

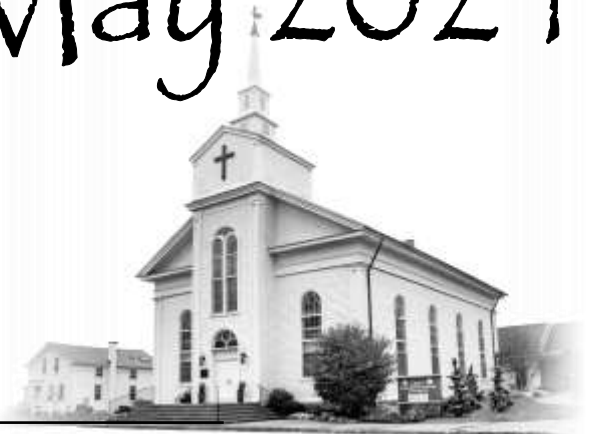
The Missive, May 2024

First Presbyterian Church

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Volume 58, Number 5, Monthly



“I get knocked down but I get up again...”

This song, released in 1997 by the group, Chumbawumba, was an instant hit. I’m not certain why: perhaps it had a good beat and was easy to dance to, as they would say on American Band Stand. And the idea that one gets up again is a pretty empowering message.

I admit that this song was plucked from obscurity and wormed back into my consciousness this spring. Perhaps it’s because I’ve fallen, or gotten knocked down by my boxers, and, thankfully, I’ve gotten back up again each time. Many of you have shared your own stories of falling. As we age, the fear of literally falling to the ground is all too real.

“Failure is not in the falling down,” Mary Pickford said, “but the staying down.”

But we know that falling, or worse, getting knocked down, is a figurative dilemma as well. Sometimes we figuratively stumble and we only have ourselves to blame. I did this recently when, attempting to be funny. I hurt someone I really care about. I fell by my own action but my friend, in a spirit of forgiveness, helped me get back up and together we restored what had been momentarily broken.

That’s Christian Community in action.

The song says, “I get knocked down but I get up again. You’re never gonna keep me down.” And I ask, “Who is the song referring to? Who tries to keep another down? Or takes pleasure in another’s stumble?”

Jesus said, “Woe to the one who causes another to stumble.” - Matt. 18:6

Yet the sad truth is, sometimes we cause one another to stumble. We knock another down. We’re human; we have anger and fear and we don’t always express this in ways that promote healing.

Sometimes we just want to see another go down.

We’ve all been witness to unkindness. Sometimes we’ve been the one knocked down; other times we have contributed to the knocking down of another.

As I return from taking two weeks of staycation, I’m reflecting on an incident in worship on April 7. It was a communion Sunday and my legs were getting tired as I stood at the pulpit. Coincidentally, it was also the very first time that Erin was not by my side. No, she and I agreed that she could handle helping with coffee hour again after our 15 month hiatus. I’d be fine!



So, we began communion, Erin slipped out to prepare the cookies and suddenly I felt the need to sit—with no one behind me to spot me. My rollator skidded on the slick wood floor and I missed the seat.

But...I got up again!

With your help, friends. What could have been an embarrassing and deflating moment became one of resilience, grace, and love. Those of you who inquired, and those medical people in the congregation who rushed to assess, all came to understand that it was not a medical concern at all. Nor was I hurt. I finished the service then joined Pat for the book discussion.

You helped me up literally and figuratively. This is what Christian community looks like....

*Grace and Peace
Mark*

MAY 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 10:00: Food Pantry Noon: Seasoned Seniors 7:00: Mission Cmte. Meeting	2 1:00: Bible Study 4:00: Choir Rehearsal 5:00: Girl Scouts 5:30: Food Pantry	3	4
5 9:45: Worship & Communion	6 9:30 : PEO Meeting 1:00: Pastoral Care Team 5:00: Boy & Cub Scouts	7 9:00: FPC Walking Grp. 10:00: Food Pantry 10:00: Connected Threads 11:00: Church Staff Mtg.	8 10:00: Food Pantry 12:30: Worship & Music Mtg. 4:30: Girl Scouts 6:15: Session Meeting	9 11:00: Bible Study 4:00: Choir Rehearsal 5:30: Food Pantry 6:00: Deacons	10	11 11:00: Memorial Service for Phyllis Davis 11:00: Eagle Scout Ceremony
12 ~ Mothers' Day ~ 9:45: Worship, 2¢-a-Meal & KidsFirst 2:00: Boy Scouts	13 5:00: Boy & Cub Scouts	14 10:00: Food Pantry 10:00: Connected Threads 11:00: Church Staff Mtg. 6:15: Brownie & Daisy Scouts	15 10:00: Food Pantry 6:30: Calligraphy Class	16 11:00: Bible Study 4:00: Choir Rehearsal 5:00: Girl Scouts 5:30: Food Pantry	17 5:00: Student Piano Recital	18
19 9:45: Worship & KidsFirst 11:15: Just Love	20 5:00: Boy & Cub Scouts 6:30: Boy Scouts	21 9:00: FPC Walking Grp. 10:00: Food Pantry 10:00: Connected Threads at Beacon Pointe 11:00: Church Staff Mtg.	22 10:00: Food Pantry Noon: ARC Blood Drive 4:30: Girl Scouts 6:30: Trivia Night 7:00: Moms' Group	23 11:00: Bible Study 4:00: Choir Rehearsal 5:30: Food Pantry	24	25
26 9:45: Worship & KidsFirst	27 5:00: Boy & Cub Scouts 6:00: Boy Scouts	28 8:00: Men's Breakfast 10:00: Food Pantry 10:00: Connected Threads 11:00: Church Staff Mtg. 6:15: Brownie & Daisy Scouts	29 10:00: Food Pantry	30 11:00: Bible Study 4:00: Choir Rehearsal 5:00: Girl Scouts 5:30: Food Pantry	31	

FPC ANNOUNCEMENTS

Connected Threads: meets on Tuesdays at 10 a.m. in the Resource Center except for third Tuesdays when we meet at Beacon Pointe.

Men's Breakfast: Food and Fellowship, Tues. May 28th, 8am at Liz's Parkview Café.

Richland Food Pantry: Tues. & Weds. 10am - Noon; Thurs. 5:30 - 7 p.m. Call 269.343.3663 to make an appointment, Walk-ins Welcome.

Weekly Bible Study: Every Thursday at 11am in the Resource Center. Everyone is welcome!

Choir Rehearsal: Thursdays at 4pm.

Women's Book Club: The women's book club will meet on May 8th, 1pm, at Carol Coverly's home, 125 Pine Cove Circle, Kalamazoo. The book we will be discussing is The Rent Collector by Cameron Wright. Any questions call 269-251-6054.

May Celebrations

May Birthdays

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| 1 st Harold Gobble | 17 th Larry Myland | 26 th Anna Gross |
| 2 nd Jason Lindenberg | 17 th Joan Willemstyn | 26 th Carrie Sutton |
| 3 rd Amber Beals | 18 th Shannan Deater | 27 th Poppy Smith |
| 6 th Branden Burris | 19 th Alison Butler | 27 th Tom Webb |
| 6 th Vicki Janson | 20 th Sandra Gobble | 27 th Eric Wines |
| 6 th Scott Alexander | 20 th Tyson Putt | 27 th Erica Wines Smith |
| 11 th Nancy Remley | 21 st David Stasevich | 28 th Tony White |
| 12 th Lindsay Webb | 22 nd Lee Coverly | 29 th Caty Zick |
| 14 th Barb Brundage | 22 nd Mara Juodawlakis | 31 st George Becker |
| 16 th Joyce Gibson | 24 th Chloe Wieber | 31 st Larke Lindenberg |
| 17 th Vicky Langshaw Thomas | 25 th Chris Koffend | |

Anniversaries

- | | |
|--|--|
| 2 nd Judy & Ted Ruser for 43 years | 22 nd Laura & DJ LaLonde for 48 years |
| 7 th Shari & Rick Wynsma for 36 years | 24 th Erin & Mark Jennings for 38 years |
| 9 th Sandra & Harold Gobble for 60 years | 25 th Jennifer & Mike Odar for 28 years |
| 10 th Sandy & Ken Barts for 44 years | 26 th Jean & Walt Stafford for 62 years |
| 11 th Amy & Mike Juodawlakis for 28 years | 28 th Ronda & Ed Schaadt for 58 years |
| 21 st Jilisa & Mark Williams for 30 years | |

& Remembrances

21st We Remember Ken Hetzel's Birthday

SESSION

Rev. Dr. Mark Jennings, Moderator Rick Foster, Clerk of Session

Class of 2024

Steve Sutherland, Buildings & Grounds
Larry Irej, Personnel
Pam Foster, Membership & Fellowship

Class of 2025

Sam Beals, Finance
Bethany Gauthier, Membership & Fellowship
Brian Young, Mission
Joyce Gibson, Christian Education
Sandy Hart, Worship & Music

Class of 2026

Laura Carisalez, Finance
Jill Steele, Mission
Connie Kratzer, Worship & Music
Ruth Mason, Personnel

DEACONS

Class of 2024

Deb Fisher
Steve Hart
Cindi Lebiecki
Sara Wieber

Class of 2025

Anna Gross
Tineke Stolt
Jeremiah Smith
Christie Sutherland

Class of 2026

Amber Beals
Joan Willemstyn
Sandra Gobble
Margaret Hetzel



by Sandy Carahaly

Please join us on May 19th at 11 AM in the church library. We will be working on planning the June 23 Pride worship service. Your input is welcome even if you've never attended a Just Love meeting in the past!

A Minute to Learn: Who was Harvey Milk? Harvey Milk, a New York native and U.S. Navy veteran, moved to San Francisco in 1972. His commitment to fighting growing anti-gay initiatives and violence against the LGBTQ+ community, as well as his support for small businesses and neighborhoods, led to his election to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 1977. Milk was the first openly gay man elected to public office in California and the first non-incumbent openly gay man to be elected in the U.S.

Milk had served less than one year in office when he was assassinated, along with San Francisco Mayor George Moscone. Despite the brevity of his political career, Milk sponsored an antidiscrimination bill ensuring equal access for LGBTQ+ people to public accommodations, housing, and employment. The bill passed 11-1 and was signed into law by Mayor Moscone. On November 27, 1978, Dan White, the sole vote against the bill, entered City Hall through a basement window and shot both Milk and Moscone. White was acquitted of first-degree murder charges and convicted of voluntary manslaughter. The jury consisted exclusively of white, middle-class, heterosexual, primarily Catholic members. Riots ensued after the verdict was announced, despite attempts from Milk's friends and aides to maintain peace.

Milk's courage to stand up for what he believed in, despite facing adversity, continues to inspire individuals around the world to live authentically and advocate for justice and equality. Milk was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2009 by President Barack Obama. In November, 2021, the U.S. Navy launched the USNS Harvey Milk in tribute to his service and his civil rights leadership; it is the first Navy ship named for an openly gay leader.

Notable Quotes: "All young people, regardless of sexual orientation or identity, deserve a safe and supportive environment in which to achieve their full potential."

- Harvey Milk

Days of Significance, May, 2024

- May 16: National Honor Our LGBT Elders Day
- May 17: International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia
- May 19: Agender Pride Day
- May 22: Harvey Milk Day
- May 24: Pansexual and Panromantic Visibility Day

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.

Why do we wear red on Pentecost?

Dear Gentle Reader,

Red symbolizes fire. The disciples spoke as if their tongues were on fire, each speaking a different language.

The Jewish feast of Pentecost was held in Jerusalem where many gathered from many places. The disciples gathered in the upper room and the Holy Spirit descended upon them causing them to speak in many languages.

The disciples went into the crowd and were able to proclaim the good news so that each could hear in their own tongue.

We celebrate this miracle by wearing red.

AED, Emergency & First Aid Kits Ready Around The Church

by Cindi Lebiecki

In case of an emergency at the Church, there is an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) kept on the wall to the left of the Display Case between the Sanctuary and the Gull Prairie Room (directly across from the fireplace room).

There is an Emergency Kit containing the most commonly needed supplies (including a BP cuff with stethoscope, CPR mask, Dressing supplies, Allergy meds, Aspirin, Glucose meter/testing strips, Glucose tabs, and Eye Wash, among other items) which is kept over the small sink in the kitchen.

When you have a chance, please familiarize yourself with these locations. There is also a small first aid kit containing band-aids, ointment, etc. on top of the coat rack in the Narthex.



AED Sign and First Aid Kit in Lobby



First Aid Kit in Kitchen



AED and First Aid Kit in Lobby



First Aid Kit in Narthex



March Small Groups

by Amber Beals

FPC Walking Group, May Walks: May 7, 9 a.m. - Walk the Richland Township Park loop. Meet by the playground! May 21, 9 a.m. - Walk the Preserve. Meet in the north church parking lot for a 2.2 mile loop.

Introduction to Calligraphy: Wednesday, May 15 6:30-8:00 in the Resource Center. Explore three classic lettering styles using a chisel nib marker: Foundational (also called Bookhand), Gothic (Blackletter or Old English) and Italic (a newer style that allowed for more rapid writing). Sign up in the Gull Prairie Room or contact the church office to RSVP. Please direct any questions to Amber (amberbeals@gmail.com) or Kristi R (kkryan6835@comcast.net). There is no cost to participate in this class.

Trivia at the Library: May 22nd, 6:30 p.m. at the Richland Community Library. If you are interested in playing, reach out to Amber at amberbeals@gmail.com. We can have up to 6 players on our team. Trivia will take a summer break after this month and will restart in the fall.

Moms' Group: May 22nd, 7 p.m., Deacon Brown House. We will be discussing Parts 4-6 of *Present over Perfect* by Shauna Niequist. This will be the last time we will be discussing this book. You are welcome to join whether or not you are reading along. If you would like to receive emails about Moms' Group activities, please reach out to Amber at amberbeals@gmail.com. If anyone still needs a copy of the book, Pat has one to lend to the group so let me know!

Family Group Gathering on Gull Lake: June 8 Save the Date! Kathleen Rothenburg has offered to host a June gathering for church families on Gull Lake! More details will be shared as we get closer.



Shared Blessings

by Erin Jennings

“Caring relationships modeled on God’s love. We open our doors and hearts to all people, and we build relationships modeled on God’s love, which leads to genuine reconciliation and peace.”

This excerpt, taken from Presbyterian Mission’s Matthew 25 focus on revitalization, is the sixth of seven identifiable marks of a spirit-filled church.

When Shared Blessings began meeting two years ago, those in attendance voiced a desire that we be a welcoming church. Reflecting on this, it occurred to me that this ministry of welcome is best exemplified by the love, care, and genuine hospitality of our Membership and Fellowship elders, Pam Foster and Bethany Gauthier.

From Homecoming hospitality to winter wassail; from potlucks to picnics; from donuts to Sunday morning coffee, from the little details, like gifting welcome bags to visitors and writing notes of welcome, to the bigger task of helping us with the rolls, this dynamic duo Gets. It. Done!

Thank you to Pam, Bethany, and the team of helpers. We couldn’t do it without you.

The Giving Update

by Sam Beals

This monthly statement is prepared by the Financial Committee to help members understand our position on meeting our budgeted giving commitments.

Giving Update*:
Budget need as of April 31: \$101,070
Income as of April 31: \$99,088
Deficit: -\$1,982

*Session approved a \$305,212 budget for 2024

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



**American
Red Cross**

First Presbyterian Church

8047 Church St. | Richland, MI 49083

Wednesday, May 22

Noon - 6 PM

Contact The Red Cross to make
your appointment to give.

redcrossblood.org | 1-800-RED CROSS

Recognition Sunday / End of the Program Year Picnic

by Bethany & Pam, Membership & Fellowship

June 2nd - immediately following worship, join us for a Picnic in the Park to celebrate Recognition Sunday and the end of our program year. Returning by popular demand is Fat Mike's delicious BBQ (pulled pork)! We ask everyone to bring a side (or two). In addition to the pulled pork, we will provide buns, drinks, and table service. We look forward to a great time and sunny weather!!

2024 Rummage Sale

by Joyce Dishon

I know you are all waiting for this exciting news! Presbyterian Women have set the date of October 11-12 for this year's Rummage Sale. We will begin collecting your items for the sale the morning of October 8. Please set aside some time that week to help sort and set up, and then work the days of the sale.

Scouting Life Meet Girl Scout Troop 80431

by Tracy Ahrens

Meet Girl Scout Troop 80431. Our troop is comprised of four girls in grades ranging from preschool to 2nd. We are a new troop that formed shortly before Thanksgiving last year and have been working hard to learn more about our community and earning badges along the way. We held our first cookie booth on April 21st at the Harding's in Richland. We are closing out the school year by wrapping up cookie sales and preparing for a fun summer ahead!

KidsFirst Summer of Service Request!

by Brooke Heck

Summer is quickly approaching and KidsFirst is excited to embark on our 2nd "Summer of Service"! The Rummage Sale concession stand fundraiser kickstarted 2023's service project... but this year, we will focus on ways to serve our community that do not require money to fund it! A few of our projects last summer fell into this category (RACC cleanup and children's hospital craft kits), but we would love suggestions to help get the kids thinking in the right direction! Do you know of a local organization, family, or individual that could use a helping hand? If so, let Brooke know! The kids will decide on the projects we move forward with throughout the summer at the beginning of June, so I would love to have a list of ideas before then to present to them!

KidsFirst Summer at a Glance

June 2nd - KidsFirst meets

KidsFirst Volunteer Recognition
Church Summer Picnic

June 16th - KidsFirst meets

Father's Day

June 23rd - KidsFirst meets

Pride Service

July 14th - KidsFirst meets

July 28th - KidsFirst meets

Aug 4th - KidsFirst meets

Aug 11th-14th - Vacation Bible School
(no KidsFirst during church Aug. 11)

Aug 25th - KidsFirst meets

Blessing of the Backpacks

Scripture Study Presentations/Bible Ceremony
(incoming 3rd graders)

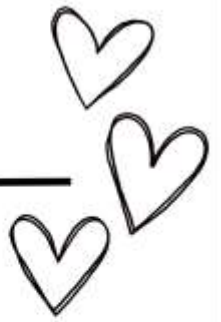
Please note that KidsFirst will only meet on the dates listed above!



Girl Scout Troop 80431 Selling Cookies at Richland Hardings



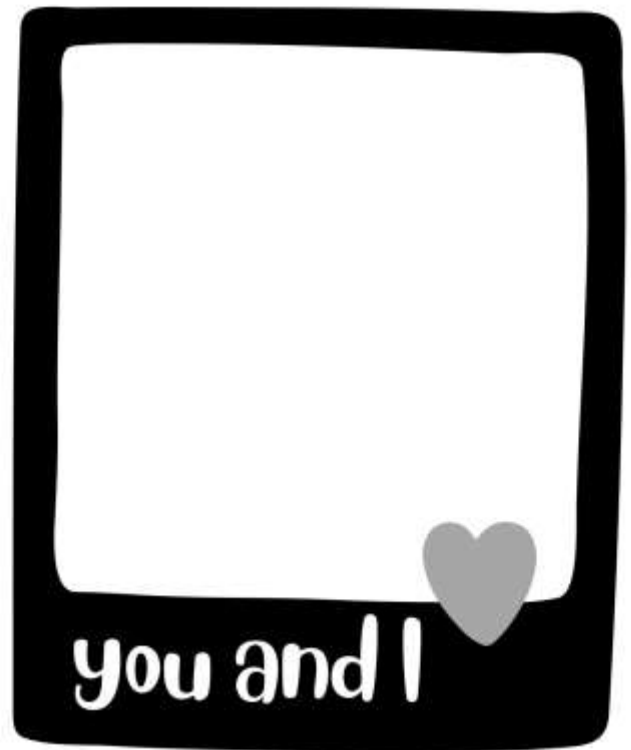
Me and my _____



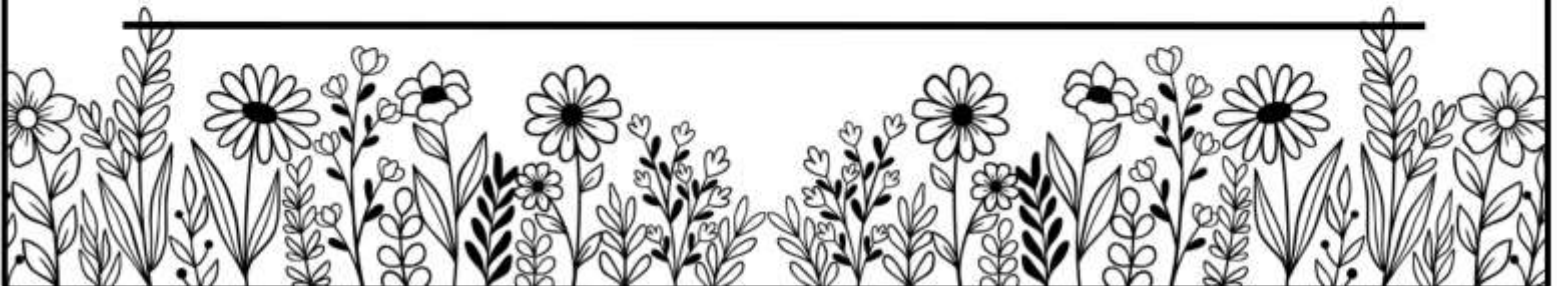
She always says _____

I love her because

She is really
good at _____



Our favorite thing to do together is



First Presbyterian Church
8047 Church Street
Richland, MI 49083

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

MAY

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH STAFF

Dr. Mark W. Jennings, Pastor
Reverend Pat Weatherwax, Parish Associate
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

Connie Slater, Sexton

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