

Tower Views

Volume 24, Issue 1

January 1-31, 2012

Youth Service Auction January 8, 2012 ~ 7:00 p.m.

All are invited to come and join the senior high youth for an evening of gourmet desserts and a live auctioneer who will conduct an auction of services offered by our youth. You just need to place a bid! Wouldn't

you love to have a 3 course dinner made for you or your car washed inside and out? Maybe this spring after the snow melts, you have a yard that needs cleaning up after your dogs? How would you like to be serenaded with guitar music or have your house decorated for a special

occasion? Do you need your grocery shopping done for you? How about a pet-sitter while you are on vacation next summer? All of this and more will be available at the Youth Service Auction on Sunday, January 8 at 7:00 pm. in Fellowship Hall. Please come and support our youth program—funds raised will be used for the summer mission trip to Tennessee and for youth scholarships.



Auction

We strive to be a vibrant Christian community that is loving, nurturing, open, sustainable and renewing, and one that inspires people of all ages to live in the Christian faith and serve the world.

For Your Information

First Presbyterian Church

535 20th Avenue North
South St. Paul, MN 55075
651/451-6223
www.fpcssp.org

"All Are Welcome Here"

Office Hours:

Monday through Friday
8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Pastor Katie off on Monday;
Pastor Tom off on Friday

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In a pastoral emergency
outside of office hours:

Pastor Katie

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Pastor Tom

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Staff Notes

Some gifts don't come wrapped in fancy paper and tied with a bow. Some gifts aren't even on your 'wish list,' don't get marked down at the discount stores, and can't be ordered online. I have received such a gift this year: the Session of First Presbyterian Church has granted me a pastoral sabbatical next spring.

Unlike the academic community, where a sabbatical is granted most often for the purpose of research and/or writing tasks, a pastoral sabbatical in the local church setting is based on our faithful understanding of the Hebrew word *Shabbat*, from which we know the practice of "Sabbath." Sabbath is a holy kind of rhythm, a recognition of the need for resting in the Lord and renewal of the spirit. We "honor the Sabbath, to keep it holy," and encourage one another to attend worship and education each week to do that. The pastoral sabbatical moves from that concept of rest and renewal every seven days to a sense that pastors need to fully rest and re-energize and renew their calling to ministry at least every seven years. I have served FPC-SSP for almost eleven years now, and truly appreciate this opportunity to refresh and reflect on my ministry through a sabbatical time away. I will be gone from my role as co-pastor for three months beginning immediately after Easter on April 9, 2012 and returning July 1, 2012. While it is hard for me to imagine being absent from this community of faith that I so cherish and in which my family is so deeply embedded, I know that the timing is right and our common life will be enriched through this gift.

My plans are just beginning to be worked out, and the next several months will include plenty of time to communicate the details both of what and where I'll be as well as

who will cover what and how things will be done in my absence. I am looking carefully at programs available for pastoral sabbatical work at Montreat Conference Center in North Carolina, at Holden Village in Washington State, and potentially even a much-dreamed-of trip to the Iona Community in Scotland. One of the great benefits for all of us in the co-pastor model of our staff is that we will not need to hire temporary pastoral coverage during this time, except for an occasional pulpit supply. Some programs and committees will likely notice changes during the sabbatical time, but with prior planning and good communication, nothing needs to be dropped or discontinued. We've negotiated and scheduled this 12-week period for the season of the church year and our programming that seems least upset by it, as it commences following Easter and concludes before the bulk of our summer events. I'll only miss six weeks of Sunday School and be back before the week of children's day camp called "Camp in A Van" and the youth mission trip to TN! It is my sincere hope that the congregation will grow and benefit from my time away even as I do.

The pastoral sabbatical has a long history in the reformed faith tradition, and many colleagues in our presbytery and others around the country are encouraging and advising me as I accept this gift. Some in our congregation may find it difficult to understand or approve, as not many professions or jobs have such a generous gift available, but I do hope you will ask questions and join the conversation as we plan for this needed and truly appreciated time away. I ask your prayers and your blessing on this experience of Sabbath.

Worship Schedule

January 1, 2012

8:30 a.m. Adult Education
10:00 a.m. Worship Celebration
11:00 a.m. Coffee and Fellowship

January 8, 2012

Epiphany

8:30 a.m. Education For All
10:00 a.m. Worship Celebration
11:00 a.m. Coffee and Fellowship

January 15, 2012

Communion

8:30 a.m. Education For All
10:00 a.m. Worship Celebration
11:00 a.m. Coffee and Fellowship

January 22, 2012

8:30 a.m. Education For All
10:00 a.m. Worship Celebration
11:00 a.m. Coffee and Fellowship

January 29, 2012

Blanket Sunday

8:30 a.m. Education For All
10:00 a.m. Worship Celebration
11:00 a.m. Annual Meeting
11:30 a.m. Annual Meeting Lunch

Adult Education

January 1 & 29: Forgiveness: A Time to Love and a Time to Hate

Once a uniquely religious word, forgiveness now is changing and there is no consensus about what it is and what it is becoming. However you define forgiveness, its power is real — and never more so when it struggles with the unforgivable.

Inevitably its new role in the world raises serious and complex questions: why is forgiveness in the air today; what does that say about us and the times we live in; what are its power, its limitations and in some instances its dangers; has it been cheapened or deepened ... or both?

This 2011 PBS film provides an intimate look into the spontaneous outpouring of forgiveness: from the Amish families for the 2006 shooting of their children in Nickel Mines, Pennsylvania; the struggle of '60s radicals to cope with the serious consequences of their violent acts of protest; the shattering of a family after the mother abandons them, only to return seeking forgiveness;

the legacy and divisiveness of apartheid and the aftermath of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings in South Africa; the penitential journey of a modern-day Germany, confronting the horrific acts of the Holocaust; and the riveting stories of survivors of the unimaginably, brutal Rwandan genocide. (from www.pbs.org)

Sunday January 8, 2012: Regaining Peace Through Al Anon

Cindy has experienced many different situations as a result of addiction in people close to her. She will tell us her story about how the steps of Al Anon have helped her achieve peace with and within those situations; how she knew she was ready to go to a meeting; what the first meeting was like.

Al-Anon provides understanding, support and hope for relatives and friends of problem drinkers. It asks the question have I been someone's problem drinking? How can I find a meeting? How can I help my problem drinker quit drinking?

January 15: Nonviolent Peaceforce

Tom Tarnow, development director in the Minneapolis office of Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP), will tell us about this national and international organization. The mission of NP is to promote, develop, and implement unarmed civilian peacekeeping as a tool for reducing violence and protecting civilians in situations of violent conflict. NP is an unarmed, professional civilian peacekeeping force that is invited to work in conflict zones worldwide. They have worked in the conflict areas of Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Guatemala and Sudan as well as monitoring for potential election violence in Palestine. Among other activities, they have created space for local groups to enter into dialogue and seek peaceful resolutions. The Nonviolent Peaceforce staff includes veterans of conflict zones and experienced peacekeepers.

January 22: TBA

Snow Camp

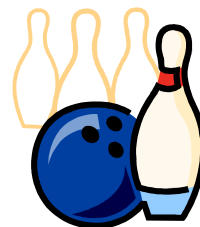
Presbyterian Clearwater Forest is spectacular in the winter and the middle school and senior high youth have a chance to experience God's beauty as they have fun in the snow! The dates for Snow Camp are January 27-29, 2012. Think hiking, snow games, hot chocolate, broomball, and worship by the fireplace. If you plan on



going, please turn in a permission form by Sunday, January 15. Forms are on the Clearwater website (<http://www.clearwaterforest.org>) and in our church office. The cost is \$75. We need a few more adult chaperones, so please let the church office know if you are interested as soon as possible. We will meet at church at 5:30 p.m. on Friday, January 27 and will return early afternoon on Sunday. Plan on eating dinner or bringing it along to eat on the way. Bring some cash for lunch on the way back and don't forget your warm snow clothes!

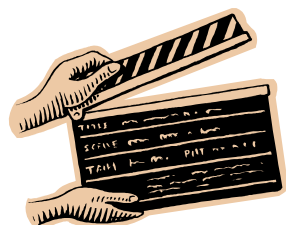
Kids Club Bowling Bash

A private bowling alley all to ourselves, with bumpers on at least one lane, pizza and cookies for lunch, and the perfect winter morning inside the warmth of a church basement bowling center—why wouldn't you be part of it? Kids and their families are invited to join us for a bowling party on Saturday, January 21 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon at the St. Francis Bowling Center in St. Paul. Cost is just \$5 and includes shoes (if you want them) and lunch. Please sign up on the kiosk or call the church office to reserve your spot. Parents/grandparents are welcome to come bowl, just watch, or drop children off for the event—just let us know which you plan to do!



First Friday Film Forum

In *Surviving the Loss of a Loved One*, Dr. Harold Bloomfield writes, "Every day you don't forgive, it's as if you are ingesting tiny bits of poison. This poison slowly robs us of our desired future. Whether we need forgiveness for ourselves or for others, it is



imperative to give ourselves permission to participate in this sacred process." The longer we hold off forgiving ourselves or others, the longer we remain in a prison of our own construction.

The film *Get Low* is a Depression-era folktale that has been told again and again in the Tennessee backwoods about a cantankerous hermit and his startling and unconventional funeral plans. It is a quirky drama inhabited by characters who trigger our feelings of sadness,

humor, and reverence for life and its ample mysteries. Depicting the spiritual practice of forgiveness on the screen is fraught with many dangers and thankfully the fine acting of Robert Duvall, Sissy Spacek and Bill Murray avoid melodramatic flourishes and deliver a cathartic finale that is both authentic and telling in its poignancy. The soul-stirring final sequences in *Get Low* reveal that there is both intimacy and allure in apology and forgiveness. These two spiritual acts have the power to break down barriers between people and draw them closer to one another. "Forgiveness is the final form of love," the Protestant theologian Reinhold Niebuhr once wrote. It is a choice and everyone can experience its liberating and healing balm. (from spiritualityandpractice.com) Please join us at 7:00 p.m. on Friday, January 6 to view *Get Low* (rated PG-13). Discussion and dessert will follow in the Commons.

Planning Meeting

In this time of stability in finances and ministry, the Session of First Presbyterian Church is looking to the future! Not really a meeting for the setting of new year's resolutions nor the making of concrete plans, current Session members and pastors are scheduled to meet for lunch and a long-range planning process on Sunday, January 22. On the agenda is a close look at all church finances including the endowment funds and memorials, a tour of the building to begin visioning upcoming needs of our facility, and a review of programs and staffing. If you are not on the Session but would like to have input to this conversation, please speak to one of the pastors before January 22.



“Setting Tables”—a Women’s Retreat at Presbyterian Clearwater Forest

Mark your calendars now and set aside the weekend of February 17-19 to enjoy the beauty of Presbyterian Clearwater Forest Camp in Deerwood, Minnesota with women of all ages. You deserve the break and your faith could probably use the boost! Clearwater Chrysalis is a long-standing program of women’s retreats, one each winter and late summer. Quite a few women from our congregation have attended over the years, Pastor Katie has led the retreat more than once, and our own Heather Marschinke is currently serving on the planning team. This winter’s weekend, led by

Pastor Kathy Smith of our presbytery, is all about community—*Setting Tables: How Ordinary Acts Lead to Extraordinary Relationships*. The retreat features large and small group gatherings, options for recreation indoors and out, crafts and music and worship and great food. Registration forms and information is available on the website at www.clearwaterforest.org or in the church office. Scholarship assistance is also available—contact Pastor Katie.



Blanket Sunday

In our shopping experience, \$5 doesn’t buy very much, does it? However, if you and your children are trying to survive in a refugee camp, or you have lost your home and all your possessions in a flood, or fled your home with nothing because of civil upheaval, Church World Service’s plain, sturdy gray \$5 blanket is like a gift from heaven.



A blanket is more than a practical gift—it says home to the desperate and says, “Someone cares!” The last Sunday in January, the 29th, is our CWS Blanket Sunday. Envelopes are provided in the monthly envelope mailing or are available in the pew pockets. Checks should be made out to FPC with “Blanket Sunday” in the memo line. Thank you for helping others in need.

New Member Class

Following the worship service on Sunday, January 15, anyone interested in learning more about our congregation or the Presbyterian Church (USA) is invited to come to the Knox Room for a new member class. Attendance does not obligate you to join, but will hopefully help you in making that decision. Those people who do decide to become active members will meet with the Session at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 26 and then will be introduced during the worship service on Sunday, January 29. If you can’t make all these dates you can still become a member. Please be in contact with either Pastors Tom or Katie if you are interested.

American Red Cross Blood Drive

Give life! Blood donation saves lives. You never know if that person will be you or a loved one. Giving is easy, quick and convenient. If you have given before you know how easy it is. If you haven't, please give it a try.



A Blood Drive will be held at FPC in Fellowship Hall on Monday January 9 from 1:00 - 6:00 p.m. Call the church office for an appointment. If you have any questions, contact Rex Boutelle at 651/343-3894. What a great way to start the new year!

Book Club Selection

In honor of First Presbyterian deciding to work on becoming an Earth Care Congregation, the Book Group is reading Thomas Friedman's *Hot, Flat and Crowded* this month. The book makes a convincing case for the green revolution. The group will meet at church at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday January 14. Books are available from the church office or your local library. Come enjoy good company, energizing discussion and yummy treats.



These members and friends of FPC have had surgery, been hospitalized or ill in recent weeks: Gail Rich, Dorothy Hunter, Bob Ista, Joan Maze, and Kathy Crouley.



Thank you so much for all the cards and phone calls helping me celebrate my 90th birthday. They made my day!

~ Virginia Strauch

First Presbyterian Church

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Education For All at 8:30 a.m.
Worship celebration at 10:00 a.m.
Coffee and Fellowship at 11:00 a.m.

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Tower Views

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First Presbyterian Church, South St. Paul,
MN

Rev. Katie Estes Collins
Rev. Tom Watson
Pastors

Mary Love
Administrative Assistant

Tower Views Deadline

January 15, 2012

For events taking place in February 2012



**Annual
Meeting**

Sunday, January 29, 2012
after worship with lunch to follow.