



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

A PLACE TO WORSHIP. A PLACE TO BELONG.

February 2022

Highland Herald

INTERIM UPDATES

Friends, each month in the Highland Herald I will inform you about where we are in the interim process.

Since early January, Don Swick, Betty Dunn, Ellen Prowant, Bob Bengston, Jon Mills and Don Schneider have been meeting regularly working on items necessary to complete the Self-Study/Mission Study. You can help them by:

1. Filling in information on the “Decade Boards” between now and February 28. We can’t underestimate the power of a project like this in helping us discern the grace lines and mission trends of our church over time. The God of the “good ol’ days” is the God of the “good new days,” too!
2. Plan on attending a Congregation Input Meeting for the Mission Study Process. Choose one of these dates: Sunday, March 6 after worship; Wednesday, March 9 at 10:30 a.m.; Monday, March 14 at 7 p.m.
3. Pray for our church. Pray for the Mission Study Group and for our discernment as we ponder our past, present and future. Pray for whoever the new pastor of FPC will be!

The Mission Study Group will have a “writing day” on Saturday, March 19. Our hope is to have this study written, approved by Session and to the Presbytery’s Committee on Ministry by early April.

This group has been aided by some significant work done a few years ago by a Visioning Team. Check out this “Vision Statement” from that work which is being considered for the FPC’s new Mission Statement:

The Mission of the First Presbyterian Church in Muskegon is to nourish minds, bodies and spirits, crossing boundaries and devoting ourselves to serve in the name and spirit of Jesus Christ. Rooted deeply enough to risk being reshaped, we will have the courage to continually explore new ways to move in the direction in which the church may be called by God.

I’ve put a timeline of the interim tasks outside Kathy’s office. Please check it out. Also, feel free to ask questions anytime about this process or give your input to a Session member, someone on the Mission Study Group, a staff member, or me.

I’m excited to see where God will lead us. . . .

Grace and peace,
Pastor Laurie

YOUR WISDOM, THOUGHTS AND INPUT ARE NEEDED!



The Mission Study Group, that will eventually be our Pastoral Nominating Committee, desires your thoughts and input about our church's history, present, and future as we begin the process of looking for a new pastor. Please plan to attend one of the following meetings at the Church or by ZOOM:

- Sunday, March 6 from 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall
- Wednesday, March 9 from 10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. in the library and by ZOOM
- Monday, March 14 from 7 p.m. - 8 p.m. -- Location TBD

In anticipation of the upcoming meetings, please think about these general matters ahead of time to make our meetings as productive and efficient as possible:

1. FPC has many successes over the years with various activities and opportunities for all ages – what are some that you feel reflect the type of congregation we are and want to be?
2. Our Visioning Committee noted three areas that were central to our historical calling – Feeding the Hungry, Crossing Boundaries, and Education. Do you believe these three are still central components of our future? Should there be any additions, deletions or modifications?
3. We need to be positive and proud of what and who we are. What things recently have been bubbling up that keep you interested in your involvement with FPC? Share a story perhaps of when you were aware God was up to something with you at FPC.
4. We will need to develop gifts, skills and experiences we possess to fulfill the mission we determine. What are several words that describe our strengths, and what are a few that describe our challenges.
5. What are the pastoral competencies and characteristics you desire in our next pastor (we will have a picklist at the meetings, but be thinking outwardly prior to meeting).

Ash Wednesday and Lent

Dear friends,

In Scripture, we often find God's people in the wilderness. Whether it is the freed Hebrew slaves on their way to the Promised Land or one of the prophets in a cave somewhere discerning their path or even Jesus being prepared for his ministry after his baptism, we find God's people often wandering around in places of uncertainty and even chaos. Places the Bible calls the wilderness.

These past couple of years have been a kind of wilderness haven't they? COVID-19 has upended all our routines, changed many things in our institutions, been the source of divisions among us as we ponder things like vaccinations and masks, forced us to learn new ways of staying connected and being church, has created much suffering in people's lives and has taken its toll on the mental health of many. And this list could go on longer, couldn't it?

During Lent this year, we will spend time in our Sunday morning worship services praying with and thinking about the realities of wilderness wanderings in our lives. These, of course, are not just COVID related. The wilderness shows up in our lives in so many ways – unexpected health challenges, pain around our children and families, unforeseen job changes or even job loss, shifts in relationships and betrayal from those we thought we could trust. The interim period in a church is sometimes referred to as a wilderness time in a congregation.

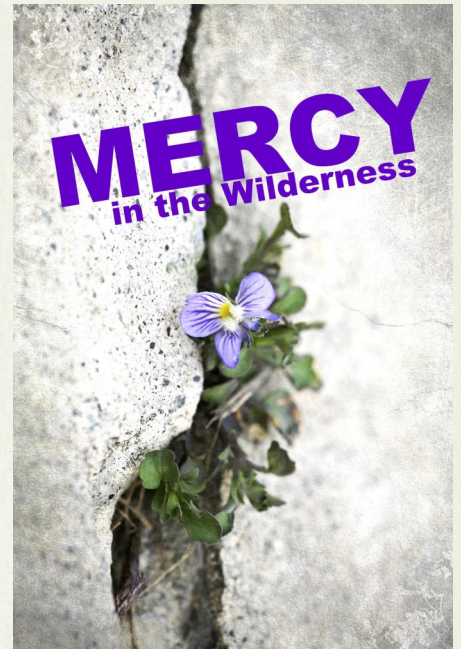
We will also explore ways in which God's mercy may show up in the wilderness. Don't worry. We won't be trite or give pat answers. But we explore deeply the good news that, over and over again in Scripture, we see God's mercy showing up in the wilderness places.

We will spend most of our time in the book of Exodus. Here is what the sermon series will look like:

- March 6: Mercy in the Wilderness: Interruptions. (Exodus 3: 1-14)
- March 13: Mercy in the Wilderness: God's Provision (Portions of Exodus 16)
- March 21: Mercy in the Wilderness: A Little Help from Our Friends. (Exodus 17:12ff)
- March 28: Mercy in the Wilderness: Some Rules to Live By (Exodus 20)
- April 3: Mercy in the Wilderness: Courage Needed (Numbers 13-14)
- April 10: Palm Sunday and the beginning of Holy Week

So, as you prepare for Lent this year, we invite you to think about how God is with you in the wilderness places in your life. You can start this journey with us on Ash Wednesday, March 2. The chapel area will be open from Noon – 1 p.m. and then again from 7:20 p.m. – 8 p.m. You can spend time in prayer at five stations where Scripture and elements from the earth will be used to help you reflect on your lives. There will be a short corporate prayer service from 7 p.m. – 7:20 p.m. in the chapel. Imposition of ashes on your forehead or hand will also be part of this experience.

I look forward to traveling this sacred season toward the Resurrection with you.
Pastor Laurie



On these cold days of winter, what better way is there to spend an hour than knitting? The Prayer Shawl Ministry meets the first Tuesday of the month at 11:30 a.m. in the youth room up the stairs. It's a friendly group and everyone is welcome to join. We have plenty of yarn, needles, and knitting patterns available for you to use. Experienced knitters can give brush up or beginning instruction if needed. The next meeting is Tuesday, March 1, at 11:30 a.m.

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

The light blue mission boxes and mission table in the Sherman hallway continue to fill thanks to the generosity of First Presbyterian Church members. Your friends in the community are thankful for these essential, donated items.

March 2022 Mission Box
Mission for Area People (MAP) Food Pantry

Groceries and personal hygiene items are welcomed by the clients of the Mission for Area People Food Pantry, which has served the citizens of Muskegon Heights and surrounding neighborhoods for over 53 years. Each MAP Food Pantry client receives a week's worth of food. Donations of the following foods to the MAP Food Pantry are therefore appreciated:

- *Pasta*
- *Peanut butter*
- *Brown rice*
- *Tuna packed in water*
- *Fruit packed in low sugar or own juices*
- *Soup with low sodium, lots of vegetables*
- *Cereal with healthy grains*

The following personal care items have also been requested by MAP staff:

- *Deodorant*
- *Shampoo, bars of soap*
- *Toothpaste, toothbrushes*
- *Disposable razors*
- *Dish detergent, laundry soap*
- *Diapers, toilet paper*

Please keep in mind that all donated items must be unexpired and unopened. Thank you again.



Though Income did not meet budget in January it still exceeded 2021 by nearly \$6,000. Expenses were less than budgeted for a few reasons—the bill for pension and insurance for the pastor had not been received (it will be in February) and we had not yet made an insurance payment. Our net loss from Operations was \$4,844. January typically is a loss due to payment of Per Capita Apportionment to the Presbytery.

FPC Vanguard investments have seen reductions compared to 2021-year-end numbers but continue to exhibit strength compared to the broad market which is currently reacting to reported inflation and geopolitical factors. Despite this, these funds were chosen for their stable income over share price, and we do not anticipate the current market conditions to affect our income projections from these investments for the year.

DOLLARS & SENSE

January 2022 Dollars and Sense Summary General Fund Financial Figures

	December 2021	Year-to-Date (YTD)
Total Income (Actual)	\$ 21,509	\$ 21,509
Total Expenses (Actual)	26,352	26,352
Net Increase (Decrease)	(4,844)	(4,844)

Please donate by regular mail or online at www.fpcmuskegon.org, then click on “Contribute to FPC” at the top left. Special charitable donations may be entered under Mission and use the memo line to indicate designated charitable organization. Thank you for your continued financial support.



With the help of our youth and those who have donated, First Presbyterian Church’s involvement in Souper Bowl of Caring 2022 has raised over \$1,000!!!, and have contributed to the national total of \$1,686,568.

A huge THANK YOU to all who were involved in making our efforts help hunger relief in our community a success!

Dear Fellow Presbyterians,

The flag out by the handicapped parking area is replaced three to four times a year. Due to strong winds this winter, the flag has been ripped and is in need of replacement now. Bob Hartman is getting a new flag this week. If anyone would like to purchase a flag so that we have a couple on hand, you may get a 3' X 5' embossed flag. The embossed flags are sewn together better than the printed ones and tend to last longer. The cost is about \$25. If you have any questions, please contact Bob Hartman.

Please be aware that there is a lot of ice around the church. With the rain and thawing and refreezing at times, it can be treacherous to walk on the parking lot and walkways. Because we don't have a custodian, no one arrives to church before people start coming for worship. If some of you early folks who are able could shovel and/or spread some salt on the steps and walks, that would be very helpful and appreciated.

A friendly reminder to those wonderful folks that prepare coffee and cookies for hospitality hour following the worship service, please remember to clean up the chapel kitchen. That includes wash, dry, and put away all the things that you use. The cleaning service takes care of the trash on Mondays. Please take the towels home with you and wash them and return them the following Sunday. If you have any questions, please ask a deacon. Thank you for your cooperation.

Our new boiler is still having growing pains. We think we have solved most of the problems with it shutting down. Time will tell. Speaking of heat, if you turn up the heat for a meeting or a project at church, please remember to turn the thermostat down when you are finished. Please turn off the lights and lock the doors, too. Let's all do our part to keep FPC operating efficiently.



Dear FPC Family:

Thank you all for your cheerful, fun, and encouraging get well wishes and cards after I fell in the narthex before church on Sunday morning, December 12, 2021. When the emergency staff assessed me, they found my right leg was suddenly two inches shorter than my left leg so I likely broke my hip in several places. With your prayers and kind thoughts, surgery for repairing my femur and for a complete hip replacement went well. I was standing for a very short time about 6 hours after surgery and, with the help of a walker, slowly walking around the hospital corridors the next day. After learning how to go up and down a step and more strolling, I was released on the third day to go home for recovery. Visiting physical and occupational therapists helped me start increasing my mobility and strength and gave me a set of exercises (sitting on a chair or lying down on a bed) to do three times a day, with form-conscious Jean as coach. With a goal of riding my bicycle on the local trails or roads by spring, I was eager to work hard. After 3 weeks of once a week visits from PT or OT, I was ready for outpatient PT at the rehab center, about twice a week in January and once a week in February. My surgical site has healed well and I'm working on bending my hip more than 90 degrees and standing full weight on the right leg. Muscles and tendons take a long time to heal after surgery and they appear to be improving each week. I now can go up and down the stairs slowly with a cane. I still use a walker or cane, but, for short periods, I am starting to walk around at home on my own two legs. Thank you so much for all your support, the smiles, the lovely cards, delicious meals, and the errands run.

Don Schneider & Jean Chin



MARCH WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

LAY LEADERS:

03/06 Sheila Wahamaki
03/13 Yvonne Friel
03/20 Norma Reynolds
03/27 Scott Stewart

CHILDREN'S TIME:

03/06 Roxanne Deibel

OFFERING COUNTERS:

03/06 Bob & Cheryl Hartman
03/13 Darlene Pawlak & Kathy DeCormier
03/20 Ara Demirjian & Mike Foster
03/27 Vic & Ellen Prowant

AFTER WORSHIP HOSPITALITY:

03/06 Mark & Pam Schumaker
03/13 FPC Youth
03/20 Clark & Pat Ganson
03/27 Kathy Dilts & Darlene Pawlak

USHERS:

03/06 Vic & Ellen Prowant
03/13 Shawn Perry & Robin Schroeder
03/20 Jeanne deVette & Joan Barnes
03/27 Mike & Pam Foster

GREETERS – SHERMAN ENTRANCE:

03/06 Mike Foster
03/13 Quinn Champion
03/20 Kristi Clark
03/27 Kristi Clark

GREETERS – WICKHAM ENTRANCE:

03/06 Pam Foster
03/13 Linda Champion
03/20 Ruth Nielsen
03/27 Mitzi Bixler



03/01 Mary Ellen Willcox
03/07 Paul Kara
03/10 Pam Foster
03/10 Mary Eschman
03/12 Laurie Hartzell
03/15 Betty Dunn
03/23 Norma Reynolds
03/23 Carol Moore
03/25 Linda Champion
03/30 Hank Kacprzyk

Julie Ayers
5425 Chestnut Drive, #121
Muskegon, MI 49444
231.246.2810



EASTER FLOWER ORDERS

The Deacons are offering a selection of spring flowers to decorate the sanctuary for Easter. The proceeds allow the Deacons to help those in need throughout the year. You may pick up your flowers following the Easter worship service. Available this year are lilies, pink tulips, lavender hyacinths and mini-daffodils. The cost is \$11 per pot. Pick up an order form at the church or call the office to place your order. **The deadline to order is March 13th.**



<p>27 Pastor Larue Hatfield - Study Transfiguration of the Lord 10am - Worship 11am - After Worship Hospitality</p>	<p>28 10am - Staff Meeting 2pm - O & C Council Meeting</p>	<p>1 10:30am - Dwelling in the Word 11:30am - Prayer Shawls 5pm - Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>2 Ash Wednesday 12pm - Hackley Postpartum 12pm - Prayer Stations 7pm - Prayer Stations 8pm - Property Council Mtg.</p>	<p>3 3:45pm - Supper House</p>	<p>4 10am - Girl Scouts</p>	<p>5</p>
<p>6 CONTINUITY OF MEMBERSHIP BASKET GIRLS OF WOMEN STUDY 10am - Worship 11am - After Worship Hospitality 11:30am - Congregation Input</p>	<p>7 10am - Mom swap 12:30pm - Book Club 1pm - Faith Development</p>	<p>8 NO CHOIR REHEARSAL 10:30am - Dwelling in the Word 12:30pm - Sarah Circle 5:30pm - Finance/Stewardship</p>	<p>9 10am - Moms Workout Group 10:30am - Congregation Input 5:30pm - Worship & Music</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12</p>
<p>13 10am - Worship 11am - After Worship Hospitality 11:30am - MCKS Council 11:30am - Membership Class</p>	<p>14 6:30pm - Congregation Input</p>	<p>15 10:30am - Dwelling in the Word 5pm - Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>18 12pm - Hackley Postpartum 5:30pm - Session Meeting</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18 9am - Mission Study/PNC Group 10am - Girl Scouts</p>	<p>19</p>
<p>20 NEWBORN BAPTISTS 10am - Worship 11am - After Worship Hospitality 1pm - Y-Y-Butterfly Exhibit</p>	<p>21 10am - Mom Swap 12:30pm - Book Club</p>	<p>22 10:30am - Dwelling in the Word 5pm - Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>23 10am - Moms Workout Group</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p>
<p>27 10am - Worship 11am - After Worship Hospitality 11am - Deacons Meeting</p>	<p>28 2pm - O & C Council Meeting</p>	<p>29 10:30am - Dwelling in the Word 5pm - Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p>	<p>1 10am - Girl Scouts</p>	<p>2</p>

<p>27 10am - Worship 11am - After Worship Hospitality 11am - Deacons Meeting</p>	<p>28 2pm - O & C Council Meeting</p>	<p>29 10:30am - Dwelling in the Word 6pm - Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>2 10am - Girl Scouts</p>
<p>3 CAME-ABILITY OFFERING/BFV BAKE 10am - Worship 11am - After Worship Hospitality</p>	<p>4 12:30pm - Book Club 1pm - Faith Development</p>	<p>5 NO CHOIR REHEARSAL 10:30am - Dwelling in the Word 11:30am - Prayer Shawls</p>	<p>6 12pm - Hackley Postpartum 5:30pm - Worship & Music 7pm - Property Council Mtg.</p>	<p>7 3:45pm - Supper House</p>	<p>8 11am - Nancy Simon Memorial @</p>	<p>9</p>
<p>10 PALM SUNDAY 10am - Worship 11am - After Worship Hospitality 11:30am - M-C&S Council</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12 10:30am - Dwelling in the Word 12:30pm - Sarah Circle 6pm - Choir Rehearsal 5:30pm - Finance/Stewardship</p>	<p>13 10am - Moms Workout Group</p>	<p>14 MAUNDY THURSDAY</p>	<p>15 GOOD FRIDAY</p>	<p>16 10am - Girl Scouts 1pm - YV-Easter Egg Hunt</p>
<p>17 EASTER/RESURRECTION OF THE LORD NEWSPAPER OBSERVANCE 10am - Worship 11am - After Worship Hospitality</p>	<p>18 Church Office Closed 12:30pm - Book Club</p>	<p>19 10:30am - Dwelling in the Word 6pm - Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>20 12pm - Hackley Postpartum 5:30pm - Session Meeting</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>23</p>
<p>24 10am - Worship 11am - After Worship Hospitality</p>	<p>25 2pm - O & C Council Meeting</p>	<p>26 10:30am - Dwelling in the Word 6pm - Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>27 10am - Moms Workout Group</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30 10am - Girl Scouts</p>

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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