

The Missive, April 2022

First Presbyterian Church

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“The Bell”

It's not all that easy to get to, actually. We hear it every Sunday, but most people have never even seen it. In years past, when I was much more able to do these things, I used to take each year's confirmation class up to see our church bell. To get to it one needs to climb up a ladder and go through the trapdoor that you can see in the ceiling in the Choir Resource Room (if you don't know where the Choir Resource Room is, it's the room with all the filing cabinets just off the sanctuary—you walk through it every time you go from the Gull Prairie Room to the Sanctuary). Once you climb through that door you realize that you are in the loft where some of the organ pipes are. You can see through the screen into the sanctuary—and you realize that if Larry decided to really crank up the organ at the moment you are walking through there . . . well, your ears would be ringing for a while. On the east side of that loft is another ladder attached to the wall that you can climb up and find yourself in the attic space above the ceiling of the sanctuary. Here there's a walkway of boards that takes you along the length of the ceiling until you reach the opening of the bell tower. Now you can climb up another ladder to actually get to the bell. You can look through the windows over the village of Richland and you'll be surprised how high you are. When you're up there you'll be able to see that some intrepid soul from previous years have written their initials or the date of their climb—some going back more than a century.

But that's all gone now. The bell tower is being taken apart and the bell is currently stored in the garage of the Deacon Brown House. We are awaiting the arrival of our new steeple in May and the bell will be put on permanent display. Now we'll be able to see it all the time, but lots of us are a little nostalgic about not having a bell hanging high in the bell tower.

We almost didn't have a bell there anyway. Many of you know the story, but this week as we've been talking about the bell, I've realized that there are some who had never heard how we almost lost our bell. The way I heard it, the story goes like this:

The first church built on this site was constructed in 1837. In 1841 our church decided that our new building needed a new

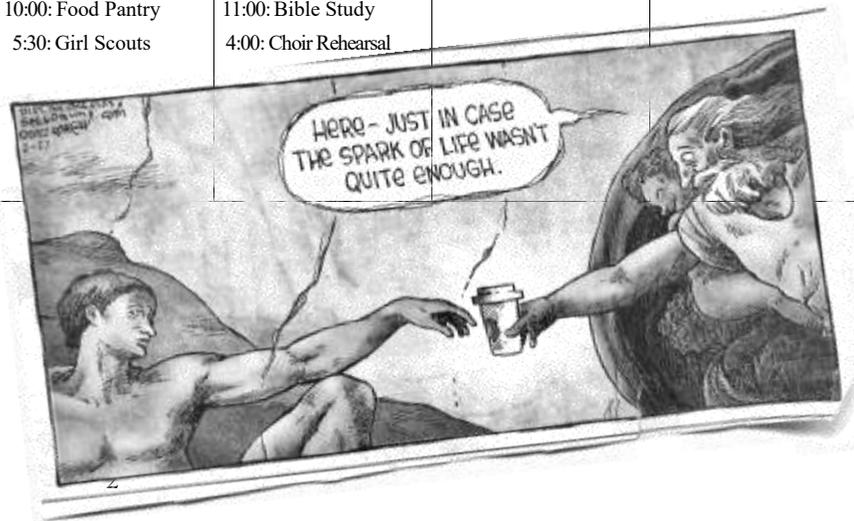
bell. Since funds were not immediately available, the church made pledges toward payment of a bell to be made by the Meneely Company of Troy, New York, all based on the harvest of 1842. The bell was delivered and put in the steeple, but the wheat harvest of 1842 was poor and the Meneely Company only received part of what was promised. Enter into the picture one Mumford Eldred, Jr. Mr. Eldred had moved his business from Gull Corners (present downtown Richland) to Yorkville and wanted the Yorkville area to be the center of commerce of the area. Since the ringing of the Presbyterian bell four times a day was perceived to be drawing people to Gull Corners, Mr. Eldred contacted the Meneely Company and arranged to be their agent in confiscating the un-paid for bell. He hoped to take it back to Yorkville. To do so he gathered a group of men and marched to Gull Corners and the church. An 1880 history of the event says, “Before Mr. Eldred reached Gull Prairie, word had gone out and quite a number of people had collected. Mr. Eldred told them that he had an order to take the bell down. They responded that he could not take the bell. Mr. Eldred walked over to the church; finding the door locked, he threw himself against it with such force as to open it. Finding himself closely followed, he sprang up the ladder into the belfry. No sooner had he reached the top than the ladder was taken down and at the same time the bell was rung as it was never rung before. Soon men and boys were seen coming in hot haste from all parts of the prairie. Mr. Eldred, becoming satisfied that it would be fruitless to attempt to obtain the bell (also since it weighed 800 pounds), concluded that the better part of valor was to retreat, and he was allowed to come down.”

It was that bell (subsequently paid for) that was installed in the bell tower of the new church building in 1861. Unfortunately, by 1877 the bell had begun to crack and had to be replaced. A new bell was installed in 1881, and it is that “new bell” that we have heard and loved for 140 years and we will soon have on display for all to see.

*Grace and Peace,
Mark*

APRIL 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3 9:45: Worship - Communion	4 1:00: Pastoral Care Team 6:30: Boy Scouts	5 10:00: Connected Threads 10:00: Food Pantry 6:00: Girl Scouts	6 10:00: Food Pantry 12:00: Seasoned Seniors 7:00: Mission Committee	7 11:00: Bible Study 4:00: Choir Rehearsal 6:30: Girls Scouts	8	9
10 ~ <i>Palm Sunday</i> ~ 9:45: Worship 4:00: 4 th 5 th 6 th Group @ Kzoo 5:00: Youth Group @ Kzoo	11 10:00: Christian Education 2:30: Personnel Committee 6:30: Boy Scouts	12 10:00: Connected Threads 10:00: Food Pantry 6:30: Boy Scouts 7:00: Shared Blessings	13 10:00: Food Pantry 5:30: Girl Scouts 6:15: Session Meeting	14 11:00: Bible Study 4:00: Choir Rehearsal 6:00: Deacons Meeting 7:00: Maundy Thursday Service 8:00: Prayer Vigil	15 ~ <i>Good Friday</i> ~	16
17 ~ <i>Easter</i> ~ 7:00: Sunrise Service 8:00: Breakfast 9:45: Worship	18 6:30: Boy Scouts	19 10:00: Connected Threads 10:00: Food Pantry 6:00: Girl Scouts	20 10:00: Food Pantry 4:00: FPC Kzoo Meal & Hot Cocoa, prep & serve	21 11:00: Bible Study 1:00: Pastoral Care Team 4:00: Choir Rehearsal 6:30: Girls Scouts	22	23 Adopt-a-Highway week begins.
24 9:45: Worship 1:00: CROP Hunger Walk	25 6:30: Boy Scouts	26 8:00: Men's Breakfast 10:00: Connected Threads 10:00: Food Pantry 6:30: Boy Scouts	27 10:00: Food Pantry 5:30: Girl Scouts	28 11:00: Bible Study 4:00: Choir Rehearsal	29	30



Holy Week Events

April 14th
 7:00 p.m. Maundy Thursday Service
 8:00 p.m. Prayer Vigil throughout the night

April 17th
 7:00 a.m. Easter Sunrise Service
Breakfast to follow
 9:45 a.m. Easter Service



April Birthdays

Jay Hoorn.....	1	CJ Hoorn.....	10	Phyllis Leiter.....	22
Claire Stupica.....	2	Rob Kubiak.....	10	Sarah Nott.....	22
Julie Howard.....	3	Emily Myland Walters.....	11	Lily Thomas.....	22
Aaron LaLonde.....	3	Emma Gay.....	12	Gail Venner.....	22
Stephanie Wank.....	3	Michelle Greve.....	12	Nancy Wright.....	22
Kay Hutchinson.....	4	Jacob White.....	12	Rick Wynsma.....	22
Robert Monk.....	4	Nancy Lynch.....	13	Liam MacRitchie.....	23
Ken Barts.....	5	Tim Brundage.....	14	Jacqueline Brignall.....	24
Rob Carpenter.....	5	Mary Ellen Bryer.....	14	Caelan Deater.....	25
Kalli Inman.....	5	Zip Fiordalis.....	15	Zoe Gobble.....	26
Charlotte Slezak.....	5	George Lindenberg.....	15	John Meyer.....	27
Jennifer Spengler.....	5	Molly Danielssen.....	16	Linda Pollock.....	27
Sara Wieber.....	5	Karen Kendall.....	17	Paul Reinhart.....	27
Gary Schott.....	7	Steve Allen.....	18	Sophia Carahaly.....	29
Irissa Wyckoff.....	7	Sheldon Putt.....	19	Elle Gay.....	30
Margaret Hetzel.....	8	Ronda Schaadt.....	20	Tom Kendall.....	30
Sharon Rothenberg.....	8	Beth Carrington.....	21	Kelene Monk Rogers.....	30
Evelyn Cramer.....	9	Scott MacRitchie.....	21		
Katie Welser.....	9	Karalea Rothenberg Jasiak.....	21		

& Anniversaries

4.....Kalli & Steve Inman	~ 35	16.....Deng & Mary Alier	~ 7
5.....Larry & Sue Myland	~ 47	23.....Byron and Carol Hodgson	~ 6
12.....Allen & Jennifer Stupica	~ 37	25.....Deb & Mark Fisher	~ 35



Carillon Hymns and Honoree for April

Date.....	Selection	Honoree
13.....	Great Is Thy Faithfulness	Jay R. Wells, Jr.
17.....	What a Friend We Have In Jesus	Janes E. Garn
30.....	Faith of Our Father's	Robert Murphy (Birthday)



YOUTH GROUP

YOUTH GROUP

Youth Group is meeting in-person for all 7th-12th grade 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.

April 10 – 5-7:00 pm @ FPC Kzoo

April 17 – NO Youth Group (Easter)

April 24 – CROP Walk

May 1 – 5-7:00 pm @ FPC Kzoo

May 8 – NO Youth Group (Mother's Day!)

May 15 – 5-7:00 pm @ FPC Kzoo

May 22 – YOUTH SUNDAY!

5-7:00 pm @ Richland

May 29 – NO Youth Group

(Memorial Day weekend!)

NEW

Calling all 4th, 5th & 6th Graders!!!

We have a NEW group just for you and all are welcome! Join us for faith, fun and fellowship!

April 10 – 4-5:00 pm @ FPC Kzoo

April 24 – CROP Walk

May 15 – 4-5:00 pm @ FPC Kzoo

May 22 – YOUTH SUNDAY!



BE THE CHURCH
Don't let the world pass you by.
Care for the poor.
Forgive often.
Reject racism.
Righten wrongs.
Be a family and a source of support.
Embrace diversity.
Love God.
Enjoy this life.



Did you know?

7th-12th Grade
Youth Group

Colleges
Young Adults

4th, 5th
& 6th
Graders

Mom's

To be added to the email list for any of these groups, please contact Meredith: meredithalspach4@gmail.com

LOVINGKINDNESS



CROP HUNGER WALK



Sunday, April 24th, 2022

Bronson Park - Downtown Kalamazoo

The Annual Kalamazoo Valley CROP Hunger Walk

Kick-off 1 pm - Walk begins at 2 pm

PLEASE FOLLOW THIS LINK TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CROPWALK, AND WHAT YOU CAN DO!

events.crophungerwalk.org/2022/team/first-presbyterian-church-richland-mi

The Kalamazoo CROP Hunger Walk returns in-person this year! In 2022, we will continue the fight against the challenges that leave people hungry.

If you would like to help, go to the "Give to CROP" link and donate to the Church World Service website. You may also mail your donation to the church, 8047 Church St, Richland, MI 49083, and your check will be sent to CWS.

For questions, please contact Cindi Lebiecki at 269-365-3115 or cdoo258@sbcglobal.net.

Team name: First Presbyterian Church Richland, MI

Mailing address for check donations: CWS PO Box 968 Elkhart, IN 46515



Paper Bags Needed

Our goal at the Richland Food Pantry is to create a food shopping experience that is familiar and comforting, like going to the local grocery store. You can help provide this by bringing your clean, folded, like new, paper grocery bags to the food pantry or church office. Please take a second to check for forgotten receipts you may have left in the bag.

Extended Hours

The pantry now serves clients Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 10 am to Noon.

Food Pantry Shopping List

Canned soups, vegetables, or chicken are always welcome if you feel moved to help the food pantry with food donations. Monetary gifts can also be directed to the food pantry by specifying it as the intended recipient on your church offering envelopes.

Bell Tower Update

By Rick Foster

Capital Campaign:

Phase 1 of the campaign is church members, friends, and community support and runs through March 30th. To date 66 members and friends and 11 community supporters have contributed approximately \$145,000. When added to the \$85,000 starting balance, we have approximately \$225,000 against our goal of \$265,000. While this will pay for all Bell Tower related construction costs, we still need your support for the total sanctuary, kitchen, pantry, and GPR improvements. Please continue to send in your donations and pledges!

Phase 2 will continue through June and will be seeking foundation and Go Fund Me support. Foundation support is pretty risky with all other needs out there, so we don't have great hope for foundation support.

A Go Fund Me page has been established and is available through the church website. Please "share" the site so others will see the Go Fund Me page – that's how to expand exposure and giving.

Bell Tower Dismantling and Construction Timeline:

Dismantling the tower starts now! Construction safety fencing is erected and the top pyramid of the tower (with Rooster) will be taken off in one-piece using a very large crane within the coming week. The contractor will let us know ahead of time so we can film the removal of the upper tower and bell. The remaining base will be taken down piecemeal to rescue old timbers over the following few weeks. All removal will be completed (hopefully) by about April 10. Construction of the new base will be on the ground in front of the church and be completed by May 10 or so.

The new steeple is scheduled to arrive May 11 and the base and steeple will be put in place shortly after using a huge crane – rooster will be re-inserted. The entire project will hopefully be completed by May 20th or so. Bells and chimes will unfortunately be disconnected during construction but will be reestablished as soon as possible.

Thanks for your continued support
- Buildings and Grounds





HELP FOR UKRAINE

By Rev. Mark Jennings

We have all been shocked and saddened by the destruction of Ukraine and the violence to her people, and we wonder what we can do.

There are many great nonprofits doing heroic things to alleviate the suffering. We would like to highlight International Medical Corps (IMC) which was founded by Bob Simon. Bob is a physician, educator and great humanitarian. He and his family are part of our church family and special to all of us.

International Medical Corps is doing yeomen's work in Ukraine, where they have been since 1999 and where they filled a critical role in sustaining the health care system in 2014.

IMC's overhead is kept to a minimum so more monies go directly to those in need and the New York Times named IMC one of the top three organizations to which to donate. Attached you will find links to IMC so you can learn about their great work.

We, as a session, have given \$1,000 to IMC and we would like to invite you to consider adding to this amount. For those wishing to contribute, we offer the option to send your check to the church where it will be added to others and sent as one donation from the people of Richland Presbyterian.

Please send your gift by April 8th.

Of course, if you prefer, or if you miss the deadline, you are encouraged to donate to IMC directly.

Please let me know if you have any questions, and continue to pray for peace.

Checks: First Presbyterian Richland

<https://internationalmedicalcorps.org/emergency-response/war-in-ukraine/>

<https://internationalmedicalcorps.org/video/cbs-los-angeles-interview-about-our-response-in-ukraine/>

<https://internationalmedicalcorps.org.uk/dr-robert-simon>

5 MYTHS ABOUT THE ALTAR GUILD

By Joyce Gibson

The Altar Guild was started by a dedicated group of talented ladies nearly seventy years ago. Any group that has been around for that long has its share of "tall tales" that are frequently shared and passed from one generation to the next. The Altar Guild is no exception; here are just a few of them:



Calligraphy by Carol DuBosch

You have to be a Master Gardener

Nope, you are welcome with any skill level, even none! You're not alone, you can volunteer with a partner(s) and there are always other members willing to help you out.

You have to have a garden

Nope, we have a large collection of silk flowers you are invited to use. You can buy flowers and arrange them or you can buy an arrangement already done and be reimbursed. You can even find lots of wild flowers along the roads and trails.

You have to make a big time commitment

Nope, you can volunteer as much or as little as you please. Even once a year on a special date is fine. We try to make schedules with available dates each season.

You have to know the Bible inside and out Nope, Mark gives us a list of the readings and he is always happy to help you interpret the message with his ideas. Unless it's a special date on the church calendar (Easter, Christmas, etc.) you are always welcome to do your own thing.; it does not have to be based on the readings.

You need to have your own supplies

Nope, we have so many supplies a florist would be jealous! Most of the time, flowers and a vase are all you need, and boy, do we have vases!

Please consider joining us. We really need your help!

Contact Joyce at moglets3@gmail.com or leave a message in the Church Office.

COCK-A-DOODLE-DOO

By Larry Myland

[Ed. Note: In 2000, Mark Jennings responded to numerous inquiries by penning the following article about the new rooster nesting atop the church's steeple. Current Buildings and Grounds Elder, Rick Foster, wants everyone to know that with the new steeple construction, the rooster will remain in residence in its new aerie. It's here to stay. – Larry Myland]

Why is there a rooster on top of the church? I've had that question asked several times in the past week since he has been sitting on the steeple, and I know many of you want to know the story behind it. If you had looked up to the top of the steeple any time in the last couple of generations you may have seen the old black steeple cap, topped with a broken weather vane. The old cap even had a bullet hole in it, so we needed a new one. Enter Jack and Caroline Gray.

Several years ago in their travels in France, the Grays noticed that many of the churches in Europe are topped with weather vanes in the shape of a rooster. These beautiful objects intrigued them. Jack had a great love for God's feathered creatures and hoped that someday the church might replace the old broken weather vane with a new one in the shape of a rooster. Before Jack died in 1999, it's one of the things he often spoke about. When the Grays made the suggestion that the memorial funds given to the church in remembrance of Jack be used in this way, the session enthusiastically endorsed the project. Local artisan Jerald Newton was commissioned to create the sculpture and a new steeple cap out of copper. Jerry himself installed it on top of the steeple. It was a dizzying spectacle to watch.

In Christian symbolism, the rooster is a familiar Holy Week symbol. Prior to being arrested by the soldiers, Jesus predicted that Peter would deny him three times before the rooster crowed the following morning. The rooster represents Peter's denial of Christ and also stands for his remorse and repentance upon hearing the rooster crow. The rooster's habit of crowing at dawn made it a symbol of the daily victory of light over darkness and the triumph of good over evil. This made the rooster a symbol of light and of Christ, the light of the world.

During the Middle Ages, the rooster became a popular Christian image on weather vanes, also known as weathercocks. Its crowing made an emblem of the Christian's attitude of watchfulness and readiness for the sudden return of Christ.

Our rooster is actually a weathercock-- a weather vane in the form of a rooster--one that turns in the wind, but then returns to face east toward the rising sun when the wind calms at night.



FEATURED THIS MONTH... MEMBERSHIP and FELLOWSHIP

By Pam Foster

Beginning this month and in the coming months, we plan to feature various committees, groups, and people within our church family. Our hope is to bring you information you will find enjoyable, helpful, and possibly will provide an opportunity for you to plug-in or help out where you choose.

Let us introduce you this month to the Membership and Fellowship Committee. Over the years this committee has been in charge of a wide range of activities. This past year they planned and organized the Church Fest in September, refreshments for the Gull Lake homecoming parade in early October, BBQ/fall picnic in the park to celebrate the church's 190th birthday, and Was-sailing in December. Thank you to everyone who helped! We had fun and enjoyed our time together!!

It is our hope that Covid numbers continue to decline and we are able to do more events. Maybe a chili cook-off and/or summer picnic in the backyard or park.

Our current Elder for this committee is Pam Foster. If you would like to help plan or assist with upcoming events, please reach out to her at 269-317-3552 (call or text) or fosterpamela17@gmail.com.

Next month we will feature the Altar Guild. Make sure and check out what possibilities there are to help with the altar flowers and arrangements we enjoy every week. In talking with Joyce Gibson, the history of this guild is very interesting and I'm sure you will enjoy either a trip down memory lane or, like me, new information I found intriguing and inspiring!

ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY



**The Adopt-a-Highway Clean-Up
is ON for April 23rd – May 1st.**

Join us Sunday, May 1st at 2 pm at church to walk with a group!

We need and welcome anyone (children must be over 12 years of age) to assist with pickup/clean up. There are two one-mile sections of road on each side of Gull Road from G Avenue towards Richland. They are at the water tower between the two MDOT signs with our church name.

Adam Simon or Pastor Mark can meet with you briefly at your convenience at church to pass out vests, trash bags and review procedures. You can also stop in the church office to get your vests and trash bags.

You decide on your own schedule during the week or join us on Sunday, May 1st at 2 pm to walk with a group from church. Many hands help the clean-up go faster.

Please text or call Adam, 217-5337, if you want to volunteer and select your section to beautify! Thank you and have fun with it!

Future 2022 dates are July 16-24 and September 24th – October 2nd.



SPECIAL OFFERINGS ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

For many years Richland Presbyterians have helped to fill the world with love by donating to

One Great Hour of Sharing.

Through our offerings, our church has a long tradition of helping children and adults around the world. Many projects are funded through

One Great Hour of Sharing,

a program in existence for over 50 years. Every year millions of Christians from many denominations show their love through donations to assist in feeding the hungry, healing the sick, and offering peace and hope to people in distress.

Human needs as simple as safe drinking water are made available to areas where the water supply is a threat to life and health. Refugees are offered basic needs such as food, shelter, and medical care in times of disaster and dislocation from their homes. The funds also provide many kinds of education, including literacy classes, agricultural and vocational training.

Please join other Presbyterians and Christians in sharing the support of these essential programs and by helping to fill the world with love. April 17th, Easter Sunday, is the day designated for the annual support of this most valuable program. Prayerfully consider your stewardship offerings and include

One Great Hour of Sharing

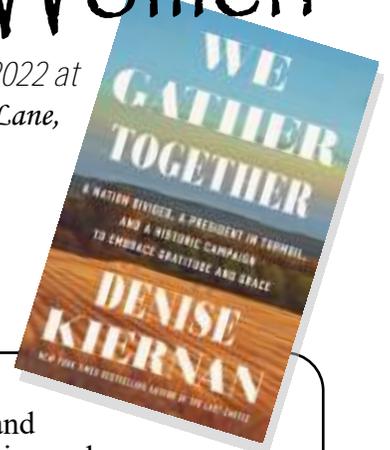
as a part of your contributions this year. A brochure has been provided in this newsletter, and one will be available during worship on the 16th for your convenience. Thank you.

Your Mission Committee

Presbyterian Women



The Ladies Book Club will be meeting on April 20, 2022 at 1 p.m. at Jennifer Spengler's home (2544 Piers End Lane, Kalamazoo, MI 49009). The book we are reading is "We Gather Together" by Denise Kiernan. Call Jennifer with any questions, 381-1195. EVERY WOMAN is welcome.



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.

First Presbyterian Church
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*
Owen Rushford, *Director of Choirs*
Meredith Alspach, *Director of Faith Formation*
Connie Slater, *Sexton*
Paul Gobble, *Interim Clerk*

APRIL