

First Press

A Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor
May 2017 ■ Volume 65, Number 5



2017 Nicaragua Mission Trip



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Dear Friends,

We are in the glorious season of Eastertide, the period of the church year between the day of Resurrection and Pentecost. We celebrate and appreciate Jesus' presence with us and give thanks for the hope and promise and joy Christ brings to our lives. The Sunday after Easter we welcomed a wonderful class of confirmands into the church, and this Sunday we will have a great class for prospective members AND celebrate all those past, present, and future who help sustain the church through special, above and beyond gifts to particular ministries and gifts to our small but vitally important endowment fund.

The month of May continues the celebrations. God is so good to us! Find reasons to be grateful – from the beauty of a spring day, to the companionship of fellow church members, to the privilege of helping another in the name of God, to the opportunity to gather to do Bible study and discuss current issues in light of the Gospel. Be mindful of examples great and small of God's grace and express thanks to God. We can never say thank you often enough! Express your gratitude by thinking

and praying about how God is calling you to further the Lord's work through the ministries of First Pres.

Pray for the elders who currently are serving on the Session. They are engaged in a comprehensive look at every area in the life of the church in light of demographic trends and known needs of this congregation. All this will lead to the development of a new vision statement to guide us in the short and long term. Expect to hear more about their efforts over the coming months.

Together we are the church of Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God!

Grace and peace,

Fairfax F. Fair

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 11 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-2017/>



Celebrating Our Graduates

Information Due by Wednesday, May 10

- High School graduates will be recognized in worship Sunday, June 11, at 9:30 a.m. Please submit graduate's name, parents' name(s), high school, and future plans at <https://firstpresbyterian.wufoo.com/forms/high-school-graduates-2017/> or to the Church Office.
- College graduates will be recognized in the June edition of First Press. Submit the graduate's name, degree, and institution at <https://firstpresbyterian.wufoo.com/forms/celebrating-our-first-pres-college-graduates/> or to the Church Office.



Church Retreat at Mackinac Island



Please pray for the 100 participants from First Pres who will journey to Mackinac Island, May 5 - 7, for "Looking Back, Growing Forward," our church retreat at the Grand Hotel. Activities include exploring the Island and hotel, cocktail hour, group dinners, optional lectures, Island runs and prayer walks, and Sunday worship and communion. Staff attending include: Rev. Dr. Fair, Rev. Rogers, Tom and Doris Granum, Sandy Talbott, Mary Jones, Linda Robinson, Adrian Prundeanu, Cindy King, and Robin Agnew. Expect to hear more about our amazing adventures in June!

JOIN NOW!

Join us on April 30 from 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. in the Curtis Room to become a member of First Pres on May 14! We want you to have full membership! Registration for this class is required. Contact Rev. Rogers, mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org. The next chance to join our congregation will be in October 2017.

May Hilltoppers Gathering

Thursday, May 11, Noon, Social Hall "The God-Pleasing Creative Life"

Dr. Lew Klatt, Professor of English Literature and Writing, Calvin College, and author of *Sunshine Wound*, *Christian Poetry*, and a new collection (prose poems) called *The Wilderness After Which* will join us to talk about Christian poetry.

Bonus Event: Lew will stay in Ann Arbor for a book reading Thursday evening at BookBound on Plymouth Road. Bring friends!

Special Gathering Postponed

Due to an illness in the presenter's family, the May 18 presentation on In-Home Care and Senior Residences will be postponed until September 21.



Presbyterian Women Gathering - Wednesday, May 17



- **9:30 a.m. in the Lewis Room** - Bible Lesson, "Who is Jesus According to Contemporary Culture?" led by Marolin Bellefleur.
- **10:00 a.m. in Monteith Hall** - During the business meeting, our new officers will be installed and the 2017 Lifetime Honorary Membership recipients presented, followed by an opportunity for well-deserved congratulations.
- **11:00 a.m. also in Monteith Hall** - A representative from the Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice will discuss "Peacemaking in Today's World."
- **Noon** - PW will enjoy lunch out on the town. Sign up in the Church Office or call 662-4466 for reservations.

Honoring Veterans on May 28



On Sunday, May 28, the First Pres veterans group will host Coffee Hour in memory of those veterans who have died. A slide show honoring veterans who are former members of our church, friends or relatives of church members will be shown. If you wish someone to be honored in the slide show, please send two photographs of the veteran, one current and one in military uniform, as well as a description of military involvement to Gary Stahl at stahl.gary@sbcglobal.net. All are invited to a remembrance ceremony led by Rev. Eldon Beery in the Memorial Garden at 12:15 p.m. The names of the veterans interred there will be read.

Contact Ralph Winter at 429-3743 if you have any questions or need actual photographs scanned for the slide show. All originals will be returned.



Worship & Music

New Stephen Ministers Commissioned

On Sunday, May 21, a new class of Stephen Ministers will be commissioned at the 9:30 a.m. service of worship. Join us as we celebrate the Lord's call upon these men and women to serve in this special role of caring ministry. Being commissioned are: Deborah Campbell, Sue Dempsey, Patricia Gilbreath, Barb DeLancey, Cheryl Gulbranson, Chris Queen, Susan Sweet Scott, and Beca Torres-Davenport.



Youth Ministry

Costa Rica Mission Trip

The Costa Rica Mission Trip is June 18-27, 2017. Sunday, June 18, we fly from Detroit to San José where Jorge Zuniga, the Portantorchas Mission Coordinator, will meet us at the airport and transport us to the neighborhood of Grand Blanc. At night the team will stay in bunks with hot showers on a beautiful, secure campus. Our meals will be served in the main house. We will travel by motorbus to our worksites out in the community. At the end of the work week we will travel to Quepos on the Pacific Ocean and stay in a local hotel. We will swim at one of the world's most beautiful beaches and visit Manuel Antonio National Park to see howler monkeys, sloths, caimans, and all kinds of birds. Rev. Jay Sanderford and Peer Minister Lex Allum will lead the trip along with Mrs. Jennifer Wilson, and college students Josh King and Erin Tichenor. For more information, contact Rev. Jay Sanderford at jsanderford@firstpresbyterian.org, 662-4466, ext. 340.



Faith in Action



Voices of Children: Many Faiths, One Song

The Interfaith Round Table of Washtenaw County will present a unique interfaith music event – Voices of Children: Many Faiths, One Song. Four children's choirs from the Hindu Chinmaya Mission, Temple Beth Emeth, St. Clare's Episcopal Church and The First Unitarian Universalist Congregation will sing. Join us on Sunday, May 21, at 4 p.m, at Genesis, 2309 Packard Street (Temple Beth Emeth and St. Clare's Episcopal). Given the current climate in our county and country, this will be a beautiful way to show our support for diversity and inclusion. There will be an opportunity to donate to the work of the IRT. For more information, call 734-424-1535 or email gbrides@umich.edu.



Opportunities at Cass Community Social Services

- **Spring planting at Cass** - It's coming. Spring, that is!! That means our annual "Plant Some Gardens at Cass" workday is just around the corner on Saturday, May 13. This is a fun opportunity to show Cass and its residents that we care. The vegetable gardens directly impact the quality of over 1,000,000 meals served by Cass each year. The flower gardens let the people served by Cass know that we support renewal and growth in nature and in people. Absolutely no special skills are required and volunteers will be able to lunch on one of Detroit's finest BBQ sandwiches from Slow's. We leave from the church at 7:30 a.m. and will return to Ann Arbor around 2:30 p.m.. Sign up now at <https://firstpresbyterian.wufoo.com/forms/cass-work-day/>. Questions? Contact Sue Jeffers at sjeffers1@me.com
- **Progressive Dinner and Tiny Homes Tour** - Be on the lookout for an announcement in the bulletin about the Progressive Dinner with Tour of Tiny Homes at Cass during Memorial Day weekend. Tickets will be available for dinner/tour at various times throughout the weekend.
- **Save the Date for the Fall Workday!** Our Fall work project at Cass is scheduled for October 14. Volunteer now as an individual, family, or with your church group, by contacting Sue Jeffers, sjeffers1@me.com.

From the Ludwigs, our Missionary Co-workers in Niger:

They write, "Many things are going well! We thank God for the movement on Community Health Evangelism (CHE) classes & training, for all the progress our children are making in school, and for friends and colleagues who encourage us. Of course there are still lots of things we struggle through everyday, from parenting in another culture, to how to get basic services like phones to work property, and continuing to work on our Hausa proficiency. In these things we are encouraged by even having you reading along with us and praying for our work of bridge-building among God's people. Three schools dominate our lives, the homeschooling at the Ludwig household, and the two Bible schools where Michael teaches. We continue implementing the CHE plan and got more experience with teaching students at the Agwie Bible school. Michael even got a chance to teach his first CHE class in all Hausa with no English speakers around which was a big step (subject was how to build consensus on problems with voting circles like on chalkboard). Michael is again working some with the rickshaws to collect information on how the business is going and how the drivers are coping with increased competition around the city and the daily commissions being reduced. We were privileged to be present with and to observe the different funeral practices after our guard's mother's death (age 45). We heard encouraging stories of the difficulties that new believers go through and the movement of the Spirit that goes along with it. We saw many people in need as they had had things stolen or struggle with empty cupboards. Thank you for your prayers!

Pray with us!

- Praise God for the chance to hear good news about how Christians are growing and communities are being strengthened across Niger through different ministries!
- Pray for comfort for our guard's family as his mom left behind five kids under the age of 20. And for our witness of friendship and caring for our other neighbors..





Nicaragua Mission Trip: Here we are Lord, send us! March 31-April 9, 2017

In a deep ravine, in the department of Jinotega, Nicaragua, not far from the Coco River and the border with Honduras lies a very small community called Quebrada Honda. The houses and farms are so scattered so it's hard to say exactly where the community begins and ends but it's easy to see that its heart lies in its school. It's a four room primary school by day and a secondary school in the afternoon and weekends. The school is the place where the community gathers for important events and special occasions. It's also where we spent much of our week in Nicaragua.

Last year, the community leaders asked us to build a classroom. We regretfully declined. How could 12 minimally skilled teens and adults from Ann Arbor possibly build anything in Nicaragua? The leaders persisted. It still seemed impossible but we finally agreed. The cost of materials was minimal by U.S. standards. The work was hard but much was accomplished as we worked side-by-side with the farmers and leaders and children of Quebrada Honda. When we left the concrete block walls were four feet tall. We were promised it would be completed and sure enough, within a month or so we received photos of the completed classroom!

Fast forward one year. We had pledged to return to continue making improvements to the school and so we did. Our group of five teens and nine adults, along with many locals, painted the classroom inside and out. We spent many hours cutting, routing, drilling and sanding wood to construct five very solid bookcases for the school and worked alongside the Nicaraguans to assemble them. It was gratifying to see the women of the community using the power tools, the ultimate example of empowerment!

In partnership with CEPAD (Council of Protestant Churches of Nicaragua) and under the leadership of Luis Vasquez and PC(USA) mission co-worker, Justin Sundberg, we were able to accomplish much more. We supplied the school and nine families with simple water filters. We learned about soil conservation using contouring techniques and small, living dams to control soil loss during the rainy season, and making compost and organic farming practices. We spoke with the men and women of the community, learning and sharing with each other and spent time spent playing, dancing, laughing, singing, praying and eating together. Our mission in Nicaragua is based on relationships: starting, nurturing and strengthening them. It was so gratifying to see our old friends: Julio, Maria, Norma, Fabio, Isa and so many children as well as meeting new friends: Rita and Annette and many more.

What's next? The school and much of the surrounding area does not have electricity but we've been told that if the school was properly wired the government would run it to the community. While that project would certainly bring an interesting set of challenges, it can be done. Imagine how the students would benefit by having lights to brighten the rooms in the evenings and during the dark rainy season. Imagine all of the other possibilities that electricity would bring.

Please join us on Sunday, May 21 at 11:00 to see and hear more about our mission in Nicaragua.



College Ministry

Celebrating College Ministry

As we close out the 2016-2017 academic year we celebrate college ministry at First Pres! Over the past year, students have come together on Wednesday evenings in the League to talk about life and God. On Sundays we consistently met for a free college lunch where we were able to continue building relationships. We are thankful for a such a great year. Know someone who might be interested in coming to college events? Contact Lex Allum at aallum@firstpresbyterian.org.





Children & Families

Register Now for Summer Vacation Bible School

June 20, 21 & 22, 9:30 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

Children (age 5 by November 30, 2016), through current fifth graders, their friends and neighbors are welcome to strap on their sandals and step into the Bible! Join us on the grounds of First Presbyterian Church as we experience what life was like when Paul traveled to the early Christian Churches and shared the message of Jesus. Experience the sights, sounds, and tasty smells of a Roman Marketplace as they craft in the shops, hear stories in the storytellers tent, and meet Apostle Paul as his ministry is re-enacted by our drama team. New this year: On Wednesday, June 21, Howell Nature Center will bring "Animal Architects" for all to see and enjoy. Register online at www.firstpresbyterian.org or complete the form mailed out mid-March.



Volunteer! There are many ways that adults, middle schoolers, and high schoolers can volunteer and be a part of this great activity. Volunteers may also register at www.firstpresbyterian.org. Questions? Contact Deborah MacVey at dmacvey@firstpresbyterian.org or Cindy King at cking@firstpresbyterian.org.

NEW Camp Westminster Options for First Pres Families

Camp Westminster is a Presbyterian camp on Higgins Lake that provides a traditional camp experience complete with swimming, boating, archery, soccer, arts and crafts, nature activities, outdoor living skills, singing, campfires, Bible Quest and more. First Pres children and youth have been going to Camp Westminster on Higgins Lake together for 18 summers. This year, interested campers and their families have new options:



- **Want to go to camp as a family?** The week of July 2 - 6 is Family Camp.
- **Interested in a two-week camp?** July 9 - 22 is Extreme S.T.E.A.M. for second grade complete through fifth grade; and Sailing, Radical Faith, or The Au Sable Paddle and Saddle Challenge for sixth grade complete through ninth grade.
- **Would you prefer our usual week?** July 30 - August 5 is Aqua Mania II for younger campers and Wet 'n Wild II for older campers.

Register and get complete details at www.campwestminster.com. There is a First Presbyterian Church "Adventure First" legacy discount for \$35 for these three camp sessions for families and children from First Pres. The code is "1432". When you register indicate that you are from First Presbyterian Church, Ann Arbor. This will insure that you are placed in a cabin with your First Pres friends. If an additional camp scholarship would be helpful, contact Debbie MacVey.

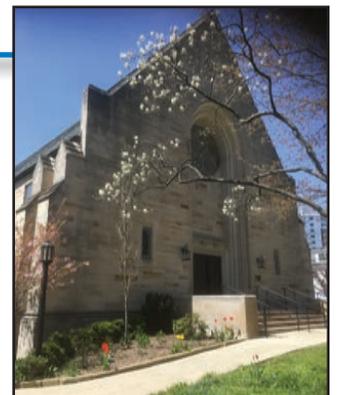


Financial Stewardship

Endowment and Special Gifts

When you admire one of the many flowering shrubs on the church grounds or sit in the shade of a tree during outdoor worship this summer, know that a Legacy Gift in memory of Charles "Chuck" and Marian Cares helps make that possible.

They, along with their children Chris, Sue, John and Alison, became members of First Pres in 1959. Cares was a landscape architect who taught at UM. They admired the natural beauty of the church grounds. Marian died in 2008 and Chuck in 2010. At her dad's memorial service, Sue remembers a friend commenting on the fact that she saw both a ruby throated hummingbird and a wood thrush that September afternoon.



The Cares children made this gift to First Pres. intended to help preserve and maintain the church grounds. They started by commissioning an updated landscape plan. Since then there have been enhancements to the grounds including pruning and replacing trees and shrubs. Water runoff continues to be an issue to be addressed in order to avoid erosion and damage to the church foundation. Gifts like this one make so many of the wonderful aspects of First Pres possible. If you would like to support the church through a Legacy or Special Gift, please contact Rev. Dr. Fairfax F. Fair; Anna Miller, Finance Manager, or read more at <http://firstpresbyterian.org/contribute/donate/legacy-partnersplanned-gifts>.



Adult Education

Sunday Adult Education Offerings

Sundays @ 9:30 A.M.

The Bible @ 9:30 - French Room/Library

The Bible at 9:30 continues a study of the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts. Rev. Ed Koster is the presenter.

First Couples - Monteith Hall

May 5-28 **Half Truths: God Helps Those Who Help Themselves and Other Things the Bible Doesn't Say**

The group will view and discuss this fascinating DVD by Adam Hamilton.

Sundays @ 11:00 A.M.

Exploring the Faith - Monteith Hall The Light Shines Through – Stories of Mission ReImagined

Our stories of mission are the powerful stories of men and women shining the light of God in Haiti, the Philippines, Nicaragua, Russia and Israel/Palestine. And in downtown Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti and Detroit. And beyond. Through the hands and hearts of many individuals, First Pres has focused the light of Jesus Christ to offer hope to countless people – sparking the successful launch of a nursing school in Haiti, providing access to education to young people in the Philippines, Palestine and Russia, building classrooms in Nicaragua, constructing homes in Ypsilanti, Detroit and the Philippines and feeding hundreds, if not thousands, of hungry vulnerable people in Ann Arbor. In each place, the light of God, coming through the ministries of First Pres, transforms the community, and our world. Come to hear the stories of God's light shining through the faith, devotion and hard work of many members and friends of First Presbyterian Church.



April 30 **Mission ReImagined: Beyond Charity to Transformation**

A Model for Mission and Ministry That Goes Beyond Toxic Charity. Presenters are Helena Prince, Carol Smith, Rev. Angela Ryo, and Rev. Jay Sanderford.

May 7 **The Light Shines through Partners: Embracing Mission and Partnership**

Explore Mission as Partnership with Rev. Chris Roseland, of the Presbyterian Mission Agency of Louisville, Kentucky.



May 14 **The Light in the Philippines**

Since joining a Habitat for Humanity Blitz Build after a catastrophic storm, First Pres mission teams have built houses, a dental clinic and a community center, and provided scholarships for hundreds of students to go to school. Our impact in Dumaguete, Philippines has been tremendous.

May 21 **The Light in Nicaragua**

Living and working in small villages like Quebrada Honda, First Pres has worked side-by-side with our Nicaraguan partners to build school classrooms bread ovens, school furniture and relationships with our partners CEPAD.



May 28 **The Light in Russia**

First Pres has a lively partnership with the Russian Orthodox Church, and Father Vladimir Klimzo in Davydovo, Russia. Located in a small village north of Moscow, Father Vladimir and his congregation operate a summer camp for special needs children and families. First Pres' financial gifts have enabled the construction of a dormitory and meeting center, the facility at the heart of the community.



June 4 **The Light in Israel/Palestine**

The Israel/Palestine Mission Team bears a consistent witness to God's compassion for the all people – of all faiths and ethnicities in the Middle East--including those living in Israel and Palestine. The I/P Team maintains a partnership with the Pilgrims of Ibillin, and is involved with the Mar Elias schools, the Hand in Hand Schools and other projects of merit striving for peace and justice in this ancient land.