

FIRST PRESS

Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church Ann Arbor

Vol. 70 | No. 4 - April 2022

Dear Friends,

The end of our wilderness journey is in sight! The final weeks of the forty days of Lent are upon us, and we will soon be considering Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem and beginning the holiest week in the Christian year. It is a time of celebration and a time of suffering, a time of joy and a time of sorrow, a time of hurting and a time of healing. It brings an elevator ride of emotions in the space of just a few days. Perhaps the hymn text that captures this most clearly is found in our hymnal, #274 in Glory to God, as You, Lord, Are Both Lamb and Shepherd, but was originally titled Christus Paradox. Sylvia Dunstan, the writer of the text, drafted it on a commuter bus on the way home from what she called "a particularly bad day" of her work in prison ministry. For me, it is one of the most meaningful hymns in our musical canon. All of Jesus' life among us was a paradox, and much of these paradoxical relationships leap out at us in Holy Week. Lamb...and Shepherd, Prince...and Slave, Narrow Path...Love that's Wide, Gift...and Cost, Death...and Life.

Many years ago, in Atlanta, I was in the audience for a concert by the Atlanta Master Chorale. The artistic director and conductor of this outstanding choral ensemble is Dr. Eric Nelson, a good friend, and the Professor of Music and Director of Choral Studies at Emory University. He is a brilliant musician and composer and is renowned for his way of introducing the pieces his choirs are getting ready to perform. This particular night Eric was talking to the audience about the anthem based on this hymn text. He spoke of the many paradoxes, but of all his remarks I was most impacted by what he said about the phrase "everlasting instant," words which recur in each verse of the anthem and the hymn. Everlasting... and instant – perhaps the ultimate paradox. In many ways it is impossible to even imagine...can an instant

be everlasting? ...can forever be only an instant? But in another sense, it is a powerful description of what our lives and surely our life-long faith journey – are all about. It is right now and it is forever. It is our time in the wilderness and it is our time in the kingdom of God. Our lifetimes are but a blip on the cosmic calendar, yet they are our forever.

And all of this is captured in Holy Week. Triumph and Humiliation. King of the Jews but lower than a lowly thief. Eating the Passover meal with friends and betrayed and forsaken by those same friends. The abandonment and the finality of Good Friday and the forever community of Easter Sunday. The permanence of death and "eternal" of eternal life.

I urge you to take time this year to experience the paradox of Holy Week. Visit the contrasting interpretations of the "passion" of Jesus in the Stations of the Cross in our Social Hall, or meet with the Adult Formation group on Sunday mornings at 11:00 a.m. learning about the ancient spiritual disciplines of Visio Divina (Divine Reading) and Lectio Divina (Divine Seeing) using the Stations of the Cross exhibit. Join us for the Communion Feast on Maundy Thursday. Share in the ultimate wilderness suffering on Good Friday and rejoice with us in the news of our forever life on Easter Sunday. You may need to share these "everlasting instants" with us. We certainly need to share them with you.

Soli Deo Gloria,

Dave VanderMeer
Minister of Music and Fine Arts



WORSHIP

Sunday, April 3 – Service of Wholeness & Healing

Join the Stephen Ministers and Prayer Team members in the Sanctuary at 7 p.m. for a special Service of Wholeness and Healing. Come for anointing with oil (if desired), special music, silence, and prayer. A special meditation will be given by First Pres member Olivier Jolliet, who will tell his meaningful story of being diagnosed with cancer and undergoing treatment. Olivier and his wife Nicole are moving to Denmark in May 2022.

Tuesday, April 5 – Taizé Prayer Service

7 p.m. in Monteith Hall
(A service of songs, scripture, prayers, silence, and candles)
In person and YouTube
All are welcome!



Holy Week Worship Services Palm Sunday, April 10

8 a.m. Worship in Monteith Hall
9:30 a.m. Worship in the Sanctuary and via Livestream
11 a.m. WAAM Radio
11 a.m. Faith Formation for All Ages

Maundy Thursday Worship, April 14

6:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary – Livestream

Good Friday Tenebrae Worship, April 15

7:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary and via Livestream

Easter Sunday, April 17

7 a.m. - Sunrise Service on the Circle Terrace
9:30 and 11:15 a.m. – Sanctuary and via Livestream

Rev. Melissa Anne Rogers, preaching
Chancel Choir, Sanctus Ringers, Brass, Percussion,
and Organ



MUSIC & FINE ARTS

Ann Arbor Women's Chamber Chorus and Sanctus Ringers Concert

Friday, April 22 – 7:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary
All are welcome to attend!



FPC Sanctus Ringers Head to Mackinac Island

The Sanctus Ringers handbell choir will participate in a Handbell Festival – A Grand Ring! on Mackinac Island, April 28 – 30. The ringers are preparing music for all 27 bell choirs that will be participating in the festival. They will also take classes on handbell techniques. A closing concert will be presented on Saturday afternoon.

PNC UPDATE

A Candidate Is Coming May 1!

In January, the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) hosted three worthy candidates for the position of Lead Pastor at First Pres. During those in-person visits, each candidate met with the Committee on Ministry of the Presbytery of Detroit, including the Presbytery liaison to the PNC, Reverend Scott Phillips (Lead Pastor at First Presbyterian Church in Brighton). Each candidate met with selected First Pres personnel representing the Administration staff, Program staff, Resident Ministers and Clergy and Pastoral staff. The candidates also met with the PNC for a time of Bible study and preached from a neutral pulpit on the Sunday of their respective visits. In addition, there were meetings with small groups from the PNC over a period of 3 – 4 days.

Following the conclusion of these visits, the PNC met and first considered feedback from members of the committee, and then from all involved in the in-person meetings. The committee's discernment over the next several weeks brought us to a point where we were

unanimous in our decision to extend a call to our first choice for this position.

The PNC is happy to announce that, following a period of discernment by the candidate, he has accepted the call. With considerable input from the Personnel Committee and the Finance Committee, the financial Terms of Call have been negotiated and agreed upon by both parties.

The candidate has not yet informed his congregation that he has accepted this call, so to preserve confidentiality, we are not disclosing his name until it is appropriate to do so later next month.

The next steps in the process of calling this pastor to First Pres will include a special meeting with Session just after Easter to review search details, present a position description (currently being refined by the Personnel Committee), and review the Terms of Call. Session will call for a Congregational Meeting to be held on May 1, 2022, when the candidate will preach, and the congregation will vote on approval of his call to become the Lead Pastor of First Presbyterian Church.

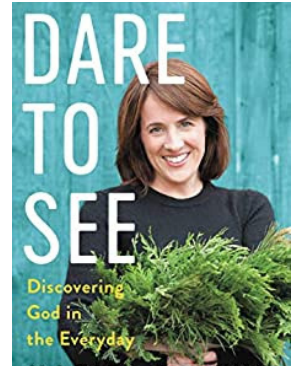
Approximately one week prior to the Congregational Meeting, the candidate will be introduced to the congregation with an informative brochure and a brief video presentation. The PNC is grateful to the congregation, the Session and staff for their support, patience, and prayers throughout this challenging process. But mostly, we are grateful to God for leading us in our discernment to a new beginning for the community of faith we so love at First Pres.

Tom Brandt, Co-Chair and Jim Clark, Co-Chair, Jennifer Edwards, Kelsey Karcher, Mark Lindley, Dianne Santinga, Charlotte Sawtell, Jean Song, Bill Upton

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

DARE TO SEE: Find God in the Everyday Moment!

**April 23 – 24, First Presbyterian Church
Special Weekend Guest:
Katie Brown**



Tickets are on sale now through [First Pres](#) (\$20 each) for the **Dare to See Breakfast in the Social Hall (limit 100) on Saturday, April 23, 9:30 a.m.** (volunteers needed – you come free! See Rev. Rogers). Be inspired with Faith, Conversation, Crafts, and Cooking and leave with a gift bag that includes a recent *Guideposts* magazine with Katie's monthly column. Breakfast prepared by Katie Brown! [Sign up online](#) or call the Church Office.

Saturday afternoon at 5 p.m. Garden party at the Home of Dan Musser and Marlee Brown Musser, the home once known as UM's Inglis House. Meet Katie, hear her stories, and leave with a free Katie Brown cookbook! [Sign up online](#) or call the Church Office!

On Sunday, meet Katie at church as she helps lead our young people at 11 a.m. Our children leave with a kid's decorating book by Katie Brown!

Who is Katie? <http://katiebrown.com/about/>

Katie Brown is known to First Pres. The daughter of Meg and Paul, she is the granddaughter of the late senator Prentiss M. Brown. Brown has been serving up dime-store domesticity on Lifetime Television's "Next Door with Katie Brown" since October 1997 and on public television's "Katie Brown Workshop." She has also had successful shows on A and E and Style networks.

She has opened her own workshops in Los Angeles, New York, and Bridgehampton. Katie Brown was the editor and chief of Yahoo Makers. She also designed a successful line of home goods ranging from garden goods to bath towels and tableware in collaboration with Meijer Stores. She was a New York Times syndicated columnist and is a frequent guest star on national shows such as GMA, The Today Show, Live with Kelly and Ryan and Oprah. Katie is the winner of a Gracie Allen Award for outstanding TV Host. Brown is married to TV

executive and producer William Corbin. They had their first child, a daughter named Prentiss, in 2004. They adopted their second child, a daughter named Meredith, in 2008. Brown has published numerous books on the subjects of cooking, gardening, and decorating: *Lipton Sides A Guide To Inspired Meals With Katie Brown*, *Katie Brown Decorates*, *Katie Brown Entertains*, *Katie Brown Weekends*, *Katie Brown Outdoors*, and *Katie Brown Celebrates*. Her latest book is a spiritual memoir *Dare to See*.

We are so fortunate to have this opportunity with this DIY and faith-filled star, columnist for *Guideposts* magazine, and daughter of our own Meg and Paul Brown!

Join up!

Fast-track to membership! You already belong, but why

not make it official? Become a full member, or an affiliate member. Next opportunities are April 3 and May 8. Join First Pres at 11 a.m. in as little as 20 minutes, then attend a new member class in June! Interested? Contact Rev. Rogers, mrogers@firsptresbyterian.org.



New Member Welcome

We recently welcomed several new members who have completed the fast-track process, have been received by our Session, and will be attending a new member class and being introduced in a future worship service where the congregation will welcome them! If you see these wonderful friends, please welcome them to First Pres!

David and Ellie Chapel (their last name rhymes with Maple) moved here for jobs as Physicians with Michigan Medicine. Both are pathologists. Ellie is originally from Portland, Oregon, and David from Parma, Michigan. They met while studying to become physicians in Chicago. They first attended a performance of Faure's *Requiem* in November, and have been coming ever since! They are expecting a baby, a son, at the end of March. David is a member of choir and orchestra, and loves theater and Bible study. He's been connected to Methodist and Episcopal churches in the past. He enjoys hiking, walks, running and biking, and is a



Germanophile. Ellie is interested in visual arts, Bible study, and community service and leadership. She attended a Presbyterian church growing up. In her free time she likes to draw with charcoal, run and read. They are excited to become first-time parents soon!

Ashley and Brian Marentette, Graham, Hadley, and Wells are excited to join and have Wells baptized on Mother's Day! Ashley has a best friend (Lindsley Paine) who attends First Pres. They have grown up together. Ashley and Brian have been attending First Pres for a while. They are interested in getting to know our community and connecting with multiple programs. Ashley, in her free time, likes exercise, getting together with friends, reading, and the show *Yellowstone*. Brian is an industrial organizational psychologist and loves golf! Graham is a Kindergartner, Hadley is in preschool, and Wells is an energetic infant! We welcome them to our family!



Ankie Schuitema comes to us from Alameda, California, relocating here to be closer to her son, Jonathan, who works in the area. She is a native Californian who spent many years at the Presbyterian church in Berkley, California. A long-time Presbyterian, she was immediately drawn in by the worship experience, our progressive theology, and the many opportunities to volunteer and serve. She's been a member of choir and on Session in previous churches. She looks to share her gifts

here! In her free time, she loves to walk, bike, hang out with her dog Coby, read, and do word puzzles. She also enjoys Masterpiece Theater and British mystery shows. We're so glad to welcome Ankie!



Get to Know our Members: Tracy Short

Get to know Tracy! Tracy joined our church during the pandemic. She lives in Wisconsin, but came to town often to visit her brother, the late Graydon Kraphol. She remains close to Graydon's family, Greta and Grace. Tracy is wife to Doug and mother and grandmother who loves to serve on the ski

patrol on the "mountain" in Wisconsin. We're glad she joins us online, and occasionally, for online coffee hour! In a recent online coffee hour, we learned that Tracy writes poetry and was willing to share. Enjoy! You can reach Tracy at tkquest@outlook.com.

I Have Traveled Far

By Tracy Krapohl Short, November 2005

I have traveled far
Through life's gale force winds and rocky waves
That have pushed and battered me
And nearly drowned my body

I have traveled far
On a path that is my own
Believing that there is a better way
With no guide except my heart
That somehow knows
What I must do

I have traveled far
Against the odds
With an indomitable spirit
That rises above the pain to reach
Understanding and ultimately, forgiveness
Of others and myself

I have traveled far
To learn that I am a child of the Universe
Loved by God and trusting that
The events shaping me
Have explanation, meaning and purpose

I have traveled far
And shine my lantern
Along the way
For you.



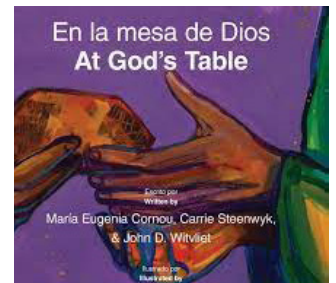
Doug and Tracy Krapohl

FAITH FORMATION: CHILDREN & FAMILIES

En La Mesa de Dios // At God's Table: A Stations of the Cross Experience

April 3 – 17 | Sundays 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. | Mondays – Thursdays 3:30 – 5 p.m.

Experience the Holy Week narrative by taking in the art of the book, *En la mesa de Dios / At God's Table*, illustrated by Joel Schoon-Tanis. Both an audio track to help in the walk-through and a pamphlet will be available to guide you as you experience multi-sensory stations of the cross in this unique format. All ages are welcome!



Lenten Parent Groups

Friday, April 8 at 8 p.m.

"Planting a Digital Arbor"

We are in the season of Lent, the period leading up to Easter when we prepare our hearts and minds for what is to come. Our theme for Lenten worship this year is *Wilderness | Welcome*. Each Sunday we'll wrestle with Scripture passages that deal with questions of hospitality, loneliness, discovery, loss, and hope in the midst of wilderness moments. Many of us have been living in the wilderness for far too long. This Lent, we will enter our third year of pandemic life with losses and hard realities all around us. Often, as we navigate these places of uncertainty and pain, our first instinct is to turn inward, to focus on ourselves, and to clench our fists until we can make it to the other side. Our faith invites us to a different response: one where fear leads us to turn toward one another, to rely on God's presence, to build love and support for all, and to trust that we do not journey on difficult roads alone. God calls us to welcome the wilderness and to turn wilderness into welcome. Contact Beca Torres-Davenport to join!



Milestone Ministry- Kindergarten & First Grade families Communion Workshop in the Sanctuary

Saturday, April 9 at 11 a.m.

Letters have been sent home to families of Kindergarteners and First graders who have not previously participated in the Communion Workshop. These families are invited to join Rev.

Megan Berry and Beca Torres-Davenport as we learn about the significance of the Sacrament of Communion and that all are welcome at God's table. This workshop is a part of our Milestone program. Children will receive their Communion Milestone, and families will be invited to help lead Communion during the Maundy Thursday service, or a following Communion Sunday.

Peeps and Pizza EGG-stravaganza on Holy Saturday!

Team up with family and friends on Saturday, April 16, from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., in the Social Hall and on the Front Lawn, and create your own Bible story shoe box diorama using those "Crazy Marshmallow Peeps" - chicks and bunnies and Jesus, oh my! An outdoor pizza lunch and children's egg hunt will be offered on the front lawn at 11:30 a.m. What is the Peeps and Pizza EGG-stravaganza? Well, do you remember when you were a kid in elementary school and your teacher had you create a shoe box diorama to illustrate some event in history? This is the same idea. Check out these photos to get an idea of what great creations have been done in past years.



Here's how it works:

1. You and members of your family or a group of friends pick your favorite Bible story. There are lots of good options inside your *Growing in God's Love* storybibles!
2. Think about how you might recreate this Bible story in a shoebox diorama using Peeps and any other materials you might like.
3. Church will supply the marshmallow Peeps, a variety of shoe boxes, tables to work on, construction paper, scissors, glue, some extra crafting supplies and great refreshments.
4. If you want to use a gummy worms, or fabric, or plant material, or your own shoe box or anything else... bring those things along that morning.
5. Then, on Saturday morning April 16, bring your favorite Bible story and your creative ideas for a fun imaginative morning here at church (maybe some we've learned during Lent?). Suggestions will be available, too.
6. Make a reservation for the pizza lunch so we know how much pizza to order. Lunch is a suggested \$5 per person donation.

We will proudly display the dioramas in the Social Hall on Easter Sunday, April 17, for all to see and celebrate with you!

VBS Marketplace 2022! "Called to be Disciples" 27 A.D.

Monday, June 13 – Wednesday, June 15; Rain dates, pending

Covid-19 precautions, June 16 & 17

Marketplace is our Vacation Bible School (VBS) program that teaches children the stories of Jesus and what life was like during Bible times. In small groups the children experience the life and family customs of Bible times and travel together to a variety of fun activities – music & movement, crafts, games, storytellers and more! We know summer schedules are filling up quickly, so be sure to add us into yours!

Children's registration link: <https://bit.ly/3tJUdT7>

Volunteer registration link: <https://bit.ly/3pTOKlo>



INTERGENERATIONAL FAITH FORMATION

We had a hugely successful lunch packing event in the Social Hall after the 9:30 a.m. service on March 6, with over 150 lunches for our mission partner in Ypsilanti, Hope Clinic, packed by an estimated 40 to 50 volunteers of all ages! Thank you to everyone who participated in this First Sunday All Inclusive Mission Event, and for all of you who donated snacks and juice boxes for the packing.



YOUTH CONNECTION

Follow us on Instagram: @firstpresa2youth
or subscribe to our weekly email for up-to-date
information on all of our events!

Confirmation Affirmation & Confirmation Sunday

On Wednesday, April 20, our confirmation class will meet for a special 'Confirmation Affirmation' with Session as they share their Faith Statements/Credos. Then, on Sunday, April 24, our Confirmands will be recognized, welcomed, and prayed for in worship as two of their confirmation teachers co-preach the sermon.

"Not a normal Youth Group Month"

With AAPS Spring Break upon us on the first Sunday in April, a special outing on the 10th, and Easter on the 17th, youth group will look a little different this month. Instead we invite you to join us on the following dates:

Sunday, April 3: Lunch & Games, First Pres: 12 p.m. – 1 p.m.

Sunday, April 10: Middle School Breakfast & Church: 8:30 a.m., First Pres

Sunday, April 10: High School Escape Room (Decode Escape Room in Ann Arbor), 6 p.m. *Sign up required

Sunday, April 17: Easter Weekend – Enjoy time with family and friends!

Saturday, April 23: Youth Service Day

Sunday, April 24: Youth Group at First Pres, 6 p.m.



Escape Room

All high school youth are invited to join us for an 'Adventure Around the World', as we try to escape our adventure within the 80 minute time limit. We'll be going to Decode Escape Room in Ann Arbor, a newly created escape room built in an abandoned warehouse. [Sign up](#) is required as there is limited space! Contact Pastor Mark with any questions.

Middle School Breakfast

All middle school youth are invited to join us for breakfast on Palm Sunday at the church at 8:30 a.m. We'll meet to share a meal, fellowship, play games, and sit in worship together. Please use [this sign up form](#) so we know how much food to prepare. Contact Pastor Mark with any questions.



Art Fair Parking Fundraiser

Believe it or not, but Art Fair fun is just around the corner. It's scheduled to be July 21-23 here in Ann Arbor. We are looking for some youth and adult leaders to help us as we raise funds for our youth ministry program. If you're interested and willing to help, please contact Pastor Mark.



Youth Volunteer Leader Reflection: When You Are The Oldest One In Youth Group

By Stacey Pakela

I started attending the First Pres youth group regularly when I became a Sunday night volunteer about 5 years ago. I am 57 years old now, so that means my journey with the youth started when I was 52 years old. To be honest, I initially felt a bit out of place and self conscious in this volunteer role. I mean, I'm much older than the youth. What could I really offer them?



I remember the exact moment my self consciousness finally evaporated. I had been volunteering for a little over a year, helping with dinners and going on adventures with the kids. In general, I was just showing up every Sunday night that I could and spending time with these awesome humans. On that particular Sunday night, one of the kids came up, gave me a big hug, and said, "You know, you're my church mom." Well, that is all it took for me to realize that I was, indeed, offering these kids something important~my unconditional love and support of them! And that love and support I was giving them transcended any age barriers.

Looking back, I can say it has been such a wonderful thing in my life to volunteer with the youth here at First Pres.! And I'm so glad I didn't let the age difference keep me from jumping in with both feet. These kids continue to bless my heart each Sunday and I will forever be grateful for that.

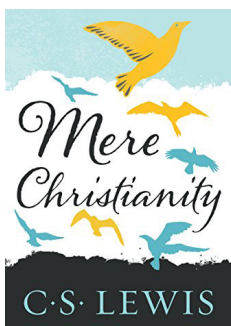
UKIRK@UMICH - CAMPUS MINISTRY



College Lunch continues into April with a small group of students grabbing lunch on Sundays at 12:15 p.m. to check in on each other, discuss the morning service, and share any prayers and concerns. If you would like to help out with our Michigan Meltdown Ice Cream Social Event on the afternoon of April 19, the last day of classes, please contact Rev. Evans McGowan (emcgowan@firstpresbyterian.org).



T2A2 (TWENTIES & THIRTIES)



The Twenties and Thirties (T2A2) small group meets most Sundays in April at 7 p.m. offsite and on [Zoom](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81301199181?pwd=dUR4ZzNEeENNTU5yQ0YxTUJ1ck5LZz09) (<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81301199181?pwd=dUR4ZzNEeENNTU5yQ0YxTUJ1ck5LZz09>). This spring we are listening to chapters of *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis – which were originally written as radio broadcasts - and discussing them in light of our world and experiences. We also have time to share about our weeks and chat. No prior preparation is required and all are welcome. For more information, send a note to Rev. Hannah Lundberg (hlundberg@firstpresbyterian.org).

In addition to Sunday evening small group study of Mere Christianity, our twenties and thirties group gathers regularly for shared time in community. During February, one of our adventures was going ice skating together at Buhr Park! If you want to stay in the loop about upcoming young adult activities, contact Rev. Hannah Lundberg (hlundberg@firstpresbyterian.org)



ADULT FORMATION

The Bible at 11 o'clock continues with the study of Isaiah at 11 a.m. in the Curtis Room. All past sessions may be viewed on our [YouTube Channel Playlist](#).

Exploring the Faith: Visio Divino, concludes on April 10 at 11 a.m. in the Social Hall. You can also find past sessions on our [YouTube Channel](#).

First Friends Class April Schedule

- April 3 & 10** 11:00 in Social Hall. Join Exploring the Faith for Lenten Art series. Stations of the Cross exhibits, Visio and Lectio Divino.
- April 17** Happy Easter! No Class.
- April 24** 11:00 in the Lewis Room. Great Courses. Understanding the New Testament. Ch.3 "Thessalonians and Paul's Ministry." Video and Discussion.
[Zoom option](https://emich.zoom.us/j/89149132347) at: <https://emich.zoom.us/j/89149132347>

MATURE MINISTRIES



Special April Lunch and Learn on Maundy Thursday

We are coming back together for lunch conversation! On Thursday, April 14, 12 p.m., in the Social Hall. Enjoy a delicious hot lunch by Chef Irma, \$5.00 per person (Chicken, Rice, Salad.)

Our Special Guest Speaker is Karen Wielinski. Karen Wielinski is the beloved cousin of Parish Nurse Stacey Pakela. On February 12, 2009, in Clarence Center, NY, Karen said goodnight to her husband Doug as he left their family room. Minutes later, an unthinkable tragedy happened as Continental Flight 3407 crashed into their home. Karen has written a book and will tell us what happened that night, and since, for her and her family. The book is called, "One on the Ground: The Story of One Family Before, During and After Continental Flight 3407 Crashed into Their Home." This will be a powerful presentation on Maundy Thursday.

The book is available [here](https://amzn.to/37zdC1K) if you'd like to read ahead of time or bring it for Karen to sign:

Sign up here: <https://firstpresbyterian.wufoo.com/forms/w1wz2bpd18kkocl/> or call the Church Office (662-4466).

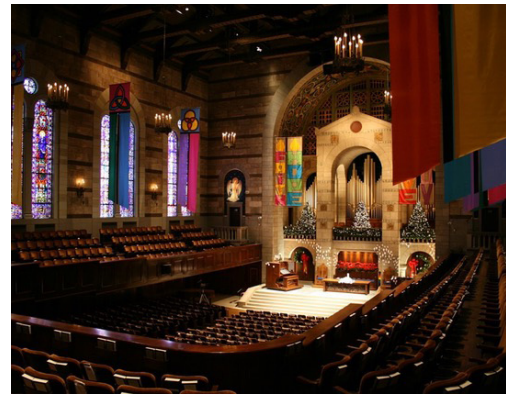
April Mature Ministries Trip to Grand Rapids

The month of April will bring Easter, spring flowers, and grand travel opportunities for First Pres seniors. Mark your calendar for April 26 (Tuesday) and a day of adventure in Grand Rapids visiting two of the city's highlights.

We'll start by enjoying a private tour of the truly fantastic Grand Rapids Public Museum, a whimsical candy box of a collection with something for everyone. Our escorted tour will take us through history and natural history exhibits...and everybody rides the merry go round! This place even has a dance floor where you can bust a move under a full-size whale skeleton. Perched right on the banks of the Grand River, this museum is one of the great experiences in the Midwest.

Following lunch at Leo's Seafood Restaurant in the heart of downtown, we'll be welcomed by members of the Fountain Street Church, a progressive congregation known as the local home to the LGBTQ community and for their emphasis on social justice work. Mature Ministries' old friends Tim Chester and Henry Matthews (we virtually toured their miniature castle in December 2020) will provide a tour of the stunning 1877 Italian Romanesque structure and Rev. Christopher Roe will share news of the church's outreach efforts.

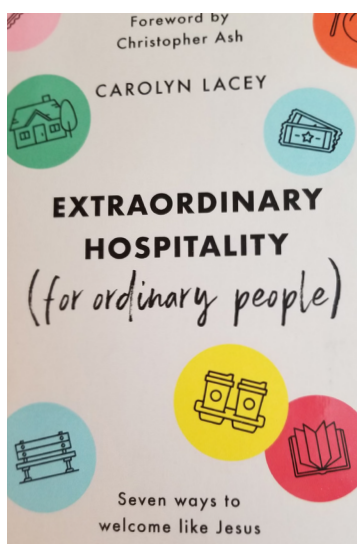
This will be a full day given the travel time to Grand Rapids but it will be a day filled with wonder and gifts for the spirit. Your reservation for the day will include transportation, admission to and a tour at the museum, and lunch at Leo's. Donations to the work of the Fountain Street Church can be made at your discretion. The cost is \$60 - sign up here: <https://firstpresbyterian.wufoo.com/forms/w1cv7m0i0yitutz/>. This trip is limited to 55 people. For more information, contact Rev. Rogers, mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org.



PASTORAL CARE

Stephen Ministry

Our Stephen Ministry Library in Hillemonds Chapel (off the Sanctuary) is available to all in our church community to borrow books! Please visit us anytime the Sanctuary is not in use.



Extraordinary Hospitality (for ordinary people)
By Carolyn Lacey

Carolyn Lacey is a writer, speaker and pastor's wife from the UK. In this 125 page "how-to" book, she outlines seven ways to welcome like Jesus. Scripturally based, this is a very practical book delineating specific ways to welcome others at home, in the workplace and at church.

"I want to show that hospitality doesn't have to be exhausting and overwhelming. And that is because it is not so much about what we do but why we do it." She asks, "Who has God placed in my path so that I may reflect his compassion?" "If our fear of what people think of us is greater than our love for them, we will be reluctant to offer welcome."

Each chapter concludes with questions for reflection. Perhaps this would be a good book for group discussion.

What is Gerotranscendence? Come Learn with Us! Stephen Ministry-sponsored Lecture Open to All

On Monday evening, April 4, you are invited to join the Stephen Ministers to hear a presentation by the Rev. Jen Davidson. Join us in Monteith Hall from 7 - 8 p.m. to learn about Gerotranscendence, a developmental stage that occurs when an individual who is living into very old age shifts their perspective from a materialistic and rational view of the world to a more cosmic and transcendent one, normally accompanied by an increase in life satisfaction. The term and the research behind it is the work of Lars Tornstam of Uppsala University, Sweden. She will explain how she came across this term while studying in Wales, was fascinated by the idea as part of her study of spirituality and aging, and is now living into this stage herself. Gerotranscendence fits beautifully with quantum theology and cosmic partnership, both ideas surfacing now in church circles.



The topic is relevant not only to Stephan Ministers caring for senior members of our congregation, but also to anyone interacting with members of the aging population or who is personally a senior. Time will be set aside for questions and comments from those present as well as people watching online.

Rev. Davidson is a second career pastor, spiritual director and end of life doula currently living in Lincoln, Nebraska. She was a 26 year resident of Michigan, two of those years joyfully spent in Ann Arbor. Go, Blue!

PARISH NURSING

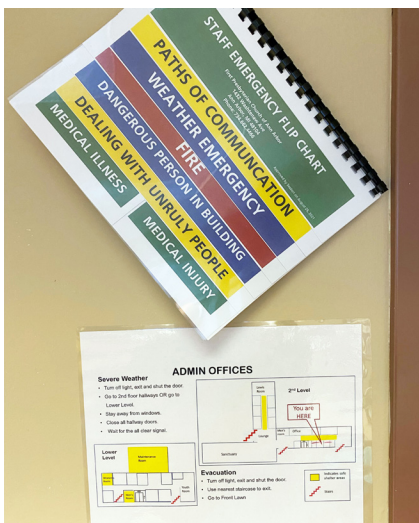
The Benefits Of Getting A Good Night's Sleep

We have all heard this statement before~getting enough sleep is necessary and even critical for our overall health. But how specifically does sleep help our bodies and our minds? World Sleep Day happened on March 18, the parish nurses thought a refresher on why sleep is so important would be great for everyone! This article, from Very Well Health, discusses the many benefits we get from getting enough zzz's. Sleeping truly is a key component to good health. Happy reading and happy sleeping!

<https://www.verywellhealth.com/top-health-benefits-of-a-good-nights-sleep-2223766>



SAFETY UPDATES



Emergency Flip Charts

Emergency Flip charts are now hanging in all offices, conference rooms, and classrooms. These are quick guides of "what to do" in case of different emergencies such as injuries, illness, an unconscious person, fire, weather, and more.

Next time you're in a room, you might look through one of these, but please replace them with their hook. We don't want any emergencies, but we want to be prepared for them all the same.

An Important Message from the Safety Work Group to the First Pres congregation:

As reported in December, a threatening statement was received against a member of our clergy team, our congregation and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) by an individual affiliated with the church. At this point, the original threat is unresolved. Additionally, we are all aware of the general increased threat to houses of worship and schools, as evidenced by the Texas synagogue incident, and the more local Oxford high school shooting. As well, our AAPD community liaison has informed us that threatening situations have been on the rise in our area since the original Covid lockdown.

Following the initial threat last fall, a private-duty police officer was hired to provide security during the crowded holiday services. Session felt that the additional security presence was important to ensure everyone's safety, but the cost of a plain-clothes officer made that option untenable. In response, Safety hired a private security guard/company for 3 months as a pilot project, funded from our own budget. This vetted person is in our building on Sundays from 8 a.m. to noon. At the end of this pilot, we will survey the congregation (both those in attendance and those who worship from home) and the Staff to help assess the experience and general attitudes regarding a security guard.

Navigating a balance between a safe and secure worship while sustaining an open and welcoming environment is challenging, but not unique to faith-based organizations. The Safety Work Group takes this balance very seriously. The opportunity to worship safely is no longer a given in today's world, but we believe we can work towards providing both a safe and welcoming environment for all who choose to come through our doors.

Our security pilot program began the first Sunday in February and will run to the first Sunday in May. Ed Boguszewski is our security person and comes to us with a wealth of experience. If you have concerns or questions, please feel free to ask Ed on Sunday mornings, or one of the Safety Work Group members below.

Looking forward in Christ,

The Safety Work Group (Sandy Talbott, Co-chair, Len Rezmierski, Co-chair; Paul Smith
Barb DeLancey, Stacey Pakela, Adrian Prundeanu, J.P. DiMaggio, Greta Krapohl)

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

The Birthday Offering Celebrating a Century of Giving and Receiving

For 100 years, Presbyterian Women's Birthday Offering has helped fund mission projects that improve lives. While projects and donation amounts have changed, PW's commitment to improving the lives of women and children has not. This year, Birthday Offering recipients are:

Mission at the Eastward McCleary House Transitional Housing in Farmington, Maine – \$80,000
Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand, Iglesia Presbiteriana de Lares in Lares, Puerto Rico – \$105,000

Please give as generously as you have been blessed. Make a donation at <https://bit.ly/3CVkT7B> or send a check to Presbyterian Women, with "Birthday Offering" in the memo. Mail to Bonnie Hughes, PW Treasurer, 3520 Paisley Ct., Ann Arbor, MI 48105. Learn more about the Birthday Offering at presbyterianwomen.org/birthday.



Nurture Your Faith: Bible Study Groups!

April finds us studying Lesson 8, "Mary in the Faith and Tradition of the Church."



Thursday, April 14, 10:30 - 11:30 a.m., Curtis Room of Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84155918470>

Diane Hockett will be leading our discussion. No biblical woman has ever captured the imagination as thoroughly as Mary. As the mother of Jesus, Mary allowed God to work in and through her, beyond fear and immense grief. Even today, she remains the ultimate disciple of Christ. Join us in this engaging study of an unforgettable woman! Don't Forget ...Mature Ministries' Lunch & Learn program follows our morning study. Sign up in the Church Office to participate.

Workbook copies are still available for \$10 – need one? Call Peggy Hodgson at (810) 360-5812 or peggyhodgson@comcast.net

"Evenings with Jenna" – Note Date Change!

Thursday, April 21, 7 – 8 p.m., Curtis Room or Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84155918470>

Folks LOVE this friendly and informal group – geared for anyone who can't make our morning study! Led by our own Jenna Mares meeting EVERY second Thursday of EVERY month; it is open to EVERYONE ... women, men, members, visitors! April's subject is also "Mary." Discussion is always varied and lively. Again, all are welcome. More information? Contact Jenna at 712-299-1971 or jenna.harms66@gmail.com.

Note: Zoom links for the Morning and Evening Bible Studies are the same.

The William Barclay Study

This group has concluded for this program year. Look for it to reconvene in October.

2022 – 23 Religious Education Scholarships Available

Presbyterian Women is accepting scholarship requests for the 2022-2023 school year. Seminary or Religious Education students are encouraged to apply by the end of April. The application is available at www.firstpresbyterian.org on the Presbyterian Women page. The scholarships honor active or former church members who participated with PW and donated financial gifts to provide scholarships to those studying for the Ministry. Questions? Contact Jill Binkley at jillbink2@gmail.com.

LOCAL FAITH IN ACTION

Refugee Resettlement Project Update

Our work to help co-sponsor a refugee family in partnership with Jewish

Family Services is underway! While we wait to be assigned a particular family and learn more about their needs, you can join one of our five main project groups which will begin preparing some details and jump into action when we learn who we will be able to welcome. Current project workgroups are:

- Housing led by Laura Davis and Mark Newton
- Welcoming/ Arrival led by Sara VanderVoort and Irene Lamanen
- Healthcare led by Nancy Oliver
- Education led by Ginny Bell and Anne Gere
- Community and Cultural Orientation led by Coleen Slosberg and Amy Lindauer



If you'd like to join one of these project areas or be involved on a more general basis, contact project leaders Hannah Lundberg, Sidonie Smith, or Mark Newton to be added to the email list and kept in the loop! Hannah can be reached at hlundberg@firstpresbyterian.org.

Thank You, Al Beery!



First Pres member, Al Beery, is receiving well-deserved recognition for his dedicated volunteer service to the Un-Housed population of Washtenaw County. His picture and story are featured in the current Newsletter from the Shelter Association of Washtenaw County. Al is a relatively new member of our congregation but a seasoned volunteer in his previous communities. Over the past 6 months Al has been a stalwart volunteer with the Shelter Association serving in many capacities at the Delonis Center and Winter Day Shelters. He has also become an integral member of the First Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor Rotating Shelter Program where he has helped with planning, setup, hosting including multiple overnight shifts and many other important tasks. Thanks, Al, for all you do for First Pres and our community.

INTERNATIONAL FAITH IN ACTION

One Great Hour of Sharing

Around the world, millions of people lack access to sustainable food sources, clean water, sanitation, education, and opportunity. The three programs supported by One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) —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.

Received at First Presbyterian during the month of April, each gift to OGHS helps to improve the lives of people in these challenging situations. The Offering provides us a way to share God's love with our neighbors in need. In fact, OGHS is the single, largest way that Presbyterians come together every year to work for a better world. One Great Hour of Sharing makes a difference in the world.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA)

- Works alongside communities as they recover and find hope after the devastation of natural or human-caused disasters, and support for refugees
- Receives 32% of funds raised

Presbyterian Hunger Program (PHP)

- Takes action to alleviate hunger, care for creation, and the systemic causes of poverty so all may be fed
- Receives 36% of funds raised

Self-Development of People (SDOP)

- Invests in communities responding to their experiences of oppression, poverty and injustice and educates Presbyterians about the impact of these issues
- Receives 32% of funds raised

GIVE: Gifts can be given to ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING through First Presbyterian Church during the month of April.

Give online here, or mark checks "OGHS" and place them in the Offering Plate or mail them to: First Pres, Ann Arbor, Finance Office, 1432 Washtenaw Ave., Ann Arbor, MI 48104.



TRANSITIONS

We give thanks for the life and faith of these members, who have entered the Church Triumphant:



Leroy Taylor, who joined on November 23, 2008, died to Eternal Life on January 19, 2022.

A service will be held on Saturday, April 23, at 1 p.m. in the Sanctuary We pray for Leroy's daughter and her family, Martha, Terry, and Clayton Farmer.



Carol Lee Charles, who joined on March 28, 2010, died to Eternal Life on March 14, 2022, at Brecon Village.

A service was held on Thursday, March 24.

STAFF UPDATES

News about Our First Pres Clergy and Staff Team Transitions

Saying a Fond Good-bye to Rev. Evans McGowan

Rev. Evans McGowan will conclude his ministry here at First Pres on May 31. As our Assistant Minister of Faith Formation and Campus Ministries, Evans has been an integral member of our First Pres team for the past 5 years, leading our Campus Ministry Program and our Faith Formation Programs for Children, Youth, Students and Adults—shaping the faithful lives for everyone “from the cradle to the resurrection.” Evans has connected First Pres to the University of Michigan campus, forging relationships through shared coffee conversation, small groups and mission experiences in Puerto Rico. Coordinating educational ministries for children, youth, families and adults, Evans worked closely with Beca Torres-Davenport and Rev. Mark Mares, shaping learning opportunities, both in person and virtually all through two years of the coronavirus pandemic. Evans distinguished himself in leading our transition to a more robust digital congregation, and was key in setting up our ability to live-stream worship and formation events. And paired with Nancy Janz-Clark, he led First Pres through the complexities of the pandemic with aplomb.

Evans has been a wonderful friend and colleague to our entire First Pres Staff Team, and he will be sorely missed as he leaves First Pres to pursue a host of creative pursuits en-route to his next calling as an educator, pastor and friend to so many. Evans leaves First Pres with, as he says, a “clear eyes, a full heart and a spirit that can’t lose.” He will preach for a final time on May 22 and his last day will be May 31. First Pres will recognize Evan’s immense contributions and celebrate his ministry on Sunday, May 22.



Rev. Mark Mares Transitions to be our Associate Pastor for Youth and Families

With the enthusiastic embrace of the Session, Rev. Mark Mares transitions from serving as our Assistant Pastor for Youth and Families to the larger role as our Associate Pastor for Youth and Families in 2022. With this change in status, Mark becomes one of First Pres' installed Associate Pastors, along with Revs. Melissa Anne Rogers and Jay Sanderford. Since Mark was called to First Pres in August 2019, he has poured himself into the work of reinvigorating our Youth Ministries program. In this time, Mark has connected deeply with the young people and parents in our community, and has shepherded many teens in the way of a healthy and vital faith, and created a vibrant core of relationships at First Pres. As a pastor, liturgist and preacher, Mark has distinguished himself with wise, witty and pertinent sermons.



Mark is a graduate of Hope College in Holland, Michigan, and earned his M.Div. degree at Western Theological Seminary. He was ordained as a Minister in the Reformed Church of America in 2017 and called to serve First Pres after two years in a cluster of churches in upstate New York. "Mark has a gift in making each and every youth and family member feel welcome," according to one of his colleagues. "His attention to accessibility is just one facet of his thinking ahead and in coordination with his volunteers to ensure all are welcome in the group." In keeping with our youth ministry goals, Mark has visited families in their homes and outside the church. During Covid, Mark came up with the idea of "driveway visits" at the homes of families. This is only one of several ways that he successfully pivoted to engage with youth and families during Covid. As a young pastor, he is highly adept at social media and has made effective use of online meetings and hybrid events.



Mark's ministry has been assessed at two major checkpoints with very positive results at the end of his first and second years. And now the Youth Ministry and Personnel Committees enthusiastically support that Mark be moved to new status as an installed Associate Pastor. In coordination with the Presbytery of Detroit, he was hired under particular terms as an Assistant Pastor with a path to installation within a three-year window of time. Beyond three years, Mark would not be allowed to continue at First Presbyterian Church by the policies of the Presbytery. But in this transition to Associate Pastor status, Mark is recognized for his excellence in church leadership and granted standing in our church.

Since 2018, First Pres has worked to establish a more collaborative model of parish leadership and ministry. One of the best things we can say about Mark is that he has contributed to our ministries fully and seamlessly. His strong Christian faith, his skills as a pastor, his commitment to our church and our culture of inclusion and diversity, and his spirit make him worthy of installation as Associate Pastor. In a relatively short time, he and his wife, Jenna Harms Mares, MSW, have become integral members of our church family. When the way is clear, Mark's call as Associate Pastor will be confirmed in a congregational meeting in August and then he will be installed in fall 2022.

Thank you to Kathy Houser

Technology is a crucial component of our ministry here at First Pres, especially during this time of COVID and staying connected while physically apart. We are tremendously grateful for our Technology Coordinator, Kathy Houser.

She has brought 20 plus years of experience organizing and addressing technology needs for Ann Arbor Public Schools. When there has been a "ghost in the machine" with our phones, email, or another technological system, she has coordinated the troubleshooting, diagnosis, and resolution with our technology team. Kathy has been an integral part of our ministry team, developing support systems, strategizing solutions and sustaining us when our technology fails us. She has been extremely patient, even when the issue has been with user error.



At her request, we now bid her adieu as she fully enters retirement. She leaves behind a stronger technological system with more integrated processes in place to address our present and future technology needs. We want to say a big THANK YOU to Kathy for doing things that sometimes felt like magic. She has been an answer to our prayers, and we now send her off prayerfully and with much gratitude for a job well done.

RESIDENT MINISTRY

A Resident Story by Marc Buchanan

As I reflect on my 20+ years of membership at First Presbyterian I can certainly say that the Resident Ministry Program has been one of the biggest blessings to me. I've served alongside many of the residents in Youth Ministry—in particular our Fall trips to the Pittsburgh Project and our summer mission trips which took us across the U.S. and to parts of Central America. Others I got to know through my time with the twenties and thirties group as they sought friendship and fellowship while trying to navigate their new home for the next two years.



I know Pastors are often told to be mindful of boundaries especially when it comes to congregants. But I am beyond thankful that the nature of the Residency program allows for some bending of those boundaries that can allow us to experience those in our midst on a more personal level. And I am beyond blessed that this ministry gave me a unique gift that I will forever treasure—a best friend of former Resident Minister Reverend Dr. Aaron Janklow. We've managed to stay close despite his initial move to Florida, then to Scotland for his PhD and back to Florida where he now resides. And it was a joy to stand beside him while he married the love of his life. I believe God puts people in your life for a reason and/or a season. And God used the Residency program to put Aaron in my life during a season in which I needed a good, male, Christian friend.

Rev. Dr. Aaron Janklow served as a Resident Minister from 2007 – 2009. He currently serves as Executive Pastor at Royal Poinciana Chapel in Palm Beach, Florida.

SESSION DIGEST

February Session Highlights

At the Stated Meeting of Session on February 16, 2022, via Zoom
The meeting opened at 7:05 p.m. with prayer.

The Session

Approved the amended Threat Evaluation & Risk Mitigation Plan presented by the **Safety Committee**. The updates outline 1) the communication procedure for altering Session when a threat has been identified, and 2) how conditions will be assessed to determine the threat is no longer active. The Safety Committee will continue to refine the Plan as appropriate.

Approved a fund-raising request from **Local / Community Mission** for up to \$20,000 for refugee resettlement. Jewish Family Services, which has extensive experience in refugee resettlement is providing valuable support and guidance to First Pres in this initiative. JFS has advised the cost of resettlement can range from \$7,000 - \$20,000.

Rev. Sanderford reported the **Governance Task Force** is focused on developing the first draft of the Session Manual of Operations. Elder Katie Parker and Clerk of Session Linda Rex are leading the effort.

Elder Gail Grady, Chair, **Congregational Life Committee**, gave a report on Fast Track Membership, a process to provide more opportunities to join and allow new members to become immediately active in the life of the church.

Jim Cameron, Chair, **Personnel Committee**, advised that Chris Dahl has been appointed as the Personnel Committee representative to the Pastor Transition Work Group. Also, Dallas Dort has been named to the Personnel Committee.

Elder Jean Song asked for clarity on Session Committee assignments -- are equity and inclusion given a priority? She said committees need to reflect the church's demographics of age and gender. Elder Bill McPherson, Chair, **Congregational Nominating Committee**, said that while the CNC is not engaged in committee assignments, it does, however, consider inclusion and equity when selecting the slate of new Elders and Deacons.

Elder Lynne Lande, **Resident Ministry Work Group**, spoke at length recognizing the extraordinary pastoral care extended to the late Rev. Matthew J. Warfield and his family during Rev. Warfield's hospitalization and after by Resident Ministers Revs. Megan Berry and Hannah Lundberg. Rev. Sanderford added that \$5455 from the Matthew J. Warfield Legacy Fund was sent in January to the Maple Avenue Ministries, an organization supported by Rev. Warfield. Additional funds will be sent in March for a total contribution of approximately \$6000. First Pres continues to stay in touch with the Warfield family.

Elder Bruce Thomson, Chair, **Finance Committee**, reported that for the month of January revenue was \$21,000 over budget, and expenses were \$10,000 less. Elder Thomson said it was a good start for 2022. He also advised Endowments & Special Gifts was down \$340,000 due to the recent stock market volatility.

Elder Chris King, Chair, **Property Committee**, advised all the boilers are now functioning, thanks to the work of Adrian Prundeanu, Facilities Manager, and technicians from Robertson Morrison. He expressed appreciation for the forethought of the prior Property and Finance Committees' leadership to establish reserves to cover extraordinary facility expenses.

Elder Len Rezmierski reported the **Property Committee** approved the contract for a three-month pilot program for a security consultant to 1) provide on-site security every Sunday for four hours, 2) assist in determining closure on previous threat situation, 3) assist in the preparation of the FEMA grant proposal, and 4) provide training as appropriate. At the conclusion of the pilot, the Safety Committee will survey the congregation to assess the value provided and consider next steps.

Pastors' Reports

Rev. Evans McGowan reported he and other Staff Members David VanderMeer, Beca Torres-Davenport, Rev. Mark Mares, and Rev. Megan Berry recently returned from the APCE Conference (Association of Partners in Christian Education) held in Chicago. He said it was a great opportunity for networking, interacting, sharing ideas, and socializing. Learn more about APCE here: <https://apcenet.org/>. Rev. Megan Berry asked for prayers for healing for her mother's fractured arm.

With no New Business, Elder Chris Wahl offered the Closing Prayer, and the meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

***The Session** is the governing board of the church. It consists of 24 Elders elected by the congregation to 3-year terms; they meet monthly (except, usually, in July) to oversee the church's financial and programmatic life, and to hear reports from the church's staff, committees and working groups. The Rev. Jay Sanderford, currently serves as Moderator. Elder Linda Rex is Clerk of Session. **Their next meeting is on March 16, 2022 (Zoom).**