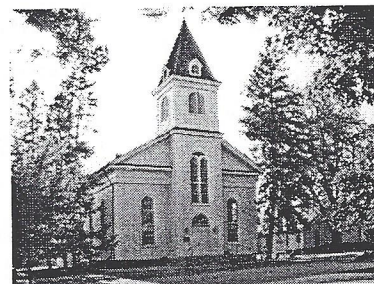


First Presbyterian Church

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"Where Does This Mean For Us?"

As everyone knows by now, the United States Supreme Court ruled this last Friday that all states must recognize same-gender marriages. That means that Michigan may not now discriminate in any of the legal benefits conferred on a marriage base on the gender of the people getting married. But what does that mean for the church?

According to our Book of Order (W-4.9000) a clergy person is authorized, though not required, to act as an agent of the state in recording a marriage contract. Nothing in our church Constitution shall compel a teaching elder (that's me) to perform a marriage service that the teaching elder believes is contrary to the teaching elder's discernment of the Holy Spirit and understanding of the Word of God. That means that it is totally my decision whether or not I officiate at a wedding. That hasn't changed and won't change.

Also in our Constitution, a session has the authority to permit or deny the use of church property for a marriage service, or for any other purpose. The property of the church is under the soul authority of the session. It is also true that nothing in our constitution can compel a session to authorize use of the sanctuary or any other part of the church for a marriage service that the session believes is contrary to the session's discernment of the Holy Spirit and their understanding of the Word of God.

What all this means is that if a couple comes to the church wanting to get married, whether they are the same gender or not, it is up to me to decide whether or not to do the service. But it is also up to the session of our church to decide whether or not to authorize the use of the building for that wedding, and the pastor must abide by the wishes of the session on the use of church property.

I think that most of you know that I do not have a problem officiating at a same-gender wedding ceremony. I think that God rejoices when a couple wants to enter into a loving covenant with each other asking the blessing of God and of the community. I know that there are some of you who feel differently and we can still joyfully come together and worship as part of the same church. It will be up to the session to consider what the policy of our church will be on the use of the building. Years ago, the session put together a wedding booklet that contained all the policies, fees and guidelines for weddings in our church. In July the session will begin to look at how that may need to be amended should they decide that our church will not discriminate when it comes to hosting weddings based on the gender of the couple.

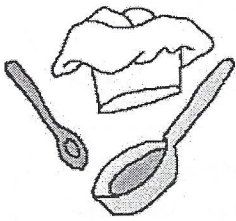
As always the session covets your prayers as we enter into this time of discernment and decision.

Grace and Peace,
Mark

Presbyterian Women

*PW meets the 1st Wednesday of each month at 1:00 p.m. in the church,
The next meeting is July 1st EVERY WOMAN is welcome.*

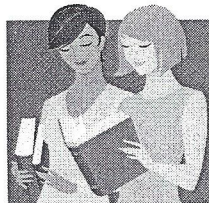
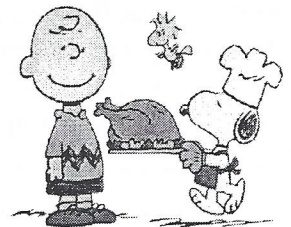
Older Bunch for Lunch needs YOU!



August 6th

Be on the look-out for a sign up sheet in the Gull Prairie Room!!
We will definitely need helpers the day of, preparing, serving, and cleaning.
When we determine what's for lunch, we'll be in touch.

This is a wonderful day to work in the kitchen
with other members and friends of our church.
We can always use extra hands and smiling faces.



WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

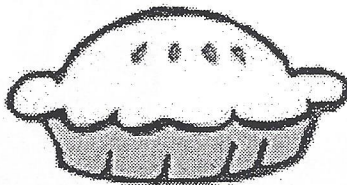
This year there will be independent lessons taught on various subjects throughout the year. We will not be meeting every month. We hope you will join us for a different approach to Bible Study this coming year!

PW PURPOSE: Forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to nurture our faith through prayer and Bible Study, to support the mission of the church worldwide, to work for justice and peace and to build an inclusive, caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (USA) and witnesses to the promise of God's Kingdom.

As part of the annual Independence Day festivities in Richland, Presbyterian Women will be selling pies at the Pie Tent July 4th

How can you help?

◆ 5 & 9-inch **Homemade** pies are needed (please no cream or pumpkin pies). Bring your labeled baked pie(s) in a disposable tin to the church by July 3 if possible or July 4th by 9:00a.m. Pies brought earlier than July 3 should be put in the church freezer.



◆ If you're not a pie baker yet **come to the church and learn from the experts.** On June 23 & 25 we will prepare and bake pies beginning at 9:00a.m. This is a great time for fellowship as well as pie baking.

◆ **Workers are needed on July 4** at 8:00a.m. to prepare for the sale and sell pies from 9:00am until about noon, and then clean up our area in the park after the sale. We usually sell out of pies by 12:00. Of course, there is always time to watch the parade.

Sign up sheets for all of these opportunities to help are posted on the bulletin board in the Gull Prairie Room along with copies of a great pie crust recipe.

Proceeds from the pie sale provide funds to meet the PW Mission Budget. Thank you for your help.

If you aren't able to make or sell pies come and buy some.
Pray for good weather on July 4th!!

The road passes through an area where Awan Mach, an elder from the junction who is in the photo, grows maize and okra. He was told his plants were going to be removed and he responded positively by saying, "Go ahead and remove my crops; this is our road and if this means you have to destroy my crops all for the sake of our road, then go for it." I was personally touched when I heard that from a senior.



This tells us at MCH how desperately people of Werkok need the road. The work has now stopped due to rain. It is raining heavily these days and that has prevented our contractor from working on the road.

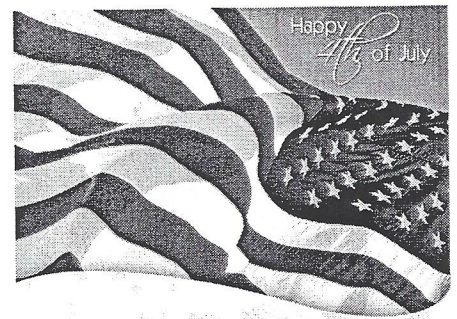
Set Free Ministries wants to renovate both the Primary school and Secondary school in Werkok and I have been delegated to work with contractor bidders. So far, I have contacted three bidders and I sent their quotations to Set Free Ministries and PCC in the US. They are going to present the information to the donors for funding. I am hoping this works out. Many people have deserted the village and if the school is open as a boarding school, then people will come back, not only to Werkok but also to the nearby villages. Set Free Ministries is a Christian organization in Grand Rapids, Michigan and they want to open a Secondary school in Werkok as a Christian School. I think this will be good because we need Christian institutions in the area.

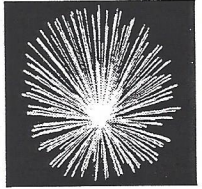
I came to Juba to work on a Tax Exemption letter for the hospital from the Ministry of Health and Customs. Our drugs arrived in Juba International Airport on Monday from Nairobi Kenya and they are now in a Juba warehouse waiting to be cleared. I will be working on the letter and I am hoping to obtain the letter this week or early next week.

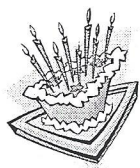
My contract is ending on July 1st of this year and I told the organization to suspend the renewal of my contract for three months (**July 1 to October 1, 2015**). I am planning to spend 4th of July with my wife and my siblings and need you to pray for my journey from South Sudan to Kenya sometime next week.

Thank you and God bless you all,
Deng/Samuel

July 2015



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 1:00 PW Meeting	2	3	4 
5 9:45 Worship - communion	6 9:00 Care Team 1:30 Office Staff 2:00-3:00 Piano in Sanctuary being used 6:00 Boy Scouts	7 10:00 Connected Threads	8 7:00 Session	9 6:00 Deacons	10	11 12:00-4:00 GPR may be used
12 9:45 Worship - 2 cents -a-meal	13 1:30 Office Staff 6:00 Boy Scouts	14 10:00 Connected Threads	15 7:00 Committee's Meet	16	17 10:00 Richland Library here, Wildlife Safari in GPR Set up for Art Fair begins in the Park	18 Richland Art Fair in the Park
19 9:45 Worship Mission Trip begins	20 9:00 Care Team 1:30 Office Staff 2:00 Piano in Sanctuary being used 6:00 Boy Scouts	21 10:00 Connected Threads	22 9:30 Flower Group in White Room	23	24 Missive articles due	25
26 9:45 Worship	27 1:30 Office Staff 6:00 Boy Scouts	28 10:00 Connected Threads	29 10:00 Richland Library here, Dr. Tom Silent Theatre	30	31	



July Birthdays



Jane Carpenter	1	Marilynn Simon	16
Jacob Pixley	1	Olivia Sullivan	16
George Spengler	1	Harold Dishon	17
Kathleen King	2	Martha Croasdale	18
Milt Pollock	2	Sam Gibson	18
Barb Perigo	3	Geoff Lindenberg	18
Sandra Barts	4	Phyllis Youse	19
Becky Mandrell	5	Roxanne Hoorn	20
Michael Moseley	5	Carrie Stolt Meersman	20
David Sutherland	5	Terry Vantine	20
Casey Kemple	6	Gary Gibson	21
Ross Reinhardt	6	Jennifer Odar	21
Larry Turpin	6	Kent Dolbee	22
Roselyn Becker	7	Joseph Odar	22
Emily Hanavan Leslie	7	David Sizer	22
Clark Crenshaw	8	Tineke Stolt	22
Rachael Nolin	9	Karen Bell	23
Rebecca Nolin	9	Christina Hittle	24
Bob Reinhardt	9	Bob Johnson	25
Luke Fiordalis	10	Sheryl Slezak	25
Jim Saunders	10	Mary Brundage	26
Donna Webb	10	Brent Wieber	26
Tim McQuater	12	Ben Gibson	27
Justin Barts	13	Annie Jennings	27
Deb Fisher	14	Julie Pausch	27
Jakob Hildenbrand	14	Kim Saunders	27
Judy Kleis	14	Pat Hanavan	28
Mike Knowlton	14	Julie Johnson	28
Melissa Spengler	14	Evan Jones	28
Kathleen Griffin	14	Diane Place	29
Mary Lou Cazers	15	Ann Stolt	30
Barbara Liggett	15	Megan Inman	30
Tony Osborne	15	Dana Pausch	30
Kyle Sunden	15	Haleigh Sage	30
Jack Alspach	16	Jessica Wines Curry	30
Sarah Newell	16	Meegin Rozeboom	31



Anniversaries

1 Tineke and Harry Stolt ~ 37 years	12 Carol and Murray Cooper ~ 7
1 Sara and Brent Wieber ~ 21	12 Jill and Rick Steele ~ 35
3 Nancy and Bob Hess ~ 44	21 Michael and Nancy Wright ~ 42
6 Doug and Linda Gates ~ 30	23 Charlene and Bob Nash ~ 49
6 Katie and John Welser ~ 52	23 Greg and Van Slatter ~ 27
9 Herb and Mary Brundage ~ 21	23 Karen and John Urban ~ 55
9 Joe and Catherine Gibson ~ 21	24 Clara and Don Kreinbring ~ 44
	25 Julie and Bob Johnson ~ 63