

A MINUTE IN MINISTRY

It's sometimes a struggle to figure out what to write for these letters – what to say in mid-August that will be meaningful and profound throughout all of September and October. The pressure feels especially acute this year, as we enter into this new stage of the Covid pandemic, with new uncertainties about what the fall will bring. Every plan we make for fall programming seems to come with a little asterisk next to it. This is the plan* - unless things change. If there's one thing we've learned in the last year and a half, it's that our plans are fluid and we need to be ready to try things in new and different ways.

This is, of course, not true only in the church. Perhaps you are feeling that pressure, that challenge in your life as you try to make plans* for tomorrow, next week, next year – not really knowing how much you can plan, and trying to think about the what ifs.

As I was writing this, feeling a little worried about what fall will look like, how many last-minute changes of plans there might be, how we're going to plan for every eventuality, I received a text message from Meredith, asking for my opinion on the backpack tag messages we will send to the kids this fall – blessing their backpacks and the children themselves as they begin this new school year (many of them entering a classroom for the first time since March, 2020). This is the tag we chose:



This is the message this church will be sending with its children this fall, and I challenge us each to take it on as our charge. Be loved. Be kind. Be you. You are a child of God, created in the image of the God, who is love. Be that image, be that reflection of God. Serve the world and the church with kindness and compassion, knowing that you are loved. You are enough.

Scripture tells us "Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today." (Matthew 6:34) Today's trouble is enough for today, and God's love and compassion are enough to cover us today, tomorrow, and always.

Be loved. Be kind. Be you.

Christy

WORSHIP OVERVIEW

September 5

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

The Rev. Larry Farris
Deuteronomy 5:12-15; Mark 6:30-32

September 12

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost Communion served

The Rev. Dr. Seth Weeldreyer
James 2:1-8; Mark 7:24-30

5:30 at Pine Island—Vesper Service

September 19

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

The Rev. Dr. Seth Weeldreyer
James 3:13-4:3 Mark 8:27-38
Baptisms

September 26

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

The Rev. Dr. Seth Weeldreyer
Esther 7:10-10, 9:20-22; Mark 9:30-37

7:00 at Pine Island—Vesper Service

October 3

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Communion served

The Rev. Chrissy Westbury
Job 2:1-10; Mark 10:2-16

World Communion and Peacemaking Sunday

5:30 at Pine Island – Service of Blessing for Animals

October 10

Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

The Rev. Dr. Seth Weeldreyer
Hebrews 4:12-16; Mark 10:17-31

October 17

Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost

The Rev. Dr. Seth Weeldreyer
Job 38:1-7, 16-18; Mark 10:35-45

7:00 at Pine Island – Vesper Service

October 24

Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost

The Rev. Kathleen Robertson King
Jeremiah 31:7-9; Mark 10:46-52

October 31

Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost

The Rev. Chrissy Westbury





HEALTH MINISTRY NEWS

The Health Ministry continues to work closely with Session and ministers to help follow current guidelines for Covid. Everyone's health and safety is our primary concern!

The Health Ministry will be offering a Healing Service on Sunday, September 26, right after Worship. The Healing service will take place in the east transept. All are welcome! Please join us.

We are working on posting the Long Covid class on the church website. Dr. Brush and Dr. Takuh provided excellent information about this condition. Watch for more information about how to access this presentation.

In the meantime, if there is anything the Health Ministry can do for you, please feel free to call **Ann Ross, Health Ministry Coordinator, at 344-0119, ext. 211.**

COVID UPDATE

Throughout the pandemic, the Health Ministries Committee and the Session of FPC have encouraged careful monitoring of the science, following the guidelines set forth by the experts at the Center for Disease Control. The CDC has strongly recommended that people in areas where there is Substantial or High Spread of the Covid 19 virus and its variants - regardless of vaccination status - wear masks when gathering indoors with people outside their household. For this reason, we are asking that all people who enter the church building mask up, as long as Kalamazoo County remains in the Substantial Spread area. Let's do our part to protect one another and stop this thing before it gets out of hand again!

SUMMER 2021: WEST VIRGINIA SUCCESS

West Virginia came together in less than a month, frugally funded and supported by generous church members and the Youth car-wash proceeds. Our Youth answered the call to minister to the very real Covid-induced emotional needs of the church in West Virginia. Some hands-on work was done, as well as sharing community and hope.



Christian Youth Education

FAITH FORMATION FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES:

Each week a Bible story and short lesson will be available in the emailed announcements and in printed form in the Children's Praise Packs folders at in-person worship. Each folder will include a Bible story with activities that encourage families to engage in the lessons together! These series of lessons come from *Growing in Grace & Gratitude*; they are designed to be done at home.

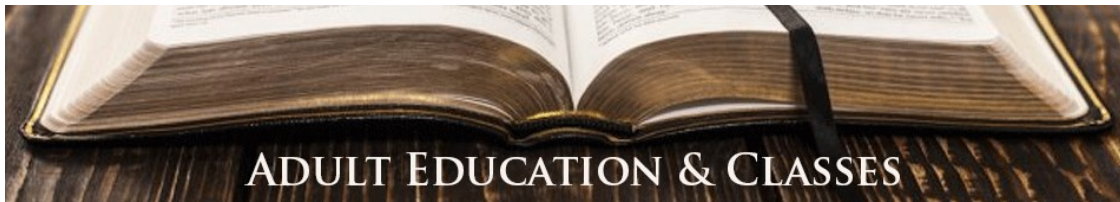
IN-PERSON SUNDAY SCHOOL: FALL 2021

Three age groupings/sections will be provided; Nursery, Pre-school, and Kindergarten - Fifth Grade. For Kindergarten - Fifth grade, a One-room Schoolhouse model will be tried out. The committee was in support of Meredith and Chrissy's innovative solution to a shortage in available volunteer teachers and the anticipated irregular attendance caused by the continued concerns about the spread of Covid-19, as yet-to-be vaccinated kids return to school in person this fall.



FAITH FORMATION VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Do you like to play games, tell stories, ask a lot of questions, and hang out with some of the coolest people in church? Then come volunteer to work with the children and youth. The Faith Formation team is looking for some kid-loving (and vaccinated!) volunteers to help with Sunday School, starting in the fall! A few areas that need helpers include nursery care, Sunday School teachers and shepherds, Youth Group assistants, and people to provide dinner for the youth on Sunday evenings. If any of these seem like something you could help with, please contact Meredith at meredith.alspach@kalamazoofirstpres.org



FPC offers a number of education and fellowship opportunities for adults! Find a time that works for you or a connection you want to make and reach out. We'd love to have you join us! If there is a small group for education or fellowship that you would like to start, reach out to Pastor Chrissy. She's happy to help support new ideas!

	Usual Location	Contact	Time
Sunday			
Prayer Partners	Room 301	Pat Stromsta	September 5 & October 3 9:00 a.m.
How to Fight Racism	Room 301	Pat Stromsta	September 12 & 26 11:30 a.m.
All-church Picnic	Pine Island Garden	Chrissy Westbury	September 12 4:00 p.m.
Worship in the Garden	Pine Island Garden	Chrissy Westbury Seth Weeldreyer	September 12 - 5:30 p.m. September 26 - 7:00 p.m. October 3 - 5:30 p.m.
Monday			
Thoughtful Readers	Room 300	Bev Murray and Donna Schonveld	September 27 & October 25 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday			
Men's Fellowship	Archives	Bill Sorenson	7:00 a.m. every Tuesday
Tuesday Noon Study (Currently reading <i>Call it Grace</i> by Serene Jones)	Library	Seth Weeldreyer	Beginning September 7 Noon
Small Group Study (Currently reading <i>Flunking Sainthood</i> by Jana Riess)	Various locations	Sue Caulfield or Chrissy Westbury	September 7 & October 5 6:30 P.M.
Wednesday			
Noon Prayer Service	Sanctuary	Seth Weeldreyer	Every Wednesday at noon.
Martha Circle	Gathering Place	Elaine Johns	September 8 & October 13 3:00 p.m.
Celebrate the Vision and Red Door Prayers	South Street Entrance	Pat Stromsta	Every Wednesday at 5:30 p.m. prayer at 6:30
Thursday			
Women's Bible Study	Room 314	Pat Stromsta	Every Thursday at 9:30 (no meetings September 2 or 9)
Saturday			
Ladies in Their 30s/40s – Kalamazoo Scavenger Hunt	TBD	Amber Beals	September 18

YOUTH & FAMILIES

CALLING ALL YOUTH!



SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School begins
September 12 for
preschool- 5th grade

- ❖ Nursery will be open for children ages 2 and under
- ❖ Preschool class for ages 3 and 4 in room 208
- ❖ Kindergarten-5th grade will meet on the 3rd floor
- ❖ Look for information on a Confirmation Class to be announced soon!

YOUTH MISSION

The youth had another amazing mission trip. It was wonderful to see dear friends in Colcord and to serve them in ways big and small. Thank you to all who helped make the trip possible this year!



YOUTH GROUP

Youth Group resumes in-person this fall for all middle and high school students!

All meeting dates are subject to change as we keep safety and health of all at the forefront of our planning. The most up-to-date information will be sent to parents directly via email.

To be added to the Youth Group email list, contact Meredith.

September 19 – Kick-off event @ Richland, 5-7pm

September 26 - @ FPC Kzoo, 5-7pm

October 3 - @ Pine Island Garden, 5-7pm

October 9 - Movies In Boxes & Food Drive @ Richland, time TBD

October 17 - @ FPC Kzoo, 5-7pm

October 24 - @ FPC Kzoo, Halloween Event, time TBD

October 31 – NO Youth Group

November 7 - @ Richland, 5-7pm

November 14 - @ FPC Kzoo, 5-7pm

November 21 - @ Richland, 5-7pm

November 28 – NO Youth Group

December 5 – Christmas Party @ Richland, 5-7pm

December 12 - January 2 – NO Youth Group



Do you want to hang out with some of the coolest people in church?

We are looking for more Sunday School and nursery helpers as well as volunteers to provide dinner for the youth on Sunday evenings.

CHURCH ACTIVITIES

MARTHA CIRCLE

Martha Circle is a group of women who meet once a month to support one another in our Christian faith. We share concerns and joys, study together, and explore what it means to be a Christian woman in today's world. We also provide cookies for Celebrate the Vision on our meeting day. Our regular meeting time is 3:00 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month – September 8 and October 13. We are continuing the Bible study, “Into the Light: Finding Hope through Prayers of Lament”.

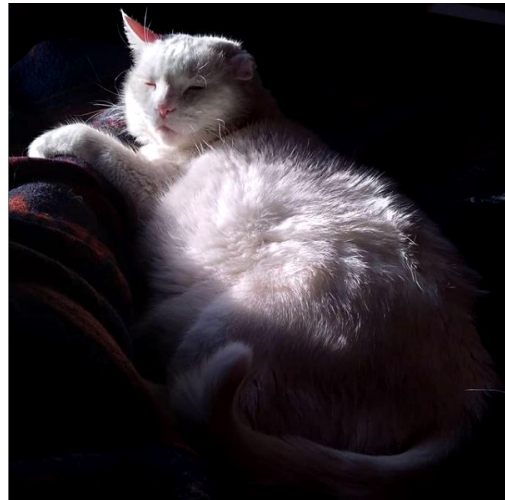
For more information, please contact **Elaine Johns (269-323-7395 or emjohns513@aol.com)** .

All women are invited and will be warmly welcomed!

BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

Bring your furry friends (as long as they get along with other animals!) out to the Pine Island Garden for a pet blessing on October 3. If your furry friend can't come, bring a photo, or just yourself. We will share in a time of worship, giving thanks for God's creation, and especially for the animals that enrich our lives. The Youth Group will be making special treats to send home.

October 3, 5:30 p.m.
Pine Island Garden (8882 W Q Avenue)



THOUGHTFUL READERS BOOK GROUP

The Thoughtful Readers Book Group will resume meeting on Monday, September 27. We meet on the fourth Monday of each month at 7 p.m. in Room 300.

The first meeting will be a planning meeting to choose the books that we will discuss throughout the year. It will also be a chance to catch up, get reacquainted, and welcome new members to our group.

Please come to the meeting with ideas for our book discussions. Also, be prepared to tell us about a favorite book: what it is about and why you loved it! Also, we would like to do a book swap. If you have a book on your shelf that you are willing to part with (you don't have to love it – someone else might!) please bring it to the meeting. Someone can enjoy your book and you will go home with a new book to read!

So, if you have considered checking out Thoughtful Readers, or if you are a current member looking forward to reading and discussing some new books, please mark your calendars for September 27. We are excited to be back! Everyone is welcome to join us.

For more information, please contact **Bev Murray at (269) 352-0079, or Donna Schonveld at (269) 598-3345.**

DEACONS' NEWS:

We are resuming the signing of "In Our Prayers" letters and sharing flowers from the Sunday worship service! These are two ways we can express love and care for one another.

Signing "In Our Prayers" letters is one way we are able to express concern, sympathy, or congratulations to one another. Look for the notebooks inside the Red Doors in the Narthex before entering the sanctuary and also inside the doors of the parking lot entrance on the south side of the church.

Another way to express our love and care for one another is by sharing flowers from the Sunday worship service. These are arranged with love by Shawn Smith and then delivered by your deacons to share a little sunshine and happiness with someone to say, "We care, we are thinking of you, and we are holding you in our prayers."

In other news, Coffee with the Deacons is on hold until further notice. Stay tuned for updates.

CONGREGATIONAL DEACONS

Class of 2021

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

Class of 2022

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

Class of 2023

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

2022 MISSION TRIP TO NICARAGUA

The Presbytery's Nicaraguan Partnership is planning mission trip to Nicaragua in 2022. The trip will be for 8 to 10 days. You will be staying with a Nicaraguan family for about 4-6 days. We will be assembling and installing water filters in rural homes.

We will also learn about the work of CEPAD in promoting self-sufficiency, creating small patio farms and vegetable gardens for the poorest of the poor which helps them provide better nutrition for their families. This is a trip for adults, college students and teens.

The Nicaraguan Partnership with Nueva Guinea Pastoral Committee and CEPAD (Nicaraguan Council of Protestant Churches) officially started in 1994. Groups have been going to the Nueva Guinea region of Nicaragua since 1992. CEPAD provides transportation, translators, housing and meals for the delegation.

Approximately 160 members of our Presbytery from 30 different churches have traveled in delegations to Nueva Guinea. Are you ready for an international mission trip experience?

We would like to know if you are interested in joining us and also whether you would prefer to have the trip in **April, May or June of 2022**. In order to plan this trip, we need to know by **September 15, 2021** if you are interested and if so, which month you prefer.

If you are curious about this project and would like more information, please contact committee members Ward Wilson or Carol Wallace.

Ward Wilson - judyandward6905@yahoo.com (517-414-6099)

Carol Wallace - cwallace145@sbcglobal.net(517-676-4847)

HOPE GARDEN UPDATES

Volunteers: Laura S., Karen H., Beth D., Pam O., Bob P., Laura S., Jan C., Stan R., and Alan.G.

Summer Accomplishments

The Hope Garden volunteers collectively harvested cucumbers, zucchinis, okra, eggplant, and green beans. Altogether, the group harvested and donated several hundred pounds of vegetables to Loaves & Fishes.

Aside from harvesting, the volunteers also have also been keeping up on weeding, watering, and all other essential garden maintenance.

To-do

The volunteers will continue to harvest the vegetables, as well as weed and cultivate the garden. As the summer is coming to a close, it is also time to start removing some of the old plants that have stopped producing.

Other Notes

Chubby Goat Acres is now picking up our damaged and spoiled veggies to feed to their rescued farm animals.

WANT TO BECOME A VOLUNTEER?

Volunteers meet at 8882 W Q Ave., Mattawan
M-W-F from 9:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m.

HOPE GARDEN BEE COLONY

Bob Candido reported following information regarding the bees at Hope Garden:

I am please to introduce to you Queen Hope. She is the slightly longer bee with a blue dot on her back. Hope and her colony was installed at the garden community this spring and has established herself quite well. She is a prolific layer and, as you can see, her attendants dote on her as she moves throughout the hive laying eggs inside the cells of the honeycomb.

The bees are busy building up to a peak summertime population. Foraging bees will travel up to 4-5 miles in search for flowers and other sources of pollen and nectar, while nursing bees are busy rearing new brood at home in the hive. Some of those larvae can also be seen in the picture between some cells containing orange pollen stores.

A few tips to help Queen Hope, her hive, and other hives that live nearby your own homes. If you can manage to allow native plants and weeds a space to grow in your yards, then give them a space to do so. Many of the plants we consider “weeds” are beneficial food sources for bees. Let them grow. Plants like thistle and clover are excellent bee plants. If you can’t do so and want to remove them, then use your hands and avoid spraying herbicides; especially when blossoms are presents. Bees will bring these poisons back to their hives and feed tainted pollen and nectar to the developing larvae in the hive. This greatly stresses and stunts the health of the colony as these poisons, which don’t readily break down in the hive, build to lethal concentrations.



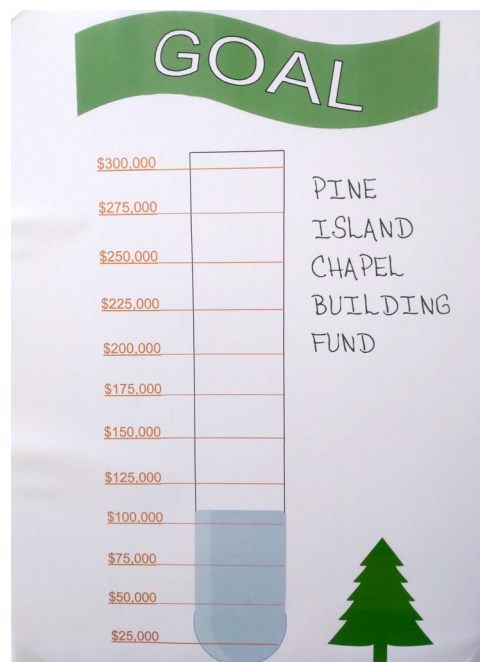
If you are out at the garden, I hope you enjoy watching the honeybees help to pollinate the vegetable blossoms of the community garden.

We thank Bob for his work at maintaining our bee colony!

PINE ISLAND FUNDRAISING UPDATE

There are concept drawings of the Pine Island campus at both tower entrances of the church. Fundraising continues for the proposed multi-function structure. All contributions are greatly appreciated. We are about half-way to our goal!

Discussions continue with several possible donors. All contributions are needed and will be accepted. The ultimate goal is to have all needed funds *prior* to breaking ground. We are hopeful that the building costs will return to normal next year, after the extremely volatile year we have just gone through.



PINE ISLAND LABYRINTH

Over the past several months, a labyrinth has been created in a space on the eastern side of the mid section of the Pine Island property. Previously, a mowed path through circuits was placed in loving memory of Ben Scarff, along with a beautiful tree at the center. Due to the need to relocate the Memorial, and in answer to my desire to check that item (build a labyrinth) off my “bucket list”— this endeavor was launched. The labyrinth was a natural project for the efforts of the Building and Property Committee, the Health Ministry Committee, and the need for an outdoor contemplative space. I am pleased that Phase One of building a classic seven-circuit labyrinth has now been achieved. Bricks have been laid on top of the ground in a path, guided by mathematical measurements and reading the works of Di Williams and of Robert Ferre’ (I have the resources if you are curious and would like to borrow them!). This has been a labor of love and of contemplation. I am grateful for the assistance of the Health Ministry team (Ann Ross, Heather Cloetingh, Tami Schab), and of my fellow “Elder and seeker”, Janet Todd. Several others contributed input towards this project. Many philosophical lessons for me emerged from the simple procurement of those bricks (vintage from the streets of Grand Rapids and a patio in Battle Creek), the weary task of relocating those bricks to the property, and the careful measurements to assure that the labyrinth circuits would indeed allow access to those mobility-challenged, that it would align with the four points of the compass, and that it would be user friendly for walking the path, also for continued maintenance. The bricks have been laid. A contemplative walk of the circuits takes the seeker 15 - 30 minutes, and there is a bench to sit on and reflect, mid-way.

Phase Two will involve raising the soft earth upon which we tread as we walk the circuits – this will take place in the future as the project continues to unfold under the tutelage of our groundskeepers. Phase Three will include the placement of memorial benches on the periphery, a place for reflection and contemplation.

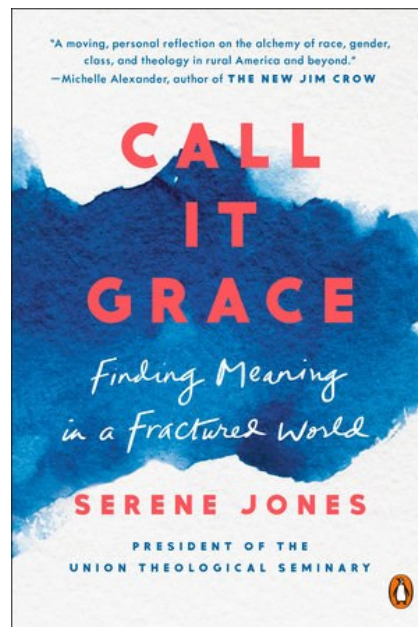
It has been a privilege to create this space – and I am grateful that Pastors Seth, Chrissy, and Kathleen, and Health Ministry Coordinator Ann Ross have given free reign to this spiritual practice. It is my hope that we will continue to learn about using contemplative practice to enhance our spiritual growth. It may be a simple practice to just walk the seven-circuit path on a pretty day, enjoying the sounds of the birds and the breezes in the fields – or the labyrinth may become for you a place to release, receive, and return to self.

—Laura Ford

CALL IT GRACE

“In my own life, the most astonishing moments come when grace—that imponderable gift of God—breaks through the surface of life and shines its light on all that is. There is no bigger, more dramatic story than this.” That’s how Serene Jones begins her book, *Call It Grace*. Grace can seem hard to define exactly. Yet, we Christians affirm that all of life and faith flows from God’s grace. Jones offers many stories from her life to illustrate grace. Pastor Seth Weeldreyer invites us to ponder her and our life stories as inspiration for living faith ... in grace. **We’ll meet Tuesdays at noon in the church library.** Serene Jones’ book is available through any source you may support. Here’s a tentative outline of chapters for each week.

- Sept ember 7 Introduction and Ch 1
- September 14 Chapters 2 and 3
- September 21 Chapters 4, 5, 6 (part 1)
- October 5 Chapters 4, 5, 6 (part 2)
- October 12 Chapter 7 and 8
- October 19 Chapter 9
- November 9 Chapters 10 and 11
- November 16 Chapters 12 and 13



EDISON PROJECT UPDATE

At this time, we are planning to resume our outreach project with Edison School. All volunteers will need to be vaccinated, and masks are required in all KPS buildings. The old Edison School at 924 Russell Street has been taken down in preparation for a new building. For the next two years, Edison will be housed in the South Westnedge Elementary School at 3333 South Westnedge.

In the weeks to come, we will be looking for volunteers to tutor, bake monthly birthday treats, read with children, donate supplies, and offer financial assistance. We are also exploring new ways to help the children at Edison.

How to Help Right Now

We will be collecting supplies for Edison again this year. Suggested needs are pencils, pencils, pencils! (Ticonderoga please!) Other needs are glue sticks, dry-erase markers, notebook paper, crayons, Clorox wipes, Kleenex, children’s socks and underwear sizes 4-12, and gently-used children’s pants and tops, sizes 4-12. Financial assistance is always appreciated, if you prefer to help in that way.

Your donations may be dropped off at church. There are boxes in the Narthex and in the lobby of the back door entrance. Thank you.

We will continue to update you as the school year moves forward.

If you would like to be involved with the Edison Project, please let us know.

We thank you for your 22 years of support!

Donna Schonveld.	Schonveld@comcast.net	269 598-3345
Sue Johnson	Suebirdjohnson@gmail.com	269 276-9216
Nancy Johnson	Nlj22@aol.com	269 808-3669

Fall 2021 PresbyPalooza

Let's kick off a new season of life together!



Sunday, September 12
Pine Island Hope Garden
Picnic 4 - 5:30p.m.
Vespers service to follow



FAMILY FUN EVENT AT HOPE GARDEN

Mark your calendars for Sunday, September 12, for a FUN FAMILY EVENT at the Hope Garden property. Join your Church family for food, games, and fun. Keep an eye out for more details!

This event is co-hosted by the Congregational Life, Faith Formation, and Stewardship Committees.

(Rain date: September 19)

Provided:

A tent and beverages with cups by Congregational Life.
Live music and a cornhole tournament by Faith Formation.
A Recollection Exhibit showcasing All We Share Together and pledge cards by Stewardship

Bring:

Your own picnic utensils and chairs.

Accessibility:

There will be coordinated parking and a place to pull up close.

Safe Distancing:

Per September 2021 CDC guidelines; details to follow.

For GPS Directions:

8882 W Q Ave., Mattawan

Questions?:

Brian Nederveld; nederveld@att.net
Jill Barnum; jmbarnum68@gmail.com

SAVE THE DATE...

A RETURN TO ADULT CHOIR AND HANDBELL CHOIR

As we continue to find ways to return to "normal" in our worship services, you might consider how you can be involved in the return of the Adult Choir and Handbell Choir! The starting dates are still to be determined.

If you are interested in participating in either group and have not been involved in the past, please contact Cindy Hunter at 269-377-2478 or cindyhunter704@gmail.com for more information. All are welcome!

OUTDOOR VESPER SERVICE AT PINE ISLAND

A Vesper Service will be held at 7 p.m. on Sunday, August 29, as well as other dates throughout September and October. at the Pine Island location, (8882 W Q Ave., Mattawan)
Check the Worship Overview on page 2 for more information. Come and enjoy the spirit of God in a natural setting!

CHURCH BREAKFAST IS BACK!

The FPC congregation and friends are cordially invited to join Men's Fellowship for return of the popular Monthly Church Breakfasts, featuring great fellowship and pretty good food.

Beginning September 19th and every third Sunday each month during the school year, the Morning Men will serve your breakfast anytime you arrive during the 8:30-9:30a.m. hour just ahead of Worship.

A donation of \$5.00 is requested, and 100% of proceeds go to our church in their continued support of Celebrate the Vision's Wednesday evening meals.

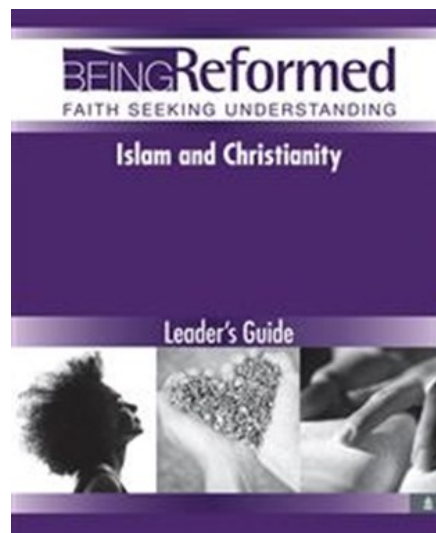
It's another sign of normalization. Skip your breakfast routine and join us instead on September 19th!

NEW THURSDAY MORNING WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

This study provides an introductory understanding of Muslim beliefs about Scripture, monotheism, Jesus, the five pillars of Islam, Muhammad, and requirements for holy living.

Some of the Questions that we will explore are: Where did Islam originate? What do Muslims believe? What similarities and what differences are there between Christianity and Islam? How can Christians and Muslims best relate to one another?

Dr. Pat Stromsta will facilitate this 5-week class, beginning on September 16, in Room #314.
Coffee is served at 9:30.





ISAAC VIRTUAL BANQUET: GRASPING AT THE ROOT: GROWING THE BELOVED COMMUNITY

First Presbyterian Church is a member of ISAAC, an interfaith organizing network of congregations and strategic partners working together to build a more just community. The three issues that ISAAC task forces are working on currently are: Anti-Racism, Housing, and Gun Violence. ISAAC invites you to join their virtual banquet this October.

Who:

Anyone can join the live banquet. It is free to watch online on Facebook Live. Use the web address below to watch the event once it begins. You do not need to have a Facebook account to watch the event.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/512622106644732/?ref=newsfeed>

You can also use the above link to find more details about the event before it begins.

What:

ISAAC is a faith-based community-organizing group made up of congregations and organizations that unite in order to accomplish what cannot be done as individuals or single congregations. Together, we focus our collective people-power on the most pressing issues of injustice in Kalamazoo County.

When:

The virtual banquet will take place on Facebook Live on October 14, 2021, at 6 p.m.

Why Racial Justice?:

ISAAC works to lift all forms of oppression as wrong, and many identity groups are currently facing oppression. Yet this year, and the past few years, we have been seeing racism manifesting itself in the form of violence and hatred towards People of Color, including Indigenous, Asian, Asian Pacific Islander, Native Hawaiian, Alaskan Native, South West Asian, Northern African, Black, African, Caribbean, Brown, and Latinx communities.

As congregations and organizations, we commit ourselves to the pursuit of a just community. Even now, we are seeking to build a world where hope triumphs over fear, where God's abundance meets the needs of all, where we live in sacred and beloved community instead of dehumanizing isolation, where the sun of equality has risen, in a land where love endures. We are united across social barriers, organizing so that our common values are reflected in the world we share.

Visit ISAAC's website at <https://isaackalamazoo.org> or their Facebook page for more information.

 **ISAAC Virtual Banquet**
Grasping Change at the Root:
Growing the Beloved Community

October 14, 2021 6pm
Dr. Michael Eric Dyson, Keynote Speaker



Our church recently observed the first anniversary of the adoption of a statement “Addressing Systemic Racism”. For those who are new to the church or who missed the statement when it was approved by Session, we offer it here as a reminder of our commitment .

ADDRESSING SYSTEMIC RACISM

In times of crisis, suffering, and hardship, the Church is called to speak both prophetically and compassionately, to comfort and heal, and to call for justice and accountability. In this time of crisis, our community and our country are struggling with a confluence of crises: pandemic, economic distress, and civil unrest. In all these things, the disparity between white society and people of color is evident.

God did not choose one people over another. Indeed, in times such as this, “there are particular problems and crises through which God calls the church to act. The church, guided by the Spirit, humbled by its own complicity and instructed by all attainable knowledge, seeks to discern the will of God and learn how to obey in these concrete situations.” (1) Now is such a time and place.

“We have been slow to face the reality of systemic racism. We have been slow to acknowledge the pain of our fellow Presbyterians, of our fellow Christians, of our fellow citizens, and of those whose value has been judged by the color of their skin. We pledge to join hands and hearts with our BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) siblings to actively confront and dismantle systemic racism in the church and in society at large, and to work for a more just, merciful, and peaceful country that allows all of God’s children to flourish.” (2) (3)

We who call FPC home are committed to non-violent ways to bring about justice. We stand with those who call for an end to unjust and discriminatory policies and practices, both explicit and implicit, which disproportionately affect our siblings of color.

We appeal to the leaders of our houses of worship, our cities and counties, our states and our nation to act with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love in healing our communities and in combating racism in all its forms. (4)

In Peace and Grace,

The Session of First Presbyterian Church Kalamazoo (PCUSA)

July 20, 2020

The statement and footnotes are on the homepage of the First Presbyterian Church of Kalamazoo website under the header Coronavirus and Worship Updates.

SESSION MEMBERS

Class of 2021

Chris Bol
Heather Cloetingh
Liz Hamilton
Elaine Johns
Sue Johnson
Brian Nederveld
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

FEATURED OUTREACH COMMITTEE ORGANIZATION

KDC is our featured Outreach Committee organization for the month of September.

The Kalamazoo Deacons Conference (KDC) is a local Kalamazoo organization that works each day to make Kalamazoo a better place to live. KDC recognizes the physical and spiritual needs of the poor in our community and attends to these needs by sharing the love and hope of Jesus Christ.



KDC begins the day with an open invitation to spend time with the Scriptures and in prayer with the staff and those of the community who come to the building for support.

Assistance is given to those who are in need, through the DRS (Direct Response Servants), who take the time to listen and address the physical and spiritual needs of the individuals and families who come to KDC. Physical needs that are met include transportation (tokens), I.D. and birth certificates, clothing, food, personal hygiene items, household goods, furniture, and appliances. Building relationships and treating each guest with dignity are also priorities.



KDC is open 5 days per week. Donations of clothing, household items and furniture are accepted Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9 – 5 o'clock at their location at 1010 N. Westnedge Ave.

For more information, call KDC at **269-344-7333** or contact Pat Stromsta at pat.stromsta@kalamazoofirstpres.org.

Peace & Global Witness

September 5 – October 3, 2021

The Peace & Global Witness Offering encourages the church to cast off anxiety and fear, discord and division, and embrace our God's mission of reconciliation to those around the corner and around the world.

Through the Peace & Global Witness Offering, congregations are encouraged and equipped to find and address the anxiety and discord that are prevalent throughout this broken and sinful world.

A gift to the Peace & Global Witness Offering enables the church to promote the Peace of Christ by addressing systems of conflict and injustice across the world. Individual congregations are encouraged to utilize up to 25% of this Offering to connect with the global witness of Christ's peace. Mid councils retain an additional 25% for ministries of peace and reconciliation. The remaining 50% is used by the Presbyterian Mission Agency to advocate for peace and justice in cultures of violence, including our own, through collaborative projects of education and Christian witness.

As we work to share Christ's peace with one another, let's share that peace with those beyond our doors, beyond our communities, and beyond our borders.

Special envelopes are available at our Lovell St. and South St. doors.

WEEKLY AND MONTHLY EVENTS

RED DOOR PRAYER

After our Celebrate the Vision community meal, we gather at the red doors on the steps of the church and offer prayers of justice.

Each week we emphasize one of the following themes: environmental justice, anti-racism, gun violence and poverty/homelessness.

Members of the congregation and community participate by reading prayers, singing, and offering prayer requests that are shared with the group. This is a powerful testimony of what it means to be part of the beloved community as we pray and share our concerns and joys with one another.



CELEBRATE THE VISION

CtV will celebrate it's 13th year of fellowship, faith and food this month. We continue to serve a home-cooked (often grilled) meal at our South St. doors from 5:00 – 5:30.

Members of the congregation often contribute to this ministry by preparing a home-cooked meal, accompanied by fruit, dessert , and a beverage.

If you would like to prepare a meal or dessert for these meals, please contact

Pat Stromsta at

pat.stromsta@kalamazoofirstpres.org.

COMMUNITY GROUPS THAT (usually) MEET AT FPC:

*Not meeting in the building
until further notice—*

we look forward to seeing you again!

*Other locations you can go to until the
church resumes meetings are listed below.*

All addresses are in Kalamazoo.

AA

Kalamazoo Alano Club

933 South Burdick

Tuesdays and Thursdays at 7 o'clock a.m.

Boy Scouts

Troop 205

Location changes.

Contact Scott Willou for more details.

Scottwillou@gmail.com

Coalition for Common Ground

First Congregational Church UCC

345 West Michigan Avenue

Check their Facebook page for updates.

[Facebook.com/CCGKZOO](https://www.facebook.com/CCGKZOO)

Crescendo Academy of Music

Epic Center, Suite 12

359 S. Kalamazoo Mall

Various classes offered.

(269) 354-6664

Kalamazoo Literacy Council

Goodwill Industries of Southwestern MI

420 E Alcott St.

Various classes offered.

(269) 382-0490, Ext. 222

Food Addicts Anonymous

Virtual meetings at various times.

<https://tinyurl.com/FAA-Virtual-Meeting>

KNOW

In front of the Federal Building

141 E Michigan Avenue

Vigils held Sundays at noon.

Virtual meetings every 3rd Tuesday at 6:30

Contact newsfromknow@gmail.com

September - October Birthdays

SEPTEMBER

1 Paul Minert
Jackson Matthews

2 Marlene Stoops

3 Laura Boersma
Stan Clouse
Max Hubbard
Barb Kafil

4 Marianne Crawford
Louise McCallum
Sandra Western

5 Caroline Breisach
Charles Green
Diane Hunt

6 Timothy Tyler
Maya Van Heest
Deborah Wiebeck

8 Jan Bedrosian
Craig Oliver
Allison Myers
Annabelle Rigg
Kenny Sparks

9 Michele Andrews
Ginny Dell
Sue Forsch
Sue Potts
Ethan Nettleton

10 Martha Finjap
Mary Kittredge
Greg Lozeau
Jim VanBuren

11 Carol Parfitt
Sandy Rozelle
Lindsey Walters

12 Mardy Grant
Dawn Marciniak
Laurie Tupper

13 Brenda Noel
Paul Schonveld
Faith Simpson

14 Steve Johnkoski

15 Paul Hartwigsen
Jim Mitchell
Mary Smyser

16 Cameron Lozeau

17 Cole Lewis
Joya Ruff

18 Lee Mizeur
Kay Vermeulen
Alex Wall Emerson

19 Anne Gladstone
Kevin Plemmons
Deborah Taylor

20 Caroline Elliott
Kaylin Taylor
William Willoughby

21 Robert Brush
Cathy Cook
Linda Parks
John Todd

22 Susan Anthony
Derick Elliott

23 Becky Demcovitz
Laura Schreiner

24 Char Hansen

25 Miranda Fiore
Sonya Scarff

26 Jane Hamilton
Jeff Daniels

27 Kevin Hollenbeck
Matthew Loughrin
Morgan Schut
Rick Taylor

28 Robert Britigan III

29 Marilyn Boal
Aedin Clements
Helen Ferrando
Jill Piwko

30 Elizabeth Hamilton
Gary Elfring

OCTOBER

1 Karen Cooper
Helen Creager
Sarah Leasure
Emma Leasure

2 Ryan Fouty
Adriane Siefert
Ron VanDerSlik

3 Ann Fergemann

4 Hilary Cloetingh
Jennalie Shepherd
William Smyser
Dave Todd

5 Nevaeh Rogers
Mary Tyler
Nancy Wood

6 Gary Fergemann
Robert Tyler

7 Kay Burtis
Jordan Diamond
Isabelle Fisk
Elsie Johnson
Nancy Klesert

8 Richard Hakken

9 Marcia Cook

10 Steve Breisach
Martha Ford
Sylvie Graziano
Brenda McGruder
Neal Miedema
David Rozelle
Richard Steele

11 Heidi Egloff
Elizabeth Honsett
Ruth Moser

12 Izaak Marciniak

13 Elaine Johns
Paisley Wall Emerson

15 Jamie Schnur
Denny Stults

16 Katrina Kore

17 Rob Case

18 Judy Swisher

19 Priscilla Blair
Nikos Diamond
Bruce Johnson
José Satamaría

20 Cerica Finjap

21 Bill Kelser
Sue Johnson

22 Kathryn Novak

23 Ralph Jarl

24 Candice Parmley
Brian Hirt
Dave Hutton

25 Margo Light

26 Ron Marvin
Eliza Mellis
Dave Novak

27 William Leasure

29 Susan Young

30 Susanne Rose

OUR LIFE TOGETHER

PASTORAL CARE AND HOSPITAL VISITATION

An important part of our ministry at First Presbyterian Church is to provide pastoral care, including hospital visits. When a church member is admitted, hospitals are no longer permitted to notify the home church. We depend on members to call the church when a family member is hospitalized or needs a pastoral call.

Pastoral care is provided by the pastors, retired ministers from the congregation, and also by the Health Ministry Coordinator. Those doing hospital calling would appreciate knowing when any member needs a visit or special attention. Please call the church office, 344-0119.

If your call is an emergency and you are unable to reach a person at this number, please call one of these staff members:

Seth Weeldreyer - (269) 425-5725

Chrissy Westbury - (989) 854-1124

Kathleen Robertson King - (269) 808-3998

Ann Ross - (269) 217-6193

In Memoriam

Joel Shepherd was born on June 19, 1928, and joined FPC on April 10, 1952. Joel died on July 28, 2021.

Mary Todd was born on November 13, 1923, and joined FPC on March 21, 1937. Mary died on July 29, 2021.

Assistance for Worshippers

Hearing Assistance Devices for 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. 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.

CD Ministry provides recordings of the Sunday morning services. You may stop in the office or call 344-0119 to place an order.

Gluten-free bread is served at all communion services.

PRESBYTER PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

The deadline for content for the November-December issue of the *Presbyter* is **October 12**. It will be mailed on October 22.

The *Presbyter* is also available for viewing on the FPC website Kzoofirstpres.org. Many of our members receive the *Presbyter* via e-mail only, in order to help the church conserve paper and postage. To remove your name from the "paper-mail" list, contact Ann Johnson at 344-0119 ext. 205 or ann.johnson@kalamazoofirstpres.org.



FPC

STAFF

(269) 344-0119

(telephone extensions are listed below)

Pastor

The Reverend Dr. Seth Weeldreyer

seth.weeldreyer@kalamazoofirstpres.org
Ext. 202

Associate Pastor

The Reverend Chrissy Westbury

chrissy.westbury@kalamazoofirstpres.org
Ext. 203

Director of Music

Cindy Hunter (269) 377-2478

cindy.hunter@kalamazoofirstpres.org

Director of Youth and Families

Meredith Alspach

Meredith.alspach@kalamazoofirstpres.org

Director of Outreach

Dr. Patricia Stromsta

pat.stromsta@kalamazoofirstpres.org
Ext. 204

Organist

Michael Montgomery

jared.montgomery@kalamazoofirstpres.org

Health Ministry Coordinator

Ann Ross

ann.ross@kalamazoofirstpres.org
Ext. 211

Office Administrator

Ann Johnson

ann.johnson@kalamazoofirstpres.org
Ext. 205

Communications Coordinator

Hannah Foreman

hannah.foreman@kalamazoofirstpres.org
Ext. 209

Financial Coordinator

Louise Taylor

louise.taylor@kalamazoofirstpres.org
Ext. 206

Building Superintendent

Shawn Smith

shawn.smith@kalamazoofirstpres.org
Ext. 213

Custodian (Ext. 203)

Randy Randt

South Lobby Receptionists (Ext. 221)

Bruce Birkel

Nik DeHaan

Deb Weurding

Sandy Sinod,



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PRESBYTER HIGHLIGHTS—
♦ NEW CLASSES
♦ NEW STAFF
♦ YOUTH GROUP NEWS
♦ BIRTHDAY LIST
♦ HOPE GARDEN UPDATE

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
321 West South Street, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49007-4708
Telephone: (269) 344-0119 • Fax: (269) 344-4645 • Website <http://kzooofirstpres.org/>



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