

# FIRST PRESS

Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church Ann Arbor

Vol. 70 | No. 1 - January 2022

*Dear Friends,*

Epiphany is upon us, and many are bracing to start a new year. A new variant is on the rise. Scientists tell us that we need more precautions. The weather is getting colder. The virus is getting bolder. We keep having to pivot to the next best thing. What we thought was a sure-thing last month, fizzled out the second time around. Live-streaming is great, and Zoom is efficient, but we yearn to connect with friends and neighbors more deeply. Without Covid-fear.

But there is good news. We are not starting from scratch. We begin this New Year 2022 with wisdom and experience we lacked twenty-one months ago. We sit in this season of anticipation and lean into the past lessons that have prepared us for a more promise-filled future. Everyone today has a Covid story. We might not have all the answers, but we've picked up essential coping skills and have both the burden and blessing of enduring a pandemic. We haven't perfected our response, but not only are we still standing, we are trying some new ways of doing church now with confidence.

So pat yourself on the back. You've lost some things, and heartbreakingly, you may also have lost some people. That pain will persist, but you are still here to tell the story that God has been mightily present all throughout the last pandemic months and that is the grace of this moment and the challenge of our future. We did not know what we were doing at some points, but we found a way to adapt and innovate in a time of sudden change.

Now, imagine what is possible. We've experienced the limitations that this pandemic has produced. We've wrapped our heads around the likelihood that we will not return to normal as we knew it. But this Epiphany 2022, I am shifting my gaze to what is possible. Meeting in mid-December, our Session adopted a new First Pres Strategic Plan: "Making God's Love Visible" that puts and keeps us on a path that

blends the genius of innovation with the strength of tradition to shape our future.

Approaching this new year, let's consider what gains have been and might yet be made. What innovation might be birthed? What and where can we create in the midst of a disrupted rhythm of worship, mission and formation? How can we learn from the loss of this year and allow it to inform how we create? As 2022 edges forward, we now have experience to build upon. We have seen how deadly this virus can be and how misinformation can literally kill someone. We've seen how we must live communally, caring for "the least of these" among us in our community.

***"How can we learn from the loss of this year and allow it to inform how we create? As 2022 edges forward, we now have experience to build upon."***

What possibilities can emerge from this pandemic-produced climate of care? As we reshape what success looks like, we are also redefining what our new standard is and can express what we want First Pres to be. We have proved that we can innovate in the span of a few weeks what we had thought would take years.

We've proved that people care about one another deeply, as evidenced by the hard work of creating backyard weddings, communion kits, 10-person funerals, baptisms on Circle Terrace, youth group Zoom parties, social justice meetings under a tent, drive-up celebrations, and all the other ways that we adapted to marking holy and symbolic moments. Don't forget our grit. Remember our resilience. Don't forget our communal care for one another. As this year closes and another dawns, what is possible?

Susan Gott and other church leaders will share our new Strategic Plan on several occasions in 2022 — look for the dates. And remember — we're are no longer starting from scratch. We're starting from experience.

Peace!  
Rev. Jay Sanderford, Associate Pastor



Rotating Shelter Prayer Card Writing



The Glorious Sounds of Christmas Concert



Rise Against Hunger Food Packaging



## WORSHIP

### NO Taizé Prayer Service on Tuesday, January 4

Our monthly Taizé Service will resume on Tuesday, February 1 at 7 p.m. in Monteith Hall.



### Guest Preacher on Sunday, January 30

The Rev. Dr. Scott Black Johnston, Senior Pastor of Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in the city of New York will preach at both the 8:00 and 9:30 a.m. worship services. Scott has an M.Div. from Yale, and a Ph.D. from Princeton Theological Seminary.



#### More about Scott in his own words:

I am a husband, a dad, a friend, a Presbyterian pastor, a comic book reader, and a fan of almost any sport that involves a ball. I am a New Yorker with a soft spot in my heart for the rhythms and people of Atlanta, Georgia; Austin, Texas; and Duluth, Minnesota. I like red wine and dark beer, and am constantly in search of the world's best pizza. I read a lot. My laugh is too loud. I am an author. I write about reformed theology, preaching, psalms and prayers. I love to talk about the challenges, absurdities and joys of an urban faith. I am always on the lookout for God and good conversation. Let me know whenever and wherever you spot them.

### JOIN A CHOIR IN 2022!

You are invited to join one of our choirs in 2022!



THE CHANCEL CHOIR  
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN ANN ARBOR

### Children's Choir

Shayla Powell, Director  
Sunday rehearsals: 10:30 – 10:55 a.m. in Monteith Hall

### FPC Orchestra (All ages)

Dave VanderMeer, Director  
Sunday rehearsals twice a month: 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.

### Sanctus Ringers (Experienced College-age – Adults)

Dave VanderMeer, Director  
Monday rehearsals: 7 – 8:30 p.m.

### Chancel Choir (High School – Adults)

Dave VanderMeer, Director  
Thursday rehearsals: 7 – 9 p.m.

### Liturgical/Visual Arts Team

Second Tuesdays of the month: 7 – 8 p.m.

For more information about the Ministry of Music and Fine Arts, contact Dave VanderMeer at [dvandermeer@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:dvandermeer@firstpresbyterian.org)

## CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

### Radio Listeners, Let Us Hear from You!

A new working group has been formed at First Pres to better understand the dynamics of our Sunday morning radio broadcasts. Barbara Mueller (Congregational Life), Haley Brown (Worship Committee), and Brad Taylor (Deacons) have volunteered to lead this effort.



A critical part of this undertaking will be to get a better picture of our radio audience and to understand what the broadcasts mean to them. We'd like to conduct interviews with at least a dozen First Pres radio listeners.

If you're a regular radio broadcast listener and would be willing to speak to a member of our working group, please call the church office and volunteer to talk. We're all ears!

Contact First Pres to volunteer: 734.662.4466

### New Member Class Coming in January!

Join us on Sunday, January 16, at 4 p.m. at the home of Tim and Marti Wendler for a new member class with all those who have joined in the last few months, staff, and those who are intending to join!

If you are interested in attending, contact Rev. Rogers, [mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org). While you already "belong," we want you to become a full member and join in all the ministries of our First Pres family!



## All-Church Retreat on Mackinac Island, May 13 – 15

**It's coming! Are you interested?** We have 30 rooms reserved at the majestic Grand Hotel on this beautiful island! A sign-up for this retreat will be sent via email to our church family on February 1 at 8 a.m. so that all have equal access to sign up.



Please note it is a 2-night commitment. Costs for the Grand Hotel, a double room, two nights per person is \$848. For a single person in a room, the total for two nights is \$640. This includes taxes. (Prices for children are substantially lower.) Breakfast and a multiple-course dinner are included.

We encourage single people to partner with others to share a room. Once the rooms are full, we will plan our travel to Mackinac for those who may want to share transportation. We will estimate prices to attend for those staying at other locations. There will be activities and worship times while we are on the Island, and plenty of free time for you and your family to explore the beauty of Mackinac. Our meal times and gatherings will be joyous! Help us celebrate our 195th year on Mackinac Island!

**Questions?** Contact Rev. Rogers for more information ([mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org)).

## FAITH FORMATION: CHILDREN & FAMILIES



### 4th/5th Grade Milestone Ministry- "Amazing Stuff"

The fourth/fifth grade "Amazing Stuff: God's Gift for Growing Up" class will meet Sundays, January 9, 16, 23, and February 6, 13, & 20 at 4 p.m. There will be no class on Sunday, January 30, the date of the Annual Congregational Meeting.

This six-week course offers wonderful information for both your child and you as your family begins navigating the physical and emotional changes of preteen/teen years with a faithful approach. We have a magnificent team of teachers comprised of nurses and doctors who are members of First Pres.

There is a concurrent class for parents whose children are enrolled in "Amazing Stuff" that meets at the same time in a different room. Families will receive informational emails and reminders for registration. Click this link to register (<https://bit.ly/3IJZuRi>) or contact Beca Torres-Davenport at 662-4466, ext. 342 or [btorres-davenport@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:btorres-davenport@firstpresbyterian.org) for additional information.

## Sunday Funday! Joy and Laughter fill Monteith Hall and the first floor children's wing!

The first half of the school year has brought laughter, joy and connection to the First Pres Sunday morning routine. Our wonderful, dedicated teachers have been guiding our children in fun, unique ways this year: writing on stone tablets, sculpting their story, even creating a cloud of witnesses.

We're grateful to our amazing teaching teams who rotate through the Sundays and bring a creative energy to the Bible stories. Please join in a heartfelt thank you to our amazing teaching teams: Dan Musser & Marlee Brown, Brian Meade, Kevin Pipe, Lisa Arnsdorf, Elisabeth VanVliet, Cassee Stem Progar, Daniel Torres-Davenport, Sarah Glinka Endicott, and substitutes Rebecca Gaffney and Brian Schneidewind. We are blessed to have these amazing volunteers to spend time with our children.



In addition to Faith Formation class at 11 a.m., our children have had great experiences in Worship and Worship LAB. This fall they have created and offered a Call to Worship and practiced call and response liturgy, baked Communion bread for the entire congregation, enthusiastically participated in a baptism, answering questions in service and using "Celebration Sticks", learning to pray together, and talked about the role of music in worship, and exploring our different attitudes during worship.

## First Sundays: All church community building events

Each month, the Faith Formation team partners with different groups in the church to provide a Social Hour event that fosters relationships within our congregation and with the local community. In the new year, we have many more exciting events for all people of the church to join together in celebrations and in various ways to lift up our local community.

Here's a couple of events to anticipate. Be sure to mark your calendar to join us!

**January 2** Epiphany Celebration *Star Words*  
**February 6** Lunch packing with Local Missions



## This fall's events included:

**September:** Labor Day Ice Cream Social

**October:** World Communion Sunday "Bread for All" – tasting delicious bread from local ethnic bakeries.

**November:** All Saints' Day "Remembering the Saints" – honoring our loved ones with a candle and name on the Wall of Saints

**December:** Caring for those in need – handmade cards with drawings and messages of welcome to our January Rotating Shelter guests, AND packing 10,000+ meals with "Rise Against Hunger"

## YOUTH CONNECTION

Follow us on Instagram: @fpa2youth  
or subscribe to our weekly email for up-to-date  
information on all of our events!

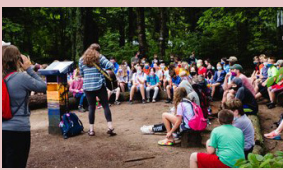
## Youth Choir + Handbells

Do you love music? Join us as we prepare for the Youth Sunday service later this year. We are putting together a Youth Choir and a Youth Handbells group to lead us in worship. Please contact Pastor Mark ([mmares@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:mmares@firstpresbyterian.org)) or Dave VanderMeer ([dvandermeer@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:dvandermeer@firstpresbyterian.org)) for more information or to sign up!



## Youth Summer Trip Opportunities

### Camp Fowler (Middle + High School)



This summer, Pastor Mark is inviting middle school and high school youth to join him as he travels to Speculator, NY, to spend a week at Camp Fowler, August 7–12. Camp Fowler is a children's camp "grounded in openness, hospitality, and compassionate Christianity, aiming to provide space for children to be themselves, learn from those who are different from them, and intimately experience wonder and love." If you would like more information, please contact Pastor Mark ([mmares@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:mmares@firstpresbyterian.org)). There will be information sessions on Zoom Wednesday, January 5, 8 p.m. and in-person on Sunday, January 9, at 11 a.m. Visit [Camp Fowler's website](http://CampFowler.org) for more information ([campfowler.org](http://campfowler.org)).

### Frontera de Cristo Immersion Trip (High School)

All high school students are invited to join us as we travel down to Arizona for an Immersion Trip, June 19–25. We'll visit Frontera de Cristo, a Presbyterian border ministry that works with churches and other organizations on both sides of the border to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God. There will be a couple of information sessions on Zoom Wednesday, January 5, at 8:30 p.m. and in-person on Sunday, January 9, at 11:30 a.m. Visit [Frontera de Cristo's website](http://FronteraDeCristo.org) ([fronteradecristo.org](http://fronteradecristo.org)).

### Triennium (High School)

Triennium is a wonderful opportunity for high schoolers to come together and meet other Presbyterian high schoolers from around the nation. The youth get to bond as a small group from the church and start building relationships with others in their small group at Triennium. Please contact Pastor Mark ([mmares@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:mmares@firstpresbyterian.org)) or Pastor Megan ([mberry@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:mberry@firstpresbyterian.org)) for more information.

# UKIRK@UMICH - CAMPUS MINISTRY

## Campus Ministry - UKirk @ UMich



Our First Pres Campus Ministry group partnered with Rise Against Hunger and the on-campus student group Redefined to pack over 10,500 meals. When all was said and done, the groups engaged over 60 volunteers in the effort, including at least 15 college students, 10 youth and 6 families. These meals are good for one year and will be shipped internationally in a month or two to those in need.



We also celebrate two seniors graduating early. Noelle Seward, a Michigander who graduates from the Ford School of Public Policy, served on our student leadership team and went to Puerto Rico with us in 2019. Eva Olson, who calls Hawaii home and has been a regular presence in our childcare program on Sundays, will be moving to Colorado to start a master's program. Congrats to both Noelle and Eva!



## T2A2 (TWENTIES & THIRTIES)

Twenties and Thirties of Ann Arbor (T2A2) is a community for all in their twenties and thirties. Our study of the book of Romans will continue in January, meeting alternately on Sundays at 11 a.m. in the Founders Room and Sundays at 7 p.m. offsite. We'll continue to meet up for casual hangouts as well on Thursday evenings (join our email list for regular updates!). Check for the latest on the [T2A2 page](#) of the church website: ([firstpresbyterian.org/connect/adult-ministry/t2a2-twenties-thirties](http://firstpresbyterian.org/connect/adult-ministry/t2a2-twenties-thirties)) and email Rev. Hannah Lundberg if you have any questions or would like to join our email list ([hlundberg@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:hlundberg@firstpresbyterian.org)). Everyone and anyone is welcome!

## ADULT FORMATION

### Sunday Mornings Exploring the Faith

**January 2** – Epiphany Intergenerational Activity

First Friends and Exploring the Faith classes will participate in the Intergenerational Activity.

**January 9** – Linnea Boese will share her story as a missionary and God's call for her life.

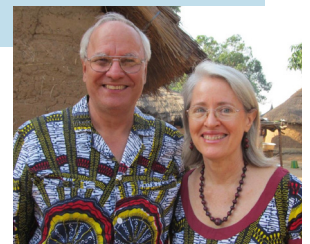
She writes, "Throughout my life, God has been showing me how much he loves all peoples – every ethnic group and race in the world. Growing up in a missionary family in Africa, I saw my parents and their partners give their lives to show compassion and bring hope to people there. Then I spent forty years ministering with my husband in Côte d'Ivoire, learning how to reach across linguistic and cultural boundaries to do the same thing. And now I live in a majority Black neighborhood in Detroit, experiencing new opportunities to continue to communicate the Lord's love here. I would love to share some of the ways the Lord has been at work in me and in these communities. He has done great things, and he wants to do yet more through all of us who follow him!"

**January 16 – February 20** – Join First Friends in the Lewis Room for the...

Adam Hamilton series: Creed: What Christians Believe and Why

([See First Friends for details](#))

**No Class on Jan. 30**





## First Friends- Lewis Room

First Friends will focus on Adam Hamilton. *Creed: What Christians Believe and Why* series during January and February.

**January 9** – Adam Hamilton. *Creed: What Christians Believe and Why*. Video and discussion. Session 1 "God."

**January 16** – Adam Hamilton. *Creed: What Christians Believe and Why*. Video and discussion. Session 2 "Jesus Christ."

**January 23** – Adam Hamilton. *Creed: What Christians Believe and Why*. Video and discussion. Session 3 "The Holy Spirit."

**No Class on Jan. 30**

## Bible Study at 11 o'clock

Participation in person (Curtis Room) and by Zoom.

Bible Study at 11 o'clock will continue reading the first 39 chapters of Isaiah in January, covering the period from about 740 to 680 BC. Upon completion of Chapter 39 we will turn to chapters 40-66, which cover the exile and return, from about 550 to about 400 BC.

## Confirmation for Adults

Adult/Parent Confirmation Class is currently meeting via Zoom! You can access that link on the church calendar or reach out to Pastors Megan or Mark for the link. We will start out the new year with a fun review of what we have learned so far before diving into new material. Hope you can join us for another fun semester of learning about our faith!

*Note: There will be no Adult Formation classes on January 30 due to the Annual Meeting of the Congregation.*

## Weekday Adult Formation Sessions

**Journeys Bible Study** — meets via Zoom on the first and third Thursday of the month from 11:30 -1 p.m. A Resident Minister facilitates our time together. We're studying the book of Acts, incorporating art and poetry to tease out fresh modern perspectives about the authority and power of the Holy Spirit. For more details contact Coordinator, Beth Gerwig at [bgerwig@comcast.net](mailto:bgerwig@comcast.net). The zoom link is (<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/295007173>).

## Men's Study Group at First Pres

The Men's Study Group meets on the first and third Friday mornings of each month (through May) from 8:30 – 9:30 a.m. in the Curtis Room for coffee, study, and conversation. All men are welcome! Questions? Contact Rev. Jay Sanderford, [jsanderford@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:jsanderford@firstpresbyterian.org) or (734) 662-4466, ext. 340.

# MATURE MINISTRIES

## Mature Ministries to Discover Detroit's Lost Black Neighborhood

Detroit's Black Bottom neighborhood—the area in Detroit where Blacks were legally restricted to live in during much of the city's history—was destroyed as the interstate highway system cut through the city, and racial unrest destroyed or compromised much of what remained. Using archival photographs of the neighborhood as her starting point, architect Emily Kutil created an exhibition that recreated the neighborhood visually and drew former residents to visit, reconnect, and share stories of the vibrant life of this community.



Ms. Kutil, Assistant Professor of Architecture at Lawrence Technological University, will be the featured speaker in a Lunch & Learn Zoom session, Thursday, January 13, at noon. Watch for future postings from Rev. Rogers for additional information on how to participate. Attend to see a vanished culture come back to life!

## PASTORAL CARE

### Stephen Ministry

The next Stephen Ministry Continuing Education presentation will be a Zoom presentation at 7 p.m., on January 10. Dr. Peg Talburtt will discuss the topic "Human Trafficking: what it is and what you can do about it." Dr. Talburtt recently retired as Executive Director of the Lovelight Foundation, a private women's foundation that has funded a number of projects in the field of human trafficking, particularly those having to do with child sex trafficking in the United States. This is an issue she has followed for decades since she worked with a group of teen girl grant makers who believed trafficked teens were a REAL issue. Through her work in several foundations over the last twenty-five years, she has been able to watch the development of comprehensive trafficking programs in Atlanta, Minnesota, New York, and Florida, among other locations. She is a current member of the MI Human Trafficking Task Force, chairs the Resource Committee of the MI Attorney General's Michigan Human Trafficking Commission, and is a community leader for MAP-Ann Arbor, an anti-trafficking volunteer organization.



## PARISH NURSING

### The Winter Months and Seasonal Depression

As winter arrives, there is often much concern for falls and hypothermia, especially for our mature community. Something equally worrisome is our mental health. During these cold months of January, February, and March, many people can experience seasonal depression. This can be something that is very challenging but also very treatable. Read on to learn more about things you can do to help your physical and mental health during the winter months.



<https://www.agingcare.com/articles/winter-seasonal-affective-disorder-depression-149072.htm>

## PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

### PW Mission – Gifts of the Season Sewing Angels & Fabric Needed!

Presbyterian Women is supporting Sewing Angels, a new project suggested by senior sewing angel Gail Grady, to make reusable/reversible shopping bags for Hope Clinic's food bank customers. PW contributed \$125 for fabric and Gail is putting together sewing kits. Donations of fabric are also appreciated! Interested in participating? Want to give fabric? Contact Gail at [gailgradycm@yahoo.com](mailto:gailgradycm@yahoo.com) or 734-417-6582 to learn more.

### PC(USA) Prayer Partners – Congo Relief Work After Mt. Nyiragongo Eruption



Please pray for Jeff and Christie Boyd, PC(USA) Prayer Partners based in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Jeff and Christie are helping those affected by the volcanic eruption of Mount Nyiragongo in eastern Congo. The volcano erupted on May 22 with no warning – killing 31 people, sweeping away seven villages, destroying crops and livestock, and displacing over 400,000 people. Learn about the catastrophe and the relief work being done by PC(USA) at [www.pcusa.org](http://www.pcusa.org). You can make a donation toward relief efforts at <https://pma.pcusa.org/donate/make-a-gift/gift-info/DR000088/>



## Ingathering 2021

Covid determined the form of Ingathering this year. We are so appreciative of your support and hopeful that we can be back gathering together to distribute items in 2022. The gifts given for the Presbytery of Detroit's "Ingathering" were distributed as follows:

\$230 to First step, Plymouth, MI, <https://www.firststep-mi.org/programs-and-services/>

\$230 to Fort Street Presbyterian Church's Open-Door program in Detroit

<https://www.fortstreet.org/opendoor>

\$230 to Genesis House II, Detroit

<https://drmm.org/about-us/history/> and its services <https://drmm.org/services/>

\$200 to Second Mile Center, Detroit, <http://www.secondmilecenter.org/about>

## November Thank Offering

Our PWs annual Thanksgiving offering has collected over \$780 to date. Contributions have allowed PW/PCUSA to award grants of nearly \$27 million to more than 1600 different projects at home and around the world. Check out the 18 national and international grant recipients at [www.presbyterianwomen.org](http://www.presbyterianwomen.org)

## PW Food Donations Support The Presbytery of Detroit Hunger Ministry

*For I was hungry, and you gave me food to eat. I was thirsty, and you gave me drink. I was a stranger, and you took me in. - Matthew 25:35*

The Presbytery of Detroit's Hunger Action Coordinator, Unah Matu-Ngare is so thankful for our support of this ministry which supplies food pantries and delivery programs food run by eight Presbyterian Churches in Detroit, Pontiac and Dearborn. These churches are deeply rooted in their communities, volunteering and collaborating with many organizations that serve the poor and hungry. The Detroit Hunger ministry welcomes gifts of food, hygiene supplies, cleaning supplies, monetary donations and volunteers. Unah says, " Whatever gifts the Lord puts in your hearts to give, we are committed to ensuring those in need receive it."

## Nuture Your Faith Morning Horizons Bible Study

Thursday, January 13, 10:30 - 11:30 a.m., **Curtis Room**

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

January's fascinating study of Ruth from *What My Grandmothers Taught Me - Learning from the Women in Matthew's Genealogy of Jesus* continues as Barb DeLancey takes the helm. Ruth and Naomi, who started out empty and bereft, are redeemed through the love they show each other, and Ruth becomes the main reason King David's family line can continue! After discussion, please join Mature Ministries' "Lunch & Learn" program (sign up in the Church Office). **Books are still available!** Contact Peggy Hodgson at 810 360-5812 or [peggyhodgson@comcast.net](mailto:peggyhodgson@comcast.net)

## "Evenings with Jenna" Bible Study

Thursday, January 13, 7 - 8 p.m., **Founders Room**

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



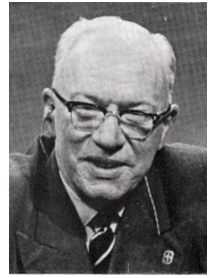
Looking for a way to connect at First Pres? This friendly group, led by Jenna Mares, meets the second Thursday of each month, and is open to all women, men, new members, and visitors! Discussion follows using the morning Horizons format (see above) with Jenna as leader. More information? Contact Jenna at 712-299-1971 or [jenna.arms66@gmail.com](mailto:jenna.arms66@gmail.com). You are most welcome!



## William Barclay Commentary Study

Wednesdays, January 12 – February 23, 10:30–11:30 a.m., **Meg Brown's home or on Zoom.**

Have you ever wanted to not just study the Bible, but delve into history as well? William Barclay was a plain-spoken genius, and a believer who wants us to understand and make the Bible personal. Read, ponder, and pray with us while focusing on Paul's Letter to the Galatians. For the link or for more information about the study, please contact Meg at [megbrown@gmail.com](mailto:megbrown@gmail.com) or 734-623-4323.



## ANNUAL GIVING & FINANCE

### Making God's Love Visible, Peace by Piece, Annual Giving 2022

Thank you to all who responded with your 2022 Financial Pledge and Opportunities to Serve forms! As of December 21, 2021, we've received 391 pledges totaling \$1,383,193 or 83.9% of our \$1,648,665 goal. If you have not yet turned in your commitment forms, there is still time, and a real need for your support. Please consider your response to the invitation to Make God's Love Visible, and return your pledge forms to the church office as soon as possible or [pledge online](https://www.firstpresbyterian.org/contribute/donate/stewardship-2022) at <https://www.firstpresbyterian.org/contribute/donate/stewardship-2022>. With your help and engagement, First Pres will continue to show God's love in our congregation, our community, and around the world.



## FAITH IN ACTION

### Christmas Giving

In the spirit of the Advent Season, gifts were provided for our most vulnerable neighbors through:

- Family to Family Christmas, coordinated so ably by Julie Morrison, provided gifts for 40 families referred by DHSS. Members directly adopted a family or made a financial donation to purchase gift cards. Members also provided gift bags or gift cards for 40 Foster children through the "Fostering Futures" organization.
- Ozone House received a donation of \$2,000 from Mission funds to purchase winter coats, gift cards and other essential items for the runaway and homeless youth the organization serves.
- Delonis Shelter received 58 pairs of winter gloves through Mission funds for the men at the shelter. We are so thankful to Bob & Jeannine Buchanan who purchased and delivered the gloves, and for their continuous care for these vulnerable men.
- The Christmas Eve Special Offering was designated for Afghani Refugee Resettlement with special emphasis on support of Jewish Family Services.



## Rotating Homeless Shelter Program at First Pres is “Pressing” Forward

First Presbyterian Church Ann Arbor has a 20+ year history of working with the Shelter Association of Washtenaw County by offering a warm welcome to un-housed men on cold winter nights. We are preparing to renew this offer in January 2022 ( Jan. 3 – Jan. 17 ) after being unable to do so last winter due to Covid safety concerns. We will be taking extra care to keep the men and our volunteers safe by ensuring safe distancing between sleeping areas, limiting food supplied to pre-packaged snacks and coffee, juice, and water, and limiting opportunities for the guests and our volunteers to sit together at tables for socialization. First Pres volunteers will be scheduled to welcome arrivals each evening following the dinner provided at the Delonis Center when the Shelter van delivers our guests to the Social Hall around 7:15 p.m. We will also provide 3-4 volunteers to spend each night at the church to share the hours between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. splitting shifts to oversee the sleeping hours.

The Shelter Program assures us the men in the Rotating cohort will, as in past years, be committed to their pledge of safe practices with regard to Covid and being free of alcohol. Regular testing of all men at the Shelter for COVID continues at least every 2 weeks. These are particularly challenging times for everyone which also means our ability to help provide comfort to the men is especially precious. It is another way for First Pres to Make God's Love Visible.

## Local Mission Grant Program Supports Delonis in 2021, and Gears up for 2022

Every year First Pres supports our neighbors in need through grants to local community agencies. In 2021 we distributed \$73,000 through 12 grants each worth between \$5,000 and 10,000. Some grants go to our long-time partners, such as Alpha House, Habitat for Humanity, and Friends-In-Deed. For 2021, the Shelter Association at Delonis Center requested help to re-open the second floor of the shelter, which had been closed prior to COVID due to lack of funds. Eventually this program expansion will increase their capacity by 50%, or 100 clients per year!

The Local Mission Grant Program is gearing up for 2022 and would welcome your input! During January we will be reviewing our funding priorities and the application process. Contact Martha Kershaw [mdkershaw@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mdkershaw@sbcglobal.net) if you would like to participate. For more information visit our [web page](https://www.firstpresbyterian.org/mission/local-missions/local-mission-grant-program) <https://www.firstpresbyterian.org/mission/local-missions/local-mission-grant-program>.

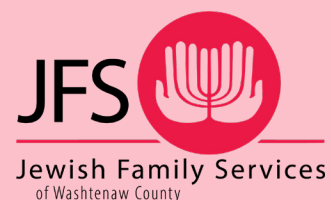
## JFS Co-Sponsorship Program for Afghanistan Refugees

Our partners at Jewish Family Services (JFS) are rolling out a new co-sponsorship program that would allow our church to sponsor a particular family and support them during their first 12 months in the U.S. JFS would offer guidance, but First Pres would be primarily responsible for coordinating volunteers, support, and community for the family we would be paired with.

Before we sign up for this program, we need to gauge volunteer interest to determine if we can faithfully serve and sufficiently meet the needs of the family we will be paired with. This is no small undertaking, JFS estimates that each church will need teams of around 30 volunteers contributing a collective 40 hours/week of volunteer service, for at least the first two months after a family's arrival. If you might be interested in volunteering please fill out this Google form <https://forms.gle/UZUsq843aDVkv5GS6> or contact Rev. Hannah Lundberg.

**Additionally, join us for an informational Zoom meeting on Wednesday, January 12 at 7 p.m.**, when Hannah will share more details and answer questions. You can [join us on Zoom](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83504783661?pwd=eGFselpFcHNTTDNpRTJUMDVZcCtWZz09) here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83504783661?pwd=eGFselpFcHNTTDNpRTJUMDVZcCtWZz09>

As we consider this particular endeavor, we also continue to work with JFS in other ways. Visit the “Supporting Refugees from Afghanistan” page of the church website to discover how you can respond to this need. You can reach out to Resident Ministers Hannah ([hlundberg@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:hlundberg@firstpresbyterian.org)) or Megan ([mberry@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:mberry@firstpresbyterian.org)) with any questions you may have.





## TRANSITIONS

### Death to New Life



**Maro Ferris**  
November 28, 2021



**Jim Bixler**  
November 9, 2021



**Robert Miller**  
November 29, 2021



**Bob Harris**  
December 2, 2021



**Al Monich**  
December 9, 2021

## STAFF UPDATES

### A Warm Welcome to Nicholas Dibacco-Vaidya

We welcome Nick Dibacco-Vaidya -- who has joined the First Pres staff as part-time Finance Assistant on a. Nick is a student at Eastern Michigan University and will graduate in April 2022 with a Master of Science in Accounting. (Go Eagles!) Nick grew up in Canada between Halifax, Nova Scotia, and Windsor, Ontario. Even so, he is a big Michigan football and basketball fan, eh?! Stop by the Finance Office to introduce yourself to Nick when you have a chance so that he becomes acquainted with members of the congregation. Nick replaces Alyssa Walker, who's one-year position has come to an end.



# RESIDENT MINISTRY

## Join us at the 8 a.m. service!

The resident ministers are enjoying getting to preach and lead worship at both the 8 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. services, but we have a special place in our hearts for the 8 a.m. gathering! We know it is early, but if you can drink enough coffee (trust us, we need it, too!), come and join us one Sunday! We hope you'll want to come back for more. The 8 a.m. gathering is intimate, friendly, and we hope it can kickstart your Sunday morning with some special joy. We especially love getting to share in Communion each week. After a long time of Communion functioning differently during the pandemic, the chance to gather around Christ's table in community week after week is refreshing and life-giving. Another joyous part of this service is being joined by our Chancel Choir section leaders, who lend their voices and presence to add a little more warmth (and on-key singing!) to the service.



Later in 2022, we hope to start trying out some more creative modes of worship at 8 a.m., as well as recording these services so those who are not yet returning to the building can participate as well. We'll keep many familiar things the same, but you might encounter a conversational sermon, some interesting participatory art, or a different way of seeing music incorporated in the service. We have lots of ideas and are eager to try some new things! We'll keep you posted as new things come to the table!

## Our Latest Art Exhibit: "Finding Sanctuary" by Christina Saj

This body of work takes shape from the circles on which they are painted. Christina Saj is a contemporary artist whose abstract paintings reveal a fascination with vivid color and rich pattern. All pieces featured in the Social Hall are for sale. Each plate costs \$225 and the Sacred Music Fund will receive 40% of all sales. See Dave VanderMeer for purchasing the art: [dvandermeer@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:dvandermeer@firstpresbyterian.org).





# Nativity Service - December 19, 2021



FIRST  
PRESBYTERIAN  
Ann Arbor | Michigan

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