



Staying Connected



Bible Readings

January 15 Psalm 40:1-11; John 1:29-42
 January 22 Isaiah 9:1-4; Matthew 4:12-23
 January 29 Micah 6:1-8; Matthew 5:1-12

Bible Study

Looking to connect more deeply with God and each other? Join our Sunday morning Bible Study, every other Sunday at 8:30 am in the Fireside Room. The next gathering will be January 22th.

Annual Meeting

The Annual Congregational Meeting for First Presbyterian Church of Howard Lake has been called by the Session to be held Sunday, January 15th at approximately 10:20 am. The purpose for this meeting is to review the Session and Committee reports from 2022, review the budget for 2023 and any other business relevant to the future of First Presbyterian Church. A quorum is needed to conduct business, and your attendance will be appreciated! **This will be followed by a Potluck Lunch.**

Snow Removal

01/08/23 — 01/14/23	Koeppe's
01/15/23 — 01/21/23	Steve Berg
01/22/23 — 01/28/23	Trevor Berg
01/29/23 — 02/04/23	Shaw's
02/05/23 — 02/11/23	Tim Berg

January Birthdays:

Anna Hohag 19
 Al Carroll-Pezzella 20
 Caleb Karg 20
 Reta Blanchette 27



Anna Hohag is turning "100"

on January 19th! Help her celebrate by sending her a card to:

445 1st Street E, Apt. 18
 Howard Lake, MN 55349

Or, calling her at:
 320-543-0022

Open House at The Lodge on
 January 21st from 2:00—4:00 pm

Anna,
 May your birthday be sprinkled with
 fun and laughter!
 Have a very special day!

Needed Prayers



Please Pray for...

Healing: Rose Barberg's daughter Cheryl Paicius, Chris, Lee Gutknecht, Alma Robinson's grandson, Chris Robinson, Mike Koepp, Sherry Young (Trudy Berg's sister), Kathy Ramthun, and Joanne Dressel

At The Lodge: Anna Hohag and Phyllis Smith

At Brookridge: Reta Blanchette and Alice Swanson

At Good Samaritan: Delores Lahr

Please Pray for thankfulness and joy for . . . Andrea, Adam, Shane & Romana Koepp! Bless this beautiful family, Lord! Hold them in your loving arms!

Letter from Pastor Cathy

Epiphany Greetings,

This is the season of light as church people, annual meetings, new session teams are being formed and wonderings about what the New Year will bring to the church.

I recently read an article by Paul Nixon a Methodist pastor and founder of a group that looks forward to what is next for congregations in Christian Churches in America. It was a very interesting observation. He speaks about the end of the way we used to gather, when everyone was expected to be at church on a Sunday morning and didn't have other options like sports, shopping or working. This has been changing over the last fifty years but has been accelerated by the pandemic.

This is what he has observed about the next season of church:

- ◆ It is rooted in compassionately serving and loving neighbors.
- ◆ It has a highly committed group at its core, people who have made very tangible, and often sacrificial, covenant of how they wish to join their lives together in faith.
- ◆ Beyond this core, the circle is drawn wide. This church includes everyone in who belongs.
- ◆ Communion is more about bread broken around a table with robust conversation and laughter than about a liturgy in a church sanctuary.
- ◆ Christ Jesus is Lord - but by this I mean the troubling, profound character of the gospels, who is full-on radical in much of his teaching and full-on accepting of people outside good order boundaries.
- ◆ Often (not always) it lives intentionally in tandem with the church gathered in sanctuaries on Sunday mornings. Sometimes, its people just need a break from conventional church, and lines of institutional connection are less important.
- ◆ People (who are squeamish about organized religion) keep wandering in and commenting, "I had no idea that church could be like THIS."
- ◆ Grace experienced around this community keeps soaking in and messing with people's perceptions and practice of life. It is almost impossible to hang around in this space without getting infected and revolutionized by grace. Even when people are dogged by bad history, this place is liberating and transformational. This healing impact is available to persons who retain non-Christian faith traditions - it is free - it is offered without baptism!

So what are people's reactions to this new way of being church together? This is even more interesting with regard to this new church, most people fall into certain camps.

- ◆ People who still manage to find meaning in church sanctuaries here and there, but who are friends and allies to this new church - and enjoy time spent in unconventional spiritual spaces.
- ◆ People who are done with organized religion (at least for now) and who find this rising church to be like water in a desert.
- ◆ People who are defensive of church as it has existed, and are quick to find fault with anything that seems to challenge the primacy of church as they have appreciated it.
- ◆ People who remain skeptical that anything good can come of organized religion, given its warped and disturbing history of brokenness and power struggles.

Excerpts from *The Contours of land appearing through the fog* by Paul Nixon

The observations of this author are troubling and interesting. What does it mean for churches in the coming year? What does it mean for us? In these in-between times it is good to wonder and ask about what could happen for us. God continues to do new things if we are willing to "Come and See!"

May the Light of Christ shine on you this Epiphany season.

Pastor Cathy