

First Press

A Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor
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Dear Friends,

May! Hooray! Flowers and trees are in bloom and the miracle of Spring is all around us. Creation's beauty shouts new life and new hope. How about our spiritual lives? Do they shout the good news we know in Jesus Christ?

They Will Know We Are Christians By Our Love was written to be used in ecumenical and interracial services on the South Side of Chicago in the 1960s, a place and a time of turmoil. Our world is still in turmoil, and we who say we are Christians are not always perceived as loving or just. Do people we encounter throughout the week know we are Christians by the way we greet them and interact with them?

In his book *The Real Jesus*, Luke Timothy Johnson, a Roman Catholic New Testament scholar, writes, The Gospels' "fundamental focus is not on Jesus' wondrous deeds nor on his wise words. Their shared focus is on the character of his life and death. They all reveal the same patterns of radical obedience to God and selfless love toward other people. All four Gospels also agree that discipleship is to follow the same messianic pattern. They do not emphasize the performance of certain deeds or the learning of certain doctrines. They

insist on living according to the same pattern of life and death shown by Jesus."

As we enjoy the glorious days of Spring, let's consider how we go about our lives. Are we mindful of whom we are following? Are we stuck in ruts on a road that needs to be graded? What if we were to model our lives after Jesus' pattern, less concerned with accomplishing prescribed good deeds or parroting a particular theological slant and instead focused on radical love and forgiveness? What a way to know God! What a way to be known in the community.

Friends, God blesses us with new life and new hope. Let's embrace it and make it known!

Grace and peace,

Rev. Dr. Fairfax F. Fair, Pastor



Register Now for the All-Church Picnic

BBQ, Inflatables, and a Bluegrass Band!

Be sure to save your spot at the June 12 All-Church Picnic! We'll enjoy delicious barbecue from Ann Arbor's Satchel's BBQ; have large and small inflatables for the kids; enjoy games for kids of all ages; and welcome the bluegrass band Thunderwüde. The cost is \$8 per person if you pay ahead online, or \$9 at the door. Children 5 and under eat for free. Sign up now at <https://firstpresbyterian.wufoo.com/forms/allchurch-picnic-reservation-2016/>



PENTECOST IS MAY 15

Help us celebrate the church's birthday – **WEAR RED TO WORSHIP!**

J2A2: Our Eastertide Journey

Jerusalem to Ann Arbor

Are your feet sore yet? Are you ready to swim across the Atlantic Ocean? We continue to travel from Jerusalem to Ann Arbor, and folks are turning in their weekly steps or miles, to see if we can make it home by Pentecost! Remember, travel comes in many forms. The miles you rack up on a bike, swimming or other ways of moving count as well. To help you get in the spirit, we have a few walks planned for you to participate in. Unless otherwise specified, these walks are for young and old.

May 7 - Two Walking Opportunities

A Bird Walk

Meet early Saturday morning in Gallup Park to go birding with members Sue and Dick Righeterink. Bring binoculars if you have them. Watch the bulletin and "Our Life Together" for meeting place and time.

A Women's Walking Retreat

We'll meet at 9:00 a.m. at the church and will be walking in different small groups (based on physical ability/choice). Each group will be led by either a pilgrim or pastoral staff. Walkers will experience different forms of walking as a spiritual practice. We'll close with a short worship at 11:30 a.m.. Sign up here <https://firstpresbyterian.wufoo.com/forms/womens-walking-retreat/>



May 14 - Cass Corridor Prayer Walk

Led by Rev. Jay Sanderford, those volunteering at Cass Community Center will walk the area, with stops to pray along the way for our partners and friends in Detroit.

Family Walks

These walks can be done by families on their own, or meet up for a larger walk. Debbie MacVey has put together a scavenger walk that you can download from our website : search J2A2 Family Walk. See if you can find all the items in the list, or use the list as inspiration to create your own!

May 15 is PENTECOST! Let's hope we've made it home to celebrate! If you haven't turned in your miles yet, you can either email them to Sandy Talbott or drop them off at Coffee Hour. Look for the J2A2 sign!

Restore Hope

Struggling with mental illness in your family? First Pres staff and members facilitate a support group called Restore Hope for family members who have loved ones coping with mental illness. The group meets twice per month. We have parents, siblings, children, and extended family members of those with mental illness attending for mutual support, encouragement, and a safe place to talk. For more information, contact Rev. Rogers (mr Rogers@firstpresbyterian.org).

Women's Walking Retreat - Saturday, May 7

This year our retreat will be part of our J2A2 practice. We will meet in Monteith Hall at 8:30 a.m. to divide into small walking groups, and set out on foot by 9:00 a.m. Along the walk you will be nourished by reflection, prayer and silence – as explained by your walk leader. All groups will return by 11:00 a.m., and we'll finish our morning with a short closing worship. We will have walks for ALL levels of walkers - from our speed walkers to our barely walkers, so plan to come no matter who you are! Register at <https://firstpresbyterian.wufoo.com/forms/womens-walking-retreat/>



A Special Note for Guests, Visitors, & Regular Attenders ... It's time!

Are you a visitor or regular attender? Thank you for attending worship services and other congregational gatherings and programs these last weeks, months, or even years! As we have learned of your presence with us and come to know more about you, we've prayed for you, hoping that when you've joined us, you've felt a sense of belonging and been warmly welcomed to take part.

Many of you are already involved in various activities and are known to the staff. Others of you have been quietly engaging in worship and learning about us in your own way. Why not take this last step to make First Pres your official church home? Joining is a commitment to be a part of a particular church family, to be willing to be known, to give of yourself, to engage in the community, to belong. Find connections, have your questions answered, hear surprising insights about who we are, and receive a foundation in Reformed faith and spirituality. All will give you a deeper sense of belonging. Whether you are new to faith, or a long-time Presbyterian, you'll gain much from the class. Meet staff and get to know other members.

The next new member classes will be held on Sunday, May 15, from 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m., in the Curtis and Founders' Rooms. Lunch and childcare are provided - and it is especially helpful for planning purposes if we know you are coming. The joining takes place on Sunday, May 22, at the 8:00 a.m. new member breakfast and the 9:30 a.m. worship service.

The joy and vitality of our church is palpable. We have a staff that is gifted and energized, and looking forward to an incredible year ahead. We hope you will make a home with us! If you are interested, please contact Rev. Rogers by calling the church at 662-4466 or emailing her at mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org.



Hilltoppers: "Light from the Cage" - Life in a Prison Classroom



Join us on May 12 for Hilltoppers, in the Social Hall, at Noon! After a delicious hot lunch prepared by Chef Christine, we will hear from Judy Wenzel, author, social activist, and teacher, and First Pres member Elsa Stuber. They will share experiences from their prison classrooms after 25 years teaching in the only high school completion program in the nationwide federal system. In addition, Leslie Harrington will speak to us from the children's literacy network to talk about providing tapes of incarcerated prisoners reading books for their children at home. Sign up with the Church Office or email Rev. Rogers, mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org. We want to see you there! Bring friends!

Hats Off to First Pres Women!

Celebrating 170 years of Women's Service in the Church

You are cordially invited to join Presbyterian Women (PW) and their families and friends in celebrating the role of women in the history of the First Presbyterian Church. On Wednesday, May 18, our First Pres PW will host a dinner in the Social Hall at 5:45 p.m., to celebrate women's service in the church for 170 years. Everyone is invited. There is no charge. Please sign up in the Church Office. For more information, contact Ginny Bell at 368-3355 or virginiabell2013@gmail.com. Wear a celebratory hat if you like!

The history of women's service at First Pres goes all the way back to the church's founding in 1826, when Ann Allen, Elizabeth Allen, Deborah Farrand, Harriet Parsons, Agnes Parsons, Mary Branch, Clarissa Mills, Phoebe Whitmore, and Mrs. Monroe accounted for nine of the original 17 official members of the church. But it was in 1846 that Martha Leech Curtis, the pastor's wife, organized the Ladies Aid Society, which after many name changes, is now Presbyterian Women. Presbyterian Women of the First Presbyterian Church, Ann Arbor have continued to help forward the mission of the church - growing spiritually as disciples of Jesus Christ through worship, fellowship, mission, learning, and prayer.

Martha Leech Curtis, organizer of the Ladies Aid Society, (precursor of PW) in 1846.



The Motown Museum Is Calling!



Mature Ministries travels for a “Taste of Detroit.” Circle Thursday, May 19, on your calendar for another adventure into Detroit’s rich cultural diversity. Our day starts with a visit to Detroit’s Motown Museum, home to Motown founder Berry Gordy, and the very recording studio where Diana Ross, Stevie Wonder, Smokey Robinson, and the Jackson Five all cut their first hits. Sing and dance your way through a slice of Detroit history in a walking tour of this popular destination. Lunch follows in Detroit’s equally famous Mexican town. Museum admission and transportation to Detroit covered; lunch on your own. Sign up with Rev. Rogers, mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org, or in the Church Office. Plans still being finalized; details to follow. Mark the date on your calendar and get out those dancing shoes!

Grief and Loss Support Group at First Pres Starts Mid-May

So many in our congregation have lost a loved one in the last few months and are coping with a new reality of grief and transition. We will be offering a grief and loss support group in mid-May at First Pres. The four sessions are Thursday evenings, May 19th and 26th, June 2 and 9, from 7:00 - 8:30 p.m., in the Vance Room. Rev. Rogers will facilitate the group. Attending to your grief is critical – not pushing it away but spending this particular time in your life reflecting on your loss, celebrating the life of the one you loved, and dealing with complex emotions that arise during this time. Your spiritual life can be a resource, but some people find prayer difficult. It is my prayer that God will give you the strength and courage to take this step towards your own grief recovery. This is open to our church, friends, and community. If you know of someone who would benefit from this, please encourage them. All are welcome, and there is no charge to participate. Please sign up with the Church Office or Rev. Rogers if you would like to come.



Memorial Notices by Email

We have a large list of First Pres members who have opted to receive email notices from the Pastoral Program when a church member dies. To be on this email list, please contact Rev. Rogers, mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org.

College Graduates Recognized in the June Edition of First Press

We will be recognizing our college graduates in First Press in June. Please let us know if you have a college graduate in your family - a son or daughter, or grandchild. You have until May 20 to submit this information for including in the First Press June edition. This deadline is firm. We look forward to honoring your family members who have done great things! Complete this form - <https://firstpresbyterian.wufoo.com/forms/celebrating-our-first-pres-college-graduates/> - or come by the Church Office to give us your information. Note: High School graduates will be recognized in worship on June 12 at 9:30, before the Church Picnic. Contact Rev. Dr. Jim Monnett for more information, jmonnett@firstpresbyterian.org

Congratulations High School Class of 2016!

High School graduates will be recognized in worship on June 12 at 9:30, before the Church Picnic. Please come and celebrate your graduation with your church family! Question? Contact Rev. Dr. Jim Monnett at jmonnett@firstpresbyterian.org.

Opportunities to Serve on Sundays

As we head into summer, and then into fall, please be thoughtful about ways you can contribute to the life and ministry of First Pres on Sundays. And, feel inspired! We need you, and want your help! Are you willing to serve as a greeter on Sunday mornings? Would you be able to usher in the summertime for us? Are you able to bake cookies for Coffee Hour? Can you serve on the prayer team that welcomes those who are seeking prayer after one of our worship services? Are you interested in selling Fair Trade Coffee on the first Sunday of the month? These are small things you can do to help the warmth, hospitality, and vitality of our Sunday mornings together. For more information, contact Rev. Rogers, mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org, or 355-2351.



SAVE THE DATE

Marvelous Things Are Coming Up!

August 21 - First Pres' 190th Anniversary!

We can't wait to celebrate with special preacher Dr. Scott Seay, church historian. There will be cake and a variety of things planned in this special celebration!

May 5 - 7, 2017 - All Church Retreat - Grand Hotel, Mackinac Island

We have a special rate for our First Pres members of \$129/per person, per night, for a double and \$193/per person for a single room. This rate includes a full breakfast and a full dinner each day! Plan now to bring your family. We have 40 rooms reserved. It's not too late to put your name in to be sure to get a spot! More info needed? Contact Rev. Rogers.

Joann Freethy recognized as Outstanding Volunteer

On April 14, Glacier Hills Senior Living Community honored one of First Pres' own at its Annual Volunteer Recognition Night. Joann Freethy was named the 2016 Glacier Hills Volunteer of the Year. This award is Glacier Hills "highest honor that goes to an individual who stands out among all volunteers and is an example of what it means to serve the community." Congratulations Joann!



Faith in Action



Do Good Work in Detroit!

Spring Planting at Cass on Saturday, May 14

Gather your friends, bring your family, and recruit your children! Give grace to Detroit by helping to plant the vegetable gardens and flower beds at Cass Community Social Services (CCSS), a place of hope in midtown Detroit. What is Cass Community Social Services? - Cass Community Social Services works across Detroit in areas of concentrated poverty providing programs for food, health, housing, and jobs. Learn more about CCSS at www.casscommunity.org. Sign up today at www.firstpresbyterian.org and click on Sign Up/Forms or email Sue Jeffers at sjeffers1@me.com.

Pentecost Special Offering - Sunday, May 15

Every year on Pentecost Sunday we collect a Special Offering that helps Presbyterians encourage, develop, and support their young people and young adults, and also addresses the needs of at-risk children. 60% of the offering will be sent to PC(USA) to be used to support Presbyterian Mission Agency ministries in those areas. First Pres will give the remaining 40% to the Corner Health Center in Ypsilanti.

The Corner Health Center offers a full range of health care, mental health, and supportive services for young people aged 12 through 25 as they transition to adulthood. The goals of the Corner Health Center are to increase young people's access to health care, reduce risk-taking, help young people understand the long-range implications of their health behaviors, and encourage and develop participation in and responsibility for their own health and well-being. On behalf of our mission teams, we thank you for supporting young people here in Michigan and through Presbyterian Church, USA.

News from Niger: from the Ludwigs

Thank you for your messages and prayers this month! There was high drama as the incumbent president won in a landslide while the opposition held ineffective boycotts. Everyone is bracing for more aggressive action from the opposition as the constitutional court ratified the election results to make it official. Our children are excited to be finishing up the school year and getting ready for visiting the U.S. Rachel had a chance to go to the national Women's Fellowship Conference with 18 other women. It was a great time for her to be immersed in speaking Hausa, bonding with the women, and learning what they were being taught about the issues of raising children in these changing times. Please pray with us for peace across Niger as a vocal minority can give in-roads for instability and terrorists; for the adoption paperwork be resolved so "our" boy can travel with us this summer to the U.S.; for improved water issues in this dry season. Thank you!



A typical scene at the women's conference, as women line-up to dance-up their offering

Philippines Dental Clinic Reopens!



Built in 2000 as a project of First Presbyterian Church, the dental clinic at Bajumpandan, Philippines is now open and seeing patients once again! Our partners at Silliman University, in nearby Dumaguete, Philippines have worked to reopen, staff and operate the dental clinic in Bajumpandan. The clinic is open several half-days a week and welcomes patients with a wide range of needs, including pain relief, extractions, and a hygiene program. Many patients have never seen a dentist before receiving care in Bajumpandan. The dental clinic was originally built by volunteers from First

Pres including John Kinzinger, Greg Detmer, and Karl Bartscht with generous funds provided by Kathy and Bob Swartz and Ross Anderson. The building was designed by local Dumaguete architects and Jeff Taggart. Since the dental clinic has resumed actively treating patients, First Pres, through our Philippines Mission Team, has provided support for supplies, new equipment and operating costs. Silliman University has funded the largest share of operating costs and the dentist's salary as part of their commitment to the local community. First Pres' connection with the Philippines began in 1999, and Philippines Mission Team members have returned to Dumaguete every two or three years, building Habitat homes, a dental clinic, and community center, and providing high school and college scholarships, medical supplies, a feeding program, and ministry at a local prison.

2015-2016 UM Food Rescue Mission

Over the past six years, the food rescue mission effort has rescued 60,000 lbs, getting it to people who are at the very bottom of the economic spectrum. This year's, food rescue activities concluded on April 1 resulting in 8,000 lbs of left-over food from UM football and basketball games being delivered to Cass Community Social Services and Second Mt. Carmel Missionary Baptist Church in Detroit. Here is what they have to say about our mission.

Pastor Edwards: Thanks to you and your church for all that you have done and have given to our church ministry. We pray that some day we will be able to return the blessings in a way that God will be pleased.

Cass: Thank you for all your help this year. Cass feeds 30,000 people a month and the amazing amount of food you have brought us has made an indelible mark on our effort. We couldn't be more grateful!



This project needs several people to provide leadership to support the seven football and ten basketball games. Let's keep it going! Interested in participating? Contact Don Redding at dredding58@yahoo.com.

Israel Palestine Mission Team Retreat: Educating Arabs and Jews



The Israel Palestine Mission Team will present a program on mission partnership with the Hand in Hand Center on Saturday, June 4, 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., in Monteith Hall. Kathi Neubert served for a year as Peacemaking Associate in Jerusalem for the Jewish/Presbyterian Dialog Group in Houston, working with the Hand in Hand Center for Jewish-Arab Education in Israel. She will share her first-hand experiences about this unique approach to bilingual/bicultural/tri-religion education in Israel and discuss the hope of a shared society in Israel, teaching in the middle of war, and the new paradigm of Jews and Arabs refusing to be enemies. A light lunch will be served for \$5.00. Register at <https://firstpresbyterian.wufoo.com/forms/israel-palestine-study-retreat/>.



Financial Stewardship

**GRACE &
GRATITUDE**
STEWARDSHIP 2017

Grace & Gratitude

The focus for Stewardship 2017

God's grace is ever-present, unchanging, and unearned. We have only to accept it. This gift of God is, as we sing, indeed amazing. As we look to Stewardship 2017, culminating in Commitment Sunday, October 23, 2016, we will be considering our joyful response, individually and as a congregation, to this wonder.

Become a Legacy Partner

Have You Included First Pres in Your Will?

Carol and I have journeyed in faith with the First Pres family since 1992. We feel blessed by the leadership of our pastors and staff, the commitment to mission (both local and international), the passion for learning, and the support of friends. Making a legacy gift to First Pres is a commitment that goes beyond our annual pledge. It reflects our desire to help ensure that the missions, worship practices, leaders, and community remain in place for future generations.

– Doug Gottlieb



Save the date for “Planned Giving: Estate planning 101” with Ron and Diana Gardner. Sunday June 5, 11:00 - 12:00. Interested in becoming a Legacy Partner? <http://firstpresbyterian.org/contribute/donate/legacy-partnersplanned-gifts>. Already a Legacy Partner? Join us for the Legacy Partners Luncheon, Sunday June 5, 12:00-2:00 at the Ann Arbor City Club. Our guest speaker will be the Rev. John Buchanan, former pastor at Fourth Presbyterian, Chicago, who will also preach at our morning services.



Children & Families



Register Now for Camp Westminster - July 31- August 6

Spots are still available for Camp Westminster! Second through eighth graders – preregister today for Camp Westminster at <https://firstpresbyterian.wufoo.com/forms/camp-westminster-preregistration-form/> Camp Westminster is a Presbyterian camp on Higgins Lake, 200 miles north of Ann Arbor that provides a traditional camp experience complete with swimming, boating, archery, soccer, arts and crafts, singing, campfires, and more. Older campers who have completed 6th - 8th grade have a canoe trip on the AuSable River. Questions? Contact Debbie MacVey at dmacvey@firstpresbyterian.org, or Rev. Dr. Jim Monnett at jmonnett@firstpresbyterian.org.

Summer Vacation Bible School - Learn about Life in Jesus' Time



Summer Vacation Bible School is Tuesday, June 21 – Thursday, June 23, from 9:30 a.m. -12:15 p.m. For three days, children who have completed Kindergarten through fifth grade will experience what life was like when Jesus lived. Participants will visit the arts and craft shops of the Marketplace, travel to the Story Teller's tent, witness events in Jesus' life re-enacted by our street players, and play games at the Jerusalem playground. Join us for a great Bible time experience, and invite a friend! Registration forms will be mailed to homes shortly or visit www.firstpresbyterian.org, Search “Vacation Bible School.” There are many adult, middle schooler, and high schooler volunteer opportunities. Questions? Contact Deborah MacVey at dmacvey@firstpresbyterian.org or Cindy King at cking@firstpresbyterian.org.

Fifth Graders Work on Mission Milestone

During May, First Pres fifth graders will participate in the “Reaching Out Together in Mission” milestone. This milestone activity will help them learn about global food shortages and our responsibility as people of faith to feed the hungry. For more information, contact Deborah MacVey at dmacvey@firstpresbyterian.org.





Adult Education



Pray for our Iona Pilgrims Please pray for the pilgrims from First Pres who will journey to Iona, Scotland in May! They will be spending a week learning, living, working, and worshipping in community on the Isle of Iona with the Iona Community. The trip will be led by Resident Minister Daniel Ervin, and includes Greg Czarnecki and Sue Dempsey, Sallie Parker, Merry Muilenberg, Jean White, and Joyce Ervin. We look forward to hearing about their pilgrimage!

Sunday Adult Education Offerings

There will be no Adult Education classes on Sunday, May 29 (Memorial Day Weekend).

Sundays @ 9:30 A.M.

The Bible @ 9:30 - French Room/Library

The class, led by Rev. Ed Koster, continues an intriguing study of the Gospel of John. William Barclay called John “the most precious book in the Bible.”

First Couples - Monteith Hall

May 1-22 **The Wired Word**

Using stories ripped from the headlines, the group will discuss current events from a Biblical viewpoint. Bring your interests, ideas and questions for a fascinating discussion!



Sundays @ 11:00 A.M.

Common Ground - Lewis Room

A place to grow in faith and develop friendships. All are welcome! The class is conversational in style.

May 1, 8 & 15 **Light and Darkness: Examining Ideas of Faith.**

Carol Gottliebse guides the class through the fragile ideas that surround themes of “light” and “darkness.” Discuss *Learning to Walk in the Dark*, by Barbara Brown Taylor and *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr.

May 22 **The Gospel According to Dr. Seuss and Other Stories for Children Large and Small**

Join together to examine the threads of faith, joy, humor and sharp-witted cultural critique evident in several of Dr. Seuss’s popular stories. Rev. Jay Sanderford Presenter

Exploring the Faith - Monteith Hall

May 1, 8 & 15 **Who Is My Neighbor? Diverse Faiths Living Together**

Rev. George Lambrides of the Interfaith Roundtable will guide us through some important questions about our neighbors, Muslim, Hindu, Jewish, Christian, or one of the Nones. Who do we live near, work with or next to? Where do our lives intersect with people and institutions of religions different from our own? And what is it like to develop inter-religious acquaintances and friendships?

May 22 **Who Is My Neighbor? Race, Basketball and The Secret Game**

A discussion about a pivotal college basketball game in North Carolina and its far-reaching impact. Join a discussion with Scott Ellsworth, First Pres member and author whose

prize-winning book, *The Secret Game: A Wartime Story of Courage, Change, and Basketball’s Lost Triumph* won the 2016 PEN/ESPN Award for Literary Sports Writing.

