



# First Press

Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor  
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*Dear Friends,* .....

A few years ago, when Peter and I retired to a very old house in the historic town of Ipswich, on the Massachusetts coast, we soon discovered that one of our new neighbors, John, was an antiques dealer – and he, of course, quickly discovered that I was a

clergyman. With John's help, Peter and I gave ourselves a pair of candlesticks here, a bedwarmer there to honor our new/old house. Then one day John called and said he had something we really had to see. It was an angel.

When the antique angel took up a post (literally) in our antique house, I assumed that – he? she? they? – would be watching over us, as angels do. But the eyes seem more ambiguous, the gaze almost more inward than outward. I chalked it up to the fact that these past few years could cause even an angel to stand with downcast eyes.

Now I've turned my own gaze toward Advent. At First Pres this year our Advent theme, "Those Who Dream," leans on an image borrowed from the 126th Psalm: *When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream...* Advent is a season for angels, after all, so I've been seeing that carved face in my mind's eye – and it has just dawned on me that perhaps what I've been seeing in those time-ravaged but gentle features, still wearing a few tatters of gilded paint after several centuries, is the face of one who is dreaming.

What makes an angel an angel, of course, is not the wings or the halo, not the gilding, not even the power to come and go quite unexpectedly; what makes an angel an angel is having a mes-

sage to deliver. The word angel, in both Hebrew and Greek, is more or less equivalent to the word "messenger." And, I must say, it reassures me to think that there are messages I might need to receive, these days, delivered by one who has an inner eye trained on that kind of vivid view of the world, distilled from a grace-full alloy of truth and imagination, that we call dreaming.

There's a lot of food for dreams this Advent. The promise of God's nearness ... intimations that all is not lost ... signs of the power of love even with so much arrayed against it in this world... We keep all these things and ponder them in our hearts, like Mary remembering everything she saw and heard that night in the stable. Are we dreaming when we believe that justice will come, that the moral arc of the universe is bending even now? Are we dreaming when we choose to see the humanity of those who see us as adversaries, enemies? I'm listening for messages that may have been dispatched to startle me awake this Advent. I invite you, over these next weeks, to try out the spiritual practice of dreaming a world that fulfills the images that faith keeps alive deep in our imaginations. Maybe it'll make messengers of us all.

Faithfully,  
*Peter Spalding*  
Interim Pastor





## THOSE WHO DREAM...

November 29 - *Keep Awake*

December 6 - *Prepare the Way*

December 13 - *Sow Joy*

December 20 - *Are Not Alone*

December 24 - *Christmas Eve  
This Night, We Are Those Who Dream*

December 27 - *Will Not Keep Silent*

## Those Who Dream ... Advent 2020

*When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream. - Psalm 126*

What does it look like to live as those who dream? The prophets, the psalmists, John the Baptist, Mary, Elizabeth, Joseph, Simeon, Anna, the shepherds and the Magi—they were all dreamers. They received, discovered, and responded to God's dreams for the world.

In Advent, we will step into the mystery and awe of God's dreams and pray they shape our reality. This theme is for the dreamers in all of us—those who dream of a deeper connection with God and those who dream of a better world. It's for those who dream of comfort and for those who have given up on their dreams. It's for those whose dreams have been crushed and for those who show us that dreams take time. Join us, November 29 through Epiphany, as we dream alongside prophets and angels, Mary and the Magi. Join us as we seek and sow God's dreams for our world.

### WORSHIP IN DECEMBER

**YouTube** – <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCi4UFJ0Spvowsk7EnVXs6CQ>

**Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/FirstPresA2/>

### Advent Taizé Prayer Service - Tuesday, December 1, 7:00 p.m.

All are welcome at this service of Hope and Reconciliation for Advent, available on YouTube and Facebook.

### Longest Night Worship - Sunday, December 20, 7:00 p.m.,

We know the darkness — both literal and figurative — that comes around the Winter Solstice. For those grieving, uncertain, facing illness, or feeling melancholy during the holidays, this season is especially hard. This service speaks to the sadness we feel. Invite your heavy-laden friends and neighbors to tune in.

### Christmas Eve Worship Services

*Three virtual services are offered this year to allow us to celebrate Christ's birth together in spirit!*

#### Nativity Worship Service - 1:00 p.m.

Tune in for a fresh retelling of the birth of Jesus as we premier Illustrated Ministry's "Do Not Be Afraid" virtual Christmas pageant. As in past years, First Pres children and youth are the star-bearers, angels, shepherds, and magi and virtual backdrops make the story come alive! The worship service centers on the narratives surrounding Jesus' birth from the gospels of Matthew and Luke.

#### Christmas Eve Service of Lessons & Carols - 5:00 p.m.

Experience the story of Christmas through First Pres' traditional presentation of scripture readings and music.

#### A Christmas Eve Fireside Service - 11:00 p.m.

As the hour approaches midnight, the traditional hour of Christ's birth, join Revs. Melissa Anne Rogers and Rick Spalding in the unfolding mystery and majesty of God's incarnation - a simple, reflective service by the fireside with a handful of beloved carols, the reading of Luke's Christmas Story, a meditation and a few heartfelt prayers for an aching, hopeful world.

### Sunday, December 27 Worship - 9:30 a.m.

Celebrate the coming of Christ into the world in worship. Rev. Amy Ruhf is preaching.





## Get Into the Spirit with Virtual Christmas Carols

Want something to make you feel more “Christmasy?” Visit “[Chancel Choir Christmas Carols](#)” Playlist on YouTube to hear the Chancel Choir sing Christmas Carols!

## Advent Email Devotional

Our 2020 Advent Email Devotional is based on our upcoming Advent theme, “Those Who Dream...” Receive daily email devotions written by members and staff during Advent. Sign up to receive them at [www.firstpresbyterian.org](http://www.firstpresbyterian.org) or contact the Church Office.

## A Word About Advent 2020 Events

Before joining us for any in-person events, please check our website [www.firstpresbyterian.org](http://www.firstpresbyterian.org), to be sure arrangements have not altered due to Covid-19.

## Honor or Remember Loved Ones With a Poinsettia

Give a poinsettia to beautify worship on December 20 and 24 in honor or memory of a loved one. Poinsettias are \$20 and can be ordered at <https://firstpresbyterian.wufoo.com/forms/poinsettias-2020/> or by calling the Church Office until noon on Friday, December 11. After worship on December 20, poinsettias will be delivered to those grieving or shut-in in our congregation.

## Advent IS Happening!

### Stroll the First Pres’ Campus - December 13 and 20

Join the celebration! You are invited to stroll the campus on the third and fourth Sundays of Advent, December 13 and 20, from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m. Stop along the way to enjoy beautiful music and to sign up to participate in various mission opportunities. Pick up an Advent Happening kit (different each week) and a Christmas Card kit to take home, enjoy a tasty treat, have your picture taken at our photo booth. On December 13, St. Nicholas may even visit to tell some little-known and heart-warming pieces of his biography. At 5:00 p.m. each Sunday we will gather, socially distanced and wearing masks, on the front lawn to receive an Advent blessing from two of our pastors and to join in the countdown for the lighting of an Advent tree. *Note: If state Covid percentages make these gatherings difficult, stay tuned for a “drive-up” opportunity to take the place of strolls on these days and times.*



## 2020 Family-to-Family Christmas

For those impacted by poverty the holidays can be a time of anxiety and fear, with many not able to afford basic needs, let alone gifts for their children or Christmas dinner for their family. The onslaught of COVID-19 has only raised the need for assistance. We again have the opportunity to help local families have a better Christmas through Family-to-Family Christmas. First Pres will facilitate the matching of individuals and families, referred by the Department of Health and Human Services, with members and friends who wish to provide them with food and gifts this Christmas. Please consider “adopting” a family in need this year yourself or with your family, group, or friends. To keep everyone safe during this time, we are following DHHS suggestions for helping our families.

**Here’s how it works ...** Sign up online to request a family. You’ll receive information on a family you can help. Contact your family! Then shop for your family and work with them to set your contact-free delivery method. You may:



- Buy gifts online and ship to the family directly
- Mail them gift cards
- Buy gifts and arrange a date for contactless delivery (dropping gifts at the door)
- Buy gifts, bring to church, and a volunteer will do contactless delivery
- Want to help another way? Financial contributions will help purchase gift cards for any families not directly adopted.

Adopt a family by clicking on the sign-up link for Family-to-Family Christmas 2020 at [www.firstpresbyterian.org](http://www.firstpresbyterian.org) or contact Julie Morrison at [jdornmorrison@gmail.com](mailto:jdornmorrison@gmail.com) or 646-5351. Thank you for sharing your Christmas blessings with our neighbors!

## The 2020 Story Slam - December 13, 7:00 p.m.

Watch our Story Slam 2020 and hear stories of dreams ... dreams that came true, that didn't happen as expected, were dashed — or something else! These stories will move you, challenge you or charm you. Peggy Hodgson, Callie Feyen, Gail Grady, and several youth will share. Join us for the Zoom reception afterwards, visit [www.firstpresbyterian.org](http://www.firstpresbyterian.org) for the link.



## Stroll the First Pres' Sanctuary



### At long last, we welcome you home on Christmas Eve!

You are invited to prayerfully and joyfully stroll through the Sanctuary on December 24, Christmas Eve, between 3:30 and 5:00 p.m. Luminaria welcome you outside while inside you will be greeted by the beautiful music of the Sanctus Ringers and organ. Enjoy a live nativity and poinsettias will fill the Chancel. You will be invited to make a Christmas Eve donation to CEPAD, a Christian organization working with poor communities in Nicaragua to support recovery in Nicaragua after Hurricane Eta. As you exit, light a candle to take the light of Christ out into the world. At 5:00 p.m. the final Advent tree – the Christ Tree – will be lighted. All participants must wear masks and remain socially distanced.

## Jesse Tree Gift to Families

At the beginning of Advent, families will receive a special mailing of a Jesse Tree Advent calendar. Your family can spend time reading Bible stories, decorating the Jesse Tree and preparing for the coming of the baby Jesus! This packet is a gift from the Children & Family Work Group.

## Christmas Offerings:

*These offering will be accepted throughout the month of December*

### Family Christmas Eve Offering

We've had a tradition of collecting an offering of gifts during the Christmas Eve Nativity Family service. This year, we will continue that tradition. Since we cannot be together, you'll have the opportunity to drop off your gifts at church. Please consider donating new children's t-shirts, underwear and socks to be gifted to Community Action Network (CAN) and Peace Neighborhood Center. Donations will be accepted from December 20 through Christmas Eve. Gifts may be dropped off at the December 20 Advent Stroll, or in the donation bin outside the Memorial Garden entrance to First Pres, Monday through Thursday, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.



### 2020 Christmas Eve Offering - Support Recovery in Nicaragua after Hurricane Eta



Our 2020 Christmas Eve Offering will support CEPAD's recovery and rebuilding efforts following Hurricane Eta in Nicaragua. This hurricane has claimed many and forced the evacuation of thousands of people. It caused great damage in many low-income communities that are served by CEPAD, the Council of Protestant Churches in Nicaragua, and our First Pres mission partner, in that region. Unending rains and wind wreaked havoc on several rural and coastal communities, but also affected the fall bean harvest in inland communities, setting the stage for food insecurity across the country. CEPAD, a Christian organization working with poor communities to promote justice, peace and equitable solidarity, works to improve the life of Nicaraguans by offering agricultural training and resource support, resources to help youth and women break the cycles of poverty, and leads groups from other countries in partnership with rural communities in Nicaragua. First Pres' Nicaragua Mission Team has traveled several times to Nicaragua in the past few years, and hopes to return to work with our friends in the near term. Our PC (USA) Mission Co-Workers in Nicaragua are Jhanderys Dotel-Vellenga and Ian Vellenga. Please make your gifts in December through the Finance Office or at one of our December gatherings. *Photo from Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, Hurricane Eta*

### 2020 Christmas Joy Offering

The Christmas Joy Offering that we will receive on Sundays, December 13 and 20, reflects that God is with us, through the generous gifts that support church leaders among us – retired, present and future – who have pointed us to God. 50% of your gifts to Christmas Joy assist current and retired church workers and their families who are in financial need. 50% of your gifts to Christ-

mas Joy make it possible for students to learn and grow in faith at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. We support the potential of students of color who will become our leaders and we seek to come alongside them, to encourage them, to be together with them. And we support church workers and their families who have critical financial needs and we come alongside them, to assist them — we are with them. And we see the witness of the whole Church, either gathered in buildings or connected home to home, member to member, sharing what we have, together. We thank God for being “with us” through the gift of Jesus Christ and for joining us together as the Church and, through our gifts, with those who have need. We can never match God’s perfect gift in Jesus, but through the Christmas Joy Offering, we can testify to who we have known God to be. Our perfect gift comes from above. Our gifts reflect our generous God. Our gifts support leaders in our Church and world — past, present and future.



## Financial Stewardship



### Annual Giving Update



We are in the final stages of the 2021 Annual Giving campaign and many of you have given us commitments of your willingness to share your time and financial support with this congregation in the coming year. Thank you. Our goals include a 10% increase in participation meaning receiving 544 pledges up from 495 in 2020, total financial commitments of \$1.7

million, and a measurable increase in commitments to volunteer opportunities which will help us leverage the work of our staff and allow us as a congregation to work more deeply with many of our mission efforts, within and beyond our building. If you have not yet made a commitment to the church for 2021 please consider doing so this week. Our shared commitments, like our shared experiences, build us as a community, and make it possible for this congregation to share God’s vision for our world. We Are the Church Together and our shared commitments, in all forms and sizes as we are able, confirm that to ourselves and the world beyond our walls.

### Finance Office Hours

Monday - Wednesday, December 21-23 ..... 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
 Thursday - Friday, December 24 - 25 ..... Closed  
 Monday - Wednesday, December 28 - 30 ..... 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
 Thursday - Friday, December 31 - January 1 ..... Closed

### 2020 Payments & Contributions

Payments in sealed envelopes can be placed in the slot in the Finance Office door at church or mailed.

### 2021 Offering Envelopes

Offering envelopes will be mailed by December 18 to those who have requested them.

### Questions? Contact Us!

Feel free to get in touch with Anna Miller, Finance Manager by leaving messages in her church mailbox, a voicemail at 734-431-6379 or email her at [amiller@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:amiller@firstpresbyterian.org).

### Financial Update

As of this writing, we have financial results through October.



- **Revenue:** Year-to-date pledge receipts and contributions were \$45,000 better than budget. Thank you to all whose generous contributions made this possible!
- **Expenses:** Personnel expenses were \$67,000 below (better than) budget. Building expenses were \$88,000 better than budget thanks to lower than anticipated expenses in virtually all facilities-related areas. In all other areas combined, spending was \$69,000 below budget. Therefore, overall expenses were \$224,000 better than budget through October 2020.
- **Bottom line:** As of October 31st, we have a deficit of \$29,000, but our 2020 budget had anticipated a deficit of \$298,000 at this point in the year.
- Because our actual deficit is relatively small, we haven’t had to pull funds from the Unrestricted Endowment to cover it yet. Instead, we’ve drawn down the balance we had in our checking account at the beginning of the year.

- As we move through the final two months of the year, it's likely that our deficit will grow and that we'll have to start pulling from the Unrestricted Endowment to cover it.
- First Pres's budget performance for 2020 has been much better than expected. To everyone who has helped the church accomplish this, we extend a huge THANK YOU!
- Regarding our endowment, at the start of this year the total amount invested was \$7,657,290. As we always do, we've drawn on the endowment to finance some of the church's activities, particularly our Resident Ministry program. Thanks to some generous donations, as well as the rebounding of the financial markets, that spending has mostly offset by gains, and our overall endowment now stands at \$7,604,463 as of October 31st.
- In this tumultuous 2020, it's a relief to see our endowment balance get close to where it started the year. The main purpose of holding funds in an endowment is to generate earnings through interest, dividends, and growth in the value of investments. Those earnings can be used to help fund current activities, while leaving the initial balance largely intact to continue generating earnings in future years. Seeing our endowment balance get back close to where we started the year means that its ability to help us in the future hasn't been diminished. That's a relief!

## Legacy Partners Spotlight - Jim Clark & Nancy Janz Clark



The Janz-Clark family has been blessed to be part of First Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor for over 40 years. The church has been a wonderful source of comfort in times of challenge as well as a place to celebrate the many blessings in our lives. While some of the faces have changed over the years, the caring relationships and supportive environment have been a constant source of inspiration to our family.

The vibrancy of this church depends on an on-going commitment to programs such as children's ministry, pastoral care, music ministry, mission programs and so many more. It also requires the ability to fund new initiatives and grow current programs allowing the church to invite new ways to embrace God's work in our community and the world. We are so grateful for the way First Pres has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic. The congregation has maintained a close connection to the

church due, in large part, to the extraordinary efforts of staff and lay leaders. We have had the opportunity to serve on committees focused on this critical transitional period for First Pres. At the same time, we have been the recipients of prayers and support as we have lost dear friends and extended family.

New ideas and/or expanding programs often require additional funding. For example, keeping pace with the technological advances to support our ministries, and creating new programs focused on social justice will require additional funds. A healthy endowment will ensure that new, exciting and essential programs can be sustained for future generations.

In our estate planning we asked ourselves, where would we like to see our legacy continue in the future? First Presbyterian Church was a certain choice. In our faith journey we have been blessed with the caring support of First Pres ministers, the range of programs, the cherished relationships and the comfort of knowing that we have a church home. While we do not know what God plans for this church in the decades ahead, we want to be certain that First Pres has the opportunity to grow and serve God's call for generations to come. We hope that all of you will give the Legacy Partner Program careful consideration in your plans for the future!



## Congregational Life

### We Say Hello ...

#### Barb Delancey – Interim Wellness Coordinator

We welcome First Pres member Barb Delancey, RN, as our Interim Wellness Coordinator. Barb will help us continue the work of parish nursing and pastoral care until a new Parish Nurse/Wellness Coordinator (a successor to Sandy Talbott, who retired last month) is hired. We are grateful for her service and availability. Until then, please keep the search committee and candidates in your prayers. To access support and help from Barb, please contact Rev. Rogers, [mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org), or the Church Office at 662-4466.



## We Bid Farewell...



### Lisa Haddrill, Technology Coordinator

Lisa Haddrill is resigning after serving First Pres for more than nine years. Coffee Hour on Sunday, December 27, will be a time to celebrate Lisa and to send her off with our gratitude and blessing. Contributions toward a special gift for Lisa may be sent to the attention of Finance Manager Anna Miller or may be dropped off at the church Monday through Thursday, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Checks should be made payable to First Pres with the purpose noted on the memo line. We are so grateful for Lisa's unending help with our tech support all these years, our website management and maintenance, and our sound, phone, and hardware help — among so many other things! Many of our members have turned to Lisa for advice with computer and network problems at home, and Lisa has always shared her wisdom. She's advised our staff and members on computer scams and hacks and helped the staff communicate with our members multiple times each week. Each email devotional has been lovingly prepared and expertly edited for errors by Lisa. Lisa is a dear staff colleague and

friend, and a hard worker, and she will be dearly missed!



### Mary Jones, Publications Coordinator

Our wonderful Mary Jones will be retiring at the end of December. We're going to greatly miss her generous smile and ready warm greetings. Having been on staff for more than 17 years, Mary has worn many different staff hats at First Pres. Her current position is Publications Coordinator — think the *First Pres* newsletter, stewardship brochures, Presbyterian Women's yearbook and every poster, brochure, banner or handout that comes your way from church. Mary has been the brilliant designer and producer for all of that!

But over the years Mary has also been the Children's Education and Family Ministry Assistant, and Assistant to the Head of Staff. Per Debbie MacVey, "When Mary and I worked together she was behind the scenes of so many of the special programs for our children and families. From our summer Marketplace Bible School to our Advent and Lenten Happenings, if there was a special event for Children and Families, Mary

was there making it beyond spectacular!"

Mary, her husband Jeff, and daughter Maggie have been members of First Pres since 1995. There have been many times that Jeff and Maggie stepped in, too, to help out with church activities. Maggie, a UM grad, is now in her third year of teaching in the Van Buren School district and Jeff has recently retired.

How to give our thanks to our beloved Mary? We'll never be able to replicate her extraordinary party planning skills, but we're going to give it a try! Join us at our December 20 virtual Coffee Hour as we celebrate Mary with balloons, cake, presents and tributes and send her off with our gratitude for her faithful service and our blessings for what her future may hold. Contributions toward a special gift for Mary may be sent to the attention of Finance Manager Anna Miller or may be dropped off at the church Monday through Thursday, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Checks should be made payable to First Pres with the purpose noted on the memo line.

## Stephen Ministers Care in Transitions

Living is a series of progressions, happenings, and changes. A person's social role is a composite of work role, economic role, family role, and community role. As a person ages, all these roles will diminish, change significantly, or come to an end. Retirement can be a time of newness and freedom, or a time in which a person lacks financial self-sufficiency or the satisfaction of being productive. Unwanted idleness may leave a retiree feeling sidetracked, missing a sense of purpose, lacking the respect in work relationships they once enjoyed, or unwanted by society. Increased time at home can cause conflict with loved ones who also must adjust to new routines. These feelings can be very difficult to handle, especially when the person is still able to make significant contributions to a cause. Considering how to reframe a new time, a transition, and new opportunities is critical. Talking with others who have been through those transitions can help a great deal.

The day Don turned 65, they held a combination birthday and retirement party for him at work. Don felt a mixture of sadness and exhilaration. He felt sad as he packed up his personal items from his desk and realized that this would soon be someone else's desk.

There is a grief associated with a significant life change, and a certain amount of time is required to adjust to that loss. Having someone to confidentially discuss feelings about this sense of loss; someone to pray with; and someone to listen to new ideas for filling that now available time really helps. A Stephen Minister fulfills that role. To have a Stephen Minister walk with you, no matter the struggle you are facing, contact Rev. Rogers, [mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org) or Kathy Wirstrom, [kwirstrom@yahoo.com](mailto:kwirstrom@yahoo.com).





## Mature Ministries

### “Downsizing” – Exploring the World from Home

Thursday, December 10 at Noon via Zoom, <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5502657984>

Henry Matthews is an art curator, museum director and world traveler who has collected miniatures from across the globe. He also serves on the board on an emerging Michigan institution, the Midwest Miniatures Museum that aspires to open in a grand old mansion in Grand Haven next year. He’ll discuss the art of the miniature in the context of a virtual tour of his eleven foot tall “dollhouse” complex that dominates the living room of his Grand Rapids residence. Zoom with us!

## Donate Chancel Flowers for Loved Ones

Donate Chancel flowers in memory or in honor of a loved one. There are available dates in upcoming weeks. Tom Thompson, our long-time provider of Chancel flower arrangements, is no longer in business. The cost is now \$75. If you would like to donate Chancel flowers in memory or in honor of a loved one, please contact the Church Office (662-4466).

## PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

### Mission- It’s what PW does!

- Ingathering 2020, COVID style, was a virtual success bringing in a total \$1480 in monetary contributions, goods and gift cards. The following agencies will each receive a check for \$410 – Second Mile Center Detroit; Samaritas Westland Family Center; (check plus new twin sheets, laptop desks, baby blankets and gift cards); and Active Faith Community Services in South Lyon for their food program. Thank you to all who contributed!
- PW also collected and delivered six large loads of gently used bedding and clothing for House By The Side of the Road.
- In October, we took \$350 worth of food to the Detroit Presbyterian Hunger Program. Hunger Action Coordinator, UNah Matu-Ngare met us in person and expressed her gratitude for our generous food and dollar contributions.



## PW Gathering

Second Thursday of the Month, December 10



**10:30 - 11:30 a.m. Bible Study - *Into the Light: Finding Hope through Prayers of Lament***

Meg Brown leads Lesson 4 - “Lamenting Death.” Look for the Zoom link closer to the date.

Contact Meg Brown, [lmegbrown@gmail.com](mailto:lmegbrown@gmail.com) to order a *Horizons* study guide (\$10).

**11:30 - 11:50 a.m. PW Actions**

**11:50 - Noon Break**

**Noon - 1:00 PW joins Mature Ministries’ Lunch & Learn via Zoom**

## Additional Groups of Women:

- **Barclay Bible Study** - will take a holiday break until the new year. Questions? Contact Meg Brown at [lmegbrown@gmail.com](mailto:lmegbrown@gmail.com)
- **Sewing Angels** - Sewing Angels work at home with donated goods on projects suggested to them. The group is open to women and men with all levels of experience and suggestions for projects. Questions? Contact Gail Grady at 734-417-6582 or [gailgrady-cm@yahoo.com](mailto:gailgrady-cm@yahoo.com); or Helena Prince at 734-971-8519 or [thprince@comcast.net](mailto:thprince@comcast.net).
- **Journeys Book/ Bible Study** – This group of women values Christian exploration, personal growth through life’s stages, creates fellowship in Christian companionship to one another and practices Christian values through service projects in the community. Meets via Zoom on second and fourth Thursdays, 11:30-1:00 p.m. NOTE: December meetings are the first and third Thursday. Questions? Contact Diana Gardner at 734-663-6611 or [drgatgard@aol.com](mailto:drgatgard@aol.com).
- **Knit Night** - No meetings are currently scheduled as members are knitting at home. Questions? Contact Prue Heikkinen at 734-709-2547 or [prueannarbor@gmail.com](mailto:prueannarbor@gmail.com).

## Welcome New Members - November 2020!



**Barbara Eichmuller** is an Ann Arbor native. She has lived and worked in the Ann Arbor community all her life. Her undergraduate degree in business is from Eastern Michigan; she also earned a Master of Urban Planning degree from the University of Michigan. She has been a realtor in Washtenaw County since 1991 and currently works at the Charles Reinhart Company. She enjoys working at the Ann Arbor Thrift Shop and is Club Secretary for the Rotary Club of Ann Arbor. Barbara and her husband, Tony, have four adult children and ten grandchildren including a set of triplets and a set of twins. The highlight of the summer season is camping with the grandchildren. Barbara is looking forward to being an active member of First Pres and appreciates the warm welcome she has received from the members she has met.



**Andrew Shepherd** is the proud father of two boys, Drew and Austin, and is married to Amy. He graduated from the University of Michigan and was excited when he and Amy had the opportunity to move to Ann Arbor in 2002. They have enjoyed being able to take advantage of all that the community has to offer, including its cultural diversity, Wolverine sporting events, and certainly First Presbyterian Church. He grew up attending First Pres in Kalamazoo and later in Chicago and Denver. His professional career has consisted of various sales and marketing roles, primarily in the medical device industry. Currently he provides marketing consultation for several spinal implant companies. He is an avid outdoorsman with passions for camping, fly fishing, hiking, and exploring the country with his family in their Airstream.



**Mary Evans** was a member previously and recently moved back to Ann Arbor with her husband Joe, a radiation oncologist, and daughters Louise (6) and Anna (4). Mary works for a marketing agency near Detroit and Joe works for Michigan Medicine. Mary grew up in the Presbyterian church in Peoria, IL and looks forward getting her family involved with the church community. Her grandfather was a PCUSA pastor. Joe did his residency at the University of Michigan and Mary was a member during that time. She's excited to be back!



**Mark Newton** is an Ann Arbor townie who left at 18 and is back again after 40 plus years. He lives in Loch Alpine outside Dexter. He and his wife Patty Rideout have been married for thirty-six years and raised their family in Shaker Heights, a Cleveland suburb. They have two grown kids who flew the coop to North Carolina and Alaska. Mark is mainly retired and is a recovering divorce and mediation attorney. He formerly taught middle school English and History and was a women's softball coach. He is spontaneous and free spirited, extroverted and loves helping and listening to people. Working with young adults was a highlight in his career, and he is contemplating what subsequent occupational venture will summon him next. He is looking to get involved in the church and community volunteer work, loves running, cooking, baking and has a passion for driving and exploring nooks and crannies everywhere. He looks forward to meeting and getting to know First Presbyterian folks.



**Tracy Krapohl Short** is joining as an affiliate member. She has been watching our services online and lives in Burlington, WI. Her brother Graydon Krapohl, who recently died of cancer, was a member of First Pres, and his wife and daughter are still members. She has been married to her husband Doug for forty-one years and they have three grown children and one grandson. She is thankful that both her parents are still living in Burlington. She is a fourth generation graduate of U of M and spent a large part of her working career as an administrator in several large health systems, serves as an adjunct instructor at a local university and is now a Medicaid Quality Consultant for Blue Cross Blue Shield. Her passions include the National Ski Patrol and anything that takes her outdoors, including golfing, swimming and Pickle Ball. She will forever be thankful for the way First Pres supported her brother and his family during his fight with cancer. She looks forward to learning more about missions and participating from afar.



## CHILDREN & FAMILIES

### Interested in Family Advent Events?

Visit the Advent 2020 section beginning on page two for more information.

### Welcome Back, Beca!

The Children and Family ministry team welcomes Beca Torres-Davenport back from family leave following the birth of Evelia. We celebrate the bonding time that her family had together during the last three months and are excited to watch as the family grows. Keep an eye out as we continue to make some fun and exciting plans for our young families.



### Thank You, Families!

We are so very grateful to the families that have joined us for Family Sunday drive-bys and Christian Formation classes on Sundays. It is so special to see the children's smiling faces and hear their joyful chatter and laughter. We miss seeing them each Sunday in the building, and these drive-bys and Zoom classes set our hearts full of joy! THANK YOU!

## YOUTH CONNECTION



### Youth & The Arts

**Children's Choir** - All sixth graders are invited to join the Children's choir under the direction of Kellie McInchak! We meet virtually on Sundays to sing, move, create, play instruments, and act. We meet on Sunday mornings this month on December 6, 13, and 20 at 10:30 a.m. using the same link for Sunday school. Please contact Rev. Mark at [mmares@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:mmares@firstpresbyterian.org) for the Zoom link.

**Chancel Choir** - Are you a high school student interested in singing in the Church choir? Contact Dave VanderMeer at [dvandermeer@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:dvandermeer@firstpresbyterian.org) to find out more information about how to join the Chancel Choir!

### Grief Conversations for Youth

In life we are constantly confronted with loss. Join us for a three-week long peer-to-peer conversation group as we explore the difficulties of encountering loss in our lives. Whether you've lost a dearly loved family member, friend, pet, or all the plans you've had for your senior year, we would love to have you join us for these three sessions as we seek to create space for us to share, learn, and grow together. Meetings will take place via Zoom on Wednesdays, December 2, 9 & 16 at different times for Middle and High School students. Middle school students meet at 4:00 p.m. and High School students at 7:00 p.m. Please contact Rev. Mark to sign up or with questions ([mmares@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:mmares@firstpresbyterian.org)).

### December Movie Night

Mark your calendars and join us for a special virtual movie night on Thursday, December 10 at 7:30 p.m.! Get your popcorn and candy ready as we watch a movie together. Sign up for movie night at <https://forms.gle/dsq1eKJv2pb9XjHh9>.

### Faith Formation on Sundays

All youth are invited to join us during our 'Faith Formation Hour' at 11:00 a.m. on Sundays. Our 6th/7th graders continue to work their way through the Beatitudes, Confirmation classes meet regularly, and our High School students will be thinking about how faith intersects with the everyday. We meet this month on December 6, 13, and for a very special all-youth gathering/Christmas Celebration on December 20 at 11:00 a.m. via Zoom. If you need the link, please contact Rev. Mark at [mmares@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:mmares@firstpresbyterian.org).

### Youth Group

Our hybrid approach to our Youth Group gatherings continues this month with some slight changes. We plan to meet via Zoom at 7:00 p.m. on December 6 and 20, and in-person on December 13 for a special Christmas party with fun shenanigans (time and location TBD). Please contact Rev. Mark at [mmares@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:mmares@firstpresbyterian.org) with any questions you might have. We hope you'll join us!



## Campus Ministry Update

Students have returned home after a tumultuous semester to enjoy time with their families and finish up their fall classes online. A stay-in-place order lifted in early November to allow for a final socially distant College Lunch on the Circle Terrace. They are all grateful for any chance to gather in person while mitigating the spread of the virus.



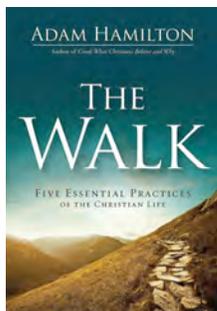
Due to the adjusted schedule, there is no Pancake Supper this year. Instead, cookie bakers from around the church provided baked goods for our students, packed into special bags with First Pres blankets by our Campus Ministry Work Group, and picked up by or delivered to various students connected to our UKirk college ministry.

The coming winter semester will also look different, as the University encourages students to connect to their classes online with a delayed start of January 19. We will continue to reach out and be in touch with students during this socially distant and isolating time. Many will be with their families and working part-time jobs over the extended holiday break.

Finally, the board of Ann Arbor Campus Ministry Foundation is dissolving the organization and transferring all remaining funds to First Pres for the purpose of future ministry to the campus. A thousand thanks to Bill Slade, Ann Andrews and many others who ran the foundation for several years, sent countless students on mission trips and supported peer ministers over the years.

## ADULT EDUCATION

*Access Note: Access information for Adult Ed sessions can be found by clicking on the event in the church calendar at <https://firstpresbyterian.org/>; <https://www.mychurchevents.com/calendar/73891597/month>*



### First Friends

**Sundays at 11:00 a.m. via Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85415813175>**

First Friends is a fellowship group that uses Christian materials. All are welcome! We are using Adam Hamilton's *The Walk* (Book/DVD). Join us!

- December 6**      **Special Presentation: Dr. Mark Lindley speaks about his work on an Indian reservation**
- December 13**    **“Share: Going Fishing, Reflecting”**
- December 20**    **“The Five Practices of the Cross.”**

### Exploring Faith - “Those Who Dream”

**Sundays at 12:15 p.m. via Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89707880133>**

Our Advent series invites us to draw from rich traditions and examples in the arts to inspire and fuel our dreams. As we wonder and ponder what is possible for our future, we can turn to the arts for inspiration and insight. During our Advent season, we will draw inspiration from different forms of art – music, visual arts, and the written word – to fuel our individual and collective dreams. The series will showcase the art and gifts of several church members as seeds for our dreaming of possibilities.

**December 6 & 13 Dreaming Through Music, Part 1 & 2**

Rev. Andrew Frazier and David VanderMeer will lead this two-part thoughtful and heartwarming presentation.

**December 20**      **Class Will Not Meet**

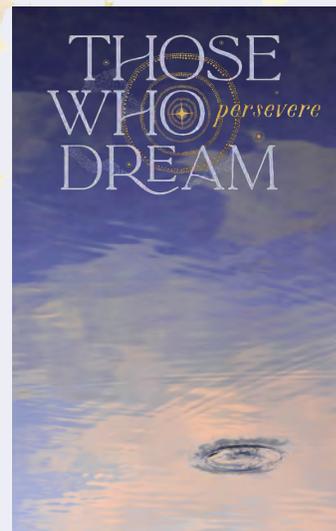
**December 27**      **TBA... See December’s Weekly Bulletins**

**January 3**          **Dreaming Through the Visual Arts**

Artists Lois Bryant, Angie Miller, and Carole Pawloski will share some of their artwork and describe the hopes and dreams that inspired their creation.

**January 10**        **Dreaming Through the Written Word**

Writers Judy Wenzel, Scott Ellsworth, and Callie Feyen will share some of their writing and illuminate how their work has been informed by dreams, as well as how it inspires dreams and senses of possibility.





## Bible Study with Rev. Ed Koster

Sundays at 5:00 p.m. via Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86545144620>

The Rev Ed Koster is teaching a course on the Gospel of Mark, touching on the unique features of this earliest of the gospels. His class explores the major themes and the underlying connections to the other New Testament gospels. Each week the class will take up a section or chapter of the Gospel with a presentation, discussion, and time for questions and answers. For more information and to receive the study materials for each week, contact Rev. Ed Koster at [ehkoster@aol.com](mailto:ehkoster@aol.com).



## Faith in Action

### COVID-19 Community Response Grant Habitat for Humanity of Huron Valley Families

*From Leah Borst at Habitat for Humanity of Huron Valley:*

“I am reaching out to acknowledge the \$2,500 from First Presbyterian’s 2020 COVID-19 Community Response grant and share the impact it has made on our organization. The grant... helped us establish and provide mortgage payments for Habitat homeowners who were financially affected by COVID-19...The funds help cover homeowners’ mortgage payments for up to two months. To date more than 23 families have been assisted and met with our financial counselor for a budget review to keep them on track.”

*From one Habitat homeowner:*

“Thank you so very kindly. You are a life saver in these trying times. Your gift is much appreciated and not taken for granted. God bless.”



### Our Mission Partners in Niger An Update from Michael & Rachel Ludwig

Our partner church in Niger continues their work of impacting their country with hope and help, so even though we’re still in the United States. We are especially grateful for the support and donations you are able to give to keep our work going as bridges and collaborators with our Nigerien colleagues in the EERN.

Resuming CHE visits – The best news we have from Niger is that Michael’s co-worker, Pastor Issa has been busy this month starting to visit the CHE evangelists again. He did a mini-training last week on “garden bags” for efficient home gardens and the nutrition benefits of the Moringa tree. We also have big news that Pastor Issa was moved to the capital to be part-time in charge of another church initiative related to Jim McGill’s help with water and sanitation.

The positive news is that Niger has not had COVID cases since July, and has not experienced a rise in illness or deaths. The negative news is that tensions in the country are high with the lead up to the presidential elections that start in December. Some prominent political parties have threatened violence if they don’t get their way.

The EERN also just held their second yearly General Assembly that renewed their vision for reaching out across the country. Another significant development amid the recent re-appointment of several pastors, there were also some women newly appointed as Bible schools instructors.

**Please pray with us:**



- Praise for our son’s good surgeries, pray for healing and growth in the right way.
- Praise for his certificate of citizenship and pray that the details would work out in good timing for our other son to be finished in the next few months.
- For wisdom and guidance that all parties involved can discern when it is right for us to go back to Niger with a late January time preferred by us.
- For the missionary who was kidnapped to be released smoothly and quickly.
- For the hosting centers to be effective assistance and witnesses to students as they are starting school, especially the new one being built now for 50 students who are waiting.
- For Pastor Issa to continue his visits and training well and adapt to his new role in Niamey.

**We Grieve the Death of:**

Anne Marshall    November 11, 2020

**We Celebrate the Birth of:**

**Cora Marie Gaus**, born October 20, 2020, daughter of Robin & Drew Gaus, granddaughter of Debbie Snyder

**Phoenix Addison Niemi**, born October 2, 2020, son of Lauren Swartz & Phil Niemi, grandson of Dave & Debbie Swartz

**Henry Keith Dickinson**, born October 8, 2020, son of Emily & Ben Dickinson, grandson of Jim Dickinson & Sharon Sheldon

**A note from Rev. Melissa Anne Rogers**

Martha Krehbiel has been a pillar of our church community since she joined in 1967. Her husband David was my predecessor as the Minister of Pastoral Care, and also a dear friend. Through that relationship, and then as a pastor on staff at First Pres, I was privileged with many hours spent with the both of them, and given a front-row seat to see her close connections and caring for all of you in our congregation and community. Martha has been a bright light and tireless advocate for peace and justice, a hard worker, a beloved Presbyterian woman who has welcomed many to our congregation. Our Ann Arbor community has always been stronger with her presence and powerful voice, including her years on the Ann Arbor School Board. As a mom, she has raised incredible children who are active in their own churches. She endured the loss of her son, Presbyterian pastor Jeff Krehbiel, to pancreatic cancer, just months after David's death. Her quiet strength and resolve to continue to serve with gladness and focus after these losses was no surprise to any of us. Please read the letter below from her children, and send notes and letters to Martha, who will cherish them. May the Lord bless her and keep her, the Holy Spirit continue to create life-giving community around her, and may God grant her peace and joy and lots of time with this precious great-grandchild in the days to come. Let us hold Martha, and her whole family, in our hearts.

Dear First Pres Family,

Our mom Martha has moved to a new place in Mars, PA later this month, just three blocks from Carol's house. It was not easy for Mom to say goodbye to Ann Arbor after 54 years, but we are looking forward to having her much closer to family. And we are very pleased that Rose Crest, a Lutheran Senior Living home focused on memory care, has such a supportive environment that is sure to keep Mom active. In addition to Carol and her spouse, JoAnn, Mom will be only a few minutes away from her granddaughter Sarah (husband Matt) and her two great grandchildren – Elliott who is three years old and Anna born on September 26! All of the other children will be within a day's drive. Recently, Mom fell and twisted her ankle, making it all the more important to get her settled into her new home where she has easier access to around the clock care until she is "back on her feet."

She moved on October 14 and because of Covid-19, we could not have the gatherings we would have liked for her to say goodbye to all of you. If you'd like to send Mom a card to wish her well in her new home, please consider writing a note and including a photo of yourself (maybe even one with Mom?). You can mail it to:

**Martha Krehbiel  
C/O Carol Chonoska  
P.O. Box 994  
Mars, PA 16046**

Thank you for your prayers and well wishes. Here are a few photos from our wonderful time with Mom in northern Michigan earlier this summer and of our newest family member.

With love,

*Martha and David Krehbiel's children – Carol, Janet, Cheryl, Sue and Doug*



*Martha after a swim at Crystal Lake*



*Anna Steward Krummert*



# Session Digest



## At the October 21, Stated Meeting of Session, conducted via Zoom . . .

Rick Spalding welcomed Elders along with guests: Brent Ivey (Strategic Planning Group) and Nancy Janz Clark (Deacons). The meeting opened with prayer led by Revs. Rick Spalding, Melissa Ann Rogers, and Jay Sanderford addressing special needs of the congregation and its extended family. Session then proceeded to –

- welcome four new members to the First Pres family: Barb Eichmuller, Tracy Krapohl, Marc Newton, and Andrew Shepherd.
- elect Elders Diane Hockett, Bruce Thomson, Bob Wallin, and Marti Wendler to represent First Pres at the November 21, Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Detroit hosted at Cherry Hill Church in Dearborn.
- support the proposal from the Reopening Recommendations Work Group (RRWG) regarding in-person worship in the sanctuary, targeting December 3, 2020, as the first Sunday. Attendance at the service would be limited to 25 people, contingent on specific metrics –
  1. Viral conditions in the community
  2. Progress with live-streaming
  3. Staff comfort and concurrence with the plan

The RRWG also provided a detailed protocol for indoor sanctuary worship to ensure participant safety. Elder Jim Peggs advised that the RRWG would update Session in November of any changes to the plan.

- receive and approve the Strategic Plan presented by Elder Sue Gott, Chair, and Brent Ivey of the Strategic Planning Group. Using feedback from the draft presented at the September Session Meeting, the SPG made revisions to the Plan, primarily in format and to the wording of the Introduction. Several Elders commended the SPG for the changes. Elder Gott also stressed that this was a “living” document to reviewed and updated as appropriate. She also emphasized that the Strategic Plan is not a stand-alone document, but rather depends on much work done previously to set a course for the church’s future. Session will put in place a Monitoring Group to insure that the Plan continues to guide the work of Committees and other workgroups.
- endorse the request from the Technology Work Group to purchase and install a livestreaming audio-visual system in the sanctuary and to update lighting for the area in front on the chancel steps, at a cost of approximately \$60,000. The initial \$32,000 will be provided from the Covid-19 Response Fund, with the balance funded through collaboration between Finance, Property and Worship Committees. The Personnel Committee will address budget for a part-time position to operate the equipment.
- approve the request from the Mission Committee to host the rotating shelter for homeless men for the month of February, 2021. Approximately 12-14 people can be accommodated. The Ann Arbor Shelter Association has asked for a month-long commitment for hosting organizations to minimize logistical needs. The Shelter Association will provide transportation services and overnight supervision, and has developed a set of standard practices that all host sites must follow. First Pres is working with the Shelter Association and the Health Dept. to determine if our social hall meets the fresh air replenishment standards. Organizations that do not meet these standards will provide volunteers to help the host sites. Mission will bring an update on this project to Session in November.
- vote to call Rev. Evans McGowan as Assistant Pastor for Faith Formation and Campus Ministries, effective December 1, 2020. This move opens the possibility that Rev. McGowan could be called by the congregation as an Associate Pastor within three years. The Presbytery Committee on Ministry has endorsed this change. When elders wondered about the financial viability of this call during a time of budget deficits, Elder Carter Hodgson advised that the compensation package for Rev. McGowan will involve only a modest increase from his current compensation, and is consistent with Assistant Pastors’ salaries in like-sized churches in our denomination. Rev. McGowan thanked the Session, and is looking forward to his expanded role in the life of First Pres.
- approve two (2) Special Called Meetings of Session for November –
  1. Sunday, November 8 (Time: TBD) to receive and approve the Self-Study Report. Session approval is required before it is sent to the Presbytery Committee on Ministry. If approved by the COM, the Congregational Nominating Committee can then proceed to discern a slate of nominees for the Pastor Nominating Committee to be brought to a congregational meeting for election - perhaps sometime before Christmas.
  2. November 17 @ 7:00 p.m. for the examination of new Elders and Deacons.

## Other Reports / Discussions

- Nancy Janz Clark, Deacon Representative, reported that 110 communion kits were delivered to members for World Communion Sunday, and acknowledged Rev. Andrew Frazier's leadership. Deacons are continuing their work to help members feel connected to the Church through flower delivery, care cards, and supporting various church activities as needed. Mums will be delivered on All Saints Sunday, November 1, to those who have lost someone during the past year. New Deacons have been assigned a "Deacon Buddy" to help them engage more quickly in their work. She also advised that plans are being finalized to honor Sandy Talbott, who is retiring as Parish Nurse, for her outstanding contributions to First Pres.
- Elder Bill Upton, Finance Committee Chair, advised that expenditures are still running below budget and income is better than budget, primarily the result of reduced use of facilities due to COVID-19. Additionally, anticipated withdrawal from the Endowment has not yet been necessary. He reported the 2021 budget process is underway and thanked the Committees for their progress so far. He asked that budgets be drafted from a non-Covid perspective as well as one assuming Covid were to last another year. All budget planning should be done in consideration of the Strategic Plan. Budget templates are due November 6, 2020. Elder Bruce Clyde, Stewardship, thanked his committee for their work - with special recognition to Mary Jones, Publications. He reported that historically 80% of pledges are returned by late November; follow-up calls to members who have not yet pledged will begin in early December. Bruce will provide an update on progress toward the \$1.6M goal at the next Session meeting.
- Elder Carter Hodgson, Personnel Committee, announced that Mary Jones will be retiring after 18 years as Publications Coordinator, effective December 31, and acknowledged the contributions she has made to the church, singling out her unflinching good humor, and extended the Church's best wishes as she joins her husband Jeff in retirement. An event to recognize Mary is being planned.
- Rev. Jay Sanderford advised that the Ordination Service for Alexis Allum, a Candidate under our care, will be Sunday, October 25, at 2:00 p.m. in our sanctuary. Due to Covid, in-person attendance is restricted, but it is being live-streamed and he encouraged all to participate.
- Rev. Spalding asked Session to consider how the results of the congregational survey might be shared with the congregation. The consensus was it would be best presented by members of the church; it was suggested that members of the Self-Study and Strategic Planning Groups might collaborate on such a presentation.
- Rev. Spalding brought Session's attention to an unsigned letter (see below) sent by members of the congregation questioning the actions taken by Session in July and August regarding social justice, systemic racism and Black Lives Matter. Most distressing to Elders and Clergy was not the expression of disagreement, but rather that the authors felt it necessary to speak anonymously out of a concern that their view would not be welcomed or received with openness and a willingness to discuss. Several Elders said this suggested that, before we can be truly welcoming to new people, we must ensure that our own members feel safe in the embrace of the church.
- Rev. Rogers advised that the Staff has also received letters and emails encouraging a stronger focus and more energy from the pulpit addressing social justice concerns. The Staff is willing and eager to have those discussions, and all are welcome to bring their concerns forward.



The Session is the governing board of the church. It consists of 24 Elders elected by the congregation to three-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. Rick Spalding, as Interim Pastor, currently serves as Moderator; the two installed Associate Pastors are also voting members. Elder Linda Rex is Clerk of Session. Their next meeting is November 18 at 7:00 p.m.

September 2020

Dear First Presbyterian Church Staff and Session,

We read the recent FPC communication regarding social justice and Black Lives Matter with interest and agree that these are important issues with significant impact upon our country's future.

George Floyd's death in Minneapolis was deplorable, and outrage from the community was justified. We believe, however, that the majority of police strive to do a good job for the community they serve. The police have difficult and often dangerous jobs, and their safety and lives are important, too. Rather than defunding police, it seems there should be additional funding for additional training so that tragedies like George Floyd's death don't occur. The injustice to too many black people should not lead to defunding which would reduce ability to protect the community, both black and white.

We believe that all lives matter and support the right to peaceful protest and demonstration. It is dismaying, however, when peaceful rallies are hijacked by violent individuals who riot and loot and by members of the extreme left who use this as an opportunity to extend their agenda. The destruction of stores, police stations, vehicles, businesses, many owned by black entrepreneurs, etc., is not justifiable and harms the sympathetic aspect of peaceful demonstrations.

And while we support change for the sake of racial justice, we're not sure how one dismantles history. We can't erase history, but as a society we can learn from our past and ensure that the negative aspects are not continued or repeated.

This letter is being sent anonymously because our society is so polarized that we feel cowed by people who espouse a different view. We, as a people, used to enjoy freedom of discourse, but the present contentiousness discourages dialog.

Rather than First Presbyterian's promotion of self-flagellating our unworthy and lousy selves, we think it's important to encourage respect. Isn't that what Black Lives Matter is all about: respect for black lives, including every single life, and even blue lives, and respect for each other's perspective without fear of shunning and disapprobation?

May God bless us all,

Devoted First Pres Members