

First



Press

The Magazine of First Presbyterian Church — Marshfield

Spring 2024



About the Cover



The "Feast of the Holy Innocents" is a Christian holy day assigned to Dec 28th to commemorate the massacre, according to Matthew's gospel, of young children ordered by King Herod in his attempt to kill the infant Jesus. For those living in Bethlehem today, the lives young innocents lost in the Hamas terrorist attack of Oct 7th and in Israel's on-going response brings this remembrance into fresh focus.

A small group of American and Palestinian friends living in Bethlehem, in prayerful solidarity with the families of Gaza, commissioned olivewood

craftsmen from the area to create 8000 olivewood hearts to commemorate the 8000 children killed in Gaza in just the first three months of Israel's response to the terror attacks. These hearts were used in the ecumenical "Holy Innocents" service in St Francis' church in Bethlehem, and have been shipped to the US to serve as a reminder to work and pray for peace and justice in the Holy Land.

In early January, Pastor Laurie received an email from Pastor Katie Anderson of Good Shepherd Lutheran here in Marshfield telling of this opportunity. Pastor Laurie then passed it on to the Outreach committee which voted to acquire 150 of these precious reminders to use during our Ash Wednesday service. Outreach members, Mark Nelson and Pam Smith, collected concrete and steel rubble from a local site to create the on-going display which you will find at the front of the narthex. Please take time after one of these Lenten Sundays to pass before this display in prayer and be reminded of the cost we all pay for choosing not to bring an end to war.

Outreach will meet in March to decide how to perpetuate the olivewood heart remembrance once the Lenten season has passed. Watch the weekly eblast for your opportunity to help.

Scout Sunday was February 4th. BSA Troop 392 & Cub Scout Pack 392 provided sweet treats after worship and led a flag ceremony in fellowship Hall. They have been using our building for their meetings for two and a half years now.



Mexican Mobile Consulate

The Mexican government has permanent consulates in some of the larger US cities, among them, Milwaukee, WI, and St Paul, MN. In order to serve Mexican citizens who do not have the ability to travel to these cities, mobile consulates were created to go to the areas where these Mexican citizens live.



Last March 25-26, after six years of hoping, praying and planning, the Immigration Action Team (IAT) of FPC was finally granted the privilege of hosting one of these mobile sites. The Milwaukee Consulate sent nine of its professional advocates to address the needs of all who showed up. Three hundred people came over nine hours the first day and 200 came over seven hours the second day. That works out to over 30 people served every hour the consulate was open. Jorge and Carmen Ramirez and Jackie Pickett were on hand to help translate and manage the crowd. IAT kept the coffee and snacks flowing to keep everyone comfortable.

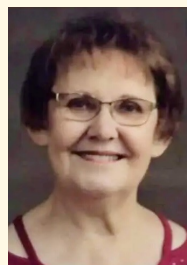
The services offered are no different from the services US citizens require of US government offices:

- 1) Matricular consulate ID's for proof of identity,
- 2) Passports required for international travel,
- 3) Voter certification to participate in Mexican elections,
- 4) Birth certificates and assistance returning the deceased to Mexico for burial,
- 5) Legal advice and power of attorney,
- 6) Assistance with business and restaurant loans and legal issues,
- 7) Assistance locating family members,
- 8) Translation services for members of the hundreds of villages who speak only indigenous languages.

These are vital, life and livelihood sustaining services that only the Mexican government can provide its citizens.

Last year the consulate found our facilities very accommodating. The plan, when they left was to return this March to do it all again. Due to their scheduling, they decided to move the March consulate to Abbotsford, but the current plan is to return to Marshfield this June. We hope and pray we can play a part in providing this essential service to our neighbors.

God commands us, in Leviticus 19 to love the stranger among us as ourselves. Regardless of where you place yourself in the political debate on immigration, we are called as God's people to respond to suffering of these our neighbors. There is still much work to do. If God is touching your heart to serve in this way, there is room for you on the Immigration Action Team. Contact Tracy Olson to find out what you can do to help!



Jackie Pickett was a key player in making this important event happen. We grieve that, on January 6, 2024, God took her home to be with her husband who preceded her in death. She will be impossible to replace. Her brother, **Rob Schulz**, offers this remembrance:

With her being the oldest child in the family, and me being the youngest, (7 years separated us) I remember Jackie sitting in her room with a tape recorder playing Spanish lessons, and repeating the words and phrases. I used to love to sit and listen to her talking Spanish. Jackie was always one who looked up for others rights, and minorities rights. Our father was raised in the late 30's, 40's and 1950's and was somewhat racist. I know he and Jackie had some debates on this as she got into high school and college. She opened my eyes to that fact that, just because someone has a different color of skin, does not make them any different from us. She was a positive influence on me and my beliefs.

The Nordic Choir of Luther College Concert

On January 29, FPC hosted the Nordic Choir of Luther College, directed by **Dr. Andrew Last**. The Nordic Choir, which celebrated its 75th anniversary this year, is Luther's premier touring choir, performing at such famous venues as the Lincoln Center, Kennedy Center, Orchestra Hall in Chicago, and the Mormon Tabernacle. This was a big deal, but how did it happen?



Dr. Andrew Last

Dr. Last was **Josh Olson's** chorale director throughout his college career at Luther College. They have kept in touch ever since. Josh would bring groups of students to Luther's Dorian Music Camp, and share various

projects with Dr. Last. **Saydi Olson**, Josh's wife who also attended Luther, ran across Dr. Last at last fall's State Music Conference in Madison. He told her the choir had no Wisconsin dates on its tour, and asked, might Josh's church be willing to host them? The college contacted Pastor Laurie in November, and the task of coordinating the event fell to **Patty Faber**.



Who will be first to get dinner? The games will decide!

The buses arrived a few hours before the concert. They introduced themselves to Patty and the other greeters, and declared their assigned task. "I am responsible for the risers," "I am responsible for the robes," etc. It was a cohesive, 'well-oiled machine.' Once all was set up, they assembled in the gym for dinner which **Lisa Carroll** prepared, along with **Kathy Philips** and the funeral lunch workers. Thanks to the online "Taco Bar Calculator," there

was food aplenty.

The choir had a devotional sharing time 40 minutes before the concert during which Dr. Last and several students shared the stories of how much previous audiences on the tour had

Lisa's shopping list:

- 16 lbs of taco meat,
- 8 cans of refried beans,
- 8 cans of black beans,
- 5 lbs of tomatoes,
- 8 heads of lettuce,
- 5 lbs of cheese
- lots of taco shells

appreciated the performance. The devotion connected the singers to each other and to the music, and it connected the performances, past and present, with an expectation that something already well-loved was about to happen. The singers then took the stage in front of a full sanctuary, holding hands during the entire concert.

Six young ladies came home with us after their absolutely wonderful concert, deposited their bags in their bedrooms, and then joined us for lots of snacks and chocolate chip cookies. They were NOT ready for bed. Lots of fun conversations, loving the dogs, and using the treadmill. They showered and went to bed after we did. We were impressed with the organization of the whole group. Very nice cordial young people. Also impressed with the thank you note left on one of the beds from the whole group. Happy to have had them with us.

— Carolyn Opitz

The performance was stunning, clear and precise, but not in a mechanical way. "Everybody was in it," Patty Faber said. The highlight of the concert came from excerpts of the oratorio, **Considering Matthew Shepard**, including a piece that tries to understand Matthew's murderers, and one that tells the story of the deer that lay beside Matthew's body until his body was found. They closed with "A Beautiful City," from the musical, **Godspell**. It was a sending forth to bring what can only be called worship to an end. Our own choir director, Greg Reiersen, raved about it for a full twenty minutes!

Patty found volunteers from several churches



Our 4 boys ate 2 large pizzas, snacks, and drank several sodas. They played pool until midnight even though a couple of them had never played pool! Very funny to listen to them laugh and play. Plus, even though we were told to have them back to the church by 8:30 am, they all said, "No need! Let's leave at 8:50 am. We can roll in just in time to get on the bus and head out of town." We got them there with 3 minutes to spare!

—Dan Burk

What a delight to host four girls from Luther College's Nordic Choir! They were perfect houseguests and fun to have around. My favorite moment of their stay happened as they were just finishing breakfast. They discovered my birthday was that day and sang their version of "Happy Birthday" to me. What a gift! I enjoyed every moment of it in the moment and will certainly never forget it.

— Carmen Lawler

to host all 67 singers. She created a spread sheet of the students' food and pet allergies and over 15 volunteer homes, listing which ones could provide transportation, and what kinds of beds they had. Stories abound of the late evenings hosting this exceptionally gracious bunch of kids. Volunteer hosts

provided breakfast, and they all assembled at church to catch the bus to the next venue. So far, there are no plans for a repeat visit here, but we can hope! Thanks to all who made this wonderful event happen, and to Luther College for their sustained commitment to impassioned excellence.

Happy Birthday, Everybody!

Everybody's Birthday was celebrated February 25th. Camping was the theme and everyone wore plaid! Lots of good food and games!



Green Team—Faith in Action

We're in for a Weather Roller-Coaster Ride!

Whoa.....fasten your seatbelts for some erratic spring weather with temperature fluctuations. There was a 24 hour period in February when Marshfield's temperatures varied over 60 degrees in one day! And it's not over yet. Wisconsin springs can surprise us, as you well know, but with climate change, the surprises can be even more jolting!

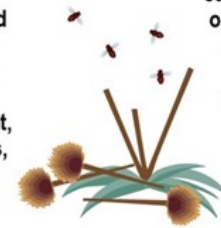
So, it's crucial to understand that this is NOT the time to clean out your flower beds or gardens just yet, even if we get a span of three successive 50°F days. The average last frost dates for Wisconsin range from late May into early June. The time to clean out beds is once the warm days arrive in succession AND there is no prediction of future frost. Patience pays off. Allowing the sticks, stems and leaf matter to remain in your gardens is imperative to ensure that native insects have access to their protective winter beds when the inevitable surprise snow or chilling cold hits once again.

This graphic, from **Heather Holm's** website, of the year-long life cycle of bees explains the benefits of delaying your spring clean-up. The bees, other pollinating insects, and the Green Team, all thank you for your patience.

How to Create Habitat for Stem-nesting Bees

SPRING

Cut back dead flower stalks leaving stem stubble of varying height, 8 to 24 inches, to provide nest cavities.



Female bees find cut or naturally-occurring open stems, start a nest, then lay an egg on the pollen balls. Larvae eat the pollen.



SUMMER

New growth of the perennial hides the stem stubble.



Bee larvae develop in cut dead stems during the growing season.



Close-up

Ted grew up in church with his parents in Merrill, WI, but church was his parents' thing. He was mostly resistant to getting involved through his young adult years. He moved to Stevens Point in his twenties where he met his wife, Kelsey, through an online dating site. She was listed with a Marshfield address, not too far to go to see this special person. He learned to his surprise that Kelsey was a traveling nurse, moving to a new city every 3 months, and her current home was New Orleans. They eventually worked out the connection, though, and married in 2015. For a while, Ted lived Kelsey's nomadic lifestyle, experiencing America's cities three months at a time, but they decided to start their family here in Marshfield where Kelsey grew up.

Wanting to raise their family in a church, they joined Kelsey's childhood church. Some theological differences made it a bit too easy to skip Sunday mornings, so they decided to shop for a better fit. Kel-

Ted Krohn

sey had visited FPC's youth events back in high school with her longtime friend, Sonya Ewert, so they visited us. The emphasis on Matthew 25 and involvement with the larger community immediately resonated with them. This was a different church guided by inclusion, not exclusion that truly welcomed all.

They joined just before the pandemic paused in-person worship in 2020. Though members for four years now, the lockdown made it difficult to establish connections and feel at home, so they feel they are just starting to make FPC their church home just as big sister, Dottie, starts Sunday School in the fall. The importance of volunteering and taking an active role is becoming clear alongside Ted's hopes for his young family. Ted has started a board game group with other FPC members which is a driving force for our recent game nights. Winning the game means creating the perfect shared experience to "break the ice" for getting to know each other better. Ted hopes that the games will build connections with the youth group, as

Winter Wipe Out

The Outreach Committee coordinated the Winter Wipe Out Drive to collect cleaning supplies, paper towels and art supplies for Marshfield Area Respite Center and Companion Daycare Service. There are always a lot of happy faces when the gifts are delivered. It means a lot to know someone cares.



Lenten Suppers are Back!

We are gathering every other Wednesday at 5 pm during Lent to share a meal and a brief meditation. There is still time to join in the fun and fellowship. Hope we see you there! Last one is March 27.

Game Night is Taking Off

Game Night is becoming a tradition! Come for a delicious meal and an opportunity to teach your favorite game or learn your new favorite game. Watch the eblast for the next one. It is great way to get to know each other and have fun all at the same time!



Faith Stories

Nicole was raised in a Catholic home in Perrysburg, OH. Folks on both sides of the family were very good, godly people. God's love was far more important than God's judgment. You did right because it was right, not because God would punish you. Lessons about diverse populations cultivated a concern for all oppressed people. Inspired by Martin Luther King Jr., Nicole devoted herself to racial justice. She and a friend were committed to helping other kids see how narrow their overwhelmingly white suburban culture was. She found strength learning that the bullying she experienced was directed less at her than at the people whom she befriended and supported.

Staring at the crucifix, she wondered why gay men could not be priests. In 5th grade, she wanted to help at HIV shelter in Toledo, but her mother, a nurse concerned about the many unknowns at that time, would not allow it. Nicole became concerned that living as a "Cafeteria Catholic," picking and

Nicole Johnson

choosing from her native faith, was like coming away from a buffet with a half empty plate, so she cast her gaze to other faiths, including Buddhism. Her continuing commitment to youth ministry comes in part from her involvement with the youth group and mission trips at a Methodist church.

Moving to Marshfield, Nicole and her family realized they needed a new church home. After meeting Lyn Zais at the "Y", she visited FPC, quizzed the pastor, and eventually "gave up looking for something wrong." It was a good fit.

FPC has become a safe space where Nicole can "say weird things" and even "lose her words," and still know she is loved and accepted for who she is. She had heard the phrase "church family," but it was after her marriage dissolved that she learned what that really means. Nicole continues to help awaken her church family to offer its embrace to LGBTQIA+ folk who often have been denied the embrace of their birth families.



First Press Magazine

Non-Profit Organization
US Postage
PAID
Marshfield, WI 54449
Permit No. 288

First Presbyterian Church
200 S Lincoln Ave
Marshfield, WI 54449

Phone: 715-384-2484
E-mail: pastor@fpcmarshfield.org
Website: fpcmarshfield.org
Editor: Dan Crump

From Pastor Laurie



*Come, thou Fount of every blessing; tune my heart to sing thy grace;
streams of mercy, never ceasing, call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet, sung by flaming tongues above;
Praise the mount, I'm fixed upon it, mount of God's unchanging love!*
--Robert Robinson, 1758

This wonderful old hymn has served as the heartbeat of our Lenten worship since Ash Wednesday and will continue to do so through April 7. May this Spring issue also serve to tune your heart to sing of God's grace. From the poignancy of the olivewood hearts installation pictured on the cover and explained within; to the heart-warming Luther Choir Nordic Choir tour center page spread; to the closeup story and faith story written by our editor, Dan Crump. These columns are the fruit of "heart to heart" conversations with two of our members. And now we share all of these varied and melodious sonnets of service and fellowship with you. May the fountain of every blessing stream into your heart as you see the mountain of God's unchanging love on every page.

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE & AND BEYOND

- Sun. 3.24 9:30 **Palm/Passion Sunday** with Palm Procession
- Wed. 3.27 5:00 P.M. **Final Lent Supper Service** in Fellowship Hall
- Thurs. 3.28 7:00 P.M. **Maundy Thursday** service with Holy Communion and Stations of Peter
- Fri. 3.29 **12 Noon Community Good Friday Service at Faith Lutheran Church** (with FPC soloists and liturgists, Janet Wolfe and Pastor Laurie)
- Sun. 3.31 **9:30 Resurrection of the Lord/Easter Celebration**
Begins in the Courtyard, with Holy Communion and special music with Brass, Handbells, and Chancel Choir
- 6 - 7:00 P.M. **"Open Church"** Open drop-in space for prayer and reflection
- Sun. 4.7 9:30 Service of Healing and Wholeness
- Sun. 4.14 9:30 Receiving of New Members during worship
- 10:30 am Called Congregational Meeting to Elect Church Officers