



SPIRIT SIGHTINGS

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF PALATINE

MARCH 2024

FROM THE PASTOR...

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"

2 Corinthians 5:17

March is a time of anticipation. It is a time when the vibrant colors of spring begin to emerge, and this year we end the month with the celebration of Easter – a profound beginning of the Spiritual rebirth initiated by the sacred season of Lent. During this period, our spirits are called to journey through the wilderness of reflection, prayer, and renewal, sparking the flame of hope within our hearts.

Within the intricate tapestry of our faith, Lent unfolds as an opportune moment for each of us to navigate the unique challenges that test our faith. This sacred season is a call to engage in extraordinary acts of grace. Through heartfelt prayer and intentional kindness, we seize the opportunity to mold our character and draw nearer to the boundless love of our Savior.

In the true spirit of Lent, let us become beacons of love and compassion by reaching out to those in need, be a source of encouragement, and plant the seeds of kindness that blossom into a garden of hope. As we serve others, we emulate the boundless love of Christ and become vessels of his transformative power.

Let us embrace this sacred season with open hearts, trusting that God's grace will be revealed in every step of our journey. May Lent be a time of radiant transformation.

~ In His Grace, Pastor RJ Kang

Loving Creator,

In this season of Lent, inspire us to journey with hope and joy.

Grant us the strength to let go of distractions. Be our guiding

light in moments of struggle and our source of courage in

times of weakness. Illuminate our hearts with the warmth of

your love, sparking a renewed sense of purpose.

With gratitude for your boundless grace, we pray. Amen.



STEWARDSHIP

I have just finished reading the Annual Report for 2023 for the second time. I hope that you have taken the time to read it also! Here are some items that are worth noting.

2023

- Membership was 80 individuals that are estimated to represent 65 households.
- Received pledges from 38 of the 65 households.
- The total pledged amount was \$171,120.
- The average pledged amount was \$4,503.
- The total pledge received was \$175,656.26.
- 30 pledgers were equal to or exceeded commitment.
- 8 pledgers were behind their commitment.
- Per Capita Apportionment was \$3,066.
- Per Capita donations were \$2,019.50 resulting in a shortfall of \$1,046.50.
- The gain for the year was \$6,574.77.

What do the **2024** statistics look like?

- Membership 79 individuals.
- Received 34 monetary pledges.
- The total pledged amount is \$160,674.
- The average pledge is \$4,726.
- Per Capita Apportionment is \$3066.
- Projected loss for 2024 is -\$42,844.97.

If you have not pledged your financial support, I hope you will consider doing so. Every contribution counts and helps fund our ministry and mission.

Your Stewardship Team: Allan, Bruce, Carol, Linda, Pastor RJ, and Tom

FOOD PANTRY

Our list of food pantry clients keeps growing! Social workers at Winston Campus and Virginia Lake Elementary continue to share our shopping list with families in need, so the last few pantry dates have seen a rise in numbers. We have heard from 2 social workers that there is a waiting list to use larger local pantries, and that coupled with the increase in food costs explains why this ministry is important to our community.

An increase in pantry orders calls for an increase in shoppers and packers. If you would be interested in helping, please contact any member of our team. (Shoppers receive a list of items needed from Aldi, do the shopping, and are reimbursed for their purchases. Packers bag items requested on clients' lists so they are ready for pick-up on pantry dates.)

Barbara Churchill, Mary Kenter, Anita Kern, Wayne Mroz





GARDEN MINISTRY

Join the Garden Ministry team!

These warmer temps have us thinking about spring and planning for the garden. We'd love to have you join our group so that we can feed those in need! Look for the poster in the entryway for more info.

EPIPHANY: THIS IS MY SON! - JANUARY 7- FEBRUARY 11

Team Members- Nancy Briggs, Barbara & Bruce Churchill, Mary Kenter and Lyn Nawrot

During the season, we had opportunity to center our lives and our thoughts on God's Beloved Son. (Mark 9: 7 -- Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, "This is my Son, the Beloved, listen to him!")

We had opportunity to focus on the divine nature of Jesus. (Mark 1:22—They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority...)

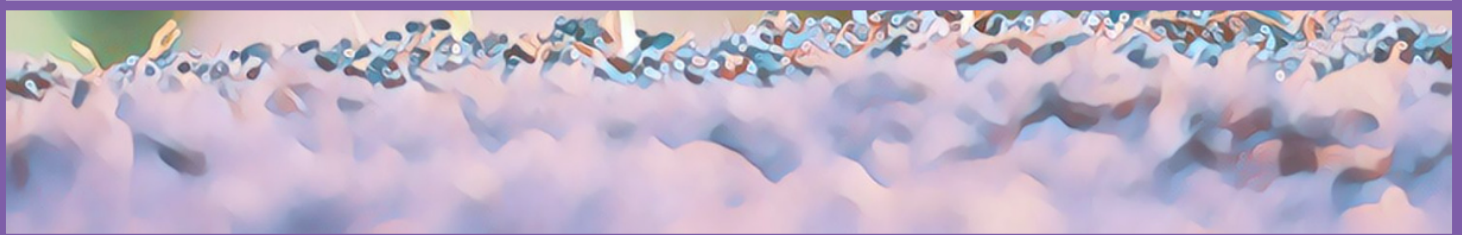
We focused more deeply on Jesus as God's Son, both in our Bible Study on the parables and in weekly sermons. In Bible study, we saw that Jesus understood God's desires for the world and expressed them in ways to make people think and come to realization about how they should live. In sermons, we learned that the parables "were to encourage the disciples, a small group, to keep planting seeds because there is a mysterious power at work in the world." Also, "as we articulate our personal experiences of Jesus and recognize divine intervention in our lives, our faith undergoes a shift from human limitations to divine gratitude."


We also learned of Jesus' compassion for the world. Following Jesus' compassionate example, our mission project for the season was to collect funds for the Faith Community Initiative, supporting Woodlawn Baptist Church as they house and offer food and support to 30 asylum seekers. We collected \$365.00 during the season. Thank you to all who gave.

We had several special Sundays during the season:

- Baptism of the Lord/baptism renewal and the Lord's Supper
- Annual meeting. Lunch followed to continue reflection on 2023 and all that was accomplished. Approximately 30 people attended the lunch.
- Scout Sunday—a day to recognize and encourage the Boy Scout troop we sponsor at the church.
- Transfiguration Sunday—the apostle Peter responds to Jesus' question "but who do you say that I am?" Peter answers "You are the Messiah". As Pastor RJ asked us in her sermon, "Who is Jesus to you?"

The Epiphany season allowed us to reflect on the coming of Jesus and what that means for the world and each of us personally. We hope you continue to look for the ways Jesus is present in your daily life and share the wonder of that with all who will listen.





LENT: WHO IS THIS MAN? - FEBRUARY 14- MARCH 30

Team Members- Pam Anderson, Anita Kern, Marge Pearson, Barbara Singelmann; Nancy Barkman (consultant/session), Linda Baumgart (stewardship)

We have many names or titles for Jesus, but who is he to us? We hope you will think about that as you meditate on the weekly prayers being shared, and listen to the scriptures and sermons each Sunday.

The season began on February 14 with our Ash Wednesday service including the imposition of ashes.

During fellowship hour on February 18, we welcomed Deana Havens, Title 1 Social Worker, during fellowship hour to learn more about one of our mission projects - Palatine High School's "Pirate Cove" which is a 'comfort closet' making available essential day-to-day necessities to students. Items we are collecting during the season include feminine pads (no tampons), shampoo/conditioner, deodorant, towels/wash cloths, and laundry detergent sheets.

Our 2nd mission project is One Great Hour of Sharing, which means we are handing out the ever-popular Fish Banks for you to fill with spare change (although paper money and checks will also fit in the bank)! During the season we are highlighting the agencies supported by this offering - Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, Self Development of People, and the Presbyterian Hunger Program.

Lent is the most holy season on our Christian calendar, and culminates with Holy Week, which includes Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday. We hope you will use the season to draw closer to Jesus in God through meditation and worship, and will join us for all of our worship services, but especially those during Holy Week.

Palm Sunday (March 24) will be celebrated with palms, Maundy Thursday (March 28) will include observance of the Last Supper, and Good Friday (March 29) will include the opportunity to walk the labyrinth prior to the service.

EASTER: TURNING THE WORLD UPSID DOWN - MARCH 31 - MAY 18

Team Members- Emima Asakawa, Kathy Ekeberg, Katrina Keiffer, Jan Lohs, Cheryl Maluta and Tom Kenter

As the Easter Season team studied the Scriptures in our first meeting, we were struck by the words "filled with wonder and amazement," "awe," and "marvelous." We were particularly captivated by the words "turned the world upside down" from Acts 17:6. We look forward to a season that celebrates the joy of transformation through the risen Christ.

The Easter Sunday worship service will be a joyous celebration that includes glorious music. If history is any indication, the children will enthusiastically take part in the traditional Easter Egg Hunt that follows! And all will enjoy special treats at the Easter Fellowship Hour.

On April 21st, please plan to join in the fun during Fellowship Hour as we play favorite games and enjoy lunch provided by the Easter Team.

The Easter season team continues to explore other possible activities for the season.



FROM THE DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

From There is a Longing in Our Hearts (hymn 470):

“There is a longing in our hearts, O Lord, for you to reveal yourself to us. There is a longing in our hearts for love we only find in you, our God.”

The hymn continues with sung prayer for justice, freedom, mercy, wisdom, courage, comfort, healing, wholeness, and new life. For me, the hymn serves as a reminder of the Lenten journey: a longing to draw closer to God and move toward the new life, wholeness, and love found in the resurrection.

This week, I was helping our daughter with a project, and came across photographs from our visit last spring to Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park and The King Center in Atlanta, Georgia. I had taken photographs of the Six Principles of Nonviolence³⁶⁵ engraved onto the wall near his tomb at The King Center. They read:

1. Nonviolence is a way of life for courageous people. It is active nonviolent resistance to evil. It is aggressive spiritually, mentally, and emotionally.
2. Nonviolence seeks to win friendship and understanding. The end result of nonviolence is redemption and reconciliation. The purpose of nonviolence is the creation of the Beloved Community.
3. Nonviolence seeks to defeat injustice, not people. Nonviolence recognizes that evildoers are also victims and are not evil people. The nonviolent resister seeks to defeat evil, not people.
4. Nonviolence holds that suffering can educate and transform people and societies. Nonviolence accepts suffering without retaliation. Unearned suffering is redemptive and has tremendous educational and transforming possibilities.
5. Nonviolence chooses love instead of hate. Nonviolence resists violence of the spirit as well as the body. Nonviolent love is spontaneous, unmotivated, unselfish, and creative.
6. Nonviolence believes that the universe is on the side of justice. The nonviolent resister has deep faith that justice will eventually win. Nonviolence believes that God is a God of justice.

When comparing Martin Luther King, Jr. and Abraham Lincoln, our child said, “Some people liked what they said. Some people did not. They were both killed by angry people who did not like what they had to say.”

As Christians, this is not an unfamiliar story. Still, as Christians, we know death is not the end of the story. Hope and messages of love and reconciliation have not been silenced.

The hymn “Christ is Alive!” was written 10 days after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. for Easter of 1968. It shares Easter hope in the midst of the difficulties faced, and continues to be relevant in Christ’s radical turning of this world:

#246 (v.1) Christ is alive! Let Christians sing. The cross stands empty to the sky. Let streets and homes with praises ring. Love, drowned in death, shall never die. (v.5) Christ is alive, and comes to bring good news to this and every age, till earth and sky and ocean ring with joy, with justice, love, and praise.

How does the Spirit lead you to carry Christ’s message of love and reconciliation forward?

Ingrid Mikolajczyk, Director of Music





PC (USA) 101, PART 1

What does it mean to be a Presbyterian?

1. Embracing our Presbyterian identity signifies our commitment to covenantal theology, recognizing God's enduring covenant with us rooted in love, extending to all people, including children. The practice of baptizing infants reflects our belief in God's prevenient grace, emphasizing the inclusive nature of our faith that does not discriminate against the youngest members of our community.
2. As Presbyterians, we cherish our sacramental tradition, acknowledging the significance of baptism and the Lord's Supper as visible manifestations of God's invisible grace. What sets us apart is our open table policy during the Lord's Supper, inviting all to partake. This inclusivity stands as a testament to the welcoming spirit within Presbyterian congregations.
3. Our Presbyterian identity is grounded in a confessional tradition, embracing reformed and ecumenical creeds and confessions. Through these confessions, we affirm our belief that God continues to speak to us, addressing relevant issues of our time. The dynamic nature of our faith, as articulated in these confessions, adds depth and relevance to our spiritual journey.

W3 Book Club

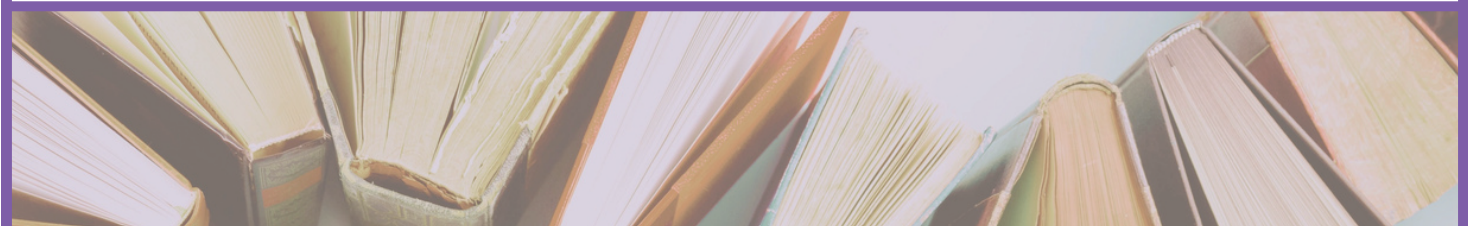
NEXT W3 - March 8 - Begins at 7:00pm

Host & Location - Mary Kenter's

BOOK

"The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store "
by James McBride

What is W3? It is a fellowship for women, with wine (or beverage of choice), and word (conversation), specifically for women of PCOP and their female family and friends. The fellowship revolves around a book club where both fiction and non-fiction books are discussed. Additionally, participants will explore where they perceive the works of God and how they perceive God's presence in the story.



March

3/3	Worship	10am	3/20	Grace Circle	10am
3/7	Pantry	2:30pm	3/21	Pantry	2:30pm
3/8	W3	7pm	3/23	Rebecca Circle	10am
3/10	Worship	10am	3/24	PALM SUNDAY Worship	10am
3/12	Personnel	7pm	3/28	MAUNDY THURSDAY Worship	7pm
3/13	PW Board	10am	3/29	GOOD FRIDAY Worship	7pm
3/17	Worship P1 Planning	10am 11:30am	3/31	EASTER Worship Fellowship/ Easter Egg Hunt	10am 11am
3/19	Stewardship	7pm			

OUR OFFICE HOURS ARE MONDAY - THURSDAY, 10:00AM - 2:00PM
 PASTOR KANG'S IN-OFFICE HOURS - TUESDAYS, WEDNESDAYS AND
 THURSDAYS BETWEEN 10:00AM & 12:00PM
 OUTSIDE REGULAR HOURS, PLEASE ARRANGE A MEETING WITH THE PASTOR.

If you have yet to sign up to serve on one or two 2024 Season Teams,
 please do so! We especially need people to sign up for PI
 You may sign up in person across from the office or call,
 or email the church office.

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