



# First Press

A Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor  
July 2020 ■ Volume 68, Number 7



Volunteers participated in the annual planting of the gardens at Cass Community Social Services in Detroit.



Bags decorated for Communion Kits

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## Dear Friends,

As I sit down to begin this monthly letter to you, it's "Juneteenth" – the day when we remember the arrival of the news of the abolition of slavery on the outer fringes of the frayed American republic, in Galveston, Texas on June 19, 1865. One hundred and fifty-five years later, what strikes me most poignantly about the story of this day is that its news arrived two and a half years late – nearly one thousand days after Abraham Lincoln had issued the Emancipation Proclamation (on January 1, 1863). One thousand extra days of cruelty, inhumanity, lingering corrosion of the national soul, just because news traveled slowly across a war-ravaged landscape – which is to say, because the rigid, angry lines a polarized nation had inscribed upon itself weren't easily permeable even to such glad and long-awaited tidings as *freedom, oh freedom*. Juneteenth this year catches our attention with particularly anguished irony: how abundantly clear it is, in *this* polarized and frayed nation, that the news of the equality of every person, before God and before every single institution of this republic, has arrived late.

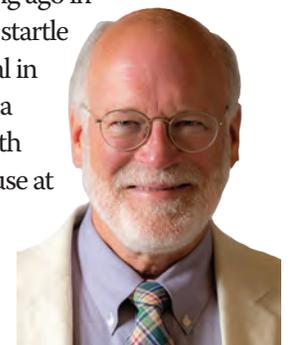
Many of us who do not live every day on the receiving end of the experience of racism – who don't have to think about where we jog or whether our school district will get the same resources others get – were caught by surprise when the upwelling of outrage following the killing of George Floyd brought business as usual to a halt for a little while. We had to play catch-up with news that seemed to arrive late at our doorstep – though it had been knocking for years: the story of freedoms withheld – freedom from fear, freedom from insult, freedom from invisibility.

Within the first few days of the demonstrations, some of us on the church staff who felt a need to *do* something hit on the idea of convening what we first imagined as a vigil: an opportunity for prayerful expressions of grief and support for those whose hearts were broken, whose fears were rubbed raw again by the latest killing of an unarmed person of color. But we quickly discovered

that these events required deeper thought and costly conversation. On our staff, there were some who felt that lighting candles at yet another vigil might console *us*, but wouldn't get anywhere near the real work of dismantling systems that oppress and assumptions that condescend. We found a way to agree to disagree, and offered you, our congregation, a YouTube opportunity for lamentation and soul-searching on the afternoon of Pentecost. But it was becoming clearer that what we needed to *do*, first, was some very personal work that's even harder than praying our grief and anger.

So we have embarked on a course of conversations about race – "courageous," we hope, "costly" for sure. For most of us, this entails the hard work of understanding the meaning and implications of being white in a society that allows us to take our privileges and our safety mostly for granted. We want you to know about this for two reasons. First – because, as a staff, we're in learning mode together now in a fresh, urgent way. And second – because we commend to you the disciplines of study, reflection and, most (and hardest) of all, conversation that's rooted in a faith that calls us, unequivocally, to do justice, to love kindness, to walk humbly, and to love one another with something of the poured-out love that Jesus lavished on every child of God within his reach. We've tried to set the stage for the Session to speak on behalf of our church to the society around us, and frame actions to follow our words. We're all struggling to catch up with tidings that should have arrived long ago in our frayed, polarized nation, and shouldn't startle us any more: that every person stands equal in the sight of God, and that it is our work, as a church, to stand tall, in the love of Jesus, with all our neighbors who have cause – any cause at all – to wonder if their lives matter.

Faithfully,  
Rick Spalding  
Interim Pastor



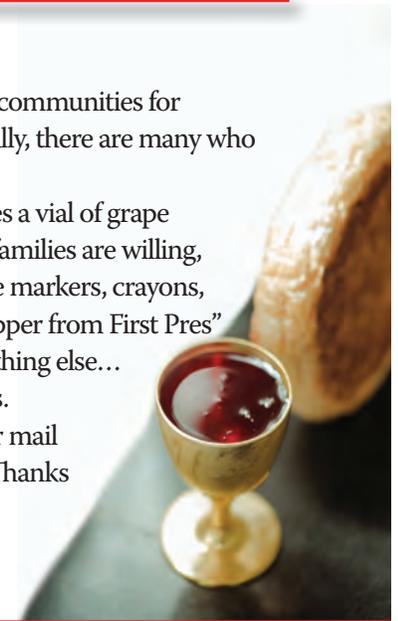


## Communion Kits for Worship This Summer

Our pastoral staff and deacons are making “communion kits” for folks living alone or in retirement communities for communion on August 2. As we make our own home communion tables and take the sacrament virtually, there are many who cannot get out to get grape juice, or set their own table.

On Saturday, August 1 we will deliver to particular members a kit in a brown paper bag that includes a vial of grape juice, little cups, a white cloth, a blessing, and a piece of home-made bread! If youth, children and their families are willing, we could use decorated bags! Imagine taking a few bags and decorating them as a home art project. Use markers, crayons, stickers, or more.... whatever would be meaningful to you. You could write on the sack, “The Lord’s Supper from First Pres” or “We never take communion alone!” or “God loves you!” Or “This is my Body broken for you!” or anything else... a scripture, a heart, a phrase... anything helps these to be something more than bland brown paper bags.

Deliver the bags, when you are done, to Rev. Rogers, at 1865 Greenview Drive. Just tuck them in her mail box! We need them by July 31. If you are game, get your lunch bags, decorate away, and drop them off. Thanks for considering it! As a family of faith, these messages of love from our young people to our older folks are a way we can help them remember they are in our hearts — always — and we are together at Table, from no matter where we are!



## New Virtual Art Exhibit featuring artist, Rudolph (Rudy) Bostic Access the Exhibit July – September at [www.firstpresbyterian.org](http://www.firstpresbyterian.org)

Rudolph Valentino Bostic was born August 16, 1944 and began drawing as a child. When toys were sparse, he created cowboy paper dolls with crayons and cardboard to play with his cousins. At 17 he was painting pictures based on Bible illustrations to be hung in church in his hometown of Savannah, Georgia. He was actually discouraged from making art, but he continued and then began to study the Old Masters’ paintings.

While working for the Derst Baking Company, he was inspired to use their cardboard boxes and flour barrel tops as his canvasses. Classically inspired by the techniques he had learned looking at art books, he began to using them in his work. He loves to emphasize contrasting light and shadow with bright colors, twisting lines, and black borders, often creating his own frames from overlaying cardboard. He works with a wide variety of media, including house paint, magic marker, acrylics, and at times a bit of glitter—all on cast-away cardboard.

His subjects still include Bible stories and continue to be influenced by pop culture. But his subjects often vary from fantasy landscapes and mythology to mermaids and merry-go-rounds.

A representative of the Mary, Mother of Hope monastery in Grahamstown, South Africa said of his work, donated to them, that “the color and movement as well as the themes are very poignant to Africans. In a country trying to find its way after so many centuries of oppression and neglect,” Bostic’s paintings are “icons of peace, certainty in God’s providence and hope.”

His work is in the collections of both the Smithsonian Museum of American Art and the High Museum in Atlanta along with many important private collections throughout the world.

## Monthly Taizé Prayer Service

Tuesday, July 7, 7:00 p.m.

Songs, scripture, prayers, silence, meditation, and candles help create this contemplative service of worship, available on You Tube (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCi4UFJ0Spvowsk7EnVXs6CQ>) and Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/FirstPresA2/>).

## Congregational Art Installation – Origami Peace Cranes

Have you ever folded an origami peace crane? Well, now is your chance. The Liturgical/Visual Arts Team is asking for your help. Origami Crane Kits will be available beginning July 1. If you would like to help fold origami cranes, you may pick them up at the church or you can ask for them to be delivered to you. Inside the kit will be 12 pieces of origami paper, names of 10 members of FPC, and instructions for folding. You are asked to take a piece of origami paper and write the name of the person on it, say a prayer for the person, and then fold it. We hope to create this new art installation for when we return to in-person worship. For more information, contact Dave VanderMeer, Minister of Music & Fine Arts at [dvandermeer@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:dvandermeer@firstpresbyterian.org)



## Summer 2020 Theme - New Beginnings

### Worship, Small Groups, Christian Formation & More....

"New Beginnings," views life through the lens of Covid-19. Some say we've entered a "new normal," but could it be that this is a rare opportunity to embrace new beginnings that can positively affect our future and our faith? As we delve into this theme, we ground ourselves in gratitude for each new day and discern new ways to persevere in the face of adversity.

Through scripture, preaching, small groups, film, and other activities we will explore a New Beginnings topic each month. Watch the Sunday bulletin, Our Life Together emails and other communication for upcoming events.



### July - Gratitude

July 5	Matthew 26:27-29
July 12	Ephesians 4:22-24
July 19	Isaiah 65:17
July 26	Job 28:12-28

## Congregational Life

### 21 Day Racial Equity Challenge

In recent weeks we have witnessed and been confronted anew with the deep sickness of racism that infects our nation and even our very selves. As Christians, we have a responsibility to address our own implicit biases to understand our privilege, power, and the ways we have benefited from the systemic racism that is thriving in America. Many have expressed a desire to do something in this moment; to take a stand and make a difference. One of the best ways that we can do that is to educate ourselves and come to understand our own relationships with racism in America.

We invite you to participate in a 21 day equity challenge. Details can be found at <https://www.eddiemoorej.com/21daychallenge> and on our church website. The idea of this challenge is to build a habit of listening to the voices of the marginalized by engaging in a variety of activities; becoming lifelong learners and learning to be true anti-racist allies as we seek justice that has been denied so many for so long. This challenge will confront you with things that you may never have seen or known about yourselves and about our brothers and sisters of color. For that reason, we recommend that you have at least one conversation partner with whom you can have the hard conversations. It's important that this person be someone whom you can trust, and someone who will push you to be your better self. Thank you for joining us in taking these steps towards doing justice, loving mercy and walking humbly.

### Outdoor Labyrinth Walk

#### Times Available in July & August

In July and August you are invited to participate in the spiritual practice of walking an outdoor labyrinth. Kurt and Kathy Hillig have a beautiful labyrinth in the field behind their house off Ellsworth Road. On Sunday, July 26, and Sunday, August 30, between 1:00 and 6:00 p.m, sign up to come and walk. Ten people can sign up per hour. You must arrive by ten minutes after the hour and leave by five minutes before the next hour for traffic purposes. Walking will be socially distanced. The center provides a nice place to stop and ponder and pray. Groups can talk there before leaving the way they came. It's not super large - You can easily walk the whole thing in and out in 30 minutes or less. Bring friends and have some fellowship after before you leave! Kurt and Kathy are 20 minutes Southwest of First Pres so plan for travel time, and watch for incoming cars in the driveway! Ten people each hour, 1:00 - 6:00 p.m. We will socially distance and stay safe. We'll enjoy the presence of God and one another! Sign up at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090f45a4ac283-walk>.



### Covotionals

Dear friends, our experiences were shared by members who wrote "co-votionals" that went through the end of May. We will occasionally print pieces from members here who have thoughts to share. Contact Rev. Rogers to participate. This month's is from Pam Ehrhart.

**About Pam:** Pam is a forever UM Wolverine. She moved to Ann Arbor from Flint in order to retire in a location halfway between her two children's homes. She likes to read historical non-fiction, write, and sing. Her home is overrun with books and she appreciates live theatre, concerts, lectures, museums, gardening, architecture, volunteering .... Even as she stays at home to avoid contagion, she emphatically asserts "Life is Good!"

#### Scripture - Isaiah 41:10 KJV

"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

#### Reflection - In The Midst of the Pandemic

by Pam Ehrhart

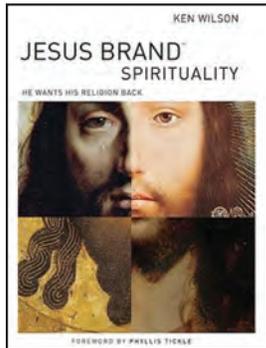
Universe maker,  
Creation's lover,  
Molding all life to your purpose, divine,  
You've made us your people,  
Called us your children,  
Guided us in your ways.

We strayed from your path,  
But You came and found us,  
Shining your glory to make clear our road.  
The gift of your Son  
Envelopes your loved ones,  
Bringing us back to you.

*Continued next page ....*

## Funerals & Memorial Services in the Time of Covid 19

Our church has been guided by our Pandemic Funeral/Memorial Policy — you can find it at [www.firstpresbyterian.org](http://www.firstpresbyterian.org). All in-person gatherings for memorials or funerals or interments are limited to 10 people until further notice. Please contact Rev. Rogers for questions at [mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org).



### Stephen Ministry Book Nook Review By Chris Queen

*Jesus Brand Spirituality: He Wants His Religion Back* is written by Ken Wilson, a local pastor of Blue Ocean Church located in Ann Arbor. Wilson begins the book with the statement “Jesus wants his religion back....so it can be for the world again.” With honesty, curiosity and rare insight, the author explores four dimensions of the spirituality Jesus left in his wake – active, contemplative, biblical, and communal. This book is practical, engaging,

and persuasive, about a deeper and gentler spirituality, taught in such a way that anyone can enhance their Christian growth.

This book really is an invitation. Join the expedition, find out more about our connectedness, to God, one another and, indeed, all created things. The book is nearly a pilgrimage, to be read and considered as we take new steps toward Christ and into Christ’s Kingdom. You may not agree with all the principles, but you will find more than enough common ground to reward your reading efforts.

Gift to the nations,  
Spirit, sustainer,  
Comforter in the midst of our fears,  
We trust in your love as we weather this crisis,  
Rock of the Ages,  
Secure.

#### Scripture - Psalm 23:4 KJV

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me ...

#### Prayer

Holy One, we are in your hands. Strengthen our trust in You as we move through these chaotic and dangerous times. When we can’t find you through our fears, brighten your distant light, guiding us to your peace. Secure in us the knowledge that you will never leave us to face our fears alone. Amen.



## Christian Formation

### Service Opportunities for Children & Youth

Enrich the faith formation of First Pres children and youth by volunteering for the following service opportunities. Learn more by contacting Beca Torres-Davenport, Coordinator of Children’s Education and Family Ministry, at [btorres-davenport@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:btorres-davenport@firstpresbyterian.org); or Rev. Mark Mares, Minister of Youth & Families, at [mmares@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:mmares@firstpresbyterian.org).

#### Twenty-Six Teachers to Rotate Teaching Teams

- Six for Middle School and High School classes
- Twenty for Kindergarten - 5th Grade Sunday School Classes

#### Six Confirmation Mentors

#### Four Youth Leaders for Youth Group activities

#### Eight Hall Monitors for Sunday morning



#### Adults in Supporting Roles

- Drivers for off-site experiences
- One-time weekend retreats and lock-ins
- Help at special services, events, and celebrations such as Advent Happening, Peeps & Pizza, Confirmation Banquet, Christmas Eve services, and more!

## CHILDREN & YOUTH

### A Compassionate Summer: \*Be Loved, Be Kind, Be You\*

Sundays, June 28, July 12 & 26, and August 9 & 23

As we look around the world, what becomes clearer each day is our deep need for compassion - now more than ever. We will examine different places in our lives where we can cultivate compassion. Children 4 years old through MIDS are invited to join us for each session. Each of these five sessions will have age-appropriate offerings for each age group where we’ll explore themes of compassion through central scripture passages. Compassion Camp’s goal is to cultivate compassion for each other, ourselves, and the world. Join by Zoom links provided in Children, Youth and Family weekly emails. Sign up at <https://firstpresbyterian.wufoo.com/forms/compassionate-camp-summer-series/>. We look forward to seeing you there!



## “Last Word Fridays” Children & Youth Parent Happy Hour

June 26, July 24, Aug 21 at 8:00 p.m.

Rev. Mark Mares and Beca Torres-Davenport invite all parents of children and youth to join us one Friday a month this summer for a virtual happy hour hangout. This will be a place for us to relax, kick back with your favorite summer beverage and just enjoy each other's company as we spend time connecting. Keep an eye out for the zoom link in your Children & Youth Ministry weekly emails.

### CHILDREN & FAMILIES

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#### Bedtime Stories & Prayers

Thursdays at 7:00 p.m.

As summer starts and we move into longer days and warm weather, bedtime stories will be going from three days a week to one. We invite you to join us on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/FirstPresA2/>) for a short livestream of a story and prayer each Thursday evening. Wear your jammies, enjoy your bedtime snack or drink and snuggle down for story. Each sharing is about five to fifteen minutes long. Videos typically are available for later viewing.



### YOUTH CONNECTION

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#### College Orientation for High School Graduates

July 19 at 12:15 p.m.

Join Rev. Mark & Rev. Evans for a special “college lunch,” location TBD. If you have any questions, please contact Rev. Mark, [mmares@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:mmares@firstpresbyterian.org) or Rev. Evans, [emcgowan@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:emcgowan@firstpresbyterian.org).

#### Visit our Instagram or Website page for Upcoming Opportunities

Keep an eye out for many opportunities this summer on our website page or our instagram account. We will have updates on our book read for the month of July (*The Poet X*), some local service opportunities, and some other opportunities to “connect.” Plus, we’ll have a “special update” to our website page this month! If you have any questions, please email Rev. Mark at [mmares@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:mmares@firstpresbyterian.org)

#### Dungeons & Dragons Adventure

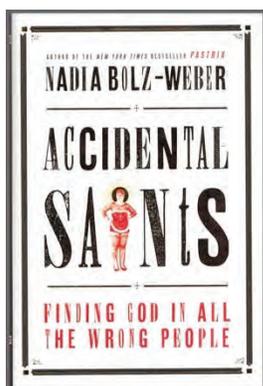
Do you like using your imagination? How about exploring new worlds and working on a team? Join us on our campaign that meets every two weeks! Contact Rev. Mark at [mmares@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:mmares@firstpresbyterian.org) for more information.

### UKIRK@UMICH

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#### Campus Ministry Update

July is usually a slower time programmatically for Campus Ministries, yet still there are many connections being made. This summer has seen many students live at home and see many plans canceled due to the virus - from internships in D.C. to studying abroad in South Africa to opportunities closer to home. The pandemic has also provided an opportunity to continue connections online while we are apart and await the fall school schedule. Our Wednesday night small group has chosen to do a book study of *Accidental Saints*. Two new online small groups have also formed: a women's college group and a co-ed group taking time to reflect on racism in our culture. Each week we discuss what we have learned from the Dr. Eddie Moore's *21-Day Racial Equity Challenge* and how we can better support justice for people of color. Rev. Evans McGowan continues to reach out and connect with students, many of whom are adjusting to a very different summer than they had expected.



## T2A2 - TWENTIES & THIRTIES IN ANN ARBOR

### T2A2 Update

T2A2 hasn't let a little social distancing keep us from our regular events this spring. A few days before the stay-at-home order, we made our regular events virtual – first with GoToMeeting and BlueJeans and then with Zoom. As many of us spread out over the Midwest and Northeast to be with family, we continued to meet on Wednesday nights for regular hangouts and on Sunday nights for small-group Bible study and prayer. We even had a new person join us virtually from Toledo! Those who stayed in Ann Arbor supported each other by delivering groceries and medicine to those in quarantine and checking on a vacated apartment. In early June, we had our first hybrid gathering, with some T2A2-ers socially distanced in person and some virtually present over Zoom (pictured). With a big screen and conference-room microphone in the center of our circle, everyone was able to participate in the conversation -- though not in the snacks! As people continue to join virtually, we'll continue to experiment with hybrid gatherings.



### Join Us!

If you're a twenty or thirty something, join us this summer! T2A2 plans to continue Wednesday evening hangouts and our Sunday evening small group all summer. Our small group will be discussing Psalms from the lectionary. There's also talk of (appropriately social-distanced) hiking, kayaking on the Huron, and hanging out with pastors. Email us at [t2a2@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:t2a2@firstpresbyterian.org) to find out more or to be added to our email list!

## ADULT EDUCATION

### Invitation to 2020 Writer's Table

Sundays at 12:15 p.m. on July 12, 19 & August 2, 9

We are thrilled to invite you to our Summer Writers Table with exceptional guest writers who will share their life, faith, and writing with us for the next two months on Zoom! Bring your lunch and eat, learn and grow with us this summer—right at the table of our amazing writers! Contact Rev. Sanderford ([jsanderford@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:jsanderford@firstpresbyterian.org)) for the Zoom link.

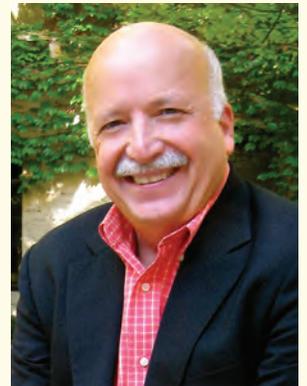
#### Guest Writers: Scott Ellsworth & Marilyn McEntyre

What would you do for a chance to meet great award-winning writers? A chance to find out first-hand how they write their books, where they get their inspiration and what shapes their stories and faith?

#### July 12 & 19 - Scott Ellsworth

##### Topic: Sports and Race

Scott Ellsworth is the New York Times bestselling author of *The Secret Game*, which was the winner of the 2016 PEN/ESPN Award for Literary Sports Writing. He has written about American history for the New York Times, the Washington Post, and the Los Angeles Times. Formerly a historian at the Smithsonian Institution, he is the author of *Death in a Promised Land*, his groundbreaking account of the 1921 Tulsa race riot. His most recent book is *The World Beneath Their Feet: Mountaineering, Madness, and the Deadly Race to Summit the Himalayas*. He lives with his wife and twin sons in Ann Arbor, where he teaches at UM.



#### August 2 & 9 - Marilyn McEntyre

##### Topic: Spirituality, Literature and Medicine

Marilyn McEntyre is a writer and professor of medical humanities at the UC Berkeley-UCSF Joint Medical Program. She cares about connecting spirituality, politics, food, healthcare, care for the earth and its creatures, care for language and public discourse, and finding new ways to live together on a planet that needs healing. Her writing has appeared in *The Christian Century*, *Weavings*, *Sojourners*, *Christianity Today*, and a variety of other academic and trade publications. She won the Christianity Today 2015 book award. She has taught at Princeton University, Mills College, and Westmont College and now teaches at the UCSF/UC Berkeley Joint Medical Program.



## Strengthening Ourselves & Strengthening Others

Wednesdays, July 22, August 19 & September 16, Noon to 1:00 p.m.

This enrichment series will provide opportunities for people to gather and discuss ways to STRENGTHEN AND GROW in their faith and beyond. Series leaders Beth Steward, Jane Dutton, and Diane Hockett will focus on personally connecting people who attend the discussion and encouraging each person's voice to be heard. Topics will include:

- Strengthening through Self-Compassion
- Strengthening through Gratitude
- Strengthening through Belonging

Visit [www.firstpresbyterian.org](http://www.firstpresbyterian.org) for more information and an opportunity to sign up.

## Cancer: Now What?

This class has been postponed. If you are interested in participating in a future date, contact Rev. Rogers at [mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org).

## New Social Justice Group

Are you devoted to climate change issues? Are you passionate about recycling or fossil fuel usage and global impact? First Pres is forming a Social Justice Group focused on these topics, and you are invited to join. If you are interested, contact Rev. Jay Sanderford at [jsanderford@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:jsanderford@firstpresbyterian.org). Other social justice issues will be addressed later in the year.



## Small Group

One small group is continuing to meet over the summer. For more information, contact Olivier Jolliet at [ojolliet@umich.edu](mailto:ojolliet@umich.edu)

## Journeys Book & Bible Study

Journeys will continue to meet this summer via Zoom on the second Thursday of the month. Plan to join us on July 9 and August 6. The group is reading *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life* by Fr. Richard Rohr. Contact Rev. Frazier ([afrazier@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:afrazier@firstpresbyterian.org)) for more information.

## Pilgrimages in Ann Arbor Parks!

Take a mini-pilgrimage at Gallup Park and explore your faith. We have prepared three Walking Guides with different themes that foster reflection as you walk the 1.35 (or 1.65) mile trail at Gallup Park. We hope you will explore this new way to enjoy the outdoors and reflect on your journey while staying socially distant. Visit <https://firstpresbyterian.org/event/pilgrimage-park> and download the guides and a map to Gallup Park.

## The Spiritual Writing Group invites your participation!

Have you ever wanted to be creative with words? Have you found it so difficult to just sit down quietly and write a memory to share? This summer during "social distancing," we are sharing our creative work and our discussion of these shared writings all by email. You won't even have to leave your home to participate. If you wish to join us, please contact Meg Brown at [lmegbrown@gmail.com](mailto:lmegbrown@gmail.com), and she'll email you the email addresses of all our members.



## Financial Stewardship



### July Financial Update

- As of this writing, we have financial results through **May**.
- **Revenue:** Year-to-date pledge receipts and contributions were \$42,000 better than budget. Thank you to all whose generous contributions made this possible!
- **Expenses:** Personnel expenses were \$29,000 below (better than) budget. Building expenses were \$47,000 better than budget thanks to lower than anticipated expenses in virtually all facilities-related areas. For the moment, Mission-related expenses were \$78,000 below budget, but that was due to the fact that local mission grants, usually given in May, were temporarily postponed so that

the Local Mission Work Group could better evaluate the needs of our mission partners as they respond to the pandemic. (These grants will also be augmented by gifts received for the local mission portion of the Love Made Visible Covid-19 Response fundraising appeal.) In all other areas combined, spending was \$15,000 below budget. Therefore, disregarding the temporary delay in the payment of local mission grants, overall expenses were \$91,000 better than budget through May 2020.

- **Bottom line:** (Again, disregarding the local mission payments) our 2020 budget anticipated a deficit of \$50,000 through May. Because of the actual results described above, we showed a surplus of \$133,000.
- To everyone who has helped us have a better-than-anticipated start to 2020, **we extend a big THANK YOU!**
- **Regarding our endowment,** on January 1st the total amount invested was \$7,657,290. A large portion of the market losses experienced in February and March were recovered by market improvements in April and May. As of May 31, the amount invested stood at \$7,155,076.

## LEGACY PARTNERS - Lois & Fernando Colon



The concept of “Legacy Partners” caught our attention the moment we heard about it and we wanted to participate. What a privilege to have a small part in the ongoing life of faith at First Pres. We arrived in Ann Arbor in 1970 with our three children, and soon found our way to First Presbyterian Church. We quite soon felt at home. So many welcoming people were a joy! The worship services were a blessing: the Word preached in such a way that invited you right into the heart of the message, music to inspire and nurture the soul, Christian education that often spurred us on to further study, and classes for the children which they found interesting and kept them asking questions which is just what we’d hoped for. We discovered opportunities for service both within the church and beyond its walls, sometimes way beyond its walls. Through all the years since, with variation of course as pastors, staff, members and visitors have come and gone as they’ve responded to their life’s callings, the vibrancy and commitment of First Pres endures.

Part of this is looking-back-in gratitude at what brought us to be Legacy Partners, but also there is much looking forward in commitment to a gift for the future: the reality that First Presbyterian Church, Ann Arbor will be a place of belonging for all people, where faith can be discovered, or nurtured and grown, made visible in care and service to and for the gathered community of faith, the larger community of Ann Arbor, and beyond.



## Faith in Action

### Love Made Visible in Response to COVID-19

The Local Mission COVID-19 Relief fund has provided \$25,000 in emergency aid to agencies in SE Michigan. Here are some examples of the impact:

#### A testimonial from Washtenaw Community College

A brief anecdotal report which highlights the impact which the First Pres Covid Emergency Relief Fund has been able to have on our community members in need. This was a result of the \$3000 our church sent to the College Student Emergency Fund in April.

J.C. is a 28 year-old student at WCC enrolled in two classes this semester as she works toward a degree in Marketing and Graphic Design. In addition to her “now online” classes she until recently held a part-time job as a retail clerk which disappeared as a result of the Co-Vid 19 crisis. She has struggled raising two children with the help of her mother who lives nearby. Recently the delicate balance of her financial situation rendered her unable to pay her rent and feed her family. The Student Emergency Fund at WCC was able to provide J.C. with a number of cash cards for use at local grocery stores. That infusion of money allowed her invaluable assistance providing food for her loved ones. Happily since then her job has been reinstated allowing her to manage essential costs and maintain her academic and life path trajectory.”

Stories such as this are common among many students young and old at the college as people strive to improve their career opportunities while struggling to manage many life challenges. First Presbyterian Church, Ann Arbor was happy to have been able to make a donation to the WCC fund through its Co-Vid 19 Emergency Funding program in April. The generous contributions of church members is felt in this and many other ways through our local mission programs. “God’s love is made visible.”



### Corner Health Center – Ypsilanti

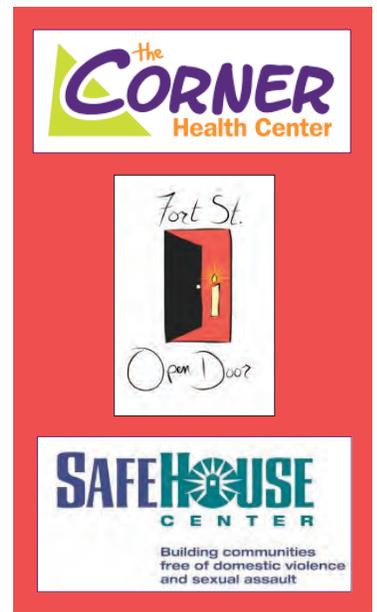
“Our young people share our fears and anxiety as we work through this pandemic. With your support they are finding the care and comfort they need through telehealth visits. We can be there for them because you are here for us. You give us hope that we will get through this together.”

### Open Door at Fort Street Presbyterian - Detroit

This gift will allow us to continue to serve the homeless and underserved in Detroit. Just this week we served over 100 meals and helped several guests with Bridge Card registration, Census Counts and unemployment benefits.

### SafeHouse Center – Ann Arbor

The “Fresh Start Fund” helps survivors establish independent living situations by paying for essentials such as moving costs, transportation and childcare. As a result of the Stay-at-Home order, requests for assistance nearly doubled. These funds can make the difference between a survivor’s ability to become independent from his or her assailant and having to return to the home where the abuse has occurred.



## Session Digest

### At the May 20 Stated Meeting of Session, conducted via Zoom ...

Rev. Jay Sanderford opened the meeting with prayer, addressing the special needs of the congregation.

#### Session then proceeded to:

- approve the 2020 Session Committee Rosters [soon to be posted on the FPC web site]. Rev. Sanderford asked that he be kept apprised of changes to ensure that the information is kept up-to-date.
- enthusiastically receive 18 new members into the family of First Presbyterian Church. Elder Marti Wendler, Chair of the Congregational Life Committee, reminded Session that none of these new members has been inside the church since March; all new member classes have been conducted virtually. Rev. Melissa Anne Rogers said this class was an intergenerational group of extraordinary and diverse backgrounds and talents and First Pres is indeed fortunate that they have chosen to join our congregation.
- supported the request by the Reopening Recommendations Work Group to conduct a congregational survey to gauge members’ expectations, priorities, and concerns regarding the reopening of the church building and resumption of on-site activities.
- authorize a virtual celebration of the Sacrament of Communion during the June 7 service in accordance with guidelines offered by the General Assembly.

#### Other Reports / Discussions

1. Jim Douglass, Deacon Representative, said the Deacons were continuing to reach out to their chapel members to provide support and sustain a sense of connectivity to the church during this time. Deacons are delivering meals, groceries, and communion kits as requested. Speaking for all Deacons, Jim expressed gratitude to Sandy Talbott and Rev. Rogers for their sensitivity and leadership.



2. Elder Sue Gott, Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee, thanked those who participated in the workshop the committee held with the Session on Saturday, May 16. She was impressed with the energy and positive engagement of those present. The SPC is now compiling further refinements of proposed future strategies, and will present to the June Session meeting an outline of priorities for implementation over the next 1, 3, and 5 year periods, to be further refined into final form over the summer for presentation to the Session in late August. Staff workload will be considered and opportunities to move some responsibilities to non-Staff personnel will be explored.

3. The Reopening Recommendations Work Group has been working to map out a strategy for how to safely reopen the church building – a phased plan that will incorporate policies and procedures that will ensure a clean, safe environment for everyone. Rev. Evans McGowan and Nancy Janz Clark presented a draft of the *Recommendation Framework* which outlines several phases by which the church might reopen; specific protocols for each phase will follow. Rev. Rogers noted that other area churches have requested copies of our survey (referenced above) to help them develop reopening plans. The Session will give the RRWG plan further consideration at its June meeting.
4. Elder Helena Prince advised that the \$25,000 approved in April by the Local Mission Committee from the Covid-19 Community Response Fund has supported seven local agencies serving vulnerable populations, responding to urgent food, healthcare, and housing needs. The Emergency Grant process is now closed, but will open again on July 1. She also reported on many other local mission activities supported by volunteers.
5. Elder Bill Upton, Chair of the Finance Committee, reported the churches April finances currently show a surplus due to decreased expenses. He also reported giving has continued at expected levels. Elder Bruce Clyde reported, for the Stewardship Sub-Committee, that work has begun on the Annual Giving plan – themes, venues for communication, and more targeting messaging for specific demographic groups.
6. Rev. Jay Sanderford shared the good news that Lex Allum, a candidate for ordination under care of our Session, received the Chidester Preaching Award from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary - given to a graduating senior who shows the greatest potential in the area of preaching. Our congratulations to Lex!
7. Elder Sue Cares reported for the Resident Ministry Work Group that this year marks the 20th Anniversary of the Resident Minister Program. Over the next several weeks each Sunday bulletin will recognize and celebrate a former Resident

*The Session is the governing board of the church. It consists of 24 Elders elected by the congregation to three-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. The next Session meeting occurred on June 17 at 7:00 p.m. The digest of that meeting will be posted in the August edition of First Press.*



## Transitions



### We Grieve the Death of :

October 6, 2019	Mary Hathaway
December 1, 2019	Brad Snyder
December 8, 2019	Shirley Burgoyne
December 18, 2019	Catherine Baker
January 4, 2020	Helen Corey
January 9, 2020	Carolyon Beuhler
January 11, 2020	Ben Hourani
January 18 2020	Edward Vandenberg
January 19 2020	Robert Kerry
January 31 2020	Judy Stuart
February 22, 2020	Alice Irani
March 12, 2020	David Husted
March 21, 2020	Greg Detmer
April 15, 2020	Graydon Krapohl
May 15, 2020	Cozette Grabb

May 17, 2020	John Eman
May 22, 2020	Greg Grieco
May 24, 2020	Jack Caldwell
May 27, 2020	Bob Davison
June 5, 2020	Judith Judge
June 11, 2020	John Hammond

### We Celebrate the Marriage of:

Ingrid Charlson & Scott Murray	December 21, 2019
Zac LeDuc & Sarah Hoeflerlin	December 31, 2019

### We Celebrate the Birth of:

Amanda & Scott Blackburn welcomed the birth of their son, Grayson Scott Blackburn, on March 21, 2020