



First Press

A Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor
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Intergenerational New Year's Event



Dick Carlisle giving the Personnel report at the Annual Meeting

Dear Friends,

As you read this, we'll have just passed the milestone of our Annual Meeting – a time to assess the vitality of our sense of ministry as a congregation, and recommit ourselves to walking joyfully, courageously, energetically toward the 200th anniversary of the founding of this remarkable church, just six years from now.

If you think of the year ahead as a journey, then let me suggest three things to carry in our collective backpack as we go. As on any hike, there are times when you'll feel the weight of the things you're carrying calling forth reserves of stamina; and at other times you'll feel a certain confidence in knowing that the heft represents your mindful preparation for the distance you hope to cover.

The first of the three things is the set of recommendations we've recently received in the report of the Administrative Commission from the Presbytery of Detroit that assessed the process that led to the dissolution of your previous pastorate. Since the report was delivered in mid-January, the Session and Staff have been actively reflecting on its observations about our life together – particularly about consistency, transparency and accountability. The earnest hope of your leaders – clergy and laity – is that we can learn as much as possible about how to improve the systems, patterns and assumptions that shape our life as a community – and that we can wield our values and carry on our mission that much more effectively and responsibly as a result. In coming weeks we expect to convene one or more open sessions for any member of the First Pres family to reflect on the AC report.

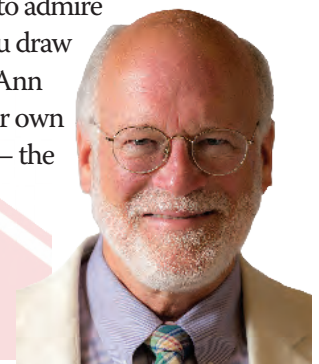
The second of the three things is the budget that the Session has adopted for 2020. Here's where you may feel the weight in the backpack: it includes a drawdown of about \$252,389 from our very modest endowment to cover the operating and program expenses deemed most essential for our ministry this year. Obviously that's not sustainable; and closing the gap will be an important mark of readiness to call a new Pastor. The budget was finalized only after all committees, working groups and offices went through a difficult process of reducing expenses as much as possible. Meanwhile, our

fall stewardship campaign brought in 229 increased pledges and 45 new pledges – not enough to offset the expenses we anticipate, but a sure sign of commitment. As we stride on into the coming months, I would encourage us to take this journey mindfully – which is to say, to fully engage prayer, imagination and hope, even as we hold these financial realities clearly before us. We're trying to be, faithfully, the church we want to be – which means doing what we feel called to do and finding ways to make it possible. God is on our side in this effort!

The third of the three things is the launching of a Self-Study that comprises the first step toward the search for the Pastor who will accompany you to your bicentennial. The Session has commissioned ten members to develop a fresh, comprehensive statement of the ministry for which we'll then seek a new pastoral leader. This will take several months – during which they'll have the support and counsel of the Rev. Judy Shipman, our liaison from the Presbytery of Detroit. For most churches this is a lively and energizing process; the March issue of First Press will offer an overview. You can expect some sort of figurative "knock on the door" over the next weeks as these folks compile information and catalogue hopes; please be as helpful as you can to their work! When it's complete – perhaps by summer if all goes well – it'll be time for the congregation to elect a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) to conduct the search.

I hope the Annual Meeting energized you for the journey ahead. For me it was another occasion to admire the dedication, conscience, and faith you draw on in making God's love visible here in Ann Arbor and beyond. It's the season of our own little local Pentecost, four months early – the re-birth-day of our church!

*Faithfully,
Rick Spalding*



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Worship & Music

NEW Handbell Choir

Tuesday, February 4 at 2:00 p.m.

Have you ever wanted to ring handbells? Now is your chance! A daytime bell choir primarily for new or beginner ringers has begun. You might call it: Handbells 101, a place to learn basic ringing techniques and ring easy and accessible music. We will meet in the Handbell Choir Rehearsal room on the third floor. Dave VanderMeer will conduct this choir. All are welcome!



Monthly Taizé Prayer Service - Tuesday, February 4

6:00 p.m. – A simple supper of soup & bread in the Social Hall

7:00 p.m. – Taizé Prayer Service

Join us the first Tuesday of every month for a Taizé prayer service in Monteith Hall. All are welcome! A Taizé worship service involves sung and chanted prayers, meditation, a period of silence, liturgical readings, and icons. There is no preaching. A Taizé songbook describes prayers as “short chants, repeated again and again ... words are sung over many times.” Taizé Services have been a practice of worshipping here at First Pres on Ash Wednesday. Now experience worship in the manner of the Taizé Community every month.



Ash Wednesday Is February 26

5:30 Family Friendly Worship

6:30 Ash Wednesday Dinner

7:30 Ecumenical Taizé Worship

Have dinner after the Family Friendly service or before the Taizé service. Reserve your spot in the Church Office or at <https://firstpresbyterian.wufoo.com/forms/ash-wednesday-dinner/>. Cost is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children 5-12 with reservations made by Monday, February 24 by 10:00 p.m. Kids under five are free.

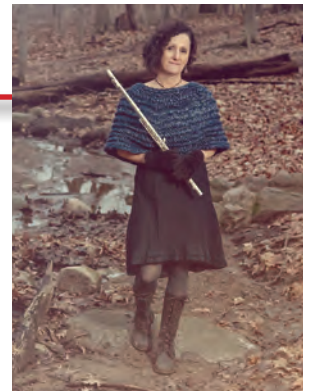


Faith In Action

Nessa Concert for Ozone House

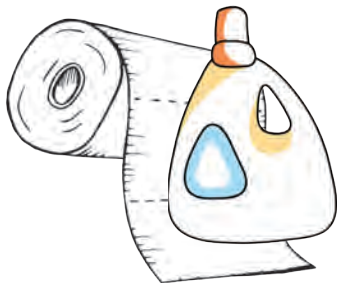
Saturday, February 15, 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary

Enjoy the eclectic sounds of Nessa, known for its Celtic inspired world music, in concert. The concert is free, but a love offering will be taken for Ozone House, a non-profit organization that provides emergency shelter, safe space, transitional housing, and counseling for homeless youth, LGBT runaway teens and families in Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti.



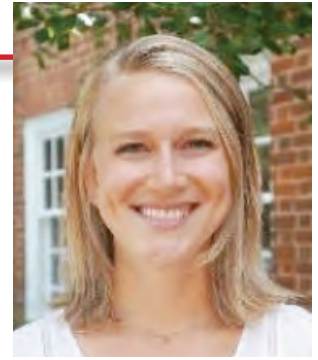
Communion Sunday Food Collection made a difference in 2019

Every first Sunday of the month we come to the Lord's table to be nurtured in our faith, to feed others, and support to those in need. Generous gifts of food and money were collected by groups such as Mature Ministries, Presbyterian Women, T2A2, Campus Ministry and our Youth and have been distributed to Food Gatherers, Washtenaw Community College Student Food Bank, Presbytery of Detroit, Hope Clinic and the Back Door Pantry. We do not weigh the food but in 2019 monthly monetary donations ranged from \$464-\$964. Get involved in this vital mission! CONTRIBUTE non-perishable, non-breakable nutritious food items; VOLUNTEER to collect and deliver items – Contact Local Mission coordinator Martha Kershaw at mdkershaw@sbcglobal.net.



Suds 'n Sheets Campaign for Cass

Our highly successful Suds 'n Sheets Campaign for Cass Community Social Services will be held in March. As in past years, we will collect paper towels and detergent, items always in demand at Cass, as part of our year-round support of Cass. In March, please drop off donations in baskets provided in the Welcome Center or in the collection box location to the Children's and Family wing. This is a great opportunity for all members of a family to participate. Questions? Contact Beth Sanderford, beth.sanderford@gmail.com.



Women of Faith Brunch with Rev. Grace Lindvall

Saturday, March 7, 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., Social Hall

Great food, outstanding speaker, and small group conversation. Our guest speaker is Rev. Grace Lindvall, Charlotte, NC, Associate Pastor, Covenant Presbyterian Church and daughter of our former pastor Rev. Michael Lindvall. More information on her presentation will be coming soon. Cost is \$10/person. Sign up at <https://firstpresbyterian.wufoo.com/forms/women-of-faith-brunch/>

Christian Meditation

Join us for Christian Meditation Saturdays, February 1 and 15, at 8:30 a.m. Refresh yourself with a time of prayer and contemplation. Questions? Contact Jeanette Kibler at jeanette.kibler@gmail.com or 646-9795.

Tell Me More!

Want to know more about, or thinking about joining First Pres? Join Rev.s Jay Sanderford and Mel Rogers for an hour of beer, good food, and great conversation about what “Presbyterian” is, who we are and what we are about as a congregation, what it is to be a member, and anything else you want to know. It all happens Sunday evening, February 9, at 5:00 p.m. at the Session Room, 3685 Jackson Rd. Register with Rev. Rogers, mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org.

Mature Ministries Lunch & Learn - “Congress: How it Worked & Why it Doesn’t”

Thursday, February 13, Noon

Kevin Portteus, Lawrence Fertig Professor of Politics, Hillsdale College



To say that Congress is a “dysfunctional institution” is not exactly profound. As our federal legislature winds down yet another fractious and unproductive term, explanations for its decline are everywhere. Indeed, diagnosing the problems of Congress has become a veritable American cottage industry. The dysfunctions of Congress observed by scholars and journalists are merely symptoms of a more profound disease in our government. Leaders from both parties are infected with the desire to abdicate their legislative power, and it has corrupted the whole institution. Until the disease is properly diagnosed and treated, legislative decline will only continue.

The Mature Ministries Lunch & Learn monthly series for those 60 & up. Lunch is \$5, sign up in the Church Office.

Deacon thanks for 2019 - Redux!

Our Board of Deacons and whole congregation thank those who were co-opted for last year’s Deacon’s Board and did so much in the transition year to help us keep moving forward — Paula Doering, Al Barber, and Carol Hendrickson. We also want to thank Lisa Shultz who served half of 2019 before she resigned from the Board. We are grateful for those who are taking an additional term or staying on as co-opted deacons in 2020. Our motto is, “Once a Deacon, always a Deacon” and in living out the ministry of sympathy, witness, and service, we welcome all who are members in good standing, committed givers, and with big open hearts to care for others to nominate themselves or others for Deacons in the next class. Questions? Contact Doug Gottlieb, Ellen Johnson, or Rev. Rogers.

Interested in a Monthly Book Group?

A church member would like to start a monthly book that would meet at First Pres and begin in February. All are welcome. The focus would be a wide range of genres. If you are interested, please contact Harmony Heath at harmony9525@att.net.

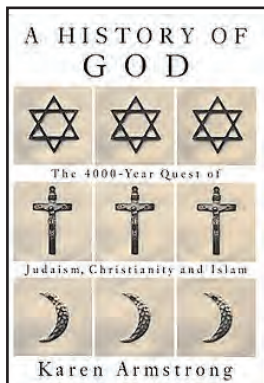


STEPHEN MINISTRY

Stephen Ministry Continuing Education

Monday, February 10 at 7:00 p.m.

All are welcome to attend Stephen Ministry Continuing Education classes held the second Monday of the month in Monteith Hall at 7:00 pm. In February, Chiara C. Clayton, Communications and Outreach Specialist for the Area Agency on Aging 1-B, will present "Helping Seniors Remain Living at Home." She will focus on resources and services offered by the AAA 1-B to help adults over 60 live independently in the community and also assist family caregivers caring for older loved ones.



A Review from the Stephen Ministry Book Nook

By Chris Queen

The book titled *A History of God – The 4000-Year Quest of Judaism, Christianity and Islam* by Karen Armstrong details the history of the three major monotheistic traditions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, along with Buddhism and Hinduism. The evolution of the idea of God is traced from its ancient roots in the Middle East up to the present day. To be more specific the book is a history of how men and women have perceived God from Abraham to the present.

One major theme of the book is the idea of God formed in one generation by one set of human beings could be meaningless to another. Armstrong argues that Judaism, Christianity and Islam each developed the idea of a personal God, which has helped believers to mature as full human beings.

Yet Armstrong also acknowledges that the idea of a personal God can be dangerous, encouraging us to judge, condemn and marginalize others. Publishers Weekly writes "To Armstrong, modern, aggressively righteous fundamentalists of all three faiths represent 'a retreat from God.' She views as inevitable a move away from the idea of a personal God who behaves like a larger version of ourselves, and welcomes the grouping of believers' toward a notion of God that 'works for us in the empirical age'."

The book is complex and some chapters are long. That being said, this is a good book to read for those interested in learning more about God, religion, spirituality and society.

Presbyterian Women Gathering - February 19

All women are welcome for all the morning's activities or any part; men are welcome to attend the program and lunch.



9:30 - 10:30 a.m. Bible Study in the Lewis Room

PW continues to explore the Horizon Bible Study *Love Carved in Stone: A Fresh Look at The Ten Commandments* by Eugenia Anne Gamble. Lesson 6 will be led by Mary Lynn Thomson.

10:45 - 11:00 a.m. Welcome & Business in Monteith Hall

A discussion of the Mission support letter will be held.

11:00 a.m. - Noon "The Opioid Crisis & Chronic Pain Care"

Jordan Backstrom, M.Div, Psy.D, a Clinical Psychologist at Cypress Counseling Center, discusses this complex issue.

Noon Lunch in the Social Hall (\$7)

Did you know? PW Is Active in Mission!

First Sunday Food Collection; Second Mile Center of Detroit; Memorial Receptions; Delonis Center; January Rotating Shelter; Interfaith Hospitality Network; House By the Side of the Road; Friends In Deed; Cass Work Days, and additional local & international missions! Learn more by contacting Ginny Bell at virginiabell2013@gmail.com.





Financial Stewardship



What Legacy Would You Like to Leave the World?

The Spirit of Generosity Creates Legacies

Please join us on Sunday, February 16 in the Curtis and Founders Rooms as we explore the spirit of generosity and how it creates legacies for First Pres. As Christians we aim to lead confident and “generous lives” by giving back to the missions that have impacted our lives. Join us as Raeann Kusch and Rick Hart from Thrivent lead a fun and informative seminar around the culture of generosity. Lunch is provided. Sign up to attend with Doug Gottlieb at dagottlieb@aol.com.



Legacy Giving ... Kyle & Jim Hall

Kyle was born in Anderson, Indiana. She attended and was baptized in the Methodist church. She graduated from Indiana University with a degree in nursing. She received a Master’s degree from Indiana University in maternity nursing and was an assistant professor at the school of nursing at Indiana University in Indianapolis.

Jim was born in Indianapolis, Indiana and was raised in Logansport, Indiana. He attended a Christian church and was baptized in a Presbyterian church. He graduated from Indiana University with a degree in Zoology and four years later from medical school at Indiana University. He completed his residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology at Indiana University in Indianapolis.

Kyle and Jim were on the Bloomington campus at the same time but did not know each other. They met while Kyle was a nursing student and Jim was a medical student (not an uncommon story). Following graduation, they moved to Logansport, Indiana and joined Jim’s dad in the practice of Obstetrics and Gynecology. Kyle worked as a nurse and taught prenatal classes for 25 years. The practice grew from two physicians to six. Jim’s primary area was diagnosis and treatment of breast disease.

They attended the Presbyterian church in Logansport. Jim served three terms on session and Kyle served two terms as deacon and two terms on session. They were blessed with four children, Audrey (1976) Courtney (1979) Lynly (1982) and Cassie (1988). As the family grew, Kyle turned in her nursing cap. Jim practiced till retirement in December 2016. They moved to Ann Arbor to get closer to grandkids (they have 5) and friends. Daughter Lynly and husband Brent live in Ann Arbor and have three kids and two grandkids live in Indianapolis with son Courtney and his wife Cassandra. Audrey works/lives in New York City and Cassie in Flagstaff, Arizona.

Upon moving to Ann Arbor, Jim and Kyle “shopped” for a church home and First Pres was the perfect fit. They say, “We feel blessed to have First Pres as our church home. We both feel that stewardship is an important part of our faith. Donation of time, talent, and, financial resources are the foundation of stewardship. We have included First Pres in our estate planning as an important part of our stewardship. We have complete faith that the money will be used wisely for God’s mission.”



T2A2

T2A2 Update (Twenties & Thirties in Ann Arbor)

T2A2 had a busy close to 2019! We volunteered and continued our fun, fellowship, and food antics. Some folks helped out at the House of Faith Habitat for Humanity home in Ypsilanti; we rescued food at the Big House; and we helped serve a meal at the Delonis Center downtown. On the fellowship and food side, we gathered for Friends-giving at Chris Wahl’s home in November and for a white elephant, ugly sweater, Christmas cookie extravaganza at Cassee Stem’s home in December. And for good measure, since it’s Ann Arbor, we went to the Sunday afternoon performance of Handel’s *Messiah*!



On top of these year-end gatherings, T2A2 continues its Wednesday evening hangouts around town and our Sunday evening small group. We took a quick look at some Advent psalms in December and are now discussing Nadia Bolz-Weber’s book *Accidental Saints*.

In 2020, we’re excited to start lunching together after the 11:00 a.m. service more consistently – if you’re interested in joining, we tend to hang around the right side of the sanctuary towards the back to figure out our plans! We’ve also enjoyed getting to know the new Resident Ministers as well as Dr. Spalding, who graciously hosted us for a soup dinner in January! Don’t hesitate to get in touch with us at t2a2@firstpresbyterian.org to find out more or to be added to our email list! Join us on Wednesday or Sunday some time!



Adult Education



Sundays @ 9:30 A.M.

The Bible at 9:30 **February 2-23** **French Room/Library**

The Bible at 9:30 is studying three things: "How the Bible came to be," focusing on Galatians. All are welcome! Bibles and name tags are provided.

First Friends **February 2-23** **Monteith Hall**

Spiritual growth, learning, fellowship, and support for those seeking to connect faith and life.

February 2 Will Minnette from Mobility Worldwide discusses carts that provide dignity and mobility to disabled persons in developing countries overseas.

February 9 Dr. Jim Peggs will share the sobering statistics about gun violence in the U.S. today which has become a national Public Health crisis. He will emphasize what health care organizations are doing to reduce risks to patients and how all of us can contribute to a world safer from gun violence.

February 16 A study of chapter two, "Lot's Wife: Homicide or Suicide?" from *Bad Girls of the Bible* by Barbara Essex.

February 23 A study of chapter 12 "The Practice of Pronouncing Blessings" from Barbara Brown Taylor's *An Altar in the World*.

Sundays @ 11:00 A.M.

Exploring the Faith **February 2-23** **Monteith Hall/Lewis Room**
Living with Dementia and/or Mental Illness

The lives of many First Pres members are consumed by the special challenges of living with dementia and serious mental illness as care receivers or care givers. Although dementia and serious mental illness are separate conditions with differing treatments and long-term outcomes, those who have one of these illnesses and their families face many of the same tasks. Join us as outside speakers and church members share their stories and increase knowledge about dementia and serious mental illness – diagnosis, treatment, problems encountered, treatments on the horizon; increase understanding of the unique challenges faced by those with dementia or serious mental illness and their families; diminish the stigma that is still associated with these conditions; increase empathy for those who have these illnesses and their families; illuminate the church's role in supporting these individuals and families.



February 2 – Bob Nassauer, NAMI Washtenaw County volunteer and former executive

Information to be covered will include diagnosis, treatment, problems to be managed, and treatment on the horizon. Darlene Wetzel, a trained social worker who lives with a mental health challenge, will help open the presentation.

February 9 – Panel Discussion on Serious Mental Illness

Church members will share their stories about living with serious mental illness and the special challenges they have faced. Discussion between the panel and attendees will be encouraged.



February 16 – Attorney Jane Bassett of Bassett Law in Ann Arbor

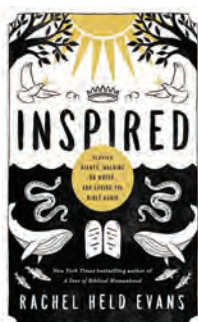
Note: This class will be held in the Lewis Room. Ms. Bassett has been an expert in the fields of elder law, probate, estate planning and LGBT law since 1994. Topics she will address may include special needs trust planning; accessing all appropriate government and health care plan benefits; filing for disability; how to find periodic or permanent home care help; where to find daytime drop-in and longer-term overnight respite care; and how to answer your loved one's questions, "Who's going to take care of me while you're at work?" or "Who will care for me when you die?"

February 23 – Group Discussion

Group discussion about social isolation, loneliness, and feelings of abandonment (for both caregiver and care receiver). What can First Pres do to help alleviate the social isolation, loneliness, and feelings of abandonment experienced by care givers and care receivers? What support could Ann Arbor churches provide if they were to join forces? We will break into small groups to brainstorm and then re-group to share ideas.

Good Reads: A New Book Discussion Group

Friday, February 21, 10:30 a.m., French Room/Library



Join Kathy Wirstrom and Rev. Jay Sanderford and others to read and discuss new and interesting fiction, short stories and more. Immerse yourself in good writing, explore important themes and enjoy free-flowing discussion. Our second Good Reads selection this winter is Rachel Held Evans' *Inspired: Slaying Giants, Walking on Water, and Loving the Bible Again*. If the Bible isn't a science book or an instruction manual, then what is it? What do people mean when they say the Bible is inspired? When Rachel Held Evans found herself asking these questions, she began a quest to better understand what the Bible is and how it is meant to be read. What she discovered changed her and it will change you, too. The Bible, she discovers, is not a static work but is a living, breathing, captivating, and confounding book that is able to equip us to join God's loving and redemptive work in the world.

Good Reads meets next on February 21, and then monthly on the third Friday at 10:30 am in the French Room/Library. All readers are welcome. *Inspired* books at \$15 and may be purchased in the Church Office. For more information, email jsanderford@firstpresbyterian.org. Future books for Good Reads include William Kent Kruger's *This Tender Land*. Kent Krueger will visit First Pres for a book signing and question and answer session in June 2020. Stay tuned for more information.



Youth Connection

Opportunities for Youth on Sunday Mornings in February!

All youth are invited to join us in the Youth Room on February 9, 16, and 23 at 9:20 a.m. for donuts, hot chocolate, and a special game or activity! Then youth are invited to attend Sunday school from 9:30-10:30 a.m. 6th/7th graders meet in LL4, Confirmation class meets in the Curtis Room, and the High School class meets in the Youth Room. We hope to see you there!



Middle School & High School Youth Group

February 2 - MIDS and HSYG meet for a special SOUP-ER-BOWL lunch in the Social Hall from 12:15-2:00 p.m!

February 9 and 16 - Both groups meet for regular programming including Youth and Creative Arts from 4:30 - 5:30 p.m. in the Handbell Room, followed by dinner at 5:30 p.m. in the Social Hall, and YG from 6:00 - 7:00 p.m. All are welcome!

Winter Retreat at SpringHill Camp!

Please pray for our youth traveling to Evert, MI along with youth from all over the state, for our Winter Retreat February 21st -23rd. Youth will participate in high energy worship, listen to great speakers, engage in small groups, and have the opportunity to sign up for a wide-range of activities. These include, but are not limited to: dodgeball, escape rooms, 3-on-3 basketball tournaments, broomball, zip-line, climbing walls, horseback riding, crafts, bungee trampoline, & archery!



UKirk@UMich



Campus Ministry Update

Campus Ministry welcomed students back for the Winter Semester with an evening of bowling before beginning their small group discussion during the Epiphany Season, entitled *Holy Shift*. We are reading the Bible and exploring the question: How do we shift to having Holy relationships?

Our Campus Ministries Coordinator continues to meet with students on a regular basis for pastoral care, theological questions, and just touching base with students connected to First Pres and the Reformed Faith. He is excited to be working with the Campus Ministries Work Group under the leadership of the new chair, Katie Parker, to expand campus ministry opportunities to students and members alike, including a reinvigoration of the Ann Arbor Campus Ministry Foundation. If you are interested in volunteering with students or the foundation, or would like more information, please let us know!

Plans for Puerto Rico are moving along with 14 students and four leaders going on the Service Spring Break Trip. Rev. Evans McGowan will be leading the team for the second year, with a strong contingent of Methodist students and campus leaders from not only UM but also Western and Michigan State!

Church Member and Professor Silvia Pedraza will be assisting the group in learning more about the unique context. Please keep the team and the people of Puerto Rico in your prayers, as Puerto Rico was recently hit with a series of earthquakes in addition to the ongoing hurricane recovery efforts!