

The Missive, March 2024

First Presbyterian Church

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“Good Grief...”



*Is grief ever good? The 2023 movie of the same name, *Good Grief*, starring Dan Levy, explores this question. Though the cause of one's grief is never good, can good come from the grieving process? In the case of the movie, the protagonist learns that, though the unexpected death of his husband is*

tragic, relationships are complicated and friendships can surprise us in a good way. Journeying through grief, for him, deepened his friendships.

*But, this term, *Good Grief*, caught my curiosity. Admittedly, I'm often likened to Charlie Brown and with this, saying “Good Grief!” is not uncommon in my house.*

So, I did a bit of an etymological search and discovered that the phrase is a euphemism for “Good God”. Substituting the word grief for God does two things: it allows one to admit to a frustration while skirting the offense of invoking the Lord's name in vain.

The oldest of these “good” euphemisms is the now obsolete exclamation “good lack”. The word “lack” comes from “alack”. I don't know if that will ever make a comeback but I might

*get behind some of these other long-lost euphemisms listed in *The American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms* like, “good gravy,” “golly Moses,” “holy gumdrops,” (which sounds like a Batman caption, *Holy Gumdrops, Batman!*) and my favorite: “great goldfish”.*

Each is meant to express reaction to an unpleasant, often surprising event, and though the levity found in these long-forgotten phrases may be a momentary escape from our grief, grief itself is painful.

The month of March, with all its cheerful offerings: St. Patrick's Day, March Madness, Spring Break, etc., always brings with it a somber undertone because, as Christians, we are journeying through Lent and remembering the crucifixion of our Lord reminds us that life is painful, death is painful.

*We know there are some in our midst who are struggling with grief, such as the loss of a loved one. We would like to offer a chance to discuss grief with the help of the book “*A Hole in the World*” by Amanda Held Opelt. This discussion will take place over three Sundays (3.17, 4.7, and 4.14) and will be led by Reverend Pat Weatherwax.*

We hope you will join us.

*Grace and peace,
Mark*

MARCH 2024

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|---|---|---|--|-----|-----|
| | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| 3 9:45: Worship, Communion & KidsFirst 1:00: Boy Scouts | 4 1:00: Pastoral Care Team 5:00: Boy & Cub Scouts | 5 9:00: FPC Walking Grp. 10:00: Food Pantry 11:00: Church Staff Mtg. 6:15: Brownie & Daisy Scouts | 6 10:00: Food Pantry Noon: Seasoned Seniors 4:30: Girl Scouts | 7 11:00: Bible Study 4:00: Choir Rehearsal 5:00: Girl Scouts | 8 | 9 |
| 10 ~ <i>Daylight Savings</i> ~ 9:45: Worship, 2¢-a-Meal & KidsFirst Noon: Session/Deacon Retreat 2:00: Boy Scouts 2:00: 4H Club | 11 5:00: Boy & Cub Scouts | 12 10:00: Food Pantry 11:00: Church Staff Mtg. | 13 10:00: Food Pantry 12:30: Worship & Music 6:15: Session Meeting | 14 11:00: Bible Study 4:00: Choir Rehearsal 6:00: Deacons | 15 | 16 |
| 17 ~ <i>St. Patrick's Day</i> ~ 9:45: Worship & KidsFirst 11:00: Just Love 11:15: Grief/ Book Discussion | 18 ~ Presidents' Day ~ 5:00: Boy & Cub Scouts 6:30: Boy Scouts | 19 9:00: FPC Walking Grp. 10:00: Food Pantry 10:00: Connected Threads at Beacon Pointe 11:00: Church Staff Mtg. 6:15: Brownie & Daisy Scouts | 20 10:00: Food Pantry 4:30: Girl Scouts 7:00: Moms' Group | 21 11:00: Bible Study 4:00: Choir Rehearsal 5:00: Girl Scouts | 22 | 23 |
| 24 9:45: Worship | 25 5:00: Boy & Cub Scouts 6:00: Boy Scouts | 26 8:00: Men's Breakfast 10:00: Food Pantry 11:00: Church Staff Mtg. | 27 10:00: Food Pantry 6:30: Trivia Night | 28 11:00: Bible Study 4:00: Choir Rehearsal | 29 | 30 |
| 31 ~ <i>Easter Sunday</i> ~ 9:45: Worship & KidsFirst | | | | | | |

March Celebrations

March Birthdays

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1 st Wanda Clawson | 16 th Caroline Gray | 23 rd Cheri Larson |
| 6 th Brianne Irey | 17 th Oliver Gauthier | 24 th Brian Evely |
| 6 th Megan Lebiecki | 17 th Ross Perigo | 24 th Brady Slezak |
| 6 th Mike Sullivan | 17 th Nick Steele | 24 th Bob Hills |
| 7 th Kai Fiordalis | 19 th Steve Saddler | 25 th Mark Hittle |
| 9 th Larry Langshaw | 21 st Bronwyn Helmick | 26 th Kay Irey |
| 11 th Kathi Muss | 22 nd Mackenzie Deater | 26 th Allen Stupica |
| 13 th Marilyn Alman | 22 nd Catherine Gibson | 30 th Lee Koffend |
| 13 th Dori Jones | 22 nd Chris Miller | 30 th Owen Osborne |
| 14 th Lois Martin | 23 rd Dave Fisher | |
| 15 th Arielle Mack | 23 rd Laura LaLonde | |

& Anniversaries

17th Pam & Bill Mattes for 44 years

Carillon Hymns and Honoree

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Selection</i> | <i>Honoree</i> |
|------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| 14 th | <i>How Great Thou Art</i> | <i>Alice Hill Kenworthy</i> |
| 15 th | <i>The King of Love My Shepherd Is</i> | <i>Jeanne Gross Kalupa</i> |
| 18 th | <i>In the Garden</i> | <i>Paul & Veda Robinson</i> |
| 20 th | <i>For the Beauty of the Earth</i> | <i>Makena Clawson</i> |
| 24 th | <i>It is Well with My Soul</i> | <i>Kathy Hoorn's birthday</i> |
| 24 th | <i>Here I am Lord</i> | <i>Alan & Marjorie Brundage</i> |
| 31 st | <i>Old Rugged Cross</i> | <i>Billie Showers</i> |



FPC ANNOUNCEMENTS

Connected Threads: Connected Threads will be meeting every third Tuesday, 10 am, at Beacon Pointe. This month that will be on the 19th.

Men's Breakfast: Food and Fellowship, Tues. March 26th, 8am at Liz's Parkview Café.

Richland Food Pantry: Call 269.343.3663 to make an appointment, Walk-ins Welcome. Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 10am to Noon.

Weekly Bible Study: Every Thursday at 11am in the Resource Center. Everyone is welcome!

Choir Rehearsal: Thursdays at 4pm.

Women's Book Club: Our next meeting is Wednesday, March 13, at the home of Sharon Wherry, 6368 Hidden Lake Circle, Richland. We are reading "Matrix" by Lauren Groff. Questions can be fielded by calling 402.890.6208.

How the Pipe Organ Works

by Larry Myland

Occasionally, folks come up to the organ console after worship and ask about exactly how the thing works. You know from experience that organ keyboards and piano keyboards look pretty much the same. Other than the actual tones produced, that's where similarities end.

How you depress or strike a piano key determines a great deal about the qualities of the tone produced. Not so on the organ. Striking the organ keyboard with a sledge hammer would have no essential effect on the tone produced.

The organ's sound depends on the "stops" or voices the organist chooses to employ for any given piece to be played. Pipes come in a great variety each of which produces a different quality of sound. There are four basic types: flute, string, reed, and diapason, sometimes called "principle." Principles produce the characteristic "organ" sound.

The length of the pipe determines the musical pitch that it generates. Pipes receive wind from a wind chest that serves the double purpose of holding the pipes in place. When wind is admitted to the foot of the pipe it sets a column of air vibrating: the longer the pipe the lower the pitch. Pipes range in size from that of a pencil (an almost inaudibly high pitch to 32 feet in length, a pitch more palpable than aural). There are even organs with pipes 64 feet long. These behemoths produce volcanic sounds that can be felt rather than heard. Pipes of any given tone quality, say flute or string, comprise a "rank:" A rank is typically made up of 61 pipes, or one pipe for each of the 61 keys on a standard organ keyboard. Oh, there are also 32 pedal pipes played by the feet. Our Schantz organ, made in Ohio expressly for this church, has 25 ranks and 1551 pipes. If you do the arithmetic, there are reasons it doesn't work out.

A bellows raises the wind that makes the organ sing. A reservoir acts as a governor between the bellows and the wind chest. This allows the pipes to sing at a consistent pitch. Without the governor, the pipes would have the wavy sound of a police siren. Imagine trying to sing hymns to that!

As you know, the organ is capable of a very wide range of musical sounds, from demure innocence to explosive majesty. The art of registration or "stop" selection is the way these sounds are created. You've heard the expression, pulling out all of the stops. That line is straight out of the world of the organ. The word "stop" refers to one of the multiple tabs or knobs on the organ console. Our organ has 20 stops; some are composed of one rank each, others have as many as four ranks each. Most organists agree, however, that the most important "stop" on the organ is the room in which the organ is placed. That's why long, narrow high ceilinged churches made of stone and glass sound so incredibly beautiful.

Wait, What? Questions & Answers

by Rev. Mark Jennings

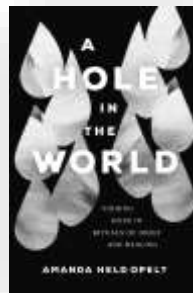
Do you have questions about something you heard in church? Have you always wondered why we do or say the things we do? Wondered what something means? This regular column is the place to bring up those questions and try to find an answer.

Why do we refer to the 40 days in Lent? When I count the days starting on Ash Wednesday and ending with Holy Saturday, I come up with 46! What's up with that???

Gentle Reader, you are quite correct that Lent is the time between Ash Wednesday and Holy Saturday. However, we don't count Sundays. Sundays are considered a "feast day" celebrating the resurrection (score! You can eat that chocolate on Sundays!) When you subtract the 6 Sundays in Lent, you are left with 40 days, the time Jesus spent in the wilderness.

A Hole in the World

by Rev. Pat Weatherwax



Grief hurts. All of us have had some grief. Some of us have had terrible grief. It may help to talk about it in a safe place, with others who understand.

Society has a variety of rituals that revolve around grief. These are examined in a book entitled "A Hole in the World" by Amanda Held Opelt. Her sister, an excellent writer herself, died unexpectedly, adding devastating grief to the pain of the author's repeated miscarriages. Opelt explores how previous generations and other cultures expressed grief through rituals and practices, as she processes her own pain.

If you are interested in a 3 session discussion on these rituals and how you've processed your grief, join Pat Weatherwax in the Resource Room after worship, on March 17, April 7 and April 14.

Copies of the book are available in the office or from your favorite bookstore.

Watch for more details, and get started by reading the introduction and first two chapters for the first gathering. I plan to share my grief journey and look forward to hearing yours.

Love is Love is Love Choral Concert

by Thomas Stegink

Two church members, Anne Fontaine and Tom Stegink, are members of a local choir which was formerly known as the Kalamazoo Bach Festival Chorus and is now Kalamazoo Choral Arts. Their winter concert is called "Love Is Love Is Love" and takes place Tuesday evening March 5 at 7:30 PM at the Dalton Theater on the Kalamazoo College campus. Details and tickets are available on their website kalamazoochoralarts.org. Call Tom for more details.

Program Description: What the world needs now is love, sweet love. In the 7th volume of this beloved annual concert, we celebrate all the ways love shows up, ranging from love of God, romantic love, nationalistic love, love of family, love of justice, and love of oneself.

"Love Is" features Kalamazoo Choral Arts and also Kalamazoo College Singers. The combination of youthful energy and vast amounts of singing experience is electric. People will hear everything from Three Dog Night to spirituals at this concert, each one celebrating the idea that LOVE shows up in many forms, and is always a good thing." With two choirs, one beautiful venue, and a whole program of powerful lyrics, melodies and rhythms, you will be thrilled you joined us.

Repertoire Highlights: Three Dog Night, Bach Cantata, Rachmaninoff, Creole Folk Songs, Prince's Purple Rain, Effervescent Canadian Folk Music, Meditative Moments, Appalachian Songs. Songs in Creole, Spanish, Russian, German, English

Sadarra Fields to Perform at Carnegie Hall

from Larry Myland & Sadarra Fields

Our former choir director, Sadarra Fields, as a member of The Brazeal Dennard Chorale, is going to perform at Carnegie Hall this June! Their performance was scheduled for 2020 but was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

To make this possible, Sadarra and the entire Brazeal Dennard Chorale are fundraising for this trip. If you are interested in hearing some of their music online and helping make the Carnegie Hall performance a reality, follow this link: www.brazealdennard.com. If you choose to donate, putting Sadarra Field's name in the memo is important so the proceeds go to the correct account. Sadarra is about \$500 away from her goal.



Brazeal Dennard
Chorale

Help Us Feed Them Elders & Deacons Retreat

by Erin Jennings

We are so appreciative of our elders and deacons and we know YOU are too! They dedicate themselves to the service of the church for a three year term, many opting to repeat a second term when filling their chair is difficult.

This great group of leaders in our church has not met for a retreat in 5 YEARS! But this is about to change. On March 10, when they gather jointly after worship and coffee hour, we would like to provide their meal. Think of it as Appreciation Day!

There will be 16-20 people. A main dish—Pasta al Forno—is already being provided with both a meat and meatless version. But we should offer both a small dairy-free and a grain-free dish as well. Salad, bread, and dessert are needed. Lastly some snacks for the afternoon are also appreciated,

Since we are sure there are more people who wish to show their appreciation than we need, please consider sending a card, flowers, or some token of thanks if you are unable to provide part of the meal.

Contributions are being coordinated by Erin 269.491.7396

New Church Snapshot in Office

by Rachel Little

Exciting new things are happening in the church office! We have three new, large, beautifully framed calendars hanging on the hallway wall in the office just outside Pastor Mark's door (Thank you Chris Gobble!!). Our goal with these calendars is for staff and committee members to be able to see a three-month snapshot of what is happening in the church, which should help lead to further collaboration and communication.

I invite committee members hoping to plan events at the church to come and look at the calendars to find the date and space that will work best for your event. When you decide where and when you would like your event to take place, please use the sticky notes in the hanging caddy to the left of the calendars to mark your selection. Write the event title, date, time, and room on the sticky note, then stick that sticky note to the calendar. When I see a sticky note on the board, I will add it to the official church calendar.

These new calendars are another great way to see how active our church is and what we are working on. Even if you're not currently planning an event for the church, come in and have a look.



Days of Significance, March, 2024

March 1: Zero Discrimination Day

March 17: Bayard Rustin's birthday

Last week of March: National LGBT Health Awareness Week

March 31: International Transgender Day of Visibility

Save the date! Our next discussion group meeting will be April 21 in the Gull Prairie Room. The topic will be the PC(USA) position on LGBTQ+ questions. (The book discussion originally planned for this date has been pushed back to the Fall. Watch this space for more information.)

Our next general meeting is March 17 at 11 AM in the church library. We will be working on planning for the Pride worship service in June and would love to have your input even if you've never come to a Just Love meeting in the past! All are welcome (and encouraged) to attend! Mark your calendar for future meetings; we meet the third Sunday of every month at 11 AM.

A Minute to Learn: Who was Bayard Rustin ?

Bayard Rustin (1912-1987) was a political activist and the organizer of the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. He brought awareness to civil rights, including LGBTQ rights, and encouraged Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to work towards justice from a nonviolent approach. Because he was a Black gay man in the 1960s he typically advised civil rights leaders like King in private, but by the 1980s he had become a public activist for gay rights at the encouragement of his partner, Walter Naegle, who is now the executive director of the Bayard Rustin Fund and board member emeritus at the Bayard Rustin Center for Social Justice in Princeton, NJ. In 1986 Rustin gave a speech asserting the perspective that being gay had taken over being Black in the context of societal bigotry. Rustin died in 1987 at the age of 75. Upon learning of his passing, President Ronald Reagan praised him as "a great leader in the struggle for civil rights in the United States and for human rights throughout the world." In 2013 Rustin was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Barack Obama.

Notable Quotes:

"Bayard Rustin was an unyielding activist for civil rights, dignity, and equality for all. An advisor to the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., he promoted nonviolent resistance, participated in one of the first Freedom Rides, organized the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, and fought tirelessly for marginalized communities at home and abroad. As an openly gay African American, Mr. Rustin stood at the intersection of several of the fights for equal rights." - President Barack Obama, 2013, on posthumously awarding Bayard Rustin the Presidential Medal of Freedom

March Small Groups

by Amber Beals

Walking Group:

March 5, 9am: Meet at Richland Township park by the playground for one or two loops.

March 19, 9am: Meet in the north church parking lot to walk the 2.2 mile preserve.

Trivia at the Library: March 27, 6:30pm. If you are interested in joining our trivia team, please email Amber at amberbeals@gmail.com

Mom's Group: March 20, 7pm at the Deacon Brown House. If you are not currently receiving emails from Amber about mom's group events, please reach out! amberbeals@gmail.com. We will read Part 1 of Present Over Perfect by Shauna Niequist for the March gathering, but come whether or not you have read it!

Family Group: There has been an interest in regular family-based activities to give the kids a chance to hang together outside of church school. A sign up is now available for families to sign up to host or plan an event. The events will occur roughly every other month and don't have to fall on a specific day of the month - the person planning has the flexibility to choose a date/time that works for you. However, please reach out to Amber when choosing a date so we can coordinate with other church activities. I will help you communicate it and do



Family Group
Sign-Up

whatever else to help you. The activity you plan/host can be something very simple or more involved. Examples: Pool party, family walk, campfire, game night, sledding, bowling, Growlers game, etc. Please let me know if you have any questions! amberbeals@gmail.com

<https://tinyurl.com/yjm9b4dr>

Hole in the World/Grief discussion: Dates: March 17, April 7 and 14 following the Sunday service in the Resource room. Please refer to Pat's missive article for details!



Shared Blessings

by Erin Jennings

Shared Blessings partnered with Amber and Small Group Ministries to host a book discussion on “Small Great Things” by Jodi Picoult (pronounced “Pee-Koh”)

The book was chosen so we could expand our understanding and deepen our compassion regarding race. The title comes from a quote of Dr. Martin Luther King, “If I cannot do great things, I can do small things in a great way.” The question was asked, “What small things can we do?”

Approaching the problem of race relations in this country is hard. There are all sorts of things we are capable of doing politically to make this country a more fair and equitable place for people of color. As a church, we can keep our hearts open to ways we can participate in social justice projects.

But it was on the personal level that we had our most promising conversation. What can we do? What can we do so that, when we encounter someone of color we can really look at ourselves and our reaction? Do we make eye contact? Do we smile? Or say hello? Worse, do we reach for our purse, or the car door lock?

The concern is not in the action or inaction you choose (there might be a good reason to lock your door!), the concern is why you made the choice. Unconscious bias is that thing in our behavior that causes us to avoid eye contact (out of fear or as a way to avoid talking to someone who is different). It’s that thing that makes us reach for our purse when there is nothing about the other person’s behavior to necessitate it. Much of the time we aren’t even aware!



At the most basic level, we ask ourselves (and you) to be more self-aware regarding how we interact with someone of a different color, and why we choose those behaviors.

When we can stop being part of a society that marginalizes through these multiple micro-aggressions; when we can consciously choose to treat others with respect and dignity; we are doing small things that - together with others - can have a great impact.



Harding's Community Rewards

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1% Rebate - Quarterly purchase \$0-\$899.99

2% Rebate - Quarterly purchase \$900-\$1799.99

4% Rebate - Quarterly purchase \$1800

Ken's Flower Pots

Margaret Hetzel wants to give Ken's collection of flower pots new homes. It's no surprise that Ken was an avid gardener. Margaret isn't, but she's eager for the flower pots to stay in service and out of the trash. If you're a gardener and want to help Margaret by claiming some flower pots, please let her know when you see her in church or Bible Study or by emailing her at k.m.hetzel@sbcglobal.net.

Cereal, Soup and Cookies

Three items the pantry can't keep on our shelves: Boxed Breakfast Cereals, Cans of Hearty Soups and Cookies. The Richland Food Pantry is eager to accept donations to help members of our community with food insecurities, and these three items are most appreciated. Monetary gifts can also be directed to the food pantry by specifying it as the intended recipient on your church offering envelopes or in the check's memo line.



KidsFirst Anticipating Easter Fun by Remembering the Christmas Pageant

by Brooke Heck



JESUS' LAST WEEK



Read the below Scriptures and figure out where it belongs on Jesus' journey to resurrection!

Luke 22: 3-6

Mark 15:17-20

Matthew 21: 1-11

Luke 22: 14-20

John 11:25-26

Matthew 21: 18-22

John 20:1-10

Matthew 21:12-17



First Presbyterian Church
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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

MARCH

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH STAFF

Dr. Mark W. Jennings, Pastor
Reverend Pat Weatherwax, Parish Associate
Erin Jennings, Volunteer Assistant to the Pastor

Larry Myland, Director of Music
Andrea Large, Chancel Choir Director

Amber Beals, Coordinator of Small Group Ministries
Brooke Heck, Sunday School Director

Rachel Little, Office Manager
Karen Urban, Office Volunteer

Gretchen Ferris, Treasurer
Chris Gobble, Financial Secretary

Connie Slater, Sexton

Paul Gobble, Director of Communications
Jeremiah Smith and Zoe Gobble, Production