

# FIRST PRESS

Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church Ann Arbor

Vol. 70 | No. 3 - March 2022

*Dear Friends,*

A few years ago, at our Ash Wednesday Ecumenical Taizé Service that we annually co-host to begin the penitential season of Lent, I was assigned two parts. After some scripture reading, singing, and prayer, worshippers would come down the aisle to receive the imposition of ashes from me. Looking into their eyes, and smearing ashes on their foreheads in the mark of the cross, I would say these words: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." Such a tender and troubling task. As one called to help guide you to deeper faith in this life, my job that night was to remind you that this life will end. With unflinching clarity, on Ash Wednesday we embrace the truth that we are mortal. Our bodies will die and decay — to be buried, or burned, and returned to God's earth. Putting the mark on children is particularly challenging, for not wanting to scare them or speak of a concept they are not developmentally able to understand, to them we say: "Remember that you belong to God your whole life long." Placing the mark on people who I know, based on their health concerns or age or something else, may be facing death in the not-too-distant future, is also uncomfortable. I felt a pang of grief with every tangible smear, signifying your deaths, and mine. Whether we accept the inevitable or avoid death at all costs — on Ash Wednesday there is no hiding it -- death is visible on our faces.

My second task was to stay in the same place after the liturgy for communion was spoken from the Table, and as worshippers came forward, to offer the Sacrament — the Bread of Life, the Cup of Salvation. Standing in the same location, the people who had received an ashy reminder of death were the same people who now received the reminder of their lives eternal. Though we cannot imagine not being in our bodies, we won't need them. What comes next is so extraordinary, so mysterious, so beyond our imagination. My grief was lifted by every smudged face

who held out their hands and opened their hearts to this greater truth. Death is a passage, excruciating as it may seem, and never the last station. Yes, we will die, but we shall live. We will feast in glory with Christ with the pain of this life, and the joy of it — behind us. Until we die, we must grapple with both. As Martin Luther wrote, "And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us, we will not fear, for God has willed his truth to triumph through us."

Jesus was newly baptized, in that mountain top moment hearing from the heavens, "This is my son, with whom I am well pleased!" -- only to be immediately thrust into the wilderness. This is how Lent begins, jolted from the joy of Christmas and Epiphany into forty days of wilderness wandering, dragged into the deepest pain of Jesus' story. Jesus found gifts in the wilderness that gave him strength. As we experience Lent, in our wilderness, welcome what God has for you. Pay attention. Alone in prayer, or walking with friends, in the darkness of Lent holding your sins up to God's

transforming light, pondering death, wondering about the mysteries of faith, coming to the Table — what gifts will come to you? Welcome the wilderness and the strength it will offer. Open yourself to the stories you hear from others, the change that repentance brings, the temptations you will be strong to overcome, and the joyful wonder when you behold the glory of Christ's empty tomb.

Welcome this wilderness, welcome those with whom you endure it, and welcome the God who does not smear us with the mark of death but inscribes Christ's eternal life and extravagant love upon us.

Faithfully,  
Rev. Melissa Anne Rogers



## WELCOME BACK!

On March 1, we are returning to many of our in-church activities as we begin our journey through Lent. Our theme "Wilderness | Welcome" invites us to take advantage of most of the programs that our church has to offer in safety and comfort. Beginning in March, the 8:00 a.m. worship service will return. Coffee Hour in the Social Hall, Worship Lab, Adult and Youth Faith Formation classes, Campus lunches and special Lenten activities will all be available in person (with a hybrid option for many of these activities). Other committees and groups will have the opportunity to schedule meetings in person (with a hybrid option a possibility also). Weekly office hours for the Welcome Center and Church Office will return to 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Mondays through Thursdays, and Fridays 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon.

We strongly recommend that everyone who is eligible, be fully vaccinated and boosted. While the spread of the Covid 19 virus is decreasing in our community, it is still contagious and there are many among us who remain at risk or who are in close contact with at-risk individuals. We will continue to wear masks and to follow other precautions for now as we gather inside the church building.

## WORSHIP IN LENT

### Ash Wednesday – March 2

#### Drive-through Imposition of Ashes

8-9 a.m.; 12-1 p.m. in the parking lot

#### Inclusive Service for All Ages

5:30 p.m. in Monteith Hall

#### Ecumenical Taizé Service

7 p.m. in the Sanctuary

### Weekly Worship Themes

<b>Sunday, March 6</b>	A Table in the Wilderness
<b>Sunday March 13</b>	Wondering in the Wilderness
<b>Sunday, March 20</b>	Lost in the Wilderness
<b>Sunday, March 27</b>	Found in the Wilderness
<b>Sunday, April 3</b>	Alone in the Wilderness
<b>Sunday, April 10</b>	Stories of Wilderness

### Sunday Worship in Lent

8 a.m. – Worship with Communion in Monteith Hall  
9:30 a.m – Worship in the Sanctuary

## Lenten Email Devotional

Begin each day with a Lenten email devotion written by church members and staff. The devotions will be in keeping with the theme, "Welcome | Wilderness." Sign up with Rev. Melissa Anne Rogers at [mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org).

## Wilderness | Walking

Join us for a 2022 Lenten Spiritual Practice: Walking! Each week in Lent, we'll have chosen a different day, time, and location, to walk. Come for the conversation and community. All ages and stages of life are welcome. Dogs are welcome! All are encouraged to come and get to know one another. We do appreciate you signing up so we know who to expect and communicate with the day before about where to meet. Walks will take place unless A2 public schools are canceled for weather. Join Rev. Hannah Lundberg or Rev. Mel Rogers on each of these walks.

Sign up online using this link: [bit.ly/3oAMTY9](https://bit.ly/3oAMTY9)

#### Gallup Park Boat Launch

Monday, March 7, 10 a.m.

#### First Pres to Nichols Arboretum

Tuesday, March 15, 3 p.m.

#### Hudson Mills (Dexter)

Thursday, March 24, 10 a.m.

#### Pinckney Recreation Area

Wednesday, March 30, 2 p.m.

#### Kensington Metropark

Friday, April 8, 9:30 a.m.

#### Meet at First Pres

Saturday, April 16, 8 a.m.

## Lent Home Worship Services

#### Musser Home (near the church)

Tuesday, March 8, 6 p.m.

#### VanderMeer/Ivey Home (near the A2 Airport)

Tuesday, March 15, 6 p.m.

#### Sid Smith Home (off Huron River Drive)

Tuesday, March 22, 6 p.m.

#### Wendler Home (Westside, near Polo Fields Golf Club)

Tuesday, March 29, 6 p.m.

Note: Gatherings are limited to a maximum of 15 people. Please use this link to [sign up](https://bit.ly/3uD4fr6) for a home worship gathering: <https://bit.ly/3uD4fr6>

## Lenten Parent Groups

The season of Lent, the period leading up to Easter when we prepare our hearts and minds for what is to come, is nearly upon us. Our theme for Lenten worship this year is Wilderness | Welcome. Each Sunday we'll wrestle with Scripture passages that deal with questions



of hospitality, loneliness, discovery, loss, and hope in the midst of wilderness moments. Many of us have been living in the wilderness for far too long. This Lent, we will enter our third year of pandemic life with losses and hard realities all around us. Often, as we navigate these places of uncertainty and pain, our first instinct is to turn inward, to focus on ourselves, and to clench our fists until we can make it to the other side. Our faith invites us to a different response: one where fear leads us to turn toward one another, to rely on God's presence, to build love and support for all, and to trust that we do not journey on difficult roads alone. God calls us to welcome the wilderness and to turn wilderness into welcome.

As we enter the season of Lent, Rev. Mark and Beca Torres-Davenport will be offering two opportunities for parents to gather via Zoom.

Friday, March 4, 2022 – "Everything is NOT ok..." at 8 p.m.

Friday, April 8, 2022 – "Digital Spirituality" at 8 p.m.

## Welcome Back Rev. Daniel Ervin

Our guest preacher for Sunday, March 27, Daniel Ervin was a well-loved Resident Minister here at First Pres from 2015 to 2017, serving alongside Revs. Emily Beghin and Angela Ryo in a diverse cohort of young pastors. Daniel will be our guest preacher for both worship services on the fourth Sunday of Lent. Since completing our Residency Program with distinction, Daniel has served as Pastor of LoveJoy United Presbyterian Church in Wood River, Illinois since October 2017. Under Daniel's guidance, two congregations in the Wood River area joined ministries together to become one strong, vibrant community of faith. Daniel grew up in Statesville, NC. After studying Social Work and Spanish at NC State University, he attended Union Presbyterian Seminary in Richmond, VA, earning a Master of Divinity and a Master of Theology.



## Sunday, April 3 – Service of Wholeness & Healing

Join the Stephen Ministers and Prayer Team members in the Sanctuary at 7 p.m. for a special Service of Wholeness and Healing. Come for prayer, anointing with oil (if desired), special music, and silence. A special meditation will be given by

First Pres member Olivier Jolliet, who will tell his meaningful story of being diagnosed with cancer and undergoing treatment. Oliver and his wife Nicole are moving to Denmark in May 2022.

## MUSIC & FINE ARTS



## AGO (American Guild of Organists) Ann Arbor Chapter will host Spring Arts Series

Fridays at 12:00 – 12:45 p.m. in the Sanctuary of First Presbyterian Church

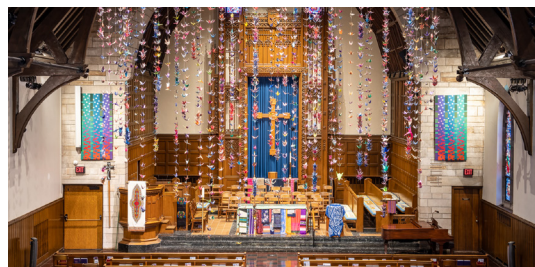
March 11, 18, 25, April 1, & 8

FREE CONCERTS – All are welcome!

On March 25, David Hufford, FPC Organist and Lucy Trumbull Baum, Artist will create a rich organ concert and visual art in a concert titled *A Feast for the Eyes and Ears*.

## Folding Peace Cranes during Lent

As a Lenten Spiritual Practice, you are invited to pick up an origami peace crane kit and fold cranes during the season of Lent. These peace cranes will be added to our existing art installation. You may pick up the kits at the Welcome Center or in the Lounge outside of the Sanctuary beginning on Sunday, March 6.

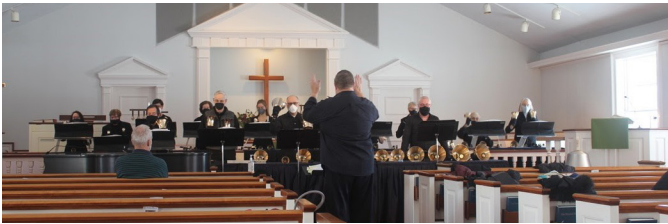


## New Art Exhibits in the Social Hall

Please visit two new art exhibits in the Social Hall in March and April. We will host two exhibits of *The Stations of the Cross*. One by artist Kathrin Burleson from Trinidad, CA, and the other from Haiti. To learn more about the exhibits, attend the March 6 event with Don Saliers and then during the Faith Formation hour at 11 a.m., March 13, 20, 27, and April 10. All are welcome!

## Music in Mission on the Road

On Sunday, February 6, the Sanctus Ringers Handbell Choir traveled to St. Timothy's Episcopal Church in Perrysburg, OH to play a handbell concert. Susan Boggs Barker, former FPC Organist/Choir Director and now the Music Director and Organist in Perrysburg, invited the bell choir to play on their Arts Series for the church. The bell choir played seven compositions, and demonstrated various handbell techniques to answering great questions from the audience.



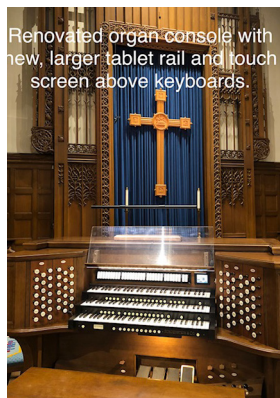
## Sanctuary Pipe Organ Improvements

The 2001 Schoenstein pipe organ at First Presbyterian Church received major upgrades in recent weeks. New state-of-the-art electrical systems have been installed to operate the console and provide outputs to play the pipes. All system functions and configuration, including all power control to the pipe organ, are operated using a compact color touch screen on the console. A new, larger tilting tablet rail has been installed in the console to provide far greater flexibility in use of the instrument.

The new systems have enormous capacity for passcode-protected storage of settings by up to 50 organists, each organist having the full resources of the console controls 100 times over. The original systems, proprietary to Schoenstein and difficult to service, had provided 16 times the console resources via a mechanical selector. Also, of note, the original bulky cables of about 600 electrical

conductors connecting the console to the instrument, itself, have been eliminated and replaced by a simple ethernet-type cable.

The new electrical systems provide many useful features that have become possible with today's ever-evolving technology. These features include full MIDI compatibility, an automatic

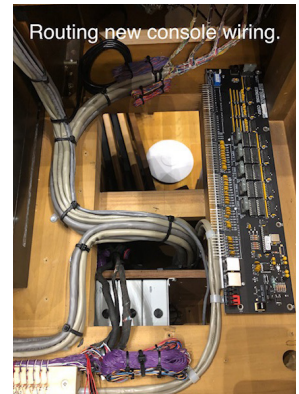


Transposer, a Sostenuento control, and improved control of the organ's expressive departments of pipes. As may have been noted since the completion of the work, the organ systems also have a Record/Playback capability with a wireless remote control. This feature allows music to be captured on the system's USB drive as it is played, to exactly reproduce at a later time. The Record/Playback capability already has been useful in maintaining the flow of our worship services while the organist moves between the piano and the organ console, and also provides a means for the organist to hear the organ in the room and check registrations. Many other features are also available, for the interest of anyone conversant in "organ-speak," and David would be happy to discuss these in detail.

Great effort was invested to streamline the completion of this project with all possible swiftness so that we were without use of the organ for only one weekend. Wiring harnesses were prepared in advance of the on-site work, and the Antiphonal division's wiring was removed a few days in advance. The organ console was carefully "gutted" of its original electronic controls following worship on Sunday, January 16, taking care to be sure that all electrical connections to the chambers were deciphered and noted. Nearly all of the rewiring and the new systems' installation were completed within one week--a tedious job normally requiring several weeks' time--and the main organ was again playable by noon on Monday, January 24. The Antiphonal was back online two days later. All wiring work has been done with exceptional neatness, and all power wiring is thoroughly fuse-protected for safety.

Thank you to the Worship Committee, Finance Committee, Session, and Dave VanderMeer for supporting this important and valuable project, together with other significant repairs that have been completed during the past several months. The many improvements make our pipe organ more versatile and able to be used in more-colorful ways. The new capabilities, reliable functioning, and serviceability of the pipe organ will be of considerable benefit for years to come.

David V. Hufford  
Organist





## Interested in Joining?

The next Fast Track to Membership is Sunday, March 6. The Fast Track session begins around 11:00 a.m., after worship and Social Hour. Join us in the Lead Pastor's office (any usher can direct you) to meet with a pastor and 2 Elders. It takes about 20 minutes and we'll provide all the support you need afterwards. You can join as a full member (with the right of voice and vote in congregational meetings) or as an affiliate member (meaning your membership is lodged elsewhere). New member classes follow, offered multiple times per year, for those who feel moved to join. You already belong – now let's make it official in 2022!



## We love our 99-year olds here at First Pres!



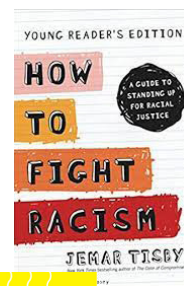
### Happy birthday to our latest 2 members to turn 99!

First, Millie Danielson on 2/8/2022. A photo at the drive through her daughter Lisa hosted for her. Lisa had to explain that Millie was given the fur coat, that it wasn't something she had bought (being in Ann Arbor and concerned for animal rights!). And Lisa bought her the tiara. Long-time member Molly Dobson turned 99 on 2/18! She is a beloved member of our congregation and community who inspires so many. What wonderful saints we have among us!

## FAITH FORMATION: CHILDREN & FAMILIES

### "Reaching Out in Mission" Milestone – BOOK CLUB!

All 4th and 5th graders are invited to join us as we read the book, *How To Fight Racism* (Young Reader's Edition) by Jemar Tisby, during the season of Lent. This book explains the history of racism in America and why it is so prevalent, as well as uses Christian principles to provide practical tools and advice kids can use to develop and maintain an anti-racist mindset and make a positive difference in the world. We will use this book to guide our conversations of the 5th grade "Reaching Out in Mission" service project for the spring. All participants will gather together to discuss in-person (with snacks!) or online, depending on what the recommended COVID guidelines are. **Books are only \$5.**



If you're interested, please sign up using this link. (<https://forms.gle/NeeoNggcbT9oADR56>).

### Welcome back to in-person classes this month!

Faith Formation for children will return to the building in March. We look forward to seeing all returning and new faces!

Child care for infant through 5 Rooms 100, 101, 104 & 105	9 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Worship LAB offered during sermons Monteith Hall or Social Hall	9:30 a.m. service
Children's Choir with Ms. Shayla Powell Monteith Hall	10:45 – 11:15 a.m.
Chapel + Faith Formation classes Monteith Hall and Room 102	11:15 a.m.



## March First Sunday Event - Lunch sack packing March 6!

### Collections through Sunday, February 27, 2022

Lunch packing with Faith Formation & Local Missions- the goal is 75 lunches packed for the community in need! Please consider dropping off donations to First Pres on or before February 27 and then join in the packing fun on March 6. This easy 3-step process will help our community in need.

### Suggested Donation Shopping list:

- **Napkins and Disposable Silverware** (compostable is a plus!)
- **Snack/Side Item Examples** (individually pre-packed): Cookies, Trail mix, Crackers, Peanut butter/crackers and cheese, Beef jerky, Fruit leather/fruit snacks, Pretzels, Cheez-its, or chips,
- **Fruit Examples:** Dried Fruit, Fruit Cups, Applesauce
- **Beverage Examples:** Water bottles, Juice Boxes
- **Main Dish Examples:** 2 tuna snack packs or 1 pop-top can of tuna, Pop-top ravioli or SpaghettiOs, Pop-top can of soup, Instant Mac N Cheese, Ramen Noodles

## En La Mesa de Dios // At God's Table: A Stations of the Cross Experience

Experience the Holy Week narrative by taking in the art of the book, *En la mesa de Dios / At God's Table*, illustrated by Joel Schoon-Tanis. Both an audio track to help in the walk-through and a pamphlet will be available to guide you as you experience multi-sensory stations of the cross in this unique format. All ages are welcome! For more information, contact Rev Mares ([mmares@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:mmares@firstpresbyterian.org)) or Beca Torres-Davenport ([btorresdavenport@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:btorresdavenport@firstpresbyterian.org)).

## YOUTH CONNECTION

Follow us on Instagram: [@firstpresa2youth](https://www.instagram.com/firstpresa2youth)  
or subscribe to our weekly email for up-to-date  
information on all of our events!

### Youth Group!

Middle and High school youth group will continue to meet during the month, please contact Pastor Mark ([mmares@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:mmares@firstpresbyterian.org)) to be added to the youth email list so that you can stay up to date on the schedule and location of our youth group gatherings!

### Youth Sunday

All youth are invited and encouraged to join us for Youth Sunday on March 20. The service will be entirely led by youth as they share their gifts, creativity, and passion with our First Pres community. You won't want to miss this!

### Youth Lenten Book Club

All youth are invited to join us as we read the book, *The Visitors* by Greg Howard, during the season of Lent. This story follows a heartrending tale of friendship, hard-won truths, and the healing power of forgiveness. All participants will gather together to discuss in-person (with snacks!) or online, depending on what the recommended guidelines are. If you're interested, please sign up using [this link](#). **Books are only \$5.**

### Youth Lenten Poetry Writing & Slam

All youth are invited to join us on Monday nights during Lent to share poetry, and craft poetry together while thinking about the Lenten theme: Wilderness | Welcome. If we feel comfortable, we'll plan to share our poetry in a poetry slam at a later date. We'll meet on Zoom from 7 p.m. – 8 p.m.



# UKIRK@UMICH - CAMPUS MINISTRY

## Campus Ministry - UKirk @ UMich



College Lunch has returned at 12:15 p.m. at various locations around campus. Sadly, there is no spring break service trip due to the pandemic. A new Lenten small group will meet weekly in March and April. Contact Rev. Evans McGowan ([campus@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:campus@firstpresbyterian.org)) for more information about any of these opportunities, or to meet one-on-one with Evans or one of our resident ministers, Megan and Hannah.



## T2A2 (TWENTIES & THIRTIES)

The First Pres twenties and thirties group (T2A2) enjoyed a Saturday morning of cross-country skiing together last month! While we continue to gather for a weekly study group on Sunday evenings and fellowship time on Thursday evenings, it was extra special to spend a few hours enjoying the outdoors together (and pretending we were Olympic athletes!). As spring approaches and the weather gets warmer, we hope to find more pandemic-friendly outdoor activities we can do together. Want to get in on the fun? Have questions about T2A2 or want to join our email list? Send a note to Hannah Lundberg ([hlundberg@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:hlundberg@firstpresbyterian.org)).



## ADULT FORMATION

**Journeys Bible Study** is a women's gathering time to further our pursuit of a faith seeking understanding through life's stages. We meet via Zoom on the first and third Thursday of the month from 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. The book of Acts is our topic through the end of May. Resident Minister, Hannah Lundberg is facilitating. Women of every age are welcomed to join us as we consider the context of the times that Christianity took root. For more information contact, Coordinator, Beth Gerwig at [bgerwig@comcast.net](mailto:bgerwig@comcast.net) or Hannah Lundberg at [hlundberg@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:hlundberg@firstpresbyterian.org). The Zoom link is: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/295007173>.

## Exploring the Faith and First Friends Class *Visio and Lectio Divina: Stations of the Cross*

Sundays during Lent: March 6 (4 – 6 p.m.), March 13, 20, 27, and April 10 – 11 a.m. in the Social Hall  
During the season of Lent the Liturgical/Visual Arts Team will host two different art exhibits of *The Stations of the Cross* in the Social Hall, from artist, Kathrin Burleson and the other from Haiti. We will practice Visio (Divine Seeing) and Lectio Divina (Divine Reading) through these two art exhibits. Visio Divina is a form of prayer that uses visual elements to help set your mind on prayer. It allows God to speak into your heart through the image. Callie Feyen, a member of the Liturgical/Visual Arts Team, will be the leader for these classes beginning on March 13. All are welcome to attend!



*"Authentic God experience always expands your seeing and never constricts it. ... In God you do not include less and less; you always see and love more and more."* – Richard Rohr

Join us on Sunday, March 6 from 4 – 6 p.m. in the Social Hall as we welcome Don Saliers who will kick-off this Lenten Series on Visio and Lectio Divina. A simple supper will be served. Child care will be provided. All are welcome!



Don E. Saliers  
Theologian-in-Residence

Dr. Don E. Saliers returned to Candler School of Theology in Atlanta, Georgia in 2014 as Theologian-in-Residence after retiring in 2007 as the William R. Cannon Distinguished Professor of Theology and Worship. For many years he directed the Master of Sacred Music program at Emory University, and was an organist and choirmaster at Cannon Chapel at Emory University for 35 years. Before joining the Candler faculty in 1974, Saliers taught at Yale Divinity School, and has taught in summer programs at Notre Dame, Boston College, Vancouver School of Theology, St. John's University, and Boston University School of Theology. An accomplished musician, theologian and scholar of liturgics, Saliers is the author of 15 books on the relationship between theology and worship practices, as well as more than 150 articles, essays, chapters in books and book reviews. He co-authored *A Song to Sing, a Life to Live* with his daughter Emily Saliers, a member of the Indigo Girls.

## Dismantling Racism Group

The Dismantling Racism Group is a subgroup of the Social Justice Action Group and is focusing on learning and action activities that support addressing racism in our community and nation.



This group wants to spotlight a great resource on the Ann Arbor District Library's (AADL) website. Extending the emphasis of Black History Month, the library has an ongoing list of anti-racism resources including the African American Cultural and Historical Museum's (AACHM) Living Oral History Project. This partnership between the AACHM and AADL creates and provides a permanent home for interviews with Black community members. These interviews serve as a road map illustrating what local African Americans witnessed, experienced, and contributed to building the community we share today. Now entering Phase 8, this project has so far collected 45 interviews. The associated LOH Digital Collection presents historical materials from AADL's Community Collections about major topics featured in the interviews, including Community Centers, Education, Housing, Employment, Entrepreneurship, and Faith. The LOH Walking Tour showcases historically Black neighborhoods in Ann Arbor. We encourage you to take a look. Many of the featured oral histories are from people that live and work in Washtenaw County and have long family histories. The Dismantling Racism workgroup will continue to feature anti-racism resources throughout the year. If you are interested in joining this working group or receiving future updates, contact Sharon Sheldon at [sheldonsharon234@gmail.com](mailto:sheldonsharon234@gmail.com).

## Scotland Trips

In the fall of 2022, you have two opportunities to go explore Scotland in different ways! Revs. Megan Berry and Jay Sanderford are each planning a unique pilgrimage to Scotland to explore our heritage and reinvigorate our minds and souls.

Rev. Megan Berry will lead a "highlights of Scotland" trip that will explore the different abbeys and kirks (churches) of Scotland. This trip will provide a snapshot of the variety of cultures and heritages in Scotland. Places you will visit include Edinburgh, Iona, Loch Lomond, and St. Andrews. Preliminary dates are October 2–12, 2022. The estimated cost is in the range of \$5000 – \$5800 each, plus airfare and a fee for single accommodations.





Rev. Jay Sanderford will lead a walking pilgrimage to the West Highland Way for men. Preliminary dates are October 1–13, 2022. The estimated cost is \$4500 – \$5200 each, plus airfare and a fee for single accommodations.

Megan and Jay will be holding interest sessions on March 6 and 20 at 5 p.m. in the Curtis Room for those who are interested in either trip. If you want to know more about the trips, come to one of our interest sessions or reach out to Megan and Jay.

## MATURE MINISTRIES

### Talking Transgender



Join us for our monthly Lunch and Learn, as we remain online for one more month! We'll meet from 12 – 1 p.m. on Thursday, March 10. Will Sherry, Director of The Spectrum Center at the University of Michigan, will be our featured speaker. Attendees will grow in their understanding of gender identity and expression terminology, learn more about the experiences of transgender and non-binary people, and gain approaches to building inclusive communities and spaces. Information about local and national resources and opportunities for ongoing learning will also be shared. Come and learn with us! The Zoom link is: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5502657984>

### Upcoming Travels!

Mature Ministries Announces March Outing to the Ford Rouge Factory Tour  
Tuesday, March 22 – 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.



The month of March brings the beginning of Lent, the brave first buds of spring, and the return of our Mature Ministries On the Road travels! Please join us Tuesday (not Thursday), March 22 for new discoveries not so far from home. Our morning destination will be the Ford Rouge Factory Tour in Dearborn, where theater and manufacturing technology combine to lead visitors through a history of the Ford



Rouge Plant and an opportunity to see Ford trucks being assembled in real time on a 1/3 mile walk alongside this state-of-the-art production line. A buffet lunch follows at a Downriver favorite, the Hungarian Rhapsody restaurant in Southgate. Family owned for over 30 years, the Rhapsody serves Hungarian comfort food in the largest Hungarian restaurant in the US. The tortes alone are worth the trip but your lunch will include a feast of traditional Hungarian favorites—chicken paprikash, cabbage rolls, sausages, baked chicken, and more. For those who don't know the Rhapsody, you'll want to return and share it with your friends. It's just that good! The price of the trip is \$50 which includes admission to Ford Rouge Factory Tour, Buffet Lunch at the Hungarian Rhapsody Restaurant, and transportation. Sign up no later than February 28 at [this link: https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090f45a4ac283-mature](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090f45a4ac283-mature). A waiting list will be kept when all slots are full.

Please note: This trip is offered in place of the originally announced Immersive Van Gogh. Questions? Contact Rev. Rogers, [mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org).

## PASTORAL CARE

### Stephen Ministry

Life is a series of transitions.

*Some of them welcome. Some of them not.*

Some of the changes we experience are biological in nature. We grow. We mature. We age. We become ill.

Other changes, both welcome and unwelcome, result from outside influences or choices we have made along the way.

Bruce Feiler, author of *Life is in the Transitions*, describes the changes we face throughout life as 'life-quakes.' Each person can expect to experience 10-12 minor life-quakes and 3-5 major life-quakes throughout life. That's a lot of change!

Together, we will explore:

- Honoring life transitions in ourselves and others
- How we find meaning in life transitions
- What our faith and tradition has to tell us about journeying through change
- Acknowledging life transitions through ritual



Join us for March's Stephen Ministry-sponsored Continuing Education Event — it's online! Just Zoom in and learn with us. All are welcome! [https://us02web.Zoom.us/j/89733372207](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89733372207)

Our speaker, Rev. Kristabeth Atwood, M.Div., is a Pastor for People Who Don't Do Church and the founder of Rites of Passage, LLC. Kristabeth brings her pastor's heart to help people through the spiritual, emotional, and practical aspects of life's changes through spiritual companionship, ritual design, and life transition support. She lives and works in Vermont, and is pulpit supply pastor for Christ Presbyterian Church in Burlington, VT.

## PARISH NURSING



### Keeping Your Mind Sharp At Any Age

We often hear about ways to stay physically fit through this journey of life. But what about staying mentally fit? While it feels great to keep our bodies moving, it also feels great to keep our brains learning. [Here is an article](https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/6-simple-steps-to-keep-your-mind-sharp-at-any-age) that shares ways to keep our mind sharp at any age. <https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/6-simple-steps-to-keep-your-mind-sharp-at-any-age>

As Carl Sagan once said, "The brain is like a muscle. When it is in use, we feel very good. Understanding is joyous." May you feel much joy in staying mentally young!

## PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

### 2022-23 Religious Education Scholarships Available

Presbyterian Women is accepting scholarship requests for the 2022-2023 school year. Seminary or Religious Education students are encouraged to apply by the end of April, 2022. The application is available at [www.firstpresbyterian.org](http://www.firstpresbyterian.org) on the Presbyterian Women page. Questions? Contact Jill Binkley at [jkbink2@gmail.com](mailto:jkbink2@gmail.com). The scholarships honor the dedicated women and men, active or former church members, who participated with PW and donated financial gifts to provide scholarships to those studying for the Ministry. The endowment was established in 1984 in honor of Doris S. Barnett. Other notable contributors include Mable Rugen and the Kooyers family in honor of Joanne Kooyers.



### Nurture Your Faith – The Mystery of Mary

*Note: Zoom links for the Morning and Evening Bible Studies are the same.*

#### Morning Horizons Bible Study

Thursday, March 10, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.,

**Zoom Only** [https://us02web.Zoom.us/j/84155918470](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84155918470)





Our March leader is Georgia Goodman and our study subject is Mary. In Matthew, Mary is a mystery – she has no narrative. We have no idea where she came from; few details fill her personality. And yet, her courage and devotion as the mother of Jesus underscore our Christian faith. Join us as we explore “Mary, Part One.” Yes! Copies of *What My Grandmothers Taught Me - Learning from the Women in Matthew’s Genealogy of Jesus* are still available! Call Peggy Hodgson at 810 360-5812 or [peggyhodgson@comcast.net](mailto:peggyhodgson@comcast.net) to get yours. Mature Ministries’ Lunch & Learn program follows our morning study. Sign up in the Church Office to participate.

## “Evenings with Jenna” Bible Study

Thursday, March 10, 7 – 8 p.m., Curtis Room or Zoom

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

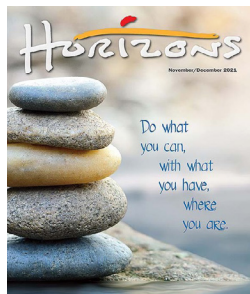
This friendly and informal group, led by our own Jenna Mares, is for anyone who can’t do mornings! It meets the second Thursday of each month and is open to all women, men, members, and visitors! The subject is the same as the morning study – Mary, Part I. Discussion is varied and lively. For more information contact Jenna at 712-299-1971 or [jenna.harms66@gmail.com](mailto:jenna.harms66@gmail.com).

## PW Mission

### Food & Personal Care Items Needed for Hope Clinic

*Donations Accepted through March*

Hope Clinic in Ypsilanti is serving more people than ever. Along with food, personal care items are a huge and ongoing need for the community they serve. Want to serve like Jesus washing his disciples’ feet? Donate the soap or body wash a neighbor can use! Other personal care items needed are shampoo and conditioner, lotions, toothpaste, deodorant (men’s & womens), q-tips, and cotton rounds. Hope Clinic also accepts cosmetic or styling products, as well as brushes and combs. As always, food donations are very welcome. Place your item in the food donation bins at First Pres any time through March 30. Presbyterian Women will deliver all collected items to Hope Clinic.



## Horizons Magazine – Connect with Women Around the World

It isn't just a Bible study, it's a digital and print magazine too! Focusing on how faith and life connect, Horizons magazine for Presbyterian Women gives you insights from women around the world and inspiration to live boldly. [Subscribe](https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/horizons-magazine/) by April 1 at <https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/horizons-magazine/> and receive the 2022-2023 Horizons Bible Study Guide, Celebrating Sabbath by Carol M. Bechtel for FREE.

## LOCAL FAITH IN ACTION

### Hope Clinic “Church Anchor” promotes Opportunities to Serve

The relationship between Hope Clinic, in Ypsilanti, and First Presbyterian Church has been long and fruitful. Individuals and groups have volunteered their services and creative gifts over many years. Recently, in response to a request by Hope Clinic, Maurine Nelson volunteered to serve as our Church Anchor. She will look for ways to expand our relationship with Hope, connecting their needs with the interests and gifts of the congregation.



### Some current opportunities to serve Hope Clinic include:

**Presbyterian Women’s March Hope Clinic Food Collection** – refer to section above for details.

**Pack Sack Lunches on Sunday March 6** – members of all ages will assemble lunches to be distributed to Hope Clinic meal program clients.

**Join the PW Sewing Angels** in making reusable cloth shopping bags for Hope Clinic's food pantry customers.

For more information about Hope clinic contact Maurine Nelson at [Maurinea4161@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Maurinea4161@sbcglobal.net).

## Join Circles as An Ally

### *Move Our Washtenaw Neighbors Out of Poverty*

Circles is a relationship-based program designed to break the cycle of poverty permanently by helping people become financially independent. It matches low-income people with middle-income partners. These new friends (Allies) help broaden their social network, giving them access to people and resources they might never have if they only relate to their neighbors in poverty. There are many different ways to help. Please join us at an information session to find out how YOU can best use your time and talents to make a difference in our community.



Circles is actively recruiting for volunteers and need your help! We are particularly seeking Allies who will begin training in March of 2022 -- volunteers who will accompany a low-income participant and their family on their journey out of poverty and into economic security. Help us promote the upcoming opportunities for individuals to come and learn more about how they might engage. Circles New Volunteer Orientation is an opportunity to learn about local poverty, how it affects our neighbors, and what you can do to help. Find links and more info here: <https://www.friendsindeedmi.org/circles/volunteer/>. For more info, contact Tracey Hoesch - [tracey@friendsindeedmi.org](mailto:tracey@friendsindeedmi.org), 734-340-9042.

Join us on March 9, 12 – 1 p.m., and March 23, 5:30 – 6:30 p.m.

New Volunteer Orientation Zoom Link (<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/4154803788>)

## Refugee Resettlement Project

Pieces are falling into place for First Presbyterian to help co-sponsor a refugee family with the support of Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County. We have submitted our application to serve as co-sponsors and, if approved, our church will be paired with a family experiencing refugee status for their first twelve months in the U.S., meeting them with community, care, and tangible support. This is a big undertaking and will require us to invest time, resources, and open-hearted love as we learn from our new neighbors and join them on this next journey. As our Lenten theme invites us into "Wilderness | Welcome," we hope we can journey through the wilderness and into abundant welcome in this particular project as well. As we step faithfully into this work, there are many unknown factors, so we will provide regular updates as details emerge. In the meantime, you may connect with project leaders Sidonie Smith, Mark Newton, and Rev. Hannah Lundberg if you'd like to join our email list or volunteer in particular ways. Email Hannah ([hlundberg@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:hlundberg@firstpresbyterian.org)) to get connected.

## Alpha House Host Week

As the pandemic grinds on and on, it's easy to focus on our own weariness, frustration, and grief, ignoring those in need. But as Margaret Wheatley writes, "When we serve others, we gain more than hope. We gain energy." You have an opportunity to gain both hope and energy by ministering to those at Alpha House, a shelter for families experiencing homelessness. The children there, like all school-age youngsters, have experienced erratic education, sometimes in person and sometimes online. In addition to the difficulties of residential mobility, they have missed out on many opportunities and services that were available to them in the before times. Their parents, many of whom work at health-risking, low-wage jobs, face daily challenges as they deal with inflation and trying to plan for a future in the extremely low-inventory housing market. We at First Pres have an opportunity to brighten the lives of these families with a home-cooked meal or, if the Omicron surge has declined by March, an hour of playtime or help with homework during the week of March 21 – 26.



You can take part in this ministry by signing up [online \(https://bit.ly/36ilap1\)](https://bit.ly/36ilap1) or at coffee hour. For more information, contact Gail Einhaus [gail.enihaus@gmail.com](mailto:gail.enihaus@gmail.com), Anne Gere [argere@umich.edu](mailto:argere@umich.edu), or Ruth Jensen [ruthannjensen@gmail.com](mailto:ruthannjensen@gmail.com).



# INTERNATIONAL FAITH IN ACTION

## Nicaragua!

Nicaragua's flag is simple, three broad blue and white stripes with a central triangle containing symbols of the beaches, mountains, volcanoes, and lakes of this largest country in Central America. It is, indeed, a country of unparalleled beauty. However, that flag and beauty cannot hide the economic, social and political ills. Nicaragua is second only to Haiti among the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere, many live in dirt floored shacks made of found materials, and revolution and dictatorships have been the rule of the land.



Against that backdrop, First Presbyterian Church has sought to provide friendship, assistance, improved educational facilities, and to build relationships with five intergenerational trips, focusing on what the Nicaraguans want rather than what we think they need. Once we were asked to build a much-needed school room. We said that there are only 10 of us, we can't do that in a week. They said, "There are also 10 of us. We can do it together." We did—working shoulder to shoulder.

For each trip we worked through CEPAD, a council of Protestant churches, dedicated to leadership training, sustainable agriculture and economic development in Nicaragua. We have seen, first hand, the fruits of their programs. Insurrection and Covid interrupted many delegation trips to Nicaragua, including our own, but CEPAD has continued its work.



We have also had the good fortune of getting to know, and sometimes work with, several PCUSA Mission Co-workers. They include Doug Orbaker, Justin and Renée Sundberg, Ian Vellenga and Jhanderys Dotel-Vellenga.

While we at First Presbyterian continue to support the work of CEPAD, we also look forward to returning to work side by side once again. The adults are most friendly and appreciative but the kids...the kids can melt the hardest of hearts.

## News from Doug Dicks, Presbyterian Mission Co-Worker in Israel-Palestine

*Note: Doug Dicks is a Presbyterian Mission CoWorker serving in Israel and Palestine that First Pres has supported. Doug's work is working alongside Palestinian Christian churches and leaders, advocacy for human rights and facilitating educational gatherings.*

Dear Friends,

Flying in the age of COVID-19 can be daunting! After almost two years of being confined (at my own choice) in Israel and Palestine, I traveled to the U.S. in fall of 2021, for some long overdue vacation time, work, and to attend to personal business and things that can no longer be attended to from abroad. The file of papers I had to carry with me was extensive, including, first, a negative COVID-19 test, done within 72 hours of departure. Second, an exit statement for Israel, done within 24 hours of departure. Third, a "passenger locator" form, since I was passing through the UK, for the UK.



Prior to leaving the Holy Land, the highlights of the past few months included the outbreak of a large fire in mid-August, west of Jerusalem near Beit Meir, which consumed large tracts of forest. The fire was so massive that the ash and pine needles fell over the Bethlehem area, miles from where the initial fire broke out. Days later, Israel sought the assistance of Palestinian firefighters to bring the blaze under control. It is estimated that this devastating fire burned 4,200 acres of forest, which, fortunately, caused no loss of life.

In early September, six Palestinian prisoners escaped a high-security prison facility in Israel by digging their way out with a spoon. The fugitives included a former leader of the militant group Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade and five Islamic Jihad members. An Israel Prison Service official described the escape as "a major security and

intelligence failure." Palestinian militant groups hailed it as "heroic." In what became known as the "Palestinian Shawshank Redemption," the six were eventually caught. The episode was an embarrassment to the Israeli prison facility. According to prisoners' rights group Addameer, there are currently 4,650 Palestinians held in Israeli jails in Israel and the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories. Palestinians view them as political prisoners attempting to end Israel's illegal occupation.

The absence of tourists from the Holy Land continues to plaque the tourism industry, both in Israel and the Palestinian Territories. Both sectors have been hit hard, but it is in the Palestinian Territories, particularly the Bethlehem region, which continues to reel from the absence of foreign visitors and tourist dollars. The livelihoods of many tour guides, hotel workers, travel agents, bus drivers and street vendors have ground to an abrupt and devastating halt. They are now entering into almost a two-year period where virtually no tourists from abroad have been seen. Places that were once visited and trodden over by thousands of tourists a day are now quiet. Even in northern Israel, the few holy sites and churches are all but empty of visitors, save for the few Israelis who venture out to see the places that were once brimming with foreign travelers.

Thank you once again for your continued and faithful support of my work and ministry, without which my presence in the Holy Land would not be possible. Thanks also for your prayers, correspondence and emails, all of which mean and have meant a great deal to me, especially during these uncertain times.

Blessings, Doug

## ***RESIDENT MINISTRY***

### **A Resident Story by Sandy Herold**

When I was on the Resident committee one group of residents asked if we would critique their sermons.

The first Sunday Lal Rodawla, born and raised through childhood in Burma (Myanmar), was to preach at First Presbyterian he said to me "Sandy, I am so nervous that people won't understand me". I said "don't worry, I will let you know if that is the case". When he began to preach the sermon, he neglected to state the scripture that the sermon was based on. His sermon was great and I didn't hear anyone say that they couldn't understand him. After the service I relayed that to him, but said in the future he might want to mention the scriptural basis of his sermon.



Lal's comment to me was that he needed his mother, but since she was so far away, would I be his Ann Arbor mother? I agreed and it was the beginning of a great relationship. This relationship has carried on to this day. We are in frequent contact by e-mail and have visited each other several times. I have met his real mother and many of his family members.

I feel the residency program works in two ways; the residents learn from us and we learn from them.

The current group of residents has also asked for feedback on their sermons. When Lal was back as a guest preacher this fall, we had lunch that included Matthew Warfield, and when Matthew heard the story, he asked if I would be his Ann Arbor "mother" I agreed, but sadly this was for such a short time.

Lal served as a Resident Minister along with Lindsay Conrad Jacaruso and Kristen Riegel from 2013 to 2015. He is currently the Associate Pastor at Providence Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, NC, and is pursuing his doctorate degree at Duke Divinity School.



# SESSION DIGEST

## January Session Highlights

### At the Stated Meeting of Session on January 26, 2022 via Zoom

Moderator, Rev. Jay Sanderford welcomed Elders and Guests Merry Muilenberg (Deacons), Chris Dahl (Personnel Committee), Tom Brandt (Pastor Nominating Committee), Revs. Evans McGowan and Mark Mares, Resident Ministers Rev. Hannah Lundberg and Rev. Megan Berry, and Minister of Music & Fine Arts, David VanderMeer. Rev. Sanderford extended a special welcome to new officers John DeLuc, Debbie MacVey, Mary McKeever, Jeanette Swartz (Deacons) and Elder Lynne Lande (Elder) who are being ordained. The meeting opened at 7:05 p.m. with prayer led by Revs. Megan Berry and Hannah Lundberg.

### The Session then proceeded to –

- Conduct an ordination service for the new Deacons and Elder. The Deacons were then excused with thanks for their commitment to serve.
- Pause for a moment of silent reflection on the lives of Elder Carter Hodgson and Rev. Mathew J. Warfield, giving thanks for their friendship and service.
- Elect the Clerk of Session, Linda Rex, for a one-year term.
- Elect the Officer of the Corporation: Bruce Thomson (President), Steve McKenny (Vice-President), Bill Austin (Treasurer), Deanne Woodruff (Asst. Treasurer) and Linda Rex (Secretary).
- Elect Elders Keith Molin and Bruce Thomson as Commissioners to the Special Called Meeting of the Presbytery on January 31, 2022.
- Elect Elders Jean Song and Steve McKenny as Commissioners to the Stated Meeting of the Presbytery on February 26, 2022.
- Welcome new members Brian and Karen Hutcheon, joining by Letter of Transfer from Chelsea First United Methodist Church, Chelsea, Michigan.
- Approve the 2022 Communion schedule as presented by the Worship Committee.
- Support the Personnel Committee's request, on behalf of the Pastor Nominating Committee, to create a Pastor Transition Work Group to ensure a smooth transition for the new Lead Pastor. The Transition Work Group is the result of feedback from Interim Pastor Rev. Rick Spalding regarding his onboarding experience at First Pres. Rev. Sanderford reported the Core Leadership Team is in full support of this proposal; it creates accountability for Session to support the new Pastor.
- Adopt the Threat Evaluation and Risk Mitigation Plan developed by the Property/Safety Committee with the provision that the Safety Committee more clearly define not only the "quality" of risk but the metrics to determine when the risk has passed. Additionally, Rev. Sanderford requested the Plan include the communication flow when a threat is discerned and define the roles and responsibilities between Safety and Session specific to risk mitigation actions. Elder Len Rezmierski, Safety Committee agreed to address these concerns and bring this to Session again in February for review.

### Other Reports / Discussions

- Elder Sue Gott, Chair, Strategic Planning Guiding Team, reported the SPGT will convene in February to review membership and timing for the next update/iteration of the Plan. She encouraged Session to advise her or any member of the team to forward suggestions for strengthening the Plan. Membership to include one Elder from each standing committee of Session; however, this will be reviewed to accommodate new committee members and workload. The SPGT will continue to make regular updates to Session.
- Elder Bruce Clyde provided an overview of the 2021 year-end financials which will be shared in detail at the upcoming Annual Meeting of the Congregation. He reported there was a \$239K deficit budgeted for 2021. However, due to lower expenses for reduced facilities and Resident Ministry plus increased revenues, the actual deficit for 2021 was \$49K. He also gave an overview of Endowment and Special Gifts status at year-end.
- Elder Deanne Woodruff, Chair, Stewardship, reported year-to-date 417 pledges have been received for a total of \$1.422mil, approximately 86.3% if goal. The average pledge was \$3410, an increase of \$100/pledge over last year. She added despite the challenges from COVID and the departure of Rev. Spalding, the financial support from members demonstrates the strength, loyalty, and resiliency of our congregation.
- Elder Len Rezmierski advised Session the Safety Committee was engaging a professional safety consultant for a three-month pilot to attend the 9:30 service and provide assessment and training. The consultant has

25-years' experience with his company having supported many large corporations with this type of service. The pilot is scheduled to run February – April.

- Elder Rezmierski also reported on the status of the FEMA Grant request which would provide funding for various safety and security enhancements for First Pres. He advised the Safety Committee is finishing the self-evaluation. Personnel from Hillel have offered to review our application to help ensure it meets the federal standards having been through this process previously. The Safety Committee will bring the final submission to Session for approval before submitting the grant request.
- Rev. Evans McGowan advised the Reopening Communications Team is extending the in-person constraints established in December through February. Although infection rates are down, hospitalizations remain high and First Pres staff has been impacted. The intent is to move forward slowly and safely with increased in-person activity in March in preparation for Lent and Easter.

### **Deacons Report**

Deacon representative, Merry Muilenberg, reported the Deacons had their first in-person gathering on December 19 to thank the outgoing Deacons for their service and welcome the Class of 2024. Poinsettias that decorated the church were delivered to members. The Deacons are being trained on the new communion procedure for the 9:30 service, a modified intinction process. Rev. Sanderford reminded Elders serving communion was a visible sign of leadership to the congregation.

### **Pastors Reports**

- Rev. Melissa Anne Rogers reminded Session there were many resources at First Pres to help individuals who are struggling with grief. The Grief Support Group, Stephen Ministers, and Pastoral Staff are readily available.
- Rev. Sanderford said it is a very busy time for Staff, made even more so with the loss of Rev. Matthew J. Warfield.
- With no New Business, the meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

**The Session** is the governing board of the church. It consists of 24 Elders elected by the congregation to 3-year terms; they meet monthly (except, usually, in July) to oversee the church's financial and programmatic life, and to hear reports from the church's staff, committees and working groups. The Rev. Jay Sanderford, currently serves as Moderator. Elder Linda Rex is Clerk of Session. **Their next meeting is on February 16, 2022 (Zoom).**



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