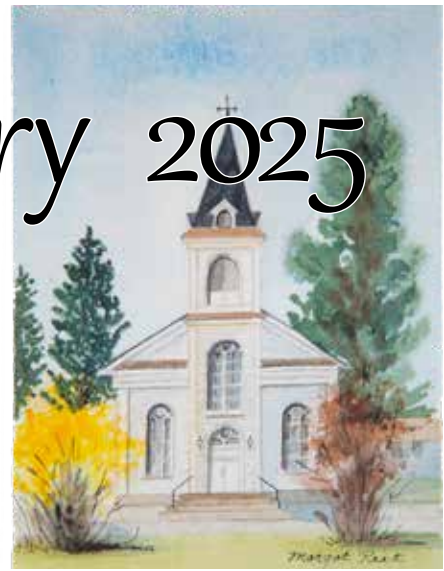


The Missive, February 2025

First Presbyterian Church

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Watercolor by Margot Peet

Update on the work of the Interim Pastor Nominating Committee

by Jill Steele

With the recent retirement of our long-time pastor, the usual Presbyterian process leading to the selection and installation of a new pastor includes the selection of an interim pastor. The Session selected seven individuals to serve on the Interim Pastor Search Committee (IPSC): Elders Rick Foster, who serves as the chair of the IPSC, Joyce Gibson, Ruthie Mason, Connie Kratzer, Jill Steele, newly elected elder Tom Stegink, and congregation member Lee Coverly. The IPSC began meeting in December with the guidance of Rev. Kristin Stroble of the Lake Michigan Presbytery. The committee elected Rick Foster to serve as the required IPSC chair, and Jill Steele to serve as the required recording secretary. The first important IPSC step is developing a “Ministry Discernment Profile,” (MDP) a standardized form used by the Presbytery to input into a database, something akin to a dating system to find matches between the MDP developed by IPSC and potential interim pastors.

The IPSC has now met five times and is preparing to present the completed MDP to the Session for approval. Once that has been approved, it will be submitted to the Lake Mich-

igan Presbytery for approval and entry into the database, at which point we would begin to see candidates interested in applying for the interim pastor position. We do not anticipate having an interim pastor in place until later this Spring, perhaps not until May. The IPSC is required by the Presbytery to keep confidential the names of applicants and those who are being considered primarily out of respect to the applicants. The IPSC will interview selected applicants who appear to be a good match for our church for this important transition period. The IPSC decided to include a provision in the MDP requiring that the candidates have undergone interim pastor training. Once the IPSC has selected an applicant and negotiated a salary, it will be sent to the Session for approval. The interim pastor generally serves for a period of a year until an installed pastor has been selected.

The search process for an installed pastor will be different and will include a lot of outreach and involvement of the congregation at large. It will take place down the road a bit, after an interim pastor is in place, but we anticipate a survey of the congregation regarding our ideal for an installed pastor.

February 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
26 9:45 Worship and KidsFirst 11:15 Annual Meeting & Potluck 1:00 Faith First Youth Group at Beacon Pointe	27 5:00 Boy & Cub Scouts 6:00 Boy Scouts 6:30 Project Night in Deacon Brown House	28 8:00 Men's Breakfast 10:00 Food Pantry Staff Meeting	29 10:00 Food Pantry 6:30 Trivia Night at Richland Community Library	30 11:00 Bible Study 5:30 Food Pantry 6:00 Library Comedy Workshop 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	31	1 FEBRUARY
2 9:45 Worship with Communion and KidsFirst	3 Noon Pastoral Care Team Meeting 3:00 Worship & Music 5:00 Boy & Cub Scouts	4 10:00 Food Pantry Staff Meeting 1:00 Worship & Music 6:15 Brownie and Daisy Scouts 7:00 Moms' Group	5 10:00 Food Pantry Noon Seasoned Seniors 4:30 Girl Scouts 7:00 Mission Committee Meeting Moms' Group	6 11:00 Bible Study 5:00 Girl Scouts 5:30 Food Pantry	7	8
9 9:45 Worship and KidsFirst 11:00 Faith First Sunday School Finance Cmte. 2:00 Boy Scouts 3:00 4H Club 6:00 Faith First Youth Group	10 5:00 Boy & Cub Scouts	11 10:00 Food Pantry Staff Meeting	12 10:00 Food Pantry 6:15 Session Meeting	13 11:00 Bible Study 5:30 Food Pantry 6:00 Deacons Meeting	14 ~ Valentine's Day ~ 4:00 J&J Book Exchange Set-up	15 10:00 J&J Book Exchange 6:00 Valentine's Bunco
16 9:45 Worship and KidsFirst 11:00 Just Love	17 5:00 Boy & Cub Scouts 6:00 Boy Scouts	18 10:00 Connected Threads Food Pantry Staff Meeting 6:15 Brownie and Daisy Scouts	19 10:00 Food Pantry 4:30 Girl Scouts 6:00 Christmas Carol Book Discussion	20 11:00 Bible Study 5:00 Girl Scouts 5:30 Food Pantry 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	21	22 Noon Finance Cmte.
23 9:45 Worship and KidsFirst	24 5:00 Boy & Cub Scouts 6:00 Boy Scouts	25 8:00 Men's Breakfast 10:00 Food Pantry Staff Meeting	26 10:00 Food Pantry	27 11:00 Bible Study 5:30 Food Pantry 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	28	1 MARCH
2 9:45 Worship with Communion and KidsFirst	3 Noon Pastoral Care Team Meeting 3:00 Worship & Music 5:00 Boy & Cub Scouts	4 10:00 Food Pantry Staff Meeting 6:15 Brownie and Daisy Scouts	5 10:00 Food Pantry Noon Seasoned Seniors 4:30 Girl Scouts 7:00 Mission Committee Meeting	6 11:00 Bible Study 5:00 Girl Scouts 5:30 Food Pantry	7	8
9 ~ Daylight Saving ~ Time Starts 9:45 Worship and KidsFirst Faith First Sunday Class 2:00 Boy Scouts 3:00 4H Club	10 5:00 Boy & Cub Scouts	11 10:00 Food Pantry Staff Meeting	12 10:00 Food Pantry 6:15 Session Meeting	13 11:00 Bible Study 5:30 Food Pantry 6:00 Deacons Meeting 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	14	15

February Celebrations

February Birthdays

1 st Cheryl Wank	10 th Jack Sizer	22 nd Carol Coverly
2 nd Jackie Stasevich	11 th Wendy Field	23 rd Alyson Muss
7 th Paul Gobble	13 th Jean Stafford	24 th Marz Carahaly
9 th Jean Yoder	13 th Allie Steele	25 th Ann Fontaine
10 th Ed Calkins	17 th Cindy Lebiecki	26 th Glenn Fontaine
10 th Marianne MacRitchie	19 th Jerry Wittwer	28 th Jaime Fiordalis Jozic
10 th Christopher Reece	21 st Chad Stopher	28 th Brian Young

Anniversaries

9 thKathy Griffin & Tom Stegink for 45 years
11 thAnn & Glenn Fontaine for 18 years
18 thRuth & Bill Mason for 20 years
26 thPam & Rick Foster for 20 years

Sunday Morning Volunteers

Welcome Teams

Feb. 2..... Jean & Walt Stafford
Feb. 9..... Amber Beals
Feb. 16... Laura Carisalez
Feb. 23... Jill Steele

Coffee Teams

Feb. 2.....Pam & Rick Foster
Feb. 9.....Sandy & Steve Hart
Feb. 16...Pam & Rick Foster
Feb. 23...Sandy & Steve Hart

KidsFirst Volunteers

Feb. 9.....Laura Carisalez
Feb. 16...Valerie Osborne
Feb. 23...Pam Foster

If you are interested in taking a turn and volunteering as part of the Welcome Team or the Coffee Team, please follow the links below to sign up. If you would like to help with KidsFirst, please contact Brooke Heck.

Welcome Team Sign-up: www.tinyurl.com/26njbyxm

Coffee Team Sign-up: www.tinyurl.com/3j8ykmyp



Mission Committee and Matthew 25 News

by Joyce Dishon



Our Mission Committee, through your support and giving, provides financial support to local agencies and programs that we feel align with our efforts to be a Matthew 25 (vs 31-46) Church. Our focus at this time is to look at how these programs and agencies work to lift people up from and eradicate systemic poverty in the greater Kalamazoo area. In the December Missive I covered Open Doors of Kalamazoo and Ministry with Community. This month I'm providing a brief review of two more local non-profit programs that receive our support: SHALOM and the YWCA Domestic Assault Women's and Children's shelter.

SHALOM (Self-Help Alternative Living Opportunities of Michigan) Kalamazoo is located at 6276 Riverview Drive north of Parchment. SHALOM Kalamazoo exists to serve adults living with developmental disabilities through the love and wholeness of Jesus Christ. SHALOM provides housing, work and community opportunities not just for the adults they serve but also for their families and caregivers. The folks they serve help care for the animals and garden on the farm, as well as helping in the thrift store. Some also make craft items that can be purchased at the store. The public is welcome to stop in to visit and shop at the Coffee Connection, the Shepherd's Barn, Connection Depot Thrift Store (lots of good shopping there), Woolery and farm. To learn more about SHALOM take time to visit their website at www.shalomkazoo.org. You may find it is a great place to volunteer.

The YWCA of Kalamazoo, located in Kalamazoo at the corner of East Michigan Ave. and Edwards St. is the longest serving YWCA in Michigan. The YWCA provides individuals and families with victim-focused counseling and advocacy services as well as shelter for survivors of violence, transitional housing, and legal services. The YWCA offers high-quality, early-learning childcare in two locations: The Dreamery at Edison and the Dreamery at Downtown. Their variety of family programs are designed to improve the lives of the

most vulnerable population. Their Women and Infant Supportive Health program promotes healthy pregnancies, positive birth outcomes, and overall well-being of infants and mothers living in Kalamazoo. For more information on the services provided by the YWCA visit their website at www.ywcakalamazoo.org.



Michigan Pilgrimage

by Rev. Pat Weatherwax

Several years ago at a presbytery meeting I heard about a twice yearly retreat weekend that's available locally. I attended and have since become a part of this great community. Nathan Martens has attended, too.

I encourage you to consider attending the Michigan Pilgrimage weekend, which will be held May 1-4, Thursday evening through Sunday afternoon. I have a brochure and a registration form with me at all times. It's a way for Christ-followers to take a break from routine and experience a weekend full of grace, hope, and peace. (There's also good food and plenty of laughs.) I would be glad to tell you more, and sponsor you. See me for details and check out the website: michiganpilgrimage.org.

Part of the pilgrimage is their routine closing statement: God loves you and so do I!

PS: I anticipate traveling mid February thru mid March, but mid March is the perfect time to commit to this.

What a great spread!

by Pam Foster and Bethany Gauthier

Thank you to everyone for bringing such amazing dishes to our annual meeting potluck! The spread of food was plentiful and delicious! Thank you also to the great group who stayed after to help with cleanup.



by Sandy Carahaly

“Do it afraid.”

This expression has been running through my head for the past couple of weeks. The changes in the US executive office and administration are causing many people to be very afraid. Immigrants, LGBTQ+ people, disabled people, women, teachers, parents, scientists, medical and mental health professionals, and so many more are finding themselves in uncharted territory as executive orders are signed and bills are proposed that impact their lives and their livelihoods.

The Bible tells us to “fear not,” but how realistic is that? Fear is a natural and primitive human response. Nobody should feel ashamed of being fearful, especially when they are being directly and clearly targeted. It would be foolish to be cavalier about clear and present dangers.

What we often forget, however, is that when scripture tells us to “fear not,” it’s followed by a reminder and promise that God is with us and will never leave us. We are encouraged not to be fearless, but to lean on the strength we gain from our faith, and to do it afraid.

The PC(USA) has made public statements recently about gender justice, anti-racism, immigration, advocacy, and equality. I am finding myself increasingly proud of our denomination, and grateful for the example it is setting as Matthew 25 Christians.

In their commentary on the “two genders” executive order – one of the first to be signed – the PC(USA) reminded us that the Confession of Belhar states that “in a world full of injustice and enmity, God is in a special way the God of the destitute, poor and wronged.” We are called to love our neighbor... that includes our transgender, nonbinary, gender non-conforming and gender expansive neighbor. It includes our immigrant neighbor (documented or not). It includes our neighbor who finds herself in a position where she is

considering abortion. It includes our Muslim neighbor, our Jewish neighbor, and our atheist neighbor. And during times of heightened fear, we need to show and share that love loudly and boldly.

Please join us after worship on the third Sunday of every month in the church Resource Center. Now more than ever we need to build strength in community. Let’s do it afraid, together.



by Amber Beals

FPC Walking Group, Upcoming Walks

February 4, 9 a.m.: Walk in the MSU/Kellogg Forest. The parking lot is off of 42nd St, approximately one-half mile south of M89 on the west side of the road.

February 18, 9 a.m.: Walk in the Richland Township Park and walk 1-2 loops. Meet by the playground.

Christmas Carol Book Discussion Group

This group meets the third Wednesday of the month at the Deacon Brown House. Our next gathering is February 19th, 6 p.m. to 7:15 p.m. Please read lessons 5 through 8.

Project Night

Please note this will be rescheduled for a later date.

Moms’ Group

Next Moms’ group is Tuesday February 4th at 7 p.m. in the Deacon Brown House. We will be discussing our book, *The Sun Does Shine* by Anthony Ray Hinton.

Valentine’s Bunco

Save the Date! Saturday, February 15th, 6 p.m., in the Gull Prairie Room. Join us for an evening of fellowship and fun! We’ll start the evening with hors d’oeuvres followed by Bunco. Prizes will be supplied! Sign up sheet is available in the GPR or by talking to Amber or Pam.

If you are interested in, or have any questions about small groups, contact Amber at amberbeals@gmail.com.

Bylaws

by Jill Steele

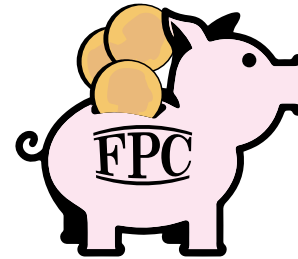
Our 27-year-old church bylaws updates were approved at this year’s annual congregational meeting. While they showed a lot of “mark-up,” many of those were technical to ensure compliance with the “Book of Order,” which is the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Congregation members were provided with a copy of the bylaws including mark-up to show where insertions and deletions were made for ease of review. Elder Jill Steele headed up the bylaw changes, concluding with a meeting including Clerk of Session Rick Foster and the Rev. Fran Lane Lawrence from the Presbytery of Lake Michigan for guidance with additional technical amendments.

The most substantial changes to the bylaws were made to provide the Session with flexibility regarding the required number of elders on the Session and deacons on the Board of Deacons. Prior to the recent amendments, each body was required to have twelve members, which presented challenges when considering the size of our congregation. With the approved changes, the Session can now set the required number at no less than nine but no more than twelve for each body.

Another change was to the constitution of the nominating committee, whose members recruit candidates for the offices of elders and deacons each year. The number of committee members remains the same at seven, but the Board of Deacons were given an equal number of members as the Session Elders hold, which is two. The remaining three are at-large congregation members. Since the pandemic, like many other bodies the Session has held many electronic meetings. While the Presbyterian Church permits electronic meetings, it must be provided for in the bylaws, so we are now in compliance with that provision.

Questions were raised at the congregational meeting about the changes to the language of “active mem-

bers.” This change was made to comply with the Book of Order. Rest assured that no one who wishes to remain a member of the Richland Presbyterian Church will be removed from the membership rolls. An additional question was raised about the deletion of “Financial Secretary,” from Article VIII, “Financial Officers.” This position remains a staff member, but it was deleted from the bylaws because it is not required to be set out in the bylaws. Our church employs several other staff positions that are not provided for in the bylaws, thus the amendments were made to leave in only those officers required to be included in the bylaws. We believe these changes will help us in this exciting time of transition to modernize our church structure. Feel free to contact Jill Steele or another member of the Session if you have questions about the recent amendments.



General Fund Income 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. A full update of income and expenses will be provided in the annual report.

Actuals for January:	\$30,063.25
Budget for January:	\$25,521.67
Actuals vs. Budget for January:	\$4,541.58
	higher than budget
Total General fund income budget for 2025: ..	\$284,210.00

Financial Contribution Choices

by Laura Carisalez

There are many ways to make a financial contribution to the church, from cash to check to electronic giving! The various methods of giving also have varying amounts of fees that might be charged. There are several ways to give that do not incur any fees to either the donor or the church. The first of these is writing a check or donating cash, either in person during the church service on Sundays, or by mailing your donation to the church office. Both of these methods are secure, and will be included in your annual giving statement (as long as you use your designated envelopes, or otherwise indicate who the donation is from!).

If you're interested in electronic giving, but do not want to have any fees deducted from your donation, a bill pay service might be right for you. Several local banks and credit unions offer free bill pay services, including Fifth Third Bank, Advia Credit Union, and Kellogg Community Credit Union. Bill pay can usually be arranged via your bank or credit union's online banking website. You can elect to set up recurring payments as well, to avoid having to remember to schedule on a weekly or monthly basis. You can also include on the memo line any designations for your donation - for example, a split between the General Fund and the Building Fund. Your bank or credit union will then mail a check directly to our church, which will be included in the weekly offering count done by our amazing counting team! These donations are also included in your annual giving statement. If you already have access to online banking via your financial institution, and need help setting up online bill pay, I would be happy to walk through it with you!

There are two additional ways to give online, that both do have fees deducted from your gift. The first of these is via the Presbyterian Foundation. The link to donate is found on our church website, at the "Give Now" button. These donations do incur a 2% processing fee. All gifts received, less the 2% processing fee, are sent in a lump sum to our church's bank account on a regular basis. You will receive a separate giving statement at year end for any donations done through this website directly from the Presbyterian Foundation.

The last way to give online will soon be available to you again, and we'll let you know just as soon as it is! This will be through Venmo. Venmo's fees are 1.9%

plus a \$0.10 per transaction. For larger donations, this fee would be less than the 2% fee incurred with the Presbyterian Foundation giving method above. When sending donations via Venmo, you can include a memo regarding the designation for your gift. These donations will be included on your year-end giving statement.

I want to express my deepest gratitude for your generous donations and continued support. Your contributions have played an essential role in helping us carry out the important work of our ministry, and because of you, we have been able to accomplish so much together. As we navigate this season of transition, your gifts are more vital than ever. They provide the foundation for the next chapter of our church's growth and allow us to move forward with confidence. With your support, we are positioned to face new challenges, seize new opportunities, and continue to live out the mission God has given us. We are excited to see all the great things God has in store for us as a church family, and we know that together, we can achieve even greater things.

Per Capita

by Laura Carisalez

Per capita is a per member fee that our church is responsible to pay, and is allocated between the General Assembly, the Synod of the Covenant, and the Presbytery of Lake Michigan. The per capita fee for 2025 is \$42 per member. **We ask that each member of the congregation pay their per capita fee, in order to offset the expense to our general fund.** If you have giving envelopes, you will find a per capita envelope in your box in order to submit this offering. Presbyterians have used per capita—an annual per member apportionment assessed by the General Assembly (Book of Order, G-3.0106; see also Standing Rule F.4.b.), and by many synods and presbyteries, to enable Presbyterians mutually and equitably to share the ecclesiastical and administrative costs of sustaining our witness to Christ—as a sign of the covenant that binds us together. General Assembly per capita is the primary source of funding for the Office of the General Assembly and makes possible numerous services on which Presbyterians depend, including the biennial meeting of the General Assembly. If you are interested, there are several articles and videos on the Presbytery of Lake Michigan's website which explain more about how per capita is used.

www.pcusa.org/resources/financial-information/capita
www.tinyurl.com/2s4frnjs
www.tinyurl.com/482w5ssh

Welcome to the KidsFirst Nursery!

by Brooke Heck

Our nursery has been updated and is finally ready to re-open! I am so excited to be able to have a safe space for everyone from tiny 6 week-old infants all the way up to kids that are finishing 5th grade in our church again! The nursery has been a labor of love over the last year; the walls are freshly painted, the furniture has been updated, more recent toys have been collected, and the carpets have been professionally cleaned - all so that the smallest of God's children can have a space to play and explore while their caregivers attend a church service each week. The nursery will be open for children aged 6 weeks up to preschool age. Feel free to come downstairs and take a look anytime (but please remove shoes before entering)!

The re-opening of the nursery means that no matter the ages of children in a family, we have a program for them - which is a really big milestone! However, it is not the end of the KidsFirst ministry's expansion though! Having a nursery service infants through preschoolers is just the first phase. Once there are families regularly attending FPC Richland with children in the nursery room, the adjoining room will be opened. Nursery 1 will be for infants from 6 weeks-walking and Nursery 2 will be for children walking-preschool.

We need YOU!

by Brooke Heck

In order to have this room open and accessible for any family that walks into our church, we need you! Ideally nursery volunteers will:

- Be a team of 4-6 adults over 18. Teens aged 16-18 are welcome to volunteer, but they must have an over 18 adult with them.
- Have 2 volunteers in the room per Sunday.
- Have a rotating schedule of when they volunteer so you can plan ahead.

Nursery volunteers will be asked to arrive by 9:30am. If no children have arrived by 10am, you are able to join service upstairs! For the safety of the children, all volunteers over 18 will require a background check (Rachel will help with this process). Once we have a few volunteers signed up, I will schedule a brief training in the nursery to go over protocol and basic information following a church service. If interested, please email kidsfirst@firstpresrichland.org or see Brooke/Rachel to get the background check process started.

SESSION

Class of 2024 (outgoing)

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*

Class of 2027 (incoming)

Pam Foster, *Membership & Fellowship*

Tom Stegink, *Building and Grounds*

Special Moderator

Seth Weeldreyer

Clerk of Session

Rick Foster

DEACONS

Class of 2024 (outgoing)

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

Class of 2027 (incoming)

Heidi Bryant

Joyce Dishon

Joan Willemstyn



kids FIRST!

at FPC
Richland



First Presbyterian Church
8047 Church Street
Richland, MI 49083

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

FEBRUARY

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH STAFF

Reverend Pat Weatherwax*, *Parish Associate*
Kaleb Nuesse, *Choir Director*
Laura Carisalez, *Treasurer*
Rachel Little, *Office Manager*
Amber Beals, *Small Group Ministries*
Connie Slater, *Sexton*

Brooke Heck, *Sunday School Director*
Maureen Lovequist, *Director of Instrumental Music*
Chris Gobble, *Financial Secretary*
Paul Gobble, *Director of Communications*
Karen Urban*, *Office Volunteer*
Jeremiah Smith*, Jarrod Heck*, Zoe Gobble*,
Production

* *Volunteer*