

the LANTERN First Presbyterian Church

Late March/April 2022



Letter from the Pastor

Easter Traditions

We are now mid-way through the season of Lent and Easter is fast approaching. My first day with First Presbyterian Church was the day preceding Ash Wednesday, the start of Lent. Lent is intentionally a season marked by fasting and repentance in order to prepare for and heighten the excitement of Easter. Because of this, I feel that my sermons since arriving in Kirksville have necessarily been a bit of a downer. Just know I am anxiously anticipating the coming of Easter with all of you!

With Easter right around the corner, I thought it would be fun to share some of the history around this important Christian festival with you. The celebration of Easter has always been a time to remember the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the first few centuries of the Church, this celebration took place around the time of the Jewish Passover festival but there was no consistent agreement on a date. Part of this lack of consistency and communication is due to the challenges of persecution the Church was contending with. The Council of Nicaea in 325 offered the Church the first real opportunity to collaborate on a date as well as settle other important controversial matters. They decided that Easter

would be celebrated the first Sunday following the first full moon that follows the Spring Equinox. The spring equinox is when day and night are equal, and then we turn the corner where we have more sunlight than darkness in a 24 hour period. This year the Spring Equinox lands on March 20th. The first full moon following the Equinox is April 16th, and therefore Easter lands on April 17th this year.

The original name for Easter was “Pesach”, derived from the Hebrew name for Passover. Because of this, in some countries around the world Easter is still called “Pascha” or something similar. The name we use, Easter, comes from an old English word “Eoster”. The name was changed by missionaries to Britain and Northern Europe to make it appealing to people there. Eoster was a pagan goddess of spring and the word itself relates to dawn. Early Christians had a tendency to take elements of the prevailing culture and redirect or turn them to worshipping God. Personally, I think there is an important lesson in that for us as Christians to be aware when consumerism turns elements of our traditions for their own purposes.

The early Church also had some interesting means of celebrating this festival. It used to be, early in the third century, the day that converts to Christianity were baptized. This was the culmination of instruction that often took up to 3 years. The reason for this prolonged period was due to gentiles needing additional time and instruction to convert from paganism to Christianity. In addition to the steep learning curve, the Church wanted to make sure converts were aptly prepared to withstand the storm of persecution that came and went frequently in the early centuries under the Roman Empire. For the early Church, to be baptized into the Church was like boarding Noah’s Ark. Once you were on the Ark, you were safe from God’s wrath. However, if a baptized Christian were to succumb to persecution and turn back to paganism that would be like jumping back off the Ark. A Christian who turned back to paganism would no longer be accepted back by the Church.

In the days leading up to baptism, the candidates for baptism as well as those presiding over the Sacrament were often instructed to fast for one to two days prior. They then entered the water early Easter Sunday morning naked to be baptized. Once they rose from the water they were given a white robe to symbolize their purity and new life in Christ. Then they were given milk and honey to symbolize their entrance into the promised land. All of this was done with the anticipation that Jesus Christ might return that day to establish the New Heaven and Earth.

Today, we celebrate Easter Sunday morning with worship and feasting. Easter “eggs” are sometimes used in celebration and can symbolize the empty tomb of Jesus Christ. In the days leading up to Easter, our church in Kirksville is planning to have a soup dinner potluck on **Maundy Thursday (April 14th) from 6:30-7:00 PM**. Following the meal we will head to the sanctuary for a worship service that will culminate in a tradition known as “stripping the church”. All the banners, paraments, and items on the Lord’s Table will be removed in silence. This symbolizes the abandonment of Jesus Christ as he heads to the

cross. The service ends in silence as Maundy Thursday and Good Friday are part of the same worship service.

Similarly, the Good Friday service begins in silence as a continuation of the Maundy Thursday service. This service is planned for **April 15th at 4:00 PM**. The timing of the service is meant to intentionally disrupt the normal flow of the work week, bringing our attention to the remembrance of the death and resurrection of our savior Jesus Christ. This service again ends in silence and with all departing in silence.

Then we gather again on **Easter morning, April 17th at 9:30 AM**, to proclaim the good news: Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia! We shake off our somber attitudes and celebrate that our savior lives, the tomb is empty, and we have been redeemed! I'm looking forward to celebrating with all of you this Easter for the first time.

Peace be with you!

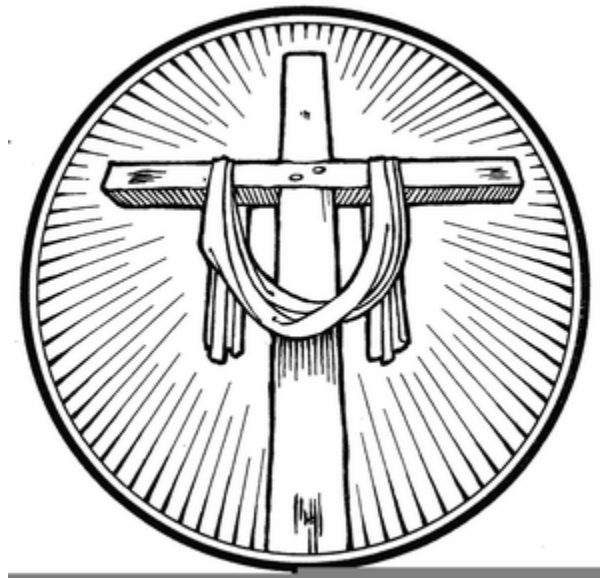
Pastor Josh

Book of Common Worship. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2018.

Bower, Peter C. *The Companion to the "Book of Common Worship"*. Louisville, KY: Geneva Press, 2003.

González Justo L. *The Story of Christianity*. New York, NY: HarperOne, 2010.

Ireton, Conway Kimberlee. *The Circle of Seasons: Meeting God in the Church Year*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2008.





The Clothes Closet is now open to the public both Tuesday afternoons and Saturday mornings as long as we have volunteers signed up to work. Donations are still being accepted either at the church or at the Closet when we are open. We will be changing to spring and summer clothing soon. Be watching for dates and if you have a few minutes to help, please let Brenda Martin know.

First Presbyterian Church Book Club!

Enjoy some Fellowship, a Good Book and some Laughs at this month's Book Club!
Sunday March 20 after Fellowship!



March

Presbyterian women will meet at 2 pm on Tuesday, March 29. This lesson (Ruth and Redemption) is the second of two lessons on Ruth . Ruth and Naomi, who started out empty and bereft, are filled and redeemed through the honesty and care they show one another The foreign daughter-in-law is praised for her faithfulness and, in the end, Ruth is shown to be the main reason King David's family line can continue.

Peace and Justice Calendar for March:

- Women's History Month
- Birthday Offering of Presbyterian Women

2--Ash Wednesday 4--World Day of Prayer
6--PDA Blue T-shirt Sunday
6--Celebrate the Gifts of Women Sunday
6-12--PW Together in Action for Women's Empowerment
8--International Women's Day
13--Self-Development of People Sunday
14-25--UN Commission on the Status of women

20--Mr. Rogers Day 22--World Water Day
25-31--National Farmworker Awareness Week

April

Presbyterian Women continue their study of *What My Grandmothers Taught Me* with a lesson on Bathsheba. Bathsheba is not named in Matthew's genealogy. Instead, as the "wife of Uriah," she is defined by her relationship to a man. At first it appears that she is silent and powerless but when she steps onto the stage she finds her voice and exhibits an ability to influence kings. Bathsheba's story illustrates the corrupting influence of power as well as the support she, as a queen, can provide for her son's reign. Presbyterian women will meet at 2 pm on April 26.

Peace and Justice Calendar for April:

Sexual Assault Awareness Month

7--World Health Day

8--Holocaust Remembrance Day

8--International Romani Day

17--Easter

17--International Day of Farmers' Struggles

22--Earth Day

24--Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day

25-27--Ecumenical Advocacy Days

27--Denim Day



March Birthdays

Rebecca Shirk—3/4
Elliott Jennings—3/10
Mary Giovannini—3/12

Christopher Marshall—3/13
Murilyn Koutstaal—3/16
Grace Achimbi—3/21
Barbara Stone—3/23
Ellie Dublin—3/25
Beth Shirk—3/30

April Birthdays

Evan AuBuchon—4/2
Eddie Hodges—4/7
Sue Bryant—4/9
Katherine Marshall—4/11
Nina Thomas—4/16
Sarah Mohler—4/16
Allie Yoder—4/18
Tim AuBuchon—4/19
Susan Dublin—4/21
Bonnie Collier—4/22
Byron Berke—4/25
Mark VanDolah—4/26
Jesse Krebbs—4/27
Aiden Prendergast—4/30

March Anniversaries

Brent & Ginger Nolker—3/6
Paul & Michele Yoder—3/27
Eddie & Mary Hodges—3/31

Ash Wednesday and Operation Joy

Operation Joy burned last year's palm branches to make this year's ashes for Ash Wednesday!



Mark your calendars for the Spring Musical, Fired Up! 7 p.m April 2, 2022!



Important Dates to Remember!!!

Book Club: March 20 after Fellowship

**PYF Spring Musical: Fired Up! April 2 at
7 P.M in the Sanctuary**

**Installation and Ordination of Pastor
Josh: April 3 at 4 P.M.**

**Maundy Thursday: Soup Dinner at 6:30
P.M. followed by a service**

Good Friday: April 15 at 4:00 P.M

**PYF Easter Egg Hunt: April 16 at 11:00
A.M.**

**Easter Sunday Service: April 17 at 9:30
A.M.**

**Pastor Josh took several First
Presbyterian Youth to the Spring Youth
Retreat down in Moberly this past
weekend!**

**They started out with a service project
providing free meals, then they had
worship, small group discussions, and
games. Looks like a fun time for our
youth!**

