

The Missive, September 2022

First Presbyterian Church

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“Is Worship Changing?”

In the last few years, we have had a new experience—worship online. As we navigated the pandemic during 2020 and 2021, we learned that we could worship together without being physically together. But is it as good as being together? Can the church really be the church without being in the same place? Are we making it too easy? Will people just turn on their computers and have worship in their pajamas with their coffee rather than driving into church?

In-person and online: what does this say about worship in the 21st century?

I’ve been asking some in the church to share their thoughts about their worship needs and attending in-person. The results may surprise some of you but—overwhelmingly—members who rarely attend in person name one main reason: COVID.

When asked about the online option, again, overwhelmingly, I was told that it is a valued alternative. For some, it is a lifeline. The suggestion to discontinue the online option has been occasionally made in hopes that it would increase in-person attendance. A number of very legitimate responses have been offered to this proposal, including: the number of people across the state and country who tune in because they have a connection to us; in the time of COVID and beyond, our membership and local community cherish this connection when in-person is difficult; and some offered—quite plainly—that discontinuing the online service will not compel them to return to in-person, it will only cause them to regretfully tune into another church on Sunday mornings.

We even had one member (who attends in-person on a regular basis) suggest that we need to lean into the online offering, add to the production value, and actively pursue a greater audience.

All this has me thinking about the nature of worship, its beginnings in a prehistoric world through the millennia of organized religion and finally into the last 100 years. There is a reason people gathered together for worship for most of human history: there was no other option. This in no way is meant to disregard the merits of in-person worship (of which there are many) but as technology has developed, we’ve grown from listening to preachers on the radio, to watching them on TV, and presently, streaming online from any church, anywhere. This notion of worshipping from home on Sunday morning is not unique to COVID; it isn’t even unique to this century.

What I’ve learned from these many discussions is that, until the concern over COVID disappears, we can’t measure our efficacy as a worshipping body by counting heads in the sanctuary on Sunday morning. However, COVID or not, we have a responsibility to God and one another to always elevate our worship experience so all are nourished and inspired to do good things the rest of the week.

What do you think? Please let me know your thoughts.

Is worship changing? Yes, but not as much as we fear. We always try to make the worship experience fresh, relevant the times we are living in, and faithful to our traditions. But no matter the times, we still gather, in person and virtually; we still praise God together; we still hear the Word and ask what the Spirit is teaching us today; and we still are here for each other as a community of faith.

*Grace and Peace,
Mark*

SEPTEMBER 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 11:00: Bible Study 7:00: Trivia on the Patio, Richland Library	2	3
4 9:45: Worship & Communion	5 ~ Labor Day~ Church Office Closed	6 10:00: Connected Threads 10:00: Food Pantry 1:00: Pastoral Care Team	7 10:00: Food Pantry 12:00: Seasoned Seniors 6:00: Girl Scouts 7:00: Mission Committee	8 11:00: Bible Study 6:00: Deacons Meeting 6:15: Girl Scouts	9	10
11 9:45: Worship & Sunday School 11:00: Church Fest	12 2:30: Personnel Committee	13 10:00: Connected Threads 10:00: Food Pantry 7:00: Shared Blessings	14 10:00: Food Pantry 12:00: Worship & Music 5:30: Girl Scouts 6:00: Girl Scouts 6:15: Session Meeting	15 11:00: Bible Study	16	17
18 9:45: Worship & Sunday School	19	20 10:00: Connected Threads 10:00: Food Pantry	21 10:00: Food Pantry 6:00: Girl Scouts	22 11:00: Bible Study 6:15: Girl Scouts	23	24 Noon: Presbyterian Women Kickoff
25 9:45: Worship 5:00: Student Piano Recital	26	27 8:00: Men's Breakfast 10:00: Connected Threads 10:00: Food Pantry	28 9:30: Lakeshore Flower Guild 10:00: Food Pantry 5:30: Girl Scouts 6:00: Girl Scouts	29 11:00: Bible Study	30	

September Birthdays

1 stDan Fiordalis	7 thChristine Gates	16 thJake Myland
1 st Doug Gates	7 thJoseph Keusch	16 th Ted Ruser
1 st Connie Kratzer	8 th Barbara Monk	17 th Sandy Hart
1 st Ruth Mason	8 thStuart Verseman	19 th Reid Williams
2 nd Pam Mattes	9 thMarleigh Burris	20 thSpencer Mack
3 rdHeidi Bryant	9 th Katie Monk Gartner	22 nd Val Osborne
3 rd Esperanza Carisalez	10 th Juan Carisalez	23 rdJohn Mittelbach
3 rdSuzie Carpenter	10 th Cindy Hoorn	25 th Rebecca Jones
3 rdStephanie Kleis Newton	13 th Alec Ambrosio	25 th Don Meitz
4 thDavid Greve	13 th Gary Mittelbach	25 thAndee Trautman
5 th Sarah Bryer	13 th Nicole Romyak	27 th Betsy Powell
5 th Traver Gay	13 thGale Slentz	
6 th Janet Saddler	14 thMadeleine Gauthier	

& Anniversaries

4 th Lisa & Andy Ambrosio	29 years	16 th Sheryl & Brent Slezak	44 years
4 th Ed & Cheri Calkins	23 years	18 th John & Cindi Lebiecki	40 years
4 th Dennis & Emily Myland Walters	12 years	22 nd ... Juan & Laura Carisalez	10 years
8 th Brian & Teresa Young	49 years	25 th Craig & Kathi Muss	40 years
11 th ... Mary Ellen & Jerry Bryer	40 years	29 th Larry & Becky Reinhart	48 years
14 th ... Barbara & Robert Monk	48 years	30 th Marilyn & Bob Simon	34 years
15 th ... Adam and Heather Simon	4 years		

Remembrances

Remembering that Dick and Carolyn Chormann were married on September 7, 1957

Carillon Hymns and Honoree for September



Date..... Selection

9th..... *In The Garden*

11th..... *God Bless America*

14th..... *Eternal Father, Strong to Save*

Honoree

Irene Verploegh

Brad Hoorn

Jay Ralph Wells, Jr.



Friends of the Library Book Club

Kalli Inman

The Friends of the Library are inviting all to join in the book club. In-person, zoom, and this year adding a day-time meeting also on Friday. But 3rd Thursday at 7pm is usual meeting time. Go here to see what books will be discussed in the next few months.

www.richlandlibrary.org/adult/rcl-book-club

We would love to have you join in the fun!

The Trails of Scouting Brownies Troop 80147

by Alisha Woolley

Scouting life is a big part of this church's life, but we don't often hear the scouting stories. This column hopes to change this by telling one scouting story each month.

Troop 80147, bridged to Brownies back in June, which launched a well deserved break over the summer from traditional meetings. In July, at Wings West, the girls were rewarded with ice skating as a result of completing their cookie sales goal, which they set this past cookie season. We are excited to get back into meetings again at the end of August.

Feature of the Month Church Fest – September 11th!

By Pam Foster

It's that time of year again when we kick off our fall season with our annual Church Fest. Please join us on Sunday, September 11th, immediately following worship.

The aroma of fresh Gull Meadow donuts, cider, and Biggby coffee will lure you from the sanctuary to the Gull Prairie Room where we will be ready for you to savor a donut (or two) and enjoy the company of friends and family.

Our various committees will have their displays available for you to see what they're all about! Stroll from table to table and look at pictures and information they've put together. Look for a few new photos from the August youth mission trip to Colcord, WV. There also will be a special opportunity to meet our new staff person, Brooke Heck. Be sure and stop by the Kids First table and meet her. She will be working with our children on Sunday mornings and we're excited for the Fall program and classes.

See you there!!

Questions? Call, text, or ask Pastor Mark or Pam Foster, Membership and Fellowship Elder.

Brownie Troop 80147



Wait, What? Questions & Answers

by Rev. Mark Jennings

Do you have questions about something you heard in church? Have you always wondered why we do or say the things we do? Wondered what something means? This regular column is the place to bring up those questions and try to find an answer.

"The New Testament was largely written by the Twelve Disciples, right? But if Matthew wrote Matthew, Mark wrote Mark, Luke wrote Luke, John wrote John, Timothy wrote Timothy, etc..., who wrote Acts, Romans and Galatians? Did Andrew or Bartholomew write anything?"

An excellent question, but one without a simple answer. The early church seemed to accept documents into the New Testament based on apostolic authorship (being written by one of the Twelve or a close associate). Many modern scholars believe that some of those claims of authorship are suspect. But tradition has it that the apostle Matthew wrote the gospel that bears his name and the apostle John wrote the one called John. The other two gospels were written by Luke and Mark, neither of whom were apostles. Mark, however, is commonly believed to have been the scribe of Peter and therefore contains the memories of that apostle. Luke we know was a disciple of the apostle Paul (although not one of the Twelve, he was specially called by Jesus on the road to Damascus), and so we believe that Paul influenced Luke's writing.

Those are the four Gospels, but what about the rest of the New Testament? Some of the answers are easy: Luke, the gospel writer, also wrote the Acts of the Apostles. John, according to tradition, also wrote three letters called, appropriately, I John, II John, and III John, and also the final book of the New Testament, the Revelation to John. The real star of missive writing was Paul. The apostle Paul was the author of Romans, I and II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I and II Thessalonians (those are all cities or areas to which Paul wrote to the churches there), I and II Timothy, Titus, and Philemon (all letters from Paul to individuals who were associates of his). Tradition also claims that Peter was the author of I and II Peter.

That leaves us with Hebrews, James, and Jude. For many centuries it was assumed that Paul also wrote the letter to the Hebrews but because there is no salutation in it as in his other letters (Paul always writes something like "Hi, this is Paul" to begin his letters) and for other reasons, we do not know who the author of this letter is. The letters of James and Jude are presumed to be two of the brothers of Jesus (Mark 6:3 lists them). They were not among the Twelve but became followers of Jesus after his resurrection and as children of Mary and Joseph they probably had a lot of standing in the early church—imagine the stories they could tell about Jesus as a boy!

Of course scholars love to debate all of these assertions and many books have been written about them, but I'm sorry to say that, no—Andrew and Bartholomew never wrote anything.

Shared Blessings: A Matthew 25 Service Group

by Erin O'Sullivan

Time to remember the kind of September...but was it ever slow and mellow? Not at First Presbyterian of Richmond, anyway. Well, to add to all the hustle and bustle of the new program year, we'd like to invite you to join us for Shared Blessings on Tuesday, September 13 at 7:00 in the Deacon Brown House. We are a group of volunteers from the church who are tasked with considering the Matthew 25 initiative of the PCUSA. This means we focus on welcoming and revitalizing; racism and our response; and poverty in our midst.



Our plan for this meeting is to reevaluate where we are, our stated goals, our new ideas, and a plan for moving forward in the 2022-23 program year. This includes establishing a relationship with S.H.A.R.E. (Society for History And Racial Equity). SHARE has a mission to foster connection as an agent for healing racial conflict and injustice. This is a timely encounter considering our conversations about race and our preliminary observation that face to face experience leads to deeper experiences than discussion alone. The current Executive Director, Chiantie Lymon, and the former, Donna Odom, will join us for our October meeting so we may learn more about their mission and how it can partner with our own. We will take some time at our September meeting to consider how we can best use our time in October.

Presbyterian Women Kickoff Event from Terry Vantine

The kickoff event will be on September 24th at noon in the Gull Prairie Room. "Bring whatever you want" to the potluck. Diane Barton, guest speaker and niece of Joyce Dishon, will give a talk about her life experiences as a minister's daughter. Remember, all Presbyterian women are PWs.



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.

"Minor" Details

by Larry Myland

I've been lambasted over the years for being so dense as to actually play organ music in church written in minor keys. It's that "minor third," the musical interval that instantly identifies "minor" tonality, that is the old bugaboo.

Today, perhaps more than ever before, if church music doesn't immediately sound bright and cheery it is often made to sit on a stool in the corner.

But I'm going to bat for "minor" tonality because of its ability to plumb music of great depth.

First off, what exactly are we talking about when we talk about major and minor tonality? Certainly one of the best-known examples of "major" tonality, at least to people on this side of the planet, is "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star."

But we don't have very far to go to find equally appealing creations in minor keys. A familiar one is "Greensleeves." Or how about "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"? Like "Twinkle, Twinkle," these songs are beautiful in their very own way. True, they could be rendered in major keys, but doing so would destroy their dark loveliness, their mystery, and their fraught emotional cargo. Yet, minor keys can be snappy too. Some of the toe-tapping music ever dreamed up are lively organ fugues in minor keys by the young and full-of-it, Johnny Bach.

Minor musical keys and strong, vivid language, however, are capable of evoking powerful images and feelings in worship.

Think of our hymn "Jesus, Lover of My Soul." The music is so rich and deep, and the words are so rugged and full of power, that the two of them together create a four-square monolith of hymnody.

Like "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," minor keys are frequently not "happy" in the sense of being glib or smiley-faced. Rather, they are joyous in a profound sense that is not easily equaled by music written in major keys.

So it goes with the spoken language of the church. The church's really deep language stirs the blood. It is seldom delicate nor very pretty. In some ways it resembles my old friend the tree that was felled in a powerful wind-storm that swept through the community. How I loved that old tree, though it was dead as a cinder. It stood in a farmer's cornfield on the west side of M-43, just north of BC Avenue and I assumed that it would stand there for-

ever. One of the high points of my day was to marvel at this lonely and magnificent creation as I drove by, twice each day.

It must have been struck by lightning years ago. It was gray and stark against the sky, with only its bold trunk and major branches left to reach out to heaven. But reach out it did with massive, grappling arms clawing at the clouds. The wind, rain and ice had worn it smooth with the passing of ancient and long-forgotten seasons. When the storm blew it over, something in me fell with it, so bold, outrageous and majestic it was. I had come to consider having an image of it on the front of my memorial service leaflet some day.

Like that mighty and beautiful old tree, here is the heart-song of the church, now in the form of a choral work by Healey Willan, which just so happens to be written in the stirring key of G-Minor. It is dedicated to Leo Sowerby for the hundredth anniversary festival of the Church of St. James, in Chicago. The words are from antiphons (devotional compositions sung responsively) for the Feast of the Dedication. Here is great language and great music to go with it. It can bring joy to a church festival and can lift our hearts even in times of trouble.

Behold, the Tabernacle of God Is with men,
And the spirit of God dwelleth within you
For the temple of God is holy,
Which temple are ye:
For the love of whom ye do this day
Celebrate the joys of the temple
With a season of festivity.

O how dreadful is this place. [dreadful=awesome]
This is the house of God,
And this is the gate of heaven.

Note: Leo Sowerby was the dean of 20th century American church music. He was born in nearby Grand Rapids. Healey Willan was Sowerby's British-Canadian counterpart.

First Presbyterians Church's New Sunday School Director

By Brooke Heck

Hello!

My name is Brooke Heck and I have recently joined the First Presbyterian Church family as Sunday School Director! I am so honored to be joining the staff at FPC and am looking forward to creating a wonderful, inclusive, and vibrant children's program here! I had the privilege of participating in the Vacation Bible School program at FPC this summer and had the opportunity to meet many of the children and parents during those fun filled evenings!

I have been married to my husband, Jarrod, for 10 years and we have 2 wonderful children, Andrew (6) and Adeline (4), and a miniature dachshund, Izzy. Andrew just started 1st grade at Richland Elementary and Adeline will be starting 4 year Preschool at Kellogg Elementary. We love playing board/card games, going for walks in our neighborhood, and going to the AirZoo, Binder Park Zoo, and Growlers games! We have lived in Richland for 8 years now and have previously attended Radiant Church. We have been looking for a new church to call home for a while now and are excited to become involved in the life at FPC!

In addition to working at FPC, I also work part time at Bronson Children's Hospital as a Certified Child Life Specialist. A child life specialist is a healthcare professional that ensures the developmental needs of children in the hospital are being met. This includes incorporating play into the hospital setting, explaining upcoming procedures to the patient in child friendly language, supporting them through procedures using distraction and/or coping techniques, providing education for new diagnoses, supporting bereaved children and families, and more! I worked in the Emergency Department for 4 years, the Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Clinic for 2 years, and most recently have been in an administrative role for the team!

I am looking forward to getting to know all the wonderful members of the church! If you see me, please come introduce yourself to myself and my family!

~ Brooke



Brooke Heck

Youth Groups Starting Soon At Kalamazoo FPC

By Meredith Alspach

T.A.G. 5/6/7 - Totally Awesome Group? Together Alongside God? Whatever the acronym stands for, all 5th, 6th and 7th graders are welcome to join us! We have changed things slightly from last year: Includes grades 5-7, Bi-weekly Wednesday meetings.

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Wednesday, September 14 – 6:30-7:30 @ FPC Kzoo.

Wednesday, September 28 – 6:30-7:30 @ FPC Kzoo.

Youth Group this year is for all students in 8th-12th grade. We have changed things slightly from last year: Includes grades 8-12, Meeting time 5:30-7:00, snacks only.

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Sunday, September 11 – 5:30-7pm KICK-OFF @ FPC Kzoo

Sunday, September 18 – 5:30-7pm @ FPC Kzoo

Sunday, September 25 – 5:30-7pm @ FPC Kzoo

Saturday, October 1 – LOCK-IN @ FPC Kzoo

Richland Food Pantry



NEED FOOD?

Our food programs are **FREE** and serve all of Kalamazoo County*.

GROCERY PANTRY PROGRAM

- No eligibility requirements. No ID required.
- Pick-up groceries 2 times per month.
- Someone else can pick up on your behalf.
- Home deliveries available county-wide.
- Non-perishable food as well as fresh produce, meat, dairy, bread, and eggs.
- At least four days' worth of food for everyone in your household.
- Special dietary needs? Let us know!

To Schedule A Same-Day Pantry Pick-Up:
Call 269.343.3663 Monday-Friday from 9AM-4PM
If you are unable to call or reach us during these times,
email info@kzoof.org or message us on Facebook.

NEED FOOD LINE: 269.343.3663
901 PORTAGE STREET, KALAMAZOO KZOOLF.ORG INFO@KZOOLF.ORG
*If you live outside the County and need assistance, give us a call. We may be able to help.

First Presbyterian Church
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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH STAFF

Dr. Mark W. Jennings, *Pastor*
Larry Myland, *Director of Music*
Owen Rushford, *Director of Choirs*
Brooke Heck, *Sunday School Director*
Rachel Little, *Office Manager*
Chris Gobble, *Financial Secretary*
Paul Gobble, *Director of Communications*
Gretchen Ferris, *Treasurer*

SEPTEMBER