

Window detail
in Burroughs Chapel



First Presbyterian Church

Corner of Fourth & Alby Streets

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First Hand February 2012



OK, Susie reminded me that I have a note due for the newsletter. No sudden inspiration bursts into consciousness, so I look at the calendar and see five big ticket dates: Super Bowl, Lincoln's birthday, Valentine's Day, Washington's Birthday, and Ash Wednesday. Should I be foolhardy enough to place them together on human capacities?

I don't know if I have shared with you my suspicion that Tom Brady has engaged in some sort of Faustian bargain, and now he is in another Super Bowl. This is a great unofficial national holiday. A number of churches combine this athletic Sabbath time with the Super Bowl where donations are collected for food agencies all over our country. So a day of snack excess turns into one also where the miracle of the loaves and fishes appears in a new guise.



Like many people who love American history, I am delighted to be in Lincoln's home state, in a town where he practiced law and debated Stephen Douglas. When still a fairly young man, Lincoln spoke to a temperance group on the 110th anniversary of Washington's Birthday. He did not drink, but he refused to say that we should coerce or cajole people who fought alcohol. Instead, he urged "kind, unassuming persuasion" and tried to rally the people to a vision of reason being able to control our appetites. He even praised those who were tempted toward alcoholism as being more creative types of people than the norm. Such a charitable stance would reappear, of course, in the great sermon, called his Second Inaugural Address.

Valentine's Day gives me a bit of a chill as I never felt that I was getting a present that could match the expectations held for this day. (Of course, I am not a paragon of being romantic; I didn't believe such a day existed as Sweetest Day). We do not honor romantic life nearly enough in the church. At the same time, we can expand the image of the day. Consider your prayers as valentines to God. Then consider, what sort of valentine messages of love does God send your way?

Washington seems to me to be more a statue, a paragon, in our hearts and minds than Lincoln, even though they appear on our money and have monuments in Washington. He was not particularly religious either, as he did not receive Communion in his Episcopal church even though he was on the vestry. In An Imperfect God, we can read of his valiant efforts to free his slaves through the intricacies of Virginia law that required him to have a substantial nest egg for every freed slave. Here too, private virtues were wedded to more than a public persona, but public action.

Finally, Ash Wednesday is a purely religious day, even as it is preceded by the bacchanal of Mardi Gras. We love as mortal beings, fragile in the face of a tough environment. The readings always point not only to a program of interior spiritual life but also linking religious ritual to the cause of public life, public peace and justice. God's love extends to the great and the ordinary alike. Even though we are mere human beings, God knows us by name, calls us by name, and loves us by name.


February *Worship Assistants*

| DATE | ASSISTING | READER/LECTIONARY | USHERING |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time <i>February 5</i> | Carrie Schildroth | Robert Thornberryl Isaiah 40:21-31 Psalm 147:1-11,20c 1 Corinthians 9:16-23 Mark 1:29-39 | Group 5 Gladys Butler Richard Rook Debbie Gates Greg Gates |
| 6th Sunday in Ordinary Time <i>February 12</i> | Mike Wilson | Nancy Matis 2 Kings 5:1-14 Psalm 30 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 Mark 1:40-45 | Group 6 Wita Halsey John Lewis Sue Monical Stephen Jac |
|  Transfiguration of the Lord <i>February 19</i> | Claudia Droste | Rick Stabell 2 Kings 2:1-12 Psalm 50:1-6, 2 2 Corinthians 4:3-6 Mark 9:2-9 | Group 7 Tim Campbell David Oates Bonnie Norman Chuck Norman |
|  1st Sunday in Lent <i>February 26</i> | Carla Cousley | Carol Fletcher Genesis 9:8-17 Psalm 25:1-10 1 Peter 3:18-22 Mark 1:9-15 | Group 1 Jane Cerbie Kelli Lauschke Deanna Utterback Paul Utterback |

PASTOR'S NOTES

Extra copies of sermons with weekly devotions on the other side for Lent will be available this month. Also, if you use the computer, we have them on a blog, www.revajc.blogspot.com. You may be able to access it through its name, *Secular and Sacred*. It also has the Friday column for the online version of The Telegraph, sermons and Bible materials.

If you have an interest in special Lenten study, other than our 9AM Sunday time and our Wednesday 9:30 AM time, please let David know, and we can organize something, as you would find interest.

Also, David is working on a Bible study on the injunction to "judge not." If you are interested, when it gets into proper shape, David would like to have a group test it out before it starts being sent off to publishers. It is projected to be a six session project.

We plan to have our Ash Wednesday Service on Feb. 22nd. It is easier to remember for those of us of a certain age to recall that, as it is Washington's birthday as well. It is an "unalloyed religious good" to start the season of Lent by facing our mortality and announcing a season of introspection on the quality of our lives.

David promised that he would try to do the basic work of teaching, preaching, and pastoral care, as he learns of our congregation in the first year. So, in March, he will start to present some ideas about our work together for the session. Remember, he is the moderator of the session, so process is within his function, but decisions

lie with your elders, as we seek the welfare of the entire church community.



On Saturday, March 31, 2012, First Presbyterian Church will host our first ever "Scrabble Social". This will be an adult night out, playing one of the world's greatest board games. The evening will be a very casual and social event. This is *not* a competitive Scrabble play, so even if you've never played Scrabble before, you'll be sure to have a great time!

The cost is \$15 per person and there will be two on a team. Doors will open at 6:30 p.m. and the first game will begin at 7:00 p.m.. Soda, coffee, tea, popcorn, and pretzels are included. Cash prizes will be awarded. There will be a 50/50 drawing and a raffle for "Brunch for a Month", which has been donated by *Mac's Time Out* located at 315 Belle Street in Alton. The "Brunch for a Month" includes their brunch buffet for 4 people for 4 Sundays!

To make reservations, please contact Claudia Droste at 618-465-9723 (claudia@copycatvideo.com) or Sue Monical at 618-466-3186 (smonical@charter.net)

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Scholarship applications are now available. Graduating high school seniors are invited to apply for the Webb, Delano, Lynn, and Stoker college scholarships at First Presbyterian Church. Applications are available now on the table outside the church office. Applications are also available from your counselor or on the scholarship web page for your school. Applications are due on March 8, 2012. Contact Sue Sinclair at 466-5588 if you have any questions.

The Elijah P. Lovejoy Memorial Scholarship Committee of Greater Alton also invites applications to assist deserving students. They award one scholarship that is currently \$5,000 per year for 4 years and \$1,500 to \$2,000 one-time scholarships for 5 to 7 students. To find out more please write Elijah P. Lovejoy Memorial, P.O. Box 214, Alton, IL 62002.

The Pastor's Study is examining parts of the Apocrypha, that is, the "hidden" collection of ancient books found in some Bibles between the Old Testament and New Testament, which indicates their status. These documents were not accepted into the canon of the New Testament by the orthodox church. The New Testament Apocrypha are those writings that were written by ancient Christians that were not accepted into the New Testament, while the Old Testament Apocrypha consist of Jewish documents that were not accepted into the Old Testament. Currently, our class is examining *The Book of Tobit*. We tentatively plan to begin a Lenten study after Ash Wednesday, February 22. All are welcome to attend. We meet in the Flota Conference Room at 9:30 a.m. every Wednesday morning.

Children's Church continues during the worship service every Sunday morning. Our children are very engaged in their own special worship service, and enjoy the follow-up crafts or games in the youth room afterwards. Samples of our crafts since the beginning of the school year are on display on the bulletin board in the education wing. Beginning on Transfiguration Sunday (February 19) and continuing through Lent, the children will come upstairs for communion with their adult leader, just as they did during Advent.

February Children's Church Leaders

| Date | Leader |
|-------------|-------------------|
| February 5 | Kate Strohmeier |
| February 12 | Sue Sinclair |
| February 19 | Carrie Schildroth |
| February 26 | Sherri Black |

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) "fish" coin boxes will be distributed on the first Sunday in Lent (February 26) and should be returned to church on Palm Sunday (April 1) to dedicate the offering at worship.

Confirmation Letters have been sent to students in eighth grade through high school for the creation of a confirmation class in 2012. The class will meet during Lent and run through the Easter season with confirmation on Pentecost, May 27. David states that his "basic intention is to go through the PCUSA confirmation catechism, to explore theology through the Apostles' Creed, spirituality through the Lord's Prayer, and ethics through the Ten Commandments. The class will look at differences and similarities of the Presbyterian Church and other faith communities. We will also do some biblical interpretation. This is one of the first adult decisions young people make in our culture, and we encourage them to bring their questions and uncertainties, along with their energy, intelligence, and imaginations." Please contact the church if you know an eligible student who may be interested in confirmation and has not been contacted.



Vacation Bible School is approaching! The VBS cooperative group last year presented the second half of *Step Up and Go Green with Jesus*, an ecological VBS program that taught responsibility for God's Creation. We are looking for a new program this year, but would like to keep the *Good Stewards of the Earth* theme that was started two summers ago. The Nature Institute, where we will again hold our Summer 2012 program, is a natural and logical location for this message. If any church would like to be a part of this program by volunteering to help one or more evenings or promote this VBS program to the families in their congregations, please call First Presbyterian Church, 465-3592. We welcome any and all participants! **Our first meeting to discuss our plans will be Thursday, February 16, at 6:00 p.m. at Elm Street Presbyterian Church, 101 W. Elm St.**

MISSION



The Saturday Café continues at First Presbyterian on the first, second, third and fifth Saturday of each month. First Unitarian offers lunch on the fourth Sunday at their church. Other churches and organizations who host (purchase, prepare food and serve) here at First on a regular basis include: Trinity Lutheran, Tabernacle Missionary Baptist, Salem Missionary Baptist and College Avenue Presbyterian. NCNW (*National Council of Negro Women*), Debra Pitts & Friends and Wood River Woman's Club are three groups from the community which also provide lunch during the year.

We thank all the churches and groups for joining with us to provide lunch and a friendly place to enjoy this Saturday meal fellowship for those in need. There are still several Saturday dates left to fill for 2012. They are: **April 7, May 5, July 7, August 4, September 29 and October 6.** If any church or individual receiving this newsletter knows of a church congregation or organization that could provide lunch here for the homeless/hungry on any of these dates, please call First Presbyterian Church, 465-3592. We serve between 30-50 *people*, but many carry-outs and extra portions are distributed, bringing the number of *meals* served each week to 60 or more. Thank you to everyone who volunteers to come and help on Saturdays! Our volunteers in January were: **Sherri Black, David Crowley, Fred & Susie Delano, Claudia Droste, Sharon Elias, Carol Griffith, Charlene Hamilton, Nancy Matis and Joan & David Marshall.** We served 65 cheeseburgers, which included 50 plates and 15 carry-outs. Thank you so much! We appreciate all of your time and efforts!

In the planning stage for the coming months are trips to:

Blue Owl Restaurant and the Anheuser Home on the Mississippi at Kimmswick

Tour of the Hindu Temple on Weidman Road followed by lunch

Trip to St. Louis Opera Theatre

Stephens House and Mississippi Lime Caves

St. Louis Fountains tour

SLSO Coffee Concert

Dana Thomas House (the newly-renovated Frank Lloyd Wright house) in Springfield

Sheldon Coffee Concert

SLSO Coffee Concert in December.

Please note that we are now making **reservations through Marjory Bryant of Elm Street Presbyterian Church, 101 West Elm Street, Alton, Illinois 62002. Phone 466-5421 - before noon.** The newsletter and mail list is still prepared at College Avenue Presbyterian Church. Dorothy Kelley continues to write the letter. If you wish to receive the newsletter, please send \$5 to cover mailing costs to Marjory Bryant. Newsletter subscription payments are due in January. For more information or to receive the newsletter, please contact Jacqueline Wiseman at 466-0532. When you make your reservations, please make your check payable to "Over 55". Early reservations are much appreciated.



On Friday, February 10, 2012 we will tour the recently opened *World Chess Hall of Fame*, a premier destination for chess aficionados and lovers of fine art and history. We will see 30 *priceless chess sets* which include the only two *Fabergé sets in the world and other fabulous sets of precious metals, jewels, marble and stones.* These sets were selected for exhibit from the private collection of Dr. George and Vivian Dean whose collection of 1,000 chess sets range from 900 AD to the 20th century and were collected over their past 50 years of travel and study.

We will also see some of the over 3,000 objects in the permanent collection of *The World Chess Hall of Fame*, which are rotated in exhibits, and contain historical documents and items as well as photos and biographies of inductees.

The first World Chess Championship was held in St. Louis in 1886. The *Chess Hall of Fame* is located in a renovated, refitted 3-story medical building in the Central West End, across from the Chess Club and Scholastic Center, at Maryland and Euclid Avenues. In 2011, St. Louis was designated *Chess City of the Year.*

Lunch will be at Ruthie's in the clubhouse of the Norman K. Probstain Golfcourse in Forest Park. Designate your lunch choice by number when you make your reservation: 1.) Cobb Salad, 2.) Half-pound burger, on bun served with french fries, 3.) Chicken salad on whole grain wheat with lettuce & tomato, served with fresh fruit, or 4.) Turkey club with ham, Swiss, bacon, lettuce, tomato, mayo, honey mustard on whole wheat, served with french fries.

Lunch includes coffee, tea and dessert. The trip includes a drive through Forest Park on our way home. Cost for this trip is \$37 per person, all inclusive. Depart from CAPC at 9:30 am to return home around 3 pm.

In Memoriam

Virginia "Ginny" Foster

January 16, 1930– January 21, 2012

In the name of Jesus Christ, we commend her to Almighty God and pray for all who mourn.



Hunter Beck, Joe Benoit, Esther Bott, Jill Bubert, Joshua Collman, Marolyn Ebbert, in memory of Alan File, Henrietta Fitzgerald, Luann Flota, the family of Ginny Foster, Phil and Nancy Gosling, McCajor Graham, Bob Halsey,

Christopher Hirlinger, Ken Hirlinger, Kim Hill, Dick & Liz Johnson, Sharon Johnson, Bob Jourdain, Dr. Phil Kannel, Bob Lindsey, Robert Nelson, Don Alan Nicholson, Tom Norris, David Reed, Jeanette Rhodes, the family of Donald Ripley, Lorraine Ross, Carrie Schildroth, Dan & Lori Sherman and family, Jane Spencer, the family of Alice Tucker, Deanna Utterback, Mrs. Charles Walker, Jim Walker, Marjorie Whitsell, David and Amy Wigger

Homebound: Hanna Burford, Nancy Groff, Paula Hopkins, Cam Meredith, Jeanne Theen

Armed Forces: Ryan Hill, Jon Mathis, Jed Purcell, Joel Radunzel, Nathan Sykes, Clayton Van Daley
Serving in Middle East: Kurt Bergmark, Richard King, Kristopher Nagy, James Nugent, Louis Robinson, Nathan Rockholm, Ann Tucker, Andrew Wiseman



CONGRATULATIONS TO

Grace Hopkins and **Ellen Higdon**, high school Youth members, who qualified to attend the YMCA Championship Swim Meet that will be held this month at the University of Missouri, Columbia campus. Good luck to both of you!

Emma Fletcher, who was selected as one of 6 students at Alton High School to perform at the 2012 All-State Illinois Music Educators Conference. This yearly festival is held at the Peoria Civic Center, January 26 - 28. Participants for the chorus are selected from the top scores from District IMEA auditions held last October. Kudos, Emma!

Lucas Fletcher, who was nominated by the Office of Dean at Illinois Wesleyan University to the National Society of Leadership and Success: Sigma Alpha Pi. This is a leadership honor society made up of students selected for high academic standing and leadership accomplishments across the nation. Lucas also continues as a Dean's List Student. Fantastic!

A NOTE OF THANKS

U.S. Central Command Forward
Al Udeid Air base, Qatar

To the Members of First Presbyterian Church,

On behalf of the men and women deployed to U.S. Central Command Headquarters Forward, I would like to say thank you for the wonderful care package you sent. The sweets, snacks, batteries, hand wipes and everything else was greatly appreciated.

In this particular organization, there are about 300 personnel. Most of us are here for 6 months, but some are here for a year. Our living conditions are great compared to other locations in the Middle East. Our mission here is to support the USCENTCOM Commander, General Mattis. We provide support via personnel allocations, military intelligence, operational planning, communications, information systems and more.

Although we are thousands of miles away from our families back home, we support each other and have become like extended families. I personally have met some people who I will keep in touch with for the rest of my life. It is also nice knowing that people like you have us in your thoughts and prayers.

Thanks again for your support.

Kristopher C. Nagy, Captain, USAF
Operations Officer, CCJ6 -SF

February Birthdays

February 3 – David Lauschke
February 5 – Katelynn Smith
February 6 – Cameron Riley,
Katherine Schildroth
February 9 – Richard Rook
February 11 – Richard Plunk
February 12 – David Cousley, Amy Lewis
February 13 – Terry Barton
February 15 – Andrew Shultz, Grace Monroe
February 18 – Mike Wilson
February 20 – Paige Rockholm
February 22 – Debbie Gates

FEBRUARY 2012

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | | | 1 Pastor's Study 9:30-10:30 a.m. Choir Rehearsal 7:00- 8:00 p.m. | 2 | 3 Offices Closed----- 6:00 p.m.- Middle School Youth | 4 Saturday Cafe Tabernacle Missionary Baptist at First Presbyterian |
| 5 9:00 a.m.– Bible Study 10:00 a.m.– Worship/ Children's Church 11:00a.m.-Fellowship/ Session 6:00 p.m.- Youth | 6 | 7 | 8 Pastor's Study & Breakfast 9:00-10:30 a.m. Choir Rehearsal 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. | 9 | 10 Offices Closed----- 6:00 p.m.- Middle School Youth | 11 Second Saturday Cafe First Presbyterian Kitchen Prep-11:00 Serve- 11:45-12:45 Clean Up- 12:45-1:15 |
| 12 9:00 a.m.–Bible Study 10:00 a.m.– Worship/ Children's Church 11:00 a.m.-Fellowship 6:00 p.m.- Youth | 13 | 14 | 15 Pastor's Study 9:30-10:30 CEC Mtg.– 6:00 p.m. Ash Wednesday Service, 7:00 p.m. <i>Burroughs Chapel</i> Choir Rehearsal <i>(Follows Service)</i> | 16 VBS Meeting 6:00-6:30 p.m. <i>Elm Street Presbyterian Church</i> | 17 Offices Closed----- 6:00 p.m.- Middle School Youth | 18 Saturday Cafe National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) at First Presbyterian |
| 19 Transfiguration of the Lord 9:00 a.m-Bible Study 10:00 a.m.– Worship/ Eucharist/Children's Church 11:00 a.m.-Fellowship 6:00 p.m.- Youth | 20 PRESIDENTS' DAY OFFICE CLOSED 5A's Animal Shelter 11:00 am-1:00 pm <i>Youth Mission</i> | 21 | 22 Pastor's Study 9:30-10:30 Choir Rehearsal 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. Oasis Board Mtg. 6:30 p.m. | 23 | 24 Offices Closed----- 6:00 p.m.- Middle School Youth | 25 Saturday Café at First Unitarian |
| 26 9:00 a.m-Bible Study 10:00 a.m.– Worship/ Eucharist/Children's Church 11:00 a.m-Fellowship/ Deacons 6:00 p.m.- Youth | 27 | 28 | 29 | | | |

