

## A Minute in Ministry

Over Christmas and New Year's, I've doing some painting. Usual holiday travel and gathering plans were Covid-altered. No where else to go. And maybe many months indoors gave Suzanne and our kids an itch for change. Out with the old color schemes upstairs! In with all-new gray walls, white trim, and most importantly, satisfied grins. And I've thought: maybe it's something like what we all wish we could do in life "old" 2020, made "new" 2021. Completely change how everything looks and how we feel about it amid it all.

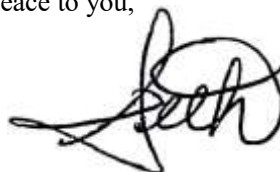
You see, painting affords much time for ruminating. In my case, where we were when the house was built and where we are as a family now. Communally and congregationally – what's happened over the past year, where we are and where we're going together. Yeah, wouldn't it be great if everything changed for the better as quickly and easily as new-fallen snow trims the world beautifully with white? Covering ugly dirtiness and opening our eyes to see things in new ways. Fresh snow ... I often imagine it's like the grace of God, settling gently to make all things new.

Truth is, whenever Covid, mingled with other crises and chaos of the past year, comes to an end, life will look different. We know it's alays both better (with newness prized) and worse (with losses) grieved. Much about the future remains unknown (after Pfizer-Kalamazoo/Portage helps to save the world! Hallelujah!). Some changes will seem surface only, with substance of life together still firm. Some change will seem more substantial. If like painting projects done well, living into it all won't be blithely easy. It'll take earnest attention, careful patience, with a steady "hand" to make sure defining contours of life get respected and coated cleanly. In some places, we'll need a little touch up mercy where offending bristles strayed carelessly. Inevitably, we'll also need the grace of deeper plaster or caulking repair where cracks appeared, maybe having grown for year(s).

And still, however we try to trim our congregation and "paint the town" with goodness, I pray we'll trust and find that the solid structure of Holy Love in our life together remains secure. No surprise—recent months also afforded much time for reading. Books like Susan Beaumont's *How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You're Going*. Amid other gems that articulate what I've felt, tried to organize thoughts around or to simply subconsciously recognize, Beaumont stresses crucial importance of openness and good listening. What doesn't work any more? What loss do we grieve? What cherished discoveries did we stumble into? What needs / opportunities did we not recognize before? Friends, liminal times like these months past and ahead naturally pose these questions. Stresses and anxieties often rise in us when we get confused and disoriented ... and lose attention, caring patience, steady control. Assumed expectations always need to balance with realities and open questions.

That's the care-full, attentive, steady work we'll try to nurture as we move into this New Year. We began conversations among staff around questions like those above, in lieu of usual annual reviews. Then Covid spiked and we shut down again. We'll pick it up again whenever we're able. That's a core task facing elders and deacons. And I welcome similar conversation / reflection with anyone else. At least, that's how I'll try to listen in all conversations trusting the Holy Spirit of love, grace, compassion, generosity and joy will lead us together, when none of us knows exactly where we're going. We'll face more than choices about the "color of the paint and carpet." Though I'm especially pleased that the color our family chose is called "Gracious Gray." So may God paint us, dear friends.

Grace and peace to you,



*Grounded in living faith,  
receiving diversity as a gift,  
we seek to reflect Christ's light  
in God's world.*

*Continually discerning God's  
vision of grace and peace,  
we share inspirational worship,  
spiritual nurture, compassionate  
service to others, and the pursuit  
of justice—all to the glory of God.*

# Church Activities

## WORSHIP OVERVIEW

Sunday Worship is at 10:00 a.m.

### January 5

#### **Epiphany Sunday**

#### **Communion served**

The Rev. Chrissy Westbury  
Isaiah 60:1-6; Matthew 2:1-12

### January 10

#### **Baptism of the Lord Sunday Ordination of Elders and Deacons**

The Rev. Dr. Seth Weeldreyer  
Matthew 2:1-12; Mark 1:4-11

### January 17

#### **Second Sunday after Epiphany**

The Rev. Chrissy Westbury  
1 Samuel 3:1-10; John 1:43-51

### January 24

#### **Third Sunday after Epiphany**

The Rev. Dr. Seth Weeldreyer  
Jonah 3:1-10; Mark 1:14-20

### January 31

#### **Fourth Sunday after Epiphany**

The Rev. Dr. Seth Weeldreyer  
2 Kings 5:1-14; Mark 2:1-12

### February 7

#### **Fifth Sunday after Epiphany**

#### **Communion served**

The Rev. Dr. Seth Weeldreyer  
Isaiah 40:21-31; Mark 2:13-22

### February 14

#### **Transfiguration Sunday**

The Rev. Chrissy Westbury  
2 Kings 2:1-12; Psalm 50:1-6;  
2 Corinthians 4:3-6; Mark 9:2-9

### February 17

#### **Ash Wednesday**

The Rev. Dr. Seth Weeldreyer  
Joel 2:12-17; Isaiah 58:1-12; Psalm  
51:1-17; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

### February 21

#### **First Sunday in Lent**

The Rev. Dr. Seth Weeldreyer  
Psalm 25:1-10; Mark 1:9-15

### February 28

#### **Second Sunday in Lent**

The Rev. Dr. Seth Weeldreyer  
Isaiah 50:4-10; Mark 8:31-38

## The Health Ministry presents KALAMAZOO TO JERUSALEM

The Health Ministry Committee invites everyone in the congregation to get healthy by getting moving this winter!

Join us in our “Walk to Jerusalem” during the Lenten season.

We need to collect **3,589 miles** to make our virtual trek from Kalamazoo to Jerusalem.

What kind of exercise counts? **Everything!** Swimming, skiing, skating, biking, running, walking, strolling, walking the dog, tai chi, yoga, or whatever you can think of. The entire family can join in. And if you are not in the area, you can still participate!

**\*\*\*20 minutes of any continuous movement/exercise = one mile!\*\*\***

We will begin our trek on Ash Wednesday, and finish at Easter. We will provide mileage from Kalamazoo to Jerusalem with multiple stops along the way. More detailed information about how to send in your weekly exercise totals, mileage goals and tracking our progress will be in weekly emails beginning in early February.

**Questions?** Contact Ann Ross by emailing [ann.ross@kalamazoofirstpres.org](mailto:ann.ross@kalamazoofirstpres.org) or call (269-344-0119, X 211), or emailing Tami Schab at [tsssj@juno.com](mailto:tsssj@juno.com)

## Just Sanctuary News: Support Local Justice Work

As a church community, we have an opportunity to support black leaders as they work towards pursuing justice and equality in southwest Michigan. We have been asked to consider making one-time or monthly contributions toward weekly meals, prepared by a chef who will take into consideration the dietary needs of those for whom they are prepared.

The link for these contributions is [paypal.me/blmswmich](https://paypal.me/blmswmich), and it should be entitled, “Meal Train”. In addition, pop cans are being collected at The People’s Food Co-Op on Harrison Street in Kalamazoo, which will be used in this effort. If you have any questions call, or text Donna Schonveld at 269-598-3345. Thank you for your support!

# Church Activities

## Thoughtful Readers Book Group

We will meet via Zoom at 7:00 p.m. until further notice.

- January 25 *The Hope of Glory: Reflections on the Last Words of Jesus from the Cross*, by Jon Meacham
- February 22 KPL read...books by Jacqueline Woodson
- March 22 *Becoming Mrs. Lewis*, by Patti Callahan
- April 26 *Front Row on Death Row: Conversations with Convicted Killers*, by Steve Schonveld (the author will also visit with Thoughtful Readers)
- May 24 *The Library Book*, by Susan Orlean
- June 28 *Miss Jane*, by Brad Watson
- July 26 *My Dear Hamilton*, by Stephanie Dray and Laura Kamoie
- August no meeting
- September 27 *The Nickel Boys*, by Colson Whitehead

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## Deacons' News

Many thanks to our retiring Deacons: Susan DeJong, John and Lisa Diamond, Miranda Howard, Judy Johnson, Bruce and Ruth Lubbers, and Jim Stephenson. They have served with grace and devotion and we truly appreciate all they have brought to the Board of Deacons during their terms.

Warm welcome to our new Deacons: Jan Carpenter, Hilary Cloetingh, Paul Minert, Suzanne Weeldreyer, Diane White, Jim Young and JoAnn Yochim. We know they will serve with loving commitment in the years ahead!

As we greet the new year, your Deacons promise to be a helpful presence and a blessing in the life of our individual parishes and of our church community. How we accomplish this, virtually or in person, will be the mark of our success. You, too, can be a blessing by reaching out to someone you normally greet at church on Sunday mornings. A simple call, kind word or smile is no small act.

A poem by Robert Frost, entitled "Not All There", reminds us that relationship with one another and with God is actively two-way.

I turned to speak to God  
About the world's despair,  
But to make bad matters worse  
I found God wasn't there.

God turned to speak to me  
(Don't anybody laugh)  
God found I wasn't there ---  
At least not over half.

The Deacons seek to listen, laugh, assist, and embrace your joys and sorrows. We are at your service, and we pray to be, not by half, but in full, listening always for the guiding, comforting words of God.

Blessings and joy for 2021 —from your Board of Deacons!

## SESSION

**Clerk of Session:**  
Allison Hammond

## CLASS OF 2021

Heather Cloetingh  
Liz Hamilton  
Elaine Johns  
Sue Johnson  
Brian Nederveld  
Norm VanDonselaar  
Scott Wilson

## CLASS OF 2022

Jill Barnum  
Bob Brush  
Richard Coryell  
Ellen Dykhuis  
Kathy Jennings  
Don Meldrum  
Heather Misner

## CLASS OF 2023

Susan Agostinelli  
Kathy Cooney  
Laura Ford  
Craig Kortlandt  
Oliver Takuh  
Deb Taylor  
Janet Todd

## CONGREGATIONAL DEACONS

### Class of 2021

Mike Boersma  
Aedin Clements  
Gary and Donita DeBRuin  
Martha Flynn  
Joyce Lander  
Karen Nellums  
Jo Russell

### Class of 2022

Evelyn Garner  
Wendy King  
Louise McCallum  
Carol Parfitt  
Deb Weurding  
JoAnn Yochim

### Class of 2023

Jan Carpenter  
Hilary Cloetingh  
Paul Minert  
Suzanne Weeldreyer  
Diane White  
Jim Young

# Faith Formation

## A Lens of Love

As we try to live with God's love and grace, we wrestle with scripture. How and why did ancient peoples imagine and describe God as they did? How can we promote responsible ethical connections with our lives and world? We read the Bible carefully, imaginatively, faithfully informed, "putting on lenses of love". So urges Jonathan L. Walton in his book, *A Lens of Love: Reading the Bible in Its World for Our World*. For any who find the Bible strange, troubling, and/or beautifully inspiring, Walton offers profound help. More than a brief summary of the entire Bible, Walton shapes how ordinary people read scripture throughout life. Let's learn and reflect together! **Tuesdays at noon, January 19 – March 23, beginning by Zoom. Please contact Seth Weeldreyer for the link.** Find Walton's book at a local bookseller or Amazon ... we'll go over Chapter One on January 19.

## The Cross and the Lynching Tree

"'The paradox of a crucified savior lies at the heart of the Christian story.' The cross inverts world values and power. In Jesus' cross God made 'a way out of no way.'"  
—So begins James Cone, reflecting on the cross, particularly from Black experience in America. When we see the cross and the lynching tree together, and find Christ there, Cone argues, we'll share more genuine understanding of Christian identity in America, for Blacks and anyone else. Giving voice to Black victims and their communities through Christian theology, Cone hopes to start conversation that heals deep wounds and empowers all who follow Jesus in America. A fitting conversation to share during Lent!

**We'll gather (probably by Zoom?) Sundays at 1:00 p.m., February 21—March 28. Please contact Seth Weeldreyer for the Zoom link.** Find Cone's book, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*, at a local bookseller or Amazon ... Chapter One discussed February 21.

## Thursday Morning Women's Bible Study

Our new study, "Testimony: a Vocabulary of Faith" frees people to live their Reformed Faith by remembering, reclaiming, and rearticulating what we believe about who God is and who we are, so the patterns of our lives embody the liberating love and grace of Jesus Christ.

We meet on Thursday mornings from 9:30 (check in) to 11:00 a.m. New participants are always welcome to join us. We are currently meeting on Zoom at the following link:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82740897636?pwd=RFZFSFlSeG1DVEhBNDNVdTBsYzdOUT09>

Meeting ID: 827 4089 7636 Passcode: 123170

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kh9Fpjhq0>

## Outreach

Celebrate the Vision will resume serving a meal to our neighbors and those who are hunger-challenged on Wednesday evenings from 5:15 – 5:45. We also provide canned goods (Blessing Bags) and warm clothing.

## New Contact Information?

If you have moved, or changed any contact information, please inform Ann Johnson at 344-0119, or email her at [ann.johnson@kalamazoofirstpres.org](mailto:ann.johnson@kalamazoofirstpres.org), so she can keep your information up to date.

# Faith Formation

## Virtual Sunday School Continues!

The virtual Sunday School for all ages will continue this winter, as we move into the study of the New Testament, reading stories of the People Jesus Met.

How do you get to know someone and form a relationship? You meet them. Get to know them. Ask questions. Discover things about them. Talk with each other. Share stories. Wrestle with what you learn. Discern your place in the relationship, with others, and with the world. Repeat.

One of the first ways we begin to understand God's self-revelation is to hear, engage, and wrestle with the written Word. In other words, it is through the stories of the Bible that we get to know God. It is through the stories of the things Jesus did and said that we get to know Jesus. It is through the Holy Spirit that we live and learn together. We get to know ourselves as beloved children of God and with our own place in the faith community.

Through our virtual Sunday School this winter, we will:

- read and hear stories from the Bible
- pause to let each story find its way into our hearts and minds;
- engage curiosity and imagination with the Bible story through wondering questions and activities exploring God's presence, actions, and grace in the story; and
- wrestle with how we fit into the story, what God is calling us to do, and how we might follow God's way of loving and living as disciples of Jesus Christ.

**For children and youth**, there will be lessons focused on people who were deeply touched and healed – in body or in soul – by Jesus. The man healed of leprosy, the woman who washed Jesus' feet, Zacchaeus, and others, will open up the ways in which an encounter with Jesus is life-changing.

**Adult lessons** will focus on the people with whom Jesus shared in ministry, and who carried on his work after his death and resurrection. These studies will include James, the brother of Jesus, Mary and Martha, Priscilla, Peter, and others.

Watch for more information in your weekly email announcements or contact Pastor Chrissy or Joseph for more information.

## Youth Fellowship

In these cold months, outdoor gathering becomes difficult, so we will plan to meet via Zoom, while constantly watching for Covid numbers and weather to allow us to change our plans for some outdoor fun! Watch your emails for the most up-to-date information!

(Please note – **everything** is subject to change!)

January 10 and 24 – Youth Group Zoom meeting!

- 5-6 p.m. Middle School (6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade)
- 6-7 p.m. High School (9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade)

## Assistance for Worshippers

**Hearing Assistance Devices** for in-person worship services can be requested from any usher, or you may call the church office in advance.

Copies of **Large-print Bulletins and Announcements** are available every Sunday morning for in-person Worship. Ask one of the ushers for a copy.

If you would like to receive **weekly e-mail updates** about events in the life of FPC, please contact Ann Johnson at 344-0119 and ask that your e-mail address be added to the list.

**DVDs** can be created for those with limited access to our services. You may email Ann Ross, or call 344-0119 to place an order.

**Gluten-free bread** is served at all communion services.

**Presbyter** Our congregation publishes the *Presbyter* six times per year in bi-monthly editions. While this may change with the complications of planning in our country's situation, here is the *tentative* schedule for the balance of the 2020-2021 program year:

<b><u>Issue</u></b>	<b><u>Deadline for Content</u></b>	<b><u>Mailing Date</u></b>
March-April	February 15	February 24
May-June	April 12	April 21
July-August	June 14	June 23

Many members receive the *Presbyter* newsletter via e-mail only to help conserve paper and other resources. If you would like to have your name removed from the USPS mailing list, please contact Ann Johnson at [ann.johnson@kalamazoofirstpres.org](mailto:ann.johnson@kalamazoofirstpres.org) or call 344-0119.

The *Presbyter* is also available for viewing on the FPC website: <http://kzoofirstpres.org/publications/>

## Parish Associates

### **Parish Associates:**

The Reverend Liz Candido, [ecandido@kzoo.edu](mailto:ecandido@kzoo.edu)

### **United Campus Ministry Pastor and FPC Parish Associate:**

The Reverend Kathleen Robertson King, [ucmkrking@yahoo.com](mailto:ucmkrking@yahoo.com)

## How Can I Join the Email List?

Sign up for announcements and links to online Worship: it's as easy as 1, 2, 3!

1. Go to the FPC website ([kzoofirstpres.org](http://kzoofirstpres.org)) and scroll to the bottom of the page.
2. There is a short form to complete (email address; first name; last name).
3. When it is completed, just hit "subscribe" and your name will be added to our email list.

Emails containing announcements are generally sent on Thursday afternoons. If you haven't received it by Friday afternoon, please look in your "junk" and/or "spam" folder to see if it went there.



**FPC**

**STAFF**

**(269) 344-0119**

(telephone extensions are listed below)

### ***Pastor***

**The Reverend Dr. Seth Weeldreyer**

[seth.weeldreyer@kalamazoofirstpres.org](mailto:seth.weeldreyer@kalamazoofirstpres.org)  
Ext. 202

### ***Associate Pastor***

**The Reverend Chrissy Westbury**

[chrissy.westbury@kalamazoofirstpres.org](mailto:chrissy.westbury@kalamazoofirstpres.org)  
Ext. 203

### ***Director of Music***

**Cindy Hunter** (269) 377-2478

[cindy.hunter@kalamazoofirstpres.org](mailto:cindy.hunter@kalamazoofirstpres.org)

### ***Associate for Youth and Families***

**Joseph Burrell**

[joseph.burrell@kalamazoofirstpres.org](mailto:joseph.burrell@kalamazoofirstpres.org)

### ***Director of Outreach***

**Dr. Patricia Stromsta**

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Ext. 204

### ***Organist***

**Michael Montgomery**

[jared.montgomery@kalamazoofirstpres.org](mailto:jared.montgomery@kalamazoofirstpres.org)

### ***Health Ministry Coordinator***

**Ann Ross**

[ann.ross@kalamazoofirstpres.org](mailto:ann.ross@kalamazoofirstpres.org)  
Ext. 211

### ***Office Administrator***

**Ann Johnson**

[ann.johnson@kalamazoofirstpres.org](mailto:ann.johnson@kalamazoofirstpres.org)  
Ext. 205

### ***Communications Coordinator***

**Anna Barnhart**

[anna.barnhart@kalamazoofirstpres.org](mailto:anna.barnhart@kalamazoofirstpres.org)  
Ext. 209

### ***Financial Coordinator***

**Louise Taylor**

[louise.taylor@kalamazoofirstpres.org](mailto:louise.taylor@kalamazoofirstpres.org)  
Ext. 206

### ***Building Superintendent***

**Shawn Smith**

[shawn.smith@kalamazoofirstpres.org](mailto:shawn.smith@kalamazoofirstpres.org)  
Ext. 213

### ***Custodian (Ext. 213):***

**Randy Randt**

### ***South Lobby Receptionists (Ext. 221)***

**Bruce Birkel**

**Nate Owens**



# FPC January and February Birthdays

## JANUARY

1  
Samantha Anderson  
Bernice Atemandeh  
Diana Diamond  
Gertrude Early  
Don Iffland  
Konjoh Konjoh  
Jonathan Leasure  
William Mack  
2  
Jacob Droppers  
LaVonne Stavig  
4  
Christopher Light  
Sherman Van Solkema  
Robert Wall Emerson  
6  
Jim Lewis  
7  
Joey Droppers  
8  
Sam Hubbard  
10  
Ellen Jarl  
Doug Jonas  
Wesley Mark Todd  
Oliver Takuh  
11  
Marcia Cowell  
Carole Cupps  
Frank Steele  
12  
Megan Dark  
Neal Graziano  
14  
Erin Diamond  
Karen Hassler  
Cain Kortlandt  
Robyn Lewis  
Andrew Roberts  
15  
Timothy Aldrich  
Peter Lewis  
Sophia Novak  
16  
Richard Byce  
Jacqueline Steffey  
18  
Charlotte Wilson  
19  
William Birch III  
Wayne Conner  
Bruce Houtman  
Elisa Oliver  
Andrew Van Ness

20  
Clara Candido  
Alison Perks  
Neil Stuit  
21  
Cameron Hay  
Lauren Kastman-Atsalakis  
Carmen Tanis  
22  
Dan Dowswell  
23  
Julie Hakken  
Kathleen Houtman  
Cameron Shaffer  
24  
Kathy Cooney  
Arria Hay  
Mark Lubbers  
25  
Jane Beers  
Ruth Minert  
26  
Deborah Weurding  
28  
William Gladstone  
Charles Leibbrand  
Conner Misner  
29  
Austin Leder  
30  
Claudia Britigan  
Sarah DeRusha  
Donald McCloud  
William Rylander  
Sarah Torrence  
31  
Sue Thielman

## FEBRUARY

1  
Bonnie Ayotte  
Andrew Bol  
Diane Heckler  
John Munn  
2  
Robert Aspergren  
Caroline Ham  
Carol McCloud  
Ryan Smith  
Pat Stromsta  
Gabriel Takuh  
3  
Deb Droppers  
Lois Heuchert  
Vincent Larkin  
Karen Trout  
4  
Shelly Denny  
5  
Amy Dark Bell  
Evelyn Hay  
6  
Maya King Becho  
Bassam Harik  
Grace Novak  
Nathaniel Owens  
7  
Paul Clements  
Carrie Palmer  
Carole Stoddard  
9  
Katherine Kremer  
10  
Keenan Millar  
Jennifer Newman  
Bob Poel

11  
Clare Elise Miedema  
Pam Obed  
Al Parfitt  
12  
Larry Braak  
15  
Valerie Burke  
Justin Hassler  
Randy Randt  
16  
Grady Coon  
18  
Robert Marciniak  
19  
Heather Kortlandt  
Meredith Novak  
20  
Emmit Newman  
21  
Silas Conrad  
Anna Gleaton  
Alexandria Jonas  
George Kremer  
22  
Gary DeBruin  
Zachary Lewis  
23  
Carlos Becho  
Michael Montgomery  
James Steele  
24  
Gary Dukes  
James Welch  
25  
Andrew Santamaría  
Grace Santamaría  
Joseph Santamaría  
Michael Sherrill  
26  
David Jarl  
Karen Meldrum  
27  
Jean Appel  
Deb Bender  
Janine Loughrin  
Richard Nellums  
Marion Palmer





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