

April 2014

“Glad Tidings”

Wysox Presbyterian Church

Pastor’s Message - A Completely Different View of the World

I grew up in the mid-west on hog farms. That alone should say a lot about my world view. I went out into the hog barns with my dad starting with my earliest memories, I got into the pens and grabbed the piglets so that my dad could vaccinate or castrate them, I helped corral the hogs to where they needed to go, and I put up with the smell because that is just what you need to do when you live in the heartland on a farm.

Did I want to do this? No. I am not painting a false picture of a golden age when children worked hard and parents were always respected. That time never existed. Instead, I fought often with my dad, preferring to stay inside and watch television or play outside in the woods shooting storm troopers of the Star Wars kind. But, I always lost those fights and I was forced to work. These experiences helped to lay the formation of my world-view: work hard, rely on yourself, and create a future for yourself.

None of you will be unfamiliar with this world-view, because it is the world-view of our culture. And, those who struggle to make it in our world are encouraged to work harder, learn more, and be more. Those who do not or cannot strive harder are look down upon. In other words, “strive first for yourself, and you will get more.”

Considering this world-view, I was shocked when I visited Costa Rica a few years back and experienced a very, very different world-view. At the time, the country was seeking a loan from the International Monetary Fund. Attached to the loan was the requirement to dramatically reduce some of their social programs such as health care and/or assistance for the poor. Though it would benefit the country, they could not take the deal because, as a local politician explained to us, “I cannot imagine not caring for our neighbors. We are all in this together. Why would we blatantly choose to forget our brothers and sisters? To not help the neighbor is plain evil.” The room was filled with head-nodding, indicating to me that I was visiting a very different planet. For them, the losers in society were not those who did not build themselves up, rather the losers were those who did not build others up.

Christians in Costa Rica have little problem understanding Jesus words, “Do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Do not miss this: Jesus is making a radical statement that shifts the world-view given to us from our birth dramatically. Do not strive first for yourselves. Strive first for God’s kingdom: a kingdom of loving God and loving your neighbor first, and God (and your neighbor) will not forget you either. For Jesus this is not simply an ideal, it is the essential shape of life for a Christian.

The Question Box

(Questions About Our Christian Life)

“How do I help my friend grieve?”

One of my seminary professors answered this question very plainly. “Helping someone grieve is 98% listening and 2% not saying something stupid.” This is very true. God has given us the gift of grief so that we can move through hard losses. Most of us do not need to be taught how to do it. But, what we do need is someone who will simply listen to our pain and our stories (even if it is the 15th time it is told.) How? Listen. – Pastor Jira

Lenten Schedule

Approximately twelve members of the Wysox Presbyterian Church attended the Ash Wednesday Service held at the Trinity Lutheran Church in Towanda.

- There will be a luncheon (breakfast casserole) after our Palm Sunday service on April 13th.
- On April 17th, we will be having our Maundy Thursday service beginning at 6:00 p.m. in Ferguson Hall. We will begin the service with a light supper followed by a time of reflection and communion by intinction led by Pastor Jira.
- Friday, April 18th, at noon, will be the Good Friday Crosswalk beginning at the Trinity Lutheran Church.
- There will be a Easter Sunrise Service at Wysox Presbyterian Church on Sunday April 20th. The service will begin at 7:30 a.m. There will also be an Easter Service at Wysox at 11:00 a.m. with communion by intinction.

Everyone is welcomed and encouraged to come and celebrate the Lenten season with us by attending these special services.

Pastor Jira Away

Pastor Jira has been approved to be on education leave from April 27th (after services) through April 30th. If anyone has an emergency or special need during his absence, please contact Clerk of Session, Kim Barnes

Easter Flower Envelopes

Enclosed in the newsletter is an Easter flower envelope that can be used to make a donation *in memory of* or *in honor of a loved one*. Proceeds from the flower donations are used to provide flowers in the sanctuary and vestibules. Please fill out the information as you want it listed on the back of the envelope. A list of memorials will be in the Easter Sunday bulletin.

Reflective Bible Verse

Session has chosen a bible verse that will guide us in our life together. The verse is taken from Colossians 1: 19-20. ***For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.*** You are encouraged to incorporate this verse into your daily devotions.

Sewing Society

God blessed us with a beautiful sunny day and we had a great crowd. We served 89 patrons.

Again, thanks to all who prepared dishes, pies and to those who came to help. We really have a lot of fun and fellowship.

We will be busy this month as we will be serving the Shriners and Growmark.

Hope to see you in April when we will be serving ham loaf.

Have a blessed Easter!

God loves you and so do we.

Spring Cleaning for TACO

For the month of April, we will continue collecting "spring cleaning" items. This includes cleaners, scrub brushes, buckets, Windex, soaps, sponges, Lysol wipes, etc... Please leave your donations in the shopping cart in the rear vestibule.

The Three Trees - Anonymous

Once there were three trees on a hill in the woods. They were discussing their hopes and dreams when the first tree said, 'Someday I hope to be a treasure chest. I could be filled with gold, silver and precious gems. I could be decorated with intricate carving and everyone would see the beauty.'

Then the second tree said, 'Someday I will be a mighty ship. I will take Kings and queens across the waters and sail to the corners of the world. Everyone will feel safe in me because of the strength of my hull'

Finally the third tree said, 'I want to grow to be the tallest and straightest Tree in the forest. People will see me on top of the hill and look up to my branches, and think of the heavens and God and how close to them I am reaching. I will be the greatest tree of all time and people will always remember me.'

After a few years of praying that their dreams would come true, a group of woodsmen came upon the trees. When one came to the first tree he said, 'This looks like a strong tree, I think I should be able to sell the wood to a carpenter,' and he began cutting it down. The tree was happy, because he knew that the carpenter would make him into a treasure chest.

At the second tree the woodsman said, 'This looks like a strong tree. I should be able to sell it to the shipyard' The second tree was happy Because he knew he was on his way to becoming a mighty ship.

When the woodsmen came upon the third tree, the tree was frightened because he knew that if they cut him down his dreams would not come true. One of the woodsmen said, 'I don't need anything special from my tree, I'll take this one,' and he cut it down.

When the first tree arrived at the carpenters, he was made into a feed box for animals. He was then placed in a barn and filled with hay. This was not at all what he had prayed for.

The second tree was cut and made into a small fishing boat. His dreams of being a mighty ship and carrying kings had come to an end.

The third tree was cut into large pieces, and left alone in the dark.

The years went by, and the trees forgot about their dreams.

Then one day, a man and woman came to the barn. She gave birth and they placed the baby in the hay in the feed box that was made from the first tree. The man wished that he could have made a crib for the baby, but this manger would have to do. The tree could feel the importance of this event and knew that it had held the greatest treasure of all time.

Years later, a group of men got in the fishing boat made from the second tree. One of them was tired and went to sleep. While they were out on the water, a great storm arose and the tree didn't think it was strong enough to keep the men safe. The men woke the sleeping man, and He stood and said 'Peace' and the storm stopped. At this time, the tree knew that it had carried the King of Kings in its boat.

Finally, someone came and got the third tree. It was carried through the streets as the people mocked the man who was carrying it. When they came to a stop, the man was nailed to the tree and raised in the air to die at the top of a hill. When Sunday came, the tree came to realize that it was strong enough to stand at the top of the hill and be as close to God as was possible, because Jesus had been crucified on it.

The moral of this story is that when things don't seem to be going your way, always know that God has a plan for you. If you place your trust in Him, God will give you great gifts.

Each of the trees got what they wanted, just not in the way they had imagined. We don't always know what God's plans are for us. We just know that His Ways are not our ways, but His ways are always best.

Prayer Circle

We are missing another long time member who has been very devoted to our mission. Betty Cook has moved to the To-wanda Personal Care Home. She has joined Marion Lent, who also was very active in our group. We miss you ladies, and someday we'll come over and have our Bible study at your digs.

We would also like to send our get well wishes to Evelyn Wilson who is recuperating after surgery. May you soon be feeling much better. We hope you will be able to join us soon.

We completed our study of Genesis, and dove head first into Exodus where God chose Moses. We have read of many strange things such as the burning bush, the changing of the rod into a snake, and God promised deliverance. We read of the many plagues which struck Egypt, however; although Pharaoh promised, he would not let the people go. We will be continuing in Chapter 12, the story of the Passover.

We would like to invite you to join us, we would even change our time to 10 am, instead of 9:30 if it would be more convenient for you. Please talk to our members if you would be interested, all 3 of us.

We meet every Wednesday morning in the conference room at 9:30. We have prayer, sign many cards for those needing comfort, or a cheerful hello, and enjoy each others company. Pastor Jira has an awesome Bible study!!!! We have all learned so much. Please plan to join us.

The following were remembered on our Prayer List

February 19th thru March 19th

Prayer Circle Listing

Angel List

Makayla Evans
Mason Barto
Ashley Weed
Marisa Ivey
Betty Miller
Nancy Irvine
Andrew Pardoe
Deb Mathers
Shawn Mastrantonio
Abbriella Brown
Caiden Irvine
Carolyn Russell
Clara Weaver

Current List

Whitney Rockwell
Danny Schmeckenbecher
Marion Lent
Robert Allen
Otto Brown
Gladys Derr
Colleen Close
Jim Allen
Tom Jennings
Cynthia Sims
Rowena McCarthy
Joyce & Carl Rogers
Linda Hartzell

Wilbur Beers
Diane Place
Richard Hollenback
Bob Soper
Jim Ennis
Our Nation
Frank Lindsey
Michelle Lamphere
Shirley Strohl
Joyce Danielski
Barb Bailey
Lynn Kithcart
Emily Woodcock

Robert Perry
Janie Wallace
Rev. Dwight Albers
Jeremiah Nickerson
Mavis Rose Pugh
Evelyn Wilson
Jim Christini Family
Janet Lewis Family
Dale Kress
Rusty Eddy
Tom Neilson

Shhh.....Surprise Birthday! Everyone is cordially invited to a surprise birthday celebration in honor of Betty Cook's 90th birthday on Saturday, April 5th at 1:00 pm in Ferguson Hall. There will be a luncheon provided by the Sewing Society and a basket will be available for cards.

Session Minutes

WYSOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SESSION MEETING FEBRUARY 10, 2014

The regular meeting of the Session of the Wysox Presbyterian Church was called to order by Pastor Jira Albers on February 10, 2014 at 7:03 PM at the Wysox Presbyterian Church.

Opening devotions and prayer led by Elder Savercool

Elders Present: Kim Barnes, Dave Blascak, Lori Blascak, Mary Bruce, Vaughn Hollenback, Michelle Irvine, Ronald Irvine Jr., Deborah King, Dody Savercool, Loretta Stevens and Shelly VanDerMark

Elders Excused: Julie Palmer

Elders Absent: None

Guests Present: Reverend Dr. Barbara Smith, Lackawanna Presbytery, stopped by to check in and let us know that Presbytery is there to support us. She indicated that she is making an effort to do outreach visits to all of the congregations/sessions in our Presbytery. Rev. Smith also stated that she enjoyed our service a few weeks ago when she attended, and that the “spirit is evident” here in Wysox.

ORDER OF THE DAY:

1. The Docket for the meeting was approved on a motion by Elder L. Blascak and seconded by Elder R. Irvine.
2. On a motion by Elder R. Irvine and second by Elder L. Blascak the minutes of the Session Meeting on 01.13.14 were approved.

CORRESPONDENCE:

- Various thank you cards and letters of appreciation

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

1. Music & Worship: Elder Savercool reported:
 - a. Ash Wednesday services will be held at the Trinity Lutheran Church on March 5th at 7pm
 - b. Palm Sunday services are set for April 13th, with Youth Group brunch following service
 - c. Easter Sunday services set for April 20th
2. Membership & Evangelism: Elder Stevens reported:
 - a. Exploring the possibility of perhaps hosting a women’s conference here
 - b. Considering sending out “missing you” letters to folks we haven’t seen in awhile
3. Christian Education: Elder King reported:
 - a. Youth Group will conduct service on May 4th for “Compassion Sunday”
 - b. \$54 was collected for Merit, the Youth Groups compassion child
 - c. Unless a new group volunteers to take charge of Mother/Daughter banquet, the banquet will not be held
4. Mission: Elder M. Irvine reported:
 - a. February 2nd “Souper” Bowl of Caring effort collected 55 cans and \$20 in cash
 - b. Hats, gloves and socks are still needed and still being collected
5. Memorial: Elder Bruce - none
6. Property: Elder Ron Irvine - none
7. Personnel: Elder Ron Irvine – none

Session Minutes

8. Finance & Investments: Elder Lori Blascak:
 - a. Presented and reviewed the report prepared by finance committee.
9. Recognition: Elder Mary Bruce

SPECIAL REPORTS

1. **Treasurer's Report:** Presented and reviewed the report submitted by Lora Schmieg
 - a. The monthly financial report was unanimously accepted on a motion by Elder Hollenback, seconded by Elder Bruce.
 - b. On a motion by Elder Hollenback and seconded by Elder M. Irvine, it was agreed to use the remaining dollars in the Outwater fund for grounds keeping and to close out the account.
2. **Pastor's Report:** Pastor Albers shared his report of activities for the past month.
3. **Lackawanna Presbytery:** Training for Elders and Deacons held in Wyalusing on February 1st was attended by Elders King, VanDerMark and Barnes. They shared that it was very good training and each of them brought something back with them that they had learned.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Consideration of adoption of Sexual Offender response policy was tabled until next month.
2. Discussion/ decision regarding the repairs to the parking lot were put on hold.
3. An itemized list of items that are currently in the safe deposit box will be made.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. On a motion by Elder R. Irvine and seconded by Elder King, it was agreed to request assistance from Rick Schmieg regarding researching the best course of action to update our office computer and software.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:03 pm.
Closing Prayer lead by Pastor Jira Albers

Next Session Meeting: March 10, 2014 @ 7:00 pm

Respectfully recorded and submitted:

Kim D Barnes
Clerk of Session