



First Press

A Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor
November 2019 ■ Volume 67, Number 10



Scottish Pilgrimage - 100 miles, 8 days, 14 women!



Third Graders received Bibles on October 13.

Dear Friends,

I'm thinking about meals – and not just because of “the big one” for which American custom sets the table at the end of this month. I'm noticing how our life together is table-shaped. This is a tale of four suppers.

Since I pulled in to Ann Arbor last month barely 48 hours before World Communion Sunday, it's almost literally true that I met you first at the Table. But you brought friends! – the Sanctuary that day was overflowing with the company of Christians around the globe keeping the joyful feast on a day when we make a point, annually, of paying attention to the wide church that Jesus gathers around his supper. The Communion Table was swathed in a whole planet's-worth of colorful fabrics, and the Choir's words re-hallowed it as a place of confluence: *donde dos o tres se reúnen en mi nombre, allí estoy yo en medio de ellos* (Matthew 18:20).

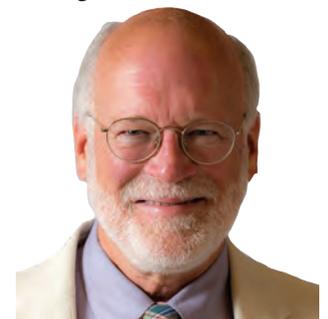
Just a week later I supped again at First Pres – less liturgically but no less spiritually – when the incomparable Helena Prince and a huge crew of helpers (thank you!!) set up an acre of tables to accommodate a welcoming potluck of favorite dishes from which I may, happily, never recover! As I scrambled around the room to meet as many of you as I could, I found myself thinking, every person on earth deserves to feel so welcome. I heard an echo in my memory of the voice of Henri Nouwen, one of my teachers in seminary saying, in his beautiful Dutch accent, at the moment just before he'd break the bread: “Lord, I am not worthy to receive you – but only say the word and I shall be healed” (Luke 7:6). Sometimes the bounty of love with which God surrounds us makes us wonder, *what did I ever do to deserve such company in this life?*

A few days from now we'll mark All Saints' Day gathered, once again, at the Table – in the vast communion of saints. The air around us, softened and deepened by the Choir singing a poignant, pensive *Requiem* by Bob Chilcott, will be full of the names of “all the saints who from their labors rest”, whose passing into the permanence of God's love has marked us this past year. As we share another Supper, I will be hearing the voice of the pastor/saint who nurtured me into ministry – who, just before breaking the bread, would always say (in the syntax of the old *Book of Common Worship*): “Behold, the one who cometh unto me I will *in no wise* cast out” (John 6:37).

And then, of course – Thanksgiving. Tables again bountifully spread, beloved ones gathered, we'll weather all the ethical complexity of the founding legend of the Massachusetts Bay separatist-pilgrims, and the question of whether the bounty we enjoy is a sign of God's favor for us individually, nationally, or a sign of God's hope for us communally, globally. I always think of a line that I first read on a Communion bulletin: “At the table of peace there will be bread and justice.” I hope we can all remember to let our bountiful “suppers” on that day remind us of this, our beloved church, with its Table and its suppers so much at its center, and of our continuing, en-spiriting, hope-fulled work: to find the lost, to heal the broken, to feed the hungry – to **make God's love visible** in the world. For, indeed, happy, worthy, welcome are all those who are called to supper together, time and again, with our bountiful God.

Food for thought! Bon appetit!

Faithfully,



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**Daylight Saving Time
Ends Sunday, November 3**

It's time to “Fall Back!” Remember to set your clocks back an hour before you go to bed on Saturday, November 2.



Worship & Music



All Saints' Day Sunday - November 3

Worship with us at 8:00, 9:30 & 11:00 a.m. as we remember members of our congregation, family, and friends who have died in the past year.

Requiem by Bob Chilcott will be offered as the Proclamation of the Word by the Chancel Choir, soloists, and orchestra. We will also celebrate Communion and read the names of those who have died in the past year.

Rev. Faith Fowler Preaches November 17

Rev. Faith Fowler, Executive Director for Cass Community Social Services, will be our guest preacher at 9:30 and 11:00 a.m. on Sunday November 17. She has been the catalyst behind the Tiny Homes movement in Detroit and has led a family social ministry that has fed, clothed and housed 1,000's of Detroit citizens over the last 10 years. Rev. Fowler is preaching as part of Mission Sunday, an event that includes the Mission Bazaar, held in the Social Hall from 8:30 a.m. - noon.



Financial Stewardship



Haven't Pledged? There's Still Time!

Commitment Sunday, the conclusion of our 2020 Stewardship Campaign, was on October 27, but if you haven't submitted your pledge yet, it's not too late to do so!

As today's members of First Pres, we're the stewards of our church in the pursuit of its mission to Make God's Love Visible. It's an honor and responsibility passed to us by our predecessors dating back almost 200 years. To be successful stewards requires the talent, time, and financial support of each of us.

Please lend your financial support by making a pledge to First Pres. Financial support makes all our worship and activities possible, and by making a pledge we inform Session of how much financial support to expect. That information lets Session determine whether we're able to maintain or even expand what we do.

By committing our talent, time, & financial support to First Pres, together we can Make God's Love Visible.

September Financial Update

The Session and the Finance Committee are committed to providing regular financial updates to our members and friends. The following financial information is for the month of September and year to date for the 2019 fiscal year.

For the month of August:

Total income received:	\$ 141,317 vs. budget of \$166,192
Total expenses:	\$ 180,002 vs. budget of \$199,362
Surplus/(Shortage):	\$ (38,686) vs. budget of \$(33,170)

Year-to-Date through August

Total income received:	\$ 1,296,462 vs. budget of \$1,258,735
Total expenses	\$ 1,306,979 vs. budget of \$1,522,427
Surplus/(shortage):	\$ (10,517) vs. budget of \$ 236,692



The favorable variances year to date are primarily due to: pledge and contribution income better than budgeted, personnel expenses less than budgeted due to staff vacancies earlier this year, and no surprises/emergencies in property. Please see the related article about the 2020 Stewardship Campaign. Thank you to all who have pledged to date, and to those who will pledge their financial support! This is especially important as we are working on the 2020 budget for First Pres, as well as the Mission Vision Next strategic plan. Our combined financial support allows First Pres to Make God's Love Visible (since 1862!) in our community and around the world. Our faith community and exceptional staff are doing amazing work, and the future looks bright!

LEGACY PARTNERS SPOTLIGHT



Linda Rex "Why Me?"

Although it was many years ago, I clearly remember my New Member Class. It was quite large and we broke into small groups to share why each of us was there. When we "reported out" to the larger group, we defined ourselves as seekers. Although each of us had come to First Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor by different paths, we had come with common purpose, looking for a place to learn and grow in faith, to feel welcomed in a community, to be challenged and to be allowed to question without recrimination.

The strength and vitality of First Presbyterian Church is its community of seekers – a congregation relentlessly looking for ways to bring Christ's message to the world with compassion and joy, respecting diversity and individuality, unafraid to speak as a voice for social justice for those who have no voice. Because there will always be seekers, there always needs to be First Presbyterian Church. Being a Legacy Partner gives me confidence that this will be so.



Congregational Life

Families @ First Special All Saints Day Event

Join us for a special celebration of All Saints' Day on Friday, November 1, at 5:30 p.m. Families @ First explores honoring and celebrating All Saints' Day through the cross-cultural lens of Dia de Los Muertos (The Day of the Dead). Enjoy a potluck-style dinner at 5:30 p.m. and watch a popular, family-friendly movie at 6:00 p.m. in wonderful fellowship! Need another reason to attend? Our new Interim Pastor will be on hand to meet and greet! The event will wrap up by 8:00 p.m. Questions? Contact Beca Torres-Davenport at btorresavenport@firstpresbyterian.org or 662-4466, ext. 342.



We Continue to CULTIVATE...

To cultivate means to actively prepare for planting. It also means to acquire or develop new qualities, sentiments and skills. All of us are cultivating new ways of being together as we integrate the various gifts of new staff members into the service of Christ and the community. We continue to focus on a different aspect of our culture in Christ each week. In November we will cultivate our eternal life, our collaboration, our commission, and our gratitude in Christ. As you experience all that First Pres offers, how might you join us in our Christ-led cultivation?

In November, We Cultivate ... in Christ

November 3	Our Eternal Life	All Saints' Sunday
November 10	Our Collaboration	Officers' Retreat
November 17	Our Commission	Mission Sunday
November 23	Our Gratitude	Thanksgiving

"Whit's fur ye'll no go past ye ..."

a Scottish phrase that means "What's meant to happen will happen!" Fourteen First Pres pilgrims walked 100 miles on the West Highland Way in Scotland, October 12 - 24.



MATURE MINISTRIES

Lunch & Learn Thursday - November 14

House Sitting - The Best Way to Travel the World

Josie Schneider and Conrad Knutsen on house sitting... "House sitting is an even-steven arrangement; homeowners gain peace of mind knowing their home and pets are in good hands, and travelers have no cost for lodging. The 'no cost for lodging' is what appealed to us, but in the 10 years we've been traveling by house sitting, we discovered the real benefits are way more valuable than saving money." Join us in the Social Hall at Noon for lunch (\$5). Reservations respectfully requested to the Church Office at 662-4466, or Rev. Rogers at mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org.



On the Road ... Mature Ministries Field Trips

Our members 60 and older may register for any or all by contacting Rev. Melissa Anne Rogers or the Church Office. Deposits are non-refundable. All final owed monies for travel, meals and programs are due 30 days before the trips take place (unless otherwise specified). Refunds are only possible if it is 72 hours or more before the event AND if another member can be found to take your place. Otherwise, your deposits and payments are forfeited.



Detroit Parade Company

Tuesday, November 12, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Cost: \$40.00, payable in advance. Includes bus, tour & lunch.

Michiganders share special memories of our annual Thanksgiving Day Parade tradition. This outing takes us to the place where everything comes together—the Detroit Parade Company—as final arrangements are being made for this year's extravaganza. A one-hour tour will make you the expert on the parade at this year's Thanksgiving dinner table. This is guaranteed to be a great bit of fun before the holidays are upon us! Lunch to follow at the original Buddy's Pizza in Detroit. Pizza, salad, soft drinks, and gratuity included. Who doesn't like Buddy's?

Reserve Your Spot Today For ...

Sign up with Rev. Rogers at mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org or call the Church Office.

- **Jesus Christ, Superstar** - **Note: This is open to the whole congregation!** Sunday, February 9, at 2:00 p.m. Tickets are \$69 including bus transportation. A \$20 deposit per person is required (non-refundable), with final fees due December 1.
- **Chicago & Spamalot in Stratford - June 11-12, 2020** 20 rooms/40 spots max are available for A+ Orchestra Seating. A nonrefundable deposit of \$75 is due at sign up. Rooms are released on November 12.

Presbyterian Women

NEW! Monthly Evening Bible Study

November 19 (Third Tuesdays) at 7:00 p.m. in the Vance Room

This Bible Study, created for working women and busy moms, uses the *Horizons Bible Study Love Carved in Stone – A Fresh Look at the Ten Commandments*. On November 19 Meg Brown will lead Lesson 3.

PW Gathering – Wednesday, November 20

9:30 - 10:30 a.m. Bible Study in the Lewis Room

Sue Dempsey leads Lesson 3 from *Love Carved in Stone: A Fresh Look at The Ten Commandments* by Eugenia Anne Gamble.

10:45 - 11:00 a.m. Welcome & Business in Monteith Hall

The Thank Offering will be collected.

10:45 a.m. - Noon Field Trip to House by the Side of the Road led by Hank McQueen

A carpool will leave the church at 10:45 a.m. House by the Side of the Road is run by volunteers and stores donated clothing, bedding and small household essentials which they provide for free to families in need.

Noon Lunch at Anna's House on Eisenhower Parkway

Please make your reservation with Joyce Himebaugh at 971-0873.

PW MISSION – How YOU can Make a Difference

- Volunteer to help make salad or dessert and serve dinner for **Circles** (a program to assist families out of poverty) on Tuesday, November 5 at St. Luke's Church on Washtenaw.
- Sunday, November 17 is the **Mission Bazaar**. Think about buying shares for PW scholarships. They make good stocking stuffers. Sell shares with Ginny and Carole at the PW Mission table.
- Check out the **PW Bulletin Board** for more women's activities: Knit Night, William Barclay Commentary Bible Study, Women's Bible Study, Journey's Book/ Bible Study, and Women's Reading Group and more.

Leaf Raking Day

Saturday, November 23, 8:00 a.m. - Noon

Calling all leaf-rakers! All come together for Washtenaw Dairy doughnuts, hot drinks, and to make our church grounds beautiful. If you have tarps and rakes – bring 'em! Or just bring yourself, your warm clothing, your good humor, and willingness to work. Questions? Contact Adrian Prundeanu at aprundeanu@firstpresbyterian.org or 662-4466, ext. 343.

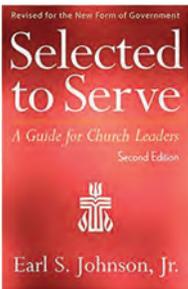


STEPHEN MINISTRY

Continuing Education Class

All are invited to attend Stephen Ministry Continuing Education classes. On November 11 at 7:00 p.m. in Monteith Hall, Collyer Smith presents "A Parent's Journey into Mental Health."

Reviews from the Stephen Ministry Book Nook

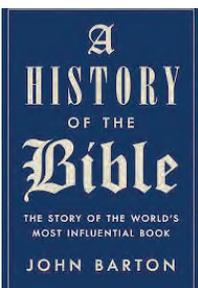


Selected to Serve-A Guide for Church Leaders, second edition, by Earl S. Johnson, Jr

Selected to Serve is one of the books we are reading for deacon training. Earl S. Johnson, Jr. is Pastor Emeritus of First Presbyterian Church in Johnstown, New York, and an adjunct professor of religious studies at Siena College.

This useful guide for church leaders covers all aspects of officer training: call, duties, ethics, the Presbyterian Constitution, and much more. Congregations will find this resource indispensable for the recruitment and training of effective church leaders. For incoming Presbyterian Church ruling elders and deacons the book covers what it means to be willing to serve from the denomination viewpoint as well as that of the individual congregation. The book covers how willingness to accept a leadership position, if done so prayerfully and thoughtfully, can help a congregation and individuals to grow with new experiences and opportunities for service.

The author writes in the preface of the book "My primary purpose in writing has not been to answer the questions about how we work as church leaders. The Book of Order and a number of other books and manuals tell us that. Instead, my aim is to consider why and what. Why do we do the things we do as Presbyterians? What are the biblical and theological principles behind our decisions? What difference will it make if we continue to follow New Testament and Reformed traditions in the future"? For me this book is something I need to read in my journey of faith. - *Chris Queen*



***A History of the Bible: The Story of the World's Most Influential Book* by John Barton**

A History of the Bible, written by John Barton, an Anglican priest and Oxford scholar, is a literary history of the most influential book of all time. In this book, the author sets out to show how the Bible came into being, developed, and was used and interpreted from its beginnings to the present day, in both Christianity and Judaism. In the introduction to the book Barton writes "I aim to show that the Bible is an important source of religious insight, provided it is read in its original context and against the conditions prevailing when it was written." The author accomplishes exactly that.

I read the book because I needed to become more knowledgeable on how to interpret the Bible and I think I did. One review of the book, written by Diarmaid MacCulloch states "John Barton has written a wise and eminently sane book about a book which has inspired both insanity and wisdom. It is a landmark in the field, and it will do great good." MacCulloch is a British historian and academic, specializing in ecclesiastical history and the history of Christianity. This very readable and thoughtful book, with plenty of notes and full bibliography, is a good read for preachers, teachers, and all who are serious about the Bible's place in their religion. - *Cyndy Colton*



Adult Education



SUNDAY MORNING OFFERINGS @ 9:30 a.m.

The Bible @ 9:30 November 3 - 24 French Room/Library

Note: Class will NOT meet on Sunday, December 1

The Bible at 9:30 is studying three things: How the Bible came to be; Galatians; and Ezra-Nehemiah. Class meets in the French Room/Library, and all are welcome. Bibles and name tags are provided.

First Friends November 3 - 24 Monteith Hall

This group focuses on spiritual growth, learning, fellowship, and support for individuals and couples seeking to connect faith and life. All are welcome!

November 3 Our Resident Ministers share their faith

November 10 Discuss *Listening to Jesus as a Jew* by Amy-Jill Levine

November 17 & 24 Gale and Don Redding discuss their experiences on their recent trip to Israel

@ 11:00 a.m.

Exploring the Faith November 3 - 24 Monteith Hall



New Series! Real Poverty Solutions: Broke, Hungry, Homeless in Ann Arbor

Our Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County neighbors are often hungry, lack affordable shelter and cannot pay for basic needs of food, shelter, health care, education, transportation and healthy relationships. As Christians, we are to care for our neighbors. To do this we need to better understand the systemic issue of poverty in our community.

During November, we will have conversations with community leaders who are engaged in the areas of need within Washtenaw County. Currently we address the symptoms of poverty by providing food, affordable housing, and access to services. One of the questions we will ask is: What can we do to alleviate poverty? How do we change our mindset to support families in poverty and take actions that will provide more equitable resources for all?

Mission Sunday is November 17 - The conversations and activities will include all age groups and mission projects including the Mission Bazaar and mission-focused worship with special guest preacher Rev. Faith Fowler, Executive Director of Cass Community Social Services in Detroit, at 9:30 and 11:00 a.m.

Poverty Solutions Events - Community Facilitators include

November 3 Mirada Jenkins, Washtenaw County Housing Office, and Amanda Carlisle, Washtenaw Housing Alliance

November 10 Bonnie Billlups, Executive Director, Peace Neighborhood Center

November 17 Tiny Homes at Cass

November 24 Suzanne Van Dam & Sarah Thornburg, CIRCLES/Friends Indeed

Staff from Food Gatherers, Alpha House, Community Action Network and other community leaders will join the conversation in December.



Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week

November 16 -24

We're joining Washtenaw Housing Alliance and the Shelter Association for a week of learning events, film screenings, a road rally, a campus sleep-in and more. For more information search Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week.



Faith in Action

Serve at Alpha House - November 11 - 17

The bounty of fall harvests, backward glances at Halloween and All Saints' Day, and anticipation of Thanksgiving - November is a delightful month. It is also a month when First Pres members have an opportunity to extend hospitality to some of those who are experiencing homelessness, those who have known lack of food security, lack of a warm place to live, lack of safety for their children. Alpha House offers a temporary sanctuary for parents and children, and we, in turn, provide meals, childcare, and overnight support for the guests at Alpha House.

During the week of November 11-17 you have an opportunity to join the Alpha House team in ministering to the parents and children at Alpha House. You can sign up online at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090c4faaaf2daa8-alpha5> or at www.firstpresbyterian.org, or in person during Coffee Hour.



Forward in Mission Christmas Bazaar

Sunday, November 17, 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., in the Social Hall

Come to the Mission Bazaar and learn about how First Presbyterian makes God's love visible through mission projects close to home and around the world. Our efforts help provide food, shelter, education, spiritual and material support to our neighbors both locally and in Nicaragua, Isreal/Palestine, Niger, Russia and the Philippines.

You can also get started on your holiday shopping! Some teams will be selling distinctive items, such as jewelry, ornaments and cards. Others will be offering "shares" of projects they support. For example, you can: purchase a crib or provide a night of shelter for a local child; support a student through a scholarship in the Philippines or Russia; or help one of our youth or college students participate in a mission trip.

The catalog of gifts will be available on-line as well, so you can plan ahead, and also purchase shares through mid-December. Look for more information in the weekly announcements. Many of our mission activities benefit children in our community and overseas. We will have an activity that helps First Pres. children to learn about our mission work. We encourage everyone to join us at the Mission Bazaar!



Children & Families

Thanks for God's Blessings

Give thanks for Adonai's goodness; God's love endures forever! Let them thank Adonai for this great love, for the marvels done for all people- for God has satisfied the thirsty and filled the hungry with good things. - Inclusive Psalms, Psalm 107:1, 8-9

We thank God for all that is provided to us; for love and grace. We are excited for our third graders who can read more about God's love in their new Bibles and the infants and children who celebrated their Baptism at First Pres by creating a treasure chest that will hold their special Milestone Ministry materials. God knows and loves each of them! At our All Saints'/Dia de los Muertos celebration we remember those we have lost, and give thanks for everlasting love, knowing that our family rests with God. This month the children will have the opportunity to explore how First Pres shows gratitude to God by serving others in our community and world at the Mission Bazaar. I wonder how it might inspire the children to serve?



Faith At Home - A fun and simple activity might be a gratitude jar (or cup)! Place a jar/vase/cup in a common area, perhaps the center of your dinner table, and 1-2 times a week each person writes down a word or phrase of what they are thankful for and places it in the jar (some may need help writing it out). At the end of the month, take them out and read all the reasons your family is thankful to God.



Campus Ministry Update

Campus Ministry continues to hum along as we approach 2020. University Sunday saw Rev. Dr. Jason Santos preach about intergenerational faith formation, particularly during the college years and the unique location of First Pres to be involved in the life of the campus. In our second annual University Luncheon, the Campus Ministry Work Group hosted several tables for discussion, including Small Groups, Career Networking and Service Learning, in addition to a table with Rev. Dr. Santos.

Monday and Friday on-campus Coffee Crew sessions provide nice bookends to the week and an opportunity for our campus pastor Rev. Evans McGowan to touch base regularly with our students. Several notable guest preachers on campus in October made for engaging conversation, including Condoleezza Rice and Hillary Clinton. Wed@8 Small Group started up again in October, kicking off with a talk about dinner church by author Kendall Vanderslice from her book, *We Will Feast*.

Perhaps the highlight of the month was our Fall Retreat, held October 18-20 at Camp Westminister on Higgins Lake. Nearly 20 students from the UKirk groups at UM and MSU gathered to rest, relax, hike, sleep, study, ropes course, canoe, and even catch the Penn State night game. It was a great way to unwind from midterms and rejuvenate before the final stretch of the semester.



Cook Pancakes for College Students!

The Pancake Supper is **Wednesday, December 11, 10:00 p.m. – midnight**. As the Fall semester winds down, UM students are working hard and our pancakes and hospitality go a long way! We expect to serve 200 hungry students and we need your help! Sign up to help at <https://firstpresbyterian.wufoo.com/forms/pancake-supper/>, or contact Rev. Evans McGowan at emcgowan@firstpresbyterian.org. Volunteers are needed to help with outreach, setup, tear down/clean up, cooking, serving, and more. Don't have time to help? Monetary donations are needed as well. To contribute, make your check out to First Presbyterian Church with Pancake Supper on the memo line.



Transitions



We Celebrate the Birth of:

Isla Joyce Cameron, born April 8, 2019, daughter of Kelly and Matt Cameron and granddaughter of Jim and Linda Cameron.

Hannah Elizabeth Bowles, born June 3, 2019, daughter of Ashley and Brent Bowles and granddaughter of Paul and Carol Smith.

Theodore James Reinhardt, born August 19, 2019, son of Sarah and Chris Reinhardt and great-grandson of Dot Gates.

We Celebrate the Marriage of:

Charlotte Anderson and Reid Sawtell, June 29, 2019

Carrie Kennedy and Ronald Shunia II, June 29, 2019

Lindsay Balint and Alexander Novak, November 1, 2019

We Grieve the Death of:

John Wacksmuth, May 23, 2019

Carl Geider, July 28, 2019

Katie Dutton, June 30, 2019

Sue Leong, July 31, 2019

Susan Reynolds, August 7, 2019

Lori Wolters, September 2, 2019

Ann Chappuis, September 21, 2019

Mary Hathaway, October 6, 2019

Herb Wagner, October 20, 2019

Thomas Slavens, October 21, 2019



Residents' Corner



“Just Worship” - Andrew Frazier

I recently attended the Just Worship Conference in Austin, TX. As the conference description accurately advertised, over the course of two and a half days I and the other participants explored the intersection of justice and worship; discerned God’s call to work for justice; discussed how worship itself is justice-making; and joined in exuberant, Spirit-filled worship that welcomed the coming reign of God. With only four total hours of rehearsal, I and a small group of singers performed a powerful cantata, *Manos Indocumentadas*, that highlighted the real stories of undocumented immigrants in America and challenged us to respond to their cries, mingled with God’s own, for justice and community.

In the rotunda of the Texas State Capitol, we gathered in an ever-widening circle with local, everyday citizens to breathe and sing together, joining our voices and breaking down dividing walls. It was a thrill to hear our voices echo in the halls of that building, and we prayed that the lawmakers would hear the resonant truth in our songs.

I listened to leading scholars and worship leaders present on just worship in a variety of ways, but I was profoundly moved by Dr. Tony McNeill’s workshop, in which he emphasized the servant role that worship planners and leaders must adopt to be servants of their congregations, servants of God’s Word, and servants of justice.

As you can see, there were so many things packed into our short time together, but each event, worship service, and workshop was thoroughly life-giving, and I left the conference comforted, galvanized, and renewed. If you’d like to know more about the things I learned or share with me your thoughts on how our worship can be more just, please contact me: afrazier@firstpresbyterian.org. I’d love to talk with you!



Advent Is Coming!

2019 Family-to-Family Christmas

Christmas means enjoying the joyful season with family and friends. For many in our community, though, the holidays are a time of anxiety and worry about affording gifts for their children or Christmas dinner for their family. In Washtenaw County, where almost 20% of residents live in poverty, the Christmas blessings we take for granted may be out of reach.



The good news is that we once again have the opportunity to help local families have a better Christmas through Family-to-Family Christmas. This congregation has been extremely generous in the past and we look forward to continuing this good work of offering what one individual we helped called “the unexpected gift of hope.” First Presbyterian will facilitate the matching of individuals and families referred by the Department of Health and Human Services with members and friends of First Presbyterian Church who wish to provide them with food and gifts this Christmas. Please consider “adopting” a family in need this year yourself or with your family, group, class, or friends. Here’s how:

- Choose a family at the sign up or online and purchase items according to their needs.
- Deliver the gifts personally at a time you set with the family, or have an FTF volunteer deliver them for you.
- Want to help another way? Financial contributions will help purchase gift cards for any families not directly adopted, as well as those in need at either Mott/U-M Hospital or Ronald McDonald House.

Sign-up to adopt families after morning services on November 24, December 1 and December 8 in the Social Hall. You can also sign up by clicking the for Family-to-Family Christmas 2019 link at www.firstpresbyterian.org, or by contacting Julie Morrison at jdornmorrison@gmail.com or 646-5351. Thank you for sharing your Christmas blessings with those in our community.

StorySlam & Strolling Reception

December 8, 6:00 p.m.

Save the date to hear stories of the season from seven speakers in this “Moth”-like special holiday presentation. In between stories we will sing cherished Christmas carols. The StorySlam will be followed by a reception held throughout the building. Listen to special musical performances and enjoy therapy dogs, nibbles, and other festivities. Watch for information in the bulletin, the December newsletter and at www.firstpresbyterian.org. Questions? Contact Rev. Rogers, mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org.