I want to reflect briefly on my experience of offering "Drive By" ashes on Ash Wednesday a couple of weeks ago. I found it to be a fascinating experience.

* All who received ashes expressed gratitude for the opportunity to do so.
* The majority of those who came by were not members of First Presbyterian Church. They were Missouri Synod Lutheran, Methodist, Catholic, and not currently practicing any faith that I could discern (more about this later).
* First Presbyterian members who partook appreciated the opportunity, but really wanted the normalcy of being in our beautiful sanctuary. I get it!
* At least three cars were a dad and his teenage son.
* Those who didn't seem to be practicing any particular faith at the moment, shared memories of attending Ash Wednesday worship with their grandmothers long ago, and of how their receiving ashes in the present helped them feel a meaningful connection to their now deceased grandmother.
* One individual came out of the YMCA parking lot headed west on Adams, but saw our Drive By Ashes sign, pulled over to the side of the road, waited until they could back up a bit, and then pulled in for ashes.

There are a couple of take-aways for me from this experience:
1) It seems that many people have a desire to experience spiritual movement in their lives, even though they may not choose to explore spirituality in an organized fashion - like through a church. Though these folks may never join us on a Sunday morning, how might we serve their spiritual needs by following Jesus' example of caring for those he encountered along the way?
2) When we only do things within our building, hoping that people will come to us, we're missing most of the action! 21st Century discipleship demands that we get out of our church building, and connect with others, and serve the needs of others, where they are. What might more intentional efforts in this direction look like at First Presbyterian?

These seem like good things to ponder as we journey through Lent......

Continue the conversation with Interim Pastor, Bill Smutz, email: wsmutz@kirkwoodpres.org, cell: 314.853.7165
As we continue our journey of Lent, I am cautiously optimistic about the arrival of Spring. The past few days have given us a hint of the next season – birds singing, early plants and flowers poking out of the ground, crocuses blooming. The days are growing longer and we sense that there are changes coming. (Please note I crossed my fingers while writing this so as not to jinx it!)

The season of Lent is the same, and it is no accident that Lent and Easter occur at this point in the calendar. We walk the road with Jesus to Jerusalem and are aware of the events to transpire but are assured by the extraordinary promise of Easter Day. Just as the earth prepares to explode with new life, we have faith that Christ will rise again.

Do take part in our weekly worship on Sunday and Wednesday and tune in for reflective music at noon on Fridays as we continue on our way. May these days of Lent be a time of blessing and renewal for us as individuals and as a congregation.

Faithfully yours,

Bill

The Con Spirito Concert Series
Tree of Life Chapel Lenten Recital Series
These 30 minute performances will be live-streamed at noon on the following days. Due to artist and copyright agreements, these recitals will not be archived.

- March 5: The Perseid String Quartet
- March 12: Reflections for Lent, Bill Stein, piano
- March 19: St. Louis Irish Arts
- March 26: Louisa Wimmer, soprano and Anthony Heinemann, tenor

Church Reopening Task Force Meets
The First Presbyterian Reopening Task Force met recently so that our interim pastor, Bill Smutz, could meet the group and become acquainted with their work. The group also examined the state of the virus, growing vaccine distribution and the decrease in hospitalization rates. Following a vigorous discussion, the Task Force agreed that the building should continue to be closed and worship continue to be live-streamed for the immediate future, hoping for a steady decline in those numbers to move us towards in person worship. Members of the committee and staff are also examining procedures for ushers and others, so we already have plans in place and are ready to go when the time comes. The group was also interested in new ideas for how the congregation might creatively gather to worship. They will meet again on Monday, March 8 to consider emerging possibilities in this area. Above all, the Task Force reaffirmed the goal of keeping every member/friend of the congregation as safe as possible, especially as the increased rates of vaccination help make a return to more normal activities tantalizingly close!
March 2021 Worship Schedule

March 7 -- The Third Sunday in Lent
Rev. Dr. Karen Blanchard, preaching
Rev. Dr. Bill Smutz, liturgist
Sermon: “Why Play by the Rules?”
The Lord’s Supper will be celebrated
(please have bread and juice/wine ready at home)
Bell Choir; Travis Evans, Bell Director
Tom Lowery, Hymn Leader; Bill Stein, Organist

March 14 – The Fourth Sunday in Lent
Rev. Dr. Bill Smutz, preaching
Rev. Dr. Karen Blanchard, liturgist
Sermon: “Moving Beyond Snakes”
The Chancel Octet; Bill Stein, Director and Organist
Travis Evans, Accompanist

March 21 – The Fifth Sunday in Lent
Rev. Dr. Bill Smutz, preaching
Rev. Dr. Karen Blanchard, liturgist
Sermon: “Even Jesus”
The Chancel Octet
Bill Stein, Director; Travis Evans, Organist

March 28 – Palm Sunday
Rev. Dr. Karen Blanchard, preaching
Sermon: “Going Home or Coming Home?”
Bell Choir; Travis Evans, Bell Director
Leslie Mallory, Hymn Leader; Bill Stein, Organist

Please join us online every Wednesday at noon for our Midweek Lenten Worship Service.

We will have a detailed schedule of Holy Week services in the March 19th email, but please reserve these dates and times for live-streamed worship:

| April 1 | Maundy Thursday | 7:00 pm |
| April 2 | Good Friday     | 12:00 pm and 7:00 pm |
| April 4 | Easter Sunday   | 11:00 am |
Dear Members and Friends of the Congregation

It was fourteen years ago that I had the privilege and honor of introducing The Rev. Dr. David Holyan as our new Senior Pastor and Head of Staff. It was with gratitude for his service and with admiration that last fall we accepted the fact that he had to resign for medical reasons. He made a great impact during his tenure here.

First Presbyterian established a tradition over 50 years ago of hanging a portrait of former Senior Pastors in the Church Lounge. In keeping with that tradition, and with Sessions permission, a campaign to fund a portrait of David is beginning. It’s called 14 for 14. It is suggested that each member of the congregation contribute $14.00, one dollar for each year of David’s tenure. You are cordially invited to PARTICIPATE in this program.

Perhaps you have a special memory of David:

Did David marry you or baptize your child or grandchild?
Did you learn of David’s amazing teaching abilities through a class or his wonderful “Dinners with David” or did a certain sermon inspire you?
Did he help you through a personal illness or the death of a loved one?

You may contribute by sending a check for $14.00 (or more, if you are so inclined) to First Presbyterian Church of Kirkwood earmarked “14 for 14” or you can visit the church website at www.kirkwoodpres.org to make a contribution online by credit card and note that the funds are for the 14 for 14 campaign (David Holyan Portrait). Knowing the generosity of this congregation, Session has recommended if the campaign exceeds the costs of the portrait, that those funds be put into the Ministry Fund.

Thank you in advance for your participation. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me. Sharon Croissant at scrois822@gmail.com or 314-909-8136.

14 for 14 CAMPAIGN

* The family of Karla McGown following the death of her husband, Roy, on February 16, 2021
* The family of Erma Brawley who died on February 23, 2021
* The family of Adelaide Luecke (Lad) who died on February 23, 2021
* The family of Jane Dunning, who died on February 26, 2021. A live-streamed memorial service for Jane will be held on Saturday, March 13 at 10:30am.

I would like to thank the members of First Presbyterian Church for their many kindnesses during my recent hospitalization. Your prayers, cards, and messages are so very appreciated! God bless you all.

Shirley Stein
The book called *Gospel Parallels* compares and contrasts various passages in the gospels. It shows us how, for example, the four versions of feeding the thousands are both alike and different from one writer to another. If we look at the baptism of Jesus in each of the gospels, we become aware of the different perspectives and nuances that are contained within each version. With that in mind we will look at a variety of passages in the gospels as a means for understanding the particular viewpoints of the gospel writers and the insights into the life of Jesus. We will meet on Wednesdays at 10am by Zoom for four weeks beginning on March 3. If you are interested, please contact Karen at kblanchard@kirkwoodpres.org to receive the study information and Zoom invite.

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**CHRISTIAN CONCERNS**  
**SUNDAY MORNINGS AT 9:30AM**  
Email Ann Miller to be added to the Zoom list at ann.willie@hotmail.com

Betsy Solomon, director of the Shepherd Center and trained art historian, will lead a series on the paintings of Jesus over the centuries at 9:30am on Sunday mornings in March, via Zoom. If you are not presently on the Christian Concerns Zoom invitation list, please contact Ann Miller at ann.willie@hotmail.com.

Betsy’s class series is called: *Through the Centuries: Art Featuring the Life of Jesus*

The life of Jesus has been an enduring inspiration for artists of the European tradition. Artists have created extraordinary masterpieces, each reflecting their moment in time and leaving behind a legacy of narrative scenes. Lecture topics for this 4-part series will include:

- **3/7** – Images of Jesus in Early Christian & Medieval Art
- **3/14** – Jesus as Subject in Renaissance Painting
- **3/21** – The Work of El Greco
- **3/28** – Images of the Crucifixion, Resurrection and Second Coming

Plan to join us.

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**FOURTH WEDNESDAY BOOK GROUP**  
**1:30PM ON ZOOM**

**March 24th:** HARRY TRUMAN’S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE, by Matthew Algeo. The story of Harry and Bess Truman taking a cross country trip following the end of his presidency.

**April 28th:** NOMADLAND, by Jessica Bruder. A book about the ways in which people deal with poverty in our country with courage and wisdom as they move from one part of the country to another looking for work.

**May 26th:** WHERE THE FOREST MEETS THE STARS, by Glendy Vanderah, a book about the mysterious arrival of a young girl and the secrets she helps to unravel that helps two adults reclaim their lives along with hers.

If you would like to be on the invite list, please let Karen know at kblanchard@kirkwoodpres.org.
School Supplies and Healthy Snacks for Kirkwood Students

Thanks to everyone who donated school supplies and healthy snacks to Kirkwood students. Now that our kids are starting a new semester, we are again asking for First Pres members to help out by donating school supplies and healthy snacks such as:

**School Supplies**
- Reusable water bottles (the drinking fountains are turned off)
- Notebooks
- Pencil cases/boxes with supplies such as pencils, scissors, erasers, glue sticks
- Crayons
- Small whiteboards
- Mechanical Pencils

**Healthy Snacks**
- Animal crackers
- Cheez-its
- Pretzel graham crackers (plain, no flavored)

We will be collecting donations now through the month of March. Please bring your donations to the Jefferson parking lot entrance of the church with the awning on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9-12. For more information, please contact the Mission Committee at mission@kirkwoodpres.org. Thank you!

**Breakfast Casseroles for St. Patrick’s Center**

Thank you, First Pres members, who have prepared nourishing and hot meals for St. Louis homeless people. There’s still plenty of need, so please join us by preparing a delicious breakfast casserole. Check out our web site for the recipe. For more information, please contact Julie Nesvig at j.nesvig83@gmail.com.

**Coats and Blankets for St. Patrick’s Center**

During these cold winter months, our St. Patrick’s Center guests need warm coats and blankets. We are asking for new, or gently used and cleaned items. To make a donation, or for more information, please contact Julie Nesvig at j.nesvig83@gmail.com. Thank you for your generosity.

**TIME TO CLEAN OUT THOSE CLOSETS!**

The Deacons of First Pres are inviting the congregation to participate in a clothing drive to benefit Sunshine Ministries, a St Louis based organization serving both men and women in need of job training and support. During the month of March, we will be collecting gently used clothes, shoes, jackets, and coats for children ages birth thru 12 years old. Please bring your donation items to the doors near the Jefferson parking lot on Tuesdays and Thursdays through the month of March marked SMCCD for Sunshine Ministries Children’s Clothing Drive. Feel free to spread the word to neighbors and family members. The Deacons appreciate your help in providing these much needed items for Sunshine Ministries Women/Youth Outreach program.
JOIN US ON THURSDAYS
4pm-4:45pm
We invite our interfaith community to gather together to provide mutual support as we continue to face so many challenges. We hope our time together will deepen mutual understanding and strengthen relationships throughout our communities. Last spring we put together a series of interfaith prayer circles via Zoom with leaders from different traditions sharing a reflection, then offering a prayer, blessing, or meditation for the St. Louis community. During a time of such new uncertainty, many found this way of caring for each other to be comforting and spiritually nourishing. Nearly a year later, we continue to struggle under the weight of grief, loneliness, injustice, and strife. In hopes of providing renewed support, we invite you join us for Thursdays Together. To that end, **beginning at 4pm on the fourth Thursday of each month**, local clergy and lay leaders will share experiences, insight, and wisdom as we seek new paths forward through these ongoing challenges. Please register at the website listed below. In addition, exciting events are happening all month long. You can find a full list of IPS programs along with other local and national interfaith opportunities on our website that includes the Thursday gatherings, book study groups and other events. The website is [https://interfaithstl.org/](https://interfaithstl.org/)

ENROLL IN OUR FREE HOME LIBRARY PROGRAM
To bridge the obstacles of the pandemic, we have created a free, at-home enrichment program to help families build understanding and empathy. Every other month, we will send enrolled families one free children’s book. By exploring stories that celebrate diversity, families can build momentum for a kinder and more inclusive community. Book themes will include topics like diversity, compassion, generosity, and friendship. Each shipment will include additional interfaith resources. You can register here: [https://interfaithstl.org/sprouts-registration/](https://interfaithstl.org/sprouts-registration/)

BLACK HISTORY EVENT
**The Great Divide: Race in Our Region**
The YWCA of St. Louis is partnering with the Jewish Community Relations Council of St. Louis and other interfaith groups for four important conversations on how systemic racism permeates our city and region. These programs will provide background, share stories of how area residents are directly impacted, and explore what action you can take to create change. Each hour-long program will be followed by an opportunity for small group discussion and reflection. Mark your calendars for these upcoming programs:

- **March 10** - Healthcare
- **April 14** - Environmental Justice
- **May 12** - Court Systems

**Register by clicking Here**
Following the extreme winter weather across the country, Texas was particularly hard hit by the arctic blast after back-to-back storms dropped temperatures to record lows, leading to water boil orders, power outages and frozen pipes. Based on initial conversations with Mission, New Covenant, Palo Duro and Grace presbyteries, some churches have even experienced burst pipes and flooding. The storm is impacting people on a personal level. “Many people don’t want to leave their homes, even though they don’t have power and heat, because they’re afraid that if they do, they’ll come home to a flooded house”, Rev. James Kirk, Associate for National Disaster Response for PDA, said. “So they’re trying to stick close to home to make sure that doesn’t happen.” The public can help by donating to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, which can put the money toward crucial needs on the local level such as warm clothes, blankets, food and water. To support this response, designate gifts for "Winter Storms" on the memo line of your check.

In a world of disaster, hunger, and oppression, millions of people lack access to sustainable food sources, clean water, sanitation, education, and opportunity. For over 70 years during Lent and Easter, One Great Hour of Sharing has provided Presbyterians a way to share God’s love with our neighbors in need around the world. Your impact restores hope, feeds the hungry, and empowers the oppressed. The three programs supported by One Great Hour of Sharing are Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and Self-Development of People - all work in different ways to serve individuals and communities in need. From initial disaster response to ongoing community development, their work fits together to provide people with safety, sustenance, and hope. To support OGHS, mail your gifts to the church designated to OGHS. Please give as generously as you are able. Thank you.

The Shepherd's Center has a full calendar of online programs including exercise, lectures and discussion groups for seniors. See below for a highlights list and web address for more information.

Online Lectures, Discussion Groups & Exercise set for March include:

- How to Zoom
- COVID and Caregiving
- Dementia Conversations: Driving, Doctor Visits, Legal & Financial Planning
- National Public Vote Interstate Compact (NPV)
- Birdwatching in Ecuador
- Warriors, Wise Women and Spirit Beings in Missouri Rock Art
- Monthly Book Club
- Exercise on Zoom
- Coffee Talk
- Online Art History

For more information and to register, go to www.shepherdscenter-wk.org and click on the online class link.
### THE NEXT TWO WEEKS

#### Sunday, March 7
- **9:30am**  Christian Concerns Class - Zoom
- **11:00am**  Worship Service - Live Streamed
- **1:00pm**  Officer Training - Zoom
- **7:00pm**  Sr. High Fellowship

#### Monday, March 8
- **8:00am**  Preschool
- **11:30pm**  Staff Meeting - 030

#### Tuesday, March 9
- **10:00am**  No Events

#### Wednesday, March 10
- **8:00am**  Preschool
- **10:00am**  Lent Bible Study - Zoom
- **12:00pm**  Mid-Week Worship Service - Live Streamed
- **7:15pm**  Board of Deacons - Zoom

#### Thursday, March 11
- **10:00am**  Prayer Time - Sanctuary (sign-up required)
- **7:00pm**  Section Leaders rehearsal - Sanctuary

#### Friday, March 12
- **8:00am**  Preschool
- **12:00pm**  Tree of Life Chapel Lenten Recital Series - Live Streamed

#### Saturday, March 13
- **10:30am**  Jane Dunning Memorial Service - Live Streamed
- **11:00am**  Men’s Bible Study - Zoom

#### Sunday, March 14 - Daylight Savings Time Begins
- **9:30am**  Christian Concerns Class - Zoom
- **9:30am**  Spiritual Formation - Zoom
- **11:00am**  Worship Service - Live Streamed
- **1:00pm**  Choir Singing Pod - Sanctuary
- **1:00pm**  Officer Training - Zoom
- **7:00pm**  Sr. High Fellowship

#### Monday, March 15
- **8:00am**  Preschool
- **11:30am**  Staff Meeting - 030
- **5:00pm**  Finance & Operations - Zoom

#### Tuesday, March 16
- **6:30pm**  New Member Committee - Zoom
- **7:00pm**  Children & Family Committee - Zoom
- **7:30pm**  Session Meeting - Zoom

#### Wednesday, March 17
- **8:00am**  Preschool
- **10:00am**  Lent Bible Study - Zoom
- **12:00pm**  Mid-Week Worship Service - Live Streamed
- **7:00pm**  Bell Choir Rehearsal - Choir Room
- **7:00pm**  Mary’s Circle - Fellowship Hall
- **7:15pm**  Lucy’s Circle - offsite

#### Thursday, March 18
- **10:00am**  Prayer Time - Sanctuary (sign-up required)
- **7:00pm**  Section Leaders Rehearsal - Sanctuary

#### Friday, March 19
- **8:00am**  Preschool
- **12:00pm**  Tree of Life Chapel Lenten Recital Series - Live Streamed

#### Saturday, March 20
- **10:00am**  Prayer Time - Sanctuary (sign-up required)
- **11:00am**  Men’s Bible Study - Zoom

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Don’t forget to set your clocks ONE hour ahead on Saturday March 13 before bedtime.

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If you would like to receive by mail an Upper Room or These Days devotional booklet, call the church office or email Paula at paulab@kirkwoodpres.org.