

A Minute in Ministry: Lent? Again?

A couple of weeks ago, I sent an email to the Faith Formation Committee members asking for help in putting together bags of materials for Lent. One of the first responses I got back asked, "Lent? When did we ever leave last Lent?" There was obvious humor in the query, but also a healthy portion of truth.

For a year now, we have sacrificed and given up so much, it's hard to think of Lent in the ways we usually do. Lent is a season when we are invited to break our usual routines and focus on enhancing our relationship with God. We think of it as a sacrificial time, recognizing and remembering Christ's 40 days in the desert. Some of us choose to give up something that tempts us, that distracts us. Some choose to take on a new spiritual discipline. We give things up or take things on to interrupt our usual cycles of living that allow us to just continue to swim along the way we always have. Those interruptions, in their best form, remind us to turn our thoughts to loving God and neighbor.

For the past year, "normal" has gone out the window. Regular routines of life are interrupted constantly. It's difficult to plan ahead or to find things to look forward to when we don't know what the next weeks or months will bring in terms of exposures, shut-downs, and quarantines. We've given up meals out, live music and theatre, coffee with friends, and hugs. For most of the last year, we have given up worshipping in person together in our beautiful sanctuary, raising our voices together in song. We have taken on the disciplines of mask-wearing and social distancing. We have taken on cooking more at home and learning new tools for electronic communication. We have taken on virtual church and virtual work and virtual school.

In a way, it does feel as if we never left last year's Lent. As we enter into this new season of Lent, this continuing season of Lent, perhaps we can challenge ourselves to use all that we have given up and all that we have taken on as ways to interrupt our routines and turn toward loving God and neighbor. When we put on our masks, let us pray in gratitude for tools that keep us safer. When we order take-out, let us pray for the safety of restaurant workers as things open up again. If we get frustrated when our technology fails us, let us remember that God never does and never will.

And, as we journey together toward Easter, may we also focus on the glimmers of hope all around us. Vaccinations and more awareness of how to prevent spread are bringing the infection rates down in Kalamazoo County and in many places. With each vaccination, and each week of declining numbers, we grow closer to the day when we can reclaim much of what we have given up during this season. Easter is coming, friends. Easter always comes. Death and destruction will never have the last word, because Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia and, yay, God!

*Grounded in living faith,
receiving diversity as a gift,
we seek to reflect Christ's light
in God's world.*

*Continually discerning God's
vision of grace and peace,
we share inspirational worship,
spiritual nurture, compassionate
service to others, and the pursuit
of justice—all to the glory of God.*

Chrissy



Church Activities

WORSHIP OVERVIEW

Sunday Worship is at 10:00 a.m.

March 7

Third Sunday in Lent

Communion

The Rev. Chrissy Westbury

Exodus 10:1-17; Psalm 19

March 14

Fourth Sunday in Lent

The Rev. Amber Nettleton

Numbers 21:4-9; John 3:14-21

March 21

Fifth Sunday of Lent

The Rev. Dr. Seth Weeldreyer

Jeremiah 31:31-34;

John 12:20-26, 44-50

March 28

Palm Sunday

The Rev. Dr. Seth Weeldreyer

Mark 11:1-11; Philippians 2:1-11

April 1–7:00 p.m.

Maundy Thursday

Communion

John 13:1-17, 31-35;

1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Mark 14:12-50

April 2– 7:00 p.m.

Good Friday

Psalm 22; Mark 14:53-15:47

April 4

Easter

Communion

The Rev. Dr. Seth Weeldreyer

Mark 16:1-8; Acts 10:34-43

April 11

Second Sunday of Easter

The Rev. Dr. Seth Weeldreyer

Acts 4:32-35; John 20:19-31

April 18

Third Sunday of Easter

The Rev. Dr. Seth Weeldreyer

Luke 24:36-48; 1 John 3:11-17

April 25

Fourth Sunday of Easter

The Rev. Kathleen Robertson King

Acts 4:5-12; John 10:11-18

The Health Ministry News KALAMAZOO TO JERUSALEM

The Health Ministry is working on helping us all get to Jerusalem for our Virtual Walk! It's never too late to join; we will be walking all of March, and end at Easter. Any 20 minutes of consecutive movement counts as a mile! Go to the Health Ministry link to see more details.

As a committee, we continue to listen to the needs of the congregation, so please let us know. We are currently formulating some class offerings for 2021; we will see if those are Zoom or in-person.



Holy Week

Worship in Holy Week

As we continue to live through Covid-altered realities, we look forward to offering opportunities to observe Holy Week together. At the time of this *Presbyter* publication, exact parameters for in-person gathering in Holy Week remain unknown. We hope to offer in-person opportunities on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter, perhaps like our simple prayer services at noon on Wednesdays. We will also offer options to be broadcast on YouTube like our Sunday services. Evening services will likely begin at 7:00 pm. Easter may include multiple services to allow for social distancing. At all services, masks will be required, and specific places in the sanctuary will be identified to sit with social distancing. We will also try to see that entries and exits respect the comfort and security levels of everyone.

It is hard to be more specific about worship options at this time. All of these plans are subject to review by Session, who will continue to consider possibilities and guide decisions about our options. Please watch for more information to come through email announcements.

Virtual Coffee Hour

Join Pastor Chrissy and others for virtual coffee hour every Sunday at noon. This is a chance to gather informally to catch up on our lives, talk about the worship service, and see familiar faces. We usually chat for 30-45 minutes, and people are welcome to come and go as they are able. All are welcome, and the Zoom link can be found in your weekly announcement emails!

Join Just Sanctuary to be part of our next steps toward Social Justice

First Presbyterian Church's Just Sanctuary supports church leadership and helps members to live into our Christian values through actively confronting systemic racism in First Presbyterian Church of Kalamazoo, and working toward a more just practice of our faith in our community and with our Kalamazoo neighbors.

The members of Just Sanctuary have been working through a plan that we created in August, 2020. At our next meeting on April 12 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom, we will be reviewing what we have done and what our next activities will be. If you are interested in joining us, this is a perfect time, as you can learn more about our purpose, our work, and be part of planning the next steps. Contact Allison Hammond at allehamm@gmail.com or Sue Caulfield at MichSooh@gmail.com for more information. We can get you information prior to the April 12 meeting to review and to help you feel included in the work.



FPC's Drive-through Chili Cook-off is March 14!



(We just had to find a way to make this fun church event happen!)

Here are the details:

The culinary masters of our church will once again be entering their delectable concoctions for your approval in this friendly competition.

You are invited to drive through the Lovell Street parking lot on Sunday, March 14 from 1:00-3:00 and receive a box of assorted pre-packaged cups of chili. Then simply take this array of delicious chilis home to reheat and enjoy. Instructions for how to vote for your favorites will be included with each box.

Our suggested donation is \$5 per person or \$10 per carload. Proceeds will once again benefit "One Great Hour of Sharing", so larger donations will be gratefully accepted.

If you or your group or committee is interested in entering a pot of chili in the competition, contact Rick Taylor at baktaylor@chartermi.net or 349-0867.

Chili will be accepted at the church on Saturday, March 13 from 3:00-4:00.



How Can I Join the Email List?

Sign up for announcements and links to online Worship: it's as easy as 1, 2, 3!

1. Go to the FPC website (kzoofirstpres.org) and scroll to the bottom of the page.
2. There is a short form to complete (email address, first name, and last name).
3. When it is completed, just hit "subscribe" and your name will be added to our email list.

Emails containing announcements are generally sent on Thursday afternoons. If you haven't received it by Friday afternoon, please look in your "junk" and/or "spam" folder to see if it went there.

SESSION

Clerk of Session:
Allison Hammond

CLASS OF 2021

Chris Bol
Heather Cloetingh
Liz Hamilton
Elaine Johns
Sue Johnson
Brian Nederveld
Scott Wilson

CLASS OF 2022

Jill Barnum
Bob Brush
Richard Coryell
Ellen Dykhuis
Kathy Jennings
Don Meldrum
Heather Misner

CLASS OF 2023

Susan Agostinelli
Kathy Cooney
Laura Ford
Craig Kortlandt
Oliver Takuh
Deb Taylor
Janet Todd

Faith Formation

Youth Fellowship

The youth (6th – 12th grade) continue to meet virtually. Over the last couple of months, we have played the online game “Among Us” while gathered via Zoom, had some great conversation, and had a virtual Super Bowl Cooking Show! As this newsletter goes to press, we are looking forward to a sledding outing!

As the weather warms up and the Covid numbers continue to decline, we will be moving toward more in-person outdoor fun. Watch your emails for the most up-to-date information!

Youth Group will meet on March 7 and 21, and April 11 and 25.

Lent Faith Formation Opportunities:

For all ages – Adults, Youth, Children, Families

We’re all experiencing Zoom fatigue and ‘way too much time on electronics, so for the season of Lent, we are encouraging families to step away from the electronics and engage with one another in Lenten prayer and discipleship.

Lent in a Bag equips you with symbols of the season of Lent to help you to have prayer and/or conversation at home. A devotion is assigned for each week, focusing on one of the symbols in the bag. Use these props and devotions during your weekly Lenten meditation as you journey together with Jesus to the cross. These meditations are designed to be used as individuals or as a household. We encourage you to find ways to weave these daily devotions into the rhythms of your life.



Your bag contains a small canvas. As an individual or as a household, using paint or markers, or gluing items to the canvas, create your canvas however you wish – one color or multiple colors, symbols, images, or totally abstract designs. When your canvas feels complete, drop it by the church, or contact Pastor Chrissy about finding another way to get it back to the church. (Chrissy.westbury@kalamazoofirstpres.org). Be sure to include your name on the back of the canvas. **Return the canvas by Palm Sunday, March 28,** and watch for a church-wide art project to emerge on Easter Sunday!

To get your Lent-in-a-Bag resources, contact Pastor Chrissy to arrange to pick up your bag or to have someone drop it off to you.



For Adults

Lenten Daily Devotional - Do you want a deeper dive into Lenten prayer? Each week, during Lent, a daily devotional will be included in the weekly email announcements. This daily devotional invites you deeply into praying with scriptures and songs that resonate in this season. Each day includes an invitation to journaling and a prompt. Each week’s announcements will include a link to all of that week’s daily readings. A printed copy of the devotionals can also be sent to you. Contact Pastor Chrissy or the church office to receive a printed copy.

Faith Formation After Easter

Virtual Sunday School will begin again after Easter, with lessons each week that include activities and videos from your Sunday School teachers. We will finish out the school year in this way, while hoping to add some in-person outdoor activities for families as the weather improves! Watch your weekly announcements for details!

Outreach and More

CONGREGATIONAL DEACONS

Class of 2021

Mike Boersma
Aedin Clements
Gary and Donita DeBruin
Martha Flynn
Joyce Lander
Karen Nellums
Jo Russell

Class of 2022

Evelyn Garner
Wendy King
Louise McCallum
Carol Parfitt
Deb Weurding
JoAnn Yochim

Class of 2023

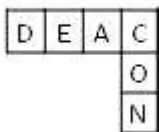
Jan Carpenter
Hilary Cloetingh
Paul Minert
Suzanne Weeldreyer
Diane White
Jim Young

Attention FPC Members: Hope Garden Work Starts in Spring!

Hope Garden, one of our Outreach activities, will open soon for initial planting of early veggies that can withstand some cooler weather. We invite any volunteers who would like to join us for fresh air, some moderate physical activity, and good company. The garden is located at 8882 “Q” Avenue (north side of the road), about 3/4 mile west of Zeb’s Restaurant in Texas Corners. All of our outdoor Worship services last fall were at the garden property and it is a pleasant place to enjoy the outdoors while providing fresh food for our under-served neighbors.

We current have work sessions on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from about 9:30 to 12:30 p.m. but other hours can be arranged if there is enough interest. No experience is necessary, just a positive attitude, and willingness to grow veggies for the Ministry with Community and Loaves & Fishes. High School-age folks are also welcome, especially if you would like to learn more about growing plants, the source of our food, and how to help plants grow. We can use all ages of volunteers as there are many different tasks to perform and many are not too physically demanding. Appropriate clothing, especially shoes, are helpful since we do dig in the dirt. Additional benefits include good company and conversation, knowing you're doing your part to make Kalamazoo a better place, and opportunities to learn about gardening.

Hope Garden is located about 3/4 of a mile west of Texas Corners on “Q” Avenue and the shopping area located there. Center Street in Portage becomes “Q” Avenue once you pass US-131 (going west), If you pass Pretty Lake Camp you have gone too far. Turn around and join us for a rewarding time of helping others. You can contact Bob Poel at 269-349-4402 for starting dates or if you want more details or information.



The Deacons are here to serve you and help you connect to the Church and with each other.

- N = New Friends
- E = Emails
- C = Care Calls

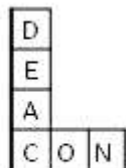
Let's talk and walk together!

C O N N E C T = Texts

O
N
N
E
C



- I = Instagram
- O = One on One
- N = Notes and Cards
- S = Service



C O N N E C T I O N S



Outreach

Celebrate the Vision serves a meal to our neighbors and those who are hunger-challenged on Wednesday evenings from 5:15 – 5:45. We also provide canned goods (Blessing Bags) and warm clothing.

New Contact Information?

If you have moved or changed contact information, please inform Ann Johnson at 344-0119, or email her at ann.johnson@kalamazoofirstpres.org, so she can keep your information up to date.

Assistance for Worshippers

Hearing Assistance devices for in-person worship services can be requested from any usher, or you may call the church office in advance.

Copies of **Large-print Bulletins and Announcements** are available every Sunday morning for in-person worship. Ask one of the ushers for a copy.

If you would like to receive **weekly e-mail updates** about events in the life of FPC, please contact Ann Johnson at 344-0119 and ask that your e-mail address be added to the list.

DVDs can be created for those with limited access to our services. You may email Ann Ross, or call 344-0119 to place an order.

Gluten-free bread is served at all communion services.

Presbyter Our congregation publishes the *Presbyter* six times per year in bi-monthly editions. While this may change with the complications of planning in our country's situation, here is the **tentative** schedule for the balance of the 2020-2021 program year:

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Deadline for Content</u>	<u>Mailing Date</u>
May-June	April 13	April 22
July-August	June 15	June 24

Many members receive the *Presbyter* newsletter via e-mail only, to help conserve paper and other resources. If you would like to have your name removed from the USPS mailing list, please contact Ann Johnson at ann.johnson@kalamazoofirstpres.org or call 344-0119.

The *Presbyter* is also available for viewing on the FPC website:
<http://kzoofirstpres.org/publications/>

Parish Associates

Parish Associates:

The Reverend Liz Candido, ecandido@kzoo.edu

United Campus Ministry Pastor and FPC Parish Associate:

The Reverend Kathleen Robertson King, ucmkrking@yahoo.com

In Memoriam

Winship Todd was born on September 11, 1918, and joined FPC on March 24, 1929. Winship died on December 8, 2020.

Ev Schut was born on May 11, 1928, and joined FPC on January 3, 1963. Ev died on December 21, 2020.

Barb Camisa was born on October 3, 1927, and joined FPC on September 27, 1955. Barb died on December 30, 2020.

Barbara Ross was born on March 13, 1942, and joined FPC on April 21, 2002. Barbara died on December 18, 2020.

Don Iffland was born on January 1, 1937, and joined FPC on October 3, 1957. Don died on December 15, 2020.

Frank Steele was born on January 11, 1925, and joined FPC on October 6, 1968. Frank died on January 7, 2021.



FPC STAFF

(269) 344-0119

(telephone extensions are listed below)

Pastor

The Reverend Dr. Seth Weeldreyer
seth.weeldreyer@kalamazoofirstpres.org
Ext. 202

Associate Pastor

The Reverend Chrissy Westbury
chrissy.westbury@kalamazoofirstpres.org
Ext. 203

Director of Music

Cindy Hunter (269) 377-2478
cindy.hunter@kalamazoofirstpres.org

Director of Outreach

Dr. Patricia Stromsta
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Ext. 204

Organist

Michael Montgomery
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Health Ministry Coordinator

Ann Ross
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Ext. 211

Office Administrator

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Ext. 205

Communications Coordinator

Anna Barnhart
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Ext. 209

Financial Coordinator

Louise Taylor
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Ext. 206

Building Superintendent

Shawn Smith
shawn.smith@kalamazoofirstpres.org
Ext. 213

Custodian (Ext. 213):

Randy Randt

South Lobby Receptionists (Ext. 221)

Bruce Birkel

March Birthdays

1 Mike Millar	8 Clara Lynn Hay Chuck Schmiege	15 Bruce Lubbers	21 Brad Allen Gary Dorrien Dick Hodgman Helen Lander Amy Schreiner Carol Payne Smith	26 John Houdek Gordon Ryskamp Samantha Shaffer Scott Wilson
2 Kennedy Elliott Jake Longman Bridgit Smith Catherine Willoughby	9 Kristen Allen Leslie Roberts Jeff Siefert	16 Richard Aldrich Rob Bradford	22 Marcia Daniels Mohseh Pegheleh Paulette Rayel	27 Dick DeVries Patrick Gleaton Marty Meinzinger
3 Ellen Dykhuis Cory Fritz Evelyn Garner Joyce Ryskamp	10 Colton Card Charlie Warren	17 Julie Bol Linda Meloche Shayne Plemmons Sue Weeldreyer	23 Sharon Bradford Matthew Novak Bob White	29 Taye Bradford John Fiore Sarah Chase
4 (none)	11 Jerre James Phil Kechele Wendy King Donna Wright	18 Julie Kechele Dean McWethy	24 Craig Kortlandt Shari Schut Jane Veech	30 Lou Grant Marjorie Wardwell
5 Cynthia Gleaton	12 Celine Finjap Todd Richman	19 Jacque Carter Jana Marie Schnur Robert Scholten Benjamin Taylor	25 Alexis Diamond Bob Klesert Nan Munn	31 Grant Coon Becker Siefert Lela Yohe
6 Sandra Edwards-García	13 Robert Murray	20 Benjamin Lewis Jean Miller		
7 Bennett Loughrin	14 Greg Russell			

April Birthdays

1 Mervin Burtis	10 Jim Weeldreyer	18 Daphne Westbury Nancy Johnson Amy Miedema	24 Robert Candido Greg Chambers
2 Connor Cloetingh Jeremy Diamond Martha Flynn Sheryl Lee-Ruff Sue Madden Mark Schreiner	11 Margot Kinnear Rollin Richman Kirsten Yohe	19 Julie Shaw	25 Richard Finjap Diane Misner Kathy Smyser
3 Matt Molitor	12 David Lewis	20 Jonathan Willoughby Jim Young	26 Carolyn Houdek
4 Sam Cupps	14 Ann Rohrbaugh	21 Sarah Graziano Addison Misner Cameryn Murray Donald Roberts	27 Pamela Zandt
7 Cynthia Feucht Marilyn Jauch Michelle Molitor	15 Betty Bennett Cecilia Crook Salim Harik Karen Lewis	22 Jeanne Case	28 Jane Todd
8 Judy Johnson	17 Cari Anderson Dave Drok Ruth Lubbers	23 Keith Johnson Brian Kastman Philip Ward Chrissy Westbury	30 Jack Mellis
9 Lisa Padgett Gene Miller			



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—PRESBYTER HIGHLIGHTS—
◇ HOLY WEEK UPDATE
◇ LENT FAITH FORMATION ACTIVITIES FOR ALL AGES



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