Sue’s Musings – Reflections of Gratitude

I could start every “Musing” article the same way – “I can’t believe it’s almost …!” This time – it’s Ash Wednesday and Lent. Really? Already!?! But the clock keeps ticking, and time keeps moving on, whether we’re ready for it or not. That’s why I love the season of Lent – it’s an invitation to pause, to reflect on our lives, on our faith, and on what is important.

I invite you during this season of Lent to reflect on two things:

**First, Lent culminates with the events of Good Friday – Jesus’ death on the cross.** If you were facing an ending, what are those things you’d like your last days to be filled with? What is most important to you? Interviews with those facing the end of life often show that what people most regret is not accomplishing more “things,” not more time at work or not more money in the bank, but things focused on relationships. More time with family. More time with friends. More time giving of themselves. More time learning to love themselves. A good way to get at this is to consider what you are grateful for. What are those things from your past you treasured? Relationships? Mentors? Opportunities?

In this Year of Gratitude for our church’s 150th anniversary, what are you grateful for as part of this church? What do you want to say thank you to God for? Loving you at a time when you were particularly unlovable? Forgiveness? Leading you to something that gives you meaning? Opportunities to make a difference? Holding you with caring during a difficult time in your life?

How does that reflection influence your thoughts about what is important to you?

**Second, Lent leads us to resurrection – new life, new opportunities, new purpose.** Given your reflections on the first, how do you want to spend your life going forward? Will you arrange your life so that you have time to do those things that are most important? What do you want your walk of faith to look like? Are there aspects of following Christ that you would like to do more of? What help do you need to follow through on that?

Lent traditionally has been a time for reflecting on sins. I have always found it more helpful to reflect on what I have learned, and how I can grow in faith and discipleship. Will you join me on this journey?

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Sue

~ Rooted in God ~ Open to Grace ~ Filled with Joy ~
150th Anniversary Celebration
2019 A Year of Gratitude

Sunday, March 31
Join us for worship at 11:00 a.m., followed by lunch in Fellowship Hall. Elona Street-Stewart, our Synod Executive, will be our special guest for worship, as well as several previous pastors. Please call or email the church to secure a reservation for lunch, 402-477-6037; churchadmin@fpclincoln.org, by March 20.

Sunday, June 9
On Pentecost Sunday we will join First Christian Church, who is also celebrating their 150th anniversary, for a special joint worship service and meal in Antelope Park.

November 8-10
In partnership with Southern Heights Presbyterian Church and Homestead Presbytery, Diana Butler Bass will join us for a series of conversations and worship on the topic of gratitude.

Grateful: The Transformative Power of Giving Thanks by Diana Butler Bass is the title of our 2019 One Church – One Book study.

Read on below for more information about our small group studies!

Small Group Studies:

Lent is fast approaching and this year in conjunction with First Presbyterian’s year of Gratitude, we are launching a small group series to do a book study on the Diana Butler Bass’s book Grateful: The Transformative Power of Giving Thanks. These small groups are meeting in a variety of times and locations at homes around town and here at church and run for four weeks during lent (March 10- April 24). Sign-ups are now open for the small groups which can be done in the Welcome Center or on-line. To see a full list of small group options and to sign-up online visit the church’s website at:

http://fpclincoln.org/2019-lenten-small-group-series/

Books are widely available at your normal online sources, but if you need assistance in purchasing a book, please let us know. There will also be a few reference copies available in the church library to be read in the library. They will not be available for check-out unfortunately as we want to assure that there are readily available copies to read at all times.

If you have any questions or would be willing to host a small group, please let Kris Brammer know.
FPChristian Education

- Sundays at 9:45 hosted by Arta, Ron, Marlene and Jim Wagner At First
- Sunday evenings at 6:00 hosted by Karl and Sue Tillinghast
- Sunday evenings at 6:30 hosted by Diane and Sue Sattler
- Monday evenings at 7:00 hosted by Steve Hill and Susie Wilson
- Wednesday evenings at 6:15pm hosted by Sue Coller at First

What’s Happening in March!

Children’s Ministry and Faith Formation:
- March 3rd – Children’s Mission Hour and FORUM
- March 10th – Sunday School, Activity Time and Teacher Appreciation Breakfast
- March 17th – Sunday School and Activity Time
- March 24th – Sunday School and Activity Time
- March 31st – Activity Time, Sunday School, and 150th Anniversary Celebration

Youth Ministry and Faith Formation:
- March 3rd @ 5:30 pm – Youth Fellowship – Games, Games, and Games
- March 6th @ 7:00 pm – Ash Wednesday Service
- March 10th @ 5:30 pm – Youth Fellowship
- March 17th @ 5:30 pm – Life Sized Game of “Clue”
- March 24th @ 5:30 pm – Youth Fellowship – Questions of Faith

Adult Ministry and Faith Formation: (Sunday Morning Classes unless otherwise noted)
- FORUM – Sarah Troyer with Friendship Home meets in Great Hall on March 3.
- Bible Discovery Class meets in Room 105. The Bible Discovery Class uses the Present Word curriculum which is a bible study exploring various themes.
- Faith and Theology Class meets in Room 107. During Lent, this class will be doing the small group series book study on Grateful: The Transformative Power of Giving Thanks.
- Third Sunday in Hebrews meets in Hebrews 211 (2nd floor) on the third Sunday of each month for a discussion on various Christian Doctrines and how they have changed throughout history. This month’s topic is “Why Did Jesus Have to Die?”
Ever Wonder?
Ever wondered why salvation had to come through death? Ever wondered if what Ezekiel saw was actually an alien spaceship? Ever wondered why there are only 66 books in the Bible? Ever wonder if God really is omnipotent? As we read the Bible and explore our faith and theology, there is one thing that is sure to happen – questions. Seems like the more we learn about our faith and theology, the more questions we have. Unfortunately, not everyone feels comfortable asking theological questions out loud, as if asking questions about God or faith is somehow not appropriate or indicates doubt.

Quite the contrary – questions are how we learn and grow. So beginning this month if you have a question of the theological nature you’d like to ask – profound, humorous and creative are all welcome and we encourage you to ask it. There will be a question box in the Welcome Center and you are invited to write your questions. Each month will take a question and do our best to give some kind of answer here in the First Report.

Ash Wednesday Worship
Wednesday, March 6, 7 pm

Join us Ash Wednesday for a special service as we begin the season of Lent. With silence, prayer, scripture and song, we will reflect on the power of God’s love and forgiveness.

Sermons Online!

Did you know we post the Sunday sermons on our website? If you miss Sunday, or really want to hear the sermon again, or, better yet, share it with a friend, you can find our sermons at FPCLincoln.org/worship/sermons.
FPC Egg Hunt
The Christian Education Committee is getting ready for this year’s egg hunt (April 14th) and we could use some assistance of donated candies to fill the eggs. Any candy will do, but we are in particular need of nut and gluten free candy. Candy needs to be in individually wrapped packaging. Thank you for your help and donations.

FPC Forum Series
First Presbyterian Forum Series
Our Forum speaker this month is Sarah Troyer, Development Coordinator for Friendship Home. Sara will share with us the mission of Friendship Home with victims of domestic violence as well as educate us about issues related to domestic violence here in our community. Join us for this informative and important topic.
Property Notes

As we look to our new chapter in Church maintenance we have come to realize that we need some items to continue to maintain our lovely facility. Please look at the list and if you have some of these items laying around that you are not using that you would like to donate to the church, please bring them by the office.

Screw Drivers (Standard & Phillips) Multiple sizes
Propane Torch
Hammers
Socket Set - Standard & Metric
Ratchets
Head Lamps
Wrenches (Standard & Metric)
Channel Locks
Vice Grips (multiple sizes)
Snippers
Crescent Wrenches (Multiple sizes)

Stud Finder
Allen Wrenches
Levels
Router
Flash Lights
Paint Brushes
Rollers
Paint Trays

Thank You!
We would like to say thank you to everyone at First Presbyterian Church for purchasing Girl Scout cookies from us. We really appreciate your support. You have helped us to reach our goals. Thank you very much.

Sincerely, Emily & Lydia Van Meter

First Report Deadline for April!

April’s First Report Deadline is March 18th. Anything turned in after that date may not get included in the newsletter. This is to allow for time for editing, printing and mailing the newsletter to our members.
Thank you for getting your information to us from the various committee’s, groups and activities within the church!
Arts for the Soul
Saturday, March 9 ~ 7:00 pm
Alasdair Fraser & Natalie Haas
Scottish Fiddle & Cello

Fraser has a career spanning over 30 years, with a long list of awards, accolades, radio and television credits, and feature performances on top movie soundtracks (*Last of the Mohicans*, *Titanic)*

“One of Scotland’s most valued tradition-bearers.” — BBC Radio Scotland

Sing From the Heart
Sunday, February 17th was our Annual Sing from the Heart concert. There were amazing desserts and a wonderful performance by our own FPC choir with guests Jackie Allen, Hans Sturm and Tom Larson. We raised over $1,300 to benefit the Music & Memory program at Sumner Place. Please call or stop in the office today to pick up your tickets to our final two concerts!
Congratulations to Charles Ore!

Charles recently found out that he is one of two people being awarded the “Faithful Servant Award” for 2019, by the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians. The “Faithful Servant Award” (formerly Honorary Lifetime Member) was established in recognition of and appreciation for those who have made extraordinary contributions to the worship life of the church.

The award will be given at the biennial conference of the organization in Portland, Oregon, on June 24th.

SAND DOLLARS PROGRAMS FOR MARCH AND APRIL:

We will hold our potluck supper meeting Friday evening March 15 at 6:30 in Fellowship Hall. Our program will feature Lisa Janssen, Program Administrator for the Gathering Place speaking to us about the rewards and challenges of operating a soup kitchen, including how the food is acquired, state regulations, scheduling volunteer groups and more. All are welcome!

April: We will hold our supper meeting Friday evening, April 19 at 6:30 in Fellowship Hall. Our program will feature Tim Rinne* who, out of concern about climate change, tilled up their lawn a number of years ago and began growing as much of their own food as possible. Now their neighbors in their "Hawley Hamlet" neighborhood are doing likewise with 20 families currently involved. Exciting things are happening! All are welcome! *Tim is the state coordinator for Nebraskans For Peace.

THE WORLD DAY OF PRAYER SERVICE BY CHURCH WOMEN UNITED will be held March 1, 2019, at SOUTHGATE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, 3500 Pioneers Blvd. beginning with coffee at 9:30 A.M. followed by the program at 10:00 A.M.

The theme for the prayer service is COME, EVERYTHING IS READY. (Luke 14:15-24 The Parable of the Great Dinner) All are welcome!

Places and Spaces

There has been a lot of activity in updating spaces around the church with the upcoming celebration of the 150th. Staff, property and a small army of volunteers are sprucing up areas of the church as we continue to sort out storage areas, repurpose our resources and enhance programs and ministry throughout the church. Along with the 150th celebration, we will be offering tours of the church. It may have been a while since you have been to the deep dark caverns of the building….or in a youth Sunday school room. We hope you will join us for a tour of the church to see the many beautiful changes and work that is ongoing as we continue to use this beautiful building to enhance ministry, serve our neighbors and provide ministry in our community.
PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

On February 10, 2018 during second service at First Presbyterian the Birthday Offering was taken at offering. The generosity of Presbyterian Women and their families and congregations help to fund real solutions in the areas of health, education, economic development and the needs of women and children. This year’s Birthday Offering recipients are:

**Disaster Response Team**  
*Presbytery of Charlotte*  
*Charlotte, North Carolina*  
*S$100,000*

The Disaster Response Team of the Presbytery of Charlotte will expand its ministry to support people affected by human-made or natural disasters. The PW grant will help to provide a warehouse, parking lot and security fencing. The new space will hold household goods, food, hygiene and school kits, and will house mobile shower units and disaster recovery trailers.

**Effingham Child Development Center**  
*Inclusive Playground*  
*Effingham, Illinois*  
*S$100,000*

In a child’s early years inclusive play environments set the tone for successful future relationships. The Effingham Child Development Center serves children and families of differing abilities and is paving the way for all kids to learn and play together. The Birthday Offering will improve the center’s playground by helping to provide a protective play surface and all-inclusive play equipment.

**Presbyterian Homes and Services of Kentucky, Inc.**  
*Good Shephard Community Nursing Center*  
*Phelps, Kentucky*  
*S$119,000*

Presbyterian Homes and Services of Kentucky care for people who are sick, poor, lonely or vulnerable due to infirmities of age and poor health. This project will improve the quality of life and safety for nursing center residents in the Appalachian region of Eastern Kentucky. PW’s grant will help provide new wardrobes, bedside cabinets, over-bed tables, nursing beds, mattresses and lift recliners.

**Wings of Refuge**  
*Restoration Home*  
*Iowa Falls, Iowa*  
*S$120,000*

Continued on next page…….
PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN, cont.

Wings of Refuge provides a safe and healing space for women victimized by human trafficking. Without safety and shelter, there is little healing. PW’s Birthday Offering grant will help fund a larger long-term safe home where many more women will find restoration, identity, community, opportunity and hope, and transition into independent living.

You can still write checks to First Presbyterian and write Birthday Offering in the check memo line. After services on the 10th of February, PW Circle’s 2 & 3 provided treats after service as a thank you as well as to celebrate the PW Birthday Offering.

On March 3rd we will celebrate the Gifts of Women Sunday and we will honor some members who have given generously of their time and talent. We will also provide treats after both services.

First Presbyterian Church Therapy Dog Program

Is your dog suffering from the day in day out, doldrums of life? Is your dog dreaming of a more active social life? Does your dog want to get out of the house more, meet new people, go to new places, have new adventures? If you answered yes to any of these questions we have the answer to your dog's desires! First Presbyterian Church is starting a Therapy Dog program and your dog, and you, are invited to join us in this exciting new adventure.

This program is starting at the ground level, but we have big plans for a big and expansive program that can meet the needs of the community around us. Whether it be reading dogs for kids at schools and libraries, socializing with the elderly, putting on "Trick Dog" shows at nursing homes, or a host of other socially interactive activities, the need for therapy dogs is real. Therapy dogs bring comfort, joy, and confidence to the individuals they meet and work with. Whether you have a giant fluff ball of a Malamute or a lap size Scottie, or anything in between, all dogs who enjoy people are welcome to join in. Don't worry if your dog is not trained well. We will be offering training to help you and your dog gain the skills needed. But first we, the puppy people, need to get organized.

If you are interested, have questions, or have skills to offer please join us for our first meeting on March 17th in room 107 just after second service (approximately 12:15). Lunch will be provided. Please let me know if you plan to attend so we can plan on food. I am so excited to be a part of this venture and am really looking forward to seeing so many of you at this first meeting.

Please RSVP to Linda@InRelationWithDogs.com or you can call/text 402-450-0889.
Library Update

Celebrate March Madness…

*The Rhythm Boys of Omaha Central*

By Steve Marantz

In the spring of 1968, the Omaha Central High School basketball team made history with its first all-black starting lineup. Their nickname, the Rhythm Boys, captured who they were and what they did on the court. Led by star center Dwaine Dillard, the Rhythm Boys were a shoo-in to win the state championship. But something happened on their way to glory.

In early March, segregationist George Wallace, in a third-party presidential bid, made a campaign stop in Omaha. By the time he left town, Dillard was in jail, his coach was caught between angry political factions, and the city teetered on the edge of racial violence. So began the Nebraska state high school basketball tournament the next day, caught in the vise of history. *The Rhythm Boys of Omaha Central* tells a true story about high school basketball, black awakening and rebellion, and innocence lost in a watershed year. The drama of civil rights in 1968 plays out in this riveting social history of sports, politics, race, and popular culture in the American heartland.

FPC History

First Presbyterian is celebrating an important anniversary this year. Stop by the FPC library to see a display of books related to the history of FPC.

March is also Women’s History Month

A selection of books highlighting the gifts and stories of women will be on display.

In March we celebrate Nebraska’s statehood, and the FPC Library will be showcasing numerous Nebraska authors and books in which Nebraska plays a central role:

- *My Antonia*, by Willa Cather
- *Doctor in Petticoats* other titles by Mary Connealy
- *Stories to Remember and Stories to Share*, by Margaret J. Dolezal
- *Those were the Days*, by Van C Duling & Jerry Mapes
- *First Presbyterian Church 1869-1994 A History*, by Henry Holtzclaw
- *The Middle of Everywhere, Reviving Ophelias, and Seeking Peace*, by Mary Pipher

By the Numbers…

Learn the different Book sections in the FPC Library, based on their Dewey Decimal Numbers.

220.9 — Women in the Bible

Find books focusing on the roles of women in the Bible and biblical study.
Please notify the church office of any name, address, email, and/or telephone changes.