



## ***The Grinnell Presbyterian***

*The monthly newsletter of First Presbyterian Church*

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January 2015

Kirsten Klepfer, Pastor

### **GARDEN OF READIN'...**

Warning: If you hate it when someone tells you something and then you start seeing it everywhere, you might want to proceed with caution. I can't say for sure what will happen, but when I learned about this something I never noticed before kept popping up in conversations with people. Counter-warning: I have really enjoyed it!

I read an article a long time ago about a study in which they found that when two people are talking to one another, they naturally, and subconsciously, take on the other's posture. If I cross my arms in front of my waist, at some point the other person will find their arms crossed in front of their waist. If I put my hand to my chin, I might notice that the person I'm talking to already had their hand to their chin. I now notice this all the time - almost to the point of distraction.

I have always resisted the temptation to test it, partly because that would make one of the participants conscious of their movements, and I suspect that would skew the outcomes. But, honestly, I also like the way things are now: Whenever I happen to notice this happening, I feel a little burst of joy.

The researchers speculated that the reason for this phenomenon was that we are naturally empathetic. Isn't that cool?! It's a little sign from everyday life that we are wired to have empathy for our fellow human beings (I suppose if we took on the posture of a tree's branches while studying its leaves we could claim natural empathy for non-humans as well - we'd probably have to find alternative proof for that).

I sometimes feel like there is so much evidence to the contrary. I feel like we see things happen all the time that point to a natural distrust of one another, or a natural animus toward others, or suspicion toward people of different cultures, races, religions, politics, you name it. But here is a ray of hope that, in spite of anything we might consciously be feeling toward someone, something deep inside says, "You are just like them. You know them. Fellow human."

Now, I don't know if this study went as far as to look at whether things changed when the two people were of different cultures or races. I have decided to remain willfully ignorant about that. What I do know is that this little thing - this little noticing that comes up in my every day life - has given me almost irrational hope for humankind. I'll take it. And now I hope you see it everywhere too.

Peace,  
Pastor Kirsten



## SUNDAY SERVANTS

### January

- 4- Liturgist: Karen Phillips  
Greeter: Irma Arnaman  
Deacon; Janice Logan  
Ushers: Janet and Jim Ferguson  
Coffee: Donna Ricks  
Acolyte: Alana Ferguson  
Van Driver: Norm Schroeder  
Nursery Volunteer: Evelyn Freeman  
Communion Servers: Karen Phillips,  
Donna Ricks, Tom Moore  
Offering Counter: Donna Ricks
- 11- Liturgist: Karla Kriegel  
Greeters: Denise and Richard Creps  
Deacon; Suzanne Redenius  
Ushers: Montie Redenius, Rich Thorson  
Coffee: Donna Winburn  
Acolyte: Damien Nickle  
Van Driver: Montie Redenius  
Nursery Volunteer: Jill Kaiser
- 18- Liturgist: Ed Phillips  
Greeters: Dallas and Lola Sterk  
Deacon; Kendall Nickle  
Ushers: Tom and Emily Moore  
Coffee/Potluck: Chris Day, Rich Thorson  
Acolyte: Julio Parmley  
Van Driver: Carey Krull  
Nursery Volunteer: Marta Miller
- 25- Liturgist: Janice Logan  
Greeter: Char Ewan  
Deacon; Doty Stoker  
Ushers: Russ Stoker, John Martenson  
Coffee:  
Acolyte: Pete Simpson  
Van Driver: Norm Schroeder  
Nursery Volunteer: Emily Moore  
Cake Baker:

### February

- 1- Liturgist: Tom Moore  
Greeter: Chrissy Hazlett  
Deacon; Carey Krull  
Ushers: Joy Krull, Rich Thorson  
Coffee: Bev Miller  
Acolyte: Miles McIntyre  
Van Driver: Montie Redenius  
Nursery Volunteer: Sue Ahrens  
Communion Servers: Tom Moore,  
John Martenson, Marta Miller  
Offering Counter: Susan McIntyre



Thank you to December fellowship coffee hosts **Debbie Schade, Suzanne Nekola, Cheryl, Paul, Stiven, Julio Parmley, and Doty and Russ Stoker**, and to **Al Ricks** for birthday cake.

**Those who brought yarn** for the Sunday School project. Our young knitters are creating something wonderful.

**Meals for youth group: Karla Kriegel, Janice Logan, Karen Phillips** for providing a meal for the hungry youth.

**Al Ricks and Karen Phillips** for organizing our Christmas caroling this year. And thanks to **Donna Ricks, Janice Logan, and Chrissy Hazlette** for their work in the kitchen getting things set up so the carolers could enjoy a wonderful meal upon returning. And of course, thanks to **all those wonderful singers** who brightened the Christmas season of the folks in our congregation that have a hard time getting out.

**Elliott and Gayle Uhlenhopp** for providing this year's Christmas tree (and for every year past!). Also, thanks to **Montie Redenius and Ed Phillips** for getting it put up in the sanctuary.

**Susan McIntyre** for the beautiful banner during Advent. She amazes me (Pastor Kirsten) every year in her ability to take my abstract (often incoherent) ideas and turn them into beautiful visuals that help us imagine what Advent and Christmas are all about.

**Janice Logan** for organizing this year's cookie exchange and to **Gillian Ferguson** for providing music.

## THANK YOU

Thank you to the 21 individuals who helped brighten Christmas for some dear church friends by caroling on December 21. A special thanks to Karen and Ed Phillips for organizing the event, to Pastor Kirsten for planning the route, and to Janice Logan, Chrissy Hazlett and Donna Ricks for readying a delicious meal to conclude the evening.

The All-Church Event planning team met in December and has some exciting things in store for 2015. Thank you all for supporting the 2014 events: the baked potato bar, the "music in the park" picnic, Presbyterfest, a New (Church) Year Eve's party, and the caroling party.

Al Ricks, Coordinator

## **PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN NEWS**

Thank you to all for the Thank Offering. We collected \$438.35. The money will be used several ways to improve the lives of women and children throughout the world.

The Heart and Hands Clinic was very thankful for all of the baby items we delivered to their office in early December.

## **2015 ANNUAL MEETING**

### **SUNDAY, JANUARY 11<sup>TH</sup>: IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING WORSHIP**

The 2015 annual meeting for our congregation will be held on January 11th. The agenda for this meeting is to elect officers, receive the 2015 budget, and approve the pastor's terms of call. Annual reports will be available for you to review by Sunday, January 4<sup>th</sup>.



## **FIRST PRESBYTERIAN TO HOST COMMUNITY MEAL**

Tuesday, February 24 is the date First Pres. will host the Community Meal at Davis

School. Signup sheets to donate various food items and to offer assistance at the event will be available in the fellowship room early in the New Year.

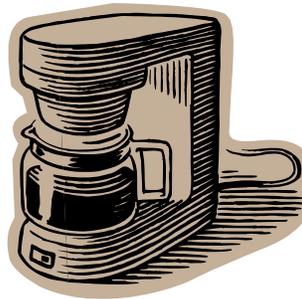
It is an evening of great food and wonderful fellowship. Please be in touch with Donna Ricks if you have any questions.

## **EPIPHANY OF THE LORD JANUARY 6**



## **SESSION AND DEACONS RETREAT: JANUARY 18<sup>TH</sup>**

This year's retreat will be Sunday, January 18<sup>h</sup> after worship. Lunch will be served and we will meet until about 3p.m. We will have time for joint conversation, visioning and planning.



## **COFFEE MAKERS NEEDED FOR 2015**

Please notice the new signup sheet on the kiosk in Fellowship Hall to make coffee/cleanup and take charge of the pot-lucks on Sundays in the

New Year! Any and all help is appreciated. Thank you.

## WORSHIP IN JANUARY

**January 4:** Holy Communion. Lectionary Readings: Jeremiah 31:7-14; Psalm 147:12-20; Ephesians 1:3-14; John 1: (1-9) 10-18

**January 11:** Baptism of the Lord. Annual Meeting of the Congregation. Lectionary readings: Genesis 1:1-5; Psalm 29; Acts 19:1-7; Mark 1:4-11.

**January 18:** Third Sunday Potluck and Food Pantry Sunday. Lectionary readings: 1 Samuel 3:1-10 (11-20); Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18; 1 Corinthians 6:12-20; John 1:43-51.

**January 25:** Birthday Sunday. Lectionary readings: Jonah 3:1-5, 10; Psalm 62:5-12; 1 Corinthians 7:29-31; Mark 1:14-20.

## PER CAPITA

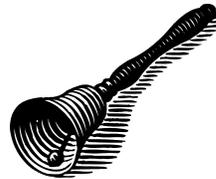
Every Presbyterian congregation is asked to pay a per-member assessment (per capita). What is Per Capita? Per Capita is not membership dues. Neither is it a tax. About twelve years ago, the General Assembly approved the following definition of Per Capita: Per Capita is an opportunity for all communicant members of the Presbyterian Church through the governing bodies to participate equally, responsibly, and independently by sharing the cost of coordination and evaluation of mission; of performing ecclesiastical, legislative, and judicial functions that identify a reformed church, while at the same time strengthening the sense of community among all Presbyterians.

The assessment this year is \$40.00 per member. Part of your regular pledge already goes to pay our per capita. Each year we also ask those who are able and feel moved to do so to help with this annual payment.

## STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

	<u>November</u>	<u>Year-to-Date</u>
Pledge Income	\$12,125	\$115,050
Budgeted	\$10,000	\$110,000
Total Income	\$12,945	\$125,566
Budgeted	\$11,048	\$121,527
Expenses	\$13,727	\$127,955
Budgeted	\$11,330	\$124,635

If you have not turned in your **pledge card for the year 2015**, we hope you will do so soon. You can send it to the church office or bring it in during regular office hours (T-F; 8:30 to noon). If you need a new form, let us know and we will get one to you.



## ADULT BELL CHOIR

Adult bell choir will resume practice on January 6<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 and will continue each Tuesday at 5:00.

If you would like to join the Bell Choir, please see Chris Day.

## JANUARY BIRTHDAYS



13<sup>th</sup> Joy Krull  
15<sup>th</sup> Kendall Nickle  
16<sup>th</sup> Emily Moore  
17<sup>th</sup> Toshia Creps  
20<sup>th</sup> Mary Anne Nickle  
Peter Simpson  
22<sup>th</sup> Angela Davis

# January 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2 12:00 Lectionary Bible Study	3
4 9:15 Choir, Sunday School 10:30 Worship Holy Communion  2:00 Turlach Ur	5	6 4:30 Prayer Time  5:00 Adult Bell Choir  6:00 Scouts	7	8	9 12:00 Lectionary Bible Study	10
11 9:15 Choir, Sunday School 10:30 Worship Heifer Sunday Annual Meeting of Congregation 2:00 Turlach	12	13 4:30 Prayer Time  5:00 Adult Bell Choir  6:00 Scouts	14   6:30 Session	15	16 12:00 Lectionary Bible Study	17
18 9:15 Choir, Sunday School 10:30 Worship Third Sunday Potluck/Food Pantry Sunday OfficersRetreat 2:00Turlach Ur	19 Newsletter Deadline	20 12:00 Food Recovery Network  4:30 Prayer Time  5:00 Adult Bell Choir	21 12:00 Food Recovery Network	22 10:30 Newsletter Mailing  12:00 Food Recovery Network	23 12:00 Lectionary Bible Study	24
25 9:15 Choir, Sunday School 10:30 Worship Confirmation. Birthday Sunday  2:00 Turlach	26	27 12:00 Food Recovery Network 4:30 Prayer Time 5:00 Adult Bell Choir  6:00 Scouts	28 12:00 Food Recovery Network	29 12:00 Food Recovery Network	30 12:00 Lectionary Bible Study	31

## **SESSION HIGHLIGHTS FROM DECEMBER MEETING**

*Many thanks to Clerk Char Ewan for providing the minutes for this summary.*

Finance Chair, Erik Simpson, presented a budget for 2015 which he and his committee of Gail Greenwald, Emily Moore, and Mary Anne Nickle have drafted. This budget along with Pastor's compensation package will be presented at the Congregational meeting in January.

The Christmas Eve offering was designated for our church's local mission.

Elders John Martenson and Tom Moore assisted Pastor Kirsten with communion to home-bound members.

The Deacons and Presbyterian Women reports were accepted.

Session approved Marci Sorter's membership transfer to Westminster Presbyterian in Minneapolis, MN

Upcoming dates:

Congregational meeting ó January 11

New officer training ó January 11 following the Congregational meeting

Special meeting to examine officers -- January 11

Session meeting with outgoing members ó January 14

Ordination and Installation of officers ó January 18

Annual retreat ó January 18, noon ó 3:00 p.m.

Community Meal ó February 24

Pastor reported that anonymous gifts were given for local mission to help those in need. She also thanked outgoing Session members, Erik Simpson, Tom Moore, and Rich Thorson for their three years on Session.



### **LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES**

Did you notice our church youth who were lighting the Advent candles this year? The worship committee discusses each year who will light the candles for the four weeks of Advent. Often this is done by families. Last year we asked families who had recently joined our church. This year we decided to focus on our youth, pairing a young person with a special mentor or teacher from our church. These pairings illustrate in a very special way the bonds that develop in a church community between our young people and the adults who nurture them in Church School, all church events, youth group, and through the confirmation process. Each young person led us in worship in this important way by standing beside a special mentor in the lighting of the candles. Miles McIntyre was paired with Marta Miller, his church school teacher. Peter Simpson was paired with Janice Logan, his teacher for the lessons on becoming familiar with the Bible in third grade. We also have three pairings of youth with their confirmation mentors: Gillian Ferguson is paired with Carolyn Jacobson, Steven Parmley with Dennis Day, and Damien Nickle with Chrissy Hazlett. "Blest be the tie that bind our hearts in Christian love."

"The one and only test of a valid religious idea, doctrinal statement, spiritual experience, or devotional practice was that it must lead directly to practical compassion. If your understanding of the divine made you kinder, more empathetic, and impelled you to express this sympathy in concrete acts of loving-kindness, this was good theology. But if your notion of God made you unkind, belligerent, cruel, or self-righteous, or if it led you to kill in God's name, it was bad theology. Compassion was the litmus test for the prophets of Israel, for the rabbis of the Talmud, for Jesus, for Paul, and for Muhammad, not to mention Confucius, Lao-tsu, the Buddha, or the sages of the Upanishads."

-Karen Armstrong

**A PRAYER FOR PAKISTAN BY**  
**GRADYE PARSONS**

(Stated Clerk of the PC(USA)):

Eternal Loving God:

We come to you today with hearts saddened by the senseless deaths of these school children. We need the tender touch of your great love and mercy.

Speak to us God, comfort us with your gracious presence.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord, we pray together.

Amen



**CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS!**

**A message from the Cottage Grove Covenant Council**

As we celebrate the birth of Christ and look forward to a new year filled with possibilities, we give thanks for our blessings at Cottage Grove! Here are just a few...

- A repaired roof that no longer leaks
- A building that has been cleaned out
- A bathroom that has been repaired and spruced up
- Reliable heat
- Running water when the faucets are turned on
- A dedicated custodian on duty
- Faithful hired workers who did their jobs admirably
- And many, many volunteers who helped make it all happen! **(Marta Miller was one of the volunteers)**

Thanks to all, and a very merry Christmas!

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Return Service Requested

**INCLEMENT WEATHER NOTICES**

In case of inclement weather, listen to KGRN for Sunday School and/or choir cancellations. Sunday worship will not be cancelled. Additionally, this information will be placed on the church's web site and Facebook page as soon as the information is received.