



# *The Church of Hope*

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*Janet Chandler, Pastor*

June 14, 2021

Dear Friends,

We have begun worshiping in the church building and we are able to sing one hymn. That is a big step we are taking as we once again worship in the church following COVID-19. It sure is nice to hear voices singing and seeing more people in the pews. We are following the guidelines of wear a mask if you have not received the vaccine, and for those who have, whether they want to wear it during worship. We are still trying to continue distancing, but as of today, that requirement is off the table as the state has returned to being fully open. We will continue to record our service and post it on Facebook on Sunday. We keep hoping and praying that the past year is definitely behind us and we can safely return to some type of normalcy. Last week we did welcome through baptism, Millie Rose Howell, daughter of Scott and Ashley Bozue Howell. We had a pretty full church and a lot of smiles from Millie as she got to touch the water and really got splashed in the face when she moved her head at the last second as I was pouring it on her head. After the service I was thinking how much I missed leading worship in the church for over a year and how we continue to move forward in faith and trust.

The Session has agreed that we need to replace the roof over the main church building (not the Christian Ed side). We called Mueller Roofing and Siding in Joliet to come and give us an estimate of which the amount for replacing the roof, repairing the bell tower siding and flashing, fixing the chimney and replacing the chimney cap, replacing the roof over the food pantry door as well as other minor fixes while they are up there for the amount of \$14,000.00. We had received some donations toward the roof replacement and would welcome any other donations to get it done. Fay Clover, Jim Bozue, and I were trying to remember when the roof was replaced the last time...I know it's over 20 years as I have been at the church for 20 years this year. We were losing shingles and had storm damage over the years from the derecho and other windstorms and it was not going to be a simple fix. It will be nice to have the roof replaced as it will protect the inside from water damage and will look nice. As I said, we would appreciate donations toward the roof, otherwise we will be taking funds from the church's savings to pay for the balance. We have been able to pay our bills, but giving has gone down as the pandemic continues to have an effect on everyone.

We are planning Vacation Bible School for July 19-23, 2021 at the church. There will be other changes as we will be offering VBS in the morning instead of evening. With the schedules changing this year between sports and the availability of volunteers to help, we held off the date until later. We had thought that we would be able to hold VBS at the VFW Park in South Wilmington this year since we are aiming to keep the kids outside as much as possible, but that is the week of Party in the Park. With that in mind, we will be holding VBS in the morning so the kids can enjoy both events during the week. I will have more information at a later date as plans firm up. The rock-a-thon raised approximately \$1,400.00 for VBS which was quite amazing. We had five rockers: Kay Bell, Carolyn Kraft, Shirley Schmoeger, Connie Swearingen, and Pastor Jan. It was a beautiful day to sit by the gazebo and watch the cars and trucks drive by. People have been very generous when it comes to programs for our children.

We received a letter from the executive board of the Cora Pope Home in Ottawa. Cora was a woman from Ottawa who was a member of the First Presbyterian Church in Ottawa who founded a home for women

who were in need of shelter and care. There was a facility in Ottawa for many years who accepted anyone who needed a place to stay, but over the years it became less needed and they finally sold the building. The funds used for this facility was through a trust in Cora's name dedicated to giving out grants for seniors who were in their homes who needed help with funds in order to maybe pay a medical bill or help to pay for utilities as they continue to stay in their homes. These are grants that can be applied for by the seniors in need in which to receive the funds. Shirley Schmoeger has the applications for those who are interested in this grant and this is open to anyone in need. If you are interested or know someone who could benefit from this, please let us know. You do not have to be Presbyterian to apply and hopefully receive funding.

The work of the church continues as we reach out into the community in different ways. The food pantry is still open and becoming busier as summer usually means a rise in the need for food. With the children home from school they are not receiving lunches from school and the need for more food becomes apparent. We do not turn anyone away who is in need of food. The Session approved the sponsorship for one year from funds from our food pantry account, to the Northern Illinois Food Bank Truck that goes to St. Lawrence once a month. We feel that there is a larger outreach to more people in this mission. We also continue to keep our food pantry at the church open and in business as we continue to receive donations of money and food through the generosity of those in the community. We will continue to supply Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners as well as the adoption of families in need for Christmas gifts through We Care. I cannot stress enough how important it is for the Church of Hope to be active in the community in mission as that is what the Lord calls us all to do. If you know of anyone with a need, please let us know.

May you all have a blessed summer and know that you are in our hearts, our thoughts, and our prayers.

Peace and Love,

Pastor Jan