



THE GRAPEVINE
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SANDPOINT, IDAHO
 September 2021

From the Pastor...

In late July, I went through the storage closet sorting the books I've packed around for years. They fit well at certain points in my journey as a professional clergy person, but for quite some time they've been locked away in the dark. Then I remembered the Little Free Library in the Community Peace Garden. Although the books still carry meaning for me, I thought it would be better to bless others through giving them away rather than cling to them just to have them. I thumbed through the titles, skimmed some pages to remind myself what it was that resonated with my spirit back when the books were new to me.

The Dance of Hope by William Frey took me back to meeting with Eugene Peterson in Montana. Newly retired, he had served as Pastor, University Professor, and he continued as an author. He had popular books about being a pastor. As a biblical language scholar, he translated the entire Bible into *The Message*. He was popular, in demand as a speaker for conferences, and he had resources. For me, he was a mentor and spiritual guide. For a few years we met regularly at his home overlooking Flathead Lake. He and his wife, Jan, were very personable and welcomed me with hospitality and care. As we sat in his study, like a good spiritual director, he could slow down and listen deeply; it was so encouraging. Eugene gave me that book, and in the front was an autograph from the author with a personal note written to Eugene.

Sentimental value is seductive, playing with idealized forms of memory. We hold on to stuff, and we think if we let stuff go, we dishonor the memories; it feels like we'd lose part of ourselves. With the book Eugene gave me, I felt like I was right back there, in his study, a scene where I was connected, valued, and important. It was a safe place where I could tell him anything and get his counsel.

Rather than cling to this book, in the pile it went. Time to let it go. My spirituality has evolved over the years and the book didn't quite fit me anymore. Maybe it would resonate with someone else, whether they knew who the note to "Eugene" referred to or not, or the prestige he had to get a signed copy with a personal note from the author, William Frey. In giving this book away, I let go of the shirttail prestige I felt by having it.

Outside in the Community Peace Garden, after cleaning up the inside of the Little Free Library, I filled an entire shelf with various books of religious inspiration. Daily devotionals, reflections on scripture, essays, and books on Christian environmental stewardship and healing the creation. All these books were now in the sunshine, placed in the Ark-inspired Little Free Library

I moved a sprinkler to better water one of the pear trees, then I went to my office door to go inside. As I closed the door, I noticed that a car with a 9B license plate from Boundary County had already pulled up. A woman stood by the open door of the Little Free Library, and she

browsed the selection. Then she returned to her car with one book in her hand. I could tell by the cover that it was the Frey book, *The Dance of Hope*. Gladness filled me up that the book wasn't in a musty storage zone anymore but was out doing what books are meant to do, engage a conversation, and inspire people. May she be blessed in her reading!

That is often how ministry works these days. That woman hasn't sat in the pews of FPC on a Sunday morning. She may not even watch Facebook Live and catch the streaming of the service. But she does come to the Little Free Library. This is the second time I've seen her stop there. I recognized the car. I chose to give away something I felt was important in my life, so valuable I've been dragging it around for over 20 years. But I chose to give it away with no strings attached, relinquished control of the outcome, allowed God to work through my detachment so others may benefit.

As church membership and Sunday worship attendance reduce, the mission and ministry of the church, in both local expressions and nationally as the PC(USA), has shifted away from "build it and they will come," and "attractual" models, to one of giving to the community. Statistics show institutional religion, like all institutions in America (with the exception of the military), is in decline. Our local church reflects this, especially as the older, denominationally loyal generations die, and younger, choice-based generations are choosing to not participate in the same way, especially as Presbyterians. Things like the Community Peace Garden and the Little Free Library are ways to reach out to those who claim to be "spiritual but not religious." This "outdoor sanctuary" is active every day as people come to read, rest, have lunch, and take a break. As we give ourselves away, may we all sense the Living Christ who restores our soul.

Then he looked up at his disciples and said:

*Blessed are you who are poor,
for yours is the kingdom of God."*

(Luke 6:20, NRSV)

"Then he spoke:

*You're blessed when you've lost it all.
God's kingdom is there for the finding."*

(Luke 6:20, The Message)

Peace and All Good,
Pastor Andy Kennaly



UPDATE ON PASTOR ANDY STUDY LEAVE AND VACATION

Study Leave:

The global scene is in flux. Climate crises, Covid pandemic, and uncertainty make trip planning challenging. One of my plans has changed. Shawna and I were going to explore the spirituality of beekeeping in a return to Slovenia this fall for a two-and-a-half-week guided tour to visit beekeepers, stay at local farms, and see some sights as part of a coordinated American tour group. But this tour got cancelled. Slovenia has a low vaccination rate, and the U.S. State Department says to avoid it. Not enough people signed up for the tour, so it was cancelled. I'll now have one week of Independent Study in September and one week in November.

Vacation:

All Pastor Study Leave funds used for this trip have been reimbursed to the church. Airline tickets are in constant flux. Slovenia flights cancelled. We hope now to fly to Germany. This personal vacation should be a great way to reconnect with long-time friends overseas, if the global travel scene stays open to support this adventure in healthy ways. If not, those weeks will become a local "stay-cation."

Pastor Andy

MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

Continued prayers for the Ross Family at the death of Virginia Ross. She had been a member at First Presbyterian Church for over 60 years. Also, prayers for the Largent family at the death of Dean Largent. A longtime Presbyterian, Dean had lived the last few years at Luther Park in Sandpoint. Some of you may know Gary and Velma Wescott. Pastor Andy recently led a graveside service and a Memorial at their home to honor their lives. Blessed are those who rest in the Lord.

THE SESSION SUMMARY
SEPTEMBER 2021

Session usually takes a summer recess during July and August. However, any items that require a decision during this interlude are usually approved via email and officially ratified at our next in-person meeting. Afterall, we Presbyterians do things in an orderly fashion, don't we?

After our June meeting, we received a couple of requests that needed timely approval. One was from the Music Conservatory of Sandpoint to use our facilities for a youth summer music camp. In our normal email exchange, Session concurred that this was an appropriate use and agreed to offer a discount from our usual fee. But since this use - over a two week period - would require daily cleaning, we ensured that our custodian(s) would receive adequate compensation. So, in an orderly fashion, Session held a special meeting to give formal approval on August 1.

We also approved a building use request by the Bonner County Human Rights Task Force for a workshop that would focus on Social Equity, offered to interested community members to bring in different perspectives to be able to work together to better understand "systemic advantage"/"structural oppression" on September 17 to 19, a Friday (4-8pm), Saturday (1-5pm), and Sunday (1-4pm), to offer 10-12 hours of engagement and education.

At the same Special Session Meeting, we called for a Congregational Meeting on August 15, to approve the ordination and installation of Dyno Wahl as a Deacon, Class of 2023. That special Congregational Meeting was properly announced according to our Book of Order. So, beginning approximately 10:14 AM on Sunday, August 15, Pastor Andy convened the meeting and at 10:20 AM we had elected Dyno to serve as deacon and the meeting closed with prayer.

Afterall, we Presbyterians do things in an orderly fashion, don't we?

Peace,
Bill Love, Clerk of Session

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL EXPLORES BIBLE TEACHING

This is an Invitation to explore the Bible and how to apply it's teaching to our lives.

As we look forward to beginning a new chapter in our journey, with the coming of fall, two Adult Education classes begin on September 19, 2021. One class is led by Anna Bates, and the other by Sharon Anderson, Pastor Andy, and Judy Labrie. Classes begin at 9:00 a.m. and all are invited to attend.

In the Retreat Room, Anna Bates will continue the exploration of the Holy Land with eight weeks remaining in the video series.

In the Fireside Room, the other class starts with a Bible study of Roman 12:2.

“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing, and perfect will.”

This verse will inform and lead our class for the year. How many times do we wonder what is blocking our access to experiencing God’s will in our lives? The class will explore this through Brian McLaren’s presentation called “Learning to See.” We will discuss how to apply his scripturally informed insights to our own lives.

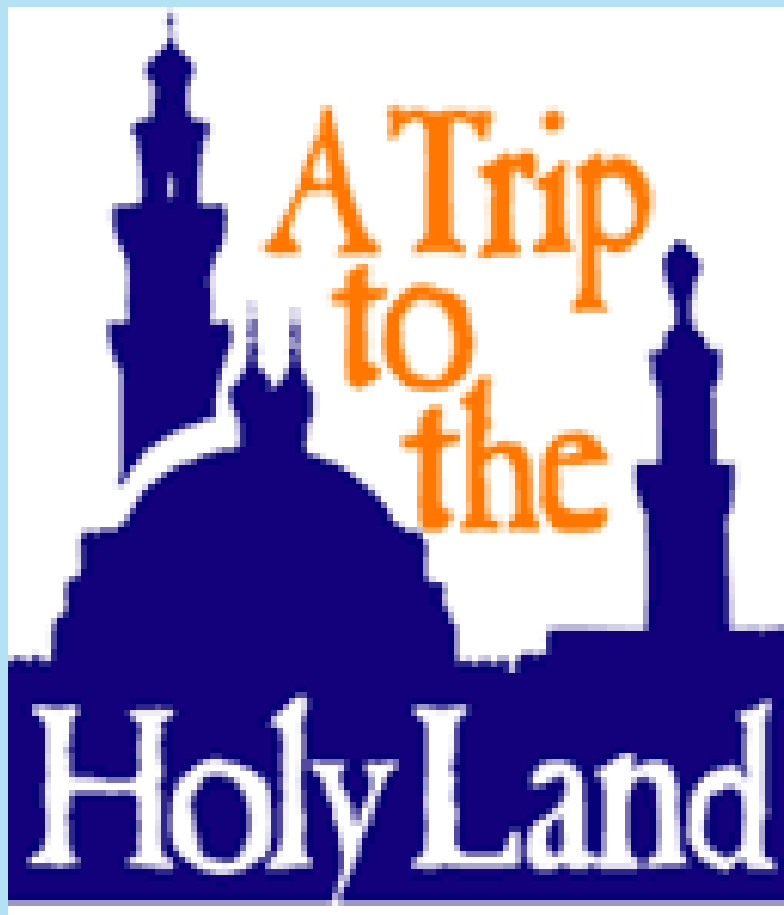
The Season of Advent will bring with it a study of some articles found in the Center for Action and Contemplations’ publication called “Oneing, Transformation.” As the year progresses to Lent, we will take a short break from our original goal of renewing our hearts and minds to a study called, **“You Set My Spirit Free, John of the Cross”**, a book of devotional readings for Lent. After Easter we will finish the year by looking again at Biblical teachings about transformation. We will explore how creativity helps to access right brain functions and brings us closer to a feeling of wholeness within ourselves.

Sharon Anderson

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL VIDEO VISIT TO HOLY LAND

YOU'RE INVITED to tour sites in the Holy Land with the Adult Bible Class. We started a terrific video series last year, which will finish around the Christmas holiday. Each week's session stands on its own, so not seeing prior sessions won't be a problem. All of us in the class have gained insight and knowledge, the smaller size encourages discussion participation, and the fellowship has been a true blessing. There is no obligation, so come join us to see what it's all about. We'll meet in the Retreat Room at 9:00 a.m. on Sundays, beginning September 19th. We're looking forward to welcoming you to what's been called the best-kept secret in the church.

Anna Bates



STEWARDSHIP, FINANCIAL, MEMORIAL

We are called to love God and ‘*provoke one another to bold acts of love*’ (Hebrews 10:24). Even as we experience the complications and the chaos of the world around us, we can focus our energy toward God’s ongoing work through First Presbyterian Church.

As we consider our financial position through the first seven months of the year, we can see that Dyno Wahl did an outstanding job of forecasting our budget for 2021. Thanks to all for your intentional and consistent financial support that allows FPC to demonstrate “bold acts of love” in our community.

Finance Snapshot

The total yearly budget at FPC is set at **\$146,895**. The budget anticipates monthly receipts and expenses of **\$12,241**.

FPC receipts are averaging **\$12,369** per month

\$86,581 received through July 31

\$93,171 received through August 8th

FPC expenses through July 31 are averaging **\$12,462** per month

\$87,233 expended through July 31

August expense TBD

Major Funds

Fund	January 2021	July 2021	Change
Buildings & Grounds	\$16,122	\$16,122	--
Heritage Trust Grant Match	\$ 5,676	\$ 5,676	--
Deacons	\$ 3891	\$ 2,543	\$ (1,348)
Memorial	\$23,725	\$16,280	\$ (7,445) *
Peace Garden	\$ 2,743	\$ 4,870	\$ 2,316

*Memorial Fund contributions toward live streaming equipment

Respectfully submitted,

Paula Vincent

Example Letter to Legislators

Dear Senator or Representative _____.

I am pleased to inform you that _____ (month/year of grant award) our _____ (building), received a \$ _____ (grant amount) matching grant from the Idaho Heritage Trust to _____ (scope of work).

As _____ (building or town) is located in District # _____. I thought it important that you be informed of this grant and aware that the Idaho Heritage Trust is at work in District # _____.

This grant has enabled the _____ (organization) to do restoration and preservation work on _____ (scope of work/building) and assure that future generations of Idahoans may enjoy this historic building.

I urge your continued support as a member of the Idaho State Legislature for the Idaho Heritage Trust and its important work in preserving Idaho's history and promoting viable communities.

Sincerely,

Addresses

Senator Woodward

P.O. Box 206

Ponderay, ID 83852

sdixon@house.idaho.gov

Representative Dixon

P.O. Box 151

Sagle, ID 83860

JWoodwrd@senate.idaho.gov

Representative Scott

P.O. Box 134

Blanchard, ID 83804

hscott@house.ida

Sample letter to Legislators (email or snail mail)

Please add a personal story about the church if you have one, i.e. I was married in this church, or I have been attending this church for ___ years.

Dear Senator Woodward, OR Representative Dixon, OR Representative Scott,

I am pleased to inform you that in November 2019 our church, First Presbyterian Church of Sandpoint, received a \$5000.00 matching grant from the Idaho Heritage Trust. Grant was awarded to fix badly needed repairs on the outside of our building. The stained-glass window above the doors show the church was built in 1906.

As First Presbyterian Church of Sandpoint is located in District #1, I thought it important that you be informed of this grant. The Idaho Heritage Trust is at work in District #1.

This grant will enable the congregation of First Presbyterian Church of Sandpoint to do restoration and preservation work on the soffits, trim, as well as replace rotting boards. We have already raised the matching funds for this project. This will assure that future generations of Idahoans may enjoy this historic building.

All of the work is sourced locally and the contractor is donating his time. I applaud your support as a member of the Idaho State Legislature for the Idaho Heritage Trust. The Trust has been important in working to preserve Idaho's history and promoting viable communities. Our church is the last church located in the downtown area of Sandpoint and still has the original stained-glass windows that were installed in 1906.

Please keep up this important work.

Thank you,

Your name





September

BIRTHDAYS

September Birthdays

1 Sylvia Humes

6 Shane Curtis

7 Marge Pietsch

18 Jeanne Marsden

21 Carol Ballard

21 Judy Labrie

24 Karen Rockhill

Regular Monthly Events



Sunday Worship 9:30 a.m. Live and Facebook Sept. 5th
Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m. Live and Facebook Sept. 12th
Monday - Al-Anon 6:00 p.m.
Tuesday - Book Study Group 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
 Contemplative Prayer Group 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
 Choir Practice postponed
Second and Fourth Tuesday - 6:00 p.m. PFLAG.
Wednesday - 6:00 p.m. Al-Anon
Thursday - 12:00 p.m. Al-Anon
 7:00 p.m. Alcoholics Anonymous



First Presbyterian Church

Ministers: Members and Friends

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