



# First Press

A Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor  
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World Communion Sunday



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College students playing in the leaves at First Pres.

## Taking It Personally ...

This month, as we each lift up the commitments of time and resources that sustain our beloved church, it seems like a good time to feel the warmth of a patchwork quilt of voices, each speaking from the heart about why First Pres matters. May they get you thinking about your own answer: *Why does the church matter to you?*

Rick Spalding, Interim Pastor



### Alice Holderby

When I was asked why First Pres matters to me, I was actually just about ready to ask the church for prayer. It's for one of my daughters who has health concerns. She's already on the prayer list, but I have other friends at church I can count on to pray for her. That's why First Pres matters to me. It's my spiritual home. I have a deep need to immerse myself in worship once a week. I need to praise God through beautiful music, seek forgiveness through prayer, and express my thanks through giving. I need to be inspired by thought-provoking sermons so I can try to live out my life as a follower of Jesus Christ. I'm in awe of the many talented and capable members at First Pres who do so much to help others. I need all the opportunities offered at First Pres that nudge me into reaching out and sharing God's love with others. When I do, it brings me closer to God, and that's the reason I'm committed to First Pres.



evils of this world, we have the church. Fighting racism, poverty, hunger, fascism, and oppression is fundamental to neighbor love that we are called to and practice through our church. The current pandemic has made it nearly impossible for us to be together. The importance of what First Pres provides is demonstrated by the absence of what we so often take for granted: stability, togetherness, and presence. The opportunity to virtually be together during these times is important, even if it is a poor substitute, as it reminds us of who we are. We are sinners, redeemed by Christ, sanctified through the Holy Spirit, and together working out our faith with fear and trembling. I need this church to remind me of these things, to teach my daughters the truth in a post-truth world, and to bear witness to the world that Christ is the answer to our despair.

### Sandra McDonald

I care deeply about church. I was baptized and grew up in First Presbyterian Church, Sioux City, Iowa, and attended a number of churches in several cities throughout my adult life. In every case, what drew me to the churches I attended or served was a deep sense of Love – Love lived out – God's steadfast Love – lived out in community – so that we could be God's love to the whole world. Every time my family relocated, usually because of career changes for one or another of us, I was able to find a church that understood and lived that kind of love. And, thanks



### Christian Vercler



I suppose that I am not alone in feeling utter despair as I read the New York Times each day. How many more things can be thrown into the dumpster fire of 2020? But the global, national, state, and local turmoil that everyone is experiencing has an answer: Christ. And how else do we know Christ than through the church? To paraphrase the theologian Stanley Hauerwas, Christians don't have a political strategy to combat the

Continued on next page ...

be to God, First Presbyterian, Ann Arbor certainly does that, and does it well. Love of God and Love of Neighbor is evident in all that we do: in the brilliant preaching we hear every week; in the glorious music that our singing and ringing choirs offer to the glory of God; in the care I have felt since I got here, from new friends and attentive Deacons; in the many acts of service to a badly broken world; and in the opportunities to grow and learn with others in many, many ways. I am truly honored to become a part of this church family.

### Dan Francis

If there was ever a time that supports my decision to be a full-blown member of First Pres it is now. There is no need to describe how fragile and chaotic life on earth has become. Change is rampant. The idea that “The only constant in life is change” goes back to the Greek philosopher Heraclitus around 500 BC. I don’t think even Heraclitus would comprehend the pace of change we are living with now. The only true constant is God – and First Pres works diligently to keep its members focused on that fact. The Church’s focus on God provides me with a North Star, so that I know at all times which direction I need to go. First Pres’s focus on Jesus constantly reminds me what is important to God: love of God and love of neighbor. Living these two great commandments is not easy. Being a fully committed member of the Church helps keep me doing what God wants me to do – praying and helping others. My life is better because I am a committed member of First Pres. I recommend it highly.



### Meg Brown

I go down to my basement and look for a picture in my scrapbook box marked “the 60’s.” It’s a picture of eight ladies outside at the side door of the First Presbyterian Church in Sharon, Pennsylvania on June 17 in 1961. Some are holding small bags of rice to toss as Paul and I dash off for our honeymoon. In their lovely one piece cotton dresses, they have just completed serving our small wedding reception in the social hall. I think there’s one of my former Sunday school teachers among them. I know there are two of the members of my Mom’s church Circle in this group of women with loving eyes and a demeanor of fondness and caring. You see I believe when we think of “church” we are way too quick to think of a building...but a building is not the essence of church. The essence of the church is made up of caring, giving, believing people. And if you haven’t been among and with them in the ministry of the church ...you are missing the blessing. The truth is right there in the Bible...We are “blessed to be a blessing.” It’s that simple and that wonderful...please don’t miss it.



## Worship & Music

### “Wild” First Pres Tee-Shirt Sightings!

Those who attended the Fall Kick Off Sunday of Fun Drive on September 13 received First Pres Tee Shirts. Now, tee shirt sightings “in the wild” are cropping up! Do you have a picture of yourself or a fellow First Presser wearing the shirt out and about? Send it to [publications@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:publications@firstpresbyterian.org) and we’ll publish it!



### Taizé Prayer Service - Tuesday, November 3, 7:00 p.m.

Join us for this service of songs, scripture, prayer, meditation, silence, and candles on the First Presbyterian Church YouTube or Facebook channels. All are welcome!

### Engage your Body, Mind, and Spirit!

November 17 at 7:00 p.m. YouTube & Facebook.



Join Rob Meyer-Kukan, a Licensed Sound Therapist for a dedicated time to center, relax, and restore. Our time together may include guided meditation, breath work, mindful movement, and sound therapy. Come and explore a new way of connecting your spirituality to your everyday life. Themes for each experience will support the themes being explored in worship, from the book of Exodus, as well as themes appropriate for the season. Consider this experience a mini-retreat to center yourself through gentle activities, focused meditation on poetry and scripture, and the soothing tones of singing bowls, gongs, and other therapeutic instruments. This event is co-sponsored by the Adult Education and Worship Committees. All are welcome! Questions? Contact Dave VanderMeer, Minister of Music & Fine Arts at [dvandermeer@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:dvandermeer@firstpresbyterian.org).

## Blessing of the Animals



## Financial Stewardship

### STEWARDSHIP 2021

#### We Are The Church TOGETHER!

Over the month of October, Faith in Action visits from Friends in Deed, Hope Clinic, Peace Neighborhood, and Alpha House provided first hand testimonies to some of the ways this congregation makes a difference in the communities in our area. You may also have read some of the descriptions of mission in the tabloid included in the Stewardship mailing, or watched some of the videos with familiar faces, and a sprinkling of data on what is being accomplished. Taken together, you get a sense of how we try, Together, to meet our mission of Making God's Love Visible.

This good work is inspired, organized, and made possible by the willingness of all of us to commit our time, and all of us pitching in as we are able financially, to maintain the financial strength of this Church.

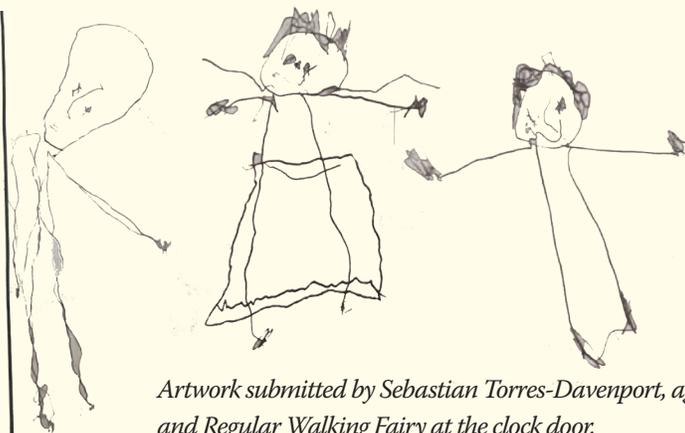
If you are still considering your pledge for 2021, please take time to look back to what you have read, heard, and seen. Think about what this Church means not just to you, but to those beyond our walls. And choose to support in every way you can, what we can do as the Church Together.

Pledge and Opportunity to Serve forms may be mailed to the church in the envelope provided in your stewardship packet, dropped off at the church or completed online at [firstpresbyterian.org/contribute/donate/stewardship-2021](http://firstpresbyterian.org/contribute/donate/stewardship-2021)



### Have you found the First Pres Fairy Doors?

Our church hallways have been deserted since March. Evidence suggests that fairies have moved in! Visit First Pres and wander the grounds. Can you find all eight fairy doors?" You (children and adults alike) are invited to draw pictures of the fairies that might live in each location. Send your drawings to [mjones@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:mjones@firstpresbyterian.org) and they might be published in future editions of First Press! We Are the Church, **TOGETHER** even if, at the moment, that can only happen in spirit. Take a fall walk to reconnect with our church in a more physical way.



Artwork submitted by Sebastian Torres-Davenport, age 3. Left to right Fairy leaning on the stone door, Dancing Fairy at the blue door, and Regular Walking Fairy at the clock door.

# Legacy Partners Spotlight



## Diane & Pat Tamblyn

Diane and I moved to Ann Arbor in 1986 and regularly attended First Pres as we sought a church home in our days before kids. We joined in 1990 as we were expecting our first child, Jameson. The inspirational preaching of Bill Hillemonds, the warm welcome we received weekly from the ushers (Jim Curran, Bill Austin, and many others), and the lasting connections we made with members of the congregation all helped to seal the deal. Our daughter, Annie, arrived in 1994 and son, Holden, joined us in 1996.

Growing up in a caring church family was an important part of our youth in Hillsdale, and we were determined to provide our children with the same foundation. Looking back at baptisms, years of Sunday School, Advent Happenings, Christmas Pageants, worship services, faith based sex education (Wonderfully Made), homeless meals in the social hall, mission trips, and endless support from church friends give us comfort that good seeds have been planted.

We both served as Elders and Deacons over the years and are grateful for those experiences. They brought us closer to First Pres and the incredible congregation that worships here. We have pledged annually as best we could given the ever changing needs of family. Now that we're empty nesters, we're updating our estate plan and decided to include First Pres by becoming a Legacy Partner. To be honest, we don't know what our legacy gift to the church looks like yet, but we are committed to figuring it out over prayer and discussion with our family.

We've all been through a lot together at First Pres, as have all the Presbyterians that created this community of faith over the last 200 years. It seems right to join them in ensuring First Pres will be here for the church families to come in the next 200 years. We invite others to join us as Legacy Partners to help that become reality.



## Congregational Life

### Update and Thank You from Self Study Group

Thank you to everyone who participated in the congregational survey! We had 525 responses; relative to our average worship attendance, this is great! Staff, Session, and SSG had results interpreted by the survey consulting company on October 13. Once the self study report is accepted by Session and the Presbytery Committee on Ministry, survey results will be distributed to the congregation. Thank you again for completing the survey and moving us one step closer to calling a Pastor Nominating Committee!



### Stephen Ministry Continuing Education

Monday, November 9, 7:00 p.m. via Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89733372207>

How responsive is your community to persons with communication disorders? All members are welcome to join our Stephen Ministers for their November Continuing Education Session. What is your response to these buzzwords: Accessibility, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging? How are they connected to the quality of life for persons with Parkinson's Disease, dementia, and stroke survivors – many of whom have a communication disorder – or are they connected? How does music fit into the picture, or does it? These questions and more will be answered by Lynn Chenoweth, founder and director of the Aphasia Community Friendship Center (ACFC). Lynn will be joined by ACFC members of the Loud and Proud Singers, an aphasia chorus. There will be time for questions.



### Mature Ministries "visits" Greenfield Village

November 12 at noon via Zoom (<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5502657984>)

We Welcome Jim Johnson, Director, Greenfield Village and Curator, Historic Structures & Landscapes, as he presents "A Half-Century in the Making: The Magic Behind Holiday Nights at Greenfield Village." What we know and love today as Holiday Nights did not spontaneously appear in 2000. This beloved holiday event has evolved and grown based on many experiences and inspirations from decades of Greenfield Village "Christmases past," and the work of many talented people. We know that the ability to transport our guests to a different time and place is most powerful after dark as the modern world that constantly pushes closer to our borders can be temporarily pushed away. When all is said and done, Greenfield Village provides the most perfect "set" upon which to bring the past alive. With over 300 years of history represented, the possibilities are endless – a world in which

Charles Dickens's, A Christmas Carol, and It's a Wonderful Life can seamlessly collide. A place where a small town from the distant past reawakens for several hours on December evenings, bringing forth the magic of the holiday season. Join Jim Johnson for an exploration of the magic behind Holiday Nights.

## Be A Shepherd & Welcome New Members

Interested in helping make First Pres a more warm and welcoming church home to new members? The Congregational Life Committee is looking for some friendly "Shepherds" to help new members find their niche and feel more at home and welcome after joining. The time commitment involved isn't huge, six or seven hours over the course of a year with some well documented instructions and recommendations on how you can connect.



Rev. Rogers will try and match Shepherds with new members who she thinks share some commonalities and interests. Interested? Please let Rev. Rogers know and she will be happy to discuss things in more depth and put you on our list of potential Shepherds. Again, expressing interest isn't a commitment, just the potential to serve at some point in the future.

## Celebrating Sandy Talbott's Retirement

Our beloved Parish Nurse and Wellness Coordinator, Sandy Talbott, will retire from her position on November 22. Sandy has broadened her role at church from traditional parish nursing to be a key colleague in wellness, congregational life, and fellowship and care for our older members. It is hard to imagine how to fill such big shoes, and even more how to give our thanks during a pandemic when we cannot be together to thank her. There are three ways we will celebrate and hope that you will join in!

**First**, we are beginning a new designated fund, the Sandy Talbott Speaker Series Fund. This fund will be used to provide an annual health and wellness speaker who will offer classes to help us deepen our devotion to the partnership of faith with physical and mental health and wellness. Your donations to this fund are welcome now, and can be sent to First Pres, c/o Anna Miler, our Financial Manager. Call the Church Office with your questions. Beginning in 2021, we will find exciting and gifted speakers to keep us focused on health and wellness as people of faith, and we will invite Sandy back for the annual offering to be present and introduce the speaker.

**Second**, from November 1 to the 21, we invite you to stop by First Pres' Welcome Center between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. to sign a gigantic card for Sandy and drop off small special trinkets to put in our "creative care package" to say thank you. Think of a small object that conveys your hopes for Sandy in her next phase of life, or perhaps find a small memento or symbol of the love and grace and gratitude you want to offer to Sandy. These will be taken to Sandy's home during the November 22 Coffee Hour for her to open.

**Third**, join us on November 22 for the online Coffee Hour to hear a few of our members share short tributes. From our zoom screens, you can thank Sandy in person on her last day with us.

Sandy's role as wife and mother has been defining, but now, with her seventh grandchild on the way, with a newly retired husband, and small grandchildren who have moved back to Ann Arbor; we can imagine what her future holds. We also know Who holds her future, and to that God, our Lord and Savior and friend, we are unspeakably grateful for these almost 9 years of enjoying Sandy as our Parish Nurse. That said, we will try to find words to speak that gratitude, and many other ways to express that to her and her family.

Questions? Contact Rev. Rogers, [mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org), 662-4466, ext. 390.



## Parish Nurse Search Begins: Are You Called?

The newly appointed Parish Nurse and Wellness Coordinator Search Committee has begun meeting to help First Pres call a new Parish Nurse! They are hard at work. Within a few weeks, look for a position posting, and information on how to apply. This is a paid position – up to 15 hours per week. Are you a licensed nurse who might be interested in serving? Have you considered using your gifts and training in mental and physical wellness to serve the church? Current Parish Nurse Sandy Talbott would love to talk

with you, as well, if you are considering a call to this ministry. We encourage you to contact any member of the search committee: Bill Findlay, Sean Kesterson, Bob Larson, Amy Lindauer, Chris Queen, Rosemarie Rowney, Tara Shantz, Sharon Sheldon, personnel committee liaison Susan Cares, or Rev. Rogers (ex-officio).

## Stephen Ministers are Available!

So many of us are coping with tough emotions and heavy doubts these days. The pandemic continues, a long winter is coming, we are more aware than ever of racial disparity and injustice, and related protests, a hurting economy. The lack of in-person schooling is also taking a toll and we worry about our health. We have found outdoor gatherings to be an acceptable risk. Colder weather and flu season will further limit our social life and ability to worship together. Your pastoral staff is available to talk with you, as are our Stephen Ministers. As spiritual friends, they are fully trained to listen, to share, and to pray with and for you to help us through a period that, for some, will be very trying. Contact the Stephen Ministry program now. Several male and female Stephen Ministers are available — to you, or friends in our community who need a listening ear. Don't let yourself be alone, or isolated. The Stephen Ministers can help. Contact Rev. Rogers or member Kathy Wirstrom for more information.



### STEPHEN MINISTRY IN A PANDEMIC

*Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. (Galatians 6:2)*

The Stephen Ministry is a lay ministry of care and support for people who are going through a difficult time. When you lose a loved one, when you suffer a miscarriage, or endure a divorce, feelings of loss and sadness can be overwhelming. When you move to a new town there can be a disorienting disequilibrium. When you are a caregiver for a loved one, you may ignore your own needs and find yourself desperate for someone to help keep you going. When bad things happen, your friends listen to you talk, lament, complain, or cry – for about a month. But then, even your dearest friends can be ready for you to move on. When you try to find strength and closure, your heart may not be ready to move on and you need more time to process and find a way through it.

You need not be alone in any of this loss and change. A Stephen Minister is available for you, a person to listen and support you as you work through hardships, over the course of a few weeks, months, a year or more. It's comforting to have someone you can talk to weekly, who will not judge but will listen and pray with you.

When Kenneth Haug and his wife, Joan, founded the Stephen Ministry, they had no idea that the world would be faced with COVID-19 and the closure of churches, restaurants, movie theatres, sports, events, schools and universities. Quarantining has brought its own set of problems. Older people who live alone are isolated from most personal contact. Some people are in extended care facilities, assisted living, or rehab facilities and are not allowed to see family members or have visitors. Many are working from home, juggling jobs as well as children in the home being educated virtually instead of in schools. So many people have lost jobs and income.

Stephen Ministers are trained to care for people by phone, as well as in person. During these difficult times they are connecting with their care receivers by phone to protect them from COVID-19. Even a phone call can be a warm and welcome respite in the midst of all the chaos we feel around and sometimes within us. If you think you might benefit from a Stephen Minister, contact Rev. Melissa Anne Rogers or one of the members of the Stephen Ministry Leader Team: Kathy Wirstrom, Mary McKeever, Charlie Koopmann, Karen Al-Saadi, Linda Lampman, Cheryl Gulbranson, Chris Queen, Cyndy Colton, and Susan Sweet Scott.

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## Presbyterian Women Gathering

Second Thursday of the Month, November 12

**10:30 -11:30 a.m. Bible Study- *Into the Light: Finding Hope through Prayers of Lament*** Caroline Richardson will lead Lesson 32: "Women's Lament."

**11:30 -11:50 a.m. PW Actions**

**11:50 –Noon Break**

**Noon PW joins Mature Ministries' Lunch & Learn program via Zoom.**

"A Half-Century in the Making: The Magic Behind Holiday Nights at Greenfield Village" with Jim Johnson, Greenfield Village Curator, Historic Structures & Landscapes



## Thank Offering Accepted

The Thank Offering began in 1888 Presbyterian Women's General Missionary Society members contributed \$1.00 above their usual giving and were credited with saving the worldwide mission movement of the church. Since 1988, PW has granted more than \$26 million to nearly 1700 projects worldwide. Make a donation to the Thank Offering by mailing your check with "Thank Offering" on the memo line to Bonnie Hughes or give online at <http://firstpresbyterian.wufoo.com/forms/donate-to-presbyterian-women/>

## 2020 PW Honorary Life Membership Pins Awarded

On a sunny Monday, September 14, First Pres PW celebrated our extraordinary women, Katie Beery, Joan Bentz, Eleonora Charlson, and Joann Freethy. Katie and Joann were awarded their silver pins and a bouquet of flowers on the church patio by Malcolm's Cross and Eleonora and Joan were pinned at their homes. Though not all of PW was able to be present, we felt the presence of their warm spirits.



## Transitions



### We Grieve the Death of:

Mary Ann Austin	September 22, 2020
Helen Parker	September 25, 2020
Arthur Parker	October 6, 2020
Melvin Edwards	October 14, 2020
Ken Brock	October 13, 2020

### We Celebrate the Birth of:

Lena Kathleen Less, born September 30, 2020, daughter of Elizabeth and Mathew Less and great granddaughter of Pat Gilbreath

Sofia Corral, born September 23, 2020, daughter of Laura Kennedy Corral, and granddaughter of Pat and Jim Kennedy

John Leo Ewels Sawtell, born September 18, 2020, son of Charlotte and Reid Sawtell

Amoz Edward Clark, September 5, 2020, son of Lauren and David Clark, grandson of Nancy and Jim Clark

### Members Moving

Ralph and Ginger Winter have moved to Bloomfield Hills and joined Kirk in the Hills Presbyterian Church.



## Faith in Action

### Imagine. . . Whirled Peace!

In recognition of the International Day of Peace, and in support of our Local Mission work, all are invited to put faith into action by participating in Pinwheels for Peace 2020. Our goal as a church community is to commit 2,020 hours of service and other actions such as prayer, to promote peace throughout our church, our community, our country, and the world. Check out the First Pres website for Opportunities to Serve in our community.



### Here's what you do:

- Pick up a pinwheel kit with instruction sheet from the church, Monday -Thursday, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00p.m.
- Decide what you can do between now and the end of the year to promote peace
- Use the marker to write a word of action on the "petals" describing your commitment
- Bring your pinwheel back to church (Mon-Thurs, 9:00 – 3:00); staff will "plant" your pinwheel in our pinwheel garden
- Put your plan into action and keep track of your hours
- Info will be shared about when and how to send your hours to the church

Questions? Contact the Church Office (662-4466). Let's watch our Pinwheel Garden Grow as we put our Faith into Action together!

## November Communion Sunday Food Collection

Financial contributions and food donations throughout the month of November will be overseen by Campus Ministry. Monetary donations will be sent to Washtenaw Community College Student Emergency Fund which provides food cards to needy students. Donated foodstuffs will be taken to Community Action Network. Collection bins are provided at the Memorial Garden entrance to the church Mondays through Thursdays, 9:00 to 3:00. Financial donations may be made at [www.firstpresbyterian.org/donate](http://www.firstpresbyterian.org/donate) or mailed to the church. Please note the purpose of your check on the memo line.



## \$3,000 COVID-19 Community Relief Grant Helps Buy Van for Delonis Center.

"Friends, Brothers and Sisters in Christ, here is the van that was purchased by your generosity, your dedication to helping others, and desire to empower others to serve those in need. God can do amazing things when his people join together. Thank you all!" - Rev. Tom Snyder, Dexter UMC

Last month, several of the churches that support the Rotating Shelter for Delonis Center joined together to purchase a used 15 passenger van. This will allow shelter

staff to safely transport clients from the various locations where they stay to meals and appointments.

When the pandemic hit in March, Delonis Center had to decrease the number of homeless individuals in their facility, but most of the churches that host rotating shelter closed their doors. Temporary shelter was eventually arranged at some motels which are on the outskirts of town. Too far to walk and with little access to public transportation, clients need help to get to meals, medical appointments and other services normally available downtown. This van will provide reliable transportation for many of our most vulnerable neighbors.

For more information about the impact of the COVID Community Relief Fund, contact Martha Kershaw [mdkershaw@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mdkershaw@sbcglobal.net) or Rev. Jay Sanderford.



## Christian Formation

### CHILDREN & FAMILIES

#### Third Graders Celebrate Bible Sunday

Congratulations to our third Graders who received their Bibles in October – Gable Maddox Salchow MacArthur, Caleb Michael Martin, Zoe Elizabeth Millward, Cecelia Katherine Elizabeth Musser, Gavin James Phillips and Henry Eldon Pipe.



### YOUTH CONNECTION

#### Youth + Creative Arts



**Children's Choir** - All sixth graders are invited to join the Children's choir under the direction of Kellie McInchak! We meet virtually on Sundays to sing, move, create, play instruments, and act. We meet on Sunday mornings when we have Sunday school at 10:30am. Please contact Rev. Mark at [mmares@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:mmares@firstpresbyterian.org) for the Zoom link.

**Handbells in Worship** - Interested in participating in worship at First Pres?! Youth (Grade 6th-12th) are invited to sign up to play handbells in worship during the season of Advent. Rehearsals will begin in November at First Pres, masked and socially distanced. There are a limited number of spots available, sign up online! Questions? contact Rev. Mark at [mmares@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:mmares@firstpresbyterian.org) or Dave Vandermeer at [dvandermeer@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:dvandermeer@firstpresbyterian.org).

**Chancel Choir** - Are you a high school student interested in singing in the Church choir? Contact Dave Vandermeer at [dvandermeer@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:dvandermeer@firstpresbyterian.org) to find out more information about how to join the Chancel Choir!

#### Faith Formation on Sundays

All youth are invited to join us during our 'faith formation hour' at 11:00 a.m. on Sundays. Our 6th and 7th graders continue to work their way through the Beatitudes, Confirmation classes meet regularly, and our High School students will be thinking about how faith intersects with the everyday.



## Sunday, November 1 – All Saints Day

9:30 a.m. - Virtual Worship, 11:00 a.m. to Noon - Family Sunday Drive Through

Receive November Curriculum packs, “Communion in the Spirit” kit, leave sidewalk messages of hope, and light a candle in honor of All Saints Day.

### Youth Group

Our hybrid approach to our Youth Group gatherings continues this month. We’ll have both virtual and in-person opportunities for our youth to participate in. Join us ‘in-person’ at the Parker home on Sunday, November 1st at 2:00 p.m., on Sunday, November 15 at 2:00 p.m. the Musser Residence, and on Sunday, November 29 at the Pakela Residence at 6:00 p.m. for a Thanksgiving bonfire celebration! We will meet virtually on Sundays, November 8 & 22 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom (contact Rev. Mark at [mmares@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:mmares@firstpresbyterian.org) for the Zoom link). We hope you’ll join us!

### Confirmation

#### Reflection on the Backyard Confirmation Retreat from Chloe Majorprice

Over the first weekend in October, Confirmation students in church and I met at one of our church members’ homes. We sat around a campfire and played human-sized, rock, paper, scissors to see who would win a prize. I had so much fun at the confirmation retreat! We brought our Confirmation Bibles with us, and Mark played a game with us and our Bibles. Where we had to find the correct passage in the Bible, and whoever found the passage first, would be awarded a piece of candy.

The lovely fellow church members, who invited us over to their house, have two very cute dogs. We enjoyed hanging out with the dogs too. We had lots of fun at the Confirmation retreat. We cooked marshmallows, read from the Bible, and played lots of fun games. I’m so happy I could make it to the confirmation retreat! I’m happy to have Mark and others help us with being confirmed.



#### Reflection on Confirmation from Pastor Mark

Over the past three years, our young people have had the wonderful guidance and leadership of Rev. Evans McGowan as their Confirmation teacher. I’m grateful for my colleague’s ministry and the work that he continues to do here at First Pres. This year, I have the great honor and privilege to be able to walk with our Confirmands as we journey through Confirmation. I’m excited for the opportunity to sit with our young people, as we create sacred space to wonder together about the big questions of our faith. Throughout this year, our young people will also hear from other members of First Pres, about how their faith shapes their lives. My hope is that our young people begin to see their own stories inside God’s larger story.

### UKIRK@UMICH



**Campus Ministry Update** Students continue to connect with each other virtually and in-person through our UKirk college student group during an unprecedented fall semester. The Big Ten is coming back, which has provided a nice boost in morale for the entire campus. On October 18, we had a special Coffee Hour to celebrate our college connections, with several members representing their alma mater!

This month saw the return of the (virtual) Coffee Crew, a time for students to take a study break together mid-week during the day. Virtual Small Groups, including ones for men, women and another focused around anti-racism, have all started up. And the weather has largely cooperated for our Sunday College Lunches on the Circle Terrace, where we have enjoyed each other’s company while playing lawn games such as cornhole and a new favorite, Kubbb!

Our Campus Ministry Work Group teamed up with the Presbyterian Women cookie bakers for some special midterm cookies for our students. Since students will be going home November 20 to finish their fall semester online due to the pandemic, we will be delivering cookies to students in lieu of a Pancake Supper this year. If you’re interested in baking cookies or delivering them to students, please let Rev. Evans McGowan know at [emcgowan@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:emcgowan@firstpresbyterian.org).



## Mid-term Cookie Bag Ministry

Rev. Evans McGowan and Meg Brown packed 20 cookie bag care packages, each containing two dozen cookies, two muffins, an apple and a mandarin orange. They were delivered to college students who are part of our UKirk@UMich campus ministry program and are in the midst of taking their midterms. The cookie bags were delivered to support students in lieu of our annual Pancake Supper event which was canceled due to COVID-19. Special thanks to over ten Presbyterian Women members who quickly baked goodies and made it possible to deliver the care packages.



## ADULT EDUCATION

### First Friends

Sundays at 11:00 a.m. Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85415813175>

Meeting ID: 854 1581 3175 One tap mobile: +13017158592,,85415813175# US

First Friends is a fellowship group that uses Christian materials. All are welcome! This fall, the First Friends group is focusing on Anti-racism and COVID-19 through a variety of online videos and podcasts.

- November 1 "How to Deconstruct Racism, One Headline at a Time." Baratunde Thurston. A Ted Talk online.
- November 8 "I Can't Breathe." Rev. Margaret Aymer. Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Online.
- November 15 "Bicycle Thief Episode." What Would You Do? (ABC TV show) Youtube.
- November 22 "A Muslim In Rural, White Minnesota On How To 'Love Thy Neighbor.'" Online.
- November 29 "White Liberalism and the Illusion of Racial Progress." Professor Vincent Hutchings. Video.

### Exploring the Faith

Sundays at 12:15 p.m. Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89707880133>

*There will be no session on November 29 (Thanksgiving weekend).*

### Racism and White Privilege

**November 1** - Discovering our Privilege. Define privilege and explore the ways in which our privilege has contributed to the perpetuation of systemic racism in American society.

**November 8** - Uncomfortable conversations with a black man. Emmanuel Acho sits down to have an "uncomfortable conversation" with white America, in order to educate and inform on racism, systemic racism, social injustice, rioting, and the hurt that African Americans are feeling today.



### November 15 and 22 – Racism and the Church Community

Community and congregational leaders will provide information and lead the discussions on actions we can take as individuals and members of the Church Community. Details to be announced

### Advent- Dreaming Together

Our Advent series draws from rich traditions and examples in the arts to fuel and inspire our dreams. During Advent we will draw inspiration from different forms of art – music, visual arts and the written word – to fuel our individual and collective dreams.

**November 29** - A flyer describing the series and offering a poem about dreams, and some reflective questions to ponder will be handed out at the Advent Is Happening Sunday drive through event and electronically.

## Outdoor Labyrinth Walk – November 1

Sign up at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090f45a4ac283-walk>

Participate in the spiritual practice of walking an outdoor labyrinth on All Saints Day. Take some time to remember and reflect on the saints in our lives as you walk Kurt and Kathy Hillig's beautiful labyrinth in the field behind their house off Ellsworth Road. It can be easily walked in 30 minutes or less, and the center provides a place to stop and ponder and pray. Enjoy the presence of God and one another, and stay socially distanced and safe. Ten people can sign up per hour from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Arrive by ten minutes after the hour and leave by five minutes before the next hour for traffic purposes.



## The Bible with Rev. Ed Koster

Sundays at 5:00 p.m. (formerly at 9:30 a.m.)

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86545144620> Meeting ID: 865 4514 4620

The Rev Ed Koster is teaching a course on the Gospel of Mark, touching on the unique features of this earliest of the gospels. His class explores the major themes and the underlying connections to the other New Testament 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. Ed Koster at [ehkoster@aol.com](mailto:ehkoster@aol.com)



## Noon Conversations: Strengthening Ourselves & Strengthening Others

November 18 - Strengthening Through Being a Contribution

Zoom link: <https://umich.zoom.us/j/3309171093> Meeting ID: 330 917 1093 Passcode: belonging

Join Jane Dutton and Beth Steward for one hour on Zoom to explore, discuss and practice different ways in which we can strengthen ourselves and strengthen others now and in the days ahead. We draw on classic and enduring practices that unlock our resourcefulness from within and help us imagine new possibilities for ourselves and for others around us. Suggested reading: [https://myclass.dau.edu/bbcswebdav/institution/Courses/Deployed/ACQ/ACQ453/Student\\_Materials/Being%20A%20Contribution.pdf](https://myclass.dau.edu/bbcswebdav/institution/Courses/Deployed/ACQ/ACQ453/Student_Materials/Being%20A%20Contribution.pdf). Sign up at <https://firstpresbyterian.wufoo.com/forms/virtual-noon-conversations/>

## CROSSROADS: Conversations on Race & Racism

Fridays through November 13, 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81766886164>

Our Adult Formation Group is sponsoring a weekly conversation about race and racism. We are discussing Layla Saad's *Me and White Supremacy*, Austin Channing Brown's *I'm Still Here*, readings from James Cone's *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* as well as current digital resources. We are working toward imagining how we can institute positive change. Various First Pres staff and members, and community members will join Rev. Jay Sanderford in dialogue. Awareness leads to action, and action leads to change. The numbers show that readers are ready to do this work. Books are available through the usual online and local booksellers. The books are available through the Church Office by calling 662-4466.



## Residents' Corner

### The Story behind Andrew's Stoles

I was recently asked about the meaning behind my stoles, and I thought I'd share the story with the whole church here. I designed these stoles with Andrea Farley of The Tailored Stole. Andrea and I felt a deep kinship with each other as we shared our thoughts about theology and worship, and we both felt like our collaboration was fed by the Spirit. We ended up deciding on a set of kintsugi-inspired stoles.

In my last sermon, I talked about kintsugi (lit. "golden joinery"), a Japanese art form in which broken ceramics are repaired using lacquer and gold. As a philosophy, it honors the history of an object by emphasizing and highlighting the breakage instead of concealing or minimizing it. Kintsugi practitioners understand that even if something is catastrophically broken, it doesn't have to be discarded. The broken, former life of the object doesn't invalidate its



beauty; in fact, when rightly repaired, it enhances and transforms it.

Andrea and I imagined this set as a single piece of art instead of as individual stoles, much like the liturgical calendar is a single unit. Beginning with Advent on the left and ending with Pentecost on the right, Andrea and I asked ourselves where the “break” would originate within the liturgical calendar. We decided upon the birth of Christ, the inbreaking of God into our world as the “break.” Look at the white stole for Epiphany: there is an impact mark that looks almost like a star. In the blue of the Advent stole, the “break” sits high on the stole, anticipatory and calm. Once Christ descends to earth and breaks into our lives, the “break” begins to spiderweb across the stoles, an expression of Christ’s spreading ministry.



Andrew wore the red stole of Pentecost for his ordination.

The “breaks” get worse and worse as we move into Lent, and the cross allusion in the purple stole points to Christ’s impending crucifixion and death. The black stole is unique, as our tradition typically doesn’t wear stoles for Good Friday, but the “breaks” are the most severe and chaotic in that stole, suggesting that we’re standing with the faithful women at the foot of the cross. The breaks “flatline” in the white stole of Easter, but with a burst of rainbow color, a dove takes flight, representing Christ’s resurrection. Finally, the red stole of Pentecost displays the same dove, filled with the flames of the Trinity, as it heads toward a golden branch with a single ginkgo leaf. The leaf contains golden embroidery, representing the cycle of life and death of a ginkgo tree. The branch itself, while not a “break,” suggests the broken nature of humanity healed and repaired by the golden joinery of Christ’s love. We may be broken, but at the same time, we are whole. If you would like to learn more about these stoles I’d love to talk with you. Feel free to email me at [afrazier@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:afrazier@firstpresbyterian.org).

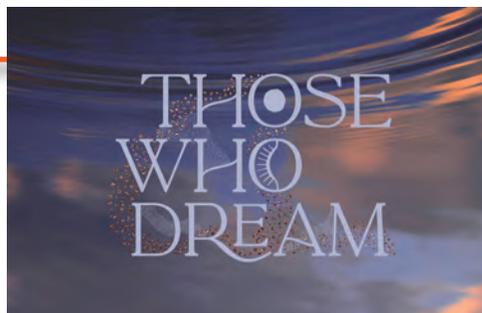


## Advent Is Coming!

### Those Who Dream – Advent 2020

*When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream. - Psalm 126*

What does it look like to live as those who dream? The prophets, the psalmists, John the Baptist, Mary, Elizabeth, Joseph, Simeon, Anna, the shepherds and the Magi—they were all dreamers. They received, discovered, and responded to God’s dreams for the world. In Advent, we will step into the mystery and awe of God’s dreams and pray they shape our reality. This theme is for the dreamers in all of us—those who dream of a deeper connection with God and those who dream of a better world. It’s for those who dream of comfort and for those who have given up on their dreams. It’s for those whose dreams have been crushed and for those who show us that dreams take time. Join us, November 29 through Epiphany, as we dream alongside prophets and angels, Mary and the Magi. Join us as we seek and sow God’s dreams for our world.



<b>November 29</b>	First Sunday of Advent	Those Who Dream Keep Awake
<b>December 6</b>	Second Sunday of Advent	Those Who Dream Prepare the Way
<b>December 13</b>	Third Sunday of Advent	Those Who Dream Sow Joy
<b>December 20</b>	Fourth Sunday of Advent	Those Who Dream Are Not Alone
<b>December 24</b>	Christmas Eve	This Night, We Are Those Who Dream
<b>December 27</b>	First Sunday After Christmas	Those Who Dream Will Not Keep Silent
<b>January</b>	Epiphany	Those Who Dream Will Persevere



### Advent IS Happening - Beginning November 29!

**Stroll the Campus! . . .** You are invited to “Stroll the Campus” each Sunday afternoon of Advent from 3:30 to 5:00. Similar to our Six Sundays of Fun, you’ll find six stations of activities inviting your participation. Instead of driving, you’re invited to get out of your car and stroll the sidewalks. All participants must wear masks and remain socially distanced. Each station is hosted by a different committee or group including Congregational Life, Christian Formation, Deacons, Mission, Music & Liturgical Arts, and Worship. Enjoy delicious treats, hear beautiful music, be invited to participate in holiday mission opportunities, and receive an Advent Happening kit and a Christmas card kit to take home. At 5:00 p.m. each Sunday we’ll share an Advent prayer followed by a countdown to the festive lighting of an outdoor Advent tree.

**Watch for information on the Christmas Eve Sanctuary Stroll, Thursday, December 24** from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m. All participants must wear masks and remain socially distanced.

## Honor or Remember Loved Ones With a Poinsettia & give a gift to another



Give a poinsettia to beautify worship on December 20 and 24 in honor or memory of a loved one. Poinsettias are \$20 and can be ordered at <https://firstpresbyterian.wufoo.com/forms/poinsettias-2020/> or by calling the Church Office until noon on Friday, December 11. You may also sign up and pay for a poinsettia at one of the Sunday strolls, 3:30 - 5:00 p.m., on the campus of First Pres. After worship on December 20, poinsettias will be delivered to those grieving or shut-in in our congregation.

## 2020 Family-to-Family Christmas

For those impacted by poverty the holidays can be a time of anxiety and fear, with many not able to afford basic needs, let alone gifts for their children or Christmas dinner for their family. Prior to the pandemic, 22% of Ann Arbor residents and 31% of Ypsilanti residents lived in need. COVID-19 has only raised the need for assistance. We again have the opportunity to help local families have a better Christmas through Family-to-Family Christmas. First Pres will facilitate the matching of individuals and families, referred by the Department of Health and Human Services, with members and friends 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, or friends. To keep everyone safe during this time, we are following DHHS suggestions for helping our families.

**Here’s how it works ...** Family to Family starts early this year! Families are available beginning November 14. Sign up online to request a family. You’ll receive information on a family you can help. Contact your family! Then shop for your family and work with them to set your contact-free delivery method. You may:

- Buy gifts online and ship to the family directly
- Mail them gift cards
- Buy gifts and arrange a date for contactless delivery (dropping gifts at the door)
- Buy gifts, bring to church, and a volunteer will do contactless delivery
- Want to help another way? Financial contributions will help purchase gift cards for any families not directly adopted.

Adopt a family by clicking on the sign-up link for Family-to-Family Christmas 2020 at [www.firstpresbyterian.org](http://www.firstpresbyterian.org) or contact Julie Morrison at [jdornmorrison@gmail.com](mailto:jdornmorrison@gmail.com) or 646-5351. Thank you for sharing your Christmas blessings with our neighbors!



## Advent Devotional – Those Who Dream

Our 2020 Advent Email Devotional is Coming! Based on our upcoming Advent theme, “Those Who Dream...”, you are invited to write a 200-word or less devotional. A set of two or three scripture passages have been chosen for each day and as the author, you choose from those on which to write your devotional. A poem and journaling prompt are also assigned to help guide your thoughts. Assignments will be made towards the end of October and completed devotions are due Friday, November 20. New authors welcome! Contact Rev. Rogers, [mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org) with questions or to sign up to write.

## The 2020 Story Slam is Coming!

We will be presenting our Third Story Slam 2020, “For Those Who Dream...”, based on our Advent Theme. Do you have a story of a dream that came true, or didn’t happen as you imagined? Can you tell us of a dashed dream, or something you learned about dreaming? Do you have a dream for yourself, others, or the world that you keep alive in your heart? How do dreams, and Christ’s coming, come together for you? What about Christmas? What do you imagine and hope for? Stories can fall into different categories, but they all have something in common - they move us, they challenge us, and they charm us. Please consider whether you have a story to share at this year’s Slam and contact Rev. Rogers as soon as possible, [mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org), 734-355-2351. We will record the story slam in Monteith Hall the second week of December.





# Session Digest

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## **At the September 16, Stated Meeting of Session, conducted via Zoom . . .**

. . . after Rev. Rick Spalding welcomed Elders and Guests, the meeting opened with prayer led by Rev. Melissa Ann Rogers, addressing special needs of the congregation and its extended family. Session then proceeded to –

- Enthusiastically welcomed new members, Jazminn Eddins and Laura Kennedy Corral who, along with four members welcomed at the August meeting would be introduced to the congregation at the September 20 worship service.
- The slate of church officers that would be elected at the Congregational Meeting on September 20 was shared with the Session:

**Elders** - Jennifer Day, Kate Kraft, Steve McKenny, Renee Mulcrone, Keith Molin, Len Rezmierski, Jean Song, and Deanne Woodruff;

**Deacons** - Betty Anderson, Anne Andrus, Sharon Dort, Carol Downton, Jennifer Edwards, Pam Ehrhart, Jun Beyer Granito, Kathy Hilig, Nicole Joliet, Catherine Kendall, Linda Koos, Chris Lin, Betsy McCallister, Angie Miller, Nelly Petrock, Brad Taylor, Nancy Tena, and Felicity Williams; **CNC:** Katie Parker, JP DiMaggio, Downs Herald, Becky Gaffney, Pat Liljestrand, John LeDuc, Cassee Stem, Mary Lynn Thomson, Elisabeth VanVliet.

- Approved an amendment to Phase 2 reopening to allow Small Groups (10 persons or less) are permitted to gather inside our building if they a) include at least one First Pres member (b) relate to the ministry of First Pres (c) have a staff liaison who will ensure compliance with all COVID-19 protocols.
- Reviewed the initial draft of the Strategic Planning Document and were invited to share edits and suggestions with the Strategic Planning Committee.
- Personnel Committee reported that Rev. Rick Spalding agreed to extend his commitment as Interim Pastor through December 2020.
- Sandy Talbot submitted her resignation as Parish Nurse as of November 22, 2020. A celebration to recognize her contributions will be held in the future.
- Personnel presented, and Session approved, a new organizational chart that aligns the roles, working relationships and reporting structure of all staff. Rev. Evans McGowan will add oversight of Christian Formation and Young Adult to his responsibilities on an interim basis beginning later this year.
- Approved virtual communion for November 1 and December 6, 2020.

## **Other Reports and Updates**

- Jim Mulcrone, Deacon representative, reported that the Deacons continue to connect with the members by sending card, delivering flowers and communion kits. They also delivered Church Directories to members.
- Elder Bill Upton presented the finance report and indicated that total income is higher than total year to date expenses. This due to the year to date pledges being higher and expenses are lower resulting from change in activities due to COVID. He also shared the Budget process to be used by committees for budget decisions for 2021.
- Bruce Clyde reported that the Kick-Off for the Stewardship Campaign is September 27. The theme for the campaign is “Doing for Others”. The materials will again be in a tabloid format with videos with partner organizations to tell the story Faith in Action.
- Elder McPherson reported that the Self Study Committee continues their work that began in March. The congregation has participated in a survey which along with other information to will be included in the report that is scheduled to be presented to Presbytery in November.

Session meets next on October 21 at 7:00 p.m.

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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.