

January Grapevine



HDWallpapersImages.com

Church Office:
309-944-5189
fpcgeneseo@geneseo.net
www.geneseofpc.org



133 East North Street
Geneseo, IL 61254
www.geneseofpc.org



Inside This Issue of the Grapevine

Table of Contents

<i>January Grapevine</i>	1
.....	1
<i>Announcements</i>	3
<i>From Pastor Doty</i>	4
<i>Musical Notes</i>	5
<i>Kid's Kingdom</i>	6
<i>Presbyterian Women</i>	6
<i>Prayers of the People</i>	6
<i>Geneseo Food Pantry</i>	6
<i>Birthdays and Anniversaries</i>	7
<i>The New Rules of Resolution</i>	8
<i>Clear Direction</i>	9
<i>January Worship Schedule</i>	10

Announcements

Congregational Meeting

There will be a Congregational meeting held on January 5th following worship for the purpose of electing officers. Please plan on attending this important meeting.

After Church Coffee

Beginning in January After Church Coffee will only be held **once a month**. The After Church Coffee will be held on the last Sunday of the month. January's After Church Coffee date is January 26th.

Staff Changes

The New Year brings some staff changes to First Presbyterian. Virginia Nelson is retiring as Church Treasurer after 20 years of faithful service. She has served the church well, keeping the books and paying the bills and serving as a critical resource to the Finance Committee and the Session. Olivia Melton is shifting roles. She has resigned as Christian Educator after six years of service, but remains on staff as our new Church Treasurer, starting January 1. We thank Virginia and Olivia for their dedicated service to our church.

Annual Report

It is that time of year again when the annual report will be done. Since this is my first year doing this I would ask that you would please get your committee's report in to me as soon as possible. This way I will have time to work through putting the report together. Thank you very much.

From Pastor Doty

Well, Christmas is over. The radio stations that play Christmas music during December are back to their usual diet of Pop. The stores (and Amazon) are cashing in all those gift cards, and taking back the returns and exchanges. Now it's back to the serious stuff—bowl games, playoffs, the heart of basketball season. But wait!!

We all know the old carol “The Twelve Days of Christmas,” but how many of us really know what that means? Is it the last 12 shopping days before Christmas, as one of my friends thinks? No, the carol refers to something most of us have forgotten. In the Christian calendar, Christmas is not just a day, it is a season.

December 24 marked the last day of Advent, the church's season of preparation for Christmas. December 25 was Christmas Day, but Christmas is not over when the clock strikes midnight on Christmas Day—the season of Christmas has just begun. The Christmas season begins on December 25 and lasts for twelve days, the “twelve days of Christmas,” ending on January 5. January 6 is the Day of Epiphany, the traditional day the Magi arrived to visit the Holy Family.

I think it would be good for us Americans to reclaim the 12 days of Christmas. We have allowed our commercial society to hijack Christmas and turn it into a purely secular holiday, devoted to giving and expecting the most lavish gifts we can (or cannot) afford. The season, that is, the shopping season, begins right after Halloween and ends on the target date, December 25. Well, so be it. I suppose by this time it is useless to resist. But we can salvage something of the spiritual value and meaning of Christmas if we remember that Christmas is a season.

When this edition of the Grapevine appears it will be the sixth day of Christmas. For myself, I can't remember whether that is six drummers, or pipers or geese, but that doesn't really matter. What matters is that the frenetic preparations for The Day have come and gone, and there is now some quiet in which to consider the meaning of the birth of Jesus. But how can we remind ourselves of this?

Here are some suggestions for remembering the season and its meaning:

Keep your Christmas decorations up until the end of the season, January 5. Maybe it is already too late to suggest that, but it was once the custom to take down the tree on the last day of Christmas, January 5, then bring a bough to the church's Epiphany service on January 6. The boughs of the worshippers were burned at the end of the service—the flame was a reminder of the light of Christ that has come into the world; and the burning was a sign that we are to let Christ burn up the sin in our lives.

Give small gifts on January 6, the Day of Epiphany. This was the day of the visit of the Magi and their gifts to the baby Jesus. So hold some small gifts in reserve and give them on Epiphany as a reminder to yourself and others of the meaning of the day.

Try this one next year: Get a manger scene with enough shepherds and angels and animals to add one on each day of Christmas. Start with the Holy Family on December 25, then add a shepherd, or an angel, or a sheep or donkey or ox on each day until January 5. You'll have a nice little crowd going. Then on January 6 add the three Wise Men. At the end of the season you will have the whole cast of characters and you will also have a reminder to yourself each day of the meaning of the Christmas season.

Doing something to observe the 12 days of Christmas is a good way to enjoy the familiar rush and bustle and joy of getting ready for Christmas, but then in the quiet of the aftermath, the season, to take time to think about the real meaning of the day that begins the Twelve Days of Christmas.

Pastor Tim



Musical Notes

This rendition of Musical Notes will be short and to the point.

THANK YOU

To all who participated in the music programs this Advent.

The Kids Kingdom “players”, the “MAN” band (Matt, Alex, and Nathan), Melanie (for her “courageous” piano playing), Robin – your talent on the flute is so appreciated, our “special event singers” – Sue, Lindsey, Gail, Brandon, Olivia and Deb – without you our “Lessons And Carols” service would have been greatly lacking. To Janet Nelson for a special trip in from Des Moines to accompany us on Christmas Eve, a special thank you. To Greg Wolf - who we are so blest to have as a backup organist, pianist/accompanist - a simple thank you is not enough to express the gratitude we have for your participation in The Kids Kingdom presentation, the Dec. 15th service, and, of course, “Lessons And Carols”. I thank Deb for continuing to be here for us on Thursday evening and Sunday morning, her “extra duty” has “saved the day” for us. I want to give my biggest thank you to the core of our choir, the six, dedicated individuals who, week after week, give us their best, making music on Sunday mornings, to the glory of God. Thank you, Virginia, Pam, Cathy, Gary, Don, and John.

I’m looking forward to the New Year hoping to have more musicians on Sunday mornings so that we can continue to present the offerings of our talent to praise Him from whom our talent came.

George

Kid's Kingdom



On behalf of the Christian Education committee, I would like to thank Olivia for her past 6 years as Christian Education Director. We wish her great success in her job and want her to know we appreciated her leadership of our Sunday School and Youth Group. We will miss you, but look forward to seeing you on Sundays during worship.

Melanie

Presbyterian Women

Proverbs 31:30

“Charm is deceptive, and beauty does not last; but a woman who fears the Lord will be greatly praised.” (NLT)



PW January Meeting:

Faith Circle

Date: January 15th

Time: 9:00 am

Location: Church

Hostess: Cathy Hadley

Asst: Barb Schang

Lesson: Barb Grunwald

Prayers of the People



Our prayers continue for Shane Haas, Janet Borkgren, Sandy Haas, Carol (Mrs. R.C.) Johnson, Phyllis Keag, Pat Williams, Julie Rash Ulven, Nathan Simpson, Archie Cullen,

From the Geneseo Food Pantry

January 2014 Church Newsletter



Cold weather and the holiday season are upon us. The needs of our clients this time of year are high. Many of them not only struggle with trying to keep up with monthly expenses, but now have the additional pressures of trying to purchase Christmas gifts and holiday meals. This often takes a huge toll on already limited and stretched family budgets.

Even though the deadline for adopting families for Christmas has passed, there are still many things you can do to make the holiday special for those less fortunate in and around Geneseo. Here are just a few ideas:

The employees of Geneseo Communications will be holding their annual Toy Drive on Tuesday, December 10th from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. You may drop off new unwrapped toys or cash donations in front of their office building. All toys are brought to the Food Pantry and will be distributed to local families in need.

We are also still in need of inexpensive gifts for teenagers such as: lotions, body wash, CD's, DVD's, books, holiday snacks (nuts, M&M's, cookies), socks, slippers, or gift cards.

This is also the time of year our clients see rising utility costs. A Project Now representative has come to the Food Pantry several times since September to help many of our disabled, elderly and low income clients apply for Low Income Heat and Energy Assistance (LIHEAP). This program provides a one-time payment to the power company to help reduce the dollar amount needed to keep bills current.

Not all of our clients qualify for LIHEAP but are still in need of assistance. It is time again to think about the possibility of helping needy families and individuals with the high costs of heating and electricity. Help can be given through donations to the Food Pantry designated for utility assistance. A payment will be made by the Pantry to a client's account when the need arises.

Food baskets are also always appreciated. You may include the ingredients for a complete meal and add recipes if you would like.

The Food Pantry staff, board, volunteers and clients wish all of you a blessed Christmas and a very happy and healthy New Year. Our prayers are filled with thanks and gratitude for the multitude of blessings that have come from throughout the community. We ask God to bless you and your families during 2014.

Food needs for December/January are: Hamburger Helper and Tuna Helper, jelly, and baking needs such as sugar, flour, brown sugar, baking powder/soda, and chocolate chips.

Non-food needs are: paper towels, body wash, household cleaners, and cough/cold medicines.

The Food Pantry will be closed from Monday, December 23rd through Wednesday, January 1st.

Drop boxes at the church for Food Pantry donations are located outside the church office and in the coat room off the front entrance of the church. Donations are always appreciated and especially encouraged on the third Sunday of the month, which is designated Food Pantry Sunday.

Birthdays and Anniversaries



January 2014

- 4 Gary Asay
- 5 Sue Wolf
- 7 Scott Durian
- 8 Becky Hugh
- 8 Joyce Will
- 10 Tristan Melton
- 10 Betsy Pratt (Asay)
- 18 Kari Hartsock
- 19 Steven Kocourek
- 20 Alex Durian
- 22 Warren Hadley
- 29 Maureen Ford
- 30 Robert Will
- 31 Cameron Stephens

Jan. 13th Brent & Spring Simpson
Jan. 15th Ron & Gail Andrews

If your birthday or anniversary is not listed, please call the church office.



The New Rules of Resolution

Pastor: Steven Furtick – Elevation Church



The New Rules of Resolution is a five part sermon series done by Pastor Steven Furtick at Elevation Church in North Carolina. The series is based on teachings from the book of Colossians. I listened to this series at the beginning of 2013. With the New Year upon us and with what I was able to take away from these teachings when I heard them, I thought I would share.

--Angela

Colossians 2:6-8

⁶So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, ⁷rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

⁸See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces^[a] of this world rather than on Christ.

Part 1 - It's not a project, it's a process

When it comes to growing in our relationship with God we need to understand that it's not a project, it's a process. We are project oriented people. We want God to change us like a project, for it to be one and done. When we come to Christ it is not a closing ceremony, meaning that our struggle is done and we are now going to perfectly walk like, talk like, act like, and speak like Jesus. It's not a project, it's a process. Walking with God is not usually a straight line from here to there. It's usually a process that can be disorienting and dispiriting, over time discouraging and eventually defeating if we don't understand what Paul is teaching about the process.

A major frustration for Christians is the misunderstanding of salvation. We are saved by God's grace, and not by anything that we have done or will do. Being saved is a process: you were saved, you are being saved, and you will be saved, but the process will not be complete until you meet God face to face and He makes you like Him. In the meantime you are in process. We sometimes call this process "sancification."

How do we retain our faith and hope in the face of the struggles life brings us? We must never confuse faith in God and faith that he will prevail in the end, with the spiritual discipline to confront the most brutal facts of our current reality whatever they might be. This is the reality of a real genuine lifelong walk with God: faith that we will prevail in the end, that God does win no matter what evil may befall, and at the same time the ability to confront directly our problems, our difficulties, and our bad habits.

If you are tired of struggling with the same issue and if you are tempted to think, "after all God has done for me why can't I change?", then there is a chance that you might not be struggling at the same level you once were. You might still struggle with the same issue but on a deeper level, meaning that God is working in your heart at a deeper level. Or you might be struggling at a "higher altitude," meaning that God has given you more awareness about the struggle. You are changing a lot even though the struggle could be as difficult as ever.

God wants us to know that this is a process and that He is patient and we should not give up or disconnect from Him. Do not disconnect because there is stuff in process and it may take a little longer than we want it to take. If we disconnect or stop circling then we could drift back and in the process of what God wanted to use to change us we could suffer spiritually of a broken heart because we are so frustrated with ourselves. Have hope that God is changing us and that it is going to take some time for us to be where God wants us to be. We might think we are going nowhere, but God is taking us deeper, and God is taking us higher. There will come a day when we look at our life and say, "God has brought me a mighty long way." We may not look like we are changing much, but we are in process.

The process of spiritual growth can be painful, but remember that “as the heavens are above the earth so are His ways above my ways and His thoughts above my thoughts.” Sometimes when you feel like you are struggling the most with “it” is the time when you are drawing closest to God. The Christian life is not an “it” it is a Him. The next time we are taking a lap around “it” if we will just shift our focus from “it” to Him, He will take care of “it” because He will be building something inside of us. The call to walk with Christ is not to finish what you’ve started, because you didn’t start it--God did. He came to us in His Son, Jesus Christ. And while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. God stepped in and interrupted the process and said “My grace is sufficient.”

Don’t read Colossians 2:6 as a command, but rather an invitation, a privilege. Because it doesn’t say that you have to live for Him, but in Him. It is not a destination, it is a journey. God is the destination. The same grace that gets us into a relationship with God is the same grace that will carry us through. The same grace that takes you into the New Year is the same grace that will see you through. God isn’t saying if you claim to know Jesus you had better live like it; rather He is saying if you claim to know Jesus now you get to live like it. It is a privilege.

The world says finish what you’ve started; God says just continue what I’ve already finished. Because He’s already died for us, and He’s already risen, and He’s already declared over our lives that we are forgiven and free--now just walk. Let’s do another lap! This may not be the perfect year but we are in process.

Clear Direction

Sometimes in life we may feel unsure
Of what God would have us do
What is His will for our lives right now
When faced with two paths to choose?

We need to come before the Lord
When we have to make a choice;
We need to have ears that will hear
The Lord's still, quiet voice

For God will gladly show the way
And open the doors to go through,
With clear direction from our Lord,
He'll show us what we should do

For He longs for us to know His will
And know the plans for our lives,
So we'll accomplish the work of the Lord
As His Spirit in us daily guides

For He will walk with us each day
And help us with each decision
As our hearts are open to the Lord,
He'll impart to us His wisdom

We just need to ask of the Lord
For the direction that we need,
He will answer and speak to our hearts
As we trust in His name and believe.

January Worship Schedule

January 5th

2nd Sun. after Christmas
Communion Sunday
9:45 a.m. Sunday school
& Confirmation Class
11:00 a.m. Worship
Sermon: "Hope"
(Jeremiah 31:7-14; John 1:14)

January 12th

Baptism of the Lord
9:45 a.m. Sunday school
& Confirmation Class
11:00 a.m. Worship
Sermon: "Why Was Jesus
Baptized?" (Isaiah 42:109;
& Matthew 3:13-17)

January 19th

2nd Sun. after Epiphany
2nd Sun. in Ordinary Time
9:45 a.m. Sunday school
& Confirmation Class
11:00 a.m. Worship
Sermon: "Word of Mouth"
(Isaiah 49:1-7; John 1:29-42)
& Matthew 4:12-23)

January 26th

3rd Sun. after Epiphany
3rd Sun. in Ordinary Time
9:45 a.m. Sunday school
& Confirmation Class
11:00 a.m. Worship
Sermon: "Fish Story"
(Isaiah 9:1-4;
12:00 p.m. After Church
Coffee)



Thanks so much to all of you for your very generous Christmas gift. I am very happy to be your pastor, if only for a time. Best wishes and God's blessings to all of you for the New Year.

--Pastor Tim

Deadline for Grapevine article submission will be January 27th for February's Grapevine.

Monthly Publication of First Presbyterian Church
133 E. North St. PO Box 196, Geneseo, IL 61254

Volume 34, No. 8