

# The Missive, October 2023

## First Presbyterian Church

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### ***“Count your blessings,”***

*the old hymn says. But do we really take time to do this? Our busy lives leave us little time to count anything: pocket change, cans of soup in the cupboard, or the number of socks in our drawers. Counting our blessings seems an extravagant expenditure of time that most of us don't have. And it rarely happens spontaneously. No, we must make time in our daily spiritual practice to fill our hearts with gratitude and give thanks. Even if only for a minute.*

*We'd like to help with this. We have a perfect place for you to perform this joyful task, to give thanks to God: in worship. Of course worship has always been the place where we take our prayers and our praises. Now we are just being a bit more deliberate in our intentions to praise our divine creator for all that has been done for us. And this is during the Offertory.*

*Our Session, at the recommendation of our Worship and Music committee, reinstated the passing of the offering plates. But it was noted that many in our pews tithe through online banking and no longer place anything in the plate. Should we reinstate a practice that so few still use? It was joked, “Maybe we should we just have slips that say, ‘I gave at the office?’” But this actually gave us an idea: why not have slips where we can list our blessings? Why not write something we are thankful for and place it in the offering plate as an offering of thanksgiving?*

*Rachel, our church office manager, got right on this and has designed blessings slips that are now placed in the pews each Sunday. Look for them when you arrive and during the service, consider something for which you would like to thank God. You don't have to put your name on it. Also, if you have a prayer concern that you want to offer. Fold the slip for privacy and know that I am the only one who reads these.*

*Let's all count our blessings.  
Mark*

# OCTOBER 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b> 9:45: Worship, Communion & KidsFirst 11:15: New Member Class 2:00: Shalom Farm Days	<b>2</b> 10:00: Student Tutoring Group 1:00: Pastoral Care Team 5:00: Boy & Cub Scouts	<b>3</b> 9:00: FPC Walking Grp. 10:00: Food Pantry 10:00: Connected Threads 11:00: Church Staff Mtg. 6:15: Brownie & Daisy Scouts	<b>4</b> 10:00: Food Pantry Noon: Seasoned Seniors 7:00: Mission Committee	<b>5</b> 11:00: Bible Study 4:00: Choir Rehearsal 5:00: Girl Scouts 7:00: Pancake Breakfast Planning Meeting	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b> 9:45: Worship, 2¢-a-Meal & KidsFirst 11:15: New Member Class 3:00: 4H Meeting	<b>9</b> 10:00: Student Tutoring Group 5:00: Boy & Cub Scouts	<b>10</b> 10:00: Food Pantry 10:00: Connected Threads 11:00: Church Staff Mtg. 6:00: Pumpkin/Floral Centerpiece Mkg.	<b>11</b> 10:00: Food Pantry 4:30: Worship & Music 6:15: Session Meeting	<b>12</b> 11:00: Bible Study 4:00: Choir Rehearsal 6:00: Deacons	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> 9:45: Worship & KidsFirst 10:00: New Member Reception 11:00: Church Birthday Picnic & Churchfest	<b>16</b> 10:00: Student Tutoring Group 5:00: Boy & Cub Scouts 6:30: Boy Scouts	<b>17</b> 10:00: Food Pantry 10:00: Connected Threads 11:00: Church Staff Mtg. 6:15: Brownie & Daisy Scouts	<b>18</b> 10:00: Food Pantry Noon: Blood Drive	<b>19</b> 11:00: Bible Study 4:00: Choir Rehearsal 5:00: Girl Scouts	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> 9:45: Worship & KidsFirst	<b>23</b> 10:00: Student Tutoring Group 5:00: Boy & Cub Scouts 6:00: Boy Scouts	<b>24</b> 10:00: Food Pantry 10:00: Connected Threads 11:00: Church Staff Mtg.	<b>25</b> 10:00: Food Pantry 6:30: Trivia at The Library	<b>26</b> 11:00: Bible Study 4:00: Choir Rehearsal	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> 6:30: Halloween Bunco
<b>29</b> 9:45: Worship & KidsFirst 11:30: Trunk-or-Treat	<b>30</b> 10:00: Student Tutoring Group 5:00: Boy & Cub Scouts	<b>31</b> 8:00: Men's Breakfast 10:00: Food Pantry 10:00: Connected Threads 11:00: Church Staff Mtg. 6:15: Brownie Scouts				

## FPC ANNOUNCEMENTS

**OCTOBER PW MEETING CANCELED**  
 PW Meeting scheduled for Wed., Oct. 4th, has been canceled. The next PW Meeting will be on Nov. 1st, 1 pm at Beacon Pointe.

**MEN'S BREAKFAST**  
 Food and Fellowship. The last Tuesday of each Month, October 31st, 8am at Liz's Parkview Café.

**RICHLAND FOOD PANTRY**  
 Please call 269.343.3663 to make an appointment. Tues. & Wed. 10 am to Noon. Walk-ins welcome.

# October Celebrations

## October Birthdays

1 <sup>st</sup> ..... Matt Inman	9 <sup>th</sup> ..... DJ LaLonde	16 <sup>th</sup> ..... Faye Luscombe
1 <sup>st</sup> ..... Kathy White	9 <sup>th</sup> ..... Jake Stopher	17 <sup>th</sup> ..... Mark Jennings
2 <sup>nd</sup> ..... Steve Powell	11 <sup>th</sup> ..... Juan Carisalez	18 <sup>th</sup> ..... Heather Putt
2 <sup>nd</sup> ..... Bob Simon	11 <sup>th</sup> ..... Rick Foster	18 <sup>th</sup> ..... Judy Ruser
3 <sup>rd</sup> ..... Tom Webb	11 <sup>th</sup> ..... Tim Simon	19 <sup>th</sup> ..... Joyce Hubbard
5 <sup>th</sup> ..... Carol Cooper	12 <sup>th</sup> ..... Lindsey Stolt Denne	24 <sup>th</sup> ..... Lorrie Syverson
6 <sup>th</sup> ..... Ryan Griffin-Stegink	13 <sup>th</sup> ..... Andrew Heck	25 <sup>th</sup> ..... Paisley Lindenberg
7 <sup>th</sup> ..... Cheryl Reinhardt	13 <sup>th</sup> ..... Dana Sullivan	29 <sup>th</sup> ..... Steve Hart
8 <sup>th</sup> ..... Brady Howard	16 <sup>th</sup> ..... Rodger Jones	31 <sup>st</sup> ..... Jeremiah Smith

## & Anniversaries

6 <sup>th</sup> ..... Katie & Tony Osborne for 5 years	16 <sup>th</sup> ..... Julie & Bruce Howard for 30 years
7 <sup>th</sup> ..... Chris & Paul Gobble for 23 years	16 <sup>th</sup> ..... Nancy & Robin Nott for 41 years
11 <sup>th</sup> ..... Cindy & Jay Hoorn for 37 years	21 <sup>st</sup> ..... Andee Trautman & Steve Allen for 45 years
13 <sup>th</sup> ..... Julie & Matt Pixley for 34 years	22 <sup>nd</sup> ..... Theresa & Dave Butler for 35 years
15 <sup>th</sup> ..... Stacey & Annie (Jennings) Ferreira for 7 years	

## & Remembrances

2 <sup>nd</sup> .....	Kristi & Tom Ryan's anniversary
15 <sup>th</sup> .....	Bill Hubbard's birthday
16 <sup>th</sup> .....	Rick Newell's birthday
25 <sup>th</sup> .....	Martha Strumpfer's birthday

## Carillon Hymns and Honoree

<b>Date</b>	<b>Selection</b>	<b>Honoree</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> .....	<i>Gift of Love</i>	<i>Lillan &amp; Dick Davis, Frieda Nikola, Julie Hargreaves, Arlene Mauch</i>
5 <sup>th</sup> .....	<i>Love's Devine All Love Excelling</i>	<i>Bob &amp; Brenda Jones</i>
7 <sup>th</sup> .....	<i>Let There Be Peace on Earth</i>	
11 <sup>th</sup> .....	<i>Morning Has Broken</i>	<i>Cindy &amp; Jay Hoorn</i>
17 <sup>th</sup> .....	<i>Of the Father's Love Begotten</i>	<i>Mark Jennings</i>
21 <sup>st</sup> .....	<i>A Mighty Fortress</i>	
24 <sup>th</sup> .....	<i>He Lives</i>	<i>Francis Hoorn</i>
28 <sup>th</sup> .....	<i>Kum Ba Ya</i>	<i>Kara Hoorn Dolbee</i>
31 <sup>st</sup> .....	<i>Amazing Grace</i>	<i>Bob Jones</i>
31 <sup>st</sup> .....	<i>Holy, Holy, Holy</i>	<i>Kyle Anderson</i>



# Meet Jonatan

by Jill Steele

Meet Jonatan (pronounced Hō – nū – tōn) De La Cruz and his sons, Angel (pronounced Ōn – hēl) and Joel (pronounced Ō – ěl). Jonatan is Jeni Steele’s “first” father from before her adoption. Jonatan was very young – only 14 when Jeni was born. He did his best to parent her, but that is far too young. He is now 38 years old and lives in Guatemala City, where he has lived his entire life. Angel turned 15 and Joel 12 this past summer, and they also live in Guatemala. The Steele family found Jonatan in 2010 and have developed a very strong relationship with him and his sons since that time. Although Jeni has the biological connection, the entire Steele family consider Jonatan and the boys their family.

Several years ago, Jill Steele set up a virtual interview between Jonatan and the owner of Seasonal Grille restaurant in Hastings – Justin. Since the pandemic, Justin has struggled to find and keep reliable cook staff at his restaurant. As a result of the interview, Justin judged Jonatan to be a seasoned, experienced chef and offered him a full-time permanent job at Seasonal Grille, offering to sponsor him for an employment VISA. This process is long and has been officially underway since early November of 2021. We expect to have the answer to the final step in the employment VISA process by early October this year – the Immigration petition. After that, the only remaining steps are submitting the VISA supporting



As many of us know, Guatemala can be a very difficult place to live, with low wages, high crime, and a government struggling with corruption issues. In spite of having only an early middle school education, Jonatan has become a successful chef through his hard work and dedication. He has been the executive chef at Verde Limon Restaurant in Guatemala, where he has worked for the last nearly 7 years. In total, he has almost 17 years’ experience in the Guatemalan restaurant industry. However, in spite of his experience and responsibilities as the executive chef, the pay isn’t enough to support himself and his children without living communally with his father, his brother, and his wife and children. Jonatan and the boys also long to have a relationship with Jeni that extends beyond one short visit every few years when the Steele family might travel to Guatemala. (Tourist VISAs are very difficult to obtain, and Jonatan would likely never qualify since he isn’t a high school graduate and owns no real estate.)

Couple Jonatan’s background with the employee shortage in the restaurant industry in the United States, and certainly here in Michigan, and you find the path for Jonatan and the boys to qualify to come to Michigan.

documents, and the VISA interview. Jonatan and the boys will live with the Steele family so that they can help the boys with transportation to school and athletic events, as well as to help them with homework while their dad is working, which will likely include a lot of evenings – and to provide them the love and sense of security they will need to adjust to this life altering move. The Steeles will also provide and/or arrange for Jonatan’s transportation to work until he has been able to get a driver’s license and save enough money for a car and insurance. Jonatan and the boys’ mother have been apart for many years, but she agreed to consent to the boys’ planned immigration to the United States, because as she states, “it is their only hope for a future.”

If you watch the church service on Facebook, you may have noticed Jonatan virtually attends the Sunday church service while he is working in Guatemala. He feels the love and support of his “church family,” as he likes to say. Jonatan and the boys are eager to see this process through and finally realize their dream of coming to Michigan to reunite with Jeni and the entire Steele family, and to live out the American dream of opportunities.

## Fall Back Flap-Jacks

by Amber Beals

**What?** A Pancake Breakfast!

**When?** Sunday, November 5—Save the date! Yes, this is the time-change morning so you will be extra well-rested and extra hungry!

**Who?** Everyone is invited!

**Why?** The Shared Blessings Social Witness team is trying to raise funds to support Jonatan and his family. Jonatan is a Guatemalan refugee who will be coming to the area soon. He already has a job lined up, but when he arrives he and 2 sons (ages 12 and 15) will need weather-appropriate clothes, jackets, shoes, school supplies, etc.

More details to follow!

### Other Shared Blessings News:

Pancake Fundraiser Planning Meeting: October 5, 7pm in the Resource Room. We are looking for help with this breakfast fundraiser, so anyone willing to help is welcome to join for this meeting.

Shared Blessings: Next Meeting, October 17, 7pm in the Resource Room.

## Small Groups Ministries

by Amber Beals

### Walking Group

October 10, 9am -Richland Township Park: Meet in the parking lot by the playground. This is a pretty flat loop of about 1.5 miles.  
October 24, 9am -Gull Prairie Preserve: Meet in the North church parking lot and we will walk the 2.2 mile preserve together.

### Pumpkin Centerpieces/Bouquets AND Salad Supper

October 10, 6pm: The Membership and Fellowship Committee and Small Group Ministries are partnering with Sherri from Green Goddess Farms to make Pumpkin Centerpieces/Bouquets! The cost for this bouquet is \$40 per person, however, if this is a financial hardship for you, please talk to Amber. Payment is due by Sunday, October 1. Please write checks to First Presbyterian of Richland or place cash in an envelope with your name on it and place it in the church office dropbox. Please bring a salad to share if you are able. If you have any questions, email [amberbeals@gmail.com](mailto:amberbeals@gmail.com). Sign up here: <https://forms.gle/ws5x8dUZaXHjZPar9>

**Trivia at the Library**, October 25 at 6:30pm: The October sign-up is now live. We can have up to 6 people on our team. Trivia start time is 6:30pm. For those interested, there will be a pre-game “Strategy Session” at Richland Pub at 5:30pm. Sign up for October’s Trivia Night here: <https://tinyurl.com/dyt388jn> or you can email Amber at [amberbeals@gmail.com](mailto:amberbeals@gmail.com)

**Halloween Bunco:** Saturday, October 28, 6:30pm. Get out your Halloween Costume and come ready for some fun. Bunco is a very simple dice game and is a great way to get to know some others in the congregation that you may not interact with very often. Bring a sweet or scary or funny inexpensive gift to share for one of the lucky winners (wrapped or placed in a bag). Sign up will be available when it gets closer.

**Book Discussion Group**, Sunday November 12, 11:15 am: As promised, we are planning a Book Discussion Group, which will be choosing books focused on spirituality, social justice, or other topics the church cares about. There will likely be 2-3 books throughout the year and each one will have a single gathering to discuss the book. For the first book, Nate Martens will be leading the discussion on the book: [A House United: How the](#)



[Church Can Save the World](#) by Allen Hilton. Amazon describes what the book is about:

By entering the culture wars, churchgoers in the United States have ushered the Left and the Right to even greater extremes. Battles over moral issues like abortion rights and homosexuality have now widened to include taxation and size of government, so that specific church affiliation has become an accurate predictor of political party affiliation. The extremists in American politics rely on Christians to be the engine that pushes the culture farther right or left.

Allen Hilton believes that religion isn't inherently divisive, and he suggests a new role for Christianity. Jesus prayed that his disciples might all be one, and this book imagines a proper answer to that prayer in the context of American polarization.

Rather than asking people to leave their political and theological beliefs at the church door, Hilton promotes a Christianity that brings people together with their differences. Through God's transforming work, he writes, we can create a house united that will help our nation come back together.

Small Group Ministries has purchased some copies of the book and has them available in the church office for \$10 each. Please stop by the office to pick one up. More can be ordered if needed.

The need is constant.  
The gratification is instant.  
Give blood.



**American  
Red Cross**



# **First Presbyterian Church**

8047 Church St. | Richland, MI 49083

**October 18**

**Noon – 6pm**

Use the contact information below  
to make your appointment.

[redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org) | 1-800-RED CROSS



by Sandy Carahaly

Want to learn more about Just Love but not ready to commit to a full hour a month? Have questions? Comments? Ideas? Stop by our information table on October 15 in the GPR!

**Recommended Reading:** The LGBTQ+ History Book, by DK.

**Notable Quotes:** “We need, in every community, a group of angelic troublemakers.” – Bayard Rustin (1912-1987; Rustin was a gay Black civil rights leader, advisor to Martin Luther King Jr., and posthumous recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom)

**A Minute to Learn:** October is LGBTQ+ History Month, an annual celebration of the history and achievements of the LGBTQ+ community, established in 1994. National Coming Out Day, Spirit Day, Ally/Solidarity Week, and several other days of recognition and awareness are celebrated in October. Notably, the first March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights was held on October 14, 1979. There was debate over whether to hold the march in 1979 or 1980. The year 1979 was chosen as it was the 10 year anniversary of the Stonewall Riots. As many as 125,000 people participated, making it the largest such event in Washington DC at the time. Subsequent marches took place in 1987, 1993, 2000 and 2009. There were 5 primary goals of the march: pass a comprehensive gay rights bill in Congress; ban discrimination against LGBTQ+ people in the federal government, military and federal contracts; repeal all anti-gay/lesbian laws; end discrimination in parental custody cases where one parent is LGBTQ+; and protect gay and lesbian youth from discrimination, harassment and opposition at home, in school, at work, and in social settings. Nearly half a century later, LGBTQ+ people still struggle with discrimination and harassment. Allyship/Solidarity is critical to ensure that we do not move backwards in our recognition of human rights for all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

**Days of Significance, October, 2023**

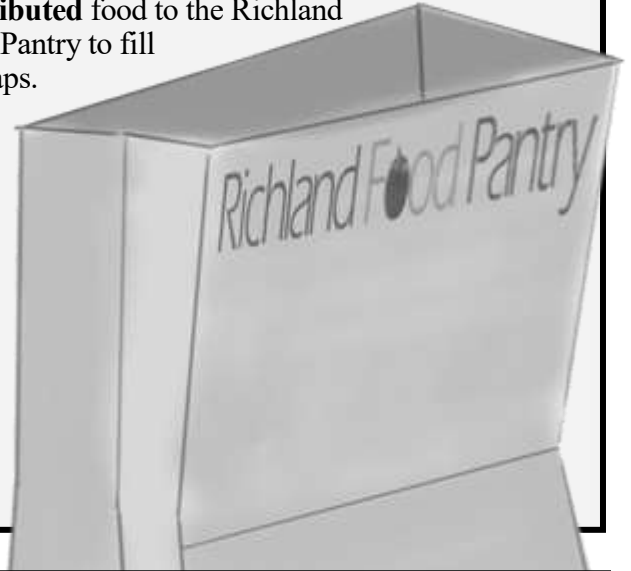
- 8th: International Lesbian Day
- 11th: National Coming Out Day
- 15th: National Latinx HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

- 3rd Wednesday: International Pronouns Day
- 3rd Thursday: Spirit Day
- Last week: Asexual Awareness Week
- 26th: Intersex Awareness Day

**FOOD PANTRY SHOPPING LIST**

Loaves & Fishes does a remarkable job keeping the pantry stocked with food to help those in our community struggling with food insecurities, but some items are difficult to keep on the shelves. With evenings starting to get colder, **cans of heartier soups, stews and chilis** would be welcomed by our pantry clients. A dozen of one item is more helpful on our shelves than twelve different items.

**Thank you to everyone who has already contributed** food to the Richland Food Pantry to fill the gaps.



**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@kzoolf.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.

# Introducing New Members to our Pastoral Team

by Rev. Pat Weatherwax and Nate Martens

We have been fortunate enough to have heard several sermons over the summer from each of our new pastoral team members. They have shared with us, and taught us about God's word. Now it is time we hear a little about Pat and Nate themselves. In their own words, we introduce Nate Martens and Rev. Pat Weatherwax.

## **Rev. Pat Weatherwax**, Parish Associate

Pat worked as a registered nurse in her first career, and graduated from Western Theological Seminary in Holland MI. She was employed as a healthcare chaplain for several years. Pat started working with First Presbyterian in Battle Creek in January of 2009 and was called and

## **Nate Martens**, Pastoral Intern

Nate is a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Battle Creek and an inquirer under the care of the Presbytery of Lake Michigan. He is a third year student at Western Theological Seminary in Holland. He spent his formative (ages 5-15) years in Livonia, Michigan. Except for a few years at college (Valparaiso University) and graduate school (Kent State University) he has called Kalamazoo County home since 1980. He is a perioperative registered nurse at Ascension Borgess Hospital. His career in health care started in 1990 and has included stops in Battle Creek, Grand Rapids and Marshall.



Rev. Pat Weatherwax



Nate Martens with daughter, Betsy

installed as their associate pastor in August of 2013. Her responsibilities were mostly with congregational care and education. She was honorably retired in September of 2021.

She enjoys puzzles and games, Facebook, and is a die-hard Detroit Tiger fan. She works as an investigator for the medical examiner, in an on-call basis.

She is married to Lloyd Sterling, has an adult daughter, Katie, and a grandson, Jude, who live in the Grand Rapids area. After her retirement from Battle Creek she was looking for a church home, and came to Richland at the urging of long time friend, Nathan Martens.

On January 2, 2021 Nate and his wife, Wendy, were married in the sanctuary of the First Presbyterian Church of Richland. They reside in Galesburg with their two Pembroke Welsh Corgis (Addie and Tillie) and their black cat (Gus). Their family also includes Betsy, 22, and Nick, 21, who are both students at the University of Michigan.



# Where Did Sacred Music Come From?

by Larry Myland

When you take a deep breath this coming Sunday to get ready for the church's triumphant hymn of praise, know that you are participating in a tradition that goes back not hundreds of years, but multiple millennia.

The first biblical record about music is in Genesis 4:21, referring to Jubal as the ancestor of all those who sing or play sacred music. This was roughly 4,000 years ago. Think of it, four thousand years.

From the time of Abraham, the Israelites were a musical people, as the Arabs are to this day, living in the same country, exhibiting their musical nature in pouring forth an unending voice of song. The Egyptians were practical musicians, and introduced music upon all festive occasions. During the Israelite bondage, the Hebrews became acquainted with the musical instruments of the Egyptians, which they carried with them across the desert into Canaan and their use has been recorded in every succeeding age.

Music was also used socially from an early date (Gen. 31:27), as an accompaniment to song and dance. David himself was an accomplished musician, and gave much attention to musical art. He even introduced it into the temple worship service. Concerning the transport of the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem, First Chronicles has this to say about the sacred music of the ancients:

David also commanded the chiefs of the Levites to appoint their kindred as the singers to play on musical instruments, on harps, and lyres, and cymbals, to raise loud sounds of joy. So the Levites appointed Heman, son of Joel; and of his kindred Asahp, son of Berechiah; and of the sons of Merari, their kindred, Ethan, son of Kushaiah, and with them their kindred of the second order, Zechariah, Jaazziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Beamoth, Maaseia, Mattithiah, Eliphehu, and Mikneiah, and the gatekeepers Obedom and Jeiel. The singers Heman, Asaph, and Ethan were to sound bronze cymbals; Zechariah, Aziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Maaseiah, and Benaiah were to play harps according to Alamoth; but Mattithiah, Eliphehu, Mikneiah, Obedom, Jeiel, and Azaziah were to lead with lyres according to the Sheminith. Chenaniah, leader of the Levites in music, was to direct the music, for he understood it. Berechiah and Elkanah were to be gatekeepers for the Ark. Shebaniah, Joshaphat, Nethanel, Amasai, Zechariah, Benaiah and Eliezer, the priests, were to blow the trumpets before the Ark of God.

*I Chronicles 15: 16~24a*

Preserved for posterity the above list chronicles some of the first real church musicians. It is probable also that choirs were a part of the temple service. The prophets themselves were great cultivators of music, and music was an important branch of instruction in the schools of the prophets.

Until some wizard invents time travel, these ancient services are lost to us, at least what they sounded like. But do not lament! The modern day great cathedral service may at least epitomize a similar spirit.

If you have access to the internet, there is hardly an end to the number and variety of churches and great cathedrals whose doors are open to you. One of my favorites is Grace Cathedral, in San Francisco. Every Sunday at 2 p.m. EDT you have a passport to heavenly mysteries. Go to [www.gracecathedral.org](http://www.gracecathedral.org) If you want to hear the Prelude played on one of the great pipe organs of this country, tune in early. Click Services, then click Choral Eucharist-- the 11 a.m. edition.

If you've never attended a major cathedral service, the experience awaits you- live on Sundays at two o'clock. Or any other time during the week when you can listen to a professional recording of this great service and other fine offerings, including daily devotions.

Source: Smith's Bible Dictionary

## Honoring, Remembering our Veterans

by Rev. Ken Hetzel

We will be honoring and remembering our Veterans next month on November 12th. The Flower Guild would like to display on the Communion Table the Memorial flags given to our veterans or given to their families. Whether folded or boxed they would be placed on the Communion Table. Some might have their service medals in Boxed display cases so these would also be appropriate for placing on the Communion Table. Any item brought in should be marked with a name so it can be returned after morning worship. Items can be brought in anytime, when convenient, and placed in the office until November 12th.

We pray that we will be honoring and remembering many this coming Veteran's Day.

# KidsFirst, Answering the Tough Questions

by Brooke Heck

Is it okay to doubt God?  
Why does God let bad stuff happen?  
How do I forgive when I don't want to?  
Why do we even go to church?  
Am I really expected to love EVERYONE?

Have you ever wondered what the Bible says about these questions? Have you ever had a question that you were uncomfortable asking because you were afraid the other person might not like it or they may judge you for asking? Our youth are often full of questions - about religion, the Bible, our beliefs/values, and God - but may be afraid to ask because it feels taboo or they feel they may be shamed for questioning the Christian faith. As adults, it is easy to get defensive when questions arise that feel uncomfortable. They aren't easy questions to answer, they are sticky and complicated. There is no quick scripture to reference or answer that can easily be found. These questions can feel like an attack... but they are far from it! It is important that as a church, we embrace the tough questions and encourage our youth to ask them.. because if they don't ask them, we will never have the opportunity to dig deep with them and learn with them!

Our new upper elementary classroom is tackling one of these questions (and many more) each week! Our new curriculum, Be BOLD, focuses on diving into a common question that youth often have but may feel uncomfortable vocalizing. We get to explore the Bible through a new lens - one that is

based in solving everyday struggles and challenges - to see how others have encountered similar situations and what the Bible says about them. And then, we get to talk as a group about how that applies to our lives today.

SO...

Maybe forgiveness isn't all about forgiving the other person for what they did... maybe it is about letting go of our own anger and giving it to God. We can learn that forgiveness does not mean that what the other person did is okay, but it means that we aren't going to let that weight sit on our shoulders anymore.

When God says "love others" what does that mean? We get to dig deep into whether love is just a feeling or also an action. When you hear "love your enemy" does that mean actually feeling love towards them or to treat them with kindness and compassion?

We go to church each Sunday... but what IS the church? We will dig into the Bible to find out what God says about what exactly the church is... is it a building? Or is it the people? If we ARE the church, why do you think we might want to come together to worship and spend time together? What does that do for us?

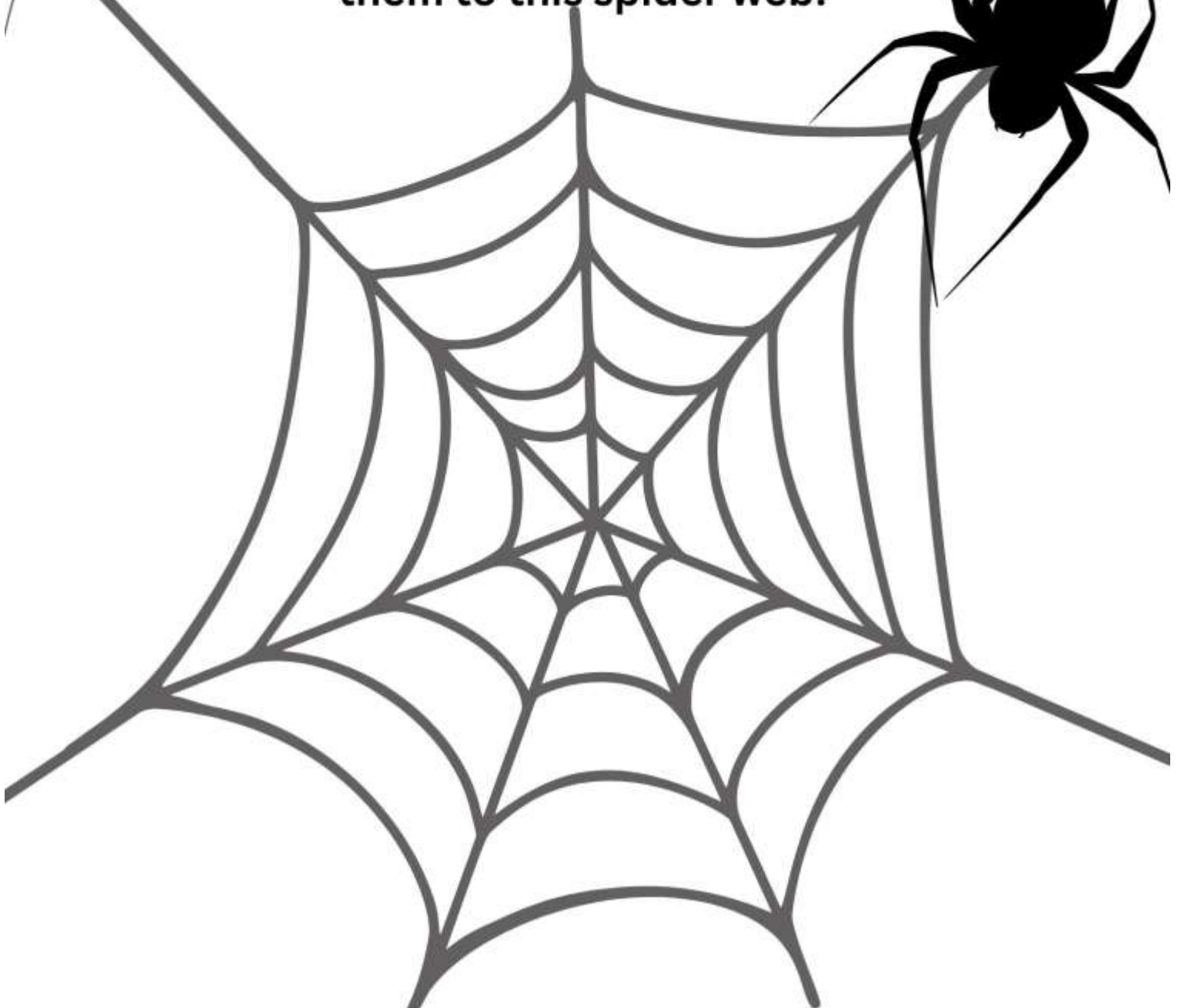
Building a strong foundation of faith in God, the Bible, and the church can often come with some tough questions but the Be BOLD curriculum and our discussions on Sunday mornings are teaching our youth that these questions can always be answered in the Bible, we just have to look a little bit harder! The more we address these tough questions head on, the less sticky they feel! Actually, we may find that the stickiest part of it all is the threads God has used to weave a beautiful web for us to land in ... no matter what life throws our way! Take a few minutes this month to think about what behaviors and actions God wants us to "stick" to and add it to the web on the next page. Find words in magazines and/or newspapers and stick them to the web! If a KidsFirst member completes the activity and shows it to Brooke, they can take a trip to the treasure box!





# **STICKY BEHAVIORS**

**Cut words and/or pictures (from magazines,  
newspapers, etc) that describe behaviors  
God wants us to exhibit and glue  
them to this spider web!**



First Presbyterian Church  
8047 Church Street  
Richland, MI 49083

*ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED*

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH STAFF**

Dr. Mark W. Jennings, Pastor  
Reverend Pat Weatherwax, Parish Associate  
Nate Martens, Pastoral Intern  
Erin Jennings, Volunteer Assistant to the Pastor

Larry Myland, Director of Music  
Andrea Large, Chancel Choir Director  
Amber Beals, Coordinator of Small Group Ministries  
Brooke Heck, Sunday School Director

Rachel Little, Office Manager  
Karen Urban, Office Volunteer

Gretchen Ferris, Treasurer  
Chris Gobble, Financial Secretary

Paul Gobble, Director of Communications  
Jeremiah Smith and Zoe Gobble, Production

Connie Slater, Sexton

***OCTOBER***