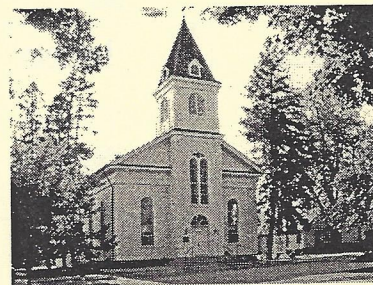


First Presbyterian Church

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"But the Bible Says!"

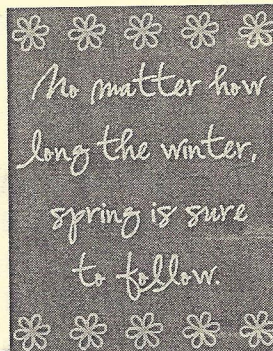
What do we do when the Bible says things that bother us? What do we do when the Bible says things we disagree with? What do we do when the Bible says things that we think are out and out wrong? "If the Bible says it, it must be right. If it is in Scripture, it must be true." Is that how we feel, is that what we think? For many years people justified slavery because the Bible never condemns it. They also used Genesis 9, the curse on Canaan to explain why people of African descent should be slave to whites: Noah says, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren." Although it never says that Canaan is the ancestor of the black race, for generations Western, especially American theologians claimed that he was.

Scripture was also used for years to justify the second class status of women. I Peter 3 expressly tells women to obey their husbands and to not braid their hair or wear gold ornaments. How do we now allow them to lead in society and the church, let alone braid their hair? In 1891, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the US denied women the right to speak, lead in prayer and participate in public discussion if men were present. They did this because, "the Bible says!" How do these passages fit with Galatians 3:28 "There is no longer Jew or Greek, slave or free, male and female, for you are all one in Christ."

How is it that we have now changed? Presbyterians, and others, realized that the Bible is not only a series of documents that are conditioned by the culture in which they arose, but we have long believed that "the infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself." That means that when we come upon Scriptures that disagree, one must look at the whole witness of the Bible. What does the whole Bible tell us about the will of God? For us in the Reformed tradition, we believe that Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, is the center of Scripture. When we keep Christ in the center of our interpretation it is difficult to justify the oppression of people of any race or gender. So what do we think about the place of gay and lesbian Christians in the church and in society? Should the church be in favor of marriage equality? What about our church? What happens when Michigan legalizes gay marriage? Then it will be up to the session to look at those passages that seem to condemn same sex relations and interpret them for our time. The next two Sunday in our Twenty Questions Sunday School class we will ask "Should the church support Marriage Equality?" We are doing this now because on February 14th, the Presbytery of Lake Michigan will vote on a proposed change to our Directory for Worship that defines marriage as between "two people." What do you think?

*Grace and Peace,
Mark*

February 2015



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:45 Worship - Communion 11:10 Sunday School 12:00 Youth Choir 12:30 Tribe	2 9:00 Care Team 1:30 Office Staff 6:00 Boy Scouts	3 10:00 Connected Threads 6:00 Girl Scout Leaders	4 1:00 PW Meeting	5 9:00 Bible Study 6:30 Cub Scouts 7:00 Chancel Choir	6 6:00 Carr/Williams Rehearsal	7 3:30 Carr/Williams Wedding
8 9:45 Worship - 2 cents-a-meal 11:10 Sunday School 12:00 Youth Choir 12:30 Tribe	9 1:30 Office Staff 6:00 Boy Scouts	10 10:00 Connected Threads	11 6:00 Altar Planning Meeting 7:00 Session 7:00 Cub Leaders	12 9:00 Bible Study 6:00 Deacons 6:30 Cub Scouts 7:00 Chancel Choir	13	14 3:00 Village Green Arts - Rich Ridenour & Barry Ross 
15 9:45 Worship 11:10 Sunday School 12:00 Youth Choir 1:00 Girl Scouts 5:30-8:30 Tribe - Dodgeball	16 9:00 Care Team 1:30 Office Staff 6:00 Boy Scouts	17 10:00 Connected Threads	18 <i>7:00 Ash Wednesday Service</i> 7:00 Cub Leaders 7:30 Committee Meetings	19 9:00 Bible Study 6:30 Cub Scouts 7:00 Chancel Choir	20 6:00 Cub Scout Lock-in	21 10:00 Cubs finished
22 9:45 Worship 11:10 Sunday School 12:00 SOUPFEST 12:00 Youth Choir 3:00 WMU Chorale here for VGA 	23 1:30 Office Staff 6:00 Boy Scouts	24 10:00 Connected Threads	25	26 9:00 Bible Study 7:00 Chancel Choir 7:00 Pack Meeting	27	28

Help Support our Young Adult Volunteer

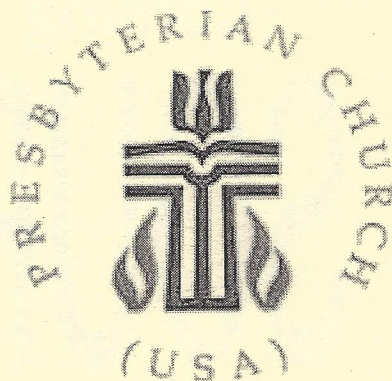
Kendall Jennings

Young Adult Volunteer, Philippines

Contact Information:

KHopeSully@gmail.com

(269)492-4075



Kendall is in Dumaguete, on the island of Negros in the Philippines. She works at Casa Esperanza (House of Hope) which is a home for victims of physical/sexual abuse. She also works with YATTA (Youth Advocates Through Theater Arts), a group of 14-20 year olds who write and perform shows that enlighten people about sex trafficking, abuse and corruption. You can read about what she is doing at ~ <http://kjennings8.wix.com/khopeyav2014>

How you can support Kendall:

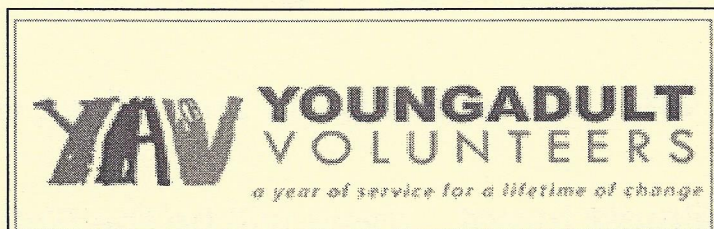
- * **Your Prayers:** Pray for her and for the people with whom she will be serving.
- * **Your Interest in her year of service:** Follow Kendall's experience by reading her blog - <http://kjennings8.wix.com/khopeyav2014>. Email Kendall to offer your support, and just to keep in touch.
- * **Your financial Gifts:** Give a tax-deductible contribution as a one time gift or installments over the course of her year of service. You may give gifts online at <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/donate/E210508/>. Checks may be sent to the address listed below or dropped off in the Richland Presbyterian Church office.
Make any checks payable to PC(USA). Memo: Kendall Jennings E210508

Presbyterian Church (USA)

Remittance Processing

P.O. Box 643700

Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700



SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

The last meeting of Session was held on December 10, 2014. With a quorum present the meeting was opened with prayer by Rev. Jennings at 7:00 p.m.

As required by IRS Code, Session approved Rev. Jennings housing allowance for 2015.

Committee Reports

Finance Session will approve the 2015 budget at the January meeting.

Personnel Salaries will remain the same for 2015. Sitech will perform the processing and storage of the church's historical records. A private donation of \$6000 will cover the cost of the process.

Membership and Fellowship The Church Christmas Party will be held Sat. December 13 in the Gull Prairie Room. Wassailing was well attended and fun. There will be a potluck after the Annual Congregational Meeting on January 25, 2015.

Christian Education The Christmas Pageant is Sunday December 14. The topic of Adult Sunday Classes will be "20 Questions" for the next few weeks.

Mission A deposit has been made to Camp Westminster for a summer mission trip. More information will be available to members in early 2015. Youth will do fund raisers for the trip during the year.

Property The phone system will undergo some changes to save money. Back steps and painting are planned for 2015. Snow removal prices are acceptable. Boy Scouts may rake the property-weather depending.

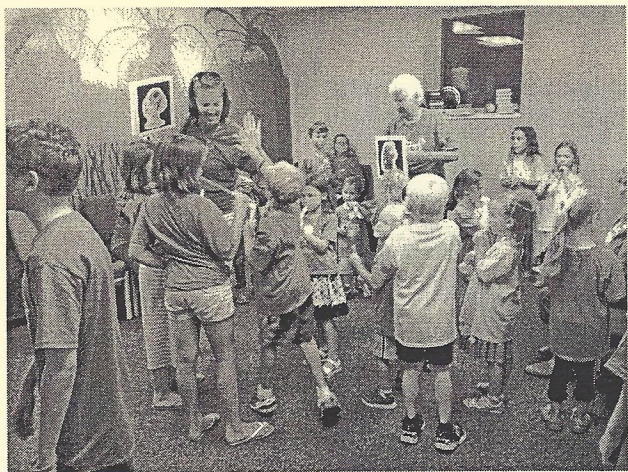
Prayer Concerns were raised for members, family and friends. The meeting was adjourned with prayer at 8:15.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL needs YOU!

That's right, planning has already begun, and we need YOU to make 2015 the best VBS year EVER! VBS is an all-ages event, and will be held August 17-20, 2015.

Here are just a FEW of the areas where you can help!

Curriculum Planning: Children/Youth/Adults	Design/Decorations/ Set Up
Teaching	Games
Youth Skit Director	Registration
Crafts	Meals/Snacks
Music	T-Shirts
Marketing	Clean-Up Crew



If you are interested in joining a planning committee or helping out with VBS week, please contact Sandy Carahaly at sandy@corva.com or 269-998-8394.
Thank you!

Sacred Sounds?

The following letter to the editor of The American Organist magazine appears in the current February 2015 issue. Reprinted by permission.

During the months of June and July, as I plan for the upcoming season, I am usually barraged with the proverbial “new release” catalogs from hopeful publishers that contain CDs and colorful photographs of smiling composers. One recently crossed my desk, with the words *Sacred Sounds* joyfully splashed across its kaleidoscopic cover, and that got me thinking.

I put two such CDs (from different publishers) into my computer, just to hear what was being touted as the latest in church music. What I found, not surprisingly, was music that in no way resembled what I have long considered to be church music. The opening track on the first CD sounded like something from a Disney animated film, and the other was reminiscent of a TV variety show or a Radio City Music Hall spectacular. I could not relate what I was hearing to anything I would consider a *sacred sound*.

How often have we heard it said that “the church should be *in* the world, but not *of* the world” – and yet we experience a “style” of worship so encumbered by secular manifestations that it reeks of worldliness? How can one honestly focus attention on a divine being when our ears are filled with music that lures us into the realm of Mary Poppins, the Rockettes, or our favorite pop artist? Although some will argue the point, ecclesiastical things—especially music—do influence our thoughts. Those who have experienced some of the great cathedrals of Europe know exactly what I mean: stained-glass windows, organs, stone floors, and vaulted ceilings all exist to direct the worshippers’ thoughts to a higher, spiritual realm that usually isn’t visited throughout the week. Yet, if the accoutrements of worship merely reflect the average, everyday world in which we live, worshippers are denied that precious opportunity, and thus, their thoughts are held captive by influences rooted in the secular culture.

So, is there a sacred sound? Yes, indeed; but, conversely, there is also a *secular* sound, and each has the power to direct listener’s thoughts

in different directions. It is a shame that some in the music industry either cannot make that distinction or simply choose to ignore it. One’s encounter with God in the act of worship is either engendered or hindered by the music we present. And so, once again, in my ministry, I am confronted with a choice: Do I select music that truly has a sacred sound to it and thus, the potential to uplift the spirit? Or do I select that which merely shackles the soul to this sinful world and enjoy the applause?

Raymond Weidner
Lynchburg, Va.

New VGA Programs This Month

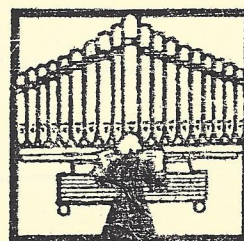
First, two local musical legends will pierce your heart with the romantic strains of Valentine’s Day, February 14th. The mid-afternoon program gives you plenty of time to follow it with a cozy candlelight dinner on the town.

Nationally known pianist Rich Ridenour, and the well-known local violin virtuoso Barry Ross are a team you won’t want to miss. The icing on the cake of having these two wizards here is that they’re also a lot of fun. They’re sure to have you tapping your foot, and they’ll give you a few laughs too. **Saturday February 14, 3 pm.**

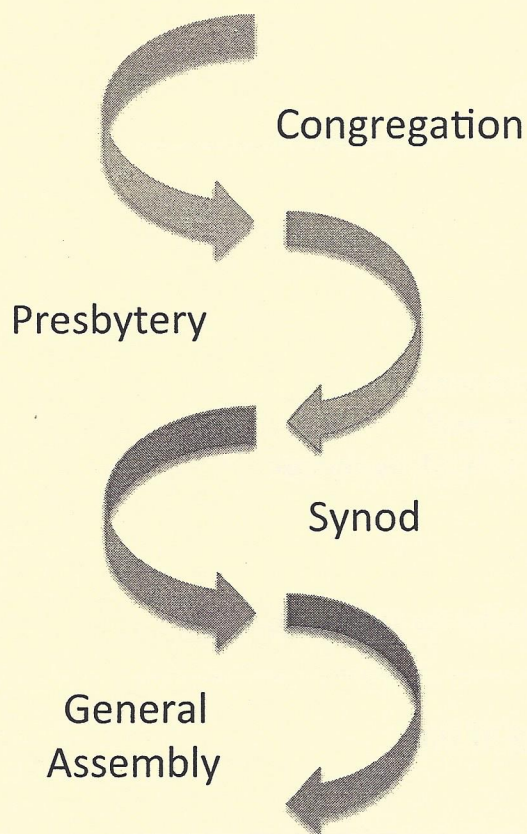
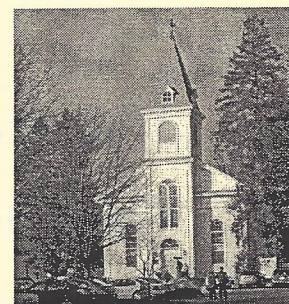
Then on the following Sunday we present the WMU University Chorale under the direction of Kimberly Adams. I believe this to be their third Village Green Arts performance here since the series began in 2000. They are superbly trained singers who sing music from many historical periods, including scores being written today. Our Chancel Choir director, Amanda Bistolfo, is the graduate assistant conductor of the Chorale. **Sunday, February 22, 3 pm.**

All Village Green Arts programs are free and open to everyone. There is an optional offering opportunity to help defray expenses. Presbyterian Women prepare a free reception tea at the conclusion of every Village Green Arts event. Stay and meet the performers.

Please come and create some new musical memories of your own.



Per Capita contributions are the way we share the expenses of the PC(USA) system of government. The annual amount is a combined request from the Presbytery, Synod and the General Assembly - of which each congregation is a part.



2015 per capita is **\$25.32**
per member.

Presbytery of Lake Michigan's \$15.00 share of the per capita budget is used for expenses:

- Presbytery Operations
- Book of Order Committees
- Mission Initiative Grants
- Presbytery Meetings
- Audit & Legal Expenses

The Synod of the Covenant's \$3.25 share of the per capita budget is used for expenses related to:

- Fulfilling constitutional and administrative responsibilities
- Facilitating conversation between the governing bodies of the church
- Synod Meetings
- Stated Clerk and Treasurer's Operations
- Legal Expenses

The General Assembly's \$7.07 share of the per capita budget is used for:

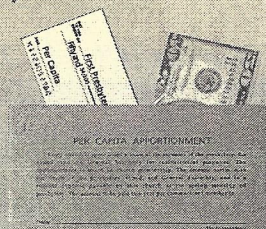
- General Assembly Meetings
- Immigration Issues
- Leadership Development
- Office of the General Assembly
- Constitutional Services

How Can You Help First Presbyterian?

Please return your Per Capita Apportionment envelope with funds to cover your family's membership. Thank you!

Members:

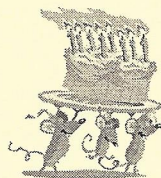
- 1 = \$25.32
- 2 = \$50.64
- 3 = \$75.96
- 4 = \$101.28
- 5 = \$126.60
- 6 = \$151.92



February Birthdays



Nick Sullivan	1
Cheryl Wank	1
Blakesley Walters	4
Sean MacRitchie	6
Bob Steely	6
Terry Dawson	9
Ryan Romyak	9
Ed Calkins	10
Marianne MacRitchie	10
Christopher Reece	10
Brooke Saunders	10
Jack Sizer	10
Brad Brundage	11
Wendy Field	11
Becky Reinhart	11
Tyler Carpenter	12
Jean Stafford	13
Allie Steele	13
Kim Killoren	15
Lisa Miller	15
Pat Peters	16
Ed Davis	17
Cindi Lebiecki	17
Kate Schrauben	18
Becky Stubbs	18
Fred Davis	19
Jerry Wittwer	19
Nancy Nott	20
Carol Coverly	22
Tyler Fitzgerald	23
Brittany Irey	23
Alyson Muss	23
Jill Bair	24
Stella Carahaly	24
Joyce Farho	24
Micky Kemple	25



Ann Meyer Fontaine	25
Glenn Fontaine	25
Beth Farho	26
Laura Fitzgerald	26
Amelia Howard	27
Christy Stallings	27
Jamie Fiordalis Jozic	28
Richard Venner	28
Brian Young	28

and Anniversaries

- 6 Phyllis and Larry Youse ~ 44
- 9 Tom Stegink and Kathleen Griffin ~ 35
- 11 Ann and Glenn Fontaine ~ 9
- 22 Mike and Pam Moseley ~ 30
- 28 Micky and Mark Kemple ~ 34

