



THE GRAPEVINE
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SANDPOINT, IDAHO
October 2020

From the Pastor...

Prayers from the Heart

September 21st is the International Day of Peace. It was mentioned in church communications and made the local paper. The day before, a piece of orange fencing was suspended between two gazebo posts in the Peace Garden at First Presbyterian Church. The morning of September 21st, a table with ribbons and markers was placed so people could stop by the Gazebo, write a prayer on the ribbon, then tie it to the fencing. It was open all day. The next evening, September 22nd, the Session had their monthly meeting in Fellowship Hall. To conclude in prayer, the Ruling Elders wrote prayers on ribbons, then walked out into the darkness, tying the prayers in place. We chatted as we did this, laughed a little bit, then headed back inside to collect our things and head home after a long day.

When we got back inside, however, I asked them if they had noticed the man sleeping on the bench in the gazebo, with a spilled beverage under the bench. He hadn't moved a muscle as we talked and tied the ribbons on the fencing. I hadn't seen him until we were just about ready to go back inside. Most of the elders didn't see him at all, and it was quite dark, especially after coming out from the lights of indoors. This man on the bench didn't fuss, didn't flinch, didn't seem to notice us at all. He was

either sound asleep or ignoring us, perhaps hoping we wouldn't notice him. As we left for home, he was still sound asleep on the bench.

This kind of scene leads to all sorts of possible scenarios, and corresponding judgments. Have whatever opinion you want, but that's how it played out that night. While we did not wake him up, or offer to get him inside for the night, neither did we cause him any further trouble or condemn him for being, apparently, homeless. He was gone the next morning and I haven't seen him since. It seems that man found a peaceful place to get some rest that night, surrounded by, and embodying, prayers of the community. Prayers of seeing beyond limited vision, finding courage amidst social dynamics that seem overwhelming, wanting connection while confronted with issues of viruses and pandemics and distancing, and homelessness as a very real and expanding issue that Sandpoint seems to ignore. Prayers for Peace among nations. Prayers for the Earth. Prayers, prayers, prayers, written, spoken, lived.

I've seen people on drugs who get agitated, even aggressive, when bothered. I've seen people with mental illness rambling absolute nonsense, or shouting all sorts of things when told to move away from church property. I've called the cops on some, and pretended I didn't see others. I've put some people up in motels for a night or two, and seen the dejection on faces that were told we would not do this. It's all rather subjective. Did you know who ever pays the room bill is also

liable for damages caused by the guest? Many motels no longer admit people who are homeless or take referrals from churches because of room damage left by some. If towns like Sandpoint do not have dedicated shelters, people are on the streets, or camping in the woods on the fringe.

Whatever the topic or issue happens to be, the problems our world faces will not be solved by the same mentality that created them. Society is experiencing a good deal of stress right now. Treating symptoms does not change the systems that perpetuate predictable outcomes. May we trust that prayers from the heart reverberate long after the fence comes down and the ribbons are tossed aside. As the Peace Pole stands as a point of energy, acupuncture for the Earth, the prayer, "May Peace Prevail On Earth," echoes the intention of the Living Christ working in the hearts of people.

May we open the eyes of our hearts to perceive the inherent goodness and beauty all around us and within, even on a peaceful night suspended in time and held by the Spirit's creative love. God bless that man from the bench. God bless the prayers surrounding him in the darkness, and those who wrote them. God bless the world in love. Wherever you lay down tonight, may you find deep rest, the Peace of Christ, in your soul.



UPDATED FIRESIDE AND LIBRARY

Thank you to everyone involved in the recent upgrade to the Fireside Room and Library. New TV, whiteboard, and furniture, along with updated paint and lighting make a welcoming reception to that space for individual and group use. Judy Labrie and Sally Moon put in countless creative hours of meticulous detailing. Don and Sue Helander helped with some upgrades as well. Judy McComish did some needed cleaning and Anna Bates is the ever-faithful librarian sorting through books for re-shelving. Thanks to the Deacons and everyone who helped with financial support and encouragement. New window coverings are on the way. The room looks great and will be functional and inviting for years to come!

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

The Capital Campaign is underway and donations are beginning to come in, but more are needed to reach the goal of \$5,000 for a matching grant by the Idaho Heritage Trust. Soffit repairs, gutter work, addressing dry-rot, and repainting trim is all part of the project that should begin in October to help the historic building make it through another winter. Contact Sue Helander, Ruling Elder for Buildings and Grounds, if you have questions. \$5,000 raised by the congregation, along with \$5,000 from the current Building Fund, and the \$5,000 Heritage Trust matching grant will combine to cover the 15,000 project.

A CHURCH MEMBER PASSES

Bob Meigs died on September 5, 2020, at home and surrounded by family. Continued prayers of comfort and support for the Meigs family as they grieve this loss. No funeral is planned, and the family will have a private ceremony at some point in the future. Bob would often sit in the side section of the sanctuary on his red electric wheel chair scooter, accompanied by his grandson, Saw. He would bring the family Curried Chicken and Rice dish to potlucks, and there was none left to bring home because it was so delicious. Bob will be missed, even as we praise the Resurrected Christ for the fulfillment of his Baptism.

THE SESSION SUMMARY

Session held its regular meeting on September 22, 2020. Just as during our June meeting, we used Fellowship Hall with its ample space to comply with social distancing protocols. Moreover, the Fireside Room was receiving Judy Labrie' and Sally Moon' final interior decorative talents in "brightening" the room.

As part of this remodeling project, Session approved using \$675.00 from the Memorial Fund to purchase a television, buffet hutch and whiteboard for the Fireside Room. We also approved purchasing a new computer for the church office, since the old one no longer receives updates from Microsoft.

Our primary discussion centered on resuming in-person Sunday worship services and the use of church facilities. We unanimously agreed to resume services on Sunday, September 27, with the following protocols in place:

- masks are mandatory,
- seating with social distancing by leaving every other pew vacant,
- large group singing will not take place, and this will be reviewed at the October Session meeting,
- no communion,
- the offering plates will be placed at each entrance,
- continue with Facebook Live to provide an online participation option.

Church programs such as Christian Education Sunday school, prayer groups, and committees, will be allowed to meet with sanitation protocols required. Use of church facilities by the public and outside groups (AA, AI-Anon, PFLAG, rental groups) will not be allowed at this time. The church office will remain closed to the public.

Dyno Wahl, Finance and Stewardship elder, reported that current giving as of August 31, amounted to \$2,235 below the 2020 budgeted income. Expenses during the same period, however, totaled \$1,293 less than the 2020 budgeted amount. This leaves a year-to-date shortfall of \$942 (in rounded numbers). Dyno pointed out that part of this shortfall resulted from paying the Presbytery per capita of \$3,200 in August.

We finished the meeting by inscribing ribbons to hang in the Peace Garden to commemorate the International Day of Peace.

See ya'all on Sunday. (It's so good, once again, to say that.)

Bill Love, Clerk of Session

RECYCLING UPDATE

The Earth Care Team continues to encourage members to “Reuse, repurpose, and recycle” in order to avoid waste of resources and to decrease pollution. We hope all members and friends who are Sandpoint residents are using their blue bins for recycling. Now that Bonner County discontinued single stream recycling option at the Dufort Road site, county residents’ major chance to recycle is at Pacific Steel. They accept separated paper, newspaper, cardboard, tin cans, & aluminum cans. They don’t accept glass and plastic. Because plastics are not biodegradable, they are clogging landfills and causing lasting damage to oceans and ocean life. There are substitutes for one-time use plastics, such as mesh bags for produce selection when shopping, bees’ wax wrap, silicone food storage bags from Mighty Fix or other companies, etc. So, we can cut down our use of plastics. Some of you may choose to take your glass and plastic to be recycled at a “town” friend’s home or in Coeur d’ Alene.

A question that the Earth Care Team wondered about: Are plastic items truly being recycled, or just diverted back into the trash? Marilyn recently researched this question thru on-line and phone contact with the Spokane Regional Recycling center. She learned that only bottles, tubs, and jugs that have a 1 or 2 in the triangle symbol on the bottom, can be recycled. Now that China does not take plastics from the U.S., the sorting center has found several firms that accept plastics, and make them into usable products. These include Frazier Plastics in Canada, Ming, which takes soda bottles, and Mohawk. This is reassuring to the 3 Co-moderators of the Earth Care Team: Lynn Pietz, Bill Love, and Marilyn Robertson. Let’s be stewards of this beautiful Earth!

WORSHIP AND MUSIC

We are pleased to resume in-person Worship services on Sundays at 10:30 a.m. in our beautiful sanctuary. We are also continuing to do video streaming via Facebook Live. It is a blessing to be able to be together in person, while maintaining appropriate physical distancing and wearing facemasks.

We are very thankful for Annie Welle for providing her beautiful piano music every Sunday. We look forward to adding more music to our Sunday Worship services at a date yet to be determined in the future.

While we are all adjusting to the challenges this year has thrown at us, we are reminded to always consider “this is good because...” One may find it hard to imagine what possible “good” could come from this, but here is one thing: because we have had to figure out new ways to stay connected as a congregation, and also how to continue to spread God’s word, we have learned new skills and adapted to using technology. Our Facebook Live video posts of Sunday Worship are viewed by hundreds of people, both near and far.

Thanks to everyone for your patience and support as we carefully and thoughtfully resume in-person Worship.

Worship & Music Committee:

HIGHWAY CLEANUP

TIME TO SAFELY RECONVENE!

We have chosen **Saturday, October 17th** as our fall highway clean-up day. We can easily social distance while beautifying our one mile section. If the weather is inclement we will change it to the following Saturday, October 24th.

Lunch will be served back at the church with simple soup and bread where there is plenty of room to spread out. All will be prepared with proper precautions.

Place: WESTMOND STORE—SAGLE

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Bring: GLOVES AND MASKS

Due to the pandemic, we didn't pick up in the spring so we may have a healthy load.



Highway Cleanup October 2019



October Birthdays

1 Carol Curtis

7 Barney Ballard

15 Barry Gage

17 Judy Farmin

19 Marilyn Robertson

20 Wesley Dustman

31 Dolly Maddox

Regular Monthly Events



Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m. and on Facebook

Monday - Al-Anon TBD

Tuesday Book Study Group - 1:30 p.m.

Contemplative Prayer Group - 3:00 p.m.

Choir Practice - postponed

PFLAG - TBD

Wednesday - Al-Anon TBD

Thursday - Al-Anon TBD

Alcoholics Anonymous TBD



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