



The LINK

Volume 2 | February 2022

Through Stained Glass: Love

February is here! Bring out the candy hearts; the pink frosted cupcakes; the poetry of Robert Burns:

O my Luve is like a red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June;
O my Luve is like the melody
That's sweetly played in tune.

It is the season of love! And I'm here for it. Why?
Everything we do comes from love.

Out of love the Holy One creates.

With love God saves. And liberates.

Love resurrects – but not before it
empowers and collaborates.

In the person Jesus we see the fullness of God – love incarnate. But a word of caution. We must not fixate or get hung up on the person Jesus. For instance, Jesus spoke of the reign of God unfolding in real time. It is a temptation to get hung up on the historical Jesus – specifically details that don't point us toward what Jesus was pointing to in his ministry. What was Jesus pointing to exactly? A reality where humanity and the more-than-human community are empowered to live fully, to love wastefully and to be all that we are capable of being.

And what are we? Image bearers of the Divine – Love.

“Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant⁵ or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;⁶ it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth.⁷ It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.⁸ Love never ends.”

Yea, we are a people of love. A loving people. People who love. Love is our identity, love is our destiny. But love isn't passive or static. Neither is God. As Christians, the Divine is a Holy Community – Father/Mother, Child, and Holy Spirit. The relationship between the three is dynamic – moving, flowing towards goodness and overflows onto all creation.

If God is love, and if we are love – then God accompanies all creation! God forever companions us with liberating, saving mercy. This creative love needs a body – and that body, sarx, is us! If we want to love as the Trinity exists and loves us – then we must get in on the dance. Yup, love is action – it is a verb! Why is this important to note? Because while some things do come to an end – like spiritual gifts [which is what Paul was addressing in 1 Corinthians 13] and our lives themselves – love endures forever. While we may not know when these endings will happen, we do know this – we must love as much as we can as often as we can!

If we want to know love – share love – be love – we must seek mutuality, and not control. We must cultivate a generous heart. I love what bell hooks says about this when she writes, “The mutual practice of giving and receiving is an everyday ritual when we know true love. A generous heart is always open, always ready to receive our going and coming... Giving is healing to the spirit. We are admonished by spiritual tradition to give gifts to those who would know love. Love is an action, a participatory emotion. Whether we are engaged in a process of self-love or of loving others, we must move beyond the realm of feeling to actual love.”

We are a people of Love – which creates, saves, liberates, and nurtures. We know the path and when we lose sight of it, the Spirit guides us back to it. February is the month of love – what shall we do with ours?

Peace,
Adam

SESSION MEETING REPORTS

December Session Summary

Session met Dec. 14 with all members present.

Session authorized Rev. Quine to apply for a Mission Grant from the Presbytery of Great Rivers. If approved, the grant would be used to establish a Center for Creativity and Community to serve youth ages 11 to 14. The goal is to have after school and summer programs to serve the target group.

The Session approved the 2022 church budget. Copies will be made available to the Congregation approximately two weeks prior to the annual Congregational Meeting.

The date of the annual Congregational Meeting was established as January 30, 2022. All members are urged to attend to assure a quorum is present and to have the opportunity for input concerning the activities and direction of the church.

The Session authorized the removal of fourteen individuals from the active membership register. Thirteen had not been active in church life during the past several years. Each was sent a letter in mid-October to determine the interest in continuing membership. Each was given the opportunity to continue being an active member, to request a call from the pastor, to transfer membership to another church, or to become inactive but remain a friend of the church. We requested a response by November 30. None of the thirteen responded. The fourteenth person did not receive one of these letters but did inform the office by e-mail of the intent to renew membership in another local congregation.

Finally, the Session did consider our current strategies in response to Covid-19 and decided to make no changes.

January Session Summary

Session met January 11, 2021. Jim Alexander was an excused absence. The remaining members were present. Also present as guests were Brittney Cosby, Cathy Maciariello, and Kelly Owens. The Nominating Committee will present the guests as nominees to Session during the January 30 Congregational Meeting.

Significant subjects considered during the meeting were the Pastor's report, selection of a delegate to the Presbytery for 2022, and the use of surplus money from the sabbatical grant.

Mary McLaughlin volunteered to be the First

Presbyterian Church delegate to Presbytery meetings in 2022. Session accepted her offer.

The Pastor's report stressed the need for more detail work to be done at the Ministry Teams level to provide more opportunity for Session to consider the serious issues concerning the future of our Church, identifying the challenges, and formulating effective response strategies.

Expenditures from the sabbatical grant totaled \$3,195.25 less than was received. The terms of the grant permit the church to retain the money if it is used for Christian education or spiritual development/formulation. The Session voted to retain the money and to give the pastor and the Ministry of Heart Team authority to use the funds in compliance with the grant terms. This money will be used in addition to the amounts shown in the 2022 General Fund budget.

Ministry of the Hands

LINCOLN LOGAN FOOD PANTRY

Rick Releford and Norm Newhouse report the following December 2021 distribution numbers:

871 individuals served
217 children
271 households.

Lincoln Logan Food Pantry is a participant in the Feeding America program through Aldi's and Walmart.

In 2021, Feeding America distributed 6 billion meals, 4.7 billion pounds of groceries rescued from going to waste, and 11 million pounds of food, water, and emergency supplies delivered to areas impacted by natural disasters. A real blessing!

A recap of United Way services:

211 is a vital service used by millions of people across North America. You can access free and confidential crisis and emergency counseling, disaster assistance, food, healthcare, insurance assistance, stable housing, and utility payment assistance, employment services, veteran services, and childcare and family services. Dial 211 is free, accessible 24/7/365, confidential, and available in more than 180 languages. Please share this information with anyone needing these services. Another blessing from the United Way.

Donation focus for the month of February is Shampoo.

Ministry of the Heart

WORSHIP, SPIRITUAL FORMATION, AND FELLOWSHIP

As the cold, dark days of winter surround us, the thoughts of Lent and spring are not far away. February is the month we begin planning for Lent. However, this year with COVID still very prevalent among us, it appears that some of our activities may be on hold.

Please keep in mind these special dates in February:

- **Sunday, February 6** we install Elders and Deacons and celebrate communion.
- **Sunday, February 27** is Transfiguration Sunday. We will distribute “Lent in a Bag” as we did last year. There will be items in the bag to help us observe Lent.
- **Wednesday, March 2 is Ash Wednesday**—morning prayer and evening worship with ashes and communion.
- **Kirk Night** will continue on Wednesday evenings at 7 p.m. in February.

The Session has approved the hiring of a Youth Outreach Coordinator (YOC). The process for selecting someone to fill this position will begin during February, with the goal of hiring someone early in March. The YOC will be working to develop significant programming and Christian education opportunities for the youth of First Presbyterian Church and the youth in the community.

The mosaic art work formerly located in front of the church has been in storage during the construction of the church ramp. Along with the Ministry of Resources Team, we hope to have it moved back to the area in front of the ramp. The Peace Pole, formerly located in the garden on the east side of the church, will also be restored to its location in the garden this spring.

Easter Lilies: In the parlor, there will be a sign-up sheet to sponsor an Easter lily, or you may contact Chris in the church office at (217) 732-6141 or office@preslincoln.org.

Ministry of our Resources

JANUARY ADMINISTRATION TEAM MEETING

At its most recent meeting, the Ministry of Resources, which includes Building & Grounds, Personnel, and Stewardship & Finance, covered several topics.

The arrival of the new doors is anticipated sooner rather than later, though no specific date has been set.

Insurance and employee contract concerns were addressed, as well as vendor communications.

Projects for 2022 were discussed and the following plans, in order of priority, are as follows:

1. Landscaping plans/re-installation of the outdoor Medallion (Easter goal)
2. Repair/replace Ottawa concrete steps
3. Paint outside railings
4. Window restoration plans
5. Kitchen remodel

No building requests have been received. Work continues to develop a fact sheet for families.

Personnel matters included finalizing an employee contract, defining the Youth Outreach Coordinator’s position, and steps to replace Chris Thomas due to her intent to retire.

Lastly, December Financials have been submitted and the 2022 budget was made available for Congregational Approval at our meeting on January 30. All reports were included in the printed report.

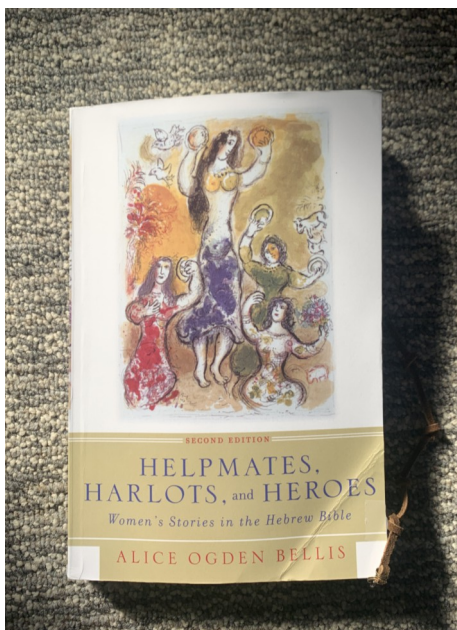
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Bill Opper, Clerk of Session
Mel Anderson, Treasurer
Christine Thomas, Admin. Asst.
Mandy Cordray, Custodial Services



Kirk Night, Wednesday nights at 7 p.m.

Join us for Kirk Night, as we begin a new study on Women's Stories in the Hebrew Bible. Our guides will be the book, *Helpmates, Harlots, and Heroes*, written by Alice Ogden Bellis, and Luba Lukova and her *Women in the Bible* series. Together, these voices will help us reinterpret the powerful stories of women in Scripture. Listening to women scholars, we will engage with these stories in fresh ways.

