

First Light

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Vol. 12 Issue 3 News from the First Presbyterian Church, Marshall April 2010

A Minute in Ministry

In recent months Session has been considering the idea of a columbarium for our congregation. Before we proceed any further, we would like to converse with and receive feedback from members of our congregation. We plan to have an informational conversation together immediately after worship on Sunday, April 18. It seems there may be a few common questions to get us started in our reflection.

What is a columbarium? A columbarium is a place to inter ashes from cremation, similar in spirit and purpose to a memorial garden or other options for burial. A columbarium can be constructed in many different forms and styles, all of which have a series of niches enclosed in some kind of attractive woodwork – I suppose kind of like cabinetry, but not exactly. Each niche is purchased for a nominal fee, again similar to burial plots, in which typically up to two urns could be interred.

Why have a columbarium? What is the “meaning”? Essentially having a columbarium is an opportunity to affirm the spiritual connection of grace between this life we share and the life eternal. Our baptism into Christ is a baptism into his death as much as his life. Our life together in Christ transcends any limit of time and space. This connection is particularly poignant with those beloved persons who are dear to us, who have gone on before us. And it is a continual affirmation of God’s promises of love greater than any experience of trouble and boundary of fear – even death itself. This Spirit of life together in God’s grace is what has moved Christian churches in all ages to have cemeteries surrounding the sanctuary, or even have individuals buried somewhere within the building itself (sometimes in a crypt below the nave or along side aisles or even in the main sanctuary floor itself).

Is this a very Presbyterian thing to do? While it is not a particularly Presbyterian idea and there are many churches of other denominations who have columbaria, there are a good number of churches in our Presbytery who have either a columbarium in the church building itself or a memorial garden just outside.

(Continue on next page)

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CREATING SANCTUARY FOR ALL

**FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**

A Minute in Ministry (Cont.)

With the increase of interest in cremation has come an interest in options for something like a columbarium either in a cemetery or church. And of course, the Presbyterian Church is very open on the consideration of traditional burial, cremation and other options for interment.

How did the idea for a columbarium come to be considered in Marshall? A number of people over the years have been intrigued by other examples they have seen in other churches. And it has come up in discussion on occasion in adult education. Mari-beth Duhrkoff was particularly interested. And when she entered into the eternal life, her family and Session agreed that contributions given in her memory could be designated to explore this purpose. It should be noted that no definite promises were made. It is not a foregone conclusion. And my understanding of Mari-beth's perspective especially is that: while she felt it would be a very meaningful addition to our life together, she would definitely not wish to impose it on the congregation if sentiment did not concur. Session has been deliberative in considering options. John Cox and John Ickes have been particularly helpful in these considerations.

Where do we go from here? Specifics? Session has considered a number of different places in and around our church building. There seems essentially no space outside that would be suitable. A couple of ideas for the lounge and in the front of the sanctuary (on the wall on either side of the chancel) were also thought unsuitable. The most likely options at this point seem to be either a) in the back of the sanctuary under the balcony in the general area of the old Gorham Pulpit where the Memorial Book is at present, or b) on the East Landing at the top of the stairs just outside the sanctuary where there is at present a kind of shelf and cabinet. There are, of course, many details yet to be determined. In any case, we envision construction that is very unobtrusive, complementing the existing architecture / trim, and that essentially lines a wall protruding no more than about 20 inches (far less than either the existing cabinet on the landing or the pews under the balcony). Before Session went any further, we felt it would be helpful to share consideration with the wider congregation. In the end, by our form of government it is Session's decision; but we want to make a decision informed by others in the congregation. There seem to be two basic questions: 1) Should we proceed with a columbarium, at all? 2) If so, where should it be located?

How will we resolve this issue? Well, of course, the first thing to stress is that it's likely not everyone will agree! Some people may end up disappointed if we choose to have a columbarium, and some similarly disappointed if we don't. So clearly, mutual forbearance, good listening, respectful sharing of thoughts, and above all, openness to God's Spirit moving among us is critical. If I could try to represent some general summary of thoughts thus far it would be as follows – although please, understand I do not intend or presume this summary is comprehensive. Rather, again, it is simply an attempt to get us thinking together.

Some people find very meaningful the spiritual connection a columbarium would have for our life together with "the cloud of witnesses" gone before. And some people find this option very attractive as they consider their own end of life decisions and plans. Some people also note support on the principle that it would be a far less expensive option, especially perhaps for individuals with more limited means. Some people feel having a columbarium within the sanctuary itself is more comfortable and most conducive to a Sacred Spirit, even connected in a way with where the Memorial Book is at present. And people who favor this option also do so out of deference to others who may wish to have a columbarium be more discreet. Some people who favor the landing are more comfortable with it not being in the sanctuary itself. For them the landing is a cozy place that could be conducive to a kind of sitting area, and also seems discreet. Some people just don't like the idea of having it under the stairwell, while others think it adds to the coziness and may even be consistent with placement in some more ancient churches.

Staff

Pastor

Seth E. Weeldreyer
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Music Director

Laura Gilbertson
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Clerk of Session

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While it seems at this point that most Session members favor the general idea after hearing, imagining, having it “grow” on us ... we have not taken any votes and there is also great sympathy to others who may find the whole idea a bit “spooky” right now. Use of that term is not at all intended to be derogatory; rather it has seemed best able to capture a certain emotional response. Session is also sensitive to how some existing functionality of these spaces could, of course, be altered. And again, Session is very clear that we feel this is a significant decision that needs due consideration of the wider congregation, including an opportunity for Session to listen to questions, comments and conversation.

So please, plan to be present on Sunday, April 18 staying in the sanctuary immediately following worship. I pledge that the service may even come up a bit shorter in time! I have drawings John Ickes completed to give us an idea of what our options could look like. You are welcome to look at that them and ask any questions of me or Session members as we begin to get our minds and hearts around this issue. And as ever, let us all proceed with the grace of God seeking together the peace of Christ, now ... and for eternity!

Grace and peace,

Seth

News from Christian Education

Sunday School Still Collecting for Clinic

The students of the Sunday school are still collecting toiletries (see the list below) for the Fountain Clinic. We will be organizing the supplies we collect soon to take them over to the clinic. Please leave your donations in the office or bring them to Sunday school. We'll be collecting through the last day of Sunday school this month, April 25. Thank you for helping the clinic!

Toothpaste	Mouth Wash	Hand Lotion	Body Lotion
Deodorant	Soap	Shampoo	Paper Towels
Toilet Paper	Nail Brush	Nail Clippers	Lip Balm

Vacation Bible School: RENEW – The Green Bible School!

YES - Vacation Bible School is really only around the corner! Save the dates on your calendar now and join us for RENEW: The Green Bible School where we'll grow in faith, have fun and change the world the week of **June 14 - 18, 2010**. The amazing coordinating team from last year is back - Christi Barrett, Kristin Dale, Lupe Fitch, Jennifer Levack, and Nancy Sutherland - along with the addition of Julie Machalka. Thanks to these hard working ladies for being our coordinators. We'll need lots more help to make the week fun, educational, and safe for all the children who will join us. Please watch this newsletter, the Sunday bulletin, and the tables at coffee hour for more information about volunteering or donating supplies.

Junior Youth Group Clean Up Day

The members of the junior youth group will be cleaning up this month **on Sunday, April 18**. We'll meet from **2:00 to 4:00 p.m.** Come to church wearing your work clothes so we can walk and pick up around the church and around town. After the hard work, we'll enjoy some ice cream at the new shop by the middle school. Bring a friend or two!





Volunteers

Liturgists

- April 4**
Creighton Sherman
- April 11**
Jack Vandy Bogurt
- April 18**
Kat Whaley
- April 25**
Dianne Backus

Greeters

- April 4**
TBD
- April 11**
Bonnie Wigent
- April 18**
Joyce & John Ickes
- April 25**
TBD

Coffee Hour Hosts

- April 4**
TBD
- April 11**
TBD
- April 18**
Kat & Brad Whaley
- April 15**
TBD

News from Christian Education (Cont.)

Sunday School Teachers Needed!!!

The most important part of our successful Sunday school program is our teaching staff! Without dedicated teachers, our children wouldn't keep coming back for more. Would you be willing to be one of these special people? If you enjoy spending time with youth, can prepare a lesson from a packaged curriculum (not from scratch), and just love to sit and listen, then we'd love to have you as part of our teaching team next year. We also need folks to lead the summer classes which are multi-age sessions for all kids. These are easy to lead and prepare. Please consider whether you can give in this way! Contact Suzanne (789-1537 or sweeldreyer@att.net) for more information or to sign up!

Youth Group Visits Humane Society

The members of the youth group visited the Humane Society in Battle Creek on Saturday, March 21. They brought in the donated cat food, dog food, and treats from the congregation as well as spending time walking dogs, playing with cats, and helping the staff at the shelter. Lots of fun was had by all! Thank you for your donations.



Seated L to R: (front) Lacey Almaraz, Morgan Koetje, (back) Nicole Almaraz, Ally Foreman, Ailih Weeldreyer, Ben Kowitz, Gabriel Weeldreyer, Alex Kowitz

Eucre Night

Come join the fun!! An evening of Euchre hosted by Glenn and Diane Kowalske. The event will be held in Fellowship Hall on Saturday April 10th beginning at 6:30pm. It will be run as a "tournament"....the rules are easy and will be explained that night. Sign-up sheets will be in coffee hour. Or you can RSVP to Diane at dianekowalske@cablespeed.com or 781-8529. Guests are asked to bring an appetizer or dessert their beverage. Child care will be considered if needed.



Calendar Highlights

Friday, April 2	Good Friday Service, 7pm
Sunday, April 4	Easter Sunday Communion Luke 24:1-35; Acts 10:34-43
Monday, April 5	PWA Board Meeting, 7pm
Sunday, April 11	Second Sunday of Easter Acts 5:27-32; John 20:1-19 Baptism of Owen Robert Lee Knoch
Monday, April 12	Teams 6:30/7pm
Tuesday, April 13	Mary Martha, 10am
Thursday, April 15	PCFC Board Meeting, 6:15pm
Sunday, April 18	Third Sunday of Easter Psalm 90; Romans 8:31-39 Informational conversation after worship
Monday, April 19	Deacons, 7pm
Tuesday, April 20	Esther Circle, 7pm
Sunday, April 25	Fourth Sunday of Easter Acts 9:1-20; John 21:1-19 This I Believe Statements
Monday, April 26	Session, 6:30pm

AA meets each night of the week at 8:00pm.

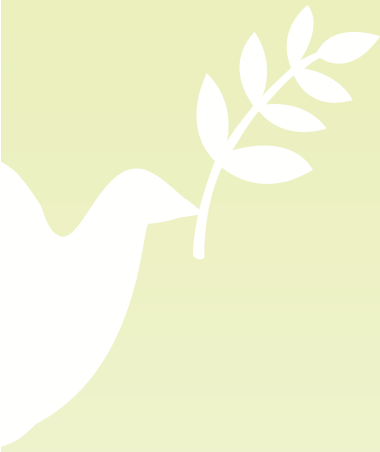
April Life at First Presbyterian Church						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Sip & Stitch 10am Maundy Thursday Seder 5:45pm Tenebrae Service Following Seder	2 Painters 1pm Good Friday Service, 7pm	3
4 Worship Easter Sunday 10:15am Communion	5 PWA Board Mtg. 7pm	6 TOPS 8:30am Mary Martha 10am	7 Choirs 6pm	8 Sip & Stitch 10am	9 Painters 1pm	10 Church Workday 9am-Noon
11 Worship 10:15am	12 Teams 6:30/7pm	13 TOPS 8:30am Mary Martha 10am	14 Choirs 6pm	15 Sip & Stitch 10am PCFC Board Mtg 6:15pm	16 Painters 1pm	17
18 Worship 10:15am	19 Deacons 7pm	20 TOPS 8:30am Esther Circle 7pm	21 Choirs 6pm	22 Sip & Stitch 10am	23 Painters 1pm	24
25	26 Session 6:30pm	27 TOPS 8:30am	28 Choirs 6pm	29 Sip & Stitch 10am	30 Painters 1pm	

First Light

Birthdays

- April 1**
Diane Whitsell
- April 2**
William Healey
- April 4**
John Mann
- April 5**
Norma Church
Adam Dale
- April 8**
Dave Phaner
Chris Rowland
- April 9**
Dick Davidson
- April 10**
Natalee Bolton
- April 12**
Grace Belew
- April 13**
Beverly Smith
Courtney Wheeler
- April 16**
JoEllen Gilbert
Jennifer Morris
- April 17**
Wil Mayo
- April 19**
Jennifer Levack
- April 20**
Sharon Karns
- April 21**
Rosemary Orwig
Laura Brownell
- April 22**
Nicole Almaraz
Charlie Eggleton
- April 23**
Julia Barnes
- April 24**
Lauren Rocho
- April 25**
Bruce Smith
- April 27**
Jeremy Karns
- April 28**
Sue Phaner
- April 29**
John Ickes
Onalise Hagedorn
- April 30**
Sandra Sinke





Spiritual Development Opportunities

- 1) Faith at 8:45 – *An Altar in the World*
We will not meet on Easter Sunday April 4 and conclude our conversation about Barbara Brown Taylor's book with Chapter 12 on April 11. Our topic of conversation after Taylor's book is yet to be determined. We meet in the Lounge before Sunday worship each week beginning at 8:45. If you have ideas or interests, please contact Seth!
- 2) DVD – Bible Beginnings Bible Beginnings, our newest offering for adults and young adults, will continue this month. The group is meeting on Sunday afternoons following worship and Tuesday evenings at 6:30 p.m. (The group will meet only on Tuesdays for the first two weeks of this month due to the First Sunday Forum and the Annual Meeting.) Please watch the prayer chain and bulletin for updates on meeting dates and lessons to be covered. You are welcome to join at any time. Questions should be directed to John Cox.
- 3) First Sunday Forum – *Capital Punishment*, ... on Sunday, April 11 (delayed one week) after worship / fellowship A series of articles are available that a) give an historical perspective on Christian scripture and theology both opposed and in favor of capital punishment, b) give a contemporary Christian ethical position against the death penalty and c) one example of recent political action to repeal in New Jersey. In this article, Presbyterian minister Thomas Long. Please, pick up copies of these articles in the Eagle Street entry, and plan to share your own perspectives in favor or against ... or simply questions you're working through ... after worship / fellowship on April 11! And if you have ideas for future discussions, please contact Seth!

Properties Update

Church members wishing to adopt a maintenance project within our Church, please coordinate with Whitney Jonas. Our Church Maintenance Guru, Beau Godde has a limited number of work hours each week to complete the many tasks asked of him, and all activities involving maintenance need to be scheduled.

A Gentle reminder to all church members and groups, you must fill out a building request form for any event or function you are planning to hold in our church facility. Along with coordination with the overall church calendar, custodial services and the PCFC schedule need to be arranged as well. Thank you again for helping us function within the intimate space of our church!!!

Church Workday is scheduled for April 10, 2010 from 9am to Noon. Outdoor and indoor projects are being planned. The Properties' Committee asks that any items, tools, etc. in the basement or janitor closets be collected or labeled. Plans are being made to do a little spring cleaning in our various storage areas throughout the Church including the closets adjacent to the Library, subbasement, storage shed, and both janitorial closets. Any person who would like to coordinate the organizing and maintaining on a monthly basis of the church storage areas, please contact Whitney Jonas.

AWOL

April AWOL will be held at the home of Lisa DeGraw, 330 North Eagle Street on April 23rd at **7pm** (not the usual 6:30pm). Please RSVP to by April 19th at 781.5040.



Ushers Schedule

April 4

Head Usher – Morgan Koetje
Elevator – Mason Fitch
Bulletins – Madison Gilbertson, Ben Lillrose
Acolytes – Nicholas Lillrose, Gabriel Weeldreyer

April 11

Head Usher – Abby Mershon
Elevator – Nicholas Lillrose
Bulletins – Ben Lillrose, Nathaniel Weeldreyer
Acolytes – Morgan Koetje, Ailih Weeldreyer

If you cannot serve on your assigned Sunday, please arrange a trade or substitute, then notify Phil Mershon and the church office of your change - Thanks!

April 18

Head Usher – Nick Vetter
Elevator – Maggie Barrett
Bulletins – Caroline Collins, Nathan Machalka
Acolytes – Nicole Almaraz, Alex Veale

April 25

Head Usher – Lacey Almaraz
Elevator – Jamie Daily
Bulletins – Kay Dale, Nolan Levack
Acolytes – Allison Brownell, Riley Brownell

Session Action

At its March 2010 meeting, your Session took the following actions:

- Approved the 2009 Annual Report of the church
- Discussed the establishment of a columbarium for the church, and decided to call a meeting of the congregation to present the idea and get congregational input, the meeting to be held immediately following worship on April 18
- Accepted the resignations of Neal Searle and Sandra Sinke from trusteeship of the Irrevocable Maintenance Trust
- Received February financial reports for the Church
- Received the February financial report of Presbyterian Women
- Authorized the baptism of Owen Knoch on April 11
- Appointed Ken MacNevin as Delegate to the April 24 meeting of Presbytery

Respectfully submitted, Phil Mershon, Session Clerk

PCFC Advisory Board Notes

- Reviewed and approved February Financials
- Discussed changing meeting dates starting in May
- Hosted March 17th Lenten Supper
- Introduced new board members

PCFC Mom to Mom Sale

Please join us for Marshall's Original Mom 2 Mom Sale on Saturday, April 24th. The sale will run from 9-11 am. You can rent a space to sell your gently used children's clothing, maternity clothes, toys, equipment, etc. for \$25.00. Sellers will be provided with an 8 foot table and space for 1 garment rack (if you chose to bring one). Please let us know if you would like to reserve a table.

We've Noticed

Thank you to my Church family for all of the cards, flowers, prayers, and calls. The chemo seems to be the culprit in the issues with my stomach. We hope to work out a system of drugs that will help prevent this problem and I'll be glad to get back to church and choir and all my loving Church family. Again, thank-you so much for your love and care! - Becky Davis

Thank you to the congregation and the Children of the PCFC in the collection of items and assembly of the hygiene kits for Haiti. We assembled 45 kits that have been shipped out for the Haitian Relief effort!!!! - JoEllen Gilbert and Mission and Outreach Committee

First Light

Teams

Administrative Ministry Team

Whitney Jonas
269.753.9951

Finance

Joelle Knoch
269.789.1339

Personnel

Jim VanderWeg
269.781.3432

Properties

Whitney Jonas
269.753.9951

Stewardship

Rich Healey
269.789.0665

Community Outreach

Ministry Team

Michael McNeil
269.789.0721

Mission

JoEllen Gilbert
269.789.1500

Evangelism

Doug Gilbertson
269.781.3101

Spiritual Life Ministry Team

Diane Kowalske
269.781.8529

Worship

Ken MacNevin
269.781.3329

Christian Education

Steve Hanway
269.789.0827

Fellowship

Creighton Sherman
269.781.2267

Shirley Clouthier

269.781.2368

Deacons

Karen Earl
269.781.3211

Women's Association

Lisa DeGraw
269.841.6787



Upcoming Worship

- April 1** **Maundy Thursday**
5:45 Lenten supper/Seder followed by a Tenebrae Service
in the sanctuary
- April 2** **Good Friday**
7:00 pm service in our sanctuary shared with the Episcopal
and Methodist churches

Maundy Thursday/Good Friday Service

On Maundy Thursday, Worship Committee will prepare for us again a Seder meal in the spirit of the last supper Jesus shared with his disciples. We will tell the salvation story of Passover, “flavored” with bits of food to remind us of the experience. And we’ll celebrate communion together in this context, along with a normal, simple meal of the season. Following our time together in the Fellowship Hall, as Jesus left the Upper Room, we will proceed to our upper room, the Sanctuary. There we will tell again the events of Jesus’ life and death following his meal shared with the disciples. It’s called a Tenebrae service. And a major part of the service is the extinguishing of candles to symbolize Jesus’ life. You are invited to bring candles and candleholders – one per person – to symbolize the light of Christ in your life. We will light them as we begin the Seder service, carry them to the sanctuary and extinguish them singing “Were you there ...” We hope you will be there!

And on Good Friday, we’ll share a service in our sanctuary with the Episcopal and Methodist churches. Details are still being finalized that will include participant leaders from each congregation and a joint choir. It is always a meaningful occasion to share unity with other Christians. We hope you will make the effort to share in it.

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