

The Missive February 2021

First Presbyterian Church

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“Connections”

When I first went to college, I went to a school that was 1200 miles from my home. It was a small college, but it drew people from many different parts of the country. I remember that every fall, as we would meet new people who were arriving at the school, almost every conversation began with the words, “Where are you from?” We were interested, was this person from Washington, Oregon, California, Alaska, Idaho . . . or from someplace far more exotic, perhaps New Jersey or New York? After four years there, I went someplace more exotic, I went to seminary in New Jersey, and I noticed a similar thing as new students arrived. But the question had changed from “Where are you from?” to “Where did you go to school?” Rutgers, Kent State, Duke, Florida State, . . . we wanted to know where they had studied more than where they had grown up. But each of these questions, I realize now, was a desire for connection. When I was in college we asked where a person was from because that might be a place we knew of, or we had been, or we had family close to there. The same was true in seminary when we asked where the person had done their undergrad work, we were looking for commonalities, for connections.

My first roommate in seminary was named Charlie and he was from a small town in East Tennessee. And Charlie had gone to a small Episcopal school in Tennessee, so I figured that there was no one Charlie was going to make connections with here at a Presbyterian school in the Northeast. I was wrong. It seemed like anyone that Charlie met who was from the South had some connection with him . . . “where did you go to school? . . . Well, do you know Dr. ____? She used to teach there? . . . Or do you know Pastor of Crooked Road Presbyterian Church in Talladega, Alabama . . . My daddy knows his family real well . . .” There always seemed to be a connection between these folks

from the South—or they would talk long enough to find one! But making connections was important to us in these new situations.

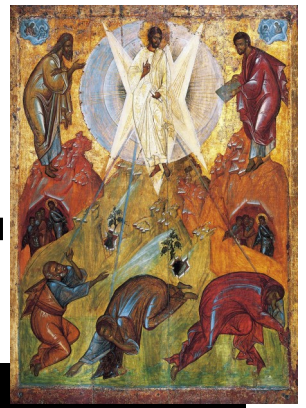
Lately, I’ve been noticing that many of my conversations begin with “Have you got your vaccine yet?” or “Have you been able to schedule an appointment for your shot?” And I realize that this is all about connections, too. Because one of the things that we have missed the most over the last 10 months is the connection with each other, being together, shaking hands, hugging, being able to be in the same space without a mask or worrying about whether we are 6 feet apart. And this is only going to change as more and more of us become vaccinated. It may be summertime before we are somewhat back to “normal.” But as we count up the numbers of our friends who have gotten their shot, it feels like that connection is getting closer.

Until that happens, we do all that we can to maintain our connectedness. We worship together and make comments or pass the peace in real time, even though we are not in the same space. We have devotions and Bible Study and “see” each other on the screen. We talk on the phone or send a text and we know that through all these methods the Holy Spirit ties us together. And we realize in the end that we are “connected,” that there is something deeper and more real than even time and space that keeps us together: “for I am convinced that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor pandemics, nor political upheaval, nor social distancing, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to break our connection that we have in the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:38-39—sort of)

Grace and Peace,

Mark

February 2021



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 10:00 Devotions 6:30 Boy Scouts	2 10:00 Devotions 6:00 Girl Scouts	3 10:00 Devotions 6:00 Girl Scouts	4 11:00 Bible Study 7:30 Story Time	5	6
7 9:45 Worship Communion 5:00 Youth Group	8 10:00 Devotions 6:30 Boy Scouts	9 10:00 Devotions 6:00 Girl Scouts	10 10:00 Devotions 6:15 Session	11 11:00 Bible Study 6:00 Deacons 6:30 Girl Scouts 7:30 Story Time	12 6:00 Girl Scouts	13
14 9:45 Worship Transfiguration of the Lord	15 10:00 Devotions 6:30 Boy Scouts	16 10:00 Devotions 6:00 Girl Scouts	17 10:00 Devotions 6:00 Girl Scouts Ash Wednesday 	18 11:00 Bible Study 7:30 Story Time	19	20
21 9:45 Worship TBA Youth Group	22 10:00 Devotions 6:30 Boy Scouts	23 10:00 Devotions 6:00 Girl Scouts	24 10:00 Devotions	25 11:00 Bible Study 6:30 Girl Scouts 7:30 Story Time	26 6:00 Girl Scouts	27
28 9:45 Worship						

February Togetherness

	<u>Greeters</u>	<u>Ushers</u>	<u>Coffee</u>	<u>Nursery Help</u>
7	YOU	YOU	YOU	YOU
14	ARE	ARE	ARE	ARE
21	COMPLETELY	THOUGHT	CARED	DEFINITELY
28	MISSED!!!	OF OFTEN!!!	FOR!!!	LOVED!!!

February is just plain malicious.
It knows your defenses
are down.

Katherine Paterson

Even though February was the
shortest month of the year,
sometimes it seemed like
the longest.

JD Robb

Though, February is short, it is
filled with lots of love and
sweet surprises.

Charmaine J Forde

Without Valentine's Day,
February would be... well,
January.

Jim Gaffigan

While it is February one can
taste the full joys of anticipation.
Spring stands at the gate with
her finger on the latch.

Patience Strong

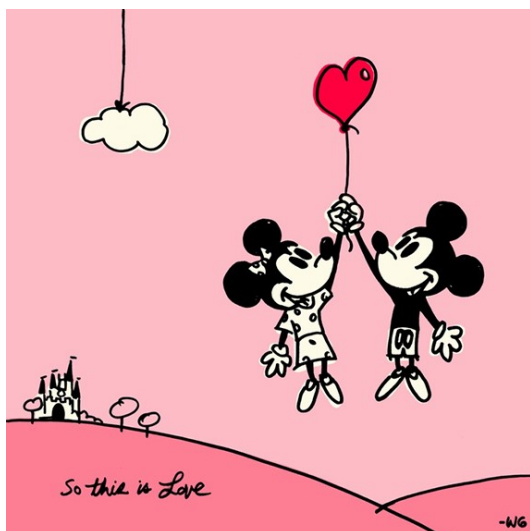
At this time, no need to put up our monthly lists!
We'll be back to normalcy before you know it!
Keep hanging in there! You are so loved!

Sometimes you
have to rethink the
things you thought
you thought
through.

-Winnie the Pooh



amomsimpression.com



"HAPPINESS IS
THE RICHEST
THING WE WILL
EVER OWN."

-DONALD DUCK



Presbyterian Women



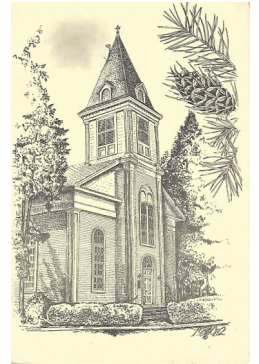
*Our next meeting is not known, but will be at Wanda Clawson's home
1507 W. Gull Lake Dr, Richland
EVERY WOMAN is welcome.*

If you have questions, please call Terry Vantine, 629-5381

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.

Carillon Hymns and Honoree for February

<i>Date</i>	<i>Selection</i>	<i>Honoree</i>
2/1	<i>On Eagle's Wings</i>	<i>Morris E. Stimson</i>
2/7	<i>Amazing Grace</i>	<i>Brandon Dallace Young</i>
2/14	<i>What A Friend We Have in Jesus</i>	<i>Karen and Jon Koets</i>



**FOOD
PANTRY
CORNER**



FOOD PANTRY Giving Suggestions

Since our pantry now has a drive-thru distribution, working with Loaves and Fishes, we can really use:

PERSONAL CARE ITEMS:

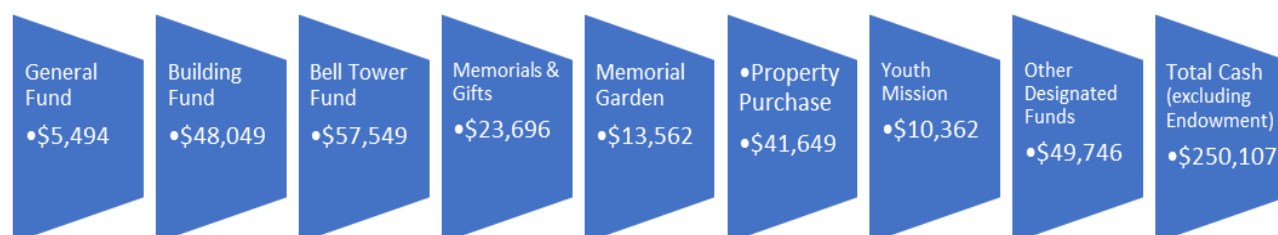
**Deodorant, Shampoo/Conditioner, Soap, Toothpaste, Body Wash, Dish Soap, Tampons, Laundry Soap/Fabric Softener
Monetary donations are very welcome too!**

MONEY MATTERS

2020 WRAP-UP

Full year 2020 net income in the General (operating) Fund was \$5,494.43, closing the year with a surplus we can use to begin to replenish contingency and other designated funds that had been depleted over several years of deficit spending. This is particularly meaningful considering the challenges our church and its members have faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Part of the surplus was related to a grant received from the PC(USA) to waive three months of pension dues, without impacting Pastor Jennings' pension benefit. Thank you to the Board of Pensions for this support and thank you to our congregation for your faithful stewardship of our church and its missions. We also received a CARES Act Payroll Protection Loan and anticipate that this loan will be forgiven in early 2021. This is not included in the General Fund surplus above, rather, it is held in Other Designated Funds pending Session allocation.

As of December 31, fund balances including PPP loan are:



2021 BUDGET

The Annual Report included a balanced budget for 2021. The budget was based on 2020 expenses and 2021 pledges, as well as a review of historical giving and spending. There were no changes to the Pastor's terms of call. Income and Expenses are both budgeted at \$270,150.50. Pledges received through January 10, 2020 are \$190,154, which is 72% of budgeted income. Session will be watching income and expenditures closely to ensure that we do not have a recurrence of the large deficits we have seen in recent years.

A NOTE OF THANKS FROM SANDY CARAHALY

This is my last year as an Elder on the Finance Committee. It has been an emotional three years, filled with many challenges and many joys. I have been honored to serve you and humbled by your support and encouragement. On the darkest days, your notes and calls and kind words helped me keep going. Thank you to Session for your dedication and focus. It has been a long road, and we all pulled together as a team. Special thank you to Gretchen Ferris, Treasurer, and Chris Gobble, Financial Secretary, for their commitment to excellence; you made this role easier for me. Please welcome Geoff Lindenberg to Session, joining Sharon Rothenberg as your Finance elders. Between them and the other continuing and new members of Session, our church is in good hands. Be well.

Pledge commitments and offerings may be made online on the church website or mailed to the attention of the Financial Secretary. Our mailing address is 8047 Church Street, Richland, MI 49083.

YOUTH GROUP

As we head into February, our *goal* is to be back in-person as soon as safety allows.

Look for more information to come as we get closer to each Youth Group date.

All Middle and High School students are welcome to join us whether virtual or in-person.

If you would like to be added to the email distribution list, contact Meredith:
meredithalspach4@gmail.com.



February Schedule:

Sunday, February 7 @ 5pm

Virtual Cooking Competition

- ❖ Make your favorite soup, appetizer or dessert and have it ready to present to the group
- ❖ AND/OR...Create a Super Bowl Commercial for us to "air" during our cooking show
- ❖ Join us to cook, with a commercial, or to be the audience and judges!

★ THERE WILL BE PRIZES!!! ★

All Middle and High School students are welcome!

Sunday, February 21

TBD



SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School continues to meet virtually for the younger children.

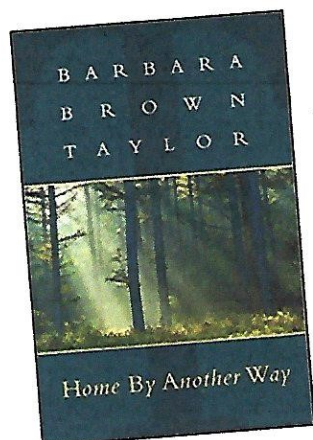
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Christian Education

The journey of faith formation . . .

As we head into the season of Lent, the Christian Ed team has chosen a few books to read together.

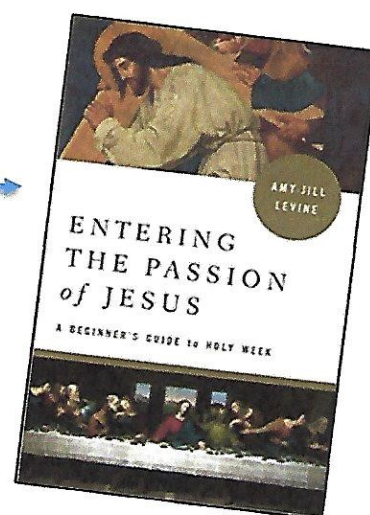


In *Home By Another Way*, Barbara Brown Taylor walks us through the church year from the expectancy of Advent to the fires of Pentecost and beyond. Her themes arise not only from a particular feast or fast, but out of the perennial questions of faith: doubt, grace, anger, and jubilation. This is a great book that will take you through the entire church calendar.

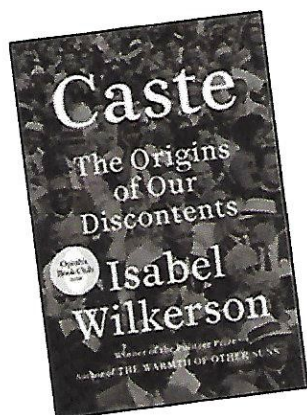
← Follows church calendar

Lenten Read →

In *Entering the Passion of Jesus: A Beginner's Guide to Holy Week*, author, professor, and biblical scholar Amy-Jill Levine explores the biblical texts surrounding the Passion story. She shows us how the text raises ethical and spiritual questions for the reader, and how we all face risk in our Christian experience.



As we continue our *Intersections* series on Racism, we will continue to recommend books and resources each month.



FEBRUARY BOOK OF THE MONTH

Caste
The Origins of Our Discontents
Isabel Wilkerson

Wilkerson's book is about how brutal misperceptions about race have disfigured the American experiment. This is a topic that major historians and novelists have examined from many angles, with care, anger, deep feeling and sometimes simmering wit. Wilkerson's book is a work of synthesis. She borrows from all that has come before, and her book stands on many shoulders.

February Birthdays



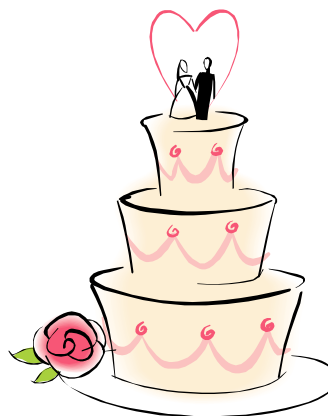
<i>Nick Sullivan</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Cheryl Wank</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Blakesley Walters</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Sean MacRitchie</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Bob Steely</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Paul Gobble</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Terry Dawson</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Ryan Romyak</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Jean Yoder</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Ed Calkins</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Marianne MacRitchie</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Christopher Reece</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Brooke Saunders</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Jack Sizer</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Brad Brundage</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Wendy Field</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Becky Reinhart</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Tyler Carpenter</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Jean Stafford</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Allie Steele</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Kim Killoren</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Lisa Miller Ballmer</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Pat Peters</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Ed Davis</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Cindi Lebiecki</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Kate Schrauben</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Becky Stubbs</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Fred Davis</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Jerry Wittwer</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Nancy Nott</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Carol Coverly</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Tyler Fitzgerald</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Brittany Irey</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Alyson Muss</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Jill Bair</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Stella Carahaly</i>	<i>24</i>



<i>Joyce Farho</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Micky Kemple</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Ann Meyer Fontaine</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Glenn Fontaine</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Beth Farho</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Laura Fitzgerald</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Amelia Howard</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>Christy Stallings</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>Jamie Fiordalis Jozic</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>Richard Venner</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>Brian Young</i>	<i>28</i>

and Anniversaries

<i>6</i>	<i>Phyllis and Larry Youse ~ 50 years</i>
<i>9</i>	<i>Tom Stegink and Kathleen Griffin ~ 41</i>
<i>11</i>	<i>Ann and Glenn Fontaine ~ 15</i>
<i>22</i>	<i>Mike and Pam Moseley ~ 36</i>
<i>26</i>	<i>Pam and Rick Foster ~ 16</i>
<i>28</i>	<i>Micky and Mark Kemple ~ 40</i>



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8047 Church Street
Richland, MI 49083

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH STAFF

Dr. Mark W. Jennings, *Pastor*
Gretchen Ferris, *Treasurer*,
Chris Gobble, *Financial Secretary*
Larry Myland, *Director of Music*
Branden Burris, *Director of Choirs*
Meredith Alspach, *Director of Faith Formation*
Heather Putt, *Nursery Supervisor*
Connie Slater, *Sexton*
Julie Pixley, *Administrative Secretary*

