

# “THE CORNERSTONE”

APRIL 2023 – MAY 2023

First Presbyterian Church PC (U.S.A.)

206 E. 20<sup>th</sup> Street P. O. Box 444

Falls City, Nebraska 68355

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Worship Time: 11:00 AM

## Pastor's Reflection

*Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord” and she told them he had said these things to her. **John 20:18***

Like Mary, we are charged with telling the story of resurrection as though we, like her, have encountered an impossible truth. As followers of Jesus Christ on Easter Sunday, we will be speaking to people who will hear very few other words of challenge or comfort from a church this year. The resurrected Jesus appears to Mary first. Not enough can be made of this simple point, in light of not just the ancient world, but the world we live in today. Our faith relies on this one woman telling others what she has seen. We might think it is a ridiculous story to have to tell, but she tells it. The first witnesses and those who first tell the story of Jesus's resurrection are women. These truths are confirmed in all the Gospels and are considered reliable, because, in short, who would make up such a thing? If the Gospel writers were trying to deceive readers, they would make a man their primary messenger, not a woman. In the context of their day, the testimony of a woman was considered untrustworthy, and yet it is to women that Jesus entrusted this key element of his story to be told.

The story of Jesus Christ might have quite literally ended if Mary had not spoken and if others had not believed her. They trusted her word which is almost as miraculous as the resurrection itself, almost but not quite. In his resurrection story, Jesus shows us not just that life can conquer death but even those whom society would deem low can be raised to places of prominence. Those we might be tempted to distrust can become our closest friends. Jesus erases these boundaries so we can know one

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another as he knows us. Whose stories might be missing today because we fail to see all people as Jesus did? The resurrection is central to our faith, but it is not a mere theological stance. It is the key to showing we live in a broken world. We live in hope, not despair; in community, not isolation; in truth, not in silence. We are heirs of the apostles, charged with telling the same story told long ago by the women, and then by the men, and then in every language and place.

Death is conquered. We are free. We are free, indeed.

Blessings upon you during this season of Easter and may the grace of God be with you.

Pastor Rick

### RECOMMENDED READING

Don't Hold Back by Pastor David Platt

Safe All Along by Katie Davis Majors

A Home in Mitford by Jan Karon

Spirit Car: Journey to a Dakota Past by Diane Wilson

### NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

All newsletter articles for the June-July newsletter will be due to the office by **MAY 8TH**. Please submit an article for the newsletter. Keep everyone informed about the activities of the church. Thank you for marking this *important* date on your calendar! Submit your good news!

### SERMON SERIES

Here we are with the commencement of Spring, 2023. Amazing isn't it and yet it is a season we have anxiously awaited. As I write this segment to you on the morning of March 7<sup>th</sup> the flowers are beginning to poke through the soil, and the buds on the trees are beginning to come out, to tell us it is time. Time to be born again, to reset ourselves, to begin anew; to come alive in the splendor of the light. The light through the darkness of a winter we have journeyed through. Glory be to God!

At Easter, we celebrate Jesus's resurrection from the dead; but this is no ghostly apparition. Jesus returns in the flesh to be close once again to his friends and to bring them closer to one another. There is tenderness and physicality highlighted in

### COMMUNITY NEWS

Mark your calendars! The Community Easter Cantata will be held at Humboldt United Methodist Church on Palm Sunday, April 2, 2023 at 2 pm under the direction of Doug Kirkendall and accompanist Doug Kottich. Free will offering. Refreshments to follow the program.



## **IT'S NOT TOO LATE FOR ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING!**

The One Great Hour of Sharing campaign kicked off on March 5th. These gifts are a reminder that through the simple act of sharing, we are blessed, and we experience God's abundance in surprising ways. Whether it is offering relief from natural disasters or access to food, water and healthcare, our gifts are needed. If you wish to donate, please send your contributions to P. O. Box 444 or drop off at the church. Please designate your donation as OGHS. We will complete our campaign with a dedication on Easter Sunday, April 9th. Envelopes and coin boxes for this special offering are also on the table at the back of the sanctuary. Thank you for your consideration.

## **BLANKET SUNDAY**

Blanket Sunday will be held on May 14<sup>th</sup>. How fitting as Mothers wrap their arms around their children for comfort, we also will bring comfort to others with blankets. If you wish to donate to this cause, please use a pew envelope marked Blanket Sunday or mark your check as such, so it may be posted accordingly.

## **FINANCIAL AWARENESS**

Many churches conduct formal stewardship campaigns. We have not done so at First Presbyterian for decades. Instead, the Session tries to keep you aware of the operational needs of the Church along with our outreach/mission programs. The winter temperatures were not kind to us this past season. Utilities have not only seen an increase to the rates, but the temperatures added an increased burden. The upshot of these few sentences is to ask each of you, whether you attend church in person or electronically, to consider this concern as you make contributions to the church. Thank you.

## **WELCOME BASKETS**

Our Mission Outreach Program of "Welcoming Baskets" is gaining momentum. We have delivered five "Welcome Baskets" in the month of March and are preparing for additional deliveries in the month of April. Welcome Baskets are an ideal way to get acquainted with someone new to your neighborhood. They may own a home, or

they may be renting. Nevertheless, they are our new neighbors, and we want to hear their stories. The baskets of goodies are filled with items from Richardson County and the church for you and/or the church to give as a gift welcoming them to the neighborhood. Your thoughtfulness will be appreciated, and they will know one less stranger. It is an easy process, please provide the church office with the name and address of the recipient.

## **FROM THE PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN—THE SOWER**

### **FAITH---WHAT'S ENOUGH?**

By Karen Moore, Wellspring 365 Meditations to Refresh Your Soul

Jesus said to him, "If you are able! —All things can be done for the one who believes. Immediately the father of the child cried out, "I believe; help my unbelief."  
Mark 9:23-24

Most of us can empathize with the poor father who struggled with his faith in the story Mark has noted here. We want to believe.

In our best moments, we do believe. In our worst moments, we question what we believe. We're not always certain we have enough of this thing called faith.

Alas, we can't buy more faith on the open market, but we may be able to buy into the concept, the idea, the fact of faith in such a way that we do indeed receive more of it. Perhaps faith is something like love. The more of it you give away, the more of it you use,

the more you have. If so, why don't we look for every opportunity to share our faith, to ground our faith, to substantiate our faith in such a way that lack is never a problem? When someone we love is struggling in their life, we call on our faith knowing that with

God all things are possible.

Take a moment and measure your faith quotient today. Is it enough to get you through every twist and turn the day may take? If not, start the day with one request. "Lord, help my lack of faith" Lord, help me depend on faith and on you in such a way that nothing can really shake it, nothing can take it away from me. Help me know that with faith in you all things are possible.

## WEDNESDAY'S MOSAIC TABLE (WMT)

We continue to enjoy the fruits of the Spirit in bringing new life to the words of Fred Rogers, "Won't You Be My Neighbor." On February 15, 2023, we hosted the parents and the incredible staff of "SixPence" to a blessing of the meal, a message from Pastor Rick, training, and a Question/Answer Segment by the parents. The month of March was dedicated to the memory of Presbyterian Pastor Fred (Mr.) Rogers's whose birthday is on March 20<sup>th</sup>. On March 8<sup>th</sup>, after the blessing of the meal and a brief message by Pastor Rick, a documentary was shown referencing the elements needed to be a "Good Neighbor." March 22<sup>nd</sup> was dedicated to our local Veterans with a blessing of the meal, a message from Pastor Rick, followed by the recent movie where Tom Hanks portrayed Mister Rogers. If you haven't attended WMT (it is every second and fourth Wednesday from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm.), please do so. You won't be disappointed.

### Won't You Be My Neighbor? by Fred Rogers

It's a beautiful day in this neighborhood  
A beautiful day for a neighbor  
Would you be mine? Could you be mine?

It's a neighborly day in this beauty wood  
A neighborly day for a beauty  
Would you be mine? Could you be mine?

I have always wanted to have a neighbor just like you  
I've always wanted to live in a neighborhood with you

So, let's make the most of this beautiful day  
Since we're together, we might as well say  
Would you be mine? Could you be mine?  
Won't you be my neighbor?

Won't you please, won't you please?  
Please, won't you be my neighbor?

Neighbors are people who are close to us  
And friends are people who are close to our hearts

the resurrection narratives. People coming together to hear and respond to this amazing news. Before Jesus's followers become the heroic saints of the church, they are simply a group of friends hearing and telling one another a story for which they can barely find words. Like bedtime stories and old family lore, we share our stories in relationships close and safe so we will be equipped to boldly share the story of Jesus in the world.

On Easter morning and the following seven Sundays of Easter, we will come together to show how the resurrection means deeper relationships with God and one another. I look forward to our conversations in the weeks ahead.

**Easter Series:** *Closer and Closer*

	<b>Sermon</b>	<b>Focus Scripture</b>
<b>Easter Sunday</b>	<i>Women Speak Truth</i>	John 20:1-18
<b>April 16, 2023</b>	<i>Reach Out and Touch</i>	1 Peter 1:3-9, John 20:19-31
<b>April 23, 2023</b>	<i>Walking with Jesus</i>	Luke 24:13-25
<b>April 30, 2023</b>	<i>Someone to Watch over You</i>	John 10:1-10
<b>May 7, 2023</b>	<i>Living Stones</i>	1 Peter 2:2-10
<b>May 14, 2023</b>	<i>The Air We Breathe</i>	Acts 17:22-28, John 14:15-21
<b>May 21, 2023</b>	<i>Bearing Witness</i>	Acts 1:6-14

## -----PARISH NEWS-----

### LENTEN SERVICE REMINDER

The Hiawatha Presbyterian Church will hold Maundy Thursday services on April 6<sup>th</sup> beginning at 6:30 pm.

### EASTER LILIES

Lilies are a lovely addition to our Easter celebration. Thank you for your floral contribution. Lilies were provided by:

Thelma Kirkendall in memory of Gary and Cindy Kirkendall  
John & Rick Martin in memory of Mary Elizabeth Martin and Mary Elizabeth Schock  
Presbyterian Women in honor of all past and present Presbyterian Women