



March 2026 - Here and Now Newsletter! Volume 73, Issue 3

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**PASTOR LEANNE'S THROWBACK MESSAGE FROM MARCH 2020:**

**"Judgement, Cheap Grace and Surprise at the End"**

*"Cheap grace means grace sold on the market like cheapjack's wares. The sacraments, the forgiveness of sin, and the consolations of religion are thrown away at cut prices. Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate."* ~ Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Ash Wednesday, the Lenten Season, Holy Week...these are the darkest days of the Christian calendar. I always look forward to the worship events of all-important season, as for me, they function as a bit of a "reset button" a reminder that the stakes of faith are very high, and the outcome of our faith was secured at a horrible price. In the weeks of our journey to the cross with Christ, we are encouraged to renew practices of personal piety, recommit ourselves to acts of mercy and compassion and revitalize our commitment to social justice—all responses dedicated to halt any process that might cheapen the grace we have received.

This is why the season begins with the most austere and slightly morbid practice of imposing ashes and reminding ourselves that our deaths are inevitable. This is why the traditional music of lent was always so dirge-like... it was intentional, to set the serious tone for the darker realities of faith. (I will never forget the first time I imposed ashes on my 2-year old baby daughter and told her she would return to dust... my whole body revolted at the thought!) Ashes are a sign of repentance which makes us ready for Lenten truths, and Lent is a season of making ready... ready for death, and the judgment which follows.

As I get older, the concept of judgment has become more and more important to me. For one thing, I think that the untruthful nature of our world requires an ultimate confrontation with diving holiness, and that is absolutely something I want to be on the right side of! But that isn't the only reason—when I was a kid in church, I couldn't think of judgment in any bigger terms than getting sent to my room. At some point, I was made afraid of the idea—convinced that,



## **PASTOR'S MESSAGE CONTINUED:**

“The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked.” (That quote is from my ancestor, Jonathan Edwards, the original great awakening hellfire and brimstone preacher, who scared me to death as a teen.) But the whole Lenten season has a surprise at the end... a savior who bore our judgment, and a resurrection that nobody saw coming. A break-out moment that changed everything for those who would have died without hope, faced judgment without a goal, and left us all drifting in meaningless religious words and acts.

Because of the grace, these days, judgment seems like something to aim at, a sure target I would like to hit. The Apostle Paul in *1 Corinthians 3:15* speaks of believers being saved, but still standing before God and having their works judged. Paul used to speak quite often about his anticipation of this judgment, hoping that at the end of his journey he would have some churches, strong and true to offer to Christ. That's the kind of thing I mean when I say that judgment is something to aim at. I just want to have something good to show for all the grace that has been invested in me—not because I must earn salvation, but because I would love to live as if grace was not wasted on me. And that's why we hit the reset button on Ash Wednesday. To prepare for a judgment in which we actually have something to offer back to God—not out of fear, but out of love and respect for what Christ has done for us.

In the words of Bonhoeffer, “Costly grace is the treasure hidden in the field; for the sake of it a man will go and sell all that he has. It is the pearl of great price to buy which the merchant will sell all his goods. It is the kingly rule of Christ, for whose sake a man will pluck out the eye which causes him to stumble; it is the call of Jesus Christ at which the disciple leaves his nets and follows him such grace is costly because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin, and grace because it justifies the sinner. Above all, it is costly because it cost God the life of his Son: ‘ye were bought at a price,’ and what has cost God much cannot be cheap for us. Above all, it is grace because God did not reckon his Son too dear a price to pay for our life, but delivered him up for us. Costly grace is the Incarnation of God.”

Leanne



## **Munch & Mingle!**

Broadway Grill (100 W Broadway Ave.)

**Noon - Broadway Grill & Tavern**

**Wednesday, March 4, 2026!**

**TEST: WE PLAN TO TEST THE ONE CALL SYSTEM**

**THURSDAY, MARCH 5TH AT 3:00PM**

I will send out a message-to test our One Call automated messaging

## **PARISH NURSE NEWS -**

**Blood pressure clinic will be the first Sunday, March 1<sup>st</sup>** before and after service. Many of us know that it's an important vital sign but do you really know what blood pressure is and why it's important?

Blood pressure is the force of blood pushing against the walls of our arteries as the heart pumps it throughout the body. Blood pressure naturally changes based on our activity, stress, medication, and even the time of day. A reading of 120/80mmHg or less is considered normal.

- Systolic (Top number): Measures pressure when the heart contracts.
- Diastolic (Bottom number): Measures pressure when the heart relaxes.

High Blood Pressure or hypertension can damage blood vessels and increase the risk of heart attack, stroke, and kidney disease. Low Blood Pressure or hypotension can cause dizziness or fainting, potentially indicating underlying issues.

While readings of blood pressure can be inconsistent, a good indicator is measuring it consistently over time and assessing the pattern with your healthcare provider.

“For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.”

*2 Timothy 1:7*



**Blood Pressure Clinic - Sunday, March 1**  
**9AM-10AM & 11AM-12PM - IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM**

## **Hospitality Committee-**

### **“IRISH SODA BREAD AND TEA SUNDAY”**

This annual event is back **Sunday, March 15th**, we invite you to gather in the Parlor following the worship service to enjoy conversation, Irish Soda Bread with jams, coffee, and Irish tea.



## **Scout Troop #6 is having a “Fill the Canoe” event:**

**Saturday, March 28 & Sunday, March 29**

**South Cash Wise (on Bismarck Expressway)**

**Starting at 10:00am each day!**

They will be collecting food items for donation to -  
The Dream Center in the name of Troop #6 & FPC Bismarck.



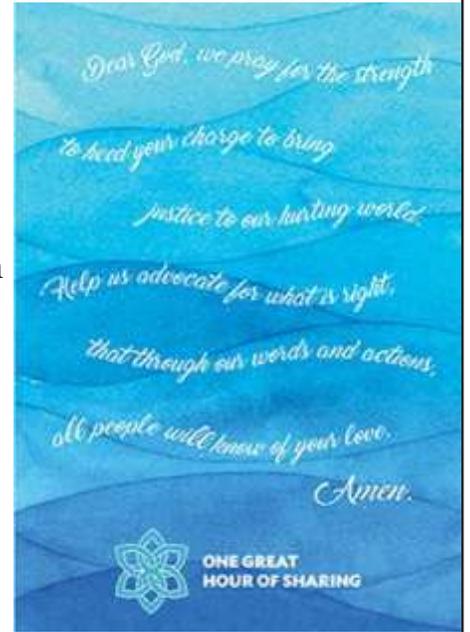
# ONCE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING/SEASON LENT SPECIAL OFFERINGS

One Great Hour of Sharing is interpreted during Lent and received on Palm Sunday and or Easter Sunday in response to Christ's call to ministries of compassion for the most vulnerable around the world. The funds received during this time will be dispersed in these areas listed below:

- The gift of sustainable developments
- The gift of partnership
- The gift of service

Presbyterians worldwide in responding to Christ's call to ministries of compassion for the most vulnerable around the world. No matter how large or small the contribution you give will make a difference in the world. Please during this Lenton Season give generously to One Great Hour of Sharing. We pray for strength to heed your charge to bring justice to our hurting world. Help us advocate for what is right, that through our words and actions all people will know of your love. AMEN.

Resource Management Committee Members



Youth collected donations for "Souper Bowl Sunday!"  
\$759.19 was given to Heaven's Helpers & the Dream Center



# PresbyTeens painted their lounge!



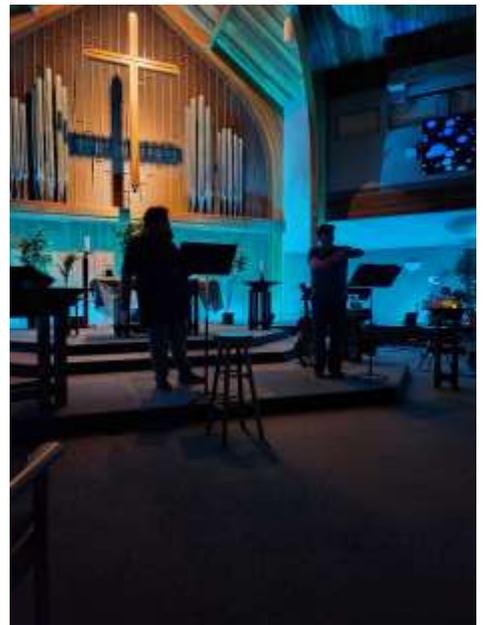
**CHRISTIAN ED:**

The end of February the PresbyTeens went on a retreat to Grand Forks, where they got to meet their friends from all over North Dakota. While in Grand Forks they did some service projects for the Salvation Army. Overall they had a great time! The teens also painted the teen room, and all youth collected donations on Souper Bowl Sunday for Heaven's Helpers & the Dream Center. Thanks for checking in on us!

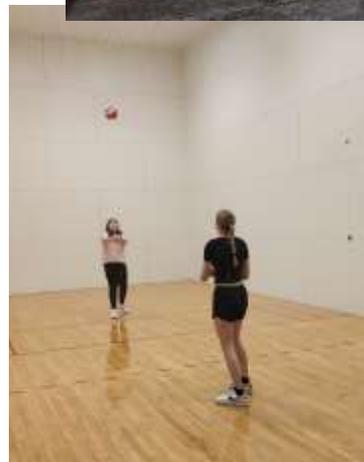
*Youth Ministry Director, Mark Jensen*

**Grand Forks Retreat— February 2026**





FPC  
YOUTH



**Brag Box: Vi & Vern Spitzer**  
**At their 75th anniversary party - in February 2026**

**with their 3 daughters  
Paula, Diane, and Susan!**



**PINOCHLE CARD PARTY!**

The Hospitality Committee is sponsoring a pinochle card party on **Sat., April 11, 2026 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. in the church parlor.** This party is for all those who know how to play pinochle and those who wish to learn to play or to play better.



Beginners or those needing a refresher course will be placed at a table with at least one person who knows how to play and will be provided with cheat sheets and instructions to use as needed.

For those wishing to play progressive pinochle, small prizes will be awarded for the top point totals. Four hands will be played at a table, with winners staying and losers moving to the next table. A drawing will be held for initial partners. Partners switch after 4 hands. Participants must keep track of their own points at each table played and for total points (honor system).

We will break for lunch and socializing at approximately noon and resume playing pinochle at approximately 1:00 p.m. Playing until approximately 4:00 p.m. Please bring something to share for lunch. The Hospitality Committee will provide liquid refreshments.

Some pinochle decks will be provided, but if you have a deck of pinochle cards, please bring it.

Come and bring friends and family. Have a good time socializing and playing pinochle! A sign-up sheet for attending and bringing something to share is on the bulletin board in the Narthex.

**Check out the "1950's Fun Chat" on YouTube with Karen Macdonald about  
the history of Glencoe Sloan Memorial Presbyterian Church!**

use the link: <https://www.youtube.com/live/pnsrSLlvTuo>

## Walk the Palm Sunday Path

In Matthew 25, Jesus laid out these values for Christians: feed the hungry, heal the sick, and welcome the stranger. First Presbyterian Church of Bismarck is a Matthew 25 church.

We have an opportunity to individually demonstrate that we believe in these values by joining in The Palm Sunday Path. The first step in this movement is participating in a Palm Sunday, March 29, procession from Trinity Lutheran Church to the steps of the state capitol grounds where a communal worship and prayer service will be held reflecting the Matthew 25 values. The second step is for Christians to take coordinated local action by publicly standing up for the Matthew 25 values. The third step is a national mass action in Philadelphia on July 3, 2026 to publicly stand up for these values. The Hospitality Committee encourages us as Christians, in a Matthew 25 church to individually consider joining this movement. Public witness to these Matthew 25 values begins by participating in the March 29 procession.

More information about this movement is available on the bulletin board in the church narthex. Hospitality committee members will also be happy to answer any questions that you might have.

### Easter Memorials

Each Easter we offer the opportunity to give donations in memory of loved ones. Monies from these memorials are directed to the Deacon's *Gift of Giving* program which supports the work of the Deacons and provides assistance to people in need. If you would like to make such a donation, please provide the following information **by Monday, March 30** to the church office: 223-6091 or email at [firstpresbyterian@fpcbismarck.com](mailto:firstpresbyterian@fpcbismarck.com)

In Memory of \_\_\_\_\_

Given by \_\_\_\_\_

Amt \_\_\_\_\_

Donations can be made in cash or a check payable to 'First Presbyterian Church' with *Gift of Giving* indicated in the memo line. All memorials will be listed in the Easter Sunday bulletin (without amounts).

### Christian Ed Committee:

Christian Ed is asking for donations of Easter (individually wrapped) candy and plastic eggs for the Easter Egg Hunt on Palm Sunday! Please drop off in the church office by **Monday, March 23**. Thank you!



### **\*Lenten Schedule\***

**Sunday, March 29 - Palm Sunday at 10:00am  
followed by Easter Egg Hunt for the kids!**

**\*NO MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE IN BISMARCK\*  
Thur., April 2 - Maundy Thursday at FPC Mandan - 7:00pm  
(choir will rehearse at 6:30pm)**

**Friday, April 3 - Good Friday Service at Glencoe Sloan - 5:00pm  
followed by a meal.**

**Saturday, April 4 - Prayer Vigil in Chapel - 11am-Noon**

**Sunday, April 5 - Easter Sunday - 10:00am (communion)**

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

February 24, 2026

**Financial Report**

Total Income YTD Actual	\$60,010	Budget	\$31,917
Total Expense YTD Actual	\$46,747	Budget	\$60,386
NET Income	\$13,263	Budget	-\$28,470

**Committee Reports**

**Administrative and Personnel**—Zoom meetings for committees may be an option when Pastor Leanne returns.

**Hospitality**—Session approved the release of the dedicated Higher Power Lunch funds (\$1,468.80) to the budget of the Hospitality Committee to use at their discretion.

Session approved sharing information with the congregation about the Palm Sunday Path, an ecumenical movement to share the values described in Matthew 25: feeding the hungry, healing the sick, and welcoming the stranger.

**Proclamation-Christian Education**—Plans being made for Easter egg hunt and spring events.

**Proclamation-Worship and Music**—Joint worship service with Glencoe and Mandan will be June 14. Good Friday service will be at Glencoe. Choir pews are being upholstered.

**Property and Equipment**—Roofing will occur in June-July. Waiting for EAPC assessment concerning electrical and architectural features. Twin City Roofing repaired the spot on the roof that caused a leak in the coat closet.

**Resource Management**—Once CD's mature, the money may be used to pay off the loan obtained for the HVAC system. The interest rate increased from 2% to 4%. Estimates are being sought for an audit, full or partial.

The Session meeting was moderated by Stephan Schroeder, Lay Pastor, First Presbyterian, Mandan.

Alice Nix, Clerk of Session





## BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

### MARCH 2026 - BIRTHDAYS

- March 2 Eleanor Sand
- March 3 Olivia Bachmeier
- March 3 Drew Henriksen
- March 3 Becky Murphy
- March 4 Dawn Henriksen
- March 5 Johan Mahlum
- March 6 Duane Ehrens
- March 8 Zach Strombeck
- March 8 Isla Ronningen
- March 10 Mary Hoberg
- March 11 John Bjornson
- March 12 Larry Larson
- March 12 Otto Reile
- March 12 Kathleen Gappert
- March 13 Mary Ingstad
- March 15 Juanita Hocking
- March 15 Jim Rambo
- March 16 Don Bigwood
- March 16 Judy Lentz
- March 17 Connor Svihovec
- March 17 Carol Zimmerman
- March 19 Alice Halling
- March 19 Larry Hoge
- March 21 Susan Schafer
- March 26 David Poffenberger
- March 27 Heather Davis
- March 30 Sandy Westerlind
- March 31 Karmen Svihovec

### MARCH 2026 - ANNIVERSARIES

- March 10 Keith & Mary Magnusson
- March 20 Steve & Laura Adair
- March 22 Dale & Lael Hoerauf



**Please let us know if we've made  
a mistake, omission  
or if you would prefer  
not to have your special  
day published.  
~ Thank you ~**



## First Presbyterian Church

214 East Thayer Ave.

Bismarck, ND 58501

Phone: 701-223-6091

[firstpresbyterian@fpcbismarck.com](mailto:firstpresbyterian@fpcbismarck.com)

[www.fpcbismarck.com](http://www.fpcbismarck.com)

Sunday Worship: 10:00 am

Office Hours: 8:00 am - 4:30 pm



### Pastor

*Rev. Dr. Leanne Simmons*

### Finance Assistant

*Carol Thompson*

### Administrative Assistant

*Maureen Chrest*

### Parish Nurse

*Carmen Bryhn*

### Maintenance

*Erik Hein Sr*

### Christian Ed. Youth Director

*Mark Jensen*

### Organists

*Arvy Smith & Gail Snustad*

### Chancel Choir Director

*Debi Rogers*

### Westminster Chimes Director

*Lael Hoerauf*

### Membership Services

*Judy Lentz*

### Audio/Visual Specialist

*Josh Stokka*

### Nursery

*Mary Jones & Laci Rauser*

### Sunday Security

*Erik Hein Jr*

### Christian Ed. Intern

*Connor Svihovec*



2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 10am Worship Communion <b>2nd Sunday in Lent</b>  1:00-3:00pm <b>Eleanor's 95th birthday in church parlor!</b>	2 1:30pm Prayer Shawl  6:30pm Scouts 7:00pm Chris. Ed	3 11am Strength & Bal. Class 2:00pm Yoga 5:30pm AA (#201) 5:45pm Prop.& Equipment	4 <b>Noon - Munch &amp; Mingle at Broadway Grill &amp; Tavern</b> 100 W Broadway Ave. 5:45pm PAC/Teens 6:30pm Bells 7:30pm Choir <b>6:30pm Lay Pastors</b>	5 11am Strength & Bal. Class  <b>3:00pm TESTING ONE CALL SYSTEM</b>	6	7
8 10am Worship <b>3rd Sunday in Lent</b>	9  5:30pm Worship & Music 6:30pm Scouts	10 11am Strength & Bal. Class 2:00pm Yoga 5:30pm AA (#201)	11  5:45pm PAC/Teens 6:30pm Bells 7:30pm Choir	12  11am Strength & Bal. Class <b>6:30pm Hospitality</b>	13	14
15 10am Worship <b>4th Sunday in Lent Irish Soda Bread &amp; Tea Sunday</b>	16 <b>Noon -Resource Management</b> 1:30pm Prayer Shawl 4:30pm Admin. & Personnel	17 11am Strength & Bal. Class 2:00pm Yoga 5:30pm AA (#201)	18  5:45pm PAC/Teens 6:30pm Bells 7:30pm Choir	19  11am Strength & Bal. Class <b>6:30pm Deacons</b>	20	21  <b>10am Spring Presbytery meeting in Jamestown!</b>
22 10am Worship <b>5th Sunday in Lent</b>	23  6:30pm Scouts	24 11am Strength & Bal. Class 2:00pm Yoga 2:00pm Presby Friends 5:30pm AA (#201) 6:00pm Session	25  5:45pm PAC/Teens 6:30pm Bells 7:30pm Choir	26  11am Strength & Bal. Class	27	28  Starting at 10:00am 3/28 & 3/29 Scout Troop 6 <b>Fill the Canoe</b> event at South Cash Wise
29 10am Worship <b>Palm Sunday- followed by the Easter Egg Hunt for the kids!</b>	30  6:30pm Scouts	31 11am Strength & Bal. Class 2:00pm Yoga 5:30pm AA (#201)				

Our thoughts and prayers are with Leanne during her recovery. In her absence, the church staff's attention to details keeps everything running smoothly behind the scenes. From preparing services to caring for members, managing details, and leading Sunday School, so much of what they do happens quietly and faithfully. We're so grateful for their dedication. Their kindness and patience truly reflect the heart of our church.

- FPC Admin. & Personnel Committee