

KALAMAZOO
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

"A Sanctuary in the City... Living Faith"



“No one owns God. God alone knows what is good. For reasons that will never be entirely clear, God has a soft spot for religious strangers, both as agents of divine blessing and recipients of divine grace—to the point that God sometimes chooses one of them over people who believe they should by all rights come first. This is a great mystery, but it does nothing to obscure the great commandment. In every circumstance, regardless of the outcome, the main thing Jesus has asked me to do is love God and my neighbor as religiously as I love myself. The minute I have that handled, I will ask for my next assignment. For now, my hands are full.”

~ Barbara Brown Taylor,
Holy Envy

JANUARY 30, 2022

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

THE GATHERING

*Wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here—with whatever joys, questions,
or tears you bring today—as we worship God, who welcomes us all!
You are invited to listen for God's Spirit speaking to you through the music of the Prelude,
as we prepare our hearts for worship.*

CALL TO WORSHIP

God's steadfast love endures forever, and God's faithfulness to all generations.
Let us worship God.

PRELUDE

“Praeludium”

J. C. Fisher

* DOXOLOGY (tune #607)

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Christ, all creatures here below;
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;
Praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.**

* OPENING RESPONSES

God says: “Come, if you're willing to seek a pilgrim journey of love and life in peace.”
**We come prepared to find ourselves in hopeful and hard places, offering prayer among
friends and strangers, whose different way disturbs us, even those deemed enemies.**
We come prepared to know we are loved, and prepared for the outrageous news that
every other person is beloved to God—no more, no less, no matter what.
**We come with trust amid uncertainty, seeking purpose amid memory and visions of
what could be. God says: “Come.” And we are willing!**

* HYMN

“Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee”

#611

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Holy God of All Life, you call us to seek your more excellent way.
We admit to you and to one another that we don't always live that sacred path of love.
We lose patience and kindness, speak rudely, and act with prejudice.
We push selfish perspectives, insisting we're right and best,
not listening for goodness and truth in others.
We tarnish your glory in people, in our community, and in all creation,
floundering not flourishing as you want us to be.
In your grace, mercy, and healing power, forgive our wrongdoing.
May your love never end before it gets reflected in the mirror we, and all people, see.**

Prayer continues in silence.

KYRIE

“Restore in Us, O God”

#434

**Restore in us, O God, the splendor of your love;
renew your image in our hearts, and all our sins remove.**

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS AND PEACE

from *A Brief Statement of Faith*

Jesus proclaimed God’s reign: preaching and teaching, healing, eating with outcasts, and forgiving. In sovereign love, God redeems us and all creation—like a mother who will not forsake her nursing child, and a father who runs to welcomes the prodigal home.

With believers in every time and place, we rejoice that nothing in life or in death can separate us from God’s love in Jesus Christ!

God’s Spirit sets us free to accept ourselves and to love neighbors. In a broken world, the Spirit gives us courage to pray without ceasing and hear voices of all people, as we work with others for justice, freedom, and peace. May the peace of Christ be with you!

And also with you!

Please stand and take a moment to share Christ’s peace with others, respecting personal need for distance and levels of comfort.

* GLORIA

Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Gloria, gloria, alleluia, alleluia!

THE WORD

MOMENT WITH YOUNG WORSHIPPERS

CHILDREN’S BLESSING

“Go, My Children, with My Blessing”

#547

“Go, my children, with my blessing, never alone.

Waking, sleeping, I am with you, you are my own.

In my love’s baptismal river I have made you mine forever.

Go, my children, with my blessing; you are my own.”

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

God of Good News, Spirit of Life, open our hearts and minds and enter in. As we hear a word of love, expand our limits of knowledge and inspiration. So may we grow in hope and faithful service, becoming your love for others, in the name of Christ. Amen

FIRST READING

Luke 4:14-30

The Word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God

ANTHEM

“O Love”

Elaine Hagenberg

O love, that will not let me go,
O love, I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe,
that in thy ocean depths its flow may richer, fuller be.

O joy, that seeks me through the pain,
O I cannot close my heart to the joy;
I trace the rainbow through the rain, and feel the promise is not vain
that morn shall tearless be ... that morn shall tearless be.

O love, that will not let me go,
O love, I rest my weary soul in the joy;
I give thee back the life I owe,
that in thy ocean depths its flow may richer, fuller be.

O love, that will not let me go...

SECOND READING

1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13

For the word of God in scripture, for the word of God among us, for the word of God within us,

Thanks be to God

SERMON

An Ever More Excellent Way

“And I will show you a still more excellent way.” (1 Corinthians 12:31)

* HYMN

“They’ll Know We Are Christians by Our Love”

#300

THE THANKSGIVING

TIDINGS OF THE CHURCH

We give thanks to God and live faith, offering ourselves through worship, work, service, and love in all its forms.

OFFERTORY

“Adagio” from *Partita on Wondrous Love*

Donald Johns

* OFFERTORY RESPONSE “Give Thanks, O Christian People”

#644 v.3

**Give thanks, O Christian people, for all who love the Lord,
who live each day believing in God’s eternal word.
To share Christ’s love in living, to witness with each deed,
to use the talents given to plant the gospel seed.**

* OFFERTORY PRAYER *(continuing to pray in unison)*

Loving God, receive these gifts as an expression of our love for you and all neighbors as they know poverty, captivity, oppression, and need for new vision. Guide us in our use that our service may bring us all closer to the fulfillment of abundant life as you favor it—your reign of grace and peace, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray...

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors,

And lead us not into temptation,

But deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, now and forever. Amen.

THE SENDING

* HYMN “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling” #366

* BENEDECTION *(Our congregational response is “Alleluia! Amen!”)*

POSTLUDE “Presto” from *Concerto in G Major* Prince Johann Ernst
arr. J. S. Bach

PARTICIPANTS

Worship Leaders

The Rev. Dr. Seth Weeldreyer
The Rev. Chrissy Westbury
Meredith Alspach

Acolyte

Gary Zandt

Reader

Pamela Zandt

Greeter

Beth Dyer

Sound

Sound Team members

Music

Michael Palmer, Interim Director of Music

Brooks Grantier, guest organist

JJ Treadway, accompanist

Adult Choir

ANNOUNCEMENTS

JANUARY COVID UPDATE

Throughout the pandemic, the Health Ministries Committee and the Session of FPC have encouraged careful monitoring of the science, following the guidelines set forth by the experts at the Center for Disease Control. The CDC has strongly recommended that people in areas where there is Substantial or High Spread of the Covid-19 virus and its variants - regardless of vaccination status - wear masks when gathering indoors with people outside their household. For this reason, we are requiring that all people who enter the church building mask up, as long as Kalamazoo County remains in the Substantial Spread area. Let's do our part to protect one another and stop this thing before it gets out of hand again!

FUTURE OFFICE HOURS

Until future notice, the office hours are as follows:

Monday - Thursday: 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Friday: 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Saturday - Sunday: Closed

YOUTH GROUP TODAY

Our new multi-church 4th, 5th, and 6th grade group meets TODAY from 4:00-5:00 p.m. at the Richland church. Youth Group for grades 7-12 will also meet tonight at 5:00 at the Richland church. Masks are required for all!

SUNDAY SCHOOL

We invite all school-age children to join us for Sunday School after the “Moment with Young Worshippers”. Parents, please pick up your children from the 3rd floor classroom immediately following Worship. The nursery is also open for all children under age three!

THOUGHTFUL READERS

Thoughtful Readers will meet tomorrow, Monday, January 24, at 7:00 p.m. The topic of discussion is *My Dear Hamilton* by Stephanie Dray and Laura Kamoie.

CELEBRATE THE VISION

A community meal is prepared and served from 5:00 to 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday at our South Street doors. We are currently serving 32 members of the community.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Tuesdays, January 18 – February 22 at noon, meeting in the Library

Due to unforeseen difficulty acquiring the previous book, Pastor Seth Weeldreyer has altered plans for our next group reflection. We will explore Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, centering on Amy-Jill Levine's book *Sermon on the Mount: A Beginner's Guide to the Kingdom of Heaven*. You can find this book through your favorite local bookstore or at Amazon. Levine writes: "The Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5-7, contains some of Jesus' most profound and most memorable teachings. What might these teachings have meant to his disciples, and to the others who first heard them? How, if we pay careful attention to his words, does Jesus provide us a road map to living as God would have us live?" Here's a schedule for our discussion:

February 1 Chapter 3: Practicing Piety
February 8 Chapter 4: Our Father
February 15 Chapter 5: Finding Your Treasure
February 22 Chapter 6: Living into the Kingdom

We will return to John Bell's book, *Living with the Psalms*, for the season of Lent. Pastor Seth will order copies of the book for anyone interested. Let him know if you'd like one!

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Thursday at 9:30, Room 301

Pastor Chrissy will be leading the Women's Bible Study in a study of the Minor Prophets. The 12 minor prophets (Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi) are called minor, not because they are of less importance, but because they are shorter books. We will spend three more weeks listening to what they had to say in their context and thinking about what it means for us in ours.

NEW ADULT CLASS: "SAY MORE?"

Today in Room 301 after Worship

We will be trying out a new adult class after Worship. "Say More?" is an opportunity to gather and reflect on the scripture passages shared in Worship and in the sermon – to ask questions and delve a little deeper into the scriptures we read each week. Contact Pastor Chrissy for more information.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

W.O.W.

Wednesday, February 2, 7:00 p.m.

This small group meets monthly at members' homes at 7:00 p.m. on the first Wednesday of the month. Each month we take a word with us to reflect on all month long. When we gather, we each bring something that word brought up for us during the month. It might be a scripture, a poem, a story, a piece of art or music – anything to help us reflect on where God spoke to us through that word throughout the month. We welcome new members! Contact Sue Caulfield or Chrissy Westbury for more information.

FREE KALAMAZOO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA CONCERT

The KSO Artists in Residence will be back for a FREE performance at FPC on February 1 at 7:00 p.m. Masks and proof of vaccination will be required for attendance, for everyone, no matter the age. The program is as follows:

AGÓCS Imprimatur (String Quartet No. 2)

ALBRECHTSBERGER Concerto for Alto Trombone and Strings in Bb Major

BRAHMS Clarinet Quintet in B minor, Op. 115

Julia Neckermann, violin

Lisa A. Williams, violin

Nicholas Jeffery, viola

Igor Cetkovic, cello

Georgiy Borisov, clarinet

Edward "Kip" Hickman, trombone

FOOD FOR THOUGHT FROM THE GREEN PRESBYTERIANS

“If you are searching for a god, observe nature.”

- Proverb inscribed on Egypt's Temple of Karnak

NEW ORGANIST!

Hey, everyone! My name is Autumn; I'm an organist, and I'm delighted to have the opportunity to serve this congregation! I've been playing organ for almost five years, professionally for over two years. Currently, I'm playing at First Baptist Church right across the park. I have a deep love for music of all kinds, which I'm delighted to bring to this church. Aside from music, I enjoy playing video games, hanging out with friends, and spending time with my two cats, Bean and Weena. I can't wait to meet you all!

NOW HIRING:

AN OPERATIONS COORDINATOR

We are currently looking for someone to fill our Operations Coordinator position. This person will take over many of what were Ann Johnson's responsibilities.

Check the church website or Facebook page for full job details and instructions to apply.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

IT'S SCHOLARSHIP TIME!

There are several endowments that have been established at the First Presbyterian Church, with portions designated to be utilized for scholarships and/or grants.

You are considered eligible to apply for a scholarship if you or your family have been active in the spiritual and community life of FPC Kalamazoo. Others who may apply are individuals expecting to continue their education beyond high school OR those who are already students beyond the high school level.

Scholarship applications are due March 15.

SHARE THE WORLD'S RESOURCES ONLINE EVENT

We will be presenting our vision to implement Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – for adequate food, housing, health care and social security for all – as a fundamental international law, in order to address systemic injustices and profound human suffering.

The talk will take place on Monday, January 31, at 2:00 p.m. It will last for about an hour. In order to register and receive the zoom link, email Victoria. victoria@sharing.org

The event is free to attend.

DID YOU PICK UP YOUR NEW NAME BADGE?

Since December, many of you have picked up your new name badges and have been wearing them at services. Thank you!

If you have not yet picked up yours, you will find it in the Gathering place on the racks on the desk near the South Street entrance. Then, you can either keep your badge with you or you can store it on the rack when you aren't wearing it.

The Congregational Life Committee hopes these new name badges make it easier for everyone to get to know one another better!

CTV VOLUNTEER COOKS NEEDED!

Can you help make soup or dessert for CtV? For more information or to sign up, contact Meredith.

WEDNESDAY NOON PRAYER

... continues! Gather in our Sanctuary for a midweek time to center and ponder on our scripture for the week.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF KALAMAZOO
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The Reverend Chrissy Westbury, Associate Pastor, x203
Meredith Alspach, Director of Youth and Families, x205
Louise Taylor, Financial Coordinator, x206
Hannah Foreman, Communications Coordinator, x209
Michael Palmer, Interim Director of Music
Shawn Smith, Building Superintendent, x213
Custodians

South Lobby Receptionists, x221

The Reverend Dr. Liz Hakken Candido, Parish Associate
The Reverend Amber Nettleton, Parish Associate
The Reverend Kathleen Robertson King, Parish Associate and United Campus Ministry Pastor

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UPCOMING WORSHIP— 10:00 a.m.

February 6

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany
The Rev. Dr. Seth Weeldreyer
1 Corinthians 15:1-11; John 2:1-11

February 13

Sixth Sunday after Epiphany
The Rev. Dr. Seth Weeldreyer
Jeremiah 17:5-10; Luke 6:17-26

February 20

Seventh Sunday after Epiphany
The Rev. Chrissy Westbury
Genesis 45:3-11; Luke 6:27-38

February 27

Transfiguration Sunday
The Rev. Dr. Seth Weeldreyer
Luke 9:28-36; 2 Corinthians 3:17-4:6

*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.*