

# First Press

A Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor  
January 2018 ■ Volume 66, Number 1



## WHAT'S INSIDE

Worship & Music.....	2
Congregational Life.....	2
Children & Families .....	4
Faith in Action .....	4
Financial Stewardship .....	7
Adult Education .....	8
Ukirk@Umich .....	10
Resident Minister Corner .....	10

## Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! It is hard to believe that it is 2018. In December one could troll the internet and find a number of different predictions of what this year will bring in the realm of economics, politics, food trends, and anything else one might be interested in. What will 2018 bring for us at First Pres? The officers you elected last September have been trained and readied to take office on January 14. The Session continues its visioning process to set out goals for 2020, 2022, and 2024. The liturgical year and the secular calendar align to give us unusual pairings. Ash Wednesday, a day of solemn repentance that for many begins a 40-day fast, lands on Valentine's Day, the biggest day of the year for giving boxes of chocolates. Easter is on April Fool's Day, so for months I've known my sermon that day must focus on 1 Corinthians 1.18: "For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." The General Assembly will meet in St. Louis in June, our children will gather for Bible School, and our middle schoolers will be going to a conference in Virginia (new for

2018). What else? We will have the privilege of celebrating marriages and baptisms. We will support one another as we mourn the loss of loved ones. We will worship together, pray together, break bread, laugh, and cry. We will build decent housing for a hard-working family, plant a garden for those who cannot afford fresh produce, and struggle to discern the best way, as Christians, to address numerous thorny social issues.

What else? My crystal ball is no clearer than yours – but I do know that God will be with us, guiding, encouraging, supporting, challenging, and loving us. Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Remember that. Hold on to it. Count on it. Rejoice in it! And our new year will be blessed. That we can trust.

Grace and peace,

Rev. Dr. Fairfax F. Fair, Pastor



## Annual Meeting & All-Church Luncheon Is January 28

On Sunday, January 28, come for one of the great fellowship events of the year – First Pres' Annual Meeting of the Congregation and Luncheon. The annual meeting takes place in the Sanctuary following the 9:30 a.m. worship service. Dr. Fair will give a brief address about the state of the church, after which the congregation will hear about the budget, approve the terms of call for the installed pastors, and learn about some key areas of ministry at First Pres. After the annual meeting there will be a "shelter in place" emergency drill. The morning will conclude with a delicious lunch in the Social Hall. Watch the bulletin and website for more details. We look forward to seeing you there!

**There will be no 11:00 a.m. worship service on January 28.**





# Worship & Music

## Ordination and Installation of Officers - January 14



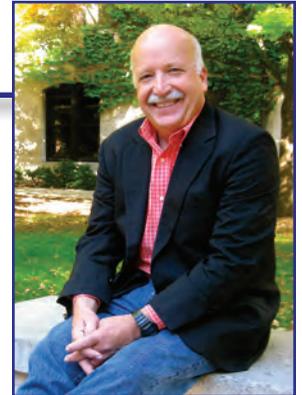
It is a joyful day when we ordain and install officers to serve Christ through serving this congregation. At 9:30 a.m., we will ordain and install our new deacons - Pam Ehrhart, Mary Engelhardt, Robin Fosheim-Hoag, Nancy Fox, Doug Gottliebsen, Alice Holderby, Susan Morville, Nancy Oliver, Julie Rupp, Lisa Shultz, Mary Smith, Jeanette Swartz, Sara Vander Voort, Brian Williams, Heidi Williams, and Pam Wood. At 11:00 a.m., we will ordain and install our new elders - Dick Carlisle, Diane Hockett, Linda Koopmann, Bill McPherson, Karen Mundus, Brian Schneidewind, Bill Upton, and Sharon Watling. Come and worship with us that day and stay for cake and a celebration following during Coffee Hour.



# Congregational Life

## Hilltoppers Welcomes Award-Winning Author Scott Ellsworth Thursday, January 11

Dr. Scott Ellsworth teaches courses on African American history, Southern literature, and crime and justice in contemporary U.S. society at UM. His book, *The Secret Game* (Little, Brown), won a 2016 PEN Book Award. Come hear about the book he is working on next! Lunch is \$5. Sign up with Rev. Rogers, [mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org), or the Church Office, 662-4466.



## Lasting Happiness – Can We Find It?

All adults are welcome to attend the next Mature Ministries book discussion on the *Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World* by the Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu. We will gather for the discussion led by Rev. Rogers on Sunday, January 21, 3:00 - 4:30 p.m., at the home Mary Smith (Ann Arbor westside). Snacks are provided!

## STEPHEN MINISTRY

### Continuing Education – You’re Invited!

Join us on Monday, January 8, 7:00 - 8:00 p.m., in Monteith Hall as Mary Shieve, Estate Planning and Elder Law lawyer, presents “Legal Considerations in Later Life.” She will cover a range of the topics relating to aging and elder issues such as long-term care issues (medicare, medicaid, assisted living, nursing homes), the role of the probate court, advance directives, powers of attorney, federal estate tax, what a will does and doesn’t do, what a trust is, and how to plan in case of incapacity. There will be time for questions and answers. Everyone is invited to this presentation.

### Grief Support Is There for You

The Stephen Ministers are trained and equipped to walk with those who are grieving, hurting, or needing support in any way. Did you know about our grief books series? A series of four grief books is mailed to most people in the congregation who have lost a loved one. One book is sent each quarter for a full year after a person experiences a death in their immediate family. Wonderful saints have been responsible for this special ministry started by Bob Harris, who would write personal notes in each book mailed. Paul Kirton then took it on followed by Evonne Plantinga who streamlined and organized the ministry. Soon it will transition to Debbie Ternes. How grateful we are for their compassionate efforts and time given!

One recipient wrote to a Stephen Minister about what a powerful ministry this is: “I just finished reading the third book about grief that you sent me. I’ve loved reading them so much that I purposely delayed finishing them because I did not want to be done. You helped me like no one else and I count you as one of my many blessings that God has given me.” She went on to say that she is sharing them with her sister and wants to send them to a co-worker who just lost her mom. This is but one small way we can share help, comfort, and support. Thanks to all of you at First Pres for supporting Stephen Ministry and all the ways our program contributes to the pastoral care of our First Pres family.



## Presbyterian Women Gathering - January 17

All are welcome to any portion or all of the day's activities. Make your luncheon reservation by signing up in the Church Office or calling 662-4466.

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

Joyce Himebaugh will lead the study of Lesson 5, "In Community with the Tradition of the Past."

### 11:00 a.m. Program in Monteith Hall

Watch *The Collector of Bedford Street*, an Academy Award nominated short film about Larry Selman, an intellectually disabled man and activist who raised \$1 million for charity. Join a discussion of activism and its impact on today's society.

### Noon Luncheon in the Social Hall (\$7)

## Save the Date for the Women's Retreat

Mark your calendars for March 9-10. We'll be exploring God's grace - both in finding and sharing it. Sign ups will start mid-January. Watch for more details on our website and in Our Life Together.

## Two New Support Groups Coming to First Pres!

Join us for "STOP: Sensibly Take Off Pounds," a four-week support group for those who are working on getting healthy and losing weight. Led by First Pres member Gail Grady who has a rich background in weight loss programs and a personal story to share, as well — we will meet from 6:00 - 7:00 p.m. in the Youth Room on Thursdays, January 18, January 25, February 1, and February 8. Come for any or all meetings and bring friends and neighbors! All are welcome as we support one another in our quest for good health.



**Divorce Recovery and Support Group** will be held on Tuesday nights in March, 7 - 8:00 p.m., Lower Level of First Pres. Led by First Pres member Annette Fraser, with help from Rev. Rogers, we will tackle the hard topics and moments for those who are experiencing the end of a marriage. If you've come through it, are in it, or are about to begin the journey, there is help for you. Come learn, share, and support one another. Community members and friends are welcome!



## T2A2: Different Paths, One Community

*Our ministry for graduate students and young professionals, Twenties and Thirties of Ann Arbor (T2A2), continues to strengthen its foundation of shared leadership and community building.*

For some graduate students, T2A2 provides opportunities to connect with others in a low-pressure environment outside their respective academic fields. Catalina Esguerra, who frequently hosts group gatherings, says, "The group itself functions as a close friend and place of solidarity in my life." Another group leader and active First Pres member, Sara McAdory-Kim, finds in the group "a sense of

belonging, no matter how often you attend." Others appreciate that T2A2 is a community where people from different life paths come together to grow spiritually through Bible study, conversations about life, and service opportunities.

The group offers two weekly engagements. Jump in on a Wednesday Hangout with a diverse group of people at a local restaurant, bar, or ice cream parlor to discuss current events, share in laughter and mutual support, or simply swap stories of common experiences. Come to an informal Sunday evening Small Group meeting at Chris Wahl's house and you can talk a little or a lot with others all along the religious spectrum who are curious about the Bible and seeking spiritual growth. This fall, T2A2 also enjoyed a Labor Day Weekend brunch to kick off the new semester, a multigenerational brunch at the home of Kathy and Spaulding Clark, volunteering with the Stadium Food Rescue, preparing and serving dinner for Circles of Washtenaw County at St. Luke Lutheran Church, attending First Forums, a Holiday Cookie Exchange Party, an outing to the Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra Holiday Concert, and more.

In 2018, the group anticipates more service opportunities, outdoor activities, outings to Detroit, and social gatherings. Several group members will travel with the Nicaragua Mission Team to wire a school in Quebrada Honda. We look forward to welcoming new members and participating in new adventures!



# Children & Families



## Register Your Child at Triangle Preschool

Triangle Cooperative Preschool (located in our church building) is now accepting applications for three and four-year-olds for the 2018-2019 school year. First Pres members receive priority enrollment status for applications submitted prior to February 1, 2018. There will be an Open House on Saturday February 3, 2018 from 10:00 a.m. - noon, for prospective families to tour the school, meet the teachers and Triangle families, and have questions answered. Light refreshments and children's activities will be offered. For an application or more information call 221-0905 or visit [www.trianglecoop.org](http://www.trianglecoop.org).



# Faith In Action

## First Pres Welcomes the Homeless

January is not the time to sleep outdoors in Michigan! Our church will host 25 homeless men, identified by the Shelter Association as good candidates for the rotating shelter program, from Monday, January 8, to Monday, January 22. They will sleep in the Social Hall on mats provided by the shelter. The men arrive around 8:00 p.m. and leave by 7:00 a.m. There are many ways for you to be a part of this wonderful hospitality:



**Overnight** - Four volunteers are needed to be custodians of the building, conversing with the men before lights out at 10:00 p.m., and taking three hour shifts during the night.

**Transportation** - The men will be given bus tokens to use during the week. Drivers are needed on the weekends from 7:30 to 8:15 p.m., and 6:30 to 7:15 a.m., including Monday, January 22.

**Food** - Volunteers are needed to drop off homemade snacks, pre-packaged treats and/or lunch meats before 8:00 p.m. each day. Hot food is also welcome in the evening.

**Donations** - Donations of hand warmers, gloves, and new long underwear are needed. Look for bins in the Church Office or bring them forward during worship on January 7.

**Want to Help?** If you are available to help, please join the 100+ volunteers needed to make this mission activity a success! Those of us who have done this before are happy to help introduce new people to this wonderful ministry. You'll be surprised how meaningful it is, and how many new First Pres and community friends you'll make. To volunteer, sign up at Coffee Hour, in the Church Office, or go to <https://firstpresbyterian.wufoo.com/forms/rotating-shelter-volunteers-2018/> Questions? Contact John Yodhes at 677-4036 or Rev. Melissa Anne Rogers at [mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org) or 355-2351.

## Thank You Hurricane Relief Responders!

We received and forwarded on to the PCUSA Disaster Relief \$21,106 for Hurricane relief in Puerto Rico, which includes a matching donation for \$6,252.00. We also received and forwarded on to the PCUSA Disaster Relief \$6,500.00 for Hurricane Harvey.

## "Thank You" From Our Mission Partners

### Haiti Nursing Foundation

"The most moving part of the event for me occurred right after the commencement. I approached Jacques Henry Demonstene, one of HNF's sponsored students. Jacques and I made eye contact and he flashed me a big smile. I re-introduced myself - 'Hi Jacques, I'm Thom Bales from the Haiti Nursing Foundation.' Jacques replied, 'I know. You're the person responsible for my scholarship.' Moved by his words, all I could answer was, 'No, Jacques, it wasn't actually me, but many others have supported you and other students here. I am merely the person with the honor to congratulate you today.'"

I hope you know that it is YOU who helped make Jacques and many other students' education (as well as the entire nursing school) possible."

*Thom Bales, Executive Director  
Haiti Nursing Foundation*



**Alpha House Thanks You** Thank you, Alpha House volunteers, for supporting children and parents experiencing homelessness in our community while they move toward stable housing. In November, your multi-generational team, as young as elementary school age, provided supplies, meals, childcare, and overnight presence during the week. Thanks to those who helped to support Alpha House guests in other ways. We are grateful to members of the Mom's Bible Study Group who collected money to support other moms. And we appreciate those of you who bought headbands, other knitted goods, and shares at the Mission Bazaar. There will be another opportunity to serve Alpha House guests the week of March 26, 2018. Please keep Alpha House guests in your prayers.

*With gratitude, Anne Gere, Lucie Audette, Paula Doering and Nicole Jolliet*



## Local Mission Grants

### Seeking to Forward God's Call in Our Community

Every year the Local Mission Team (LMT) of First Pres seeks to understand the essential human needs in our area and to respond in ways that make an impact. The team gathers information about the needs of vulnerable people and pays attention to where God's heart is breaking in our Ann Arbor, Washtenaw, and southeast Michigan area.

The LMT discerns ministry groups and organizations that are addressing those needs, and invites them to apply for a Local Mission Grant of up to \$10,000 each. At First Pres, we are particularly interested in partnering with organizations that meet basic human needs and build communities with effective programs and/or tackle structural social inequities as they engage in long term solutions. In 2017 we awarded 23 grants, from \$1000 to \$7500, distributing over \$75,000. During January we will discern our priorities, revise the grant application accordingly and prepare to distribute it in February. In March and April we will evaluate the applications and decide about awards, Questions? Contact Martha Kershaw at [mdkershaw@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mdkershaw@sbcglobal.net), Rev. Sanderford at [jsanderford@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:jsanderford@firstpresbyterian.org), or <https://firstpresbyterian.org/mission/local-missions/local-mission-grant-program>.



## Faces of Faith VII

**Sunday, January 14, 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.,  
Zion Lutheran Church, 1501 W. Liberty, Ann Arbor**

One of the annual programs that the Interfaith Round Table offers the community is a "face to face" experience with people from many different religious and spiritual backgrounds. This year we have six presenters ready to talk about the joys and misconceptions that come with their tradition or beliefs. Come, listen to, and engage with a Hindu, an Interfaith minister, a Muslim, a Buddhist, a Jew, and a Catholic on what it is that both brings them joy from their faith traditions and sadness from other people's reactive biases. There is a \$5 suggested donation.

## Cass Community Social Services

"Thank you once again for planting our gardens and making our Webb Street buildings look good. We always look forward to your Saturday and getting things planted for the summer. Thank you for getting us in shape and for helping supply the kitchen with great food!"

*Rev. Sue Pethond*

## The Family Learning Institute

"Meet Ayub: Because English was second-grader Ayub's second language, he came to FLI reading below first-grade level. By the end of May, Ayub had not only greatly increased his vocabulary but was able to make some sense of what he read and was reading at his grade level. Ayub has become a reader!"

*Jean Waltman, Board Chairperson,  
The Family Learning Institute*

## Washtenaw Community College SRC (Student Resource Center) Emergency Food Pantry

"With a small budget to purchase food from our food partner, Food Gatherers, we rely heavily on donations like First Presbyterian's. As a donor, you demonstrate to us that you're dedicated to helping those in need and helping students reach their educational goals. Please know how much we value this support – and how important it is to our mission of providing basic food to WCC students facing a temporary food crisis."

*Carol & the SRC staff*

## Alpha House Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN)

"We can't do what we do without volunteers like you – you make Alpha House possible – from feeding our six families, to supplying them with essentials and the shelter and to coming and playing with our kids. You keep us going!"

*IHN at Alpha House*

## English as a Second Language (ESL) Ministry

### A Taste of Thanksgiving Potluck

The ESL Ministry has an annual tradition of “letting love show” with its Taste of Thanksgiving potluck. The event takes place on the Tuesday before Thanksgiving and is sponsored by ESL staff volunteers, each of whom prepares an entrée for the event that provides the learners with culinary enjoyment and information about this revered American holiday. Along with the sampling of food and hints on carving a turkey, our international guests receive historical insights into the evolution of this Thanksgiving. Interested in learning more about ESL at First Pres? Contact Ruth Primas at [ruthp@umich.edu](mailto:ruthp@umich.edu).



## Dr. Ruth Barnard Retires from the Haiti Nursing School Foundation



*Dr. Ruth Barnard with other Haiti Nursing Foundation Board members for the Nov. 2017 Haiti Nursing School graduation.*

On Friday, December 8, the Haiti Nursing Foundation Board of Directors, meeting at First Presbyterian, paused to applaud the long tenure and signature accomplishments of Dr. Ruth Barnard. The Haiti Nursing Foundation also used the occasion of Ruth Barnard’s retirement from the board to note the pivotal role that Ruth played in the launch of the Faculté des Sciences Infirmières de l’Université Episcopale d’Haïti (Faculty of Nursing Science of the Episcopal University of Haiti or FSIL) located in Léogâne, Haiti and to commend her for her vision, resourcefulness and tenacity.

In 2001, at the urging of Rev. Michael Lindvall, then pastor of First Presbyterian, Ruth Barnard came alongside Dr. Jack Guy Lafontant and other Haitians working with the Medical

Benevolence Foundation (MBF) in Léogâne, Haiti to start a school of nursing to improve medical care across Haiti. MBF had been successful in obtaining a \$1.2 million grant from the United States Agency for International Development. A First Pres member and recently retired professor from the University of Michigan School of Nursing, Ruth Barnard, PhD, RN, was tapped to lead the effort to develop the nursing school program while the school buildings were under construction. Dr. Barnard recruited other volunteers to form a governing board to oversee school operations and programs, brought together nursing professionals to design and structure a nursing curriculum and participated in recruiting quality leadership for the school.

FSIL was the first baccalaureate nursing school program in Haiti, setting a standard for the country. The nursing school graduated its first class of 13 men and women in January 2009 and more than 135 students have now graduated. Along with the Haiti Nursing Foundation Board, the First Pres Haiti Mission Team and the Mission Committee thanks Ruth for her many contributions to compassionate ministry and mission around the world.

## News from Niger – Michael and Rachel Ludwig



The exciting news here is that the church in our town is starting the building process on the first student hosting center! We’re hopeful that it will be done for students to start coming when school resumes in mid-January. Michael was blessed to be a part of the ceremony and to meet the people involved in the future success of the center. We hope to be able to introduce children’s programs at the center. Construction on the second hosting center starts later this month. There is still a need for sturdy bunk beds for these facilities so that they can host the maximum number of students in the new year.

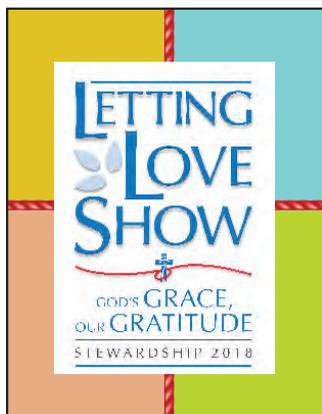
Pray with us! Praise God for the safety and healthy growth of our family. Please pray for Michael’s health. Pray for the quick and efficient building of the youth hosting centers, for the students who will stay there, and the pastors that will lead them.

## PCUSA Appoints New Israel Palestine Mission Coworker

Presbyterian World Mission has recently announced the appointment of Doug Dicks as the Mission co-worker for Israel and Palestine. The Israel Palestine Mission Team of First Presbyterian Church looks forward to working with and supporting Doug as he begins this ministry. In his role as facilitator for education for justice and peacemaking, Doug connects PCUSA congregations and councils with indigenous Christians in Israel and Palestine. Doug's extensive experience in the region as a PCUSA region liaison for Israel, Palestine and Jordan, mission co-worker, and peacemaking consultant and facilitator furthers his capacity to educate PCUSA constituencies on the contextual realities of the churches' witness in the region. Learn more at <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/missionconnections/doug-dicks/>



## Financial Stewardship



### Letting Love Show – Stewardship 2018

Thank you to all who responded with their 2018 financial pledge and Opportunities to Serve forms! As of December 20, we've received 480 pledges totaling \$1,566,544, or 92.1% of our \$1,700,000 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 God's invitation to Let Love Show, and return your pledge forms to the church office as soon as possible (or pledge online at [www.firstpresbyterian.org](http://www.firstpresbyterian.org) under the contribute tab). With your help and engagement, First Pres will continue to share God's grace in our congregation, our community, and around the world. 2018 is looking promising, indeed!

### Financial Update

The Session, First Presbyterian Church's governing body, along with the Finance Committee are committed to providing regular financial updates to you, our members and friends. The following financial information is for the month of October and the 2017 fiscal year which ends December 31, 2017. We will provide an end-of-the-year financial report and our Church's 2018 budget at the annual meeting of our congregation on Sunday January 28, 2018.

#### For the month of October:

Total income received:	\$ 166,579
Total expenses:	\$ 146,347
Surplus:	\$ 20,232

#### Year-to-Date through October:

Total income received:	\$ 1,500,740 (71.7% of our annual budget),
Total expenses	\$ 1,495,080 (71.4% of our annual budget)
Surplus	(\$ 5,660)

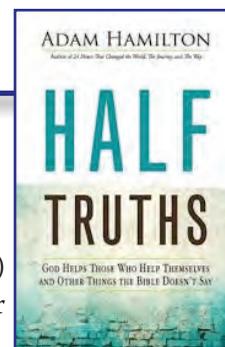
Questions? Contact Bill Wood, Chair of Finance, at [wwood594@comcast.net](mailto:wwood594@comcast.net).



## Adult Education

### A Call for Book Donations

Twenties and Thirties of Ann Arbor (T2A2) will study Adam Hamilton's *Half Truths* in January and could use your help! If you studied the book this fall and are willing to donate your copy for a young adult/graduate student on a budget, please contact Rev. Parks-Piatt ([dparks-piatt@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:dparks-piatt@firstpresbyterian.org)) and drop the book off at the Church Office. Copies for lending, marked with "please return to" and your name, are also helpful.



## 2018 CHRISTIAN LIFE ACADEMY

### Creating a New Story of Faith – Dr. Rodger Nishioka

#### An Event for Parents, Families, Children, Young People and Adults

Dr. Rodger Nishioka, Director of Adult Educational Ministries at Village Presbyterian Church in Prairie Village, KS, will be the keynote preacher and presenter for the First Pres Christian Life Academy, February 10 and 11.

A vibrant faith changes everything. Flowing from an adoring, living God, our new story of faith is being created as people—children, young people, families and adults—come together to form faith. Gather together with one of the leading educators as we imagine how we, at First Pres in Ann Arbor, shape a faith for all the people of First Pres! Dr. Rodger Nishioka is passionate about helping people reimagine how faith is formed in the 21st century. His expertise is about designing and redesigning methods and models, practices and experiences, sessions and classes, that combine to create a resilient and dynamic Christian faith for all of God's people in this era.

#### Forming a Faith for All! The Research and the New Story

##### Saturday, February 10

4:30 p.m. Presentation for Church Leaders, Teachers, Educators, Youth Leaders and others

6:00 p.m. Dinner and Table Conversations

##### Sunday February 11

9:30 & 11:00 a.m. Guest Preacher

4:30 - 6:00 p.m. Creating a Story of Faith for Children, Families and Young People

6:00 - 6:45 p.m. Dinner for All

6:45 - 8:00 p.m. Creating a Story of Faith for Adults

**Christian Life Academy registration information will be available soon.**

#### Who is Rodger Nishioka?



Born in Honolulu and raised in Seattle at the Japanese Presbyterian Church, Rodger is the son of a retired Presbyterian minister. He is one of the most sought-after and inspiring preachers in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Rodger taught at Columbia Theological Seminary in Atlanta for 15 years, teaching pastors to be teachers and leaders in the church's educational ministry, specializing particularly in youth and young adult ministry. Prior to that, he was the national coordinator for Youth and Young Adult Ministries for the PCUSA. He received his PhD in Social and Cultural Foundations of Education from Georgia State University, and an MA in Theological Studies from McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago. Watch and listen as Rodger describes his own faith journey at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kBfXkvpaejE>.

### First Forums - A Fresh Conversation

#### One Sunday a month, 12:15 - 1:30 p.m., with lunch (\$5)

We live in a world that is increasingly divided. All around us, the media, family, friends, and co-workers want to know “Whose side are you on – are you with us or against us?” How, as Christians and Presbyterians, are we called to respond to these forces and invite people with whom we differ into dialogue to gain a better understanding of our dispirit beliefs? Knowing that we hold a variety of beliefs, values, and opinions, each First Forum is an opportunity for open dialogue, respect, and faithful disagreement. Come seek opportunities for respectful conversation and for finding avenues for advancing faithful values of peace, justice and community.



Following the Word in Today's World

#### January 14 #MeToo, #ChurchToo Part 1

#### Curtis/Founders Rooms

In October the hashtag #MeToo became a national sensation following the revelation of the repeated sexual misconduct of Harvey Weinstein. The phrase identifies the unfortunate reality that sexual harassment and abuse is all too common in the United States. What does our faith say in the light of the #MeToo conversation? How do we respond to sexual abuse and harassment in our lives and in our congregation? FirstForums will seek to examine how we, as Christians, engage the #MeToo moment in our culture.

**February 4 Environmental Issues and the Church Curtis/Founders Rooms**

Visiting scholar Rev. Dr. Patricia K. Tull is A. B. Rhodes Professor Emerita of Old Testament at Louisville Seminary in Kentucky and author of *Inhabiting Eden: Christians, the Bible, and the Ecological Crisis* (Westminster John Knox, 2013). She lectures, preaches, and leads workshops nationally on faith dimensions of creation care, blogs at [www.inhabitingeden.org](http://www.inhabitingeden.org), and works through Interfaith Power & Light with Indiana congregations seeking responsible, effective ways to address climate change. On February 4th, she will facilitate a discussion on Environmental Issues and the Church.



**February 18 #MeToo, #ChurchToo Part 2 Curtis/Founders Rooms**

## Sunday Morning Offerings

**9:30 a.m.**

**The Bible at 9:30 a.m. January 7, 14, 21, & 28 French Room/Library**

This class continues a study of the book of Acts. Rev. Ed Koster is the presenter. Come for a solid biblical study and robust discussion. All are welcome!

**First Friends January 7, 14, 21, & 28 Monteith Hall**

*First Friends is a self-directed adult group that offers a safe, supportive gathering to discuss religious and spiritual topics.* Watch the bulletin for information about January class offerings.

**11:00 a.m.**

**Exploring the Faith January 10 – 24 Monteith Hall**



### Creation Groans : A Series on Environmental Justice

God created the world and all that is in it, and human beings to have a special place in creation. Scientific consensus shows that human activity is having an incredibly large impact on the earth and its environment. How are we meant to respond to the environmental changes that threaten species, shift weather patterns, endanger potable drinking water, and threaten coastlines? This series will explore why Christians should view climate and environmental issues as a matter of justice.

**January 7 - Dirt! Before the Flood!**

The series begins with stunning excerpts from two films, *Dirt*, and *Before the Flood*. Immerse yourself immediately in the realities, double-binds, and contradictions of now when the world is changing and our leaders express doubts. Get to the core of the critical issues, while keeping an eye on the core mandates of our Christian faith. Facilitated by Rev. Eric Koenig-Reinke and other educators.

**January 14 - “Water and the World”**

Water is a necessity for all life, and we are joined to the Church through the waters of baptism. Yet droughts threaten agricultural production, pollution threatens potable water, and melting sea ice threatens coastal areas. How do we become more attuned to issues related to water, and what can we do about it? Facilitated by local water resource specialists and Rev. Eric Koenig-Reinke and others.

**January 21 - “Automobiles, Industry, and Temperature”**

Transportation and industrial production are two of the top four emitters of greenhouse gasses according to the EPA. Michigan is a major industrial center, and General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler all have their headquarters in the Detroit Metro Area. How do we as Christians become more attuned to issues related to the automobile industry, and what can we do about it? Facilitated by member Chet France.

**January 28 - No Class, Annual Congregational Meeting**

## Exploring the Faith in February

**February 4 - Our Children’s Inheritance: Climate Change from a Faith Perspective**

Faciliator: Rev. Dr. Patricia K. Tull

**February 11 - Let’s Think BIG Picture!**

Faciliator: Michael Bodner



**UKirk@UMich** - This fall First Presbyterian Church rebranded FirstPres College as UKirk@UMich. UKirk (meaning University Church) Ministries is the PC (USA) national network of campus ministry, connecting us with other campus ministries in our denomination across the country. UKirk@UMICH is uniquely located to engage in mission and outreach to the University of Michigan. The campus ministry team, including Rev. Evans McGowan as well as Rev. Eric Koenig-Reinke, Rev. Blair Buckley, and Essie Koenig-Reinke, is actively forming relationships and building trust with undergraduate students. Through one-on-one meetings, Wednesday night gatherings, and lunch after worship on Sundays, we are cultivating a community of faith among a growing group of undergraduate students.

**A New Work Group** - In Isaiah 43:19, God says, "I am about to do a new thing." By God's grace, new things are springing forth, with the advent of our Student Leadership Team and the newly formed Campus Ministry Work Group. As we look forward to next semester, we are excited to see what new growth is in store for UKirk@UMich and Campus Ministry.

**They Came, They Saw, They Ate!** In December, UKirk@UMICH hosted another successful annual tradition, the Pancake Supper. Over 50 volunteers served a full breakfast meal to around 150 students, replete with pancakes, fruit, biscuits, sausage, egg dishes, hot drinks and juice. Prior to the event, our youngest members made gift bags for the students to encourage them during finals. One could feel the presence of the Holy Spirit in our Social Hall amidst the food, fun and fellowship on a cold and snowy Tuesday night in December.



## Resident Minister Corner



Resident ministers at First Pres have often played a key role in adult education, but this year they are even more deeply involved. All three current residents are helping to develop the programming for the year. Working collaboratively with the Adult Education Committee, they have launched "First Forums" that focus on challenging issues in our world and seek to discern faithful responses to them. Each Forum is an opportunity for open dialogue, respectful conversation, and faithful disagreement. November's topic was "Race Still Matters." Participants filled the Lewis Room for a light lunch and a presentation by Dr. James Perkinson of Ecumenical Theological Seminary in Detroit followed by a lively discussion period. More First Forums are planned for 2018. January's topics include engaging environmental ethics.



Sunday mornings you will find that our Residents are deeply engaged in teaching and facilitating Adult classes on such topics as the "Reformation Here and Now," a timely subject on the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation, and the study of Isaiah and the prophecies of the coming of the Messiah. Of course, Adult Education doesn't just happen on Sunday mornings. You will also encounter the Residents working with Stephen Ministry continuing education, Advent small group studies, and in the Officer Training Retreat.



Though we have just come through Advent, the Liturgical year will soon move us to Lent, which begins this year on February 14. Last year you may remember that two of our previous Residents, Angela Ryo and Daniel Ervin, engaged the artists of the church in a Sunday morning series called "Artists as Our Prophets." The Social Hall was filled with original and repurposed art. There was even a full sized labyrinth. Plans for this year are built around the book, *Be Not Afraid: Facing Fear With Faith* by the Rev. Dr. Samuel Wells, former Dean of Duke Divinity School, as the general template for small group and other Bible studies. We can look forward to a creative engagement with the theme of Exploring the Faith. Our congregational experience is much enriched by the vision and dedication of these new ministers. We are so glad they are here.