

April 4, Volume 23, Issue 07

First Presbyterian Church

FOCUS

Christians Serving, Learning and Loving

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1st Sunday
April

Christians Serving, Learning and Loving

Reflections

“Choose Your Source Carefully”

²⁶ Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. ²⁷But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, ²⁹so that no one might boast in the presence of God. ³⁰He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, ³¹in order that, as it is written, ‘Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.’

1 Corinthians 1:26-31

One of the biggest fears we all have is looking foolish, of being humiliated in front of others. Sadly, as children we learn this pain when peers make fun of us or point out our weaknesses. Common nightmares include appearing in public unclothed, or being revealed, in other ways, so the world can see our shortcomings. We are afraid that our deficiencies and weaknesses are being made known to everyone. At the same time, whose opinion really matters. Why do we worry about the opinions of people from whom we would never go for advice?

The wisdom of the Apostle Paul is that we should take time to focus on the source of our self-esteem: the place where we develop our sense of value. To some degree, we need to be aware of what others may think of us. But at the same time, we are often judged by someone when that judgment comes from something unhealthy in them. When the world does not understand the generosity of Christians, it emerges with a belief that more stuff and more money bring happiness. It also brings a false belief that there isn't enough to go around - so one person getting more means someone else is getting less. That's neither right nor healthy thinking.

There was a time, when I was on a business trip, trying to get from the meeting venue, to the airport. As I was trying to wave down a cab, it began to rain very hard. From a bench behind me, where there was a protective overhang keeping the water away, a voice called out, “Why don't come sit down and wait. It'll pass in a minute.” My initial reaction was irritation that someone was witnessing my wet, frustrated, and humbling experience. But then I realized it was a homeless guy, with a shopping cart parked next to him. For some reason that broke my defensive thinking. I went and sat down. The man was quite charming and intelligent. I offered him some money and he turned me down. Then I asked if he knew someone who could use it, and after a moment he said, “Okay, I'll pass it along. But I don't like to be burdened with too many responsibilities.” I'm not saying his life is one to emulate. I honestly don't know that much about him. But I did have to admire his strong sense of self, and his lack of fear about how the world viewed him.

Easter is a time for embracing and celebrating what much of the world does not understand: that God and love are more powerful than force, violence, or death. The world doesn't deny the resurrection as much as it denies the entire premise that God raised Jesus from the dead to vindicate his sacrifice and righteousness. The world seems to think that power, defensiveness, and being shrewder than others is better than love and trust in the goodness of creation. The world sees people as fools to trust in God, and, wise to deny health and relationships to gain money. An empty tomb and compassionate creator are not going to be perceived as “the real world,” for those who do not know God.

So, we come to Easter. Celebrate with a bit of foolishness – the type of foolishness that involves enjoying relationships, celebrating goodness, rejoicing in kindness, and finding the healing power of laughter. Be in fellowship with others who see the wisdom of taking time to enjoy the love and blessings of God.

Seek God's peace, as silly as that might seem.

Peace,
Pastor Jack

Christians Serving, Learning and Loving

04/04/2021 Easter Sunday Communion

Sermon: "Rejoice, Christ Has Come"

Theme: We celebrate the gift of the resurrection, which moves us from gloom and darkness into the light of hope and salvation.

Purpose: We will experience the gift of Christ's resurrection in personal and meaningful ways.

Scriptures: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 The Apostle Paul passes on what he received from those who bore witness of the resurrection to him.
John 20:1-18 Mary Magdalene receives the resurrection and passes it to the disciples.

Questions:

How is the Apostle Paul's experience of having received the resurrection from "faithful witnesses" different from Mary Magdalene's experience which lead her to say to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord?" In what ways are we more like Paul, part of a chain of witnesses who have inherited our faith? In what ways do we need to be like Mary Magdalene, sharing a firsthand account of what we have seen and experienced? How do we allow ourselves to experience the resurrection in a new and profound way, especially during a pandemic?

04/7/2021 Midweek Devotions

Sermon: What role does the resurrection play?

Theme: The resurrection is an experience of Christ's victory of righteousness and love over evil and death which we must experience ourselves.

Purpose: To focus on how we will experience the resurrection.

Scriptures: Mark 6:1-8 The resurrection in it's shorter form in Mark's Gospel.

Questions:

How do we experience the resurrection as a victory of God's love and forgiveness over the powers of evil and death? What role do we play in sharing the resurrection with the people around us? What do we need to do in order that we can know the resurrection in a present tense rather than as something that happened in the past? How does the experience of the resurrection change for us as we grow older and change in our roles in life? What do we need today in experiencing the resurrection?

04/11/2021 2nd Sunday of Easter

(Service from last year to allow worship production team to get some time off).

Sermon: Our Resurrection Story

Theme: We experience the Resurrection as we open our hearts to Jesus' promise of overcoming death.

Purpose: The congregation will be renewed in their expectations of the resurrection.

Scriptures: 1 Peter 1:3-9 A Living hope through Jesus' resurrection.
John 20:19-31 Jesus appears to the disciples and a second time to Thomas.

Questions:

What does the resurrection mean to us today? How do we come to live as people of the resurrection rather than being dominated by fear of death and loss? How do we grow to be people of the resurrection? How do we trust in something we cannot see or control? What does it mean to believe without seeing or to trust in Jesus without control?

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04/14/2021 Midweek Devotions

Sermon: Resurrection Means God of the Living

Theme: We will expand our thinking about resurrection to realize that God's power changes how we live, rather than what happens after we die.

Purpose: To rethink the meaning of resurrection for our lives.

Scriptures: Mark 12:18-27 The Sadducees doubt the resurrection and challenge Jesus with a question about Levirate marriage.

Questions:

What difference does it make for our attitudes and perceptions that God raised Jesus from the dead? How might we experience things differently with a lens of God's vindication and justice as opposed to seeing through expectations of domination and evil? How do our fears and unresolved past hurts influence the way we see the world today and our expectations for the future? How are we limited in our thinking and acting out of fear when we could be confident and hopeful in the knowledge of the resurrection?

04/18/2021 3rd Sunday of Easter 3rd Sunday of Easter

Sermon: Releasing our Fear

Theme: We are invited to be purified of our fear and cleansed of all that causes us guilt and separation from God.

Purpose: To change our attitude and seek release from fear.

Scriptures: 1 John 3:1-7 We are called "Children of God" and purified from our sins.
Luke 24:36b-48 Jesus appears to the disciples and eats with them to calm their fears.

Questions:

What does Jesus mean that all of the law and the prophets "must be" fulfilled? What difference does it mean that Jesus is not speaking in the past tense? In what ways are we still fulfilling all of the law and the prophets? How do the reactions of the disciples with fear, disbelief, and joy expand our understanding of the resurrection and God's work of reconciliation? What role does love play in our understanding God's law and our sin? What is the relationship between love and righteousness?

04/21/2021 Midweek Devotions

Sermon: Commissioned to share Knowledge of Christ

Theme: We are empowered by our experiences of resurrection to assist others in their discovery of Jesus' resurrection for their own lives.

Purpose: To understand how we share the resurrection with others.

Scriptures: Mark 16:19-18 The longer ending to Mark's Gospel, Jesus appears and commissions the disciples.

Questions:

What role do we play in sharing the resurrection with others? What is the difference between attempting to "evangelize" others to believe as we do and assisting others in discovering the resurrection for themselves? In what ways is the resurrection a relationship with God rather than a doctrine or theology? How does knowing the hope of God's power over death change a person's life?

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04/25/2021 4th Sunday of Easter

Sermon: Love in Truth and Action

Theme: We commit our lives to living our faith over all of the distractions and empty alternatives.

Purpose: To commit to living our faith.

Scriptures: 1 John 3:16-24 Let us not just love in word but in truth and action. We live our love in the way we care for one another.
John 10:11-18 Jesus is the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep.

Questions:

What does it mean for us to listen to the "Good Shepherd's" voice? What difference does it mean for us that Jesus lays down his life for those who follow him? If Jesus leads through offering to sacrifice himself, what traits should those who seek to speak on Jesus' behalf demonstrate? What does this say about many in our culture today who seek to demand conformity to religious rules? How does John's instruction regarding love and confidence change our thinking about what it means to practice righteousness?

04/28/2021 Midweek Devotions

Sermon: Passing Through the Consequences

Theme: We are guided by God's love and justice through the consequences of our own evil and faults by the gift of God's abiding love and healing presence.

Purpose: To draw our strength and guidance from God even when we have done what we know has been wrong.

Scriptures: Micah 7:8-20 I must pass through the results of my sin, but I will be risen up and God's justice will prevail.

Questions:

How shall we react when we do what we know to have been wrong? What is our response to the consequences of our own failures and misdeeds? How do we build on our relationship with God even after we have acted in ways we know are disappointing to God? What is our way of responding in faith rather than reacting out of our own hostility and fear?

05/02/2021 Confirmation Sunday

Sermon: Those who Love Know God

Theme: The clear sign of maturity and wisdom in Christ is the capacity to practice the love of Christ.

Purpose: We will affirm the foundation of love in our relationship with Christ.

Scriptures: 1 John 4:7-21 Those who know God love others for God is love.
John 15:1-8 Jesus said: "I am the true vine." As we abide in him we bear fruit.

Questions:

What is the nature of the love which is essential to being able to know God? How do we learn and practice that love in our relationships? What is our message for those who have come to put obligation and guilt above their commitment to love? How do we learn to make love central to all our relationships? What is the process by which we develop a covenant of love? What is the difference between the practices of Christian love and emotional affection or attachment?

Christians Serving, Learning and Loving

Information @ Church

April 8 - Ruby's Pantry



DRIVE-THRU DISTRIBUTION

- Food distribution will take place at **GRACE CHRISTIAN CHURCH**. Please enter on the **EAST** side.
- **On-line pre-registration is now available.** Please go to www.rubyspantry.org to reserve a time slot for a food share using a credit or debit card.
- 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

Where	Grace Christian
When	April 8
Open	4:30-6:00pm
Donation	\$20.00 Cash Only

If you have any questions contact Grace Christian Church at: 920.923.5292 or rachelrudzik@gccfdl.org

If you are interested in volunteering, at Ruby's Pantry please complete an application at: www.rubyspantry.org.

April 7 - PYA Game Night



Join us Wednesday, April 7, on Zoom, at 7:30pm. We will check in and play some games and celebrate Spring! A Zoom link will be emailed to PYA students. Please contact Jennifer if you have any questions or need the Zoom link.

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 to provide a dessert, please contact

izander@fdlpresbyterian.org.

April 18 - Grade School Bibles

It is the tradition, at First Presbyterian Church, for each elementary student 3rd 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:**

izander@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

April 22 - FPC Families



Join us on Thursday, April 22 at 7:00pm via Zoom. We will check in, laugh, and discuss your favorite yard games that you played as a child or that you enjoy now.

Contact Jennifer for the Zoom link or questions.



Please consider donating some, *or all*, of your stimulus money to St. Vincent DePaul. **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
- You can donate electronically on the SVDP website by clicking [here](#).
- 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

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

Pandemic Update

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.

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.

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 do not wish to risk lives to return to in-person gatherings too soon. We offer a prayer of thanksgiving and that God is at work during these uncertain times.

For your reference, here is the link to our metrics, please click [HERE](#).

We thank you for your continued prayers, patience, and support. If you have any questions for us, please submit them using this link ([Click HERE](#))

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

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 brief devotional podcasts on Wednesdays. You can find the link to our podcasts on our website:

www.fdlprebyterian.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

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 Sunday
- Podcast 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

Dick Sleder
rssleder65@att.net

Elder

Laurie Leestma-Christie
lleestmarnccm@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.
Joyce J.
Lincoln D.
Jesse F.
Silas W.
Roland H.
Carol M.
Julia A.
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.

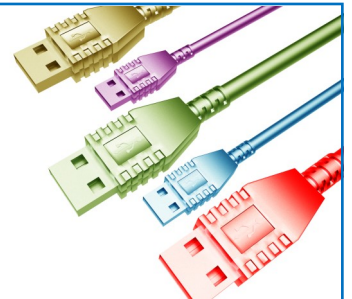
Electronic Ways to Keep in Touch

Website www.fdlpresbyterian.org

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



Christians Serving, Learning and Loving

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Custodian Assistant

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Social Media and Website



First Presbyterian Church, Fond du Lac

www.fdlpresbyterian.org

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