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Voices of Faith

February 2017

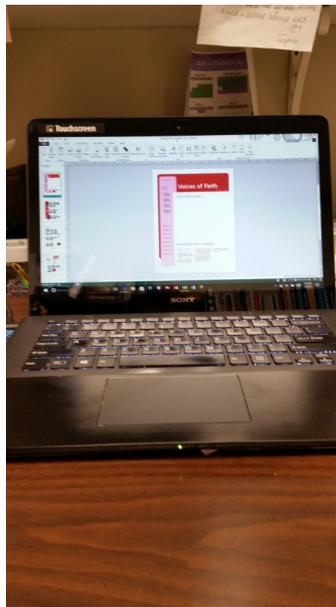
From Deb's Desk

When I think of February a few things come to mind: Groundhog's Day, Lincoln's Birthday, Valentine's Day, and Washington's Birthday. As a kid, we watched as the groundhog searched for a shadow, decorated boxes to hold the Valentine's we would receive at school, and we couldn't wait for the day of Lincoln's birthday to have a day off school (before President's day and I was in Illinois). The folks at the Rock Island Federal Arsenal got Washington's birthday off.

Now, when I think of February, I am more concerned about things like: when is Ash Wednesday (it isn't until March this year), whew, we made it through another annual meeting, and oh yeah, there's the Super Bowl.

Not that I don't think about groundhog's day and Valentine's day and the birthdays of former presidents, but the change is interesting to

me. Part of the change is due to what my voca-



tion is — so I should be concerned about annual meetings and Ash Wednesday but it's more than just vocation.

When I think of February — the shortest of months, I am drawn to think of how big God is and how amazing God is and all of the wonderful things God does not only for me but for each of us.

In a sermon I preached earlier in January, I said we needed to **notice** God's presence in our lives — whether it be God working in others or in ourselves. I said we needed to **share** — share how we have seen God working in our lives or in the lives of others. And I said we needed to **invite** others to see what God is doing in our own lives and in the lives of others in our congregation, our community, our world.

God truly does amazing things in the lives of all God's people and you and I are witnesses to this — why would we not want to notice, share and invite others **to see** what God is up to.

February may be the shortest of months, but it is a big month in how it reminds us of all that God has done, does, and will do throughout the year. I hope you will notice, share, and invite!

By Brandon Ward

When you receive your offering box each year, you will find six additional offering envelopes, aside from the weekly envelope. Four of these envelopes are Special Offering envelopes for special times throughout the year. The remaining two are for offerings which cover operational expenses incurred by the church. I'd like to talk about each of these four, covering the latter two first.

The very first envelope in the box is the "Initial Offering" envelope. This can be thought of as your first offering of the New Year and is really meant to cover the cost of the envelopes themselves. While the Session does budget funds that go toward purchasing envelopes for members who pledge, your initial offering will offset this and will allow the rest of our church funds to be used for other expenses, like programs and building costs.

The next envelope you will find is the "Per Capita" envelope. The Presbytery sets a portion of the per capita amount every year. This is the cost per member of the Presbytery to cover operational expenses of our higher governing bodies – the Presbytery, Synod and General Assembly. You may wonder why it is important to pay a per capita. By contributing these funds, our larger governing bodies are able to op-

erate, with administrative costs being covered. Then, when any other donations are made throughout the year – like donations to the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, Presbyterian Mission Agency, etc. – 100% of your donation will go toward the given cause. Per Capita has been set at \$30 per member this year – the same amount that was set in 2016. With a membership of 100, our church is obligated to contribute \$3000 in per capita. If these entire funds are not received, additional money from our General Fund must be used to make up the difference. Last year, only about 65% of per capita was received. This meant that we had to use \$1,015 from our General Fund to make up the difference. *Note that if you are a member of Faith but did not pledge, you will not receive offering envelopes but are still responsible for contributing per capita.*

The first special offering received each year is on Easter and is the "One Great Hour of Sharing" offering (abbreviated OGHS.) Funds received from this offering support a long-standing ecumenical effort to alleviate the effects of poverty, injustice and disaster. 32% of the total funds received go to support Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, 36% of funds support the Presbyterian Hunger Program and 32% helps to support the Self-Development of People.

The second special offering is the Pentecost Offering received on – yes, you guessed it – Pentecost. Funds received from this offering go to support the church's greatest resource – our young people. 40% of this offering are retained by our church to support our Youth Programs. 25% goes to support Young Adult Volunteers as they learn about fellowship, worship and service. Another 25% supports Youth Ministries. The remaining 10% of this offering is dedicated to providing advocacy for protecting children who are at risk around the world.

Our third special offering has been recently renamed the "Peace & Global Witness" offering. This offering helps us live up to our promise of being a connectional church by uniting us with other congregations and presbyteries to promote reconciliation and peacemaking within cultures of violence and conflict – including our own. We retain 25% of this offering at Faith to help respond to conflict within our own community. Another 25% of this offering is dedicated to the work of the mid-councils, presbyteries and synods, as they work to connect with those in need of peace and reconciliation. The remaining half of this offering supports collaborative educational initiatives to spread Christ's witness in the world.

Office Hours Change

Due to less income because pledges can't keep up with expenses, the Personnel committee, along with Administration and Finance, and the Congregation voted to reduce Pastor Deb's hours from 50 per week to 40 per week. What this means is that some of the tasks Deb usually did for us, will now fall to members of the congrega-

tion. Things like: getting the trash and recycling to the curb, writing articles for the newsletter, helping committees with some of their work, etc. Pastor Deb is usually in the office every morning, Monday through Thursday and afternoons depending on evening meetings, visitation, etc.

Additionally, Bonnie Zgola, our administrative as-

sistant, also had her hours cut from 10 per week to 8. She will be in the office Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 2 pm until 4 pm.

While these are not ideal situations, they were necessitated by our lack of funds and wanting to have a budget closer to being balanced than not.



Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

The Deacons and the Building and Grounds committee are asking you to be aware! Be aware that we have both a Recycle bin and a trash bin in the kitchen and a recycle can and a garbage can in the hallway by the back door. The only things going into the recycle bin/can are: paper, cardboard, cans and bottles. If you have a box, it must be broken



down! Garbage of any kind, aluminum cake pans (unless they are

washed out), etc. goes in the trash/garbage cans.

Also, please do not put cups into the garbage that have liquid in them — makes for a big mess when trying to clean up. Please dump any liquid into the sink in the kitchen.

Your help is deeply appreciated by those who empty both recycling and trash cans.

Please remember —
Reduce
Reuse
Recycle

A Celtic Prayer by John Philip Newell

Glory be to you, O God,
For the rising of the sun,
For colour filling the skies
And for the whiteness of daylight.

Glory be to You
for creatures stirring
forth from the night,
for plant forms stretching
and unfolding,

for the beauty of your
image waking in opening
eyes,
lighting the human countenance.

Glory be to you. Glory be to you.
But where the glistening
is lost sight of,

where life's colours are dulled
and the human soul grows
hard,
we pray for grace this day,
we pray for your softening
graces.



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Offering envelopes continued...from page 2

Our last special offering, the Christmas Joy Offering – which is received on Christmas Eve, helps to assist our past and present church workers in their time of need. It also helps provide for the education and leadership development of our church's future racial ethnic leaders. Half of this offering goes to provide assistance to students to attend Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools and colleges to pursue their professional and leadership goals. The other half supports the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions which offers financial assistance for current and retired Presbyterian church workers in their time of need.

Please take some time to consider what your gift to these special offerings this year may be. And please, help our church and our governing bodies work to spread the light of Jesus throughout the world by contributing to the initial offering and per capita. May we continue to work together this 2017, in the name of Christ our Lord.