

Notes from the Hill

The Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church
March 2013



A Note from Pastor Patrick

As a church, we have seen a lot of suffering lately. People we love fighting cancer. Recovering from hard surgeries. Long-time members passing away, and others dying far too young. And then there's the suffering that we *can't* see. Those suffering in *silence*. Whether it's from some chronic condition, depression, addiction, the effects of a divorce or broken relationship, or simply watching those we love suffer, we *all* know suffering in some form at some time in our lives.

Lent is a season in which we are reminded that *God* knows suffering, too. Especially as we approach Holy Week, we are reminded of how, in Jesus, God experienced betrayal, abandonment, fear, pain (both physical and spiritual), humiliation, even death. The journey of Lent, and that of the whole Christian life, is not one of *avoiding* suffering, but of meeting it head on. We *have* to go through Good Friday before we get to Easter Sunday. We *have* to stand at the foot of the cross (or hang upon it) before we can stand at the opening of an empty tomb. While the world around us tells us to do everything we can to *avoid* suffering, the challenge for *us*, especially in this season, is to follow Jesus right into the midst of it, because we trust that there is something good waiting beyond it.



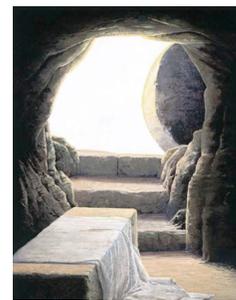
If you look up the word *suffer* in the dictionary, one of the definitions you will see is "to allow or permit." This seems strange to a lot of us, because we think of suffering as bearing or experiencing pain. But think of how Jesus used the word when he said, "*Suffer* the little children to come unto me"

(Matt. 19:14, *King James Version*). What is he saying there? *Allow* the little children to come to me. Don't block them out; let them *in*.

Suffering is *allowing* ourselves to feel pain. Not ignoring it or denying it or blocking it out, but letting it in. There are plenty of people who do not *allow* themselves to feel the pain of life or of those around them. They deny it or numb themselves to it. But *God* became *human* and *allowed* himself to feel pain. Why? To be *at one* with us, because God *loves* us. And to show us that suffering does not have the last word.

Why have we, as a church, experienced so much suffering lately? Because we *love* people who are *hurting*, and we *allow ourselves* to hurt *with them*. There's a sports writer named Peter King who, years ago, was writing about the death of his beloved dog, and he said, "The only way to not feel such intense sadness is to never feel intense love. And that is certainly no way to live."

So as we journey toward the cross and the tomb and *beyond*, we do so trusting, *hoping*, that there is something *good* waiting for us just beyond.



And that's all we can *ever* do. We can't *explain* suffering. All we can do is *hope* and *trust* that God will not allow it to have the last word. That, in the words of Nuri al-Maliki, the Prime Minister of Iraq during a particularly rough time of transition, "The beautiful days in life come after fatigue and difficulties. The difficult labor produces a more beloved result."

Worship News

Sunday Night Celebration, our casual, contemporary worship service meets every Sunday at 6 P.M. in the Fellowship Hall. **Note: We will NOT meet on March 24 and 31.**

New Elders and Deacons will be ordained and installed on Sunday, March 3, during morning worship.

A Palm Sunday All-Church Breakfast will be held beginning at 9:15 A.M. on March 24th in Fellowship Hall (this replaces the Easter Sunrise Breakfast). Worship that day will include the Sunday School children in the Procession of the Palms and singing. An egg hunt for the children will follow the service. The hunt is for nursery through 4th grade. The 5th & 6th graders will assist the youth group with the smaller children.

Holy Thursday Worship: We will gather at 7:00 P.M. on Thursday, March 28, to celebrate the Lord's Supper and confirm this year's Confirmation Class. Nursery care will be provided.

Easter Sunday is March 31!

7:30 A.M.: The High School Youth will lead Sunrise Worship.

There is no Sunday School Easter morning.

10:30 A.M.: Easter worship. Anyone wishing to give lilies for the Easter Services can bring them to the church office the week before.

The One Great Hour of Sharing offering is received by several denominations and is used to aid hunger and disaster relief at home & abroad. Our church will begin receiving this offering on Palm Sunday, and continue in the weeks following.

If you would like to be a greeter before morning worship, there is a sign up sheet on the bulletin board by the front doors. Greeting is really easy...just show up a little early with a smile, and welcome people to worship!

Youth Group News

The Middle School Youth Group will meet March 6 at the church (6:30 to 8:30) for pizza and a movie night. March 20 we will meet at the church (6:30 to 8:00). Thanks to everyone who signed our banner for Richard Dunn. We will be sending it soon!

T-SHIRT SALES will continue through the end of April. Our first order has arrived and deliveries have begun. A second order has been placed. An order form is included with this newsletter. There is a box where you can place orders by the bulletin board near the front doors of the church. You can also give them to any MSYG member.

March

Ushers

John Horsham, Dan Lanik
Rob Brigham, Greg Brigham

Nursery Care

Karen Grabowski/Dani Ludi
Kristen Tomjack

Acolyte

Eli Jorgensen

March 28 (Maundy Thursday) –
Eli Jorgensen & Corby Brigham

Greeters

March 3 – Jared & Grace Ketner
March 10 – Shirley Van Metre
March 17 – Chris & Marcia Otte
March 24 – still needed
March 31 – Laurence Swanson &
Dorothy Klink

Coffee Time

March 3 – Chuck & Launa Larsen
March 17 – Lolly Cook

Sunday School News

Sunday School is preparing for One Great Hour of Sharing and boxes will be going home with the students to collect change. The children will be encouraged to place the boxes by a sink, or source of water, and each time they get something to drink they are encouraged to place a small donation in it to help other countries that are in need of resources for drinking water. Please return the boxes on March 24, Palm Sunday.

If you are able to, please send a bag of candy or small Easter egg stuffers with your child by March 17 for the egg hunt. The children will also be participating in the Procession of the Palms and singing during worship on March 24.

A Sunday School bulletin board is up in the entry-way. Make sure to check it out for upcoming dates and events, as well as pictures of what the children have been up to. Right now there is information up for upcoming summer camps at Camp Calvin Crest. You may also check out the information online at www.calvincrest.org.

Study and Fellowship

Wednesday Night Lenten Meetings will continue on March 6 and 13. Our focus this year is on prayer. **Bible and Prayer** will NOT meet during Lent, due to our Wednesday Night Lenten Meetings. We will pick back up on April 3.

The Presbyterian Women will meet Thursday, March 7, at 1:30 P.M. in the Fellowship Hall. The program will be by Marilyn Jensen, Master Gardener. The serving committee is Barb Texel and Bonnie Veach.

Women's Bible Study will meet Thursday, March 21, at 1:30 P.M. hosted by Joy Wilt at Westview.

Joys and Concerns

(Please keep us posted.)

Birthdays, 75th & over:

March 8 – Adele Jackson, Jack Tillman

March 21 – Dr. Harold Hedlund

March 23 – Joe Erickson (101 years!)

On February 17 we celebrated the baptism of Diem Donna Manstedt, daughter of Chase and Kami Manstedt.

Our hearts go out to the family and friends of Bill Jackson on his death.

Karen Grabowski has become a member of the Federated Church in Columbus, while retaining affiliate member status here with us. We celebrate that she is connecting with a new church family in her new home!

Josiah Jorgensen passed his review to become an Eagle Scout! Congratulations, Josiah!

A special thanks to everyone who signed up to help with snow removal during the winter months, and to Russ Barry for keeping the parking lots clear. We really appreciate your time and energy!

Financial News

The General Fund had a positive balance of \$12,412.77 as of January 31. Total receipts for the month were \$28,794.23 and total expenses were \$16,981.02. Thank you for so generously supporting the life and ministry of the church!

Miscellaneous

Don't forget your receipts! We collect receipts year-round from Sunmart and the Corner Market. Anytime you buy something (even gas), save your receipts and drop them off in the baskets in the coat rack outside the sanctuary.

Coffee Time Co-hosts are needed for the spring months! Please see sign-up sheet on the bulletin board to help with this important time of fellowship.

Session & Deacon News

New Elder & Nominating Committee Member: Dennis Jeppson (Elder) and Sandi Massie (Nominating Committee). They were elected at a February 10 congregational meeting.

The Session and Deacons will each meet on Monday, March 11, at 7:00 P.M.

The Session designated the following officers and committees for the coming year:

Finance: Dave DuBois (chair), Allen Mumm, Ann Brock

Property: Sean Elliott (chair), Wes Kramer, Dennis Jeppson

Christian Education: Barb Shanahan (Chair), Lynae Callan, Ashley Otte

Evangelism/Mission: Sue DuBois (Chair), Jared Ketner, Christy Robbins

Worship/Personnel: David Markle (Chair), Arlinda Snelling, Greg Brigham

Mission and Outreach

Lincoln City Mission: The Presbyterian Women will continue to collect items for the Lincoln Mission which include new or used clothing, household goods, toiletries, books, etc. Please take items to the back of Fellowship Hall.

We will be leading worship at the Care Center and South Haven on Sunday, March 10. We would love for you to come! We will meet at the Care Center at 1:15 for worship at 1:30. Then we will drive over to South Haven for worship at 2:15. We will be done by 3. Come to one, come to both. We always love to bring a big group with us to visit with the residents!

**First Presbyterian Church
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Join us for Holy Week worship!

**Palm Sunday (March 24) – All-church breakfast at 9:15 A.M.
Procession of the Palms & kids sing at 10:30 A.M.
Egg Hunt at 11:30 A.M.**

Maundy Thursday (March 28) – Worship & Communion at 7 P.M.

**Easter Sunday (March 31) – Sunrise Worship at 7:30 A.M.
Morning worship at 10:30 A.M.**

Come celebrate our salvation!

