

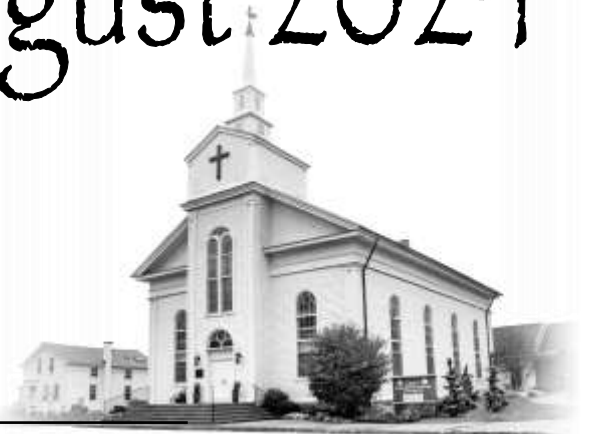
The Missive, August 2024

First Presbyterian Church

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We were in Texas when we were asked, “Did you see it?” Their tone revealed alarm and their furrowed brows revealed their disapproval, even before we knew what the topic was.

The answer was no, thankfully. We hadn’t seen the opening ceremonies of the Olympics, nor had we heard about it and so we could offer no insight into what the French were thinking in their portrayal of a libidinous banquet as part of their nationalistic pageantry.

But this is not what this month’s Missive letter is about. I believe there are deeper waters to plumb than why the French might skirt the edges of the Last Supper while celebrating Bacchus, the Greek God of Wine.

But, instead, it was the couple’s subsequent launch into the power of Satan in the world and how we must be vigilant, that stayed with me long after the analysis of the controversy had subsided.

It reminded me of the concern regarding Christian nationalism and the belief that a war is on: one between those who would organize to defend the country from the power of Satan and, presumably, the rest of us. I had been reading about Brad Onishi, a former Evangelist and Christian nationalist leader who spent many years devoted to the apocalyptic battle to come, when Jesus and Satan would battle for the soul of America.

It brings to the surface, especially in this election year, the vitriol and the hyperbole in this kind of framing. When we drop the name of Satan into the mix, we move away from the idea that two people or two sides can operate from different sets of values, and we enter Thunderdome, where the existential battle between good and evil causes us to demonize the other.

Finding ourselves to be the selected sounding board for a couple of irate Christians put us in the crosshairs of this dualism that separates the good guys from the bad. Had we had anything to offer the conversation we, no doubt, would have been relegated to the other side, a black pit of debouchery where Satan lives. Thankfully, for the sake of family harmony, we were spared this relegation and graced with the excuse that we were too busy tending to family matters to know about this latest assault on Christ.

From the pulpit this summer, Nate and I both had touched on the Book of Revelation. It is important to understand the literary nature of the book, the function, and even the prolific array of end time writings that didn’t make the canon. It makes Revelation less of a prediction and more of a description of warfare on this earth in any region and any era. Unfortunately, it is the Book of Revelation that fuels these “Left Behind” fantasies of spiritual warfare. This is not a criticism of Revelation but rather a concern about how we exploit it to demonize others and justify violence.

I will stop short, however, of saying there is no spiritual warfare, or that all sides have validity. I absolutely believe that some people are motivated by malice and greed, that others suffer at the hands of sadistic people who derive pleasure from elevating themselves at the expense of others.

But, thankfully, that’s not most of us...most of the time. Let’s leave the name of Satan for the truly and deeply vile ones from whom we can extract no virtue from their actions and remember that most of those we encounter are just trying to figure things out like we are.

Grace and Peace,
Mark

AUGUST 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
28 9:45: Worship & KidsFirst	29 5:00: Boy & Cub Scouts	30 8:00: Men's Breakfast 10:00: Food Pantry 10:00: Connected Threads	31 10:00: Food Pantry 4:30: Girl Scouts	AUGUST 1 5:30: Food Pantry	2 11:00: Library Event - Magic with Mr. Jim in Gull Prairie Room	3 2:30: Scout Badge Event in Gull Prairie Room
4 9:45: Worship w. Communion & KidsFirst	5 12:30: Worship & Music Mtg. 1:00: Pastoral Care Team 5:00: Boy & Cub Scouts	6 10:00: Food Pantry 10:00: Connected Threads 6:15: Brownie & Daisy Scouts	7 10:00: Food Pantry Noon: Seasoned Seniors 7:00: Mission Cmte. Meeting	8 1:00: Library Bingo 5:00: Girl Scouts 5:30: Food Pantry 6:00: Deacons Meeting	9 Noon: ARC Blood Drive in Gull Prairie Room	10
11 9:45: Worship 2:00: Boy Scouts 5:00: VBS	12 5:00: Boy & Cub Scouts 5:00: VBS	13 8:30: FPC Walking Grp. 10:00: Food Pantry 10:00: Connected Threads 10:00: Church Staff Mtg. 5:00: VBS	14 10:00: Food Pantry 4:30: Girl Scouts 5:00: VBS	15 5:30: Food Pantry 6:15: Session Meeting	16	17
18 9:45: Worship 11:15: Just Love 3:00: 4H Sewing Group	19 5:00: Boy & Cub Scouts 6:00: Boy Scouts	20 10:00: Food Pantry 10:00: Connected Threads 6:15: Brownie & Daisy Scouts	21 10:00: Food Pantry	22 5:00: Girl Scouts 5:30: Food Pantry 7:00: The Illuminator Viewing	23	24
25 9:45: Worship & KidsFirst	26 5:00: Boy & Cub Scouts 6:00: Boy Scouts	27 8:00: Men's Breakfast 8:30: FPC Walking Grp. 10:00: Food Pantry 10:00: Connected Threads 10:00: Church Staff Mtg.	28 10:00: Food Pantry 4:30: Girl Scouts	29 5:30: Food Pantry	30	31
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August Celebrations

August Birthdays

1 st Tyler Fisher	12 th Lisa Ambrosio	26 th Emma Gobble
1 st Liam Beals	12 th Brent Slezak	27 th Walt Stafford
4 th Dorothy Humphreys	13 th Judith Coasdale	27 th Morgan Wieland
5 th Hannah White	13 th Edward Schaadt	27 th Charlie Bryant
6 th Rick Steele	14 th Colin MacRitchie	27 th Jackson Rogers
6 th Helen Keusch	14 th Diane Meitz	29 th Laura Carisalez
7 th Brianna Wynsma	15 th Byron Hodgson	30 th Matthew Reece
9 th Marleigh Burris	16 th Leslie Keusch	30 th Lindsay Sutherland-Gvakharia
10 th Maureen Lovequist	21 st Vince Carahaly	30 th Jeremy Simon
10 th Samuel Butler	22 nd Laurel Sutherland	31 st Maddie Ballmer
11 th Tom Stegink	24 th Kathy Hoekstra	

Anniversaries

1 st Samantha & Traver Gay for 15 years	20 th Charlotte & Jon Battaglia for 2 years
3 rd Amber & Sam Beals for 22 years	20 th George & Roselyn Becker for 58 years
4 th Valerie & Larry Osborne for 45 years	22 nd Karen & Thomas Kendall for 54 years
12 th Janet & Jerry Petersen for 48 years	23 rd Eric & Cheri Larson for 49 years
13 th Kathy & Tony White for 41 years	26 th Carol & Leon Coverly for 63 years
13 th Cheryl & Darcy Wank for 41 years	26 th Sharon & Dan Wherry for 52 years
14 th Donna & Tom Webb for 48 years	27 th Ron Davis & Carrie Sutton for 13 years
16 th Bethany & Nick Gauthier for 21 years	28 th Christie & Steve Sutherland for 42 years
19 th Gary & Joyce Gibson for 52 years	30 th David & Shannan Deater for 38 years
19 th Dave & Jan Fisher for 57 years	30 th Gene & Sharon Rothenberg for 44 years
19 th Le & Allie (Steele) Rouse for 1 year	

& Remembrances

5th We remember the Wedding of Nancy & Jim Staley 57 years ago

31st We remember Phyllis Davis Birthday

SESSION

Class of 2024

Steve Sutherland, Buildings & Grounds

Larry Irey, 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

Moderator

Rev. Dr. Mark Jennings

Clerk of Session

Rick Foster

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

Grateful For All Your Support

by Rev. Pat Weatherwax

Dear Richland First Pres Family,

My daughter, Katie, and I are so grateful for all the ways you supported us this past month. The cards and other greetings were thoughtful and kind. The service was very well received by those attending. Rev. Dr. Jennings and Erin were the help we needed to create something meaningful to honor Sterling.

The video has been watched 500+ times! Special thanks to Zoe Gobble for streaming that for us, and for many who were not able to attend in person.

We were also grateful for the special music provided by Susan B. Anthony and Larry Myland.

We especially thank those who provided refreshments and assisted in the reception. I wish I had made a list of people to thank individually!

God's gracious providence has again been visible, through you.

Sincerely,

Pat and Katie Weatherwax and family

W. W. 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 final book in the biblical canon is called Revelation. It is singular, coming from the Greek word "apokalypsis". So why do we say Revelations? To confuse matters, I am reading a book called "Revelations" with the "s" intentionally placed by the author to communicate that there were multiple revelatory writings about the end of days.

So why is it Revelation? Perhaps the biblical writer John wanted to put forth the idea that his version is the only version? Or perhaps he acknowledges that his is but one revelation among others.

smagroups August Small Groups *by Amber Beals*

FPC Walking Group, Upcoming Walks

August 13, 8:30 a.m.: Walk in the MSU/Kellogg Forest. The parking lot is off of 42nd St, approx .5 mile south of M89 on the west side of the road. We will just walk a portion of it, then turn around and come back to the parking lot.

August 27, 8:30 a.m.: Walk in the Richland Township Park and walk 1-2 loops. Meet by the playground.

Family Pool Gathering

Thanks to the Carisalez family, we have one more family pool gathering this summer! Save the date: August 24 from 2 -6 pm. More details to follow.

The Illuminator Documentary Viewing

August 22, 7 pm, in the Deacon Brown House: Join others in watching a documentary of the making of Saint John's Bible. This Bible was made using traditional calligraphy with exquisite drawings and lettering. If you attended the Calligraphy class in May, this is the documentary Kristi R. told us all about! Please let Amber know if you are planning to attend. amberbeals@gmail.com or 269-303-1673.



Shared Blessings: Our Matthew 25 Leadership Team *by Erin Jennings*

Please watch this section for news to come as your Matthew 25 Leadership Team meets in September. We are excited to share news of this ministry as we grow together in our call to love and care for one another.

Presbyterian Women 75th Pie Tent Report

by Nancy Lynch

Three months before the scouts put the tent up, on the night of the third, plans started happening. We needed to decide what to charge for the pies- we kept it at \$10 for small, \$15 for large. As always, a decision on whether to sell cookies, brownies, and cupcakes was debated. How do we decorate the tent and tables? What signs should we have? Who will be able to help?

We have 101 families listed in the directory. I went over it with three different people to decide which families would be appropriate for our five volunteer callers to contact.

Because, in the past, people have thought the money raised stayed in our church. We made a sign to be put up in the tent, and at the rummage sale coming in October. We give to: Church Women United, The Gospel Mission, Ministry with Community, Community Volunteers, Open Door Kalamazoo, Loaves and Fishes, Richland Food Pantry, and the Gull Lake Alternative High School called Gateway Academy.

We decided that if someone made a donation they would be told they had just got another pie- a "ghost pie." The invisible pie was calorie, sugar, gluten, and nut free. The donation jar, created by Nicki Vantine, had a picture of the pie on the front.

On Wednesday, July 3, pies came out of the freezer, fresh pies began coming in, and the tent went up.

On Thursday, July 4, the Beal family- Sam (one of our finance elders), Amber (a scout leader and our small group ministries person), and Liam (a scout and youth participator in our church)- carried out the six tables and chairs. Pies were put out by our volunteers, and the tent was decorated. We were then ready to sell the 73 large pies made by our wonderful pie bakers, the 20 small pies made by Terry Vantine, and some brownies made by Jan Harrison. At the end of the afternoon the scouts put everything back in the church and we put things away for next year.

We are happy to report that we raised \$1,572. This includes the \$55 put in the donation jar and \$200 from a family that needed to keep and eat their pies at home.

We wish we could thank everyone by listing the names of all who baked or helped, but we are blessed with just too many. You know who you are and we hope you feel good about helping so many in the community!

Please note, Terry Vantine and I will not be heading this again next year. We were happy to do it the past few years, knowing how well this event is received by the community. We know whomever takes "the tent" over will feel blessed being able to raise funds for so many who need it.

Thank You from the Mission Committee

by Jennifer Spengler

THANK YOU!!!

Thank you for the generous donation of supplies and monetary support for the Welcome Packs that support Seita Scholars at Western Michigan University. Our congregation has supplied more than three full Welcome Packs which will be delivered to WMU this week.



All the donated items for the Seita Scholars program

The Giving Update

by Laura Carisalez

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 July 31: \$189,918

Contributions as of July 31: \$159,663

Deficit: -\$30,266

*Session approved a \$307,331.31 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

August 9

Noon – 6pm

Use the contact information below
to make your appointment.

redcrossblood.org | 1-800-RED CROSS



by Sandy Carahaly

PLEASE JOIN US! Our next meeting is August 18, at 11 AM in the church resource center. All Are Welcome! We will be discussing our Fall & Winter programming, an update on what becoming a Matthew 25 church means for Just Love, and a Best Wishes celebration for Marz as they head off to GVSU!

A Minute to Learn: Who was Marsha P. Johnson?

Martha P. Johnson is best known for her participation in the June, 1969, Stonewall Uprising, a pivotal event in LGBTQ+ rights. Police in NYC regularly raided gay bars at the time, and during a raid on the Stonewall Inn patrons resisted arrest. Police set the Inn on fire, and a week of uprisings, protests, and demonstrations followed. Johnson denied being at Stonewall when the uprising began, and many of the claims of her specific involvement were never verified. Nevertheless, Johnson is widely seen as one of the icons of the Uprising and LGBTQ+ rights. While she would likely consider herself transgender today, that word was not in common use at the time; Johnson self-identified as gay, a transvestite, and a drag queen. She had a strong faith, born into the African Methodist Episcopal church, practicing Catholicism as an adult, and expressing a personal relationship with Jesus. She said that Catholicism spoke to her because it “says we are all brothers and sisters in Christ.” She was active in many LGBTQ+ rights organizations, focusing her attention on supporting homeless transgender youth and advocating for transgender rights as well as caring for sick and dying patients during the AIDS pandemic. In 1992, at the height of a gay bashing epidemic in NYC, Johnson’s body was found floating in the Hudson River. Her death was initially ruled a suicide but later opened as a homicide case after friends insisted she was not suicidal and pointed out that she had a significant head wound. She was 46 years old.

Notable Quotes:

“How many people have died for these two little statues to be put in the park to recognize gay people? How many years does it take for people to see that we’re all brothers and sisters and human beings in the human race?” Martha P. Johnson, speaking on the dedication of George Segal’s sculpture “Gay Liberation” in Christopher Park (near the Stonewall Inn) on June 23, 1992 – two weeks before her murder.

Days of Significance, August, 2024

- August 2: James Baldwin’s Birthday
- August 12, 2nd Sunday in August: Gay Uncles (Guncles) Day
- August 19: Transgender Flag Day
- August 24: Marsha P. Johnson’s Birthday

FOOD PANTRY SHOPPING LIST

The Food Pantry is now open three days a week. With more people shopping the pantry every week, we welcome any contributions to our pantry shelves. **Boxed breakfast cereals and baked sweets like cookies and Pop-Tarts** remain our most in demand items. Monetary donations can also be made by listing the Food Pantry as your chosen recipient in the check memo line or on your donation envelope

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the Richland Food Pantry to help 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.

Scouting Life Summer with Troop 294

by Antoinette Sandum

This July the troop traveled down to Camp Mountaineer in Morgantown, WV for a week-long summer camp. They were able to participate in merit badges in various areas of discipline, such as handicraft, aquatics, climbing, and shooting sports. They also participated in the camp wide games and aquatic carnival. Three of the girls completed the mile swim this year. They also made dutch oven desserts, and the girls placed 3rd with peanut butter chocolate cake.

They had fun interacting with staff and other scouts, as well as with each other. In their free time, they enjoyed fishing, playing games, and exploring the camp.

Keep On Scouting!



August Happenings In KidsFirst

by Brooke Heck

August is always a busy month for the children's ministry as we say goodbye to summer, level up kids to new ministries and classes, and begin a new year of curriculum!

As we gear up for Vacation Bible School this year, I want to take the time to thank all those who have donated supplies/funds, their time, or signed up to provide dinner to the campers and their families!



Donations

Mark and Erin Jennings, Kalli Inman, Phyllis Leiter, The Smith family, Nancy Lynch, Connie Kratzer, Sandy and Steve Hart, Sandra Gobble, Joan Willemstyn, Jennifer and George Spengler.

VBS Volunteers

Amber Beals, Liam Beals, Pam Foster, Chris Gobble, Emma Gobble, Sandra Gobble, Zoe Gobble, Erin Jennings, Mark Jennings, Paisley Lindenberg, Maureen Lovequist, Jackson Rogers.

VBS Meal Teams

FPC staff, Mission Committee, Worship/Music, Deacons.

As a result of the outpouring of support from the congregation, we were able to offer our VBS program to the community! We have the privilege of opening our doors to multiple new families this year!

We are excited to have a fun filled 4 nights exploring the land "down under" and learning all about God's love and protection, the beautiful world he provided us, and how our actions can "boomerang" back to us!

Campers: complete the coloring page in this issue and bring it to the registration table of VBS on any of the 4 nights to get a special prize!

Save the Date for KidsFirst Sunday!

Make sure you attend church on Sunday, August 25th for a very special service! You will be greeted by KidsFirst members, witness the blessing of the backpacks and the Bible presentation to our incoming 3rd graders, as well as coffee service by the KidsFirst team! Have you been downstairs in the last 2 years? A lot has changed! During coffee hour, we will be offering guided tours of the revamped Sunday School wing by the kids of KidsFirst! It's a Sunday you don't want to miss out on!

God loves me!



DOWN UNDER DISCOVERY
Vacation Bible School 2024

First Presbyterian Church
8047 Church Street
Richland, MI 49083

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

AUGUST

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH STAFF

Reverend Dr. Mark W. Jennings, Pastor
Reverend Pat Weatherwax, Parish Associate
Rachel Little, Office Manager
*Erin Jennings, Pastoral Assistant
Paul Gobble, Director of Communications
Andrea Large, Choir Director
Amber Beals, Small Group Ministries
Brooke Heck, Sunday School Director

Chris Gobble, Financial Secretary
Laura Carisalez, Treasurer
Connie Slater, Sexton
*Jeremiah Smith and Zoe Gobble, Production
*Karen Urban, Office Volunteer

*Volunteer