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Dear Friends,

Where once we all lived in a vigorous relationship with the earth, growing much of what satisfies our hunger, we now find our daily bread by pushing a shopping cart through the aisles of a grocery store and inserting a plastic card in a chip reader. It's not quite the same, and the lack of connection hurts us – and our spiritual lives as well. Jesus taught, "I am the vine, and you are the branches . . . apart from me you can do nothing." Of course, there can be no growth apart from the vine. How can we continue to enjoy the fruits if we're no longer rooted in life-giving relationship with the God of creation?

Once, we came to the church seeking communion. We'd trudge into the Sanctuary bearing all kinds of wounds and emptinesses, weaknesses of body, numbness of spirit, self-doubt, God-doubt, brokenness, fear. Always the church doors stood open, sounds of the choir spilling into the grove of giant oak trees. We'd stumble inside, drawn by a holy magnetism to a place where people sing of grace, forgiveness and love. But for a long 12 months, the doors at First Pres were closed, and yet somehow, we found our way to a virtual connection that has tapped into a vital well of spiritual fuel.

Presbyterians tend to be resourceful, rational, problem-solving people. We get our work done – but our vital

connections are sometimes fragile. We might get wrapped up in doing good things, being in the right places, studying important issues, taking the right stands, being active in the right church community. It is still important to ask about how the wealth of our connections is faring in this strange pandemic season.

"Apart from me you can do nothing," declares John. At the core of Christianity is the idea that we can best be completed through the presence of Christ. To be a person of faith is to trust that God overcomes our weaknesses, forgives our failures,

heals our brokenness. At one level it is very simple; yet it is also a bit complicated, and can best be experienced and nourished in the setting of a community of faithful women, men and children. Always, I found a sense of expansiveness in our community that coaxed me to loosen my grip on my personal burdens and join in something larger, softer, shared.

Our theme for this summer – "**Staying Connected**" – invites us all to be linked together in a broad community of people, joined by the energy of a holy curiosity and an indefatigable courage. As the coronavirus lessens its grip, and we emerge into a new hybrid existence,



Continued on page 3



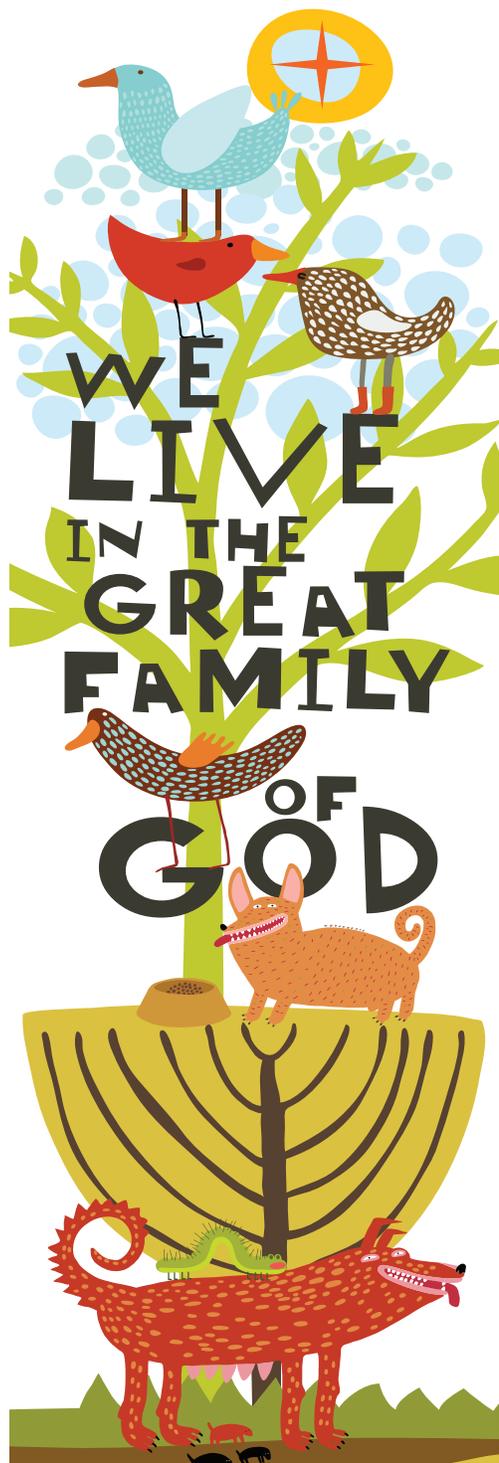
Our annual Church Picnic is coming! See page 2 for details

Summer Festival of Worship - Special Events

STAY CONNECTED!

Life is busy in the Great Family of God!

We know that most members of our First Pres family have lots of obligations in the summer. Perhaps you have little time to think about your faith, and how it can grow. We hope you can find an hour or so weekly to join us for an alternative worship offering. Come, strengthen your faith in the company of old friends – and friends you've yet to meet!



TUESDAYS @ First Pres

(June 1, July 6, August 3) at 7 p.m.

Taize worship is livestreamed from the Sanctuary on YouTube and Facebook.

WEDNESDAYS @ First Pres

(June 16, July 21, and August 18) at 6 p.m.

Worship around the fire on the First Pres lawn

THURSDAYS @ First Pres

(June 24, July 29, and August 26) at 6 p.m.

Guided outdoor meditation at the Hilligs' labyrinth

SATURDAYS @ First Pres

(See graphic on page 6 for details)

(June 12, July 17, and August 14) at 5 p.m.

Jazz Vespers service on the First Pres lawn

SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP

The 9:30 a.m. service will be live-streamed on YouTube and FaceBook. Radio broadcast will be on WAAM at 11 a.m.

IN-PERSON INDOOR WORSHIP

Check our website (www.firstpresbyterian.org) or contact the church office (734-662-4466) for information about limited seating, in-person Taize and Sunday indoor worship services, and for Covid-related schedule updates.

CHURCH PICNIC RETURNS!

At long last, First Pres in-person fellowship returns! Join us on June 12, Saturday evening, at 6 p.m. Bring your families, lawn chairs and blankets, and enjoy a boxed dinner from **The Produce Station**, and the musical stylings of the Paul Keller Jazz Quintet, and games for the kids! (*Families may also bring their own picnic for their family unit.*) Drinks will be provided. Flags will help us appropriately distance ourselves on the lawn yet still be able to share with one another. The Vespers service precedes the picnic at 5 p.m. and is open to all. Please sign up for the picnic and choose your selections from 8 delicious entrees here: <https://firstpresbyterian.wufoo.com/forms/allchurch-picnic-reservation-2021>

You can pay by credit card, or send in a check, by June 8, if you have a space. Payment must be received for the boxed dinners to be ordered.

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it is vital that we re-connect, stay connected or connect afresh. It takes curiosity and courage to remain connected to each other. Curiosity to see how we can creatively connect to one another, and courage to do it safely amidst a changing viral situation.

This summer 2021, we will explore ways we stay connected to the things that matter most. For some, it will be getting out for some fresh air and a brisk walk. For many, it will mean staying in touch virtually via live-stream, Zoom, or even phone conversations. For others, it will mean traveling and reconnecting with family and friends whom we haven't seen in the flesh in a long time. All the while, First Pres will be an active community, vibrant and alive, connecting all to the power and grace of the God of all creation.

Here at First Pres, we have an innovative summer slate to offer with worship both inside our Sanctuary and outside on our campus. Sunday morning worship @ 9:30 a.m. will be live-streamed and spaces will be open for in-person attendance. Each week a different style of worship and gathering will be offered. A variety of Taizé worship will be live-streamed from our sanctuary on three Tuesday evenings. We are invited to gather around a fire pit for singing and story-telling on Wednesday evenings. There will be guided meditation experiences on Thursday evenings, and we will be immersed in wonderful jazz Vespers on three Saturday evenings. See the Summer Festival of Worship for details.

Grace and peace!
Rev. Jay Sanderford
Associate Pastor



Core Leadership Team

The CLT Is Here for You!

The Core Leadership Team (CLT), appointed by the Personnel Committee (PC) of Session, includes Associate Pastors Rev. Jay Sanderford and Rev. Mel Rogers, Assistant Pastor Rev. Evans McGowan, Minister of Music and Fine Arts Dave VanderMeer, and Interim Bridge Administrator J.P. DiMaggio. This team meets each Monday morning to plan, manage and direct our church's worship life, and support our many ministries and programs. This group is in regular conversation with the PC.

During this bridge interim time, until a new Lead Pastor is called and begins ministry among us, you will hear a variety of preachers in the pulpit -- a regular rotation of the pastors on our staff along with outstanding guest preachers, including visiting former Resident Ministers.

The CLT will communicate with you regularly about how things are going, what you can do to help, and what changes are emerging in our church, including how our new Strategic Plan is being implemented. Our Session and PC will keep us faithful to our call to keep First Pres vital and to be transparent along the way. The Holy Spirit will be our true guide as we pray and work together to keep First Pres thriving as we worship.

We look forward to hearing from you! We also look forward to taking some vacation time this summer. Don't hesitate to reach out to any member of the CLT.



CLT Announces June and July Preaching Schedules

Worship with us Sunday mornings @ 9:30 at First Pres (sign-up for in-person) and on YouTube, live-streamed. Be sure to sign the virtual Friendship Pad and stay for virtual Coffee Hour!



Rev. Dr. Deborah Forger



Rev. Dr. Flo Barbee-Watkins

- | | |
|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| June 6 | Rev. Dr. Deborah Forger, former Resident Minister and Lecturer at Dartmouth College, New Hampshire |
| June 13 | Rev. Evans McGowan |
| June 20 | Rev. Mark Mares |
| June 27 | Rev. Andrew Frazier |
| July 4 | Rev. Jay Sanderford |
| July 11 | Rev. Dr. Flo Barbee-Watkins, Presbytery of Detroit Transitional Executive Presbyter |
| July 18 | Rev. Melissa Anne Rogers |
| July 25 | Rev. Evans McGowan |

A Note from Former Interim Pastor Rick Spalding

Dear First Pres,
Did I ever tell you about the man I took voice lessons from in college? His name was Ben Deloache; he was in his late seventies, I think, and at least six-feet-five, I'm sure, and carried every inch like a vertical sacred trust. Often, when he'd interrupt my singing to make a point – waving away the sound I was making to clear the air – instead of giving me technical pointers he'd give me some little nugget of food for thought, and then beckon me back into the music. One of his aphorisms I'll never forget: "My dear boy, *gratitude* is the highest emotion of which human beings are capable. It is what distinguishes us from lower forms. Now, sing!"

If I ever doubted that Ben Deloache was right, these months of ministry with you at First Pres have refreshed my certainty that gratitude is our best thing: the thing about us that makes so much else – compassion, courage, trust, healing, creativity – possible. I think that, without a doubt, it's what got us through these long months of extremity and crisis. Watching you stubbornly continue to *be* the church was a kind of parable of gratitude – for the beloved community you treasure

and embody, for the call of your faith to serve in the world, and for the presence of God and the company of Jesus filling the vessel of your lives – that gave me so much to admire and to emulate. Sharing your journey of faith through these months made possible for me relationships, opportunities, insights that I could never have had without your company, and helped me to rise toward my better self.

The gifts you gave me on my last Sunday – gorgeous works of art (Angie! Malcolm!), the Deacons' album of blessings, and the financial wherewithall to return, soon, to Ireland – took my breath away momentarily. But the breath is back, and has filled my lungs and every other part of me enough to last for years. Thanks from the heart of my heart. Count on my continuing prayers.

Onward!

Faithfully,
Rick



Worship, Music & Arts

This is the third installment of Worship Wisdom, a series of articles highlighting the elements of the Order of Worship in our regular Sunday morning Service for the Lord's Day.

In April we talked about the four main sections of worship, and then focused on the beginning, the Gathering section, including the Opening Voluntary, the Call to Worship, and the Opening Hymn. Those initial elements are intended to help us to focus our attention on God, and offer our words of praise and adoration.

Then in May we talked about the next parts of the service all relating to Confession.

This month we will begin with the next section of our Service of Worship for the Lord's Day: the Proclamation of the Word. This most often takes the form of a number of scripture readings, followed by a sermon offered by one of the pastors. The Word can be proclaimed in this pattern through the spoken word, but the proclamation can also be offered through music, drama, dance, and liturgical art. As Reformed Christians the Proclamation of the Word is central to our act of worship, and the reading of Scripture is central to the act of proclamation. Even the transition between the Gathering and the Proclamation of the Word is important. The reader, often called the lector, moves to the Bible, and we prepare ourselves to hear the Word read and proclaimed. This part of the service opens with the Prayer for Illumination, a short, focusing prayer offered on behalf of the congregation and in the name of Jesus Christ. With these words we seek the "illumination" of the Holy Spirit, and call upon God to help us be open and receptive to the life-giving words of Holy Scripture. This Trinitarian prayer is an important part of reformed worship because of the emphasis we place on the reading and preaching of the Word. At First Pres this reading is often done by a young person, giving our children and youth an opportunity to be involved in a vital part of our service. Careful preparation of this reading is necessary so that the reading conveys the importance of the text and provides a meaningful aural experience for the congregation. From earliest times worshipers heard rather than read Scriptures, so it is not necessary to follow along in a printed text or pew Bible.



The Bible is intentionally placed on the lectern in view of the congregation, where even its size and location makes a statement. It is the community's book, intended to be read aloud to the assembly. Sometimes the Bible is processed into the Sanctuary as part of the opening and gathering for worship.

Readings can be from the Old Testament, from the Psalms, from one of the four Gospels, or from the rest of the New Testament, sometimes referred to as the Epistles. Worship in the ancient Jewish synagogues included reading of what we now call the Old Testament texts interspersed with silence or the singing of a Psalm, and the early Christians continued this practice in their worship.

Texts can be selected based on the Revised Common Lectionary, which provides for an Old Testament, Psalm, Gospel, and Epistle reading for each Sunday of the church year. Readings can also be selected using a *lectio continuo* approach, where texts are chosen to move sequentially through a particular book of the Bible, or by using a more thematic approach. Historically, the Old Testament reading was followed by the singing of a Psalm. We will discuss the Psalms in the next installment of Worship Wisdom.



Taizé Prayer Service

TUESDAY, JUNE 1, 2021 – 7 p.m.

in the Sanctuary

RSVP to sign-up for in-person worship!

A service of songs, scripture, prayer, silence, and candles. This service can also be viewed on YouTube and Facebook.

New Virtual Art Exhibit

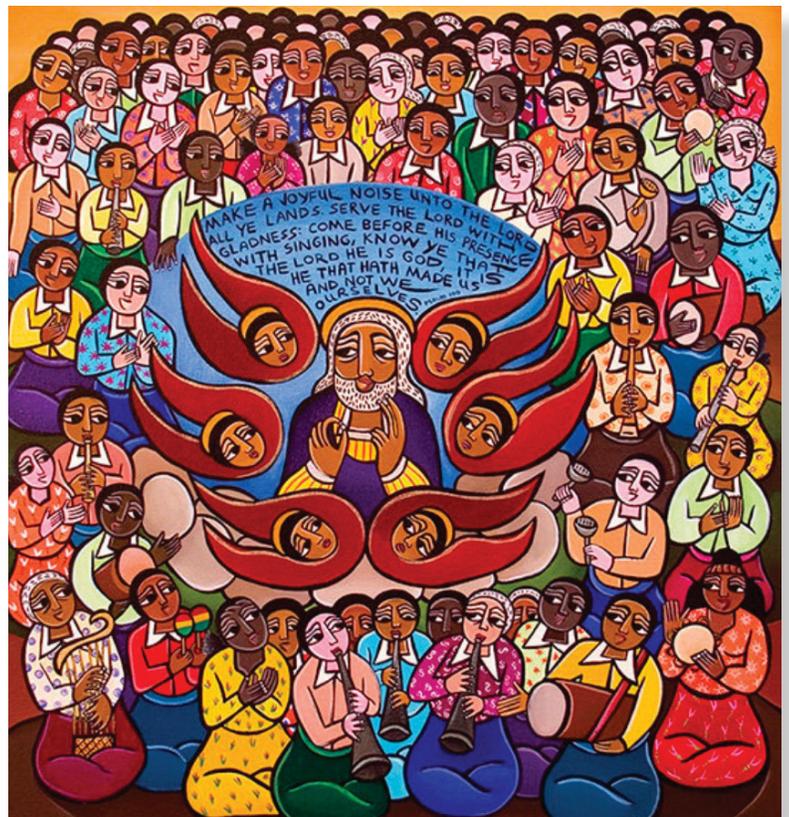
Black Is Blessed, by artist Laura James from New York City. Enter the exhibit here:

www.laurajamesart.weebly.com

Laura James is a self-taught painter living and working in New York City. She is a visual storyteller who explores biblical subjects, cultural issues and secular themes through her unique contemporary use of the traditional art of Ethiopian iconography. Her goal is to have her art in churches and public places where black people can actively see themselves included within the stories of the Bible.

Laura creatively re-contextualizes the Christian message to include all of God's people. This is masterfully done in her 34 paintings for the Book of the Gospel lectionary published in 2000 by LTP. Her biblical paintings visually remind us that, "red or yellow, black and white, they are ALL precious in God's sight . . . Jesus loves all the children of the world." Learn more at her website:

<https://www.laurajamesart.com/>



ALL ARE WELCOME TO

JAZZ VESPERS

SATURDAYS, 5:00 - 5:45PM
JUNE 12 | JULY 17 | AUGUST 14

Bring a lawn chair and join us for a
short evening Vesper Service featuring
The Paul Keller Jazz Quintet



**FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN**

1432 Washtenaw Avenue | Ann Arbor, MI



Congregational Life

You Already Belong! (Moving into Membership)

Over the last year of a pandemic, First Pres received 39 new members (not counting confirmands!). This is simply extraordinary. Not only is it difficult to join in this strange, disorienting period in which so much of our gatherings are virtual – we are also moving through an extended interim period!

Our beautiful new members have been drawn to First Pres’ strength in the midst of these challenges, and have felt the joy of stimulating worship and the compelling culture of compassion that is First Pres. We will continue to receive new members over the summer, support them and make sure that they get involved and integrated into our congregation.

Email Rev. Rogers for questions about membership, or if you are willing to serve as a “new member shepherd” to walk with new members through their first 2 years. Help us keep our church growing, and our compassion flowing!

Welcome to “Pandemic Presbyterians!”

The following have joined First Pres between May 2020 and May 2021. Please reach out to these new members with your warm welcome. Get to know them and help them get to know us! Reach out to Rev. Rogers for more information or contact information.

Jim Anderson
Linda Atkins
Andrea Bare
Kurt Boeve
Martha Boeve
Meghan Bugosh
Zach Bugosh
Mary Jane Chase
Jazminn Eddins
Barbara Eichmuller
Larry Engelhardt
Mary Evans
Bobbie Ewels
Anna Gehrke
Heather Gerety
Peregrine Gerety
Beth Gerwig
Macy Holmberg Jermyn
Will Jermyn
Tommy Kaercher



Kurt & Martha Boeve

Cynthia Leet
Maurine Nelson
Mark Newton
Molly Ominsky
Rebecca Pagels
Penny Papadopoulos
Steve Papodopoulos
Hal Pray
Jennifer Rejim
Tim Rigotti
Olive Scott
Stephanie Simpson
Andrew Shepherd
Tracy Short
Sidonie Smith
Brynn Stelter
Nicholas Stelter
Steven Syverud
Rob Zink
Susan Zink

Eastertide — Held by Baptism

On May 23, Brynn and Nicholas Stelter presented their twin boys, Hank Thomas Stelter and Wade Robert Stelter – born May 22, 2020 – for baptism, thus completing the circle of Eastertide baptisms at First Pres begun on April 11. Welcome to our two newest members!

From L to R: Nicholas Stelter, Wade Robert Stelter, Brynn Stelter, Rev. Mark Mares, Rev. Melissa Anne Rogers, Hank Thomas Stelter



Fast-Track to Membership!

JUNE 6 and 13, JULY 11, and AUGUST 15 at Noon

It just takes 20 minutes. While you already belong, why not make it official? We'll explain why that's a good thing! Zoom here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84143125355>.

Tell Me More

JUNE 27 and JULY 15

Join us on any fourth Sunday of the month, at Noon, online, for "Tell Me More About this Church." This is a brief time of gathering with elders and members to learn more about First Pres. Prospective members and guests are welcome to join us for conversation. Come get to know us! The Zoom link is: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81188882448>

Pentecost Card Thanks

The Deacons thank the First Pres Helping Hands Card-Makers for making the beautiful Pentecost cards that were delivered to 50 of our members randomly selected by our Deacons to receive a lovely red geranium.

If you received a plant and a card, give thanks to your Deacons and Card-Makers! On the "birthday of the church," we celebrate the many gifts of our church members who lend a hand in pastoral care, building this First Pres culture of compassion.



Summer Devotionals by Email

This summer, we stay connected with God and each other by telling stories – stories of our faith, stories of our losses and hope, and stories of things related to church! If you would be willing to share a 200 - 300 word devotional based on a scripture and personal story of your own choosing. The stories should be related to your faith, or moments of loss and hope, or stories that are connected to your experience of being a part of a congregation (this or another).

Please contact Rev. Rogers, mr Rogers@firstpresbyterian.org. Pastors are willing to help support you as you author these pieces. Can you be vulnerable and share? Are you ready to be a first-time author and take a risk? If you have written in the past, will you bless us once again? SIGN UP anytime in June for July (stories of loss and hope) and August contributions (stories of church) by emailing Rev. Rogers. We need about 100 authors for the summer. Help us all to connect more closely to one another and grow in faith.

Get the Email Devotional!

If you aren't already getting the summer email devotionals, email Rev. Rogers to be added to the list to receive devotionals written by our members from June through August.

Knit Night

No meetings scheduled. Members are knitting at home -- grief shawls and baby blankets! Contact: Prue Heikkinen, 734-709-2547, prueannarbor@gmail.com, for instructions and knitting labels.

Save the Date to Celebrate 195!

On August 21, First Pres turns 195 years young!

We will be holding several key events in August to celebrate this milestone.

Watch for the August *First Press* for all the ways we will come together in joy and gratitude!



Faith Formation

CHILDREN

A Compassionate Summer — “Changing the World with Lovingkindness”

5 SUNDAYS: JUNE 13 & 27, JULY 11 & 25, and AUGUST 8 at 11 a.m.

As we look around the world, what becomes clearer each day is our deep need for compassion – now more than ever. Together, the children (along with Beca Torres-Davenport, Rev. Mark and some youth) will examine different places in our lives where we can learn about and cultivate compassion.

Children 4 years old through Middle School are invited to join us for each gathering. Each session has **age-appropriate offerings for each age group** where we’ll explore themes of compassion through central scripture passages. The practice of lovingkindness serves as the backbone for this year’s theme. Lovingkindness is the utmost form of selfless love toward ourselves and others. The practice begins with focusing on self-compassion because once we have compassion for ourselves, we can have compassion for others.

5th & 6th Graders!

WEDNESDAYS, JUNE 16, JULY 14, and JULY 28 at 6 p.m.

Immersed into this year’s Compassion Camp will be a Crossover Connection to create a space for 5th graders to get acquainted with the Youth program. There will be 3 “neighborhood” events on these Wednesdays. For the first gathering on June 16, we’ll join together for “Worship around the Fire” at 6 p.m. Then we’ll make a trip to get ice cream afterward. Hope to see you there!

Summer Vacation Bible School — Marketplace 49 AD — Travels with Paul

JUNE 21 - 23, Rain Dates: JUNE 24 or 25

Choose a session: 10 a.m. - Noon or 1 - 3 p.m.

Yes, you’ll want to be there! It might look a little different this year, but with good weather, we will be together outside! For three days we’ll experience what life was like for the disciple Paul. Relive Biblical events, occupations, the synagogue, family life, and experience being part of a typical Bible-time family. Participants will visit the arts and craft shops of the Marketplace, travel to the Storytellers tent, learn about Paul’s travels to share the good news and try your hand at building a tent like Paul. Mark your calendar, sign up your child(ren), and consider volunteering if you have time!

Child Registration (<http://bit.ly/21VBS-Camper>)

Volunteer Registration (<http://bit.ly/21VBS-Volunteer>)

Safety protocols include: smaller groups, daily temperature checks, masks required, sanitizing stations, prepackaged crafts, social-distanced groups outside.





Mama's Group

Parenting is hard – but you're not alone. Find your place of support, encouragement, listening ears and open hearts as we share our struggles and successes! Mamas of infants, toddlers and preschoolers are invited to join us 1 - 2 times a month online or in person as we begin this new journey together. Come when you can, step away if you need to – we're here for you!

For more information, contact Sarah Glinka Endicott: sngendicott@gmail.com, Charlotte Sawtell: anderson.cee@gmail.com, or Beca Torres-Davenport: btorres-davenport@firstpresbyterian.org for details on the next gathering.

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us."

Hebrews 12:1

YOUTH

Updates

Follow us on Instagram: fpa2youth or subscribe to our weekly email for up-to-date information on all of our events! If you'd like to join our GroupMe, please email Rev. Mares at mmares@firstpresbyterian.org.

Minecraft Office Hours

Do you enjoy playing minecraft? Have you always wanted to try? Join Pastor Mark on the First Pres Minecraft Realm this summer for "office hours" as we try to recreate the First Pres grounds in the world of Minecraft. For more information, contact Rev. Mark Mares at mmares@firstpresbyterian.org.

Sunday Night Summer Fun

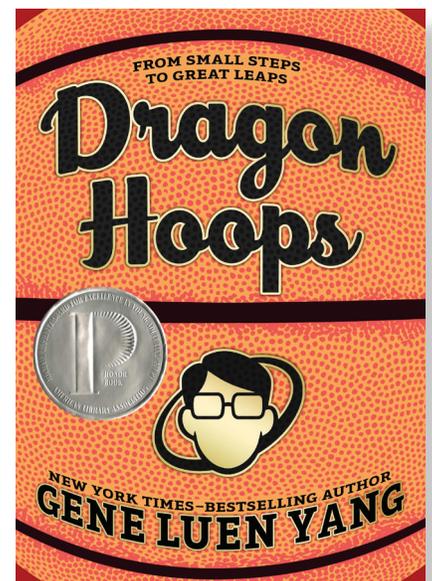
The last Youth Group gathering of the year was on Sunday, May 23rd, but don't miss out on our summer Sunday night gatherings! We plan to meet at a park in Ann Arbor twice a month during the summer months (**JUNE 13 & 27, JULY 11 & 25, and AUGUST 8 & 22**) at 7 p.m. We'll gather for games, fellowship, and hopefully lots of fun. Keep an eye out for the location of our first gathering on **JUNE 13**, and plan to bring a friend, all are welcome!

Summer Book Read

This summer, join other youth of First Pres as we read together the book, *Dragon Hoops*, by Gene Luen Yang.

From the Common Sense Media review: "At the start of DRAGON HOOPS, computer science teacher Gene Yang realizes he knows very little about the people in the physical education department. Because his students are excited about the upcoming basketball season, Yang commits to following the Dragons all the way to the state championships and chronicling their efforts in comics. Along the way, Yang learns about the history of the game, the diverse lives of the players, and the meaning of teamwork."

Read this book over the summer and then gather in-person for a book conversation on the Circle Terrace at First Pres for a date TBD in July. This book is available at the library or you can order it for \$10 from the church. Please contact Rev. Mark Mares at mmares@firstpresbyterian.org to sign up and/or order a book!





2021 Graduates — Congratulations!

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

Izzy German

Pioneer High School
Daughter of Carol and Bob German
Attending the University of Michigan

Katie German

Pioneer High School
Daughter of Carol and Bob German
Attending the University of Michigan

Jason Hauk

Aragon High School, San Mateo, CA
Son of Kathryn Ullrich and Jeff Hauk,
Grandson of Susan Ullrich
Attending the University of California at
San Diego

Shannon Hoy

Huron High School
Daughter of Lane and Jennifer Hoy
Attending Western Michigan University

Mali Kerschbaum

Ann Arbor Academy
Daughter of Dave and Katie Kerschbaum
Attending Washtenaw Community College

Kale Lampman

Pioneer High School
Son of Brian and Justina Lampman,
Grandson of Linda Lampman and Jim Smiley
Attending Eastern Michigan University

Aidan Majorprice

Pioneer High School
Son of Holly Majorprice and Dan Price
Attending Washtenaw Community College

Rachel Maki

Hudsonville (Michigan) High School
Granddaughter of Downs and Sandy Herold
Attending Hope College

Oscar Mares III

West Ottawa High School
Son of Oscar Jr. and Erika Mares
Will work with his dad at ODL while
attending college part-time

Katie Maugh

Skyline High School
Daughter of Larry and Dorie Maugh
Attending the University of Michigan

Heath Monsma

Pioneer High School
Son of Genevieve and Jotham Monsma,
Grandson of Norma and Chuck Monsma.
Attending Dartmouth College

Michael Morrison

Pioneer High School
Son of Julie and Paul Morrison
Taking a gap year beginning this fall

Ethan Phillips

Huron High School
Son of Sarah and Keith Phillips
Attending the University of St. Andrews
(Scotland)

Luke Rogers

Community High School
Son of Jim and Melissa Anne Rogers
Attending Michigan State University

Calvin Shaw

Pioneer High School
Son of Susi and Eric Shaw
Attending Michigan State University

Alena Song

Greenhills School
Daughter of Jean and Ben Song
Attending Emory University

Cassidy Spisak

Pioneer High School
Daughter of John and Linda Spisak,
Granddaughter of Carol Eman

UNDERGRADUATE & ADVANCED DEGREES

Rebecca Barks

MSW, University of Michigan
Daughter of Karen and John Barks

Luke Bilby

BS, Mechanical Engineering/
Multidisciplinary Design
University of Michigan
Son of Sheila and Keith Bilby

Charles Butz

BA, University of Michigan
Son of David and Heidi Butz

James Davenport

PhD, Anthropology
University of New Mexico
Son-in-law of Bruce and Jennifer Thomson

David Galant

MBA, Michigan State University
Son of Linda and Richard Galant

Joshua Herold

BS, Electrical Engineering
University of Evansville (Indiana)
Grandson of Downs and Sandy Herold

Elisabeth Jahnke

BS, Electrical Engineering
University of Michigan
Daughter of Margaret and Harold Jahnke

Anna Kaehr

BSE, Chemical Engineering
University of Michigan
Daughter of Makie and Monte Kaehr

UNDERGRADUATE & ADVANCED DEGREES (continued)

Miah McCallister

BS, Social and Behavioral Sciences
University of Arizona
Daughter of Betsy and Ben McCallister

Lauren Mulcrone

Doctor of Veterinary Medicine
Ross University School of Veterinary
Medicine, St. Kitts, West Indies
Daughter of Jim and Renee Mulcrone

Rachel Mundus

BS, Dental Hygiene
University of Michigan
Daughter of Karen and Jeffrey Mundus

Cameron Palmer

BS, Chemical Engineering
Michigan Technological University
Grandchild of Sandy Herbertson

Alexander Pierson

Associate Degree
San Diego City College
Son of Lisa Danielson and
the late Phil Pierson
Grandson of Millie Danielson, and
Son-in-law of Jane Chronis

Benjamin Potter

BS, Business and Science
Eastern Michigan University
Son of Missy Smith-Potter and Scott
Potter

Madison Potter

BS, Science, Ohio University
Daughter of Missy Smith-Potter and
Scott Potter

Stephanie Simpson

MBA and Masters
User Experience Design
University of Michigan

Benjamin Spisak

BS, Computer Science
Bowling Green State University
Grandson of Carol Eman

Grace Sleder

BA, Community and Global Public
Health University of Michigan

Laura Stahl

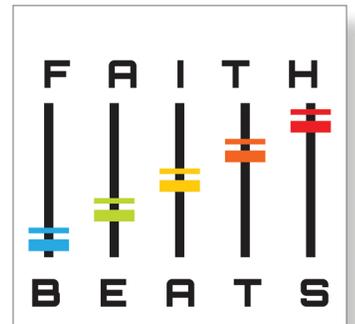
BA, History, International Studies,
and German
University of Michigan
Daughter of Jennifer and Gary
Stahl

First Pres Podcast: Summer Plans

We finished our inaugural season of the First Pres podcast, Faith Beats, last month. But you won't have to wait too long to hear us again. Keep an eye out for a few special episodes this summer, before the second season begins in September. In the meantime, re-visit the conversations from our first season or click through the resources on our website: faithbeats.com.

Art Fair Parking Cancelled

The 2021 Art Fairs have been cancelled. We look forward to 2022, and hosting a parking fundraiser to support future Youth mission & immersion trips! Contact Rev. Mark at mmares@firstpresbyterian.org.



CAMPUS

Update

Our campus ministry program continues to grow and thrive. Watch this space in the August newsletter for updates!

T2A2

Are you in your 20s and 30s and looking for community and connection? Our group meets every month for multiple gatherings – online and in person – and for spiritual study as well as mutual support. Get to know us this summer! We'd love to get to know you! Contact Chris Wahl, Haley Brown, or Rev. Evans McGowan at t2a2@firstpresbyterian.org.



ADULT

Sunday Opportunities

FIRST FRIENDS

SUNDAYS at 11:00 a.m.

First Friends is a fellowship group that uses Christian materials. First Friends will not meet during the summer. Sessions will resume in September.

EXPLORING THE FAITH

SUNDAYS, JUNE 6 and 20 at 12:15 p.m. (no class on JUNE 13)

Exploring the Faith is an Adult Education offering open to all. Attend every week, or just pop in for those that most interest you. Join by Zoom at 12:15 pm.

What's Ahead for First Presbyterian Church?

In June, we'll explore what is next for First Pres with discussions and presentations by members who have been crafting visions, self-study and strategic plans. Bring your questions and thoughts, or just come listen in.

- **June 6: A 2030 Perspective – What Are Young Adults Saying?**

Join Haley Brown, Cassee Stem, Elisabeth VanVliet, and Chris Wahl for a discussion of their narrative vision:

<https://www.firstpresbyterian.org/2030-narrative>

What might the First Pres Strategic Plan might look like in action in 2030? Hear what some 20- and 30-somethings appreciate about First Pres and a vision for how the church might become even more welcoming, inclusive, and mission oriented. See the article "A 2030 Retrospective" in the May *First Press* for more about their narrative vision. The Zoom link for this session is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89707880133>.

- **June 20: What's Next for First Pres?**

Join several members of the Strategic Planning Group and Self-Study Committee for an introduction to, and discussion of, the First Pres Strategic Plan (<http://firstpresbyterian.org/sites/default/files/other/FPC-Strategic-Plan-2020.pdf>) and Self-Study Report (<https://www.firstpresbyterian.org/sites/default/files/other/Self-Study-Report-2020.pdf>)

These documents will help guide First Pres's work for many years to come. A special invitation to elders, deacons, and committee chairs. This is also an opportunity for you to share your ideas.

Summer Notes

Bible Study with Rev. Ed Koster

This study group will have its last meeting before the summer on June 6. Sessions will resume in September. For more information contact Rev. Ed Koster at ehkoster@aol.com.

Join the Spiritual Writing Group

Have you ever wanted to be creative with words? Have you found it difficult to sit down and write a memory to share? During "social distancing," we are sharing our creative work and our discussion of these shared writings, all by email. Want to join? Contact Meg Brown at lmegbrown@gmail.com to receive the email addresses of all our members.

Barclay Bible Study

"The New Daily Study Bible Series" by William Barclay will meet weekly via Zoom on Wednesdays at 10:30 AM. We will be studying the book of Romans. All are welcome to participate. Contact Meg Brown for details, study guide, and Zoom link: lmegbrown@gmail.com

MATURE MINISTRIES

June Lunch & Learn (online)

THURSDAY, JUNE 10, at NOON

Topic: "Peonies: Where Ephemeral Beauty Becomes Timeless"

Our passion for peonies reflects a movement that began in the Midwest in the 1850s. Here in Ann Arbor preparations are underway for the Peony Garden's Centennial in 2022. Find out what has made the historic University of Michigan Nichols Arboretum collection prized at home and distinctive internationally. Revel in the beautiful images.

Our speaker will be Dr. David Michener, Curator of the University of Michigan Matthaei Botanical Gardens/Nichols Arboretum, and author of *Peonies: The Best Varieties for Your Garden*. David's peony book has been recommended by *The New York Times*. The Zoom link is: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5502657984>



Dr. David Michener,
Curator of the University of Michigan
Matthaei Botanical Gardens/Nichols Arboretum

NOVEMBER IMMERSIVE VAN GOGH TRIP — UPDATE

We have filled this 35-member trip to Detroit but have started a waiting list. If you are still interested, contact Rev. Rogers, mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org.



Pastoral Care

DEACONS

Deacon Doin's

Your Deacons will remain hard at work caring for the congregation during these summer months. Our goal in every season is to build and strengthen the culture of compassion within our congregation and offered to those in our community. Flowers are delivered each week, cards sent, calls made, and visits offered! Please share your needs and joys with your Deacon. Contact the Church Office if you aren't sure who your Deacon is.

STEPHEN MINISTRIES

GIVE Yourself the GIFT of a Stephen Minister

Maybe you know someone like Peggy. At 45, and with four children, she recently divorced. After 25 years of a good marriage, things unexpectedly broke apart. The challenges were immediate and great. First, there were the financial implications.

Peggy had been a full-time homemaker and mother and was very active in her children's lives and in their church. Going back to work was an immediate challenge, but she credited God with leading her to a new position as a school secretary.

Then there were the emotional struggles for her and her children. All five of them entered therapy to help them with the divorce, and were blessed to have good counselors that they could afford with their health insurance. Peggy had a great psychologist, but missed having the Christian companionship of another woman to talk about



her feelings and pray. Her church's Stephen Ministry program was known to her and she considered whether a spiritual friend could be assigned to her in addition to her psychologist.

With her psychologist's encouragement, she asked for a Stephen Minister to be a part of her team of people helping her navigate her new reality and support her children appropriately. Peggy was very happy to meet her Stephen Minister. They became close spiritual friends, and the Stephen Minister was with her every week to talk through layers of change and pray together.

This relationship gave her a chance to talk about events, her feelings, and pray with someone about her specific concerns. To have a Stephen Minister talk with you, no matter the struggle you're facing, contact Rev. Rogers (mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org) or Kathy Wirstrom (kwirstrom@yahoo.com). You, or any "Peggy" you know, do not have to be a member of our church to be considered for Stephen Ministry.

Join Stephen Ministers to Talk about Suicide

JUNE 14 at 7 p.m. on Zoom

Our June continuing education session will include watching a 30-minute video together and then discussing it. With compelling vulnerability, podcaster and author Mike McHargue de-stigmatizes suicide and calls the church to be on the front lines of addressing the crisis of suicide in our society. All are welcome.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89733372207>

Stephen Ministry Library Book Review

A Rhythm of Prayer: A Collection of Meditations for Renewal

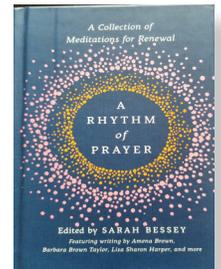
Edited by Sarah Bessey

Prayers as poetry, lament, and connection to your soul and body are contained in this book. Sarah Bessey grew up in prayer circles and knows them well. There are many practices in this slim book to help reframe prayer in your life.

This book is dedicated to Rachel Held Evans, who died in 2019, Rachel said, "I am writing because sometimes we are closer to the truth in our vulnerability than in our safe certainties."

This book is organized into three parts: Orientation, Disorientation and Reorientation. Each section contains prayers, meditations, and psalms. It is a beautiful, heartfelt collection of writings. Amongst the offerings from other writings, the editor, Sarah, has submitted: A Prayer to Learn to Love the World Again, Instructions for an Evening in your Life, A Prayer for When You Don't Even Know, A Benediction, as well as others.

If you are looking for new writers to learn from, this book may be for you. Contributors include: Amena Brown, Rev. Gail Song, Rev. Winnie Varghese, Lisa Sharon Harper, Barbara Brown Taylor and many others. Sarah has asked these women to join her prayer circle because they were her teachers.



This great book – and so many others that can help you – are in the Stephen Ministry Library in Hillemonds Chapel.



Presbyterian Women

PW 175th Celebration

PW will celebrate Sunday, October 17, by presenting First Pres with a gift honoring PW's 175 years of service. Our hope is our PW sisters will be there.

PW Gives!

As of April 19th, thanks to the generosity of the congregation, PW has collected and given to the following PCUSA-PW organizations:

Least Coin: \$163
Birthday Offering: \$849
Thank Offering: \$570
In-Gathering gifts: Detroit Presbytery: \$2,460
Hope Clinic: \$1,370 cash and \$450 food

More Giving! PW was blessed to give end of year donations to:

Ozone House- Kicked Out fund: \$500 (Note: Children make up a significant portion of Michigan's 86,000 homeless.)
Hope Medical Clinic: \$500
House by the Side of the Road: \$370
Second Mile Center Detroit: \$500 (Summer program)
Presbytery-Camperships: \$500 (The POD helps children attend summer camp.)
Presbyterian Disaster Relief – Refugee and Immigration advocacy Grant: \$1000



**PRESBYTERIAN
WOMEN**

June Mission



Presbyterian Women will be delivering our June all church Food Collection to the Detroit Presbytery Hunger Ministries program at the end of June. This will be the Sixth annual CEREAL FOR SUMMER CAMPAIGN. No child should go hungry. However, many kids who rely on receiving a subsidized breakfast or lunch during the school year, often face long summer days without enough to eat. Please bring your breakfast type cereals and food to the bins outside our north side entrance before June 24th. Monetary donations will also be collected throughout June through the church's monthly Food Collection program.

Coming in August

View the PW Bulletin Board to see what we learned from our Grandmothers.

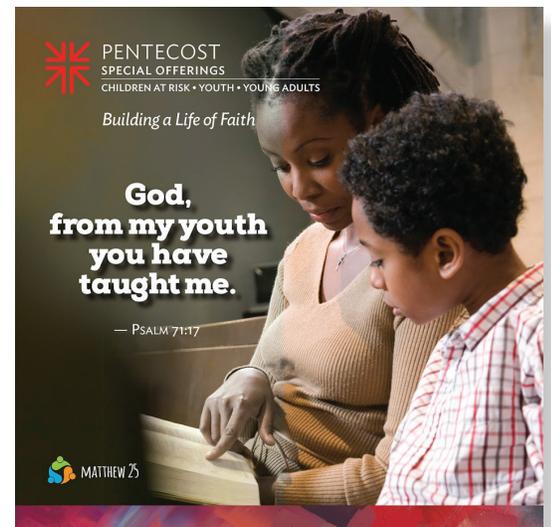


Faith in Action

Pentecost Offering 2021

This month we join with others across our Presbyterian Church to focus our support on young people, young adults and children-at-risk in support of the Pentecost Offering of our Presbyterian Church U.S.A. We see how the Pentecost story inspires all people into a lifetime of faith and service. 60% of your Pentecost gift goes to exciting national Presbyterian ministries helping children, youth ministries and young adults develop their faith. Montreat Youth Conferences, Youth Triennium and even the Confirmation materials used here at First Pres benefit from your gifts. The balance of the Pentecost Offering will support the Student Advocacy Center of Michigan, a local Washtenaw County program that nurtures, educates and guides young people through life's challenges in our communities.

Please give to the Pentecost Special Offering by clicking on the Donate to First Presbyterian Link on our website, or send a donation to the church office noting Pentecost Offering in the memo line. The Pentecost Offering makes a difference for the life of the whole church and for congregations like ours. We will receive the Pentecost Offering until June 13, 2021.



Why We Volunteer

A Reflection by Gale and Don Redding – Food Rescue Program

Recently we and Cass lost a dear friend as Matt Prentice, Executive Chef, passed away after a brief illness. Matt transformed the Cass kitchen from okay food to outstanding entrees as his years of experience as an Executive Chef allowed him to teach the Cass staff how to make great meals. Matt was involved in Cass's food service off and on for twenty years.

Matt was a well-known Detroit chef and had owned several high end restaurants. Recently, he opened Three Cats Café Restaurant in Clawson.

Matt's passing caused us to reflect on our friendship with Matt, but also on why volunteering is so important. When we volunteer we create new friendships with people we would normally never meet. Equally important, we gain much better insight into the lives of those people being served by our volunteer efforts.

During the last five years, the food rescue team has been at Cass about twenty times a year. During each visit we get to meet other volunteers and develop relationships with permanent employees. At Cass, it wasn't just Matt's friendship but Nicki, Bobby, Kevin, Kay, Bob and Sarah's friendships. Also, we often helped serve lunch and saw the clients.

When serving food in the basement of an old building, with folks crowded around the tables with whomever sits down, you understand the "system" these folks are trapped in. They don't have any private space, they don't decide when to eat, they don't have leftovers for a snack and they don't get to decide on the "menu." They eat when, where and what someone else decides! So, yes they get fed, but NO, they have no control over their lives. This is what poverty really looks like.

In summary, volunteering isn't about the numbers. It's about the impact we have on the clients and ourselves as we learn to appreciate the reality of their situation.



Gale and Don Redding

Making God's Love Visible, Responding to God's Call to Action

First Pres recently formed a Social Justice Action Group, focusing on key issues identified by the congregation. The group grew from adult education courses on social justice issues, and members' interest in moving beyond education to action. This group is reflected in our strategic plan, developed by all committees of Session. Co-chaired by Diane Hockett and Helena Prince, the new group meets monthly to pursue specific actions to address three key issues the congregation identified: racial justice, gun safety, and climate change.

Over the years, our congregation has studied and responded to a variety of such issues, tried to discern what our call to action is as Christians, responded to specific needs in the Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti community, and prayed for all impacted by injustice. Raising these concerns encourages us to do more than simply study and discuss these issues. Beyond that, what actions can Christians take to meaningfully address local injustice?

Our Mission and Adult Education committees are collaborating to answer that very question. The Social Justice Action Group plans to support advocacy, participate in community events, and take further action to respond to the specific issues the congregation supports. The group is exploring ways to update the congregation, and also determine our interaction with local advocacy groups currently addressing our three key topics.

We look forward to hearing from members interested in these topics. Stay tuned for more information about these important areas as we move forward, and visit our web site at:

<https://www.firstpresbyterian.org/connect/adult-ministry/social-justice-workgroup>

Jesus said, "Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream."

Amos 5:24

Our Parish Nurse Program Is Featured!

In the March/April 2021 issue of *Horizons* – the magazine (and Bible study) for Presbyterian Women – Virginia Bell – Moderator for Presbyterian Women at First Pres – contributed an article entitled "Advocacy and Care: The Evolving Call of Parish Nurse and Wellness Coordinator." She consulted with First Pres records and collaborated with Rev. Melissa Anne Rogers, Sandy Talbott, Barbara Delancey and Stacey Pakela, Church Office Manager Linda Robinson and the PW coordinating team at First Pres. This article is shared by permission of the publisher and can be found here (<https://www.firstpresbyterian.org/connect/health-ministries>). Thank you, Virginia, for spotlighting this important work and the critical figures making this program so successful at First Pres!

Orange Is Beautiful!

June 4-6 marks “Wear Orange Weekend.” Why orange? It is the color that Hadiya Pendleton’s friends wore in her honor when she was shot and killed in Chicago at the age of 15 — just one week after performing at President Obama’s second inaugural parade in 2013. After her death, gun safety advocates asked us to stand up, speak out, and wear orange to raise awareness about gun violence. Today, we wear orange to fight for a future free from gun violence.

Rotating Shelter News

Keeping People Safe, Dry and Warm — The 2021 Shelter Association Report

The Shelter Association of Washtenaw County is pleased to share this summary of the winter Rotating Shelter Program in which First Pres again played an important though different role this year, due to COVID. Multiple members of our congregation contributed to the effort by serving as evening hosts, overnight hosts, by preparing nutritious hot meals at their homes or by their donations of winter clothing or financial support to the cause.

As the coordinators of our church’s Rotating Shelter Program we urge you to review these numbers with pride, knowing the comfort the program brought to so many, and pray our church may be able to respond with equal vigor next winter when the need arises.

The Shelter Association of Washtenaw County has a mission of ending homelessness one person at a time, and the support of First Presbyterian Church has helped us to do just that in the first half of 2021.

Just look at what we accomplished together in a pandemic:

- We served over 1,200 vulnerable individuals
- We sheltered over 700 clients
- We conducted over 100,000 health screenings
- We distributed over 55,000 masks
- We facilitated over 5,000 COVID tests
- Less than 1% of our population reported positive COVID cases
- We helped over 120 clients receive their COVID-19 vaccinations
- We managed 5 shelter locations to keep our clients safe, warm and dry
- We helped 172 people find long-term, sustainable housing

Our work is not done, but we care for our clients better when we work together. Thank you First Presbyterian Church!

—Marcey Terrien and Jim Peggs

SESSION DIGEST – April 2021 Session Highlights

At the Stated Meeting of Session on April 21, 2021 . . .

The Moderator, Rev. Jay Sanderford, welcomed Elders and guests Steve Gerhardt (Property Committee) and Catherine Kendall (Deacon Representative), extended a special welcome to the 2021 Confirmands and their families, and opened the meeting with prayer.

The Session proceeded to –

- Welcome the 2021 Confirmation Class into full membership in First Presbyterian Church. Graham Corey, Hadley Feyen, Chloe Majorprice, Brianna McLaughlin, Madeline Montgomery, Maverick Musser, Anna Schneider, Molly Schneidewind, and Owen Smith were introduced by their families, shared their faith stories, and were gifted with shawls knitted by members of First Pres as a symbol of God’s embrace and loving care.
- Approve the request by the Congregational Life Committee to approve six new members to First Pres – Nicholas and Brynn Stelter, Steve and Penny Papadopoulos, and Steve and Martha Boeve.
- Receive the Status of Building and Grounds Report – Updated for 2021.
- Support the request by the Property Committee to permit members of the Committee to reach out to city / community leaders regarding the Hill Street property owned by the church.

Other Reports / Discussions

- Catherine Kendall, Deacon Representative, reported on the work of the Deacons.
- Elder Sue Gott advised Session the Strategic Planning Guiding Team would be presenting a detailed report at a future meeting, the culmination of the work done since the group first met. The focus will be on the priorities identified for 2021-2022 and a combined property-finance report. The report will show how the Strategic Plan merges with concerns from Property to plan for a capital campaign, and provide an outline for Session discussion.
- Rev. Jay Sanderford and Elder Katie Parker reported on the Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Detroit held on March 20. The next Stated Meeting, July 13, is scheduled to take place at Belle Isle Park, weather and health conditions permitting.
- Elders Kate Kraft and Renee Mulcrone, Co-Chairs, Faith Formation Committee, advised that due to the current limitations for in-person engagement and “Zoom fatigue”, the Committee, in conjunction with the Reopening Recommendation Work Group, is investigating the use of an open-sided tent and fire pits on the Hill Street Property. This tent could also be used for other purposes post-COVID, perhaps even rented out to generate revenue. Elder Mulcrone asked Elders to send suggestions for additional uses.
- Rev. Evans McGowan reported for the Reopening Recommendation Work Group. Regarding the tent proposal, this tent will remain in place from Spring through October, with the cost for a 12,000 sq. ft. covered area between \$5K-\$10K. Costs could be defrayed through rentals and/or collaboration with Hillel. He will discuss matters of permits, vandalism protection, and liability coverage with Hillel which did have a similar tent up for a month.
- Rev. McGowan gave a brief update from the Technology Committee. Outdoor livestreaming is not possible as the sound system is inadequate; therefore, summer outdoor worship is presently on hold. Other options are being considered for church community events while maintaining the recommended safety precautions.
- Elder Ken Westfall, Chair, Property Committee, provided the background of the Status of Building and Grounds Report, adding that the update for 2021 includes what has been accomplished, proposed actions for 2021, revised cost estimates, and available funding. Elder Westfall encouraged Elders to review the information and forward any questions to Adrian Prundeanu, Facilities Manager, or Keith Bilby, Property Committee. Another topic presented by the Property Committee was the Hill Street Property, specifically the portion included in the Historic District. Session agreed that any planned use of this property needed to consider the local community and ideally receive its endorsement.

- Elder Len Rezmierski reported the Safety Committee is meeting regularly to prepare the necessary documents required for the 2022 FEMA Grant. The Committee is planning to bring these documents to Session for approval in time to meet the April 2022, submission deadline.
- Elder Sue Cares, Personnel Committee, reported the Committee is working hard to fill open positions as well as continually monitoring staff workload during this interim period. She also announced the Resident Ministry Work Group has selected three new Resident Ministers who will arrive in August. Further details will be provided in June / July.
- Elder Bruce Clyde, Chair, Finance Committee, advised that for March, revenues were up, expenses down. Due to the open staff positions (communications / technology) personnel expenses were lower than budget, and with the early departure of Resident Minister Amy Ruhf, less is being pulled from the Endowment. Elder Clyde said there was an urgency to establish the structure / outline of the capital campaign considering the issues identified by the Property Committee. It would be important to show there is a plan in place when interviewing candidates for a new Sr. Pastor.

Pastors Reports

- Rev. Melissa Anne Rogers thanked Session for its support of the Fast Track Membership process. She also requested Elders to step forward and share their stories of faith, blessings, and hope for the summer Email devotionals.
- Rev Jay Sanderford thanked Rev. Mark Mares for shepherding the Confirmands to this point in their faith journeys. He also reported the Core Leadership Team has already crafted a worship schedule through February 2022, with many guest preachers including former Resident Ministers, professors from seminaries, and current Residents. He expressed his appreciation to David VanderMeer for the worship planning he leads each week.
- Rev. Mark Mares thanked Session for its time to receive the 2021 Confirmation Class and special thanks to Revs. McGowan and Rogers for their support.
- Rev. Evans McGowan gave kudos to Rev. Mares for his guidance to the Confirmation Class. He also acknowledged Elder Chris Wahl for his support with the website, Elders Len Rezmierski and Paul Smith for their leadership with ushering, and Elder Jennifer Day for her work on the Technology Committee. He reported a re-design of Campus Ministry is on-going and would welcome any interested volunteers to be a part of that program.

With no New Business to review, the meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m., following the closing prayer offered by Elder Chris Wahl.

The Session is the governing board of the church. It consists of 24 Elders elected by the congregation to 3-year terms; they meet monthly (except, usually, in July) to oversee the church's financial and programmatic life, and to hear reports from the church's staff, committees and working groups. The Rev. Jay Sanderford, Associate Pastor, currently serves as Moderator; the Rev. Melissa Anne Rogers, Associate Pastor, also serves as a voting member. Elder Linda Rex is Clerk of Session. The next meeting is on May 19, 2021, at 7 p.m. (via Zoom). A list of elders and their photos can be found here: <https://www.firstpresbyterian.org/about/leadership/session-governing-body>.

