



PRESBY PRESS

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
114 EAST JEFFERSON STREET † OTTAWA, IL 61350
(815)433-1045

WWW.OTTAWAFIRSTPRES.ORG

VOLUME 43 No. 2

FEBRUARY 2019



OUR MISSION

TO BE THE
LOVING
COMMUNITY OF
JESUS CHRIST
THAT WILL

WIN

NEW FOLLOWERS
OF CHRIST TO
SAVING FAITH

GROW

ALL FOLLOWERS
TO DEEPER FAITH

GO

INTO THE
WORLD AND
DEMONSTRATE
FAITH

THE PASTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT: LOOKING BACK AT 2018 & AHEAD – FPC AT 150 YEARS

Dear Church Family,

If I have to say so myself, I will! My most recent annual report – *Looking Back at 2017* – was really good! It was honest about our congregation's challenges and authentically hopeful about our future. So I'm going to reuse it here with a few minor edits for my 2018 report, because of all that's going on for us as a congregation entering our 150th year celebration, and for what will come after in our 151st year and beyond. Please read (or re-read) these words and see what you think:

In my last two years of annual reports, I have attempted to help us look with honesty and hope at some of the challenges facing the church today, our own First Presbyterian Church included. Using certain measurements we have seen declines in most churches including our own, attendance and giving most notable among them. Those metrics are undeniable, but before we panic or despair, let me tell you why I am full of hope for the future of the church and for our FPC family. (In 2018 we can observe that both these measurements for our congregation have reversed to the positive, especially in the area of your generous giving!)

I have hope first and beyond all other reasons because of this: Jesus Christ is LORD and Savior of his church for whom he died. He is also Head of his church. I know that Jesus is not anxious about his church. Ever. Because he knows what he's doing in our life with him. If we are in a season of change, it's okay because he is with us, just like he was with the disciples when they were being tossed about by the stormy changes on the Sea. There in that storm of changes they gained a glimpse of just who he is as LORD, when he stood and with a word the creation obeyed his command.

I have hope because as stormy as these changes can feel to us, it's not the first season of change for Jesus' church. In October 2017 we celebrated the 500th anniversary of another stormy season of change that happened for the world and the church in the Great Reformation, as it's come to be called.

Cont. on Pg. 3



As we move ahead marking the 150th Anniversary of our church's founding, we have been excited to develop several ideas for our celebration. A few of the things included will be a kickoff dinner, a marble bench for in front of the church, a new commemorative wall hanging, planting a tree, Scarecrow Festival, displays of old photos, and a TIME CAPSULE.

Participating in the TIME CAPSULE is something for the whole congregation. Our TIME CAPSULE will be a wooden box created by Larry Schmitt that will be "buried" within our church, thus insuring that the elements will not destroy the precious materials we place in it.

We are looking for a variety of items to include in our time capsule. A few suggestions:

1. Copy of a sermon.
2. Prayers from Sunday school children, any memorabilia from the Sunday School classes
3. Church roll of members
4. List of church milestones, such as additions, the new steeple, etc.
5. Memorabilia from our Opportunity School mission
6. Information about our other missions
7. Names of all the pastors
8. Picture directories
9. Church bulletins

We especially need from the congregation the following:

- Photos
- Personal memories of the church and church events
- Personal letters
- A list of your favorite hymn, scripture verse, bible character

Cont. on pg. 4

Pastor

John W. Walker

jwalker@ottawafirstpres.org

Church Secretary

Cindy Arjes

fpcone@ottawafirstpres.org

Treasurer

Betty Angus

**Westminster
Choir Director**

Lloyd Chapman

Lloyd@udnet.net

Organist

Diane Chapman

The Presby Press is published
monthly by
First Presbyterian Church
114 E. Jefferson St., Ottawa, IL
61350
Telephone 815-433-1045

***Our Elders are
committed
to serving.***

Brian Huebner

(Worship)
433-5477

Mike Farrell

(Worship/Deacon)
434-2774

Brian Smithmeyer

(Discipleship)
795-6791

Lisa Mestelle

(Discipleship)
252-7462

Brad Angus

(Trustee)
433-2946

Dan Mestelle

(Trustee)
252-7462

Dan Duggan

(Trustee)
431-9168

Jim Keely

(Administration)
433-0868

Pete Trolinger

(Administration)
795-6791

Kerry Gerding

(Fellowship & Outreach)
434-4123

Betty Ehret

(Fellowship & Outreach)
228-2217

Ron Koestler

(Missions)
343-6088

Diane Farrell

(Clerk of Session)
434-2774

Pastor's Report cont. from pg. 1

No one had access to headlines or social media 500 years ago as we do today. Today's media connections bring this stormy season to our minds and hearts to such extent that we become hyper-aware of our situation and, I believe, more anxious. The Reformation of 501 years ago was much more tumultuous than what we witness today, at least thus far. It's difficult to put things into perspective when anxiety moves our thinking and understanding. Phyllis Tickle was a well-known author and speaker on the Christian faith until her death in September 2015. As an expert on the history and contours of the church, she made a telling observation about the church's lifecycles when she said something to this effect: Every 500 years or so, the church has a rummage sale. Indeed, if you study the cycles of the Christian church, and even those of the Jewish and Muslim religions, you will find that every 500 years there is a season of change. Sometimes it's seismic. What I believe is this: the Holy Spirit, who is Jesus' presence with us (by his promise he gave to us until he comes again), will get us through whatever this current change is about. We need not fear, but simply trust and follow Jesus, asking him to help us be faithful every day in our witness to him. The Holy Spirit will equip us with all that we need. We must not give up!

From June to August 2018 the elders received the findings and recommendations of a study they commissioned in June 2017 from the *Vision Cast Team*. Eight FPC members, led by elder and VCT chairman, Ron Koestler, spent significant time each month over one year praying, reading, studying, researching and discussing FPC's past and future in light of our times and current culture. One of those recommendations was to take part in the *Explore God Chicago* initiative in January and February 2019, joining 1000 churches in the area inviting people into worship and small groups to ask questions about God and faith. This is an important season to help us think in the immediate term about how we reach out with Christ's gospel and welcome others into our vital community life. Another important and long-term recommendation of the VCT was for FPC to become more effective and intentional about making disciples – *followers of Jesus*. This is something that I look forward to exploring together with the elders and the congregation in 2019 and beyond, both as we think about what our mission will be in our next 150 years and as we move into our next sabbatical season which is themed: "*Follow Jesus*"

I have hope because of the Loving Community of Jesus Christ that we are together! *Even if it can be said that some of our metrics have declined in recent years, let me say I believe those are by no means the only measurements we need to pay attention to. I think everyone at First Presbyterian knows it – I do! There is a vitality of spirit, of joy, of gladness for our life together, a richness of fellowship and a deep love for one another that comes only from Christ. It's not perfect, but it is undeniable. And we are growing in those measurements.*

Cont. on pg. 4

150th Anniversary cont. from pg. 2

Please use archival paper if possible. There will be a box of archival paper in the office if you do not have any. Take your items to the church office (I will have a box for them) or give your items to Chris Keely.

Thank you for helping to make this milestone a special event! Please contact our committee with any questions: Kerry Gerding (434-4123), Julie Angus (433-2946), Don Morehead (488-5212), Carol Engburg (433-3465), Nathalie Schmidt (433-0175), Diane Kennedy (870-740-0442), Casey Clemens (343-7245), Gayle Schmitt (667-4964) and Chris Keely (433-0868).

Pastor's Report cont. from pg. 3

*Forget the other metrics we always seem to want to count! Let's commit together that, with the Holy Spirit, we will grow in these measurements of vitality and reach out to the community with the good news of the gospel. Let's reach out and make disciples! I believe we are living in an important moment of **hope** in the growth of FPC's witness to our community that Jesus and his church are vitally present to make a difference in today's world.*

*For 2019 and beyond, how would Jesus have us celebrate our life together in him while reaching out and inviting others to come join in the journey? How can we grow in our metrics of serving others for the sake of the gospel? How can we faithfully make disciples as Jesus commanded us in Matthew 28:19-20? How is Jesus calling you to reach out and draw someone in to the vitality of life at First Presbyterian in 2019? What will YOU do to live your **hope** in Christ in an uncertain world where the church is undergoing change? What we have at First Presbyterian Church is worth sharing. Let's do it!*

Still Full of hope with you in Christ,

Pastor John Walker

2019 Annual Meeting is February 10, 2019

The Annual Congregational Meeting will be held next Sunday, February 10th, 2019 @ 10:45 a.m. in Scott Hall for the purpose of: **(a)** Reviewing the 2019 budget; **(b)** Electing of congregational members of the Nominating Committee; **(c)** Receiving annual reports **(d)** Transact any other business that may properly come before the meeting.

ADULT BIBLE STUDY

Book of James - 5 Week Survey continuing through February 24

The book of James has a well-deserved reputation for providing practical advice, yet it also contains challenging teachings on hearing and doing the Word, taming the tongue, being patient in suffering, and showing the relationship between faith and works.

Through clear exposition of the biblical text and thoughtful application questions, this survey helps us understand James as a stirring exhortation to fruitfulness—ultimately reminding us of the necessary connection between genuine faith and heartfelt obedience.

The class will start on Jan 20th and run for 5 weeks (skipping Feb. 10 due to Annual Meeting). We will meet in the Library around 10:45 am following worship. Teacher: Allen Gibbs

Come join in and be part of this exciting adventure into God's Word.

Would You Like to be a Volunteer Tutor?

The Community Tutoring Program at IVCC is currently accepting participants for its upcoming free Volunteer Tutor Training. Training will be offered on Saturday, February 23 from 8:30 am-4:00 pm at the IVCC main campus. The Community Tutoring program assists 350 adults each year in Adult Education classes. Literacy students consist of those testing below 9th grade level in reading, math, and writing, and also English Language Acquisition students. Please consider joining us in this important effort to improve literacy in the Illinois Valley. For more information on becoming a tutor, call Angela at (815) 224-0479 or Susan at (815) 224-0379.



ADULT LITERACY



IT'S TIME FOR THE SECRET SISTER REVEAL PARTY!

The Secret Sisters will meet in Scott Hall on Sunday, February 24.

Good Morning God

By Ruth Stephan

Good morning God, creator of everything.

I lift my voice up to you I sing.

God who is everywhere and knows our thoughts and deeds.

Praise the Lord our King!

The birds are chirping with a conversation all their own.

God the Father is in heaven on the throne.

Nature is amazing and all is unique.

Give praise to Jesus our King!

God Morning God, I know I am in your hands.

Your already know what is going to happen in your big plan.

I start my day thinking of You and know you will guide me through.

Thank You for all my blessings and wonderful family and friends,

all different that you have sent.

Thank You for this day. Jesus I give You praise!

God Morning God, creator of everything

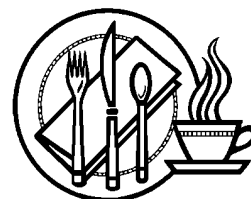
LOVE, WIN, GROW, GO: SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE!

Would you be willing to supply a meal for our Jr. High Youth Group (LOL4JC & Sr. High Group)?

They meet on the 2nd and 4th Sundays from 5 pm to 7 pm, and they start each meeting with a meal to begin a time of fellowship before launching into their discussion and game time. Please contact Lori Trolinger (815-795-6791) or Lisa Smithmeyer (815-313-5843) if you would like to commit to preparing a meal for our LOL4JC kids

Free Community Meals; 3rd Sunday of every month: **LOOKING TO FILL**

July, August, September and December in 2019. Might God call you to work on the community meal project? On the third Sunday of each month volunteers are needed to do the following: Organize the meal (decide what to make, plan the purchase of food); cook the meal; visit with those eating; clean up. Who can help? Anyone, any age. Are you feeling like you and your friends can be the next ones? Contact David Farrell (815-252-2351) or Gayle Schmitt (815-667-4964) for more information and to sign up.



Prayer Shawls: Our Prayer Shawl Ministry is still going strong.

Do you know someone who could use a hug from God (who doesn't)? Please call us so that we may provide a Prayer Shawl for you to give that "someone" who needs God's hug.

Jackie Bean 434-3380

Why not join a small group?

At FPC small groups are important. Why? Because few experiences encourage and build our faith more than small groups. Small groups teach us how to better know, understand and apply God's word in daily life. They also become a place of good friendship and caring. Want to join a small group? It's easy! Just talk to Pastor John or one of the small group contacts listed below:

Mike & Diane Farrell (Sun. PM): 434-2774

Carol Engberg/Women: 433-3465

John Walker (1st Sun. PM monthly): 433-1045

(Thurs. PM, once a month)

Jack & Sandy Finnegan (Thurs. AM): 433-5253

Jim Keely/Men (Sat. AM): 433-0868

Handy Food Receipts

Please save your receipts and bring them to church. We can earn 1% of the receipts totals for our church! Boxes will be in Scott Hall and on the table by the church offices. If you have any questions please contact Gayle Schmitt (815-667-9892).

Ottawa Community Food Basket:

Donations for the Food Basket for the month of February is cereal. Let's fill the barrels at the entrances to our sanctuary and share our gifts with the less fortunate in our community.



Sunday Greeters needed:

We need your smiling face to greet newcomers and "oldcomers" at the front door on Sunday mornings. This is a great way to contribute to the life of your church.

LADIES' NITE OUT

Tuesday, February 5th

6:00 p.m. at Sunfield's

Contact

Darlene Halm 815-252-5722

Or Carol Woeckel

434-6852

for information and reservations

KUM JOIN US

**SUNDAY, February 3 at
11:00 a.m.**

IN THE SANCTUARY

**WE WILL MEET AT
HALFTIME RESTAURANT
FOLLOWING MEETING**

All are welcome!



FOOD, FELLOWSHIP & FAMILY



FEBRUARY

Edythe Brockman	6
Nathan Hess	10
Dan Brockman	11
Idalia Stricklin	13
Noah Trolinger	14
John Damron	15
Erin Stuedemann	19
Tiffini Thompson	24
Sue Brockman	27

MARCH

Lisa Smithmeyer	2
Kerry Gerding	5
Nancy Lewis	6
Randy Ehret, Sr.	8
Kathy Gonzalo	13
Darren Bragg	15
John W. Walker	16
Sarah Walker	17
Grant Smithmeyer	21
Ed Grobe, Madeleine Trolinger	22
Matthew Walker	24
George Mansour	29

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Every Sunday 8:45 am Prayer 9:00 a.m. Choir Practice 9:30 am WORSHIP 10:45 am Fellowship 10:45 am-ZONE, Jr. & Sr. High Sunday School, Adult Education Class		Every Tuesday	Every Wed. 7 pm Choir in the Library	Every Thurs. 9:30 am Seniors Small Group		Every Saturday 7:30 am Men's Small Group
					1.	2.
3. 11:00 am-Kum Join Us 11:45 am- Sabbatical Renewal Team	4.	5. 6 pm-Ladies' Nite Out	6.	7.	8.	9.
10. 10:45 am-Annual Meeting 5 pm-LOL4JC & Sr. High	11.	12. 7 pm-Committee Meetings	13.	14.	15.	16.
17. 9:30 am- Installation of Elders NOON-Community Meal	18.	19. 7 pm-Session	20.	21.	22.	23.
24. 5 pm-LOL4JC & Sr. High	25.	26.	27.	28.		

Coming Sunday, March 10 at 10:45 a.m.—The Sabbatical Mission Faire!



February 2 0 1 9

First Presbyterian Church
114 East Jefferson Street
Ottawa, Illinois 61350

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Ottawa, Illinois

Return Service Requested

Get Ready for the Sabbatical Mission Faire!

Sunday, March 10 at 10:45 a.m. in Scott Hall

**What will you want to do during FPC's 2019 Sabbatical to...*

REST.....RENEW.....FOLLOW JESUS ?

- Come to the Mission Faire to learn of the variety of ways we will seek to Follow Jesus during our Sabbatical, **April 22-August 15**
 - Get involved, sign up to participate or help in activities to be offered
- Come enjoy Steve's Bakery donuts, coffee and a festive gathering with others!

<i>* Pastor's Annual Report</i>	<i>pg. 1</i>	<i>* Announcements</i>	<i>pg. 6</i>
<i>* Looking Back 150 Years</i>	<i>pg. 2</i>	<i>* Love, Win, Grow, Go</i>	<i>pg. 7</i>
<i>* Pastor's Annual Report cont.</i>	<i>pg. 3</i>	<i>* Food, Fellowship, Family</i>	<i>pg. 8</i>
<i>* Annual Meeting Announcement</i>	<i>pg. 4</i>	<i>* Calendar</i>	<i>pg. 9</i>
<i>* Announcements</i>	<i>pg. 5</i>	<i>* Highlights of the Month</i>	<i>pg. 10</i>

CELEBRATING 150 YEARS!