**Good News Newsletter**

**First Presbyterian Church of Decatur**

**March 2020**

**Katie's Korner**

For the last 7 weeks we’ve talked about the 7 Marks of a Vital Congregation, where we thought about what makes us vital and what gifts we bring to this community. On Ash Wednesday, we lamented that we are not always the church God has called us to be and how we have changed over the years. We begin the season of Lent, the 40 days before Easter focusing on the darkness of the world. Somedays I feel myself being overwhelmed by the darkness, the nastiness of the political climate, illness and disease affecting loved ones, grief that swells up unexpectedly, there is a lot of darkness is our world.

As kids, we can be afraid of the dark, it’s full of things that go bump in the night. But I don’t know that we get any better at being in darkness as adults. There will undoubtedly be moments in our lives that are filled with darkness, temptation and wilderness; this is also a part of our faith story. For Lent I’ll be following the lectionary passages of Scripture and using “Learning to Walk in the Dark” by Barbara Brown Taylor, who is an author, teacher and Episcopal Priest. This book reminds us of the beauty that can be found at night and how we are often closer to God in the midst of the dark and scary places. That will be our journey these next 40 days and 40 nights. Together we will discover the light of Christ that cannot be extinguished, even by death. I hope you will join us on this Lenten Journey.

 Yours in Christ,

 ***Rev. Katie***

**Worship Volunteers of the Month of March**

 **March 3st March 8th**

**Greeters Keith & Lauren Leighton Family Jon & Lori Baushke Family**

**Liturgist Jack Hovenkamp Elaine Hovenkamp**

**Acolyte Stella Abby**

**Nursery Judy Kish Brenda Visuri**

 **March 15th March 22nd**

**Greeters Jack & Elaine, & Mary Fosdick Joel & Leonda & Gregg Krikke**

**Liturgist Joe Leary Keith Leighton**

**Acolyte Jackson Jesse**

**Nursery Lori Baushke Shannon Allen**

**March 29th**

 **Greeters Sunday School**

 **Liturgist Sunday School**

 **Acolyte Sunday School**

 **Nursery Roxanne Lovell**

**PLEASE: If you cannot do this service please call Judy by Wednesday so she can switch you with someone, and then get the information to Patsy so the correct name is in the bulletin.**

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**Deacon of the Month \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*Nancy Vliek**

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**Schedule for the Month of March**

**(Please put these dates on your home Calendar)**

**10 a.m. Service Every Sunday**

**9 a.m. Sunday School Every Sunday**

March 2nd 7 p.m. Session Meets

 6th Soup Supper, Emmanuel COGC

 8th **DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME**

 20th Soup Supper, First Church of God

 27th Fish Dinner, Holy Family

 29th 5th Sunday of Praise, Emmaneul COGC

**March Birthdays and Anniversaries**

3rd Robert Krueger 20th Missy Klimczak

 Amy Leighton 23rd Bob Johnson

6th Brenda Visuri

16th Chuck Cubbage 30th Erika Southworth

 Amy Druskovich 31st Lauren Leighton

**Fellowship Hour Last Sunday in the Month**

 **Amy Druskovich, Gloria Houtman, Karen Makay, Nancy Vliek**

**& Pat Cubbage.**

**Decatur Donation Drive to Benefit the SMCAA Decatur Shelter. Please shop at the Dollar General and purchase personal care items and cleaning supplies for the shelter. This runs from March 2nd to March 16, and it is sponsored by our church.**

**SOUP SUPPER COMING UP.....April 3rd**

Lori Jerue will **not** be home in time to head this one up. Start firing up your ovens for the pies we will need. I will have a sign-up sheet out the middle of the month...All hands on deck **jmr**

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**Presbyterian Women Reconvene April 14th...**

 **Waiting for those Snow-birds to get home!!!**

 **Christian Ed and Youth Activities Update**

Thank you to elders, deacons, and congregants who helped the youth raise over $300 at their Souper Bowl of Caring fundraiser last month! Most of the money earned went to Decatur's food pantry, but the money the youth made on their winning tomato soup was held back to stock their refrigerator project.

Sunday, February 23rd the youth formed an assembly line for making wontons to be used in the second-ever inter-generational Ash Wednesday meal and service February 26th. We had a delicious meal of chicken stir fry and wonton soup. Afterwards we crafted a bulb-vase for Paperwhites to bloom at Easter, and then had a worship service with the imposition of ashes. Thanks to Joel, Leonda, Nancy, David, and Marcia for such a lovely meal. Recipe for the delicious stir-fry at the end of the newsletter.

February 13th was a school snow-day so six youth and three adults held an impromptu sledding party at Lake Cora. Leonda provided the much welcomed hot chocolate. They had a great time. And, on April 5th, Sunday School and the Youth Group will help in leading worship for Palm Sunday worship.

  Adults---your children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and neighbors are welcome and needed for our Christian education programs. And while our young people are in their classes, you can join other adults in Coffee with Katie!

** April Showers **

Begin thinking about who you would like to invite to join us for Palm Sunday, April 5th and Easter Sunday, April 12th. Let’s shower the community of Decatur with the love of Christ this spring!

 **I requested this recipe from Joel. The stir-fry was really, really good!!!**

 **HOISIN CHICKEN STIR-FRY**

**3 Tbs. vegetable or peanut oil**

**1 medium onion, cut in half and sliced**

**1 red bell pepper, cored, seeded, and thinly sliced**

**1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into 3/4-inch chunks**

**Salt and freshly ground black pepper**

**6 oz. snow peas, trimmed**

**Crushed red chile flakes**

**1 to 2 tsp. minced fresh ginger (optional)**

**1/3 cup Hoisin sauce**

**2 Tbs. water**

**1/3 cup dry-roasted peanuts or cashews**

## Heat 2 Tbs. of the oil in a large skillet over medium high heat. Add the onion and cook for 2 to 3 min. Add the bell pepper and cook until both the pepper and onion are browned around the edges, 4 to 6 min. Remove the vegetables from the skillet; set aside. Pour the remaining 1 Tbs. oil in the skillet. Sprinkle the chicken with salt and pepper, add it to the oil, and cook, stirring frequently, so that all sides brown, 2 to 3 min. Stir in the snow peas and sprinkle in some red chile flakes. Add the ginger, if using. Reduce the heat to medium low and stir in the hoisin sauce and water. Simmer for 1 min. to wilt the snow peas and finish cooking the chicken (don’t overcook it). Sprinkle with the peanuts or cashews and serve over rice.

**Using store-bought**[**hoisin sauce**](https://www.finecooking.com/item/5421/hoisin-sauce)**makes this chicken stir-fry easy and fast. You can substitute any quick-cooking vegetable, such as mushrooms, thinly sliced carrots, or broccoli florets. Round out the meal with**[**Steamed White Rice**](https://www.finecooking.com/recipes/basic-white-rice.aspx)**. (Joel had all of this added.)**

Highlights of January Session Meeting Minutes

**Report of Treasurer**

* David Vliek presented the report in Fred Reeder’s absence:

December Revenue $11,358.05

December Expenses $12,6632.14

Net Loss for December $ -1,274.09

* 2019 Grand Totals:

Revenue $137,997.96

Expenses $125,808.38

Net Income for 2019 $12,186.58

**Report of Clerk**

* New Clerk of Session Karen Makay received the books and information from former Clerk Mark Johnson and is reviewing them.

**Pastor’s Report –Reverend Katie Hartwell, Moderator**

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|  | Pastor continues to work on the website design with Shannon. It is anticipated that we will go live in February with on-line donations |
|  | Reminder that Pastor Katie will be gone January 26 thru February 5 for a seminar |
|  | Attended Frank Popp Memorial Service & we hosted luncheon afterward. |
|  | Ash Wednesday is February 26th. Motion made to hold an Ash Wednesday service, consisting of a meal, activity & service. |

**Endowment Committee**

* Balance is $79,397.

**Stewardship, Audit, Personnel Committee**

* Bank balance $35,107.20 including $10,000 from the Hirst Estate.

**Building and Grounds Committee**

* Front landscaping needs to be updated. Jim Abshagen & Paulette Rybarski will help to design the new garden.

**Memorial and Mission Committee**

* Christmas Joy Offering $365
* Shelter residents continue to be helped with boots & gas cards

**Nominating Committee**

* No report

**Worship and Music Committee**

* A Thank You card was sent to our special music violinist
* We will be proving some of the special music for the Community Dinner

 **Education and Youth Committee**

* Sunday School resumes January 12
* Pastor Katie hosting the youth at the manse for pizza & fellowship

**Board of Deacons**

* Many cards were sent out

**Old Business**

* Annual reports due January 15th

**New Business**

* Installation of New Deacons & Elders January 19th
* 2020 Plan – Vital Congregations – Session will read Sailboat Church together and Pastor will preach on the 7 marks of a vital congregation
* Session committee assignments made.
* Session expectations discussed and revised
* Souper bowl Sunday February 2. Youth will help with soup & cleanup
* Michigan Interfaith Power & Light program – we will again participate

The next Session Meeting will occur at the church at February 3 at 7:00 P.M. A motion was moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was supported and approved. The meeting was adjourned with prayer at 8:50 p.m.

Respectively Submitted,

Karen Makay

Clerk of Session