



First Press

A Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor
April 2019 ■ Volume 67, Number 4



Art in action before and after pictures from the Messy Living Art event.

Dear Friends,

From Messy Lent to Glorious Easter: AWAKE!

As we walk our two Labrador retrievers along the B2B trail in Dexter, that last of the snow piles are melting and the skunk cabbage is about to emerge, signaling warmer, longer days. Stepping across the still-frozen earth, the poet Jane Kenyon's words come to mind: "Beside the porch step, the crocus prepares an exultation of purple, but for the moment holds its tongue..."

I resolve to prepare our flower beds and the vegetable garden for wonderful things. The soil is still frozen a few inches below the surface, but this cold, dark, rich soil reminds me of the virtues of humus; the "super important" dark, fertile organic matter that holds nutrients, moisture and microbes. "Humilis" comes from the Latin for "low." As a friend translates Genesis 2:7: "The Lord God formed a human from the "humus" and breathed into his (sic) nostrils the breath of life. And the human became a living being."

Humus. Human. It's right there in Genesis: you and I, we are messy, dirt people---created by God to receive flourishing, bursting, jubilant life.

We've observed messy Lent this year at First Pres, an acknowledgement that we are, indeed, messy, imperfect people living in a messy, flawed world. This is has been a time to acknowl-

edge all of the knowing that we do not know, and to prepare our messy, earthy selves to embrace the graces of God emerging in us.

Vaclav Havel, former prime minister of Czech Republic wrote that "We live in an era of intense conflict and massive institutional failures, a time of painful endings and of hopeful beginnings. It is a time that feels as if something is shifting and dying while something else wants to be born." With much of Lent behind us, fast approaching Holy Week portends the holy rhythm of dying to our messy, earthy selves and the bursting promise of resurrection life and power and rebirth. It is as though God is coming awake and alive again!

"Awake!" is our Easter theme at First Pres and we invite you in this holy season to flow through the rhythms of Holy Week, of walking the path of betrayal and abandonment and betrayal on Maundy Thursday, to dying a messy death on Good Friday before rising anew, awake, and fully human and alive on Easter.

Peace,
Jay Sanderford
Associate Pastor



Holy Week & Easter Worship

For more information about these services, go to page three.



Palm Sunday, April 14
8:00, 9:30, 11:00 a.m.
in the Sanctuary

Maundy Thursday, April 18
10:30 a.m. at Glacier Hills,
7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary

Good Friday, April 19
7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary

Easter Sunday, April 21
8:00, 9:30, 11:00 a.m.
in the Sanctuary



Lent & Holy Week



Easter Lilies in Memory or Honor

Order Easter lilies in memory or honor of a loved one. They will beautify Easter morning worship and afterwards be delivered to those who are sick or home bound.

Order flowers (\$17) at <https://firstpresbyterian.wufoo.com/forms/easter-lilies/> or in the Church Office. The submission deadline is Monday, April 15 at noon.

Lenten Adult Education Series

Sundays at 11:00 a.m., ABIDE: Blessed in the Mess continues the conversation about the complicated nature of the world, while recognizing God's presence in the midst of the chaos. We believe that Jesus abides with us, and blesses us, even in the messiest moments of our lives. The class focuses on "Family" on April 7 and "Moments" on April 14.

Wednesday Lenten Contemplation

All are welcome to meet in Monteith Hall Wednesday mornings during Lent, from 9:00 - 9:30 a.m, for a time of guided contemplation. This time will be followed by a silent walking meditation on the way to a restaurant for breakfast for those who have the time/interest. This weekly centering time will be led by Kate Drinkwater or Kathy Wirstrom. Find focus and fellowship during Lent.



"Bless this Mess: Our Real Lives" Photo Challenge

Send photos to photos@firstpresbyterian.org through April 10

During Lent, we invite you to take a photo of your mess, whatever it might be and share it. God knows our messes and loves us anyway! "Let those who know what you're all about tell the world you're great and not quitting. And me? I'm a mess. I'm nothing and have nothing: make something of me. You can do it; you've got what it takes—but God, don't put it off." Psalm 40: 16b-17 (MSG). Submissions will be printed and placed on the cross in the lounge outside the Sanctuary. Watch as our mess, with God, transforms into beauty.

Messy Movie Nights

Wednesdays, April 3 & April 10, 5:30 – 8:00 p.m.

\$5 for Dinner/ age two and under are free

Explore faith with family and friends as we eat, watch a movie, and discuss how Christ is present in mess. There are two more movies in our series – **April 3, Inside Out** and **April 10, Wonder**. Reserve your spot at <https://firstpresbyterian.wufoo.com/forms/messy-movie-nights/> Questions? Want to volunteer? Contact Beca at btorres-davenport@firstpresbyterian.org or Essie at essie@firstpresbyterian.org.

Lenten Small Groups

Living with Contradictions: Benedictine Spirituality

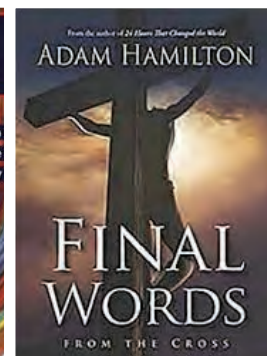
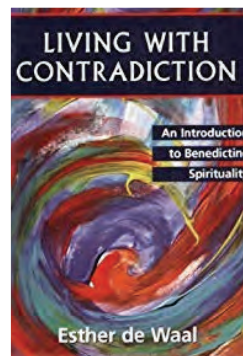
Tuesdays through April 9, 7:00 – 8:00 p.m., in the Lewis Room

Rev. Annette Fraser leads this Lenten group based on the book *Living with Contradictions: Benedictine Spirituality* by Esther Wahl. Bring a journal or notebook.

Final Words from the Cross

Small groups explore *Final Words from the Cross* by Adam Hamilton. In life, in death, and even in the mess, Jesus' words were powerful and meaningful.

Sign up on our website or in the Church Office. More information is available there. Books (\$15) may be purchased in the Church Office.



Messy Peeps & Pizza Fair!



Saturday, April 13, 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., Social Hall

Team up with family and friends and create your own Messy Bible story shoe box diorama using marshmallow Peeps. A pizza lunch will be served at noon. What is the Peeps & Pizza Fair? Remember making a shoe box dioramas in elementary school? This is the same idea.

Here's how it works: Pick your favorite messy Bible story. Plan how to depict the story in a shoe box diorama using Peeps and any other materials you might like. First Pres 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. If you want to use a gummy worm, fabric, plant material, your own shoe box, or other materials, bring those with you.

On Saturday morning April 13, bring your story, your supplies, and your creative ideas for a fun imaginative morning. Suggestions will be available, too. Lunch is \$5 per person. Make a reservation so we know how much pizza to order at

<https://firstpresbyterian.wufoo.com/forms/peeps-and-pizza-fair/>. The dioramas will be on display in the Social Hall on Palm Sunday, April 14 for all to see.

Holy Week Worship

- **Palm Sunday, April 14** - A Palm Parade will be held at the beginning of the 9:30 a.m. service. Children will meet Beca Torres-Davenport in the Social Hall at 9:20 a.m. to prepare for the parade.
- **Maundy Thursday, April 18** - Worship will be held at 10:30 a.m. at Glacier Hills in the Hanson Room and at 7:00 p.m. in our Sanctuary. Maundy Thursday recalls the Last Supper.
- **Good Friday, April 19** - This reflective service is held at 7:00 p.m., remembers the suffering and death of Christ.



Easter Worship - Sunday, April 21

Worship at 8:00, 9:30, & 11:00 a.m. - Rev. McGowan at 8:00 a.m. and Rev. Rogers at 9:30 and 11:00 a.m. will preach at these traditional services held in the Sanctuary. Musical leadership will include the Chancel Choir, brass quintet, organ, and timpani.



- **Flowering Cross** - Bring fresh flowers to add to our Flowering Crosses located outside the Sanctuary on the front steps and in the Monteith Hall vestibule. Store-bought flowers are welcome.
- **Easter Treats** – Enjoy coffee and snacks in the Welcome Center between the 8:00 and 9:30 a.m. worship services Easter morning. Note: Coffee Hour will not be held after the 9:30 a.m. worship service.
- **Easter Sunday Childcare** –Easter Sunday Childcare is available for crib - young five-year-olds at the 9:30 and 11:00 a.m. services, and for the 8:00 a.m. service by reservation. To make a reservation, contact Beca Torres-Davenport at 662-4466, ext. 342 or btorres-davenport@firstpresbyterian.org.
- **Easter Childcare Volunteers Needed** – Can you help with childcare? Additional childcare providers are needed for Easter Sunday services. If you can offer this wonderful gift to the families of our church, please contact Beca Torres-Davenport at btorres-davenport@firstpresbyterian.org or 662-4466 ext 342.



Centering Retreat: Alive in God's Spirit

Saturday, April 27, Noon-3:00 p.m.

Join us for Alive in God's Spirit, a centering retreat that includes gentle, beginner-friendly yoga, a singing bowl meditation, and an introduction to the essential oils in the Bible. The singing bowls meditation will include scripture and poetry by Christian authors. An overview of the history of essential oils in the Bible and how they were used will be given as well as the opportunity to learn what they smell like. Please let Rev. Blair Buckley know if you will attend at bbuckley@firstpresbyterian.org.



A Grand Gathering at the Grand Hotel

May 3 - 5, Mackinac Island



This two-night gathering will be a unique opportunity to get away, spend time together, explore an amazing part of Michigan, and stay at a historic hotel at phenomenal rates. Explore the island, enjoy special presentations, worship, make new friends and hunt for lost treasure.

Deadline to register is Wednesday, April 3. This includes the submission of a financial deposit of one full night's rate to The Grand Hotel along with a completed registration form available at www.firstpresbyterian.org.

Rates: Cost is \$131/day per person, double and \$197/day per person, single. This includes a 5-course dinner and breakfast. Children 9 and under stay and eat for free. Children 10-17 years old are \$65 each per day, and 18 and over are \$149 each per day which includes breakfast and dinner. If you are a single person and would prefer a roommate, please contact Rev. Rogers to arrange. A commitment to the retreat is a commitment for two nights. You will cover your own cost to get to the Island. Questions? Contact Rev. Rogers at mr Rogers@firstpresbyterian.org or 662-4466, ext. 390.

Parish Nurse Wellness Series: Keeping Sabbath

And on the seventh day...God rested.

Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy.

Words from an ancient text or a prescription for good health? What does it mean to "keep Sabbath"? For observant Jews, and some Christians, it means taking one day out of every seven to "RE": recharge our batteries, reconnect with family and friends, reflect on life, and relax into the loving arms of God.

It's not much, right? For every six days we work and live in this world, we give one back to God. We give up our outside, worldly "to dos" - and take time to rest. To listen. To BE. To be in this world, but not transformed by it: a human being, not a human doing.

Over the next few months we'll explore this idea of "keeping sabbath" and the gifts we receive when we do. And I challenge you to pick a day (it might be Sunday unless that's a busy work day) that you and/or your family can set aside and make holy. Holy unto God, and wholly for a better "you". Stay tuned...

Congregational Life Happenings

Congregational Life and our Church Staff are working hard to offer a variety of activities in the coming months. We hope that one or two of these will be of interest to you. A few of the upcoming events:

Saturday Suppers

April 6

A few openings are still available! Reserver your space today with Sara VanderVoort at saravoort@gmail.com

Mackinac Island Gathering

May 3 - 5

Space is limited so register online soon!

Benedictine Spirituality Retreat

May 17 - 18

Join Rev. Annette Fraser at St. Augustine's House and learn more about the paradox of quiet contemplation and working toward social justice.

All Church Picnic

Sunday, June 9

Save the date and help us kick off the summer with barbeque, music, fellowship and fun! More info to follow.

Questions or comments?

Contact Karla Olson-Bellfi at karlaolsonbellfi@gmail.com or Rev. Melissa Anne Rogers at mr Rogers@firstpresbyterian.org



Mature Ministries Events

Lunch & Learn - Thursday, April 11

Diversity & Race, Water, and the Future of Work

Earl Lewis, noted social historian, author and academic leader, has returned to the UM faculty to serve as director of the UM Center for Social Solutions, a new center that will address three core areas of social concern: diversity and race, water, and the future of work. Previously he was president of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, former vice provost and dean of the Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies, former provost and executive vice president for academic affairs at Emory University, and faculty member at UC, Berkeley.



Phone, Mail & E-Scams

Join us for a Michigan Consumer Education (State of Michigan Attorney General's office) presentation by Justine Bykowski on Thursday, May 2 at 10:00 a.m. in the Lewis Room. Scams come in all different shapes and sizes. It's important to learn the warning signs, as well as things you can do to protect yourself. Sign up in the Church Office at 662-4466.

News from the Property Committee

We are so very thankful for the building and grounds we have available to us for worship services, community projects, local mission projects, and many other activities. Like all buildings and grounds, continuous maintenance is necessary for First Presbyterian's facilities. As we progress through 2019 watch for the following projects we hope to accomplish this year:



- Replacement of two flat roof areas including the roof over the ramp in the Monteith Courtyard (see photo) and the roof between the Kuizenga Wing and Monteith Hall. Both have been repaired previously.
- Miscellaneous masonry, concrete and caulking work around the building
- Replace two catch basins (drains) in the main drive area (see photo) and repair one catch basin in the Hill Street drive area.
- Replace worn hinges and door seals on the side Emergency Exit door of Monteith Hall
- Replace the last 10 remaining incandescent bulbs in the outside tall light posts with high efficiency LED bulbs
- Regrading and landscaping at the southeast corner of the sanctuary and along the adjacent wall of the Lemon Wing

While we are grateful to be able to pursue these projects, there are certainly many more, and larger, projects to be undertaken in the future. - *The Property Committee*

From Blue to Purple ... Hymnals!

In with the New - Thanks to all who donated to purchase new Glory to God hymnals for the Sanctuary. The appeal was wildly successful and over 800 new hymnals were purchased. Look for them in the pews starting Maundy Thursday, April 18.

Out with the Old - From Easter to Pentecost, the blue hymnals will be cataloged by staff and volunteers, making a list of hymnals and what nameplates are in them. An attempt will be made to see that those who donated the last time are given access to the particular hymnal with their family's nameplate inside. We cannot promise that we can locate the one you gave previously, but we will try. After Pentecost, if you donated a new *Glory to God* hymnal, you may have a blue hymnal at that time. Two hundred hymnals will be kept for future use of First Pres in services, retreats, and other events. After that, those who would like to purchase a blue hymnal who did not give a *Glory to God* hymnal may purchase one for \$5, in support of the Sacred Music Fund.



Christian Meditation

Meditations will be held on Saturdays, April 6 and 20 in Monteith Hall at 8:30 a.m. All are welcome. For more information, contact Jeanette Kibler, jeanette.kibler@gmail.com.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Seminary Scholarship Applications Now Accepted

Presbyterian Women is now accepting scholarship requests for the 2019-2020 school year. Men and women beginning or in seminary, or religious education, are encouraged to apply by the end of April. Contact Joan Bentz, Scholarship Committee (jdbentz@comcast.net) or Virginia Bell, Moderator (virginiabell2013@gmail.com). The application can be downloaded from the PW page of the church website.



The seminary scholarship has a rich history as it honors dedicated women and men who were/are active members of First Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor, vital participants in the work of PW, and have given financial gifts to support this scholarship for students studying for the ministry. The original scholarship endowment was established in 1984 in honor of Doris S. Barnett. In 1990, the Kooyers family added memorial monies to this endowment to honor Joanne Kooyers, and designated those funds to aid women scholars. One more outstanding contributor to the ministry of our church and PW, Mable Rugen, was honored in 1999 when additional funds were added in her name. PW continues to place a great deal of importance on scholarships and has been selling scholarship “shares” at church mission bazaars to maintain the ability to award scholarships.

PW Gathering - Wednesday, April 17

Women of the church are invited to attend any or all activities. Men of the church are invited to attend the program and lunch.

- **Bible Study at 9:30 a.m. in the Lewis Room** – Rohn Federbush will lead lesson 8 from *God's Promise: I Am With You* by Amy Poling.
- **Business Meeting at 10:45 a.m. in Monteith Hall** - PW will hold a brief business meeting which will include the collection and dedication of the Birthday Offering and the election of officers.
- **“Local Mission: Ozone House” at 11:00 a.m. in Monteith Hall** - Betsy McCallister will share her experiences at Ozone House, an organization that provides emergency shelter, safe space, transitional housing, and counseling for homeless youth, LGBT runaway teens and families. Betsy was given a PW Lifetime Honorary Membership Award in 2018.
- **Lunch at Noon in the Social Hall** – Lunch is \$7.00. RSVP to the Church Office at 662-4466.

Singing through Adversity

Not even a tornado warning can keep the dedicated members of the Chancel Choir from practicing. After seeking shelter on the lower level they kept singing! Max Trombley was guest conductor for this memorable rehearsal.



Stephen Ministry Book Nook - Books you can borrow

Our Stephen Ministry books are available for your reading pleasure. You may check them out as well. This collection of books is located in Hillegonds Chapel. Further information is available in the White Notebook you will find there. We hope to highlight in this column a new, interesting, and relevant book each month.

Our book of the month is *Standing at the Edge* by Joan Halifax, PH.D. Joan has authored six previous books. She is a Buddhist teacher, anthropologist, and social activist. Her premise is that our toughest challenges are our most valuable source of wisdom, and the power of compassion can transform our suffering. She offers us a path for navigating some of life's challenges finding freedom where fear and courage meet.

We encourage you to stop by Hillegonds Chapel and discover the Stephen Ministry library, perhaps finding something relevant for you.

The Latest from T2A2 *William van Geest*

T2A2 (Twenties & Thirties of Ann Arbor) is going strong. Last December, the group finished its study of the book of Revelation. While several members – myself included, and even members of the First Pres pastoral staff – were skeptical of the idea, it carried the day; and week after week, chapter after chapter, members of T2A2, armed with no fewer than four reference works, took turns leading the group at Chris Wahl's home in thought-provoking questions, investigation of historical context, and collective reflection on this rich specimen of biblical literature.

Since January, T2A2 has been studying Rachel Held Evans's *Inspired: Slaying Giants, Walking on Water, and Loving the Bible Again*, but on the imminent completion of this study will be joining the rest of First Pres in their Lenten study of Adam Hamilton's *Final Words from the Cross*. In addition to the Sunday evening study, T2A2 has undertaken a number of other activities, including a visit to Cell Block 7 in Jackson accompanied by Brad Taylor, a games night with the young adult group of Knox Presbyterian, cross-country skiing excursions, a Superbowl party, and serving at the Rotating Shelter and Circles of Washtenaw County, in addition to its weekly Wednesday evening hangout at various Ann Arbor area eateries.

Those interested in participating in either the Sunday study, the Wednesday hangout, or the various other activities planned for the upcoming weeks can join the T2A2 google group (t2a2@googlegroups.com) or get in touch with Rev. Dorothy Piatt (dpiatt@firstpresbyterian.org) or Chris Wahl (cgwahl@gmail.com).



New Crucifer Cross

Many thanks to Joe Schmidt who has made a beautiful crucifer cross to use in worship. The cross design is taken from our First Pres logo. Check it out in the narthex. Joe also made the logo cross statue on display outside the Church Office.

Of the new cross, Joe writes, "It was something that I felt that I needed to make. The copper portions of the cross were made from the portico of Henry Ford's estate which is shown in the below picture. When I worked at Ford we used to eat lunch in the restaurant that was built over the swimming pool and it was called the pool restaurant. I was there one day and workers were replacing the beams of the portico with other wood and I asked if I could have the old wood. They filled up my truck with the beams that were virgin Spruce from Henry's Upper Peninsula property. I did build the top of a violin from the spruce and it is amazing that counting the tree rings there are 130 years of growth across the face of the violin. The top of the beams were covered with copper sheets and I used that copper sheet to make the sweeping elements of the cross. I have always enjoyed making things from reused material that I collect in my travels." So cool!



Financial Stewardship

Thank You, Legacy Partners!

On Sunday, April 7, we continue Living God's Love with the celebration of our Legacy Partners:

- At the 8:00, 9:30, and 11:00 a.m. services, each Legacy Partner will receive a carnation.
- Our guest preacher for the 9:30 and 11:00 a.m. services will be Rev. Christine Chakoian, Vice President of Seminary Advancement, Pittsburgh Seminary.
- Following the 9:30 a.m. service, there will be cake in the Social Hall to celebrate our current Legacy Partners.
- At 11:00 a.m., Carter Hodgson will have a presentation, open to everyone, on estate planning.
- At noon, Rev. Chakoian will present stories and insights regarding endowments and stewardship. This presentation is also open to everyone.

If you would like any additional information regarding this event, or about becoming a Legacy Partner, contact Anna Miller (amiller@firstpresbyterian.org) or Ken Westfall (struct92@gmail.com). We look forward to seeing you on April 7, Legacy Partner Sunday!



Financial Update

The Session and the Finance Committee are committed to providing regular financial updates to our members and friends. The following financial information is for the month of February and year to date for the 2019 fiscal year.



For the month of February:

Total income received: \$ 169,115

Total expenses: \$ 153,179

Surplus/(Shortage): \$ 15,936

Year-to-Date through February:

Total income received: \$ 369,453 (16.25 % of our annual budget)

Total expenses: \$ 296,235 (13.03 % of our annual budget)

Surplus/(shortage): \$73,218

You may also want to know that the 2019 church budget includes a \$46,580 allocation to designated funds for repair and replacement reserves for our church building. We recognize this amount will not address all the deferred maintenance our wonderful building needs, but it represents a discipline to set aside funds for when those repairs are needed (think trusses). Of course, larger repairs and improvement will someday require a dedicated capital campaign (think boiler and roof).



Faith in Action

Russia Mission Team Events

Get Ready for Easter & Support Mission Work

The Russia Mission Team invites you to purchase yummy Easter baked goods! Proceeds support the summer camp in Davydavo for children with disabilities and for their caregivers. Place your order during Coffee Hour on April 7 then pick up your goodies at Coffee Hour on April 14.



Enjoy a Festive Evening at St. Vladimir Russian Orthodox Church

On Friday night, May 3, at 7:30 p.m., First Pres is invited to enjoy desserts and entertainment at St. Vladimir Russian Orthodox Church, 9900 Jackson Rd. We Presbyterians will provide some of the entertainment too, indoors and outdoors, depending on the weather. Think square dancing and a fire pit!

Spring Work Day at Cass Community Social Services

Saturday, May 11

Spring is coming! That means our annual "Plant the Vegetable Gardens at Cass" workday is just around the corner. Come be a part of our group – we're looking especially for families and youth. Come and show Cass and its residents that we care! The vegetable gardens directly impact the quality of the over 1,000,000 meals served by Cass each year. Sign up at <https://firstpresbyterian.wufoo.com/forms/cass-work-day/>



Creating Peace - Integrated Arab/Jewish Schools

On Sunday, May 19 don't miss this opportunity to hear Dr. Merav Ben-Nun speak about her work in establishing Hand in Hand, a network of integrated, bilingual schools for Jewish and Arab children in Israel. She will speak at 2:00 p.m. at First Pres.

Dr. Merav Ben-Nun, former Deputy Director of the Community Department at Hand in Hand, spent most of her childhood in Haifa, the third-largest metropolitan area in Israel and one of the country's few mixed Arab/Jewish cities. She first became aware of the historic complexity of the Arab/Jewish conflict during her mandatory military service in the Israel Defense

Forces Education Corps and realized how deep and destructive those historic complexities have become.

Merav wished for her young children to grow up in an integrated Arab/Jewish school system. Since such an educational framework did not exist there at the time, she set out to create one. With help from other Arab and Jewish parents, the first Arabic/Hebrew preschool class of 14 children, was born. Today the integrated, bilingual Hand-in-Hand community in Haifa, boasts a thriving public elementary school with an enrollment of well over 150 students and growing!

A Letter from the Ludwigs

Dear First Presbyterian Church Ann Arbor,

We want to thank you and share our recent encouragements with you. Lately it seems we've been sharing about how life in Niger is difficult for us despite all the advantages we have that the majority of the population does not. The place has a way of wearing most things down. But this month we've both received some much-needed encouragement from different groups we attend. Rachel was recently moved at her Bible Study when reflecting on the encouragement to stick with the tasks that you've been called to. (2 Thessalonians 2:11-12). At the same time Michael was leading a devotion for CHE training for the regional trainers and was struck by the encouragement to not lose heart as you are a part of a larger community that is setting its eyes on Jesus, who himself endured so much (Hebrews 12:1-3).

So, we give you this thank you for your financial contribution to our sending and support with a renewed sense of encouragement. We know that you are an important part of this community of people ("great cloud of witnesses") that are gathered around the Perfecter of our faith with us. Your prayers and presence with us are a big part of our not losing heart and of any fulfillment or success in the work we're attempting to do. Please take these encouragements to heart in your own life of faith!
Rachel and Michael Ludwig



Spring Cleaning?

Wondering where to donate gently used items? Consider these agencies who provide direct support to others in our community:



House by the Side of the Road - Located on State Street in Ann Arbor. Clothing and small housewares are given free to those in need who qualify. Contact - www.housebythesideoftheroad.org/donate.html

Friends in Deed - Located on Ecorse Road in Ypsilanti. Furniture (will pick up) given FREE to those who qualify. Contact - www.friendsindeedmi.org/donatefurniture/

Kiwanis Thrift Sale - Located on Staebler Rd at Jackson Rd., west of Ann Arbor. Clothing, housewares and furniture given via vouchers provided to those who qualify. Proceeds support many other local organizations. Contact - www.kiwanissale.com/dropoffpickup.htm

Thank You Blood Donors!

With the help of our wonderful members, deacons, and people in the community we collected 24 pints of blood at the Deacon Blood Drive on March 19. Each blood donation can help save up to three lives. Your effort is truly appreciated by the blood recipients, their loved ones and all of us here at First Pres. Our next drive is Tuesday, July 9, noon - 6:00 p.m.



Adult Education

Please Note: There will be no Adult Education classes on Easter Sunday, April 21.

Sundays @ 9:30 A.M.

The Bible @ 9:30 April 7 - 28 in the French Room/Library

Bible exploration and conversation currently based on the book of Acts. Rev. Ed Koster is the presenter. All are welcome for solid biblical study and robust discussion.

First Friends April 7 - 28 in Monteith Hall

Spiritual growth, learning, fellowship, and support for couples and individuals. Presenters are class members. New members are always welcome!

April 7 The Life of Meaning Read and discuss Chapter 2:13-16 in *The Life of Meaning*, by Abernethy and Bole.

April 14 - 28 Acts of the Apostles - The group will watch and discuss the DVD *The Acts of the Apostles*.

Bible @ 9:30 Schedule

4/7	The Soul
4/14	The Angry God v. Best Friend
4/21	Easter - No Class
4/28	Wealth & Prosperity
5/5	Holiness
5/12	The Beatitudes
5/19	Exclusivity of Christianity
5/26	Memorial Day. No Class
6/2	The Spiritual Life

Sundays @ 11:00 A.M.

Exploring the Faith April 7 - 28 in Monteith Hall

Beginning April 28 – Interfaith Traditions Adult Education Series



In this series, several religious leaders from other religious traditions in Washtenaw County will speak about their respective religious traditions and how they teach/demonstrate compassion. On April 28, Rev. George Lambrides will introduce the series “Getting to Know You – Who is the YOU in this multi-religious society?” He will focus on the nature of our multi-religious society and the various forms of cross-religious engagement. During succeeding classes (through May 26), he will introduce speakers and facilitate discussions. More info will be provided in weekly Our Life Together and Adult Ed News emails.

Rev. Lambrides preached on Interfaith Connections at First Pres a month ago. He is Co-Director of the Interfaith Round Table of Washtenaw County, an organization that helps create a local culture of understanding and inclusion through education, dialogue, and shared practices.



Business of the Church

Notes from the AC

An Administrative Commission has two tasks: to inquire and to settle. We have invested our winter in the first of these undertakings by listening, reading and observing. Over the past several months, we have had conversations with many of you. We’ve met you in public gatherings, in the confines of committee and board meetings, by emails and telephone calls, over formal agendas and dozens of cups of coffee. We have been impressed by the passion you have for your faith community, for your concern for people you love and hold close, and for competing needs to both move forward and understand the recent past simultaneously.

The AC is now completing the inquiry phase, we believe that we have a fairly complete picture of your recent history. If you have input that we should consider, please let us know. We have some AC meeting times still available (we love meeting by web conference if that’s an option) and are always looking for information that will help clarify our timelines and document collection. You can contact us by email at fa3c2018@gmail.com. Our attention is now transitioning from inquiring to settling. It seems to me that “settling” is a very optimistic term (used by the Book of Order none the less!) for the work of an Administrative Commission, but that is the bar the Book of Order sets for our second task.

We are not a judicial entity; findings of guilt or innocence are outside of our scope. Our task is to identify changes that can be made which will make the future different than the recent past. Some of those changes are already being considered: there is important work being done by the Personnel Committee and the First Pres Session to identify necessary changes and design ways to implement those changes. The AC’s work of “settling” will begin with a series of conversations with the Session where the AC will make recommendations and explain our underlying rationale. Working with the Session, recommendations will be translated into tangible actions and activities in the life of First Pres.

At the end of this process, we will come back to a public conversation where we will summarize our recommendations and offer the rationale for them to the entire First Pres family. By the time the public report is given, the Session will be deeply involved in implementing recommendations into the life of the church. We continue to pray for you, and to trust that this season of Lent will prepare all of us for the new life which bursts forth on Easter morning.





Spring Break ... Puerto Rico & Mission

UKirk @ UMich sent five college students to Puerto Rico in March over University of Michigan's Spring Break. In partnership with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the group stayed in San Juan for a couple of nights and the remainder of the week in Añasco on the western side of the island. Hurricane Maria devastated the island in September 2017, and the people of Puerto Rico are still recovering. Our UKirk group helped rebuild the house of an elderly couple who survived by hiding in their bathroom.

Working as a team alongside the daughter and other skilled Puerto Rican workers, the group learned how to mix concrete by hand, build cinder block walls and strengthen those walls with mortar and cement.

The group also visited historic sites such as the forts of Old San Juan and the oldest church on the island in San Germain. They also took time to experience the natural beauty of Puerto Rico, including its famous bioluminescent bay, sea caves, beaches and waterfalls. The students have returned to their studies but will never forget the profound experience they had and our church which made this trip possible. Stay tuned to hear group members share their experiences.



Children & Families



Summer Vacation Bible School

Marketplace 29 A.D. - June 18, 19, & 20, 9:30 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

Learn what life was like when Jesus lived. Relive Biblical events, occupations, the synagogue, and experience being part of a typical Bible time family. Participants will visit the arts and craft shops of the Marketplace, travel to the Story Tellers tent, and witness events in Jesus' life re-enacted by street players, and play games at Jerusalem playground. Registration forms will be mailed by Easter or sign up now at <https://firstpresbyterian.wufoo.com/forms/vacation-bible-school-child-registration/>

Volunteers Are Needed! There are many ways that adults, middle schoolers, and high schoolers can volunteer and be a part of this great activity. Sign up to help at <https://firstpresbyterian.wufoo.com/forms/vacation-bible-school-volunteer-registration/> For more information, contact Beca Torres-Davenport at btorres-davenport@firstpresbyterian.org or Cindy King at cking@firstpresbyterian.org.



A Messy Lent...

