

The Missive, April 2025

First Presbyterian Church

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Watercolor by Margot Peet

April, A Month of Special Services and Joy

It is with anticipation that we look forward to our services in April. We have so much to celebrate, foremost our gift of salvation our Savior gave us as he sacrificed His life. And then, three days later rose from the dead, forever defeating sin and death.

We launch the month on April 6th with Rev. Pat Weatherwax bringing us the Word and communion.

On April 13th, Rev. Kathleen King will proclaim the message, remembering the events of Palm Sunday and the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. To continue that remembrance, we will have hot cross buns during coffee hour. And we thank our Membership and Fellowship ahead of time for those.

A service honoring Jesus' last evening, especially his last meal, will be held in the sanctuary on April 17th, at 7 pm. We have invited people from the Plainwell First Presbyterian Church to join with us. In turn, we are invited to worship on Good Friday with them, April 18th, at noon. Nathan Martens and Pat Weatherwax will co-lead these holy remembrances.

April 20th, we have our joyous Easter celebration, "Christ is Risen, risen indeed!" Rev. Bob Bond will be leading that service. We will have special music from our choir and the participation of Mike McMinn, as his trumpet heralds our risen Lord! The service will end with members of the congregation invited to join the choir in singing the "Hallelujah Chorus". What a blessed time.

April 27th is Scout Sunday, a special service with the involvement of our scout programs. It is a time to meet some of them and hear their thoughts on scouting and its impact on their lives. Rev. Pat Weatherwax will lead this service.

We will have a busy April with lots of activity and special times together. Please plan to join us.

Sandy Hart
Worship and Music Elder

April 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
30 9:45 Worship	31 5:00 Boy & Cub Scouts	1 APRIL 10:00 Connected Threads Food Pantry 1:00 Worship & Music 6:15 Brownie and Daisy Scouts	2 10:00 Food Pantry Noon Seasoned Seniors 4:30 Girl Scouts 7:00 Mission Committee Meeting	3 11:00 Bible Study 5:00 Girl Scouts 5:30 Food Pantry	4	5
6 9:45 Worship with Communion and KidsFirst 11:00 OutFront Kalamazoo Discussion	7 1:00 Pastoral Care Team Meeting 5:00 Boy & Cub Scouts	8 9:00 Walking Group 10:00 Connected Threads Food Pantry Staff Meeting	9 10:00 Food Pantry	10 11:00 Bible Study 5:30 Food Pantry 6:00 Deacons Meeting 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	11	12
13 9:45 Worship and KidsFirst 11:00 Faith First Sunday Class 2:00 Boy Scouts 3:00 4H Club	14 5:00 Boy & Cub Scouts	15 10:00 Connected Threads at Beacon Pointe Food Pantry Staff Meeting 6:15 Session Brownie and Daisy Scouts	16 10:00 Food Pantry 4:15 Girl Scouts 6:00 Christmas Carol Book Discussion	17 ~ <i>Maundy Thursday</i> ~ 11:00 Bible Study 5:00 Girl Scouts 5:30 Food Pantry 7:00 Maundy Thursday Service	18 ~ <i>Good Friday</i> ~ 5:00 Girl Scouts Noon Good Friday Service at Plainwell First Presbyterian	19
20 ~ <i>Easter Sunday</i> ~ 9:45 Worship and KidsFirst 11:00 Just Love	21 5:00 Boy & Cub Scouts 6:00 Boy Scouts	22 9:00 Walking Group 10:00 Connected Threads Food Pantry Staff Meeting	23 10:00 Food Pantry	24 11:00 Bible Study 5:30 Food Pantry 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	25	26 10:00 Elder / Deacon Training
27 9:45 Worship, Scout Sunday and KidsFirst	28 5:00 Boy & Cub Scouts 6:00 Boy Scouts	29 8:00 Men's Breakfast 10:00 Connected Threads Food Pantry Staff Meeting 6:15 Brownie and Daisy Scouts	30 10:00 Food Pantry 4:30 Girl Scouts 7:00 Library Team Trivia	1 MAY 11:00 Bible Study 5:00 Girl Scouts 5:30 Food Pantry	2	3 3:00 Family Group Games
4 9:45 Worship with Communion and KidsFirst	5 1:00 Pastoral Care Team 5:00 Boy & Cub Scouts	6 10:00 Connected Threads Food Pantry Staff Meeting 1:00 Worship & Music 7:00 Moms' Group	7 10:00 Food Pantry Noon Seasoned Seniors 7:00 Mission Committee Meeting	8 11:00 Bible Study 5:30 Food Pantry 6:00 Deacons Meeting 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	9	10

April Celebrations

April Birthdays

- | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 3..... Stephanie Wank | 12..... Emma Gay | 22..... Sarah Nott |
| 4..... Kay Hutchinson | 13..... Nancy Lynch | 22..... Gail Venner |
| 4..... Robert Monk | 14..... Sharon Wherry | 22..... Nancy Wright |
| 5..... Ken Barts | 15..... Zip Fiordalis | 22..... Rick Wynsma |
| 5..... Kalli Inman | 15..... George Lindenberg | 23..... Liam MacRitchie |
| 5..... Charlotte Battaglia | 16..... Kelila Ryan | 24..... Jacqueline Brignall |
| 5..... Jennifer Spengler | 17..... Karen Kendall | 25..... Caelan Deater |
| 5..... Sara Wieber | 18..... Steve Allen | 26..... Zoe Gobble |
| 7..... Irissa Wyckoff | 19..... Sheldon Putt | 27..... John Meyer |
| 8..... Margaret Hetzel | 20..... Caelen Ryan | 27..... Linda Pollock |
| 8..... Sharon Rothenberg | 20..... Ronda Schaadt | 29..... Sophia Carahaly |
| 9..... Evelyn Cramer | 21..... Scott MacRitchie | 30..... Elle Gay |
| 10..... Rob Kubiak | 21..... Karalea Rothenberg | 30..... Tom Kendall |
| 11..... Emily Myland Walters | 22..... Phyllis Leiter | 30..... Kelene Monk Rogers |



Anniversaries

- | | |
|---|---|
| 4..... Kalli & Steve Inman for 38 years | 16..... Mary & Deng Alier for 10 years |
| 5..... Sue & Larry Myland for 50 years | 23..... Carol & Byron Hodgson for 9 years |
| 12..... Jennifer & Allen Stupica for 40 years | 25..... Deb & Mark Fisher for 38 years |

SESSION

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

Pam Foster, *Membership & Fellowship*
 Tom Stegink, *Building and Grounds*

Special Moderator

Seth Weeldreyer

Clerk of Session

Rick Foster

DEACONS

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

Heidi Bryant
 Joyce Dishon
 Joan Willemstyn

April Volunteer Roster

*My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue,
but in deed and in truth. - 1 John 3:18*

Liturgist

April 6 Connie Kratzer
April 13 **Volunteer Needed**
April 20 Val Osborne and
Esperanza Carisalez
April 27 Amber Beals

Welcome Team

April 6 Heidi Bryant
April 13 Amber Beals
April 20 Ruthie Mason
April 27 Amber Beals
May 4 **Volunteer Needed**
May 11 **Volunteer Needed**

Coffee Teams

April 6 Pam & Rick Foster
April 13 **Volunteer Needed**
April 20 **Volunteer Needed**
April 27 **Volunteer Needed**
May 4 **Volunteer Needed**
May 11 Heidi Bryant

KidsFirst

April 6 Valerie Osborne
April 13 Shannon Smith and Laura Carisalez
April 20 Christie Sutherland
April 27 **Volunteer Needed**
May 4 **Volunteer Needed**
May 11 **Volunteer Needed**

Panera Bread, Monday

April 7 Joyce & Gary Gibson
April 14 Deb & Mark Fisher
April 21 Jim Staley
April 28 Christie & Steve Sutherland
May 5 Joyce & Gary Gibson

Panera Bread, Friday

April 4 Margaret Hetzel
April 11 Sandra & Ken Barts
April 18 Sara Wieber
April 25 Cara Barnes
May 2 Margaret Hetzel

Richland Food Pantry

April 1 Sandy Welker and Jim Staley
April 2 Marilyn Graber
April 3 Myah VanTil and Jan Harrison
April 8 Jan Runnels and Jim Staley
April 9 Shannon Smith
April 10 Jan Harrison and **Volunteer Needed**
April 15 Jim Staley and **Volunteer Needed**
April 16 Marilyn Graber
April 17 Jan Harrison and **Volunteer Needed**
April 22 Jan Runnels and Jim Staley
April 23 Rose Ann Triestram
April 24 Renee Scott and Jan Harrison
April 29 Jim Staley and **Volunteer Needed**
April 30 Marilyn Graber
May 1 Jan Harrison and **Volunteer Needed**

Scan the QR codes below to sign-up and volunteer

Sunday Morning
Welcome Team



Sunday Morning
Coffee Team



Food Pantry
Mornings



Food Pantry
Evenings



Interim Pastor Search Update

by Jill Steele

The Richland First Presbyterian Church continues to be active as we rediscover our church and move forward after the retirement of our long time Pastor, Rev. Dr. Mark Jennings. Most recently, the Interim Pastor Search Committee (IPSC) met on March 2 and March 9 to learn about the Church Leadership Connection (CLC) website and receive training from Rev. Kristin Stroble on behalf of the Lake Michigan Presbytery. This website provides “matches” between our completed Ministry Discernment Profile (MDP) and ministers who may be seeking available interim calls. For more details on the MDP, please refer to the cover article in the February Missive.

Since then, the IPSC has received its first batch of matches, which for confidentiality reasons initially did not include any identifying information. The committee has met to review and narrow down candidates for further exploration. Our Interim Pastor position may also have been posted for ministers who do not have a profile on the CLC, and we have received letters of interest and resumes from several applicants independently of the CLC website.

As a result, the IPSC has started initial screening interviews via Zoom and continues to review applicants and “matches.” The committee has enjoyed the interviews thus far and looks forward to conducting in-person interviews with candidates selected for more in-depth discussions.

Next steps include conducting background checks through representatives from the Lake Michigan Presbytery, as well as reference checks. It is important that the identities of applicants and interviewees remain confidential until the committee has selected a candidate and recommends that the Session approve that individual as our Interim Pastor, and the Session approves that recommendation. We remain optimistic about having an Interim Pastor in place within the next few months.

Once the Session approves the Interim Pastor, the Session, along with guidance from the Lake Michigan Presbytery and the Interim Pastor will prepare for the search for an Installed Pastor, including the election of a Pastor Nominating Committee. As noted by the Lake

Michigan Presbytery, “During the time of transition between pastors, a congregation is invited to engage in a spiritual discernment process to discover or reconfirm its call to ministry—what God wants the church to be and do in the next phase of the congregation’s life. Your presbytery may ask your congregation to engage in a mission study that involves Bible study, prayer, and an honest and thoughtful look at your congregation and community, as a way to discern the ministry direction in which God is leading you.”

This process will likely take us through to the fall, when the congregation will elect the members of the PNC in accordance with the Book of Order, which states: “G-2.0802 Election of a Pastor Nominating Committee. The Session shall call a congregational meeting to elect a Pastor Nominating Committee that shall be representative of the entire congregation. The committee’s duty shall be to nominate a pastor for election by the congregation.”

We anticipate that the Interim Pastor will serve for about a year before we have an Installed Pastor in place. If a PNC is formed later this fall, it would allow us 6-7 months to find the right candidate, and still have an installed pastor by next summer, although we are cautioned that we could have an interim pastor for longer than a year.

Glasses Get a Second Glance

by Pam Foster

The used eye glasses box has a new look and we have Val Osborne to thank! Val checks to see when glasses have been donated and she takes them to the yellow bin on the edge of the park across the street from the church. The Lions Club redistributes them. Thank you, Val!



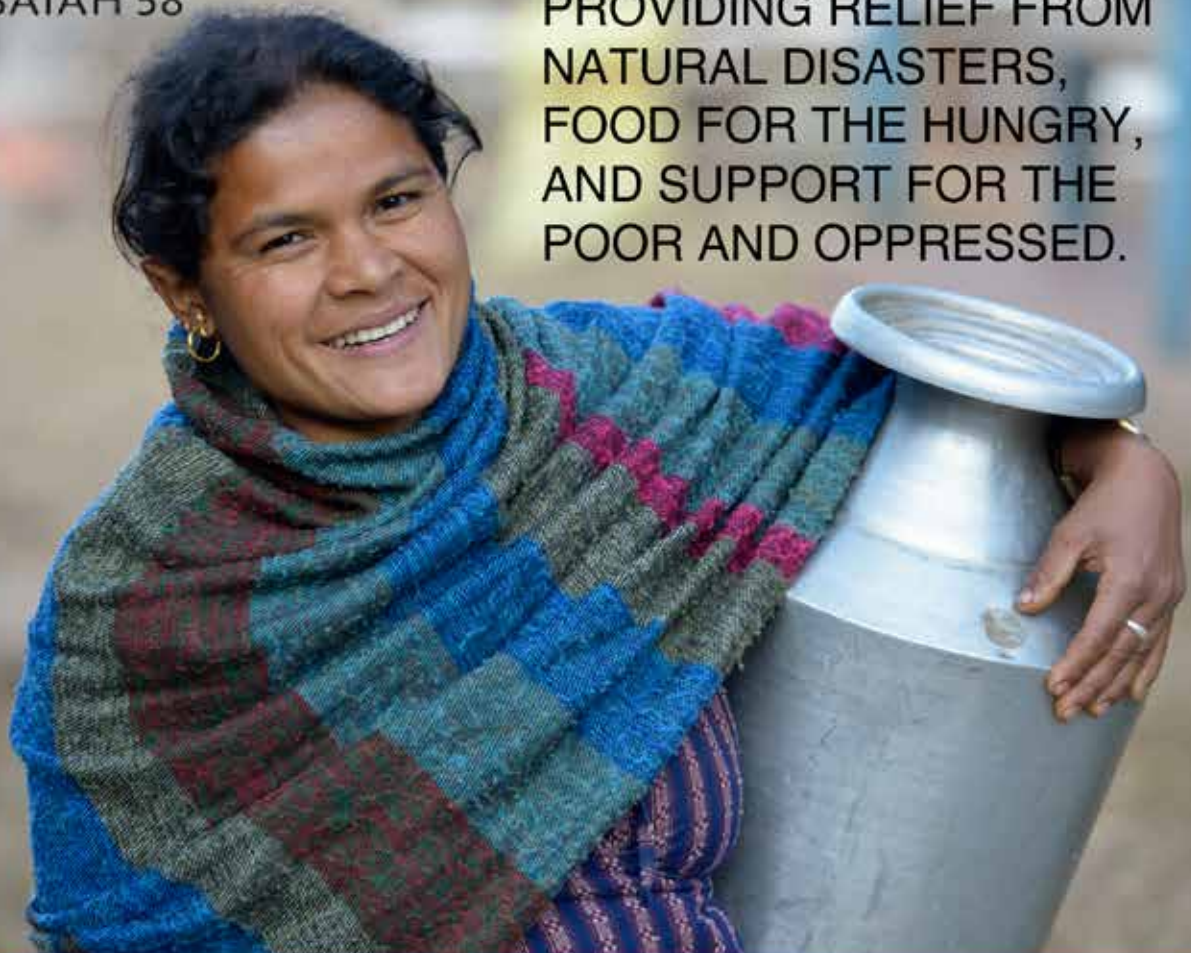


ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING
SPECIAL OFFERINGS
HUNGER • DISASTER • DEVELOPMENT

Repairing the breach

ISAIAH 58

PROVIDING RELIEF FROM
NATURAL DISASTERS,
FOOD FOR THE HUNGRY,
AND SUPPORT FOR THE
POOR AND OPPRESSED.



March 5–April 20, 2025

Join with Presbyterians worldwide in sharing God's love with our neighbors-in-need around the world by providing relief from natural disasters, food for the hungry, and support for the poor and oppressed.

This Lenten season, please give generously to One Great Hour of Sharing.



MATTHEW 25

Earth Care

by Steve Allen and Andrea Trautman

Earth Care designation was successfully renewed in February 2025. We have been an Earth Care Congregation since 2017. Various categories that encompass energy efficiency, environmental awareness, educational opportunities, and resource recycling have been met by the congregation.

Continuing for this year, out-of-doors walks both in the prairie next door and other nearby parks will continue. Watch the bulletin for recycling opportunities and the schedule for the Road-Side clean-up both this spring and in the fall.

The Earth Care committee has a pollinator plant give-away planned for the spring. Rooted pots with bee and hummingbird friendly flowers will be provided to those congregation families that express interest. Details of the types of flowers and the

delivery (likely closer to Memorial Day weekend or early June) will be provided closer to the event.

Also, in early June, a garden bed clean-up and planting will be scheduled. All the various planted beds need care and weeding at the beginning of the growing season. The committee is delighted that congregation members and friends have been faithful in preparing the beds, planting and maintenance. All of these areas continue to contribute to the Monarch Butterfly Waystation designation that First Pres. – Richland obtained last spring.



The annual flower bed that has received a generous donation of Zinnias for the past two summers will receive similar attention this year also.



The Altar Guild is once again offering an opportunity for you to remember or honor someone or something dear to you by ordering a potted flower which will be used to decorate our church on Easter Sunday. Your remembrance will be noted in the bulletin (multiple names can be used for one plant) and you are free to take any plant with you after the worship service.

The price per plant is \$10.00. The orders must be in no later than **April 14.** Orders may be given to Rachel in the office or in the blue dropbox outside of the office. Thank you for participating!

Your name as you would like it to appear: _____

Person(s) or event being remembered _____

ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY



The Adopt-a-Highway Clean-Up is Saturday April 12th.

Join us Saturday, April 12th at 8:30am in the church parking lot to walk with a group!

We need and welcome anyone (children must be over 12 years of age and accompanied by their responsible adult - 3:1 ratio max) to assist with pickup/clean up. There are one-mile sections of road on each side of Gull Road from G Avenue towards Richland up to the water tower between the MDOT signs with our church name. These signs are located on the NE side of Gull Rd just north of "G" Ave and on the SW side of Gull Rd across from the water tower.

Brian Young will meet with you in the parking lot at the church to pass out vests, trash bags and review procedures at 8:30 am on April 12th.

Many hands help the clean-up go faster. We must have a minimum of 3 participants to conduct the cleanup.

Please TEXT me at (269-720-3466) if you plan to participate so that I can provide any updates if our plans change due to weather or not enough participants. Please include your name/names in the TEXT. Thank you.

Also, per MDOT rules, please review the YouTube video located on the MDOT Adopt-a-Highway website at:

<https://www.michigan.gov/mdot/programs/highway-programs/roadside-property-management/adopt-a-highway>



Also click on and read the Safety Brochure (and other Safety Information) shown on that website right across from the YouTube video. These are very short. You will need to sign a sheet stating that you have reviewed the video when we meet in the parking lot and I will have a very brief safety review in the parking lot before we drive to our road sections.

This notice will be posted in the Gull Prairie Room and March/April Missives. We will not have a signup sheet this time, so please TEXT your intent to participate and your name/names to 269-720-3466. We thank you for your support.

Mission Committee – Brian Young



by Sandy Carahaly

Join Us for a Conversation with OutFront Kalamazoo. After worship on Sunday, April 6, we'll welcome guests from OutFront Kalamazoo for a discussion group in the Gull Prairie Room.

Did you know that an estimated 7.6% of U.S. adults identify as LGBTQ+, with the percentage even higher among youth? Based on those numbers, the LGBTQ+ population in Kalamazoo County is estimated to be around 20,000 people.

OutFront Kalamazoo is our region's leading LGBTQ+ advocacy organization. They provide vital support services and community programs, and they host Kalamazoo Pride—the second largest Pride festival in Michigan.

We invite you to join us to learn more about their work, the communities they serve, and how we, both as individuals and as a church, can show support and solidarity with our LGBTQ+ neighbors. Learn more at: www.outfrontkzoo.org

Nonbinary Parents Day, April 20. What is it, and why do we celebrate? Held annually on the third Sunday in April, Nonbinary Parents Day is a time to honor and celebrate parents who don't identify strictly as male or female. Like Mother's Day and Father's Day, this day gives us an opportunity to say thank you to the caregivers and loved ones who support us—regardless of gender identity. If you know a nonbinary parent, take a moment on April 20 to wish them a joyful and affirming day!

What Does It Mean to Be Nonbinary? Gender is often thought of in binary terms—male or female—but in reality, gender exists on a spectrum. Nonbinary is a term used by people whose gender identity doesn't fit neatly into the categories of "man" or "woman." A nonbinary person might identify as both, neither, somewhere in between, or as fluid over time. It's important to know that:

- Gender identity is how a person experiences and understands their own gender.

- It is different from biological sex, which is based on physical characteristics, and from sexual orientation, which is about who someone is attracted to.
- Being nonbinary is not a new concept—many cultures throughout history and around the world have recognized more than two genders.

At its core, being nonbinary is a deeply personal expression of self—and worthy of respect, recognition, and celebration.

April Days of Significance

April 11 - Day of Silence

April 20 - Nonbinary Parents Day

April 21-27 - Lesbian Visibility Week



by Amber Beals

FPC Walking Group, Upcoming Walks

April 8, 9 a.m., Walk in the MSU/Kellogg Forest. The parking lot is off 42nd St, approximately one-half mile south of M89 on the west side of the road.

April 22, 9 a.m., Earth Day! Walk in the Richland Township Park and walk 1-2 loops. Meet by the playground.

Christmas Carol Book Discussion Group

This group meets in the Resource Center on the third Wednesday of the month. The next gathering will be April 16, 6 - 7:15 p.m. Please read lessons 13-16.

Moms' Group

Join us on May 6, 7 p.m., for the next Moms' group at the Deacon Brown House. We will discuss the book "In the Country We Love" by Diane Guerrero.

Family Group Games

May 3, 3 p.m., Save the Date! Join other church families for an afternoon of games, fun and food at the Smith home. Plan to bring a snack to share. Burgers/dogs provided. Please RSVP to Shannon at shannon.wixson@gmail.com.

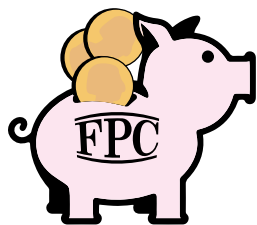
If you have any questions about any of these Small Group events or want to suggest a Small Group activity you'd like to see, please contact Amber via phone or text at 269-303-1673 or by email at amberbeals@gmail.com.

Mission Committee

by Joyce Dishon

Our Mission Committee provided both financial and material support to several different Kalamazoo area agencies in 2024 to align with being a Matthew 25 Church. In November and February I wrote about four agencies that we supported: Ministry with Community, Open Doors, Shalom, and YWCA Domestic Assault Center. In this article I am covering the Seita Scholars at Western Michigan University.

Seita Scholars are college eligible students who have aged out of foster care and do not have traditional families to support them in their desire to attend college. Through an endowed scholarship at WMU these students are provided the financial aid to attend college. But they may not have access to the basic personal needs of bedding, towels, personal hygiene needs, etc. The Mission Committee provided financial support to the Seita Scholar program, and have asked the congregation to participate by donating care basket items including laundry baskets, bedding, towels, and soap, toothbrushes and toothpaste, school supplies, and many other items. In late July we will again be asking for your contributions to support these promising students. You can visit the Seita Scholar Program at WMU online to see how these young people have succeeded in their studies and plan to give back to their communities.



General Fund Update

by Paul Gobble

The Finance Committee prepares the General Fund Update monthly to help members understand our position on meeting our budgeted giving commitments. Because this April's Missive was printed before the last Sunday in March, the Finance Committee did not have the complete month's giving figures needed to create the report. The General Fund Update for March will be included in the Thursday Staff Email early in April.

Holy Week Kits

by Brooke Heck



What is Holy Week and why do we observe it?! We talk a lot about the crucifixion and resurrection... but what happened in the days that led up to those events? It can be a lot for kids to process and understand, so there are Holy Week Family Kits available for families to take home. These kits contain a short message about the event(s) that took place that day and a coordinating activity. All supplies needed (minus scissors and glue for one of the crafts) are in the kit, just make sure to grab the appropriate bag for the number of kids participating! There are kits for families with 1, 2, and 3 participating kids. Kits will be available to pick up in the Gull Prairie Room following worship on Sunday, April 6th.

4H Club Shares our Nest

by Christina Chase



At our last meeting we did an ornithology study. The older youth made blue bird houses and the younger cloverbuds decorated already made houses. There is always room for more and youth can join for free at www.4honline.com.

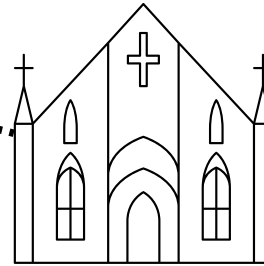
Luke 12:6-7 records Jesus making a similar statement: "Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows."



JESUS' LAST WEEK



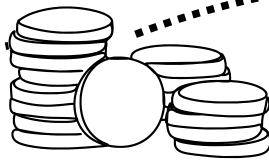
SUNDAY



MONDAY



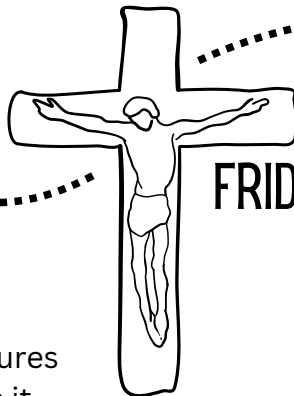
TUESDAY



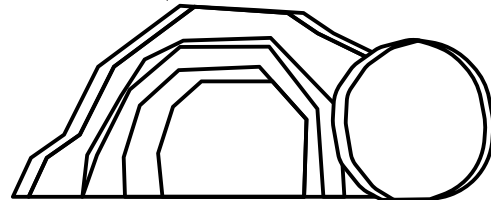
WEDNESDAY



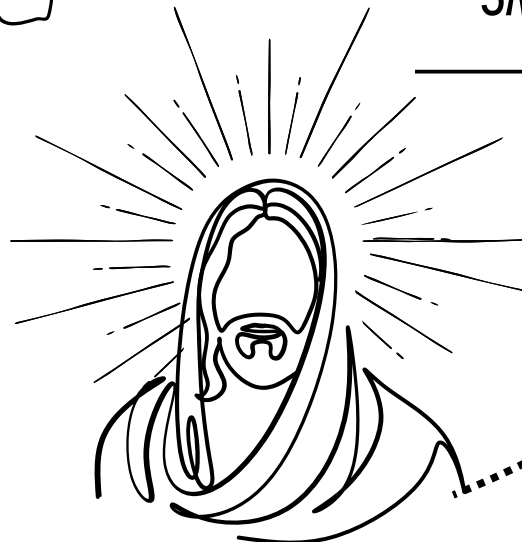
THURSDAY



FRIDAY



SATURDAY



SUNDAY

Read the below Scriptures and figure out where it belongs on Jesus' journey to resurrection!

Luke 22: 3-6

Mark 15:17-20

Matthew 21: 1-11

Luke 22: 14-20

John 11:25-26

Matthew 21: 18-22

John 20:1-10

Matthew 21:12-17

First Presbyterian Church
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Richland, MI 49083

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

APRIL

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH STAFF

Reverend Pat Weatherwax*, *Parish Associate*
Kaleb Nuesse, *Choir Director*
Laura Carisalez, *Financial Administrator*
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*