

# THE VOICE

A PUBLICATION OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF WILLMAR



First Presbyterian Church is a caring and compassionate community of God's children in the heart of the city, welcoming all people and striving to work together to be Christ's hands and feet, spreading the good news of God's love throughout the world.

## PASTORS NOTE

**"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God" (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).**

Dear Friends,

Let's talk about grief. I know, its not a popular topic of conversation. But its important that we acknowledge that we are experiencing an unprecedented corporate experience of grief right now. We most commonly think of grief as something we experience at the death of a loved one. But grief can emerge in response to so many other losses: the loss of a job; the loss of financial security; the loss of health and vitality; the loss of significant relationships; the loss of hopes and dreams; the loss of meaningful experiences; the loss of independence; the loss of agency in our own lives. Grief is a universal human experience. At one time or another, we have all lost someone or something that was important to us. Right now, in the midst of a global pandemic, we are all experiencing loss at the same time. All of us are grieving.

We are grieving the inability to celebrate milestones, like birthdays and weddings, the way we had envisioned them. We are grieving the isolation that has been thrust upon us, missing our social outlets and visits with family and friends. We are grieving the loss of familiar routines at church, at work, and at school. We are grieving a loss of control over our future, unable to make long term plans because so much is unknown. We are grieving job insecurity, housing insecurity, and food insecurity. And yes, in the midst of all of this we are grieving the loss of loved ones without the familiar rituals that normally accompany death to provide comfort and closure.

So, what does it mean for us that we are all experiencing some degree of grief all at the same time? It helps to have a framework to think about what it means to grieve. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross created just such a framework, the one that has become the standard of understanding the grieving process. She identifies 5 stages of grief that include denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. At some point during the grieving process, we experience all of these, but it is not a linear experience (we don't experience them one at a time in order) and there is no time limit on how long each stage lasts. But understanding this framework helps us to have grace for ourselves and each other when grief shows up in our lives and in our relationships.

Because it does show up, and it does create problems for us. It shows up in anger over seemingly petty things. It shows up in a refusal to accept reality. It shows up in days of debilitating depression. Have you experienced any of these, or

witnessed them in those close to you? Have you found yourself envious of those who seem to have it all together, wondering how they can so easily accept and move on while you can barely manage to put another meal on the table? All of that can be the result of grief. And the reality is that this grief will be with us for a while.

We are going to have to be patient with ourselves and with each other, because on some level we are all hurting. We have all lost something important to us in the midst of this pandemic. And if we can recognize that in ourselves and in each other, maybe we can be just a little more compassionate and a little more gracious with each other. One of the dangers of grief is that we can turn inward and close ourselves off from those around us. But, if we can recognize our own grief reflected in the face of another, perhaps we can have empathy for those around us and offer the comfort we ourselves need. We are all grieving, *and* we all need to hold each other up during these challenging times. May the God of grace and mercy comfort you in your season of grief so that you can be a source of comfort to those around you.

In Peace,  
Pastor Leanne

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September is **Stewardship** month! This is the time of year when we make a commitment to support the work and ministry of the church in the coming year. In the midst of all the uncertainty we are experiencing, we need your faithfulness more than ever. Watch for your stewardship packet to arrive in the mail in early September and send back your pledge card so that we can begin planning our budget for 2021. Tune in to worship on September 13<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, and 27<sup>th</sup> as Pastor

Scott and Pastor Leanne explore with us what it means to choose Thanks Living in our lives, embracing a practice of gratitude to counter fear and nurture the growth of generous hearts.

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## Facebook Live Worship & Midday Prayer

This is a reminder that you can join us for Facebook Live Worship (Sundays, 10am) and Midday Prayer (Wednesdays, **11:30am**). You do not need a facebook account to watch the video recording of those services. A link to the recording is sent out in the Monday email, and is included on the home page of our website. If you prefer, we would be happy to send you a printed manuscript of the worship service and sermon. Contact Shara to be added to the mailing list!

## Celebration of Communion

September 13, 2020

Christ is made present to us in the breaking of the bread and the sharing of the cup by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not confined to a particular building, place, or time.

Because we believe that sharing Communion is an act of faith, and because we need the nourishment that comes from sharing Christ's feast, we will be celebrating Communion virtually and in the sanctuary in the month of September.

- Pastor Scott and Pastor Leanne will lead us through the traditional and familiar words and actions of communion. They will break bread, pour the cup, and speak the words of institution, inviting Christ to be present with us wherever we are.
- If you are in the sanctuary, pre-packaged communion elements will be provided for you.
- If you are worshipping virtually, you will supply your own bread and cup. There are no

strict rules about this. The bread represents the common food of common people. It can be any variety of bread, crackers, rice cakes, or tortillas – whatever you have available to you. The cup, likewise, was the common beverage of the day. Traditionally, that would have been wine. In our worship service we use grape juice. You may use either of these, or whatever juice or beverage you have available. Remember, the bread and cup are symbols, the presence of Christ is made real in them by the power of the Holy Spirit.

- Please let us know that you shared in this wider offering of God's gracious feast by commenting on the Facebook worship video feed or sending a message (text or email) to the pastors.



9/1 Gary Manzer  
9/1 Robin Raasch  
9/2 Eli Engle  
9/4 Beverly Donley  
9/5 Deb Willis  
9/6 Dylan Schueler  
9/6 Ashley Johnson  
9/6 Nicholas Johnson  
9/8 Gerald Tallakson  
9/16 Fanchon Ellwood  
9/18 Katie Drexler  
9/20 Stephen Thomas  
9/20 Perry Lemke  
9/20 Aubriauna Lemke  
9/22 Brinley Boeyink  
9/23 Kristine Schueler  
9/23 Caroline Bell  
9/25 Melanie Hathcock  
9/25 Johah Engle  
9/25 Madison Douglas  
9/25 Samantha Marquardt  
9/26 Sally Packer  
9/27 Michelle Schoolmeester  
9/27 Brianna Schoolmeester

### Church Prayer Requests

#### **Prayers for Healing & Comfort:**

- Norm and Diann Tempel
- Chuck Stern
- Jeff Tebben
- Mike Bakke
- Carol Lange (Richard Lange's Mother)
- Ried Arnold
- Norman Berglund
- Mark Chamberlain
- Elaine and Kent Boyd
- John Carver
- Fanchon Ellwood
- Steve and Bette Ourada
- Arlen Sjerven
- Jill Berglund (Norm & Mary Berglund's Daughter)
- Lori Peterson (Beci Eliason's Mother)
- Merle Stiles (Sister of Connie Spartz)

#### **Prayers for those Grieving:**

- The Family of Patricia Harding
- The Family of Peter Nelson

#### **Prayers for those Serving Elsewhere:**

- Tristian Woitaszewski (Terry Woitaszewski's Nephew) Navy, Pensacola, FL
- Perry Bishop (Bruce and Pam Quimby's Grandson-in-law) Army, Fort Riley, KS
- Matthew Sjerven (Grandson of Arlen and Sheila Sjerven) Fort Gordon, GA

- Noah Prout, (Barb Little's Nephew) Air Force, Afghanistan
- Chandler ad Hayley D'Incau (Bob and Rita's Grandson and wife) Beale AFB, Marysville, CA
- Rob Grunwald, Coast Guard, Two Rivers, WI on Lake Michigan

**Prayers for the Church Here and Abroad:**

- The People of Occidente Presbytery, Guatemala;
- Minnesota Valleys Presbytery– Union Presbyterian Church, St. Peter, MN;
- Bdecan Presbyterian Church, Spirit Lake Reservation, ND.

**Take a moment & pray for these as well:**

- Prayers for all the people of Lake Charles, LA who are having to recover and rebuild after Hurricane Laura.
- Prayers for all the essential people working on the front lines.
- Prayers for our leaders to guide our country through this pandemic.
- Prayers that the people of our country to stay safe by abiding by the rules put upon us to control this virus and we "stay safe at home".
- Prayers for all people to have faith in God during this time.
- God will carry us through this time of turbulence. "God is Good"!

**September Small Group Schedule**

*These will take place over Zoom or **Facebook LIVE**. If you would like to participate, please contact the pastors to receive the phone number/email link to join the Zoom gathering.*

**Men's Bible Study**

Tuesdays at 7am

Contact: [scott.fpcwillmar@gmail.com](mailto:scott.fpcwillmar@gmail.com)

**Women's Bible Study**

Wednesdays at 7am

Contact: [leanne.fpcwillmar@gmail.com](mailto:leanne.fpcwillmar@gmail.com)

**Sr. and Jr. High Youth Group**

Wednesdays at 6:30pm

Contact: [jill.fpcwillmar@gmail.com](mailto:jill.fpcwillmar@gmail.com)

**Midday Prayer**

Wednesdays at 11:30am on Facebook LIVE

**MISSION OF THE MONTH**



SPECIAL OFFERINGS  
PEACE & GLOBAL WITNESS

**A Season of Peace**

Peace is Active, not Passive;  
Peace is Doing, not Waiting.

The Presbyterian Church established the Peace Offering in 1980. It encourages the church of our time to cast off Fear and Anxiety, Discord and Division, and Embraces God's mission to those around the corner and around the world. It joins us together to quiet our Fear and Anxiety, as we offer our prayer.

"May the Lord grant us peace in all times, in all ways."

We will give 25% of the offering taken to promote Peace in our community. (The mission committee will let you know where we decide to give that money at a later date.) Another 25% of this offering goes to support peacemaking in our region. And 50% supports work for peace done by Presbyterians around the globe. If we all do a little, it adds up to a lot.

## **TREASURER/BUDGET AND STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT**

We continue to operate under new protocols with the pandemic continuing to influence plans and action. Gradually we are moving ahead, with the first worship service in the sanctuary on August 16. There are modifications to conducting face to face contact, but this is a start. Financially, we are grateful for your continued support. During July we saw a decrease of the deficit. This is due in part to increased investment income, in part to some expenses like programs reduced and in part, because you, the members and friends of the congregation continue to send your donations. Thank you!

Per capita payments continue to come in. If you have made your payment, thank you! if you have not yet paid your per capita, please pay any or all of it whenever you can. Per capita is \$42 per confirmed member for 2020. Our total obligation is \$ 9,783 this year, and has been paid to the Presbytery.

Extra giving to date is \$783. Extra giving helps to reduce the end of year deficit so that we can minimize our end of year appeal for help in balancing the budget. Some of our smaller sources of income are not happening when we are not worshipping together—there is no loose offering. There is no fellowship coffee. The extra giving continues to help toward reducing any end of year appeal.

It has been our practice to print giving statements six months into the year and make them available for you to pick up in the Narthex. We have done that again this year, with one difference—with the pandemic it was deemed wiser to put the statements in the mail. We have reduced attendance and are striving to keep close contact to a minimum. These are being sent for your information only, and as we do each year, an annual statement will be sent out in January.

From now on, we will report the balance in the Building and Remodeling Fund account and discontinue making not of the current giving. The heating system has been paid and we are now building the fund to provide for the future building enhancements as recommended by the Dream Team Task Force. Building Fund pledges are still needed toward this future plan.

### **PER CAPITA**

The 2020 per capita is \$42 per confirmed member. First Presbyterian Church, and every Presbyterian church in this Presbytery pays per capita for each confirmed member. Our share of the total is \$9,783 and your share is \$42.

#### **2020 Per Capita Expense**

\$9,783

#### **2020 Per Capita Received**

\$5,345.00

#### **General Fund through July 31, 2020**

##### **General Fund Revenue:**

\$ 131,905.00

##### **Per Capita Giving:**

\$ 5,345.00

##### **Total General Fund Receipts:**

\$ 137,250.00

##### **Expenses:**

\$128,958.00

##### **Per Capita Payment:**

\$9,783.00

##### **Total General Fund Expenses:**

\$138,741.00

##### **Expenses in excess of Revenues:**

## Youth and Children Announcements

### **Last Years Sunday School Offerings**

**Check this out!** Pictured to the right is what \$80.88 looks like in non-perishable food items. Thanks to our Sunday school children, who collected offerings throughout the past year, these items were purchased to add to the Blessing Box outside of our church. Thanks kids for helping support the Blessing Box ministry, and for leading with your hearts to help families in need, especially now during the Covid-19 pandemic!



Rally Sunday, September 13 will not look like it normally would in a world of non-Covid. It's not how we planned to kick off the Sunday school year, but we will at some point celebrate the return of Sunday school for children and youth. Families should continue to stay updated through the weekly Monday emails, and the VOICE newsletter as to when CEYM activities will resume. For now, check out the article in this edition of the VOICE regarding "At Home Family Kits".

### **"At Home Family Kits"**

Faith formation happens in many places and in a variety of ways. In order to expand how we do Sunday school, until it resumes, we are offering at-home kits for families. These kits will be used to support families teaching the stories at home. These kits will be used to connect with stories in the units as families select their own questions and activities, which will be provided. Families can focus on the wondering questions-questions that all ages can ponder and discuss. Families who like activities can do crafts, play games, read books, watch videos, and so forth. And families who like both can choose to do that as well!

The at-home kits will be delivered to all of our church families, with children three years old through 5<sup>th</sup> grade, the week of September 14<sup>th</sup>. A CEYM Committee member will be contacting parents to arrange for a drop off time convenient for you. If for some reason you do not hear from someone





## Gospel Rock and Youth Group

Normally in the month of September we would be kicking off the new year of Gospel Rock and Youth classes and activities. But, the CEYM Committee has decided to hold off for the time being. A startup date will be communicated to our church families as soon as possible. For now, all Jr. and Sr. High youth will be meeting together by zoom beginning Wednesday, September 16 at 6:30 p.m.

## Youth at Lulu Beans

Once again, the Jr. and Sr. High youth are invited to gather at LuLu Beans every 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of each month at 10:00 a.m. beginning on September 12<sup>th</sup>. Plans are to meet in the large room upstairs, social distanced and wearing masks (only when you're not sipping on your favorite cup of whatever). Contact Jeff Sieck or Rita Phillips if you have questions.



## Sunday Morning Adult Ed

With safety protocols in place, the Adult Ed Sunday school class will be starting up on Sunday, September 13<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m. in John Knox Hall. All participants will be required to wear a mask and social distance, with 2 people at a table. And be sure to bring along your favorite cup of coffee from home. If you've never attended the Adult class, this would be a great time to give it a try!

If you have any questions or comments, contact Jill Baker.



## Sunday Morning Adult Study

## Church Announcements

### PROJECTIONIST NEEDED

Do you want to get more involved with the church?? Do you want to get more involved with the worship side of things?? Are you stuck at where to start deciding?? Give being a projectionist a try!! It would just be once per month or less and there will be training available this Fall!!

If this sounds like something you would like to do, let Shara know in the office! Thank you so much in advance!!





## **Financial Peace University** **Class**

**When:** Starting September 8th

**Time:** 6:30pm

**Hosted by:** Karen Skaggs

**Online Link:**  
[fpu.com/1121831](https://fpu.com/1121831)

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### **REMINDER:** **We have an ONLINE giving option.**

Go to our church website homepage at [www.fpchurchwillmar.org](http://www.fpchurchwillmar.org)  
and click on "GIVE NOW"

**OR**

click the button below

**GIVE NOW**

You can still give in the traditional ways. This does not replace offerings by cash or check dropped in the offering plate or sent to the church. If that is how you prefer to give, please continue to do so. This is simply another option.

# 150th Anniversary



2020 marks the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary year for First Presbyterian Church, Willmar, MN. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Anniversary Celebration will be postponed to 2021. Our year of celebration will kickoff with the Advent Festival on December 6, 2020. Watch this space for coming events, important updates, and anecdotes from our history.



## **1 Tuesday**

7:00am: Men's Bible Study via Zoom

6:30pm: Deacons via Zoom

## **2 Wednesday**

7:00am: Women's Bible Study via Zoom

11:30am: Mid-day prayer on Facebook

## **6 Sunday**

10:00am: Worship

## **7 Monday**

**HAPPY MEMORIAL DAY**

**OFFICE CLOSED**

## **8 Tuesday**

5:45pm: Personnel via email

6:30pm: CEYM via Zoom, Mission via Zoom

## **9 Wednesday**

7:00am: Women's Bible Study via Zoom

11:30am: Mid-day Prayer on Facebook

6:30pm: Building & Grounds via Zoom

## **13 Sunday**

8:45am: Nurture and Fellowship via email

9:00am: Adult Ed in JKH

10:00am: Worship with Communion

## **15 Tuesday**

**VOICE Deadline**

7:00am- Men's Bible Study via Zoom

## **16 Wednesday**

7:00am: Women's Bible Study via Zoom

11:30am: Mid-day Prayer on Facebook

6:30pm: Sr. and Jr. High Youth Group via Zoom

## **17 Thursday**

**COMMITTEE MINUTES DUE**

## 20 Sunday

9:00am: Adult Ed in JKH

10:00am: Worship

## 22 Tuesday

7:00am- Men's Bible Study via Zoom

6:00pm: Budget and Stewardship via Zoom

## 23 Wednesday

7:00am: Women's Bible Study via Zoom

11:30am: Mid-day Prayer on Facebook

6:30pm: Sr. and Jr. High Youth Group via Zoom

## 24 Thursday

6:30pm: Session via Zoom

## 27 Sunday

9:00am: Adult Ed in JKH

10:00am: Worship

## 29 Tuesday

7:00am- Men's Bible Study via Zoom

## 30 Wednesday

7:00am: Women's Bible Study via Zoom

11:30am: Mid-day Prayer on Facebook

6:30pm: Sr. and Jr. High Youth Group via Zoom

# CHURCH CONTACTS

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Visit our website