



First Press

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February 2023

From the Pastor's Desk



CHRISTMAS EVE

**Lift high the cross, the love of Christ
proclaim,
Till all the world adore His sacred name.**

Peter Paul Rubens painted this depiction of a terrible and glorious event--the Cross of Christ. Our modern minds can barely comprehend the agony He knew for us. We might wish to turn our heads from such images as Rubens' from the 17th Century.

(continued pg.2)



Pastor's Desk (cont.)

Our Presbyterian church icons, being Reformed, depict an empty cross in celebration of the Resurrected Lord. The painting was created in the same time frame as the Reformers changed imagery from statuary and crucifixes to plainer symbols reminiscent of celebration of life rather than death.

"Lift High the Cross" is a hymn generally sung in worship during Lent reflecting the love of Jesus which we should emulate. Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on February 22 which we shall mark with a service of remembrance including the optional imposition of ashes at 6:30 p.m. The Ash Wednesday service is generally somber and meditational, marking an orderly transition from the Incarnation to the Resurrection, Christmas to Easter. Truthfully, Lent is anything but orderly and festive. "Lift High the Cross" was written by an Anglican clergyman as a festival hymn in 1887 for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.

George W. Kitchin was inspired by Matthew 12:24: *If any man desires to be my disciple, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me*, and the example of the conversion of Constantine. Constantine is said to have had a vision of a cross bearing the inscription: IN HOC SIGNO VINCES, *In this sign thou shall conquer*.

The words of the hymn speak for themselves as an expression of Resurrection Faith:

*Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim.
Till all the world adores His sacred name.
Follow the path of which our captain trod
The King victorious, Christ the son of God.
Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim.
Till all the world adores His sacred name.*

On a less serious note, the famed groundhog, Punxsutawney Phil, predicted six more weeks of winter weather on February 2. I was pulling for an early spring having now experienced a few days of winter ice and sleet. Please, Phil, not a repeat of that snowy Easter because we have plans:

Ash Wednesday, February 22, Communion and imposition of Ashes at 6:30 p.m.

Palm Sunday, April 2, remembering the triumphal entry of Jesus with a palm processional and music by our choirs and guest musician.

Maundy Thursday, April 6, communion and Tenebrae (service of darkness usually on Good Friday) at 6:30 p.m. Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services are combined.

Easter Sunday, "Lift High the Cross", a glorious celebration of new life in Christ at 11:00 a.m. in song and scripture.

**Easter lilies will be available for purchase for use in worship and to take home.*

LIFT HIGH THE CROSS ~ IN THIS SIGN YOU SHALL CONQUER

Rev. Kathy Vineyard, H.R.

FINANCIAL DATA

JANUARY - February 12

Total Income	\$14,666.48
Total Expense	\$ 6,501.01
Net Income	\$ 8,165.47



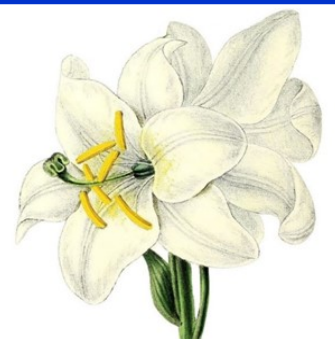
A Stated Meeting of the Session was held on Jan. 21, 2023. Highlights provided by the Clerk of Session include:

- The need was stated to call a Congregational Meeting to elect CNC members – the date of Sunday, February 5th was selected for this meeting. [Meeting was held and Lynda Allmer and Fulton Jones were elected for Congregational Nominating Committee for 2023]
- Item- Organization of Session. After considering options, the 2023 Session decided to organize with these teams:
 - Worship – Kay Atwood
 - Building & Grounds – Terry Coyne and Larry Boyles
 - Congregational Care (Internal) – Marian Sutter. This will also include hospitality and the new men’s and women’s groups.
 - Missions (External) – Julie McPhail
- Treasurer’s Report - Penny presented the report which showed an end-of- year deficit. The Session agreed that they need to reconsider the adopted budget in light of year end shortfall. Discussion followed but no action was taken at this time. A decision was made to invite the Treasurer, Fulton Jones, to the next meeting to provide insight.
- Julie mentioned that BISD had some reading opportunities for churches. She also mentioned sharing the Presbyterian Giving Catalog as a Lenten season project, perhaps as a Minute for Mission. We can also encourage members to take a look at the catalog or their website.
- Marian has taken on sending cards to members of the Congregation celebrating birthdays and anniversaries. It was noted that we need to update our contact names and information. She will also coordinate the provision of meals for the Body of Christ volunteers when we are scheduled to provide them.
- With the current Session vacancy, there is no one to lead the area of Christian Education. Bob Livingston will continue the Bible Study Sunday School Class, as that is a vital source of education for the congregation.
- Kay gave updates on plans for special services for Lent and Easter, Pentecost, Mother’s and Father’s Day and the 4th of July. Stay tuned for more details as those dates approach.

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Easter Lily
For \$15



Special
Event

The Banner Team Presents
New Original Banners
February 26th

CHRISTMAS EVE



MORE CHRISTMAS EVE



CHRISTMAS DAY



NEW YEARS EVE



ORDINATION & INSTALLATION

