

JANUARY 2022

Highland Herald

A PUBLICATION OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SOUPEL BOWL OF CARING FEBRUARY 3 - FEBRUARY 13

In 1990, a simple prayer: "Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those who are without a bowl of soup to eat" was delivered during a church service at Spring Valley Presbyterian Church in Columbia, SC led by Brad Smith, who was serving as a seminary intern at the time. This gave birth to an idea. Why not harness the energy and enthusiasm of Super Bowl weekend, a time when people come together for football, food and fun, to unite the nation for a higher good? Youth groups could collect dollars in soup pots and canned food for those in need and send every dollar and food donation DIRECTLY to a local charity of THEIR choice. Now people of all ages tackle hunger to help support local hunger relief.

Souper Bowl of Caring is a youth-inspired and youth-led movement which provides many opportunities to build upon leadership skills, philanthropic endeavors, and network with their peers on hunger-related issues within their local communities. Thousands of participants including: churches, schools, youth groups, community partners, grocery partners, local businesses, media partners, NFL teams, passionate individuals and the Youth of First Presbyterian Church have contributed to

this annual event raising over \$170 MILLION dollars nationally since it started in 1990. Every year ensures that every penny, dollar, or food item collected by Souper Bowl of Caring participants goes directly to hunger-relief charities.



We are still very much involved in contributing to this cause but, similar to last year, there will be an alternative approach. The youth will volunteer at Supper House on February 3rd to package and distribute meals. The youth will also contact members of the church from February 3-13 to collect monetary donations in support of local hunger relief. Donations may be received via mail or personally delivered to First Presbyterian Church-2577 Wickham Drive, Muskegon, MI 49441 until February 13th. Contact Arisha with questions by calling the church office at 231-759-1275 or by email yff@fpcmuskegon.org



FROM THE INTERIM PASTOR:

...BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT...
SINGING & MAKING MELODY
TO THE LORD WITH ALL YOUR HEART.



Ephesians 5:18-19, ESV

Friends,

Have I told you how much I am enjoying being with you? I am. I'm experiencing you as a faithful, hardworking, fun bunch of Christ followers. I'm feeling much hope for the present and future of FPC Muskegon.

One of the many joys of being with you these past weeks is that I've been able to sing in the choir! Many Tuesday nights, under Roxanne's top-notch leadership, I get to hear Cammie Hussey's beautiful alto voice in my ear, along with the rich tenor voices of Joan Barnes, Clark Ganson, and Cheryl Hartman coming at me from behind my head. And there is something *inspiring* about having my voice join other voices in making music. My singing voice is fine, but not exceptional. But somehow, when my voice can join other voices in a choir, something exceptional happens. We make music. We praise God. We help lead worship. This happens even with our masks on and as we stand in safe social distance from each other! This is a picture of the Body of Christ.

And then, on the way home from choir practice, I find myself singing these songs. But not just on the way home: I may find myself singing them while I'm cooking dinner or feeding

the cat or doing laundry. The other day I started singing "Down by the River to Pray" as I was walking out to the mailbox to get the mail. That then leads to other singing.

There is something about singing that opens us up to the holy. At least that is my experience. So it is no wonder that Paul invites us to sing songs to God.

So as we start this New Year, friends, I invite us to sing. Whether you have a great voice or an average voice or can only make a joyful noise—SING! Let the Holy Spirit's breath fill your lungs, and whether you feel joyful or in despair or somewhere in between, make some music. And remember, if your voice feels weak because of grief or hardship, you can always come to church and join your voice with the voices of others and, together, we can make some beautiful music.

Isn't that Good News?!

*With gratitude and prayer,
Laurie*

PS AND, everyone's voice is welcome in the choir. So, feel free to reach out to Roxanne!

DWELLING IN THE WORD

Each Tuesday morning at 10:30 a.m., you are invited to join Pastor Laurie in studying and praying with the Bible text she will be preaching on the following Sunday. Meet in the library!

Here are the texts for the rest of January and February:

January 23:
Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10 and Luke 4:14-21

January 31:
I Corinthians 13 and Luke 4:21-30

February 6:
Isaiah 6:1-8 and Luke 5:1-11

February 13:
Jeremiah 17:5-10 and Luke 6:17-26

February 20:
Genesis 45:3-15 and Luke 6:27-38

February 27:
Exodus 34:29-35 and Luke 9:28-43a



Pastor Laurie's Schedule

After learning better the rhythms of FPC, Laurie has changed her schedule to be in the office and/or Muskegon on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Sundays. She will write at home on Thursdays, and Fridays will be her Sabbath/day off each week. Feel free to reach out anytime at 269-240-7565, realizing that if you call on Fridays, you will likely not get a call back until Saturday, unless it is an emergency.

Interim Updates

Friends, each month in the newsletter I will inform you about where we are together in this interim process. This first update is kind of long, but I encourage you to read the whole thing as there is information I'm sure you wish to know.

I'd like to outline the interim process for you:

1. A pastor resigns (in this case, Jim).
2. The Session, with the support of a Transition Counselor (TC) from the Presbytery (in our case, Rev. Troy Hauser-Brydon), forms an interim pastor search committee and hires an interim pastor.
3. The interim pastor (in this case, me) is hired.
4. The Session and interim pastor appoint a committee in the church to help lead a self-study/mission study. Its purpose is for the church to take an honest look at itself and prayerfully discern its direction so it can be more clear on the kind of pastor it wishes to call. This will include surveying the congregation, looking at the past and some of the strengths of the church and also envisioning possible new directions.
5. The interim pastor and this committee working on the mission study will write up a report to send to the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry (COM).
6. If the mission study report is approved, ting Committee can select a Pastoral Nominating Committee (PNC) to begin working toward hiring a new pastor.
7. The church elects the PNC in a congregational meeting.
8. The PNC writes a Mission Information Form using the information from the mission study and starts the process of receiving information about possible candidates.
9. The PNC goes through the process of selecting a candidate.
10. The PNC presents that candidate to the congregation. The congregation votes whether or not to receive the candidate.

From this outline, you can see we have completed the first three steps and are now on Step 4. By the time you receive this newsletter the self-study/mission committee will already have had its first meeting. The committee members are Don Schneider, Don Swick, Betty Dunn, Jon Mills, Ara Demirjian and Bob Bengston. Karlie Arnts will help as she is able.

In the next few weeks you will have the opportunity to share your reflections on the strengths in our church's history and your understanding of the church's mission.

This process can feel long and cumbersome at times—especially this mission/self-study period. But it is important work. So hang in there. When this is done thoroughly, the payoff is that we will have a clearer and deeper sense of who we are and develop clarity of vision and direction for a promising future. Top-notch pastoral candidates will want to know who FPC Muskegon is and what our sense of call is. I sometimes liken this process to dating. Isn't it true that the best matches happen when the partners know *themselves* well? I'm hoping we can complete this self-study in the next few months and be ready to nominate a PNC by mid- to late spring. This will be an exciting journey.

What can you do? Three things:

1. Pray. Pray for me. Pray for your Session. Pray for the self-study committee and PNC. Start praying for your future pastor.
2. Keep praying. And if you get frustrated with the process or are feeling that your thoughts aren't being heard, reach out to me or someone on the Session.
3. And did I say, pray?!

One piece of Good News is that our church belongs to Christ, and he promises to lead us. The other piece of Good News is that this church is made up of incredibly gifted and devoted people. I've loved working with you so far. I can't wait to see where Christ will continue to lead us!

*Grace and peace,
Laurie*



**Share love and warmth with a blanket!
Blanket Sunday is February 20, 2022**

Each night we burrow under covers as we fall asleep, comfortable and warm. Imagine being without a home, a bed, or even a blanket with which to find shelter at the end of a difficult day.

Natural disasters have been particularly ruthless this past year with a powerful earthquake in Haiti and tornadoes in northern Kentucky. Church World Services' Blanket Sunday program distributes blankets to disaster survivors and refugees. Each ten-dollar donation to the Blanket Sunday program provides a heavy blanket for a person in need. Envelopes in the pew racks and online giving at <https://cwsblankets.org/virtual/fpcmuskegon/> are ways you can contribute to this mission.

Here in Muskegon, effects of COVID outbreaks have uprooted many people from their homes and sources of income. Every year, as part of Blanket Sunday, First Presbyterian Church donates blankets to Every Woman's Place and/or the Mission for Area People's Household Pantry. Blankets are collected on a table in the Wickham hallway during the month of February. Each blanket, whether a large fleece blanket or a small baby blanket, will provide comfort and hope to a local person in need.

Thank you for your generosity in supporting Blanket Sunday and stay warm.

Prayer Shawl Ministry Update for February 2022

The knitters continue to provide prayer shawls for people in any way part of our church community. If you know someone who would benefit from receiving a prayer shawl, please call or email one of the knitters: Joan Barnes, Dona Demirjian, Betty Dunn, Pam Foster, Carol Giblin, or Sue Kacprzyk.



The prayer shawl knitters will meet **Tuesday, February 1st, from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.** in the youth room. Come join us if you can.

***February 2022 Mission Box
Every Woman's Place***

The personal care items donated by First Presbyterian Church assist Every Woman's Place in providing emergency shelter for survivors of domestic abuse and sexual assault. This assistance is given free of charge to clients and their children. The facility is a safe haven with support groups, individual counseling, and advocacy services.

Every Woman's Place appreciates donations of the following new and unopened, personal care items:

- Deodorant
- Combs and hairbrushes
- Shampoo, conditioner, and hair spray
- Hand soap and body wash
- Feminine hygiene products
- Toothpaste and toothbrushes
- Towels and wash cloths
- Twin sheet sets and pillowcases
- Toilet paper

The labeled mission boxes are located in the Sherman hallway.

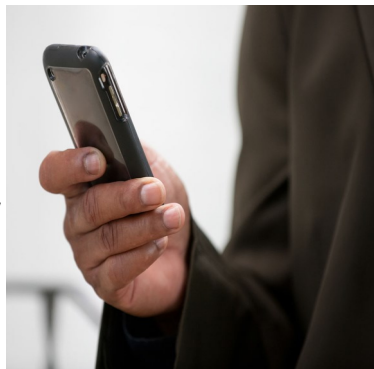
Thank you for your faithful contributions.



- ◆ A Little Lending Library is on the Wickham lawn.
- ◆ A children’s book donation box is in the hallway near the chapel.
- ◆ Church Library books may be checked out by self-serve—directions are posted in the library.

Each One, Call One

The Outreach & Communication Council is in favor of an Each One, Call One effort, in which First Presbyterian Church individuals call, text, or email someone whom they haven’t seen at church since we’ve returned to in-person worship, encouraging him or her to attend. We also encourage inviting new people to our church.



Sarah Circle meets the second Tuesday of each month at 12:30 p.m. We are reflecting on a Bible study published by the Presbyterian Women’s Horizon series, “Into the Light.”

*The next Sarah Circle meeting is **Tuesday, February 8**, in the library. Hope to see some new faces! Pastor Laurie joined us last month.*



We are preparing to distribute an updated member telephone directory in February. If you have a new address, discontinued using your landline and are only using a cell phone, or changed phone numbers, please contact the church office so that we may publish current and correct information.

FEBRUARY Birthdays

02/05	Brent Schofield
02/08	Jim Thies
02/08	Bill Schaefer
02/09	Bill Barnes
02/10	Clark Ganson
02/10	Steve Hussey
02/13	Ruth Nielsen
02/14	Mike Giblin
02/15	Tic Adams
02/16	Lowell Kinney
02/20	Shaun Arntz
02/22	Becky Slimko
02/22	Julie Stewart
02/26	Ellen Prowant
02/26	Michelle Piper
02/26	Lee Kleinheksel



We are seeking nominations for the annual Gifts of Women Honorary Membership. Do you know a woman at First Presbyterian Church that deserves such an honor? If you have someone you would like to nominate to be the 2022 recipient of the award, please contact Bev Spiwak. The deadline to submit nominations is Sunday January 30.

New Music Program Structure

You may have noticed some changes in FPC Muskegon's music program recently, including FPC's hiring of Hävila Kamps as our Director of Music and me as the Choir Director. Hävila and I are enjoying working with one another and with Pastor Laurie very much, and are excited to familiarize you a little with the plan for ongoing programming.



One feature of the new structure is the (re)establishment of two ongoing ensembles: the "Combo" and the Chancel Choir. The Combo, which is directed by Hävila, consists of a collection of talented musicians joining together to provide contemporary Christian instrumental and vocal music. The Chancel Choir will present contemporary and classical choral music, and is directed by myself. Although the pattern isn't fixed, it's likely you'll see the Combo in worship on at least two Sundays each month, and the Chancel Choir on at least two Sundays. In the event of a fifth Sunday or a special worship service, Hävila, Laurie, and I will plan something special.

We believe there will be many benefits of having two established ensembles. First, having ongoing ensembles allows Hävila, Laurie, and I to coordinate selection of music that enhances the message of the scriptures, and allows for adequate rehearsal, an important ingredient of the musicians' comfort and the quality of the offering. Second, an array of ensembles allows more of our members to participate in worship. Musically-inclined members and friends of FPC can participate in either (or both!) ensemble, sometimes on an as-available basis. Finally—and most importantly—having a variety of ensembles allows us to meet the worship music needs of more of our members by providing the broad range of carefully-prepared offerings that members have told us they find meaningful.

Please let us know if you have questions or comments about the music program at FPC Muskegon (we love to talk about it!), if you would like to become involved in one of these ensembles, or just have a piece of music you would love to hear in worship by sending us an e-mail at music@fpcmuskegon.org.

Roxanne Deibel
Choir Director

FEBRUARY WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

LAY LEADERS:

02/06 Suzanne Carl
02/13 Dona Demirjian
02/20 Carol Giblin
02/27 Nate Christensen

CHILDREN'S TIME:

02/06 Arisha Coffee

OFFERING COUNTERS:

02/06 Bob & Cheryl Hartman
02/13 Quinn & Linda Champion
02/20 Ara Demirjian & Mike Foster
02/27 Quinn & Linda Champion

AFTER WORSHIP HOSPITALITY:

02/06 Ron & Mary Rop
02/13 FPC Youth
02/20 Kathy Dilts & Darlene Pawlak
02/27 Ruth Nielsen & Bev Spiwak

USHERS:

02/06 Mike & Pam Foster
02/13 Clark & Pat Ganson
02/20 Bev Spiwak & Darlene Pawlak
02/27 Bob & Joan Bengston

GREETERS – SHERMAN ENTRANCE:

02/06 Jeanne DeVette
02/13 Shawn Perry
02/20 Suzanne Carl
02/27 Don Olson

GREETERS – WICKHAM ENTRANCE:

02/06 Joan Barnes
02/13 Robin Schroeder
02/20 Mitzi Bixler
02/27 Marie Olson

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>10am - Worship 11am - After Worship Hospitality</p>	<p>10am - Staff Meeting</p>	<p>10:30am - Dwelling in the Word 11am - Prayer Shawls Ministry 6pm - Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>12pm - Hackley Postpartum 5:30pm - Worship & Music 7pm - Property Council Mtg.</p>	<p>3:45pm - Supper House</p>		<p>10am - Girl Scouts</p>
<p>6 Cents-ABILITY Offering/BFW Bake 10am - Worship 11am - After Worship Hospitality</p>	<p>7 10am - Staff Meeting 12:30pm - Book Club</p>	<p>8 NO CHOIR REHEARSAL 10:30am - Dwelling in the Word 12:30pm - Sarah Circle 6:30pm - Finance/Stewardship</p>	<p>9 10am - Moms Workout Group 7pm - Member Calls - Deacons</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12</p>
<p>13 10am - Worship 11am - After Worship Hospitality 11am - YG-SouperBowl of Caring 11:30am - MC&S Council</p>	<p>14 10am - Moms Swap 10am - Staff Meeting 6:30pm - Faith Development</p>	<p>15 10:30am - Dwelling in the Word 6pm - Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>16 12pm - Hackley Postpartum 6:30pm - Session Meeting</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19 10am - Girl Scouts</p>
<p>20 BLACK SUNDAY NEWSLETTER DEADLINE 10am - Worship 11am - After Worship Hospitality</p>	<p>21 PASTOR LAURIE HARTZELL - Study Leave 12:30pm - Book Club</p>	<p>22 6pm - Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>23 10am - Moms Workout Group</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p>
<p>27 PASTOR LAURIE HARTZELL - Study Leave 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 11am - Prayer Shawls Ministry 6pm - Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>2 Ash Wednesday 12pm - Hackley Postpartum 7pm - Property Council Mtg.</p>	<p>3 3:45pm - Supper House</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5 10am - Girl Scouts</p>

First Presbyterian Church

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www.fpcmuskegon.org



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ABOVE ALL
THESE *put on love,*
WHICH BINDS EVERYTHING
together in PERFECT *harmony.*

COLOSSIANS 3:14, ESV