



PRESBYTERIAN NEWS

First Presbyterian Church of Paw Paw, Michigan

120 Pine St – 269-657-3111 – firstpres1@btc-bci.com – <http://1stpresb.pawpawmi.us>

Volume 80, Issue 1

January/February 2012

From Tom's Study

"Praise the Lord!" Psalm 135, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150

"O give thanks to the Lord!" Psalm 136

It is hard to believe that on January 15, I will begin my tenth year of ministry among you. I want to take this moment to thank all of you for your faithful ministry at the church, in the church, through the church, in the community and in the world. You truly are a group of people seeking to be a beacon of love, hope, and light in the world. I feel privileged to be serving in your midst. Thank you for being partners in ministry.

2011 was a particularly exciting year as we took a tremendous leap of faith and hired Tami and Adam to help us expand our worship experience and grow our youth outreach. Tami and Adam have been a huge gift to our ministry. Watching the Holy Spirit work through them has truly been a blessing. It will be a great joy to see how God continues to bear fruit through their ministry among us.

Of course with all changes and new beginnings there are bumps along the way. One of those bumps has definitely been connected to an expanding repertoire of music. I want to take the rest of this article to share a few thoughts about music in worship.

It has been said that music is the language of the soul. For most of us music has a deep connection to our inner being. We become particularly connected to the music that speaks most profoundly to us during our adolescent and young adult years. Whatever that music was or is will throughout our lives have a deep soul connection.

So for me, if I find a radio station playing music from the late seventies and early eighties I can just start singing along. Those years of music will always be familiar and comfortable for me. Also the music I sang in youth group and in college worship settings remains ever familiar and comfortable.

Most often I think that is true for most of us. I was talking to someone in the long term care industry who was expressing how they are changing the kind of musical groups they bring in from solely big band era sounds to occasional early rock and roll sounds. Every generation has a musical language that speaks

to their hearts, to their souls. I think this situation has even become more complex because since the 1950's what's popular musically has changed much more rapidly, just as is the case with all aspects of our culture.

When we take this into account it becomes quite understandable why it is a tremendous challenge to plan worship in a manner that speaks the musical language of multiple generations all at the same time.

At the same time sacred music is constantly changing as well. The traditional hymn for instance was designed as a theological teaching tool. Take some time to read some hymns. For instance read through Martin Luther's (1529) "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God". What a marvelous statement on the sovereignty of God. Such theological hymns were and are powerful teaching tools. The authors sought to engage our head.

Beginning in the mid to late 1800's and through the 1940's many hymns started having a chorus, a phrase, or sentence that was repeated after each theological stanza. For instance, "How Great Thou Art" (1885) or "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" (1923) represent two such examples. By adding a chorus the author sought to speak to both the head and the heart by providing an oft repeated refrain that could be remembered more easily and sung through the week. Since the 1960's worship music has been written to engage more fully the emotions and our spiritual longings. The music has been written to be more meditative using succinct theological or scriptural statements that can be mediated upon in a prayerful posture. Today's music harkens back to the repetitive refrains of the last 20 Psalms where lines such as "Praise the Lord" or "O Give Thanks to the Lord!" repeat over and over.

While each of us has our particular favorite style of sacred music, just as we do from our adolescent and young adult years, one style is not better than the other. Rather they are simply different with different intentions. Today's contemporary songs are designed to engage our hearts in a prayerful meditation. For instance, think about the chorus from "Taste and See!"

"Taste and see that You are good
I taste and see that You are good
Yes, I taste and see that You are good
And Your love, Your love endures forever"

As we sing that over and over can we open our hearts to truly know that God is good and that God's love endures forever? Meditation is designed to move us beyond just believing an idea intellectually to knowing its truth in our heart. This is so important because until faith moves beyond just an intellectual exercise it has little transformative power in our lives or in our world.

In Psalm 119, the Psalmist entreats us to "Mediate on God's precepts, meditate on God's statutes, meditate on God's wondrous works, and meditate on God's promises." Meditation is different from reading theological treatises. Meditation is giving ourselves to the power of God's transformative word and letting it have its way with our hearts and our actions.

So as we plan worship not only does every generation have a different musical style that connects to the soul, sacred music too has developed different styles with different purposes and intentions. The truth is God is present and at work as we sing in worship no matter the style or the form. The question and challenge facing each of us is can we open ourselves to God's voice knowing that God is speaking?

I pray that we can have tremendous grace for each other during this critical time in church history and in the life of our congregation. God is at work no matter the style of the song we are singing. The question is whether we are open to what God is doing? I pray that we are!!!

Blessings on this New Year— Pastor Abbott

Exciting Upcoming Events

Souper Bowl Sunday: On Sunday, February 5 the deacons will host the annual Souper Bowl Sunday. The proceeds go to support Eleanor's Pantry.

Wyldlife Camp: Attention all middle school students. Don't miss out on a great weekend at camp from February 10-12. Sign-up forms available at the church. Don't let money hinder your participation, we can help.

Ash Wednesday Worship: On Wednesday, February 22, 7:00 p.m. we will gather around the Lord's Table to begin our Lenten Journey. Don't miss this special evening of worship.

Annual Meeting: Don't miss the Annual Meeting, immediately following the 11:00 a.m. worship service on February 26th.

Interested in Joining the Church? If you have questions about the church or would like some

information about membership please contact Pastor Abbott at 657-3111.

Adult Small Groups

Attention Men: Men's breakfast will take place on Saturday, **January 28 & February 25**, at 8:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall. All men are invited and we would love to have you join us for this time of food, fellowship, and study.

Monday Night Bible Study: We will join together at 7:00 p.m. in the Library to study the Scripture Passages for the upcoming Sunday. It would be a gift to have you join us. We will resume meeting on January 9th.

Sunday Morning Classes: There is one morning class beginning at 9:45, in the library. The class resumes on January 8th and will study the book of James. The other class will look at Rob Bell's book Love Wins. That class meets at the same time in the lounge.

Worship Opportunities

Sunday Worship Times: On January 1st there will be one worship service at 10:00 a.m. Beginning on January 8th we will return to the two worship service schedule of 8:15 and 11:00 a.m. That schedule will continue through May 20th.

Communion Celebration: We will celebrate communion on January 8, February 5, 22, 26.

Invite a Friend: One of the ways we can be a beacon in our community is by simply inviting people to join us in worship. People's spirits are thirsty. Let us invite them to the well that never runs dry. Make sure to offer to pick them up.

Parking on Sundays: If you don't mind walking a bit, we would encourage folks to park on the street leaving the parking lot for folks who have a hard time walking, visitors, and parents with a car full of kids.

Meetings

Commission Meetings: In January all commissions will meet on January 17. We will meet together in the Sanctuary at 6:30 for an organizational meeting. Then the commissions will meet from 7:00 to 8:00. Future meeting times will be set that night.

Session & Deacon Meetings: The Session and Deacon meetings will take place on Tuesday, January 17 & February 21, at 8:00 p.m.

Elder/Deacon Visioning: On Sunday January 22nd we will meet from around 1:00 p.m. until 3:30 p.m. Our time will begin with a lunch. We will take time

to celebrate all that God has done in our midst while looking ahead to where God is calling us to move and minister.

Fellowship

Monthly Potluck: Invite a friend to join you on Wednesday, January 11th & February 8th at 6:30 p.m. for potluck. We have great food and a wonderful time together so invite a few friends.

Weekly Fellowship: Stick around and enjoy building relationships with each other after every service of worship. The food is always good as well. This a great time to grab a friend and spend some time in prayer.

Youth Ministry

Wyldlife: Be looking for the New Year schedule. We are looking forward to an astounding 2012

Wyldlife Camp: Don't forget camp is coming from February 10-12.

Young Life: High school people please check your Facebook page for the latest Young Life news. Young Life meets most Monday nights, somewhere in the area, from sometime in the evening to later in the evening. Believe me you don't want to miss it.

Middle School Sunday School: On January 8th the middle school folks resume meeting. They will meet each Sunday at 10:00 a.m.

High School Sunday School: Deb Abbott will gather with the high school folks beginning on January 8th and continue through the school year. The class meets at 9:30 a.m.

Children's Ministry

Sunday School for pre-school through middle school: Regular Sunday School will resume on January 8th at 10:00 a.m.

Teacher Training: Training for the next quarter of Sunday School will take place after worship on Sunday, January 29th at 12:30 p.m. Participants will meet in Pastor Abbott's Study.

Teachers Needed

For Nursery/Abraham's Tent: If anyone is interested in volunteering for nursery or Abraham's Tent lessons, I am in need of some help. Please let me know as soon as possible. Abraham's Tent is teaching a short lesson to children from ages 4-8 during the 11:00 service. Danean Baker 436-1944 or zamese1@yahoo.com

For Elementary Sunday School: If you might be interested in teaching the elementary age children during Sunday School (9:45-10:45), please let Danean Baker or Bill Welling know as soon as possible. You will be teaching 3-4 weeks of lessons with a team teacher. The lessons are provided. Any questions or if you want to volunteer, please contact Bill or Danean.

2012 Per Capita Apportionment

Our congregation's share of the support for PC USA General assembly, Synod of the Covenant, and the Presbytery of Lake Michigan amounts to \$ 6739.36 and is due in January. The amount billed to our church for 2012 the amount is \$ 24.28 per active member.

Just as each member helps support our local church, each church has a responsibility to support the mission of the governing bodies of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

"Per Capita is an opportunity for all active members of the Presbyterian Church throughout the governing bodies to participate equally, responsibly and independently by sharing the cost of coordination and evaluation of mission; and of performing ecclesiastical, legislative, and judicious functions that identify a Reformed church, while at the same time strengthening the sense of community among all Presbyterians." (GA minutes, Part 1, 1995)

Of the \$ 24.28 due for each of our active members, \$ 6.63 goes to support the work of General Assembly, \$ 3.25 goes to support the work of the Synod of the Covenant (Michigan and Ohio), and \$ 14.50 goes to support the work of the Presbytery of Lake Michigan.

It has been our practice at Paw Paw to ask each member to pay their Per Capita expense in January each year. Please mail or deposit into the offering plate your check marked "Per Capita" to cover the number of active members in your household. We have also placed a blue Per Capita envelope in your box of contribution envelopes for you convenience.

The Session gratefully thanks you in advance for this voluntary giving and support of the larger family of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

THANK YOU!

Wendy Mickle, Andy Thorburn, Ric Baker,
Tom Baney (Administration Commission)



Mission Opportunities

Jonas Jars: Thanks to the generous giving of our congregation coin savers the Jonas Jar Project was able to raise \$700 to send to the Reverend Jonas Naceimento for his Home of the Good Seed shelter for children. What one can do is helpful, but what we can do together is powerful.

Second Saturday for Service: Please plan to participate in this month's Second Saturday for Service on the 14th of January. We will be making a meal for the Prayer Clinic and working on painting the kitchen at the Homeless Shelter in Decatur. If you have a project that the church could work on with you, or for you, please let Tom Shoemaker or Deb Abbott know of it.

Eleanor's Pantry: There has been a significant increase in people coming to Eleanor's Pantry for assistance. The food pantry could use your help. Peanut Butter and canned fruit are both in high demand and short supply. If while shopping you see needed items on sale, or could pick up an extra one when you purchase your own, it would be appreciated. Bring it to church and someone will see that it gets delivered.

Don't forget to shop for the pantry when you are at the store. Or if you are able, help the pantry out with a financial gift. Looking for a gift for that special someone? Make a donation to the pantry in their honor. Everyone will be grateful.

Lighting the Darkness Walk: Three students from the Van Buren Tech Center are planning and organizing a suicide prevention awareness walk to be held on **Thursday, January 26, 2012** beginning at 6:30 p.m. in Paw Paw. The walk will begin at the New Hope Fellowship Church on West Michigan Avenue across from Hazen Street and the Marathon gas station.

The purpose of the walk is to raise awareness for suicide prevention by walking through the town of Paw Paw. The students are selling T-shirts, luminaries, and ribbons and are donating the proceeds to Gryphon Place in Kalamazoo (the students were unaware of the existence of Van Buren's Youth Suicide Coalition until recently).

Please consider joining us on the walk (there is no cost to walk!). If anyone would like to purchase a t-shirt, you can contact syerrick@vbid.org or let me know and I will place the order for you. The t-shirts cost \$10 each. They are purple with yellow lettering that says "You Are Not Alone" and "Life

Matters" on the front, and "Lighting the Darkness Walk" on the back. Luminaries are \$1 and Ribbons are \$.50.

Wings of God: The Open House at Wings of God was a great success. Thanks to all the volunteers and donations, music contributions, and attendees, the atmosphere was festive and joyous. People visited the house in a constant stream, both days. The outlook for opening the doors February 1, 2012, to our first residents, is very positive.

Joint Food Pantry: If you have any questions about how you might help with the pantry please connect with Sue Miller (657-4601). I am sure we can find a niche for you.

Tremendous Need: We truly need people who are interested in learning how to run the sound system and the video projection system. If you have such an interest please connect with the church office.

Are you looking for a place to serve? Are you looking for a place to use your gifts? Please be thinking about involvement in these local mission opportunities: *Lunch with Friends, Habitat for Humanity, Restorative Justice, Eleanor's Pantry, Wings of God, Recovery Bash, The Decatur Shelter and United Christian Services.* If you have any questions about any of these please contact Pastor Abbott at 657-3111.

PAW PAW COMMUNITY CHORUS BEGINS REHEARSALS

The Paw Paw Community Chorus, sponsored by the Paw Paw High School Choirs, will begin practice on January 16th, 7 p.m., at the Paw Paw First Presbyterian Church, in preparation for their 12th Annual Spring Concert to be held May 6th, 4 p.m., at the Paw Paw High School Performing Arts Center. The chorus, under the direction of Theresa Vaughn and accompanied on piano by Lisa Gardner, will present a variety of music including: GIVE ME YOUR TIRED, YOUR POOR, THEY DARED TO DREAM, WHAT A WONDERFUL WORLD, THE MUSIC OF THE NIGHT, THE COLORS OF MY LIFE, THERE'S NO BUSINESS LIKE SHOW BUSINESS, YOU RAISE ME UP, and A STEPHEN FOSTER MEDLEY.

New singers are welcome to join. For further information, please call Karen Christensen at 269-539-4089, Gretchen Hudeck at 269-668-2059, or Theresa Vaughn at 269-668-4631.



January/February

- 01/04 Timothy Driscoll
- 01/05 Thomas* Baney
- 01/06 Caitlin* Brown
- 01/07 Ruthann* Bryer
- 01/07 Kevin Carr
- 01/08 Rick* Diemer
- 01/09 Jillian Graham
- 01/10 Dee* Outman
- 01/10 Chuck* Duncan
- 01/10 Michael Kubicek
- 01/10 Elise Walker
- 01/11 Daniel Burkett
- 01/12 LaVon* Roth
- 01/12 Mary* Diemer
- 01/13 Rachell* Vantzelfde
- 01/13 Kaydee Weaver
- 01/14 Kenneth Anderson
- 01/14 Caitlin* Paynich
- 01/17 Tyne Buhl
- 01/17 Connor Welling
- 01/20 Scott Walker
- 01/21 Gerald* Dundon
- 01/21 Danean* Baker
- 01/21 Christena* Eggleston
- 01/23 Corinne* Price
- 01/23 Judith* Combs

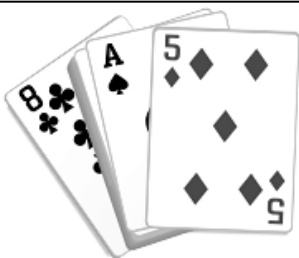
- 01/23 Farah Buhl
- 01/25 James Charles
- 01/25 Hanna* Abbott
- 01/26 Catherine* Smith
- 01/27 David Driscoll
- 01/28 Gregory Walker
- 01/29 Howard* Dewitt
- 01/29 Bill* Johnson
- 01/31 Robert* L. Bennett
- 2/01 Ashley* Racette
- 02/01 Ian Buhl
- 02/01 Jakob Vliek
- 02/01 Koty Combs
- 02/02 Matthew Driscoll
- 02/02 Mary Alice Smith
- 02/03 Barbara Rhodes
- 02/04 Jan* Ogden
- 02/04 Robin Griffin
- 02/04 Nathan Cronenwett
- 02/04 Walker* Woods
- 02/05 Max* Schiffman
- 02/05 Kiera Grate
- 02/07 Linda Walker
- 02/07 William* Welling
- 02/07 Natalie Craft
- 02/09 Erin* Paynich
- 02/09 Emma Imus
- 02/11 Sue Pugsley
- 02/12 Mary* Burkett
- 02/13 Nancy* Boven
- 02/13 Heather Jahr
- 02/15 Judith* Haefner
- 02/15 Chase Simonds
- 02/16 Allen McNeil
- 02/16 Morgan VanDenBerg
- 02/18 Jack* Gilbert

- 02/19 Alan* Colgren
- 02/21 Betty* Pelton
- 02/21 Elizabeth Burkett
- 02/21 Andrew* Garceau
- 02/25 Nicole Mroczek
- 02/26 Judy Thorburn
- 02/26 Monica* Marlowe
- 02/27 Kylie Combs
- 02/28 Nichole* Dunkerly
- 02/28 Elizabeth Lee



January/February
Anniversaries

- 01/04 Bruce & Judy Cutting
- 01/18 Dee & Bill Outman
- 01/22 Wayne & Mary Martin
- 02/1 Kathy & Roger McGuire
- 02/04 George & Gerry Jacher
- 02/14 Tim & Jane Driscoll
- 02/18 Sandra & Bill Henson
- 02/24 Dan & Elizabeth Burkett



***Pray and Play
at the First Presbyterian Church
is back!!***

Stay in Fellowship Hall until 2:00 (or until the last game is completed...) to play cards or board games with your friends. A light lunch will be provided. There will be board games as well as decks of cards. We are encouraging all bridge players, euchre players, chess players and board game players to attend. Rides home will be provided if needed. There will be extra players to fill in at euchre and bridge tables. Hope to see you there!!



Cribbage

Scrabble

January 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 10:00 Worship Fellowship	2	3	4 8:00 TOPS	5 Noon Rotary Club Meeting 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	6	7
8 Communion 7:15 Prayer Time 8:15 Worship 9:30 CE Classes 11:00 Worship Fellowship	9 7:00 Bible Study	10 10:00 Sharenet 3:30 Going Deeper	11 8:00 TOPS 6:30 Potluck 7:00 Boy Scouts	12 Noon Rotary Club Meeting 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	13	14
15 7:15 Prayer Time 8:15 Worship 9:30 CE Classes 11:00 Worship Fellowship Pray and Play 4:00 Wyldlife	16 7:00 Bible Study	17 3:30 Going Deeper 6:30 Commission Meetings 7:30 Worship 8:00 Session/Deacons Meetings	18 8:00 TOPS Noon Lunch with Friends 7:00 Boy Scouts	19 Noon Rotary Club Meeting 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	20	21
22 7:15 Prayer Time 8:15 Worship 9:30 CE Classes 11:00 Worship Fellowship Pray and Play 1:00 Session/Deacon Retreat	23 7:00 Bible Study	24 10:00 Sharenet 3:30 Going Deeper	25 8:00 TOPS 9:30 PW Bible Study 10:30 PW Meeting Noon Lunch with Friends 7:00 Boy Scouts	26 Noon Rotary Club Meeting 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	27	28 8:00 Men's Breakfast
29 7:15 Prayer Time 8:15 Worship 9:30 CE Classes 11:00 Worship Fellowship Pray and Play 2:45 Nursing Home Services	30 7:00 Bible Study	31 3:30 Going Deeper				

Thoughts for Jan. & Feb.

And when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left, your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it."

Isaiah 30:21

And we urge you, beloved, to admonish the idlers, encourage the faint hearted, help the weak, be patient with all of them. See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. Rejoice always.

Potlucks continue the second Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. Please come and join in this time of fellowship. It's a great chance to talk with other church members you might not see on a regular basis.

February 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 8:00 TOPS Noon Lunch with Friends 7:00 Boy Scouts	2 Noon Rotary Club Meeting 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	3	4
5 Communion 7:15 Prayer Time 8:15 Worship 9:30 CE Classes 11:00 Worship Souper Bowl Pray and Play	6 7:00 Bible Study	7 10:00 Sharenet 3:30 Going Deeper	8 8:00 TOPS Noon Lunch with Friends 6:30 Potluck 7:00 Boy Scouts	9 Noon Rotary Club Meeting 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	10 Wyldlife Camp	11 Presbytery in Holt Wyldlife Camp
12 7:15 Prayer Time 8:15 Worship 9:30 CE Classes 11:00 Worship Fellowship Pray and Play 4:00 Middle School Youth	13 7:00 Bible Study	14 3:30 Going Deeper	15 8:00 TOPS Noon Lunch with Friends 7:00 Boy Scouts	16 Noon Rotary Club Meeting 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	17	18
19 7:15 Prayer Time 8:15 Worship 9:30 CE Classes 11:00 Worship Fellowship Pray and Play	20 7:00 Bible Study	21 10:00 Sharenet 3:30 Going Deeper 6:30 Commission Meetings 7:30 Worship 8:00 Session/Deacons Meetings	22 8:00 TOPS 9:30 PW Bible Study 10:30 PW Meeting Noon Lunch with Friends 7:00 Ash Wednesday Worship 7:00 Boy Scouts	23 Noon Rotary Club Meeting 7:00 No Choir Rehearsal	24	25 8:00 Men's Breakfast
26 7:15 Prayer Time 8:15 Worship 9:30 CE Classes 11:00 Worship Annual Meeting Pray and Play 4:00 Wyldlife	27 7:00 Bible Study	28 3:30 Going Deeper	29 8:00 TOPS Noon Lunch With Friends 7:00 Boy Scouts			

Souper Bowl Sunday



February 5
following 11:00
service
Please come and enjoy
an assortment of soups
and bread following
service. The offering
supports our local food
pantry.

ANNUAL MEETING Sunday, February 26 after 11:00 Service

We will review the Annual Report and
appoint a Nominating Committee. Please
stay after service to participate.

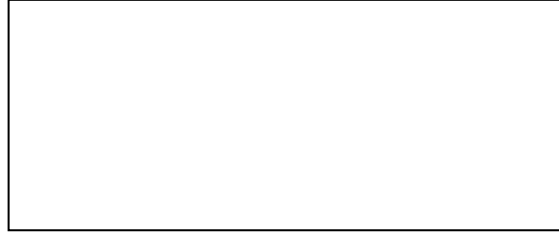
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Return Service Requested



January/February Sermon Schedule

January 1st – New Year’s Day

January 8 – Baptism of the Lord - Communion

Scripture Reading: Psalm 29, Acts 19:1-7, Matthew 3:13-4:11

Sermon Title: “Anointing Leads to Temptation”

Synopsis: As soon as Jesus was baptized he was led out into the wilderness to be tempted. When we follow the way of Jesus, then we will be keenly aware of temptation. Satan or whatever you want to call the powers of evil will seek to undermine the faithful living of all who know the anointing of God’s Holy Spirit. Will we be ready to such temptation in our lives?

January 15 – 2nd Sunday after Epiphany – Ordination & Installation

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 60:1-3, Ephesians 3:1-13, Matthew 2

Sermon Title: “The Right Time”

Synopsis: Joseph took his family to Egypt, then back to Israel, then finally settled in Galilee. Joseph was keenly aware of God’s leading for his family. Today as we ordain and install new elders and deacons, do we as leaders of today’s church have a keen awareness of God’s leading for our family?

January 22 – 3rd Sunday after Epiphany

Scripture Reading: Matthew 7:24-27, Exodus 20:1-21, Matthew 5:17-20

Sermon Title: “Fulfilling the Law”

Synopsis: How would you describe the difference between the letter of the law and the meaning of the law? Jesus came to fulfill the meaning of the law and as followers we too are called to live our lives in ways that fulfill the meaning of the law. How have you been tripped up by the letter of the law?

January 29 – 4th Sunday after Epiphany

Scripture Reading: Matthew 7:24-27, I Corinthians 3:1-9, Matthew 5:21-26

Sermon Title: “Murder, Anger & Relationships”

Synopsis: Paul talks of being infants, not yet ready for solid food. Jesus uses the language, “You have heard it said, but I say to you.” Jesus prays that we will grow up. Growing up, means that we will open ourselves to the transforming power of the Spirit, so that, our lives serve as a witness to the Kingdom of God. For example, we grasp the damaging power of our anger.

February 5 – 5th Sunday after Epiphany - Communion

Scripture Reading: Matthew 7:24-27, 1 Corinthians 3:10-19a, Matthew 5:27-37

Sermon Title: “Let Your “Yes” be “Yes”!”

Synopsis: Jesus desires for us to grow up in our understanding of the law. Paul reminds us that our bodies are temples of God’s Holy Spirit. In this part of the sermon Jesus teaches on the true points about the commands to not commit adultery, to not divorce and to not swear falsely. How might we grow in our understanding of these aspects of the law? How do these laws affect all of our relationships?

February 12 – 6th Sunday after Epiphany

Scripture Reading: Matthew 7:24-27, Luke 10:25-37, Matthew 5:38-48

Sermon Title: “Love Your Enemy”

Synopsis: In the Kingdom of God everything is upside down from how we typically understand how we are to live. Jesus makes this point in a particularly profound way as he challenges us to love our enemy. How can we actually do such a thing? How is that even practical? Can Jesus be serious?

February 19 – Transfiguration of the Lord

Scripture Reading: Matthew 7:24-27, Matthew 17:1-9, Matthew 6:1-15

Sermon Title: “Motives Behind Our Alms & Prayer”

Synopsis: How do you understand the word piety? What is the purpose of piety? How does piety relate to our relationship with God? That is really the question. Why do we do the good things we do? What are the motives behind our actions? Jesus again challenges us in some critical areas of our faith journey: our giving and our praying.

February 22 – Ash Wednesday - Communion

Scripture Reading: Matthew 7:24-27, Psalm 51:1-12, Matthew 6:16-18

Sermon Title: “Fasting”

Synopsis: As we enter the season of Lent, what do you think about the discipline of fasting? How might fasting be a helpful component of your spiritual journey?

February 26 – 1st Sunday in Lent - Communion

Scripture Reading: Matthew 7:24-27, Luke 18:18-30, Matthew 6:19-24

Sermon Title: “How Do You See Treasure?”

Synopsis: The Ten Commandments call us to serve only God, to break free from our idolatries. One of the great idols is money which Jesus calls treasure. But I think Jesus wants us to consider anything that we treasure. We can treasure all kinds of people and things more than God. What treasures hinder your relationship with God?