



First Press

NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ANN ARBOR

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Dear Friends,

We are moving forward!

As our world welcomes three life-saving Covid-19 vaccines, we are moving towards increased freedom to gather together with our loved ones in person, to be together in worship once again, to enjoy the people and places that give our life meaning.

As a congregation, too, we are moving forward! On April 11, we will celebrate Rev. Rick Spalding's last Sunday with us as our Interim Pastor. Rick has served for nearly 21 months, and soon returns to a life of retirement in Ipswich, Mass., with his beloved partner Peter. (And hopefully traveling soon to Ireland, one of his happy places!) Their presence with us has been a true gift. Rick's grace-filled words have helped challenge and grow us – words written and preached, shared at coffee hour, and written in cards and notes. He's helped steer us through a pandemic, guide our Session, steady our connection to the Presbytery of Detroit, prepared us to seek a new Lead Pastor, and keep our staff strong even as we have said goodbye to key colleagues and welcomed new ones along the way.



But what now? Who will guide us going forward?

The Core Leadership Team (CLT), appointed by the Personnel Committee (PC) of Session, includes Associate Pastors Rev. Jay Sanderford and Rev. Mel Rogers, Assistant Pastor Rev. Evans McGowan, Minister of Music and Fine Arts Dave VanderMeer, and Interim Bridge Administrator J.P. DiMaggio. This team meets weekly to plan, manage and direct our church's worship life, many ministries and programs. It will be in consistent conversation with and report to the PC.

Pastors will engage a preaching rotation of our current ministers and have several Sundays when outstanding guest preachers, including some notable former Resident Ministers, will lead our worship. Our Session committees will be active and engaged – with Elders focused on keeping all areas of ministry vital!

Our Pastoral Nominating Committee (PNC) is hard at work in the search to find our next Lead Pastor. This process takes many months, during which the CLT will sustain the church's vibrancy, health and growth. The CLT will communicate with you regularly about how things are going, what you can do to help, and what changes are emerging in our church, including how our new Strategic Plan is being implemented. In a month or so, you will hear news about the Resident Ministers who will join our staff in August!

What you should know is that the church is in good hands – God's hands and the hands of a collaborative core team of experienced and enthusiastic leaders. Our Session and PC will keep us faithful to our call to keep First Pres vital and to be transparent along the way. The Holy Spirit will be our true guide as we pray and work together to keep First Pres thriving as we worship, serve our members, our community and the world, and as we – a church together connected in faith, love and spirit – move through new stages of the pandemic, hopefully returning to a more normal experience of faith and church.

Faithfully yours,
The Core Leadership Team

Meet David Hufford, Our New Organist

Highly-accomplished musician David Hufford joins First Presbyterian Church as permanent Organist on April 11.

David brings a wealth of experience as organist, vocalist, church musician and organ technician to our staff – and we're excited to welcome him!

"I am pleased to welcome David as FPC's organist and colleague," said Dave VanderMeer, Minister of Music & Fine Arts. "His extraordinary gifts as an organist and composer will greatly enrich the worship life of our community of faith."



Born in Toledo, David began his musical journey at age six and secured his first church organist position at 16. He was selected organist at a large Lutheran church

at age 20 and served there several years. During that time, he met a classmate of Dave VanderMeer, who gave David his first formal organ instruction and encouraged him to go to school to study music.

Accepted into the University of Michigan Organ Department, David moved to Ann Arbor in 1991. He won the 1993 Keyboard Day Organ Scholarship Competition and placed second in a National Hymn-Playing Competition in 1995. He also

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Holy Week and Easter



Holy Week Service In-Person Offerings

We will have in-person worship (up to 50 spots, two people per spot) for Maundy Thursday (7:00 p.m.), Good Friday (7:00 p.m.), and Easter Sunday (9:30 a.m) worship services. A sign up link is available on our website. You may sign up for one of those three services to be present with us in the Sanctuary, and you agree to remain socially distanced and masked while at church. Please sign up yourself and your family only, not other people in the congregation. We're sorry we cannot accommodate all our members who wish to be there, but we look forward to seeing you there, or online, and gathering next year in the Sanctuary together!



HOLY WEEK SERVICES AND OTHER OFFERINGS

Mid-day Prayer Time, Monday – Wednesday, March 29–31

Prayer Time premieres at 12:15 p.m., on Facebook and Instagram, where each will be available for 24 hours.

Maundy Thursday Worship, April 1

Worship Service with Communion is livestreamed at 7:00 p.m., on both Facebook and YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCi4UFJ0Spvowsk7EnVXs6CQ>).

Good Friday Worship, April 2

Stations of the Cross Family Service is at 11:00 a.m. via Zoom (<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89584086945>)

Seven Last Words of Christ Service is livestreamed at 7:00 p.m., on both Facebook and YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCi4UFJ0Spvowsk7EnVXs6CQ>).

Easter Sunday Services, April 4

A 25-minute Sunrise Service is at 7:15 a.m. on the Circle Terrace.

Worship with Communion is livestreamed at 9:30 a.m., on both Facebook and YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCi4UFJ0Spvowsk7EnVXs6CQ>). Radio broadcast is at 11:00 a.m. at 1600 AM and online at <https://www.waamradio.com>.

Easter Pageant Worship is at 11:00 a.m. online; see website for more information.

Easter Sunday Sanctuary and Grounds Stroll, April 4

Sign up online: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090f45a4ac283-easter1>

Covid-19 safety protocols require all participants to be masked and socially distanced.

Highlights include:

- Creation of a flower cross (bring a flower to add)
- A prayerful stroll through our Sanctuary filled with the beauty of Easter flowers and live music
- A hands-on Prayers of Gratitude station
- Easter treats to take home to enjoy later
- A photo opportunity – have your photo taken by a flowering cross; we'll mail the photo to you
- An opportunity to bring donations for One Great Hour of Sharing (financial donations), Cass Community Social Services (paper towels and laundry detergent), and Community Action Network (canned food and financial donations)
- And, last but not least, a Blessing station where you will have the opportunity to receive a final blessing from Rev. Spalding and thank him for the many blessings he has shared with us during his Interim Ministry at First Pres.
- Light a candle of memory or gratitude

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was a featured recitalist at the Organ Historical Society National Convention in Detroit. While completing his Master's Degree, he received another organ scholarship and sang in the University Choir.

David has been Director of Music/Organist at Angelica Lutheran Church in Allen Park the past 25 years. During his time there, he led an ambitious project to significantly rebuild and enlarge the church's 1952 Casavant pipe organ according to a new specification of his own design. The results have been widely admired by both the congregation and visiting musicians.

In 1993, David helped establish the Renaissance Pipe Organ Company in Ann Arbor, which is well known for its quality of work and has an impressive clientele that includes many prominent Detroit cathedrals and churches.

For many years, David has sung bass as part of the Dearborn-based, 85-member Vanguard Voices, and with a select offshoot vocal ensemble, The Aeolian Chorale. Since 2014, he has served as a staff organist at Ann Arbor's historic Michigan Theater, where he personally rebuilt and restored its nearly 100-year-old Barton organ.

David and his partner, vocalist Randall Nicholls, are stalwart residents of Ann Arbor and enjoy opportunities to collaborate in making great music. David also enjoys good food, coffee, a well-made cocktail, dabbling amateurishly in audio recording, and many types of hands-on projects, such as home remodeling.

Please take a moment to welcome David to the FPC Family. You may reach him by email at dhufford@firstpresbyterian.org.



Hear David Early!

You can see and hear new Organist David Hufford even before he officially joins the FPC staff! He will present a 30-minute, organ mini-concert at 12:15 p.m. on Wednesday, April 7, on YouTube. The link for this performance will be on the First Presbyterian Church website and our YouTube channel.

You can also hear David playing on this Mendelssohn Allegro con brio audio track: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/f1e-qlq6m55j643/Track%208%2C%20Mendelssohn%20IV%20Alle-gro%20con%20brio%20-%20Track%20-%20%2316.wav?dl=0>

Sunday, April 11, will be David's first date of playing music for us in worship.

Thank You and Farewell To Paul!

David Hufford's appointment concludes a time of more than two years during which Paul Haebig served with steadfast grace and patience as our Interim Organist. Paul's last Sunday with us will be on Easter, April 4.

"It has been a privilege and a pleasure to work with Paul the past 18 months. He is a gifted organist, a sensitive accompanist and a consummate musician – and has been a valued colleague to the FPC staff during his time here," said Dave VanderMeer, Minister of Music & Fine Arts.



Sunday after Sunday, Paul's playing has inspired us – and one beneficial side-effect of videotaped services necessitated by Covid-19 restrictions is that we've been able to watch Paul's skill at close range! We're so thankful for his musicianship and his collegiality – and glad that he remains with us through Lent and Easter before moving on.

The First Pres staff has been blessed to have Paul with us these past two years, bringing his skill, wisdom, devotion and a lovely wit! His generous presence in worship, weddings, memorial services and special events, like the annual Story Slam, has encouraged our appreciation for the beauty of music and the support of song.

In addition, Paul's knowledge of liturgy and church history has deepened our creativity in our worship planning as a staff.

So much has changed the last year in how we worship and what church feels like as staff members. Paul has been a steady companion with us as we've made our way into virtual worship and beyond. His gift for writing limericks has brought our staff much laughter on tough days and been a lovely way to celebrate colleagues leaving us.

We are grateful for the opportunity we've had to work together and will miss him. Go with our blessings, Paul!

Please join our staff in expressing our appreciation to Paul for his faithful service to FPC. One way to celebrate him is at the Virtual Coffee Hour following the Palm Sunday Service on March 28. Also, he may be reached at phaebig@firstpresbyterian.org.

Pastor Nominating Committee

The Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) is pleased to announce that Session unanimously approved, at a special meeting on Sunday, March 7, the Ministry Information Form (MIF) submitted for consideration. This is an essential first step in the process of selecting a new Lead Pastor for FPCAA. Our Presbytery liaison, Rev. Scott Phillips, presented the MIF to the Detroit Presbytery Committee on Mission (COM) on March 1. Our MIF was approved by the COM. The MIF will be posted on the Church Leadership Connection website and can currently be viewed on the Pastoral Transition at First Presbyterian web page (<https://www.firstpresbyterian.org/about/staff-leadership/pastoral-transition-first-presbyterian>).

Any interested pastor candidates can access the MIF through the Church Leadership Connection website in order to learn what First Pres is searching for in a new Lead Pastor. Pastors with an interest in this position can submit a Personal Information Form that describes their desire and qualifications for the position. The PNC is excited to receive and begin the work of reviewing these resumes.

We would like to thank all members of the congregation that have reached out to us with suggestions, comments and encouragement. In the months ahead, we will continue to actively seek your opinion and recommendations as we broaden the scope of our search process. The support of our church family, the wise counsel of our pastoral leadership and the comfort of the Holy Spirit in this time of discernment fill us with optimism and energy to pursue the important work ahead.

On behalf of the PNC, Co-Chairs Tom Brandt and Jim Clark wish blessings to all.



Worship & Music

Worship Wisdom

This is the first article in a new series offered in *First Press* that will focus on the elements of the Order of Worship in our regular Sunday morning Service for the Lord's Day. As you can tell by looking at a bulletin, the worship service is divided into four major sections: Gathering, Proclaiming the Word, Responding to and Sealing the Word, and Sending. Today we will begin even a bit earlier than the Gathering.

Worship begins with God. God calls us together. So, our first act of worship is to heed God's call to join with others in prayer and praise, supplication and ultimately service. The act of Gathering begins really early when someone enters the sanctuary, turns on the lights, and begins to make it ready to welcome worshipers. Preachers, liturgists and readers prepare themselves to lead worship, the choir warms up, and we welcome each other into the worship space. After the Welcome and the announcements about Life in the Church, the service begins with the first note of the Opening Voluntary. During the Voluntary, whether it is played by the organist, or offered by another instrumentalist, the orchestra, or the handbell choir, we are called to enter into a time of quiet and meditation and prepare ourselves for worship.

Following the Opening Voluntary is the Call to Worship. Its words are typically scriptural, and are intended to help us center on God – to bring us into a holy space. The Call is often responsive, and offers our praise and adoration to God. Our Directory for Worship reminds us that the Call to Worship is not an invocation. We do not need to call God into our presence – God is calling us! We just need to respond. And we do respond by singing the Opening Hymn, usually a hymn of praise and welcome. The next part of our worship involves confession, and that will be the subject of our next article.

Virtual Hymn-Sing on YouTube and Facebook

The Chancel Choir, Sanctus Ringers, and the FPC Section Leaders have created a Virtual Hymn-Sing. It is available on YouTube and Facebook. You are welcome to sing along from your home with Hymns like: *Abide with Me*; *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty!*; *The Church's One Foundation*; *Shall We Gather at the River*, and much more! Check out our website for more information.

Monthly Taizé Prayer

Tuesday, April 6 – 7:00 p.m.

A service of song, scripture, prayer, silence, meditation, and candles. This service can be viewed on YouTube and Facebook.



Communion by Benjamin Winans

March 12 – May 2

www.benjaminwinans.weebly.com

Exhibited at First Presbyterian Church is a sculpture titled Phantom Limb, and is a part of Benjamin Winans' Master of Fine Arts thesis on display at Stamps Gallery March 12 - May 2. It is part of a broader body of work in which Winans reimagines symbols of American Christianity and nationalism - a pew, a flag, the notion of monument. He takes these apart and puts them back together in new ways that expose misinterpretations and historical undercurrents that are often in opposition to Biblical tenets of grace, forgiveness, redemption, and reconciliation. The artworks test relationships between patriotic, sacred, and often violent power structures in American political culture and Christianity. In this way, he also tests his own relationship to the symbols with the hope that the investigation will provide proof that there is room for truth, justice, and change in this broken world.

The artist **Benjamin Winans** (b. 1987, Raleigh, North Carolina) is an installation artist, printmaker, and scholar whose work addresses the intersection of evangelical Christianity and American culture, faith and doubt, and the search for grace and redemption. For more information on Benjamin, visit our website.



VIRTUAL ART EXHIBIT

COMMUNION

BENJAMIN WINANS

First Presbyterian Church
of Ann Arbor

March 15-May 2

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
Ann Arbor, Michigan

FOR MORE INFORMATION visit www.firstpresbyterian.org

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The All-Church Variety Show – Sunday, May 23 (Pentecost Sunday)

Plan to share your talent for our All-Church Variety Show. You may record your act or talent from home or schedule a time to record yourself in the sanctuary. Wonder what to do? Well... What are you good at? What makes you happy and confident? Is there an act you could perform with members of your family? Maybe it's singing, playing an instrument, dancing, reciting poetry, sharing a piece of visual art you have created, performing comedy, juggling, performing gymnastics – you name it. Variety makes the show...well, a Variety Show! Your act must be 3 minutes or less! If your performance is more than 3 minutes, you may be asked to shorten it or, if that is not possible, to choose something else. Please contact Dave VanderMeer: dvandermeer@firstpresbyterian.org.

Congregational Life

Join First Pres!

Is the Holy Spirit calling to your heart to become a member of our church? Fast-track to membership on April 11 at noon — on Zoom! Contact Rev. Rogers for the link, or see your worship bulletin. It takes just 20 minutes to meet with a pastor and two elders, share a bit about yourself, and answer the questions of membership. You can join by Affirmation of Faith, Reaffirmation of Faith, Transfer of Letter, or as an Affiliate Member. Let us embrace you as a part of our church family. Enjoy all the rights and privileges of full membership at First Pres. Contact Rev. Rogers to learn more, mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org.

Mature Ministries Lunch and Learn

Join us on April 8 at Noon, on Zoom for "Spring Skies over Ann Arbor." Our guest presenter for the hour is Dr. Shannon Schmoll, Director, Abrams Planetarium, MSU. Spring is a wonderful time to look up. It's getting warmer and clearer and we are all itching to go outside. In this presentation we will guide everyone through the night sky. We will discuss what constellations and planets are visible in the spring, why we have seasonality of constellations at all, and explore some of the deep sky objects you can peek at with binoculars or a telescope. If you are joining from beyond Ann Arbor, no worries! The sky is pretty similar for the entire mid-Northern latitudes. Come ready to ask all of your astronomy related questions! The Zoom link is: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5502657984>



Mature Ministries Bonus!

In addition to our 2nd Thursday Lunch and Learns, we are adding two “bonus gatherings” for April and May — midweek! On April 14, at Noon on Zoom, Justine Bykowski, MA, former Long Term Care and Senior Housing Counselor at University of Michigan Health System, Housing Bureau for Seniors, and Consumer Education consultant for the State of Michigan, will present “Assisted Living Care: Watch for These 6 Red Flags”. Please join a discussion on ways to look into the violations that occur in licensed homes for the aged. We will cover: how assisted living is defined; where to find state regulations and violations; action steps to take/problem solving strategies; special regulations for memory care; what differences to compare.



Continuing Education: Death Doulas

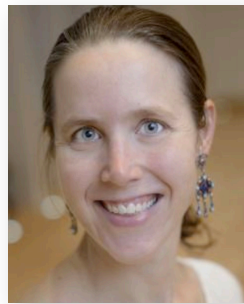
Join the Stephen Ministers on April 12 at 7 p.m. on Zoom to learn about death doulas. We will spend the hour in conversation with Merilynne Rush, RN, BSN. In addition to being a midwife, she has been a hospice nurse, a companion caregiver, home funeral guide, and health-care volunteer in India, Nicaragua, and West Africa. Learn more about Merilynne here: <https://www.thedyingyear.org/>. Join us online for this presentation: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89733372207>

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

We welcome those who have joined in 2021!

Rebecca Pagels

Rebecca lives in Ann Arbor with her husband Oscar Ybarra and son Maximilian Orion Pagels Ybarra, who was born in October of 2020. Rebecca originally hails from Wisconsin and attended school in Chicago and Ann Arbor. A job with the Ann Arbor symphony brought her back to Ann Arbor and she now works in development for the University of Michigan. In her spare time, she plays the clarinet in the Dexter community orchestra and with a chamber group. Rebecca enjoys yoga and salsa dancing, as well as traveling with her husband.



Maurine Nelson

A Michigander by birth, Maurine attended the University of Michigan where she received both her BA and MA. She taught at Mack School during her time as a graduate student. After moving to Washington, DC, she worked for a national medical society and received a Master of Theological Studies from Wesley Theological Seminary. She has lived and worked in Delaware and Maryland. After her husband died, she felt it was time to “come home,” moved to Chelsea, and assisted in starting a Lifelong Learning Institute there. She has enjoyed being nearer to family and now is grateful for the blessing of a second family at First Presbyterian.



TABLE GRACE

Today we share a recipe with you to enjoy! Ginny Rezmierski writes that this recipe came from her Aunt Shirley, who recently died at the age of 92. It's a wonderful recipe for using to take muffins to church members in need or as a special gift.

Six-Week Bran Muffins

This recipe makes approximately 48 large muffins

- 1 (20 oz) pkg. Post Bran Flakes or Raisin Bran
- 1 c. oil
- 3 c. sugar
- 1 qt. buttermilk
- 5 t. baking soda
- 4 eggs, beaten
- 5 c. flour
- 2 t. salt

Mix bran, sugar, flour, soda, and salt in a very large bowl. Add beaten eggs, oil and buttermilk. Mix well. If desired, add handfuls (approx. 1 c. each) of chopped walnuts, dried cranberries, and golden raisins to the mix. Store the batter in the refrigerator in a covered container until you are ready to bake. Fill large muffin papers about 3/4 to full before you bake. The muffins will rise in the refrigerator. Therefore you can fill the muffin tins to the top without their running all over the oven. Bake muffins at 400 degrees for about 20 minutes.

Don't get worried about the ingredients—this recipe makes a lot of batter. Because the batter will keep in the refrigerator for up to 6 weeks, and because the muffins are the best after they have been sitting and blending for at least a couple of days, this recipe is ideal for making 6-12 in a morning a couple of times each week or once a week.

Enjoy!

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Mary Jane Chase

Mary Jane is a retired professor of history with a specialty in sixteenth-century France. She grew up in Ann Arbor (Go River Rats!), but has lived in California, New York and Utah for most of her life. She has enjoyed returning home to Michigan to be closer to family. Her life in the church has revolved around music, service projects and adult education classes, but she is open to exploring all the wonderful things First Pres has to offer and making some new friends in her new (old) hometown.



Stoddard, N.H. Long-time Presbyterians, they met in Grad School at UM. Jim is a pharmaceutical consultant and Bobbie is a former pharmaceutical chemist and high school teacher. Both served as Elders and leaders in their previous churches. Like their daughter Charlotte, they enjoy music, both playing and singing. They also enjoy woodworking, hiking, home projects and kayaking.

Jennifer Nussdorfer Rejim and son Adnan Rejim

Jennifer was a teacher in Florida before suffering a stroke and undergoing 16 brain surgeries. She and her family have been grateful for the prayers of the First Pres family all these years. When she had to stop working, she and Adnan came to live with her parents, Donna and Gus Nussdorfer, at their home in Brighton. Recently she became a sales rep for Mary Kay and is enjoying that. Jennifer is excited to get involved and find ways to use her gifts for teaching with our children and youth here at First Pres!



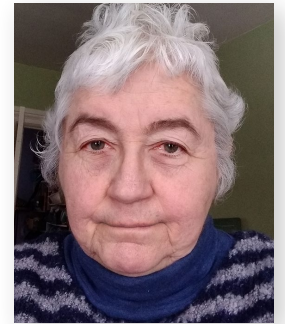
Meghan and Zack Bugosh

High school sweethearts from Midland, Michigan, Meghan is transferring from Memorial Presbyterian Church, in Midland and Zack is transferring from Trinity Lutheran Church, also in Midland. Meghan recently finished her medical residency here in Ann Arbor. She is a new OB-GYN with IHA, and Zach is in analytics for Domino's. They are excited to raise their children, Isla and Theo, here at First Pres, and love walking, reading, hiking and golf.



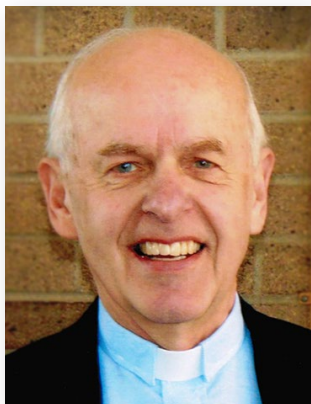
Cynthia Leet

Cynthia is the daughter of long-time member Martha Leet who died in 2013. Cynthia is a retired technical writer and has a grown son and daughter. She enjoys Bible Study at First Pres, especially Journeys with Rev. Frazier, and the Sunday Bible Study class with Rev. Koster. Cynthia likes to sew, walk, bike, renovate her home, read, do photography and watch television.



Jim Anderson and Bobbie Ewels

Better known as the grandparents of Jack Sawtell, they are the parents of Charlotte (Anderson) Sawtell. Jim and Bobbie split their time between Ypsilanti, Mich., and



Meet Rev. Roland!

Roland Schaedig joins our pastoral care department as a volunteer pastoral visitor. He will be making phone calls to members to hear their stories and learn of their spiritual needs. Roland is an ELCA Lutheran, ordained in 1969, and for 47 years ministered as a hospital chaplain having served his last 22 years as a chaplain at the Ann Arbor VA Medical Center. He and his wife Barbara met at a First Singles' event in 1992, and together they enjoy their colorful front yard and engaging granddaughters in Maine, Virginia, Amsterdam and Saline. Roland loves gleaning, cutting, splitting and stacking firewood, preserving quarts of summer and fall fruit, and reading German theology. He is honored to have been asked to help out with pastoral care at First Pres. To welcome Roland, email him at: schaedigro@hotmail.com.

NATIONAL HEALTHCARE DECISION DAY ~ April 16, 2021

One of the most important things you can do for yourself and your family is to make sure your loved ones know what your wishes are concerning your health and well-being. While this can be a difficult topic to talk about, it is necessary if you want others to be able to carry out any plans that you hope for in the event you cannot carry them out yourself. As Mr. Rogers once said, "Anything that's human is mentionable, and anything that is mentionable can be more manageable. When we can talk



about our feelings, they become less overwhelming, less upsetting and less scary." National Healthcare Decision Day, coming up on April 16 of this year, encourages folks to take the time to write down their wishes in a legal and binding way. The legal document recommended is called Five Wishes and it is an advance directive created by the non-profit organization, Aging with Dignity. You can go to the Five Wishes website and, for a nominal fee of \$5.00, you can print

and fill out the online form. The link is here: <https://fivewishes.org/five-wishes/individuals-families/individuals-and-families>. At the end of the form, there is a place for a signature and having it witnessed. The American Bar Association's Commission on Law and Aging confirms that Five Wishes currently meets the legal requirements for advance directives in 44 states, including Michigan. Five Wishes is a wonderful way to ensure that you receive the care you want if you are ever unable to advocate it for yourself. Prayerfully consider making these decisions sooner rather than later — April 16 would be the perfect date to make your wishes known.

Help with Livestreaming!

First Pres is now livestreaming church activities on the Internet via YouTube and FaceBook! The First Pres Technology Work Group has been hard at work these last few months putting all the technology and equipment in place for livestreaming worship and other church-based events. Additional volunteers are needed to run the equipment. Are you interested in learning how to run a livestream production, sound board, cameras, and a tricastor to put it all together? Have you ever imagined yourself at a sound board or behind the camera? Do you already know how to do this? We want you, and we will train you! We welcome anyone from high school age through our mature members to volunteer for this new and exciting part of our mission and service. Please email Jennifer Day at jen1641@gmail.com if you are interested. If you are in high school, talk to Pastor Mark; college students, please reach out to Rev. McGowan for more information.



Faith Formation

Children & Families

Easter Pageant Worship Service, Easter Sunday, April 4 - 11:00 a.m. online

Tune in for a fresh retelling of Holy Week and the resurrection of Jesus as we premier Illustrated Ministry's "Good News!" virtual Easter pageant. First Pres children, youth and adults will guide us through the story, and virtual backdrops make the story come alive! The worship service centers on the narratives surrounding Jesus as an adult from the gospels of Matthew and Luke.

New Mamas Group

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us." (Hebrews 12:1)

Join us online on Friday, April 9, at 7:30 p.m. Parenting is hard, but you're not alone. Find your place of support, encouragement, listening ears and open hearts as we share our struggles and successes! Mamas of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers are invited to join us on Friday evening, April 9, as we begin this new journey together. Come when you can, step away if you need to; we're here for you! For more information, contact Sarah Glinka Endicott (sngendicott@gmail.com); Charlotte Sawtell (anderson.cee@gmail.com); or Beca Torres-Davenport (btorres-davenport@firstpresbyterian.org).

Milestone Ministry

Sundays April 11 - May 23

Letters have been sent home for the 2021 Milestone for 4th and 5th graders, "Amazing Stuff: God's Gift for Growing Up". We will meet Sundays at 3:00 p.m. in person, socially distanced. Please note, no class will be held on Mother's Day, May 9. The corresponding class for parents whose children are enrolled in "Amazing Stuff" will meet at the same time in a different room. To register or for additional information contact Beca Torres-Davenport at 662-4466, ext. 342 or btorres-davenport@firstpresbyterian.org.

Summer Vacation Bible School

June 21-23

Yes, you'll want to be there! It might look a little different this year- but with good weather, we will be together outside! For three days we'll experience what life was like when Jesus lived. Relive Biblical events, occupations, the synagogue, family life, and experience being part of a typical Bible time family. Participants will visit the arts and craft shops of the Marketplace, travel to the Story Tellers tent, witness events in Jesus' life re-enacted by our street players, and play games at Jerusalem playground. Mark your calendar- more information to come! The rain dates are June 24 or 25.

Youth

Updates

Follow us on Instagram at fpa2youth or subscribe to our weekly email for up-to-date information on all of our events! As the warmer weather comes, we want to try and have more opportunities to gather safely outdoors! To sign up for our weekly email, send a message to Rev. Mares at mmares@firstpresbyterian.org.

Youth Group

We plan to jump back to our hybrid approach to Youth Group gatherings this month, having both in-person and virtual youth group gatherings. Contact Rev. Mares at mmares@firstpresbyterian.org.

First Pres Podcast

Faith Beats



A new podcast from First Pres, Faith Beats, launched in February with four episodes available to listen to. Look for new episodes this month on Friday, April 9 and April 23. Faith Beats is a podcast geared towards youth and their families, but we invite all of First Pres to check it out on Apple podcasts and Spotify. Faith Beats is a podcast about the questions of life and the rhythms of faith, community, and imagination, through the narrative lens of storytelling, arts, and spiritual practices. Find out more information by visiting our new website: faithbeats.com.

Adult

First Friends

Sundays at 11:00 a.m.

First Friends is a fellowship group that uses Christian materials for meaningful discussions. All are welcome!

Topics to be discussed from April 11 - May 2 include:

April 11 – **Adam Hamilton's *The Walk***, Chapter 6

April 18 – ***Always a Guest: Speaking of Faith Far from Home***, Barbara Brown Taylor, Chapter 9

April 24 – **What brings you joy?** <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/now-is-everything/201106/50-ways-add-joy-your-day>

May 2 – **Affordable Housing**, with Amanda Becker Carlisle

Exploring the Faith – Sundays at 11:30 a.m.

Inviting Compassion Into our Lives: How can we bring compassion into our lives at such a critical time? This series explores three unique and important ways we invite compassion into our lives.

April 11 – **Self-compassion**

Beth Steward will lead us in a discussion of what is self-compassion and engage us in exercises to awaken us to the power of self-compassion.

April 18 – **Making Compassion Real**

How can we turn our sense of suffering into compassionate action? Listen to examples of individuals who were called to respond to suffering they saw around them. Shahnaz Broucek, Jennifer Hurand and Cara Rosaen will share their inspiring examples that invite all of us to consider how we can make compassion more real in our lives.

April 25 – **Communicating with Compassion** (This week note time change! 12:30 p.m.)

Rev. Melissa Anne Rogers and Jane Dutton will engage us in a discussion of how we can communicate with compassion. Rev. Rogers will share insights from her longtime role as Pastoral Care and Congregational Life. Jane will share insights from her studies of how leaders communicate compassion. Together we hope to expand our imagination for how we can communicate more fully with compassion.



Bible Study with Rev. Ed Koster – Sundays at 5:00 p.m.

This is a study of the Gospel of Mark, touching on the unique features of this earliest of the gospels. Each week the class will take up a section or chapter of the Gospel with a presentation, discussion, and time for questions and answers. For more information and to receive the study materials for each week, contact Rev. Koster at ehkoster@aol.com. (<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86545144620>)

Additional Opportunities

Noon conversations: **Growing Ourselves to Be Our Best**

Noon on Zoom, April 21, May 26

Join Sue Ashford, a UM faculty member and author of the book: *The Power of Flexing: How to Use Small Daily Experiments to Create Big Life-Changing Growth*, to talk about all-things growth! This two-part series focuses on how you can use all your different life experiences to also grow your personal and interpersonal effectiveness. Consider six practices that help you gain more from your experiences to grow toward becoming the person you most want to be. Help yourself become better personally and interpersonally whether to lead, to have more effective family relationships, or to be more effective in our church and community.

April 21 – **Setting a mindset for growth.** Check in on our basic assumptions about ourselves, our potential for growth. We will engage together in an experimental, playful, flexible approach to gaining the growth we want most. April Link: <https://umich.zoom.us/j/95154958850>

May 26 – **Using your experiences to enable your growth.** Discuss how to prompt experiments that foster growth, read the feedback most meant for you, and gain the most from a practice of reflection. May Link: <https://umich.zoom.us/j/99510169406>

Journeys Bible Study

Journeys, a women's Bible study group, meets monthly on the second and fourth Thursday at 11:30 a.m. Contact Rev. Frazier (afrazier@firstpresbyterian.org) for the Zoom link or for more information.

Join the Spiritual Writing Group

Have you ever wanted to be creative with words? Have you found it difficult to sit down and write a memory to share? Currently, during this time of social distancing, we are sharing our creative work and our discussion of these shared writings, all by email. Want to join? Contact Meg Brown at Imegbrown@gmail.com to receive the email addresses of all our members.

Barclay Bible Study

"The New Daily Study Bible Series" by William Barclay will meet weekly via Zoom on Wednesdays at 10:30 AM. We are studying the book of Romans. All are welcome to participate. Contact Meg Brown for details, study guide, and Zoom link, Imegbrown@gmail.com



One Great Hour of Sharing Makes a Difference in Detroit

In Detroit, your One Great Hour of Sharing gifts empower individuals living with disabilities through Warriors on Wheels of Metropolitan Detroit. Thanks to a grant that flowed directly from the One Great Hour of Sharing to the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People (SDOP), the Warriors on Wheels organization is raising up leaders who are advocating for equal opportunity and full inclusion for people with disabilities. As might be expected, the Warriors on Wheels group actively speaks out to inspire that all communities be ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant. “Warriors on Wheels is the embodiment of our SDOP criteria,” said the Rev. Dr. Alonzo Johnson, coordinator of the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People. “People living with disabilities are more likely to be homeless or to have a mental illness.



Warriors on Wheels recognizes that people need to be in control of their own destinies.” One Great Hour of Sharing helps us directly live out our call to be generous through three important programs that reach around the world and touch us right here in Detroit: Presbyterian Disaster Assistance; Presbyterian Hunger Program and Self-Development of People. More information is available at Presbyterian Church USA OGHS . (<https://specialofferings.pcusa.org/offering/oghs/>)

Please plan to share your compassion for those in need by giving to this Special Offering on Palm Sunday, March 28 or Easter April 4, 2021. Traditional OGHS Fish Banks provided to families and children may be dropped off at the Easter Stroll on Sunday, April 4 or left in the Church Welcome Center Monday—Thursday, 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM. You may give by check or online at First Pres. (<https://www.firstpresbyterian.org/contribute/donate/donate-first-presbyterian>)

Good News from CEPAD, Our Mission Partner in Nicaragua

First Pres has had a strong mission partnership with CEPAD, the Protestant Council of Churches in Nicaragua for many years. In 2016, our Nicaragua Mission Team, working with CEPAD and community members, helped construct a new classroom in the small village of Quebrada Honda. In 2017, another mission team from Ann Arbor painted the classroom and built 5 bookcases for the school. In 2018, our First Pres team completed the electrical wiring of the school, helping realize the people’s dream to have a school for educating their children in their community. Along the way, First Pres provided additional funds to install a large transformer, overhead wiring and other electrical infrastructure to make this project a reality.

In February, Emily Hewes, the CEPAD/USA representative communicated to thank First Pres for the monetary support we provided of late. When a planned 2020 UM Campus Ministry trip to Nicaragua was cancelled because of the coronavirus, those funds were re-directed to provide vital support for program operations and COVID support. The 2020 Christmas Eve offering of nearly \$5000 was designated for CEPAD to support emergency aid and relief after two massive hurricanes struck Nicaragua last November.

There is very good news from Quebrada Honda! The electrical equipment we paid for was installed and made it possible to have electricity in the school! It took some time but it finally happened. With help from the government, the road to Quebrada Honda has been improved and is in good shape! And lastly, the first class of students has graduated from the school that our First Pres team helped to build. There was undoubtedly much fanfare on that day!



PW 175th Celebration

We lament postponing our celebration. PW's hope is for an enthusiastic in-person celebration in the Fall.

The Birthday Offering of Presbyterian Women

Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth; break forth, O mountains, into singing! For the Lord has comforted the people, and will have compassion on suffering ones. —Isaiah 49:13

The Birthday Offering of Presbyterian Women celebrates our history of generous giving. Launched in 1922 to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Woman's Auxiliary in the Presbyterian Church in the United States, the Birthday Offering has become an annual tradition. It has funded over 200 major mission projects that continue to impact people in the United States and around the world. While the projects and donation amounts have changed, Presbyterian Women's commitment to improving the lives of women and children has not. We ask for your support so that PW can continue funding mission projects like the ones selected for 2021. Give as you have been blessed, generously and as led by the Holy Spirit. To learn more, visit <https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/>, or see the January/February 2021 issue of Horizons magazine. Click the below link to see the 2021 Birthday Offering promotional video on PW YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xmp2bYiSrdg>). Mail your Birthday Offering check to our treasurer, Bonnie Hughes, 3520 Paisley Ct, Ann Arbor, 48105, or give online to First Presbyterian Women's Birthday offering at: <https://firstpresbyterian.wufoo.com/forms/donate-to-presbyterian-women/>

PW Religious Education Scholarships

Presbyterian Women is now accepting scholarship requests for the 2021-2022 school year. Graduate students (men and women) starting seminary or other religious education are encouraged to apply by the end of April, 2021. Contact Virginia Bell, Moderator, at virginiabell2013@gmail.com. The application can be downloaded from the PW page of the church website.

PW Opportunities

As we look forward to spring please consider putting a little spring into your schedule and consider being a part of the Coordinating Team of Presbyterian Women. Several positions are open and Moderator Ginny Bell will be delighted to send you position descriptions for you to consider. Come volunteer with



PRESBYTERIAN
WOMEN

a great group of women of the church! We normally meet once a month and make the decisions to guide PW budget and activities.

April Gathering

Horizon Bible Study, "Into the Light: Finding Hope through Prayers of Lament" was written by P. Lynn Miller. All lessons conclude with a section called "Trusting in the God of Hope." On April 8, join us at 10:30 a.m., on Zoom as Lois Nissly leads Lesson 8: "God Laments." You will receive the

Zoom link close to April 8. Contact Meg Brown, Imegbrown@gmail.com to order a Study Book (\$10 /Horizons Bible Study). At noon, we join the Mature Ministries monthly program after a short break. (See the Church calendar online for the link.)

A Resolution from Session



On this occasion of the meeting of the Session of First Presbyterian Church, we the members of the Session pause this night to express our deep gratitude to our Interim Pastor, Rev. Spalding, for his leadership, service and skill as a pastor, moderator, administrator and theologian in a crucial period in the life of First Presbyterian. We applaud Rick's diplomatic manner, deft leadership, resolute and gracious spirit and undying confidence in the ongoing transformation of First Pres. We commend your presence and spirit among us here in Ann Arbor, and wish you and your beloved partner Peter a blessed re-retirement in Ipswich, MA.

Gratefully,
The Session of First Presbyterian Church
Wednesday, March 17, 2021

SESSION DIGEST – February 2021 Session Highlights

At the Stated Meeting of Session on February 24 . . .

The Moderator, Rev. Rick Spalding, welcomed Elders and guest Jim Mulcrone, representing the Board of Deacons. The meeting opened with prayer led by Rev. Mark Mares and members of Session.

The Session proceeded to –

- Welcome five new members to First Presbyterian Church. Jennifer Rejim (by Reaffirmation of Faith), Meghan Bugosh (by Letter of Transfer, Memorial Presbyterian, Midland, MI), Zack Bugosh (Letter of Transfer, Trinity Lutheran, Midland, MI), Jim Anderson and Bobbie Ewels (Letter of Transfer, First United Methodist Church, Hudson, MA).
- Elect Linda Rex, as Clerk of Session for a one-year term.
- Confirm membership rosters [now posted on the church's website] for the standing committees on Congregation Life, Property, Personnel, and Finance; the Residency Ministry Work Group; and the Strategic Planning Guiding Team.
- Support the Congregational Nominating Committee's motion to call a Special Meeting of the Congregation for Sunday, March 14, immediately following the 9:30 service, for the purpose of electing two Elders to fill unexpired terms on Session and vacancies on the CNC.
- Elect Elder Katie Parker to represent First Pres at the Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Detroit on March 20.
- Approve the motion of the Recommendations for Reopening Work Group to allow in-person weddings and funerals in the Church Sanctuary for up to 25 persons, following all social distancing and safety protocols as required by the Health Department.
- Elect as Officers of the corporation of First Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor: President, Elder Bruce Clyde; Vice-President, Elder Bruce Thomson; Treasurer, Bill Austin; Asst. Treasurer, Elder Steve McKenny; Secretary, Linda Rex, Clerk of Session.

Other Reports / Discussions

- Jim Mulcrone, Deacon Representative, reported the Deacons make connectivity to chapel members a priority, communicating via e-mail, phone calls, and care cards. They are keeping members well-informed on the church's reopening plans. Deacons did a Random Acts of Kindness initiative for members of Session. The new Deacons are fully engaged and the mentorship program has proven to be very successful. He thanked Carol Gottlieb and Michele Madden (co-Moderators, Board of Deacons) for their excellent leadership.
- Elder Sue Gott advised Session that the Strategic Plan Guiding Team met for the first time to map out the objectives, meeting schedule, and resources. The Team will meet monthly through May to "jump start" its work and then less frequently. The goal of the Team is to ensure the Strategic Plan, adopted by Session last October, remains a living document, and that committees' and Work Groups' initiatives align with and support the Plan.
- Rev. Evans McGowan detailed safety protocols that would be in place for in-person worship beginning Sunday, March 7. Up to 25 people can pre-register for the four Sundays in March via the Church website.
- Rev. McGowan also announced that livestreaming of the 9:30 Sunday service would begin on February 28.
- Elder Sue Cares, Personnel Committee, reported that a Core Leadership Team, comprised of Revs. Melissa Anne Rogers, Jay Sanderford, and Evans McGowan, Minister of Music David VanderMeer and Interim Bridge Administrator J. P. DiMaggio, has been formed to lead the church during the transition period after Rev. Spalding's term is complete. Rev. Jay Sanderford will serve as Moderator of Session (pending approval by the Presbytery of Detroit). Elder Cares expressed confidence that the church is in a strong position thanks to the work of Session, Staff, and the congregation as it enters this next phase of the transition period.
- Elder Bruce Clyde reported on the January financial status. He said 2021 was off to a good start, and announced Elder Deanne Woodruff will Chair the annual pledge campaign; she has already started recruiting members. He also reported that the Finance Committee is exploring various presentation formats to provide a clear visual snapshot of the church's finances – graphics vs. an Excel spreadsheet - and invited Elders to forward any suggestions to the committee.

Pastors Reports

- Rev. Rick Spalding reported that he was recently advised that the Pastor Nominating Committee would soon be submitting the Ministry Information Form (MIF) for Session approval, en route to the Presbytery's COM. Elder Jean Song, a member of the PNC, concurred. This form will be posted to various denominational websites, for use by pastors seeking a new position.
- Rev. Jay Sanderford thanked the Resident Ministry Work Group for its engagement in recruiting and evaluating candidates for the next cohort of Resident Ministers.
- Rev. Evans McGowan expressed thanks for the Recommendations for Reopening Work Group. He said it was a great pleasure to work with the members. He also asked for prayers for a successful launch of livestreaming on the 28th. He thanked J. P. DiMaggio for accepting the Bridge Administrator position and advised the Communications Team is re-vamping its scope to include all aspects of information-sharing.

With no New Business to review, the meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m. following the closing prayer offered by Elder Bob Wallin.

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. Rick Spalding, as Interim Pastor, currently serves as Moderator; the two installed Associate Pastors are also voting members. Elder Linda Rex is Clerk of Session. Their next meeting is on March 17, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. (Zoom).