
From the Pastor

We're now in the Easter season, between Easter Sunday and Pentecost Sunday, which is on May 19th. It's a whole season celebrating new life in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the way this new life bursts forth in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

On May 19th we'll read Acts 2 which tells us the story of the Holy Spirit sweeping through the room where the followers of Jesus were gathered, enabling them to declare God's mighty deeds in a large variety of languages from all over the region. People gathered from all directions marveled that they could hear this declaration in their own native language.

A couple of folks speculated that maybe the disciples were drunk.

But Peter stands up to help those gathered to understand that this outpouring of the Spirit was a gift to God that the prophet Joel told us was coming. Peter quotes Joel 2:

Then afterward
I will pour out my spirit on all flesh;
your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
your old men shall dream dreams,
and your young men shall see visions.
Even on the male and female slaves,
in those days, I will pour out my spirit.

Free, slave, male, female, old, and young: all flesh will dream dreams and see visions given by the Spirit of God!

That we can dream should not surprise us at all. That this congregation called me because they wanted to grow was itself a God-given vision and dream that began the search for a new pastor.

So dream! What your visions and dreams for this congregation and for Rensselaer, where God has called us to serve?

What needs do you see in town that can be met? What sorts of projects do you think sound exciting to you that build on things the church is already doing? Or is God giving you ideas about something completely new? We could help kids, deepen the accessibility to and celebrate of the arts, start a garden that would produce fresh food for the food pantry, develop a tutoring program or after school care, we could host classes to learn Spanish, how to cook, or how to knit!

Continued from Page 1

Our belief in the resurrection is the belief that death is not the last word. It is not death that defines us, but life. We read in Isaiah 43:

Do not remember the former things,
or consider the things of old.
I am about to do a new thing;
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness
and rivers in the desert.
The wild animals will honor me,
The jackals and the ostriches;
for I give water in the wilderness,
rivers in the desert,
to give drink to my chosen people,
the people whom I formed for myself
so that they might declare my praise.

As we go forward in our life as a congregation, let's go forward embracing the infinite possibilities of serving God in this time and place. God so loves the world – who knows the variety of ways we can show that love to Rensselaer!

Each one of us needs to open the eyes and ears of our hearts and minds to the dreams and visions God is giving. When someone has an idea, our first response will be “that’s so interesting! Tell us more!” instead of “no, that won’t work.” Our dreams and visions as a congregation will depend on us listening to one another, mingling together all the things we can do as we follow God’s calling.

Christ is risen!
Christ is risen indeed!

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Michelle

We need volunteers for the Food Pantry!

First Presbyterian volunteers at the food pantry on the third Saturday of every month, from 8-10 am. For a long while now, Vanessa and Rob Jefferson have been heading that for us, and now it's time to turn it over to others in the congregation. Training with Bob Souza is available for this, of course, and we always want to be there in teams of at least two. But if we had four people, a team could do it every other month! So who wants to join in the effort? I will also be able to do it from time to time.

And, in other news: The Good Samaritan Food Pantry has moved! The new address is 227 S. College Ave. Suite 1, next to the old Pizza King.

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

March 14, 2024

. Pastor Michelle Bartel called the meeting to order at 4:05 pm in the pastor's study. The moderator opened the meeting with prayer and devotion. Kathy Staddon was appointed Clerk pro tem in the absence of Kristi Slaby.

Linda Comingore, Suzanne Jordan, Julie Williams, and Vanessa Jefferson were present. Kathy O'Neill attended the meeting via Zoom.. A quorum was declared.

Actions taken by Session:

- ⇒ The minutes of the February 8th Session meeting were approved as submitted. It was noted that Clerk Kristi Slaby will probably not return from California until April 10th.
- ⇒ Rev. Bartel's Pastor's report included:
 - Michelle will be taking home communion to Barb Baer.
 - Jacki Richey's family donated medical equipment to the church such as a walker, wheelchair and other items. They asked that new homes be found for the equipment.
 - A former pastor's son named Chip Filson has contacted Michelle. He and his wife want to support the work of our church financially. Session is exploring ideas for uses for the funds.
- ⇒ Treasurer Rick Comingore submitted a financial report and explained that the copier has been malfunctioning for a while. Bethany Dodge, our new office administrator, must be bonded and they are working to complete that. Rick is working with Bethany on an accountability procedure for expenses. Session passed authorization to sign the new copier contract with CPI Business solutions. Session approved of bill payments online.
- ⇒ Elder Sheffler spoke to the Session concerning major repair work needed at the manse. There is a leak in one of the rooms over the garage from a soffit. The chimney must also be tuck-pointed and sealed. Session approved the employment of Steve's Specialized Services to complete all necessary repair work.
- ⇒ Christian Ed/Youth: continuing to study the Fruits of the Spirit. Spring break is March 22 to 31st. The last youth session will be April 24th. VBS this year will be June 4, 5 and 6 and will focus on fruits of the spirit. Michelle and Stephanie Davisson will develop the program. The committee will continue to promote and send our youth to the Fendig play this summer.
- ⇒ Personnel Report: Bethany Dodge has been hired as our new office administrator. She started work on February 22nd.
- ⇒ Mission Report:
 - Elder Julie Williams will invite the director of the Recovery House to speak to our congregation during worship. The congregation will be asked to bring needed items for the Crisis Center during Lent. Julie proposed making backpacks with supplies for people who come to our office for help. Kathy Staddon proposed making micro loans through existing organizations and establishing a program for rent loans (first and last months rent). These proposals will be discussed later.
 - Donations were voted on and approved, and will go toward the following charities/missions: The Crisis Center, the Backpack Program, Special Olympics, and Kemmerer Village in Memory of Bill Craig
 - Our congregation is now a 4 for 4 church for PCUSA special offerings.

Session agreed to hold the next meeting on Thursday, April 11, at 4:00 p.m. in Pastor's study. The meeting was adjourned with prayer at 5:35 p.m.



Pentecost offering will be collected Sunday, May 12th and Sunday May 19th (Pentecost Sunday)

Chicago The Musical

RCBS Auditorium April 11, 12, 13 at 7pm
April 14 at 2pm

Tickets: \$8.00 (No pre-sale tickets)

* **Be on the lookout for our own youth members Ava Wanda (as Cell block #6 Hunyak) and Addie Hitchcock (as Big Mama)**

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 April Fool's Day! AAA-Abuse Awareness & Accountability 5pm - 8:30 pm	2 Dance Magic 3:30 pm Bible Study 4pm	3 Youth Group meets 5 - 6:30 pm	4	5	6 AA - Alcoholics Anonymous 7 pm
7 Communion 9:30 am	8 AAA 5pm-8:30pm	9 Dance Magic 3:30 pm Bible Study 4pm	10 Youth Group meets 5 - 6:30 pm	11 Session meeting 4 pm	12	13 AA-Alcoholics Anonymous 7 pm
14 Worship 9:30 am	15 AAA 5pm-8:30pm	16 Dance Magic 3:30 pm Bible Study 4pm	17 Youth Group meets 5 - 6:30 pm	18	19	20 Food Pantry 8-10 am AA - 7 pm
21 Worship 9:30 am	22 AAA 5pm-8:30pm 	23 Dance Magic 3:30 pm Bible Study 4pm	24 Youth Group meets 5 - 6:30 pm	25	26	27 AA - Alcoholics Anonymous 7 pm
28 Worship 9:30 am	29 AAA 5pm-8:30pm	30 Dance Magic 3:30 pm Bible Study 4pm				



Our VBS Dates this Summer 2024 are: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday June 4, 5, & 6 at 5pm. The Theme is Fruit of the Spirit.



Photos of the church Easter Brunch 2024 by Rick Comingore

First Presbyterian Church
220 North Cullen Street
Rensselaer, Indiana 47978

