible on Sunday, **April 18**. Families will choose how they would like to present the Bibles to their child.

The **required** Bible class will be on Sunday, April 11 at 11:00am, on Zoom. Parent(s) must attend the class with their child. **Please RSVP to Jennifer Zander by April 1:**

[jzander@fdlpresbyterian.org](mailto:jzander@fdlpresbyterian.org)

Responding by April 1 will insure that the Bible Class materials can be delivered to you in time for the class. If your child is new to the church and has not received a Bible, please contact Jennifer, in the church office (920.922.0425) or any member of the Learning Team. You can contact us if you have any questions, also.

We look forward to gifting Bibles, every year!

# Christians Serving, Learning and Loving

## Information @ Church

### 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: [jzander@fdlpresbyterian.org](mailto:jzander@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.

### The Transition Team

The team is working on our phased plan. As milestones are met, we will communicate that plan. If you have any questions, 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

### Guide for Safely Returning to 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



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



# 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.



Online giving is easy, convenient and secure. You can use a credit card, a debit card, electronic check or electronic funds transfer, through your bank. You can change or cancel your amount at any time.

Click [here](#) to get your questions answered and to set up your account. We think you'll be pleasantly surprised at how convenient it is!



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!



## 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  
Every Sunday
- 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 March

### Deacon

Les Mier  
lmsrtrains@gmail.com

### Elder

Brian Conran  
odosou@mac.com

## First Presbyterian Focus

Please send submissions for the  
Newsletter to:

fdloffice@fdlpresbyterian.org.



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.  
Joyce J.  
Lincoln D.  
Jesse F.  
Silas W.  
Roland H.  
Carol M.  
Leisa Wagstaff  
Jerry and Mary H.  
Bonnie and Jack H.  
Chastity G. and Joan S.

## Prayer Partners

Send prayer requests to  
fdloffice@fdlpresbyterian.org

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

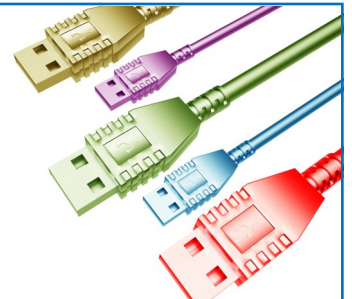
## Electronic Ways to Keep in Touch

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  
mrobotka@fdlpresbyterian.org

Deb Zorn  
Communications Coordinator  
dzorn@fdlpresbyterian.org

## Volunteer Staff

John Neville  
Treasurer  
jneville@charter.net

Judy Dassow  
Assistant Treasurer  
jnjdassow@gmail.com

Dave Weber  
Custodian Assistant

## Elders on Session

Dave Erickson  
Clerk of Session  
djericks975@att.net

Mary Bacon  
bitsinbacon2@hotmail.com

Brian Conran  
odosou@mac.com

Debbie Cooley  
tdcooley@charter.net

Jim Dassow  
jnjdassow@gmail.com

Nancy Hilbert  
nhilbert1946@gmail.com

Laurie Leestma-Christie  
lleestmarnccm@gmail.com

Don Vahlsing  
dwwahlsing@gmail.com

## Deacons

Roy and Wendy Johnson  
roy4368@att.net

Christine Langille  
carsoph02@yahoo.com

Debby Lorenz  
daalorenz@gmail.com

Les Mier  
lmsrtrains@gmail.com

Jolene Schry  
rjschry@charter.net

Dick Sleder  
rssleder65@att.net

Carol Smith  
smith9007@yahoo.com

Lew Smith  
lewissmith2568@yahoo.com

Amber Summeril  
ericksonambere@yahoo.com

## Social Media and Website



First Presbyterian Church, Fond du Lac

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

first presbyterian church fond du lac

1225 Fourth Street    Fond du Lac, Wisconsin 54935    Voice 920.922.0425    Email [fdloffice@fdlpresbyterian.org](mailto:fdloffice@fdlpresbyterian.org)