

# FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH BARABOO WISCONSIN

Newsletter Volume 7, 2024

We are a congregation of friendly and caring people  
dedicated to our involvement with church, community, and world projects.

## FOOD FOR KIDZ EVENT

Several volunteers from our church participated in packing food with "FOOD FOR KIDZ," which was a mobile food packing event held at the Baraboo High School in May. 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian church volunteers packed 612 meals of cinnamon instant oatmeal during a 2-hour shift from 6pm to 8pm. There were over 88,000 meals packed during the event!

The meals are shipped on a regular basis to four

primary countries that experience food insecurity issues. Those countries are Haiti, Honduras, Afghanistan and Sierra Leone, Ukraine was also mentioned.

Thank you to Tammy Bates, Kim Bockenbauer, Elgin Bulin, Shirley Bulin, Mary Collins, Joan Kaul, Dar Otto, Gail Schmedlin, Mary Steberl, Holly Stoffels, Steve Stoffels, Al Schroeder, Kathy Teasdale, and Jean Wendt. It is a joy to participate in events

like this! Our church family showed up and did our part. All the

planning, coordination & clean-up was done by Rotary International, Baraboo Interact Club and School District of Baraboo.



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!

### June Birthdays

6/2 – Laura Sloan  
6/10 - Jon Hatz  
6/12 – Jaxon Kramer  
6/16 – Jill Krueger  
6/25 – Kathy Allen

### July Birthdays

7/3 – Leo Skwor  
7/6 – Lorelie Drinkwater  
7/10 - Kim Bockenbauer  
7/10 - Jon Stoffels  
7/13 – Terry Loomis  
7/15 – David Baldwin  
7/16 - Tom Otto  
7/16 – Sharon McArthur  
7/16 - Bill Wresch  
7/18 – Elgin Bulin  
7/18 – Haesun Roberts  
7/25 – Bob Sloan

## HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!!

### June Anniversaries

6/7 – Sue and Bill Wresch  
6/8 – David and Sherry Baldwin  
6/9 – Elsie and David Gilmore  
6/9 – Sandy and Bob Zweifel  
6/10 - Marge and Dave Hatz  
6/26 – Paige and Luke Kramer  
6/28 – Gail and Bob Schmedlin

### July Anniversaries

7/8 – Deb and Mike Steinhorst  
7/31 – Anne and Dave Crane

*If your June or July birthday or anniversary is not listed  
please call in the date to our church office.*

## THOUGHTS FROM DAVID GILMORE

### -Moderator of Session

Our tendency is to think of those things we don't have rather than appreciating those things and people we do have. It seems it's just the way we're built. As a congregation we know that we don't have a pastor. We feel like half a church, but we're much more than that. We tend to overlook the blessings that we do have. Even though we don't have a pastor, I think it is a good time to remember what we do have. We have Kristin Johnson, our hard-working administrative secretary; we have David SaLoutos, a wonderful organist and pianist along with a backup pianist, Annie Calkins, and backing her up, Mona Larsen; we have a talented choir director, Melisa Skwor; and we have Gene and Mickey Rau, custodians. We have skilled volunteers in finance and worship technical support. We also have a strong Session with its Ministries: Building and Equipment, Congregational Life, Finance, and Outreach, all of them with dedicated people. They haven't quit. There's also the choir, Presbyterian Women, Church School, youth event leaders, and those who work on the endowment fund. Plus, I'm sure there's something I missed.

And then there's you, people who show up to worship every Sunday to share together as a community of faith, many of you come downstairs to share a time around refreshments. Through a dedicated volunteer who does scheduling, we have worship leaders who show up every Sunday, and however it goes, we listen for God's word and leading. Our presence at worship is very important. It is our witness to each other, the community at large, and to those who may show up as visitors. It shows we are a committed group of Christians who share together our faith in Jesus Christ and reach out to the world showing the reality of God's love.

I know it's frustrating at times not to have a pastor. It's frustrating to me. But when I look at what we do have, I'm encouraged about who we are and can be together. We are looking toward our next step, whatever that may be, with help from the Committee on Ministry of John Knox Presbytery. We will also do our own task of discernment. We will do this as quickly as possible. No matter what happens, I am not interested in treading water. I am interested in moving forward,

being a faithful disciple and part of a faithful community witnessing to God through Jesus Christ. At the moment, we may not have a pastor, but we have many other gifts; we will not let them go to waste. I invite you to share with me this adventure of faith.

### PERIOD PROJECT

We collect gently used cosmetic bags to donate to a project which provides free hygiene products to local school students. There is a collection bin located in the church Narthex. The high school uses our donations to stock their free dispensers, as well as providing supplies for students that struggle with access to products at home. Thank you for donating to this important and meaningful project!



### PREBYTERIAN WOMEN

Next time you grab a cup of water in the Narthex, take a look at the 12 Apostles that have a new home in the built-in cabinet behind the water dispenser. Graciously donated by Shirley Kieffer, the collection is a wonderful addition that has brought life back to a forgotten display. Thank you, Shirley!

### BLOOD DRIVE

Our blood drives collected 98 units this year! The first blood drive was held on February 29, which collected 50 units of blood, and helped save up to 150 lives. A second blood drive was held in May and a total of 48 units were donated, which helped save up to 144 lives! We appreciate all church members who volunteered to help during the drive.

## SUNDAY SCHOOL



The Sunday School kids have kept busy this Spring by participating in our Earth Day worship service and raising money for the Pentecost offering.

They also hosted a very special Fellowship on Mother's Day, and celebrated the end of the year with a party on May 19<sup>th</sup>.



We know they'll keep busy all summer long, and look forward to having them back in the Sunday school classroom this Fall!

## BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS

Summer is a time to do any needed outside repairs. So, you may notice some workers on the church roof replacing missing shingles blown off by strong winds. Elgin noticed that after one of our spring storms.

The church thermostats have been switched to the AC programming. You can do a temporary change just by pushing the + or - buttons. After 2 hours the thermostat will return to its summer programming.

We are excited to report that a handicap door system is being installed this summer on the parking lot entry. This will make it easier to enter and exit for folks with wheelchairs, walkers, and canes or if you are carrying an armload of stuff. The left-hand door as you enter will be the official handicap accessible door. There will be handicap push plates (large buttons) on the outside post and inside on the wall. Our dear church member Sandy Edwards asked us to consider this improvement to make it easier for her with her walker. Still thinking about her church even at the end of her life.

Please let any member of this ministry know of a building or equipment concern you may have.

Yours in Christ,

Liz Nevers, Elgin Bullin, Tom Otto, and Al Schroeder

## CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

Thanks to the planning and commitment of our caring Congregational Life members, we have some fun Fellowship events coming up this summer. June 9<sup>th</sup> was an "Ice Cream Social", and July 7<sup>th</sup> will be a "Charcuterie Board" themed Fellowship. You won't want to miss these fun Fellowships!

Jim Allen is also planning on another Young at Heart luncheon this year. More details to come, as we get closer to September. Thanks, Jim, for your commitment to an event that many look forward to!

Also, a special "Thank You" to Holly Stoffels, who has been over-seeing the scheduling of Fellowship hosts!



## CIRCUS PARADE EVENT

The Annual Circus Parade was on Saturday, June 8.



As we have done in prior years,

we opened our church facilities and offered use of the parking lot.

We had 92 guests use the church facilities. Parking and open house donations totaled \$250.46.



This event was organized by our Outreach Ministry, and is appreciated by many individuals in the community that use our facilities for a place of rest,

relief, and cool air on what is usually a hot and crowded day.



Thank you to everyone who volunteered their time and service for this event!

## OUR DONATIONS

We raised a total of \$263.37 for Pentecost. Of that, 40% stays with our church to use in local ministries for children at risk. The remainder is given to The John Knox Presbytery, and of that, 25% will go to Ministries with youth, 25% to young adult volunteers, and 10% to children at risk. We all did a little, and helped raise a lot!

## PRAYER SHAWLS

Our church family volunteers knit and crochet prayer shawls. We deliver the shawls to people who need prayers for special times in their lives. We hope the shawls give the recipients a feeling of comfort and peace. We want them to know that our church family is praying for them. Anyone wishing to pick up a prayer shawl and give it to a friend, neighbor, or relative may do so. The shawls are in a basket in the Narthex along with notes to give to the recipients.

## OUR CHOIR

Thank you to all the choir members, director Melisa Skwor, and accompanist David SaLoutos for the beautiful music you have provided. We wish those of you on break a wonderful summer, and look forward to enjoying your talents again in the fall. We also thank those of you that continue your musical services throughout the summer, you bless us greatly with your talent!

## DO YOU GET GRACE NOTES?

Grace Notes are weekly updates about our church events and projects. Every week our church Administrative Assistant emails Grace Notes out. If you are not getting Grace Notes by email and you would like to, contact the church Administrative Assistant at 608-356-5945 or email her at [office@presbybaraboo.com](mailto:office@presbybaraboo.com)

## CHURCH OFFICE INFORMATION

You can find Kristin in the office from Tuesday to Friday, from 8am to 1pm.

She can be reached by phone at: 608-356-5945 Or by email, at: [office@presbybaraboo.com](mailto:office@presbybaraboo.com)

## NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Articles and announcements appropriate for this newsletter are welcome! The next deadline is August 20. Submit articles to the church office.

## LEAD USHERS

Thank you to all Lead Ushers who have volunteered so far this year! Anyone wishing to become a Lead Usher is welcome. Call Cheryl Anderson at 608-493-2066 to volunteer or email her at [cheryla813@gmail.com](mailto:cheryla813@gmail.com). Thank you, Cheryl, for over-seeing our Lead Usher schedule!

## PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE UPDATE

A Congregational Meeting was held after the Worship Service on May 19, for the purpose of dissolving the committee.

It was voted to dismiss the pastor nominating committee with gratitude for their devotion and diligence.

Read the letter from Session below, which explains the reasoning that led to this decision:

Dearest Friends,

In December 2022, the congregation approved a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) to lead the search for a new full-time pastor for our church. Beginning in January 2023, the PNC began meeting almost weekly to effectively put together a procedure to guide the search process, review and discuss applications, and ultimately interview candidates. The PNC soared above these expectations and deserve the highest praise.

In the course of almost 15 months, the PNC has interviewed a handful of candidates, and the Session was excited to learn that on three separate occasions an offer was made. Unfortunately, each of these highly qualified individuals turned us down, deciding that their call was elsewhere. Additionally, circumstances surrounding the Pastor search have changed. Therefore, the Session has arrived at the decision to propose dissolving the PNC in order to further discern our next steps in our search for a Pastor.

Dissolving the PNC will require a vote by the congregation. Therefore, **Session is calling a congregational meeting on May 19th directly after church.** This meeting will be moderated by a representative from the *Committee on Ministry* (COM), a group that has been guiding us through this process.

While this decision may come as a surprise, there are a number of factors that led to this decision including:

1. Candidates who were given offers indicated our less than competitive salary as a factor for declining. However, offering a competitive salary consistent with the current economic climate was not sustainable for the long-term financial health of the church.
2. The PC(USA) Board of Pensions has recently made changes to their insurance policy that has a direct impact on the benefit package we are able to offer a full-time pastor.

For these reasons, and several others that will be discussed in more detail at the congregational meeting, Session believes that we need to explore different ideas and solutions as we seek a new Pastor.

We understand that the factors above may elicit questions and concerns about where we go from here. We remain confident and steadfast in knowing God has a plan and is guiding us through this process. We greatly appreciate your patience and prayers as we navigate through this tricky climate we find ourselves in. We look forward to continuing to work together to find the new Pastor for our church.

Yours In Christ,

Session Members of First Presbyterian Church of Baraboo

## **JOHN KNOX PRESBYTERY**

The office of The John Knox Presbytery has been moved from Richland Center, WI to Neenah, WI. The office, which had been placed in the geographic center of the Presbytery and jokingly named "Equally inconvenient for everyone," was rarely used in person anymore.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, executives and administrators had not occupied their office space daily. Committees that were forced to meet by zoom technology became adept at zoom meetings and committee members preferred skipping the drive before and after the meetings.

Another deciding factor was that the office administrator had retired. In examining options, Winnebago Presbytery had a part-time trained person, so they created a full-time position, where she splits her time between John Knox and Winnebago Presbyteries.

Their new address is:

John Knox Presbytery  
181 E. North Water St Suite 207  
Neenah, WI 54956

## **SUMMER LUNCH PROGRAM**

Our seven-week Summer Lunch Program that is organized by our Outreach Ministry is drawing near. It will begin on July 15 and go through August 30. Our church will host the lunches served on Mondays. Anyone that is interested in helping to donate, serve food or help with clean-up can contact Darlene Otto. We are also grateful for any monetary or dessert donations for our Monday shifts. Several other local churches have also volunteered to donate and serve lunch. They are Emmanuel Methodist, First United Methodist, New Life Community Advent Christian, St. Joseph's Catholic, St. Paul's Lutheran, Trinity Episcopal, and United Church of Christ. Other supporting partners, donors, and/or sponsors are: Baraboo Children's Museum, Dental Associates, IAM Dairy, Las Milpas, Lion's Club, Mary's Book Club, Oak Street Antiques, Pulse Fitness, Sauk County Nutritionist, Sauk County Public Health Department, Saint Clare Hospital Foundation, Pizza Ranch, The Back Pack Project, and William Bebber.

## **GREEN TEAM ECO-FRIENDLY TIPS**

*Use bar soap instead of liquid hand soap.* People sometimes worry that sharing a bar of soap is less sanitary than sharing a bottle of liquid soap. But think about it; the bar soap gets rinsed off every time you use it. The plastic pump? Not so much. Guess where the most germs are accumulating? For those folks who prefer body wash to soap, there is now solid, packaging-free shower gel.

*When you go to purchase eggs, purchase the eggs that are in the cardboard flats.* They are made from recycled newspaper, and they are quick to biodegrade (Unlike Styrofoam, which takes an incredibly long time to biodegrade). The cardboard flats do not produce harmful byproducts, another benefit over Styrofoam.

Try to reduce using items that take a long time to break down. Some of the LEAST biodegradable items that are easy to swap for better options are:

Plastic containers. They take 450 years to decompose!

\*Consider using washable glassware, or biodegradable containers for short-term use.

\*Buy a reusable K-Cup that you can fill with your own coffee grounds.

Plastic bags. They take 200-500 years to decompose.

\*Consider using cloth bags, instead. Find a seamstress that can repurpose that pile of clothing waiting to be donated, into shopping bags. Worn out jeans are great for these!

When we look around our homes, and maybe even here at church, we may still find some items that are not very Earth-friendly and consider replacing them with items that are better for the earth. When we each do a little, it adds up to a lot!