

presbyterian *profiles*

WORSHIPPING, SERVING, AND LIVING WITH A FRESH
VISION OF GOD'S VIBRANT ENERGY AND GRACE FOR ALL...



YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS A SUNDAY IN MAY!

- May 1:** The FPC choir will be offering a Mass in Spanish
- May 8:** Mothers Day
Reception of New Members
- May 15:** Pentecost
Graduation Celebration
Recognition of Worship Leaders, Choir Members and Teachers
- May 22:** Summer worship schedule begins with one service at 10:00a
Peace Fair & Brunch

WE LOOK FORWARD TO CELEBRATING WITH YOU!

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Y ehi shalom al ha-aretz

Man noh toh bison tam got-emah ah heeng kognik

Amani na iwepa duniani

Moge vrede heersen op aarde

Que la paz prevalezca en la tierra

In other words, **May Peace Prevail on Earth**, in Hebrew, Ojibwa, Swahili, Dutch and Spanish, five of the twelve languages which will proclaim peace on the FPC Peace Pole.

Yes, on May 22 at our Peace Fair/Season of Peace celebration, our Peace Pole will be installed by the south entrance to the church at the corner of 28th and State Street. The project was suggested by Paul Van Faasen just prior to his death, championed by The Watchers, approved by the Outreach Council, supported by the Session, and funded by individual donors. The six sided pole is 8 feet high, made of western red cedar, and has sandblasted lettering.

There are more than 200,000 Peace Poles standing in almost every country throughout the world in churches, private homes, community parks, and many other locations. In the United States, the official peace pole manufacturer is in Maple City, Michigan!

The idea for peace poles originated with a Japanese man, Masahisa Goi following the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He dedicated his life to the cause of inner and outer peace, a mission which led eventually to the movement coming to the United States in 1986, with the opening of the World Peace Prayer Society, a nonprofit, nonsectarian movement whose sole purpose is uniting people across the world through the universal message, "May Peace Prevail on Earth".

The cross on the church roof identifies us with Christians world wide who gather for worship in the name of the Prince of Peace. The Peace Pole will identify us with ALL people of any language and of any religion who work toward peace in hearts, homes, communities, nations and the world.

Our Season of Peace comes to an official end on May 22 with our Peace Fair (following the one worship service at 10 o'clock), but our calling to be peacemakers is for every season. When you drive by, or walk by, or see it from the M & M Café, it will be a symbol of who we are and what we are called to do. When the work becomes frustratingly difficult or fatiguing or seemingly impossible it is a reminder, an accountability symbol, a silent prayer, a connection with a universal human hope.

MAY PEACE PREVAIL ON EARTH

A MESSAGE FROM SCOTT

First Pres Family,

I write on the eve of my kidney donation, feeling calm at the moment. One reason for this is the incredible support I have felt and received from all of you. Thank you again for supporting me in this endeavor. It is wonderful to know that there are hundreds of people praying for me, my family and for the recipient.

It has been a privilege hearing how organ donation has touched so many of your friends and families. We all have challenging and beautiful stories that have shaped who we are and how we relate to God and others. A secondary motive for my pursuing kidney donation is because I trust that it will open new and profound connections with you and others. For me, it is a decision toward affirming how we are all part of a related and relating humanity.

A special thanks to Linda, the rest of the staff and countless volunteers for putting in extra time to cover for me during my absence. I know that my time away will create more work. Finally, Jill and our kids are central in this journey and equally deserving of encouragement and prayers. They are making significant sacrifices in their daily lives to support me and to be patient with me during my recovery.

There are a lot of great things planned for the summer, so I look forward to being back with all of you in about 4 weeks.

With gratitude,
Scott



PEACE FAIR - MAY 22

FPC will be holding a Peace Fair on May 22 to celebrate our Season of Peace! The day begins with a Peace Walk and a room for guided meditation beginning at 9a. Our Peace Pole will be installed at the conclusion of the 10a worship service with activities to follow that engage and demonstrate our commitment to being peacemakers.

Lunch will also be served. All are welcome!

Please contact Teresa Larson if you have questions.

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WORSHIP CENTERS



The Judean Date Palm Tree

Tree of Peace. Palm branches were used when Jesus entered the City of Jerusalem, coming in Peace. Others called it the **Tree of Life**; its fruit was protein and branches used for shade. I am still in awe of the seeds, found about 30 years ago by an excavating team near King Herod's palace, dating back 2,000 + years ago, planted in 2005, and today are thriving into a Judean Date Palm Tree of over 9 feet tall.

This tells me that the seeds of faith that we plant, nurture and give the freedom to grow in our children today, are God's Plan. Do you agree that it's a beautiful thing; the Word and the infinite love of the Good Shepherd are still being witnessed and being spread, like the seed, 2,000 + years later, right here at FPC?

A note from the Children's Advocacy Center stating, "You are making a difference," was received thanking our children for contributing the Quiet Bags to the CAC. Yes, our children do make a difference. We are currently choosing what each Worship Center wants to provide with their offering for the PCUSA: Peace and Global Witness Mission. Ask our children if they chose chicks, piglets, bags of seeds or school supplies for displaced students.

Plan to be involved with the All Church activities this summer. To name a few: Peace Fair, Family Camp, canoeing, AWESome Sundays (during the morning service), Park-it, and more. If you have an idea of an activity that could bring us together, please share it with us!

Our children are living what they are learning from you:

FPC is a community "Worshipping, serving and living with a fresh vision of GOD's vibrant energy and GRACE for all."

Plant the seed of faith deep, make a difference, and experience Peace.

- Lori

SOUND SYSTEM UPDATE

As you have probably noticed, we've had issues with the sound system over the past few months. Parts of the system date back to the early 1990's. The newest parts are nearly 12 years old. We have a great team of operators who diligently work each week on the system and on its maintenance. Recently, Tim Richardson took it upon himself to do a thorough review of the equipment. It was discovered that the 2004 installation project was lacking in some areas which he corrected. He was also able to determine that one of the six receiver units for the wireless microphones was intermittently failing. A replacement unit arrived and was installed. We now seem to be having fewer problems. We continue to explore options and alternatives to bring a better audio experience to the worship services, whether you listen over the speakers, through the loop system or to the sermons posted online.



YOUTH@FIRST

A MESSAGE FROM TERESA

If I were asked which Bible verse I find to be the most significant to my life and my faith, I would have to say Acts 2:44:

"All who believed were together and had all things in common."

This verse is smack in the middle of the story of Pentecost, a day in our liturgical calendar that humbles me, inspires me, challenges me and fills me with a sense of awe every year. Pentecost is often referred to as "the birthday of the church," the first time the church is together. To me, this moment in our greater faith story that stretches across generations is the church at its best. This event anchors my convictions about who the church is, and the role that the church is called to play in God's story: continuing to build and be a beloved community that demonstrates love and reconciliation for all people.

I think Pentecost is the perfect note on which to close out our regular programmatic year. As I reflect back on the themes that our youth events have been centered on this year, it's ultimately been all about building and **experiencing community together**. The many laughs, insights and moments of vulnerability we have shared together have continuously been met with a response that embraces and affirms that which brings us "together" and have "all things in common" - our identity as beloved children of God.

While our programmatic year will be coming to a close, our youth summer schedule is filling up fast! Double-check that I've got your correct contact information so you can stay up-to-date on youth gatherings and service opportunities that you are not going to want to miss! - Teresa

YOUTH@FIRST MAY DATES TO REMEMBER:

May 1 from 6:00-7:30p
May 8 from 6:00-7:30p
May 15 from TBA

Senior High youth group
Junior High youth group
Junior & Senior High youth group... More details coming soon!



Thank you to all our faithful 2016 CROP Hunger walkers and generous donors! Because of YOU we had another successful CROP Hunger Walk. Check out the FPC Youth that were represented!



GET INVOLVED

Here is just a handful of the many ways that you can connect with others at FPC.
For a complete list of small groups, please visit:

www.fpcholland.org/community/ministries/

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN (PW)

All women are cordially invited to participate in Presbyterian Women Circles and Events!



**PRESBYTERIAN
WOMEN**

DATES TO REMEMBER

- May 4 2:00p Study Leaders meet with Rev. Linda
- May 5 10:00a PW Coordinating Team
- May 7-14 TBD Tulip Time with volunteers helping in the Information Tent
- May 11 9:30a Miriam Circle
- May 12 11:30p Hannah Circle

Volunteers are needed to help in the Information Booth at Tulip Time.
The sign-up sheet will be on the bulletin board near the South main doors.

The June Luncheon will be at 12:00p on Wednesday, 6/8 at Freedom Village.
Come and enjoy a delicious salad, rolls, beverages and dessert. The entertainment following the meal will be in the auditorium. Six talented residents of Freedom Village will read a play about a family during the Christmas holidays. The characters are a husband and wife, mother-in-law, teenagers, and a care-giver. The play is "Affluence" by Steve Petersen. More details will be given in the Bulletins and a sign-up sheet will be in the M&M Cafe.

BIBLE STUDY: Lesson Nine is the last one in *Come to the Waters* by Judy Record Fletcher with *Suggestions for Leaders* by Larissa Kwong Abazia. **Read Revelation 21 and 22.** John wrote Revelation at the end of the first century when Christians were under heavy persecution and the real Jerusalem lay in ruins. In the unfolding of John's vision for the end times, his message to this young Christian Community seems to be that the way things are now is not the final word. This was a passage of hope for the people then and it is a source of hope for us today.

LESSON FOCUS: In Revelation, we get a picture of the end time, with the fullest revelation of God and God's creation. This becomes a cause of great hope. We learn that we live in between the revelation of Jesus Christ and this final revelation and that we are to witness to this as we live out our faith.

OPPORTUNITIES TO SHOW OUR GRATITUDE:

Those who have a birthday this month will find the **Birthday Offering** Envelopes on the PW shelf in the M&M Cafe. Money given in celebration of the blessings in life enables donations to national and world missions. Please place these donations in the offering plate during worship. Write the check to "Presbyterian Women" and "Birthday" where it states "for" to ensure that this is credited to the right account.

MINISTRY HIGHLIGHT OF THE MONTH

Strategic Plan Update



What is the Strategic Plan?

On February 4, 2014, the Strategic Plan was presented to the congregation. The purpose of the Strategic Plan is to *build on our strengths within a guiding framework to assure our future as a vibrant and growing community of God's people*. When Eric Heller was leading the Strategic Planning Team through the process, he emphasized again and again that the task was “**Strategic Doing**”, not just Strategic Planning.

View a copy of the Strategic Plan at www.fpcholland.org/community/news-2/ under “Other Publications.”

Who oversees the implementation of the Strategic Plan?

At their retreat on March 11-12, Session reviewed our progress on action steps related to each goal area identified in the Strategic Plan, and they agreed - we've made great strides! The Staff, the Session and its Councils are indeed “doing”. That is, the Strategic Plan is NOT sitting on a shelf collecting dust: *it is our direction for ministry and mission!*

What exciting things took place in the last 12 months in response to the Strategic Plan?

- The calling in 2015 of a full time Associate Pastor and hiring of a half time Youth Director came directly from the first goal area “Staff and Facilities to Attract Young Families.”
- The face lift to the M&M Café kitchenette this past winter and the Kitchen Fixin' Project in the lower level is in response to Goal Area “Improvement for Facilities.”
- An elder position for small groups has been created (Bonnie Cowie). Small group ministries are a staffing priority in a staff member's job description (Scott VanderWal). New small groups are being created regularly, and there is a specific funding line item in the Spiritual Growth Council.
- A Communications Task Force was created, made recommendations and was dismissed having fulfilled its tasks. Needs for strengthening Communications are being addressed with the newly expanded role of our Publications Specialist.
- At the recommendation of the Communications Task Force, a computer fault-tolerant server was installed and network capability was optimized. Security procedures (including Wi-Fi separation from the internal private traffic), folder security and automatic backup procedures were implemented; along with remote access for staff and expanded Wi-Fi access in both the upper and lower levels of the church.

What ministry projects are you planning in the coming 6 months?

Maintaining the present progress and:

- Upgraded furnishings in the Youth areas (facilities)
- Pursuing options for a safer, more attractive north entrance (facilities)
- Reconfiguration of church website (communication)
- More rigorous external publicity of FPC Outreach Efforts (communication)
- Exploration of high quality projection capacity for the sanctuary (worship)

On Sunday, June 5, there will be a Strategic Plan Update

KITCHEN FIXIN'

Have you heard? The kitchen is nearly complete! Check out the newly installed appliances...



Kitchen Inauguration Pancake Breakfast - Join us on June 5!
Donations will be collected partially to cover food & partially to support FPC youth mission trips.

SAVE THE DATE

MAY 27- 30 FAMILY CAMP

Spend time with the FPC family while enjoying the wonderful atmosphere of the Presbytery's own Camp Greenwood summer camp. We will sleep in cabins, eat in the dining hall, enjoy the lake, the recreation field and the trails - just like the campers!

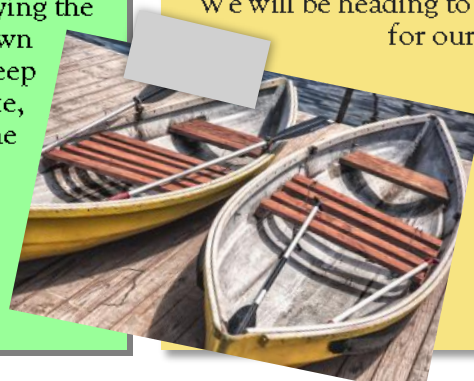
If you are interested in joining the fun, please contact Alan Martens at alanmartens@gmail.com or (616)340-7920.

JULY 15-17, 2016 ANNUAL CANOE/KAYAK TRIP

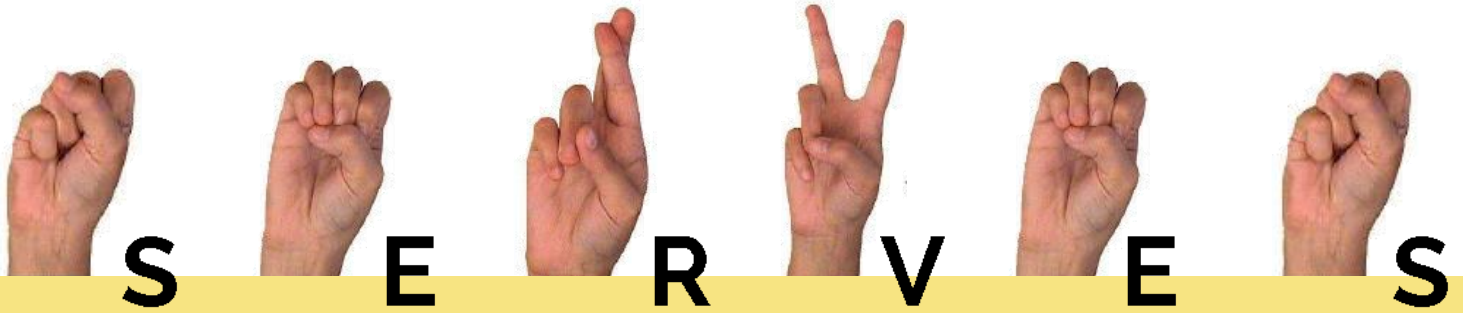
We will be heading to Henry's Landing in Scottville, MI for our annual canoe/kayak trip.

Registration information to come later this month!

For live updates, search for and join the event Facebook group: "First Pres. Canoe Trip"



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



2016 CROP HUNGER WALK

ENDING
HUNGER
ONE STEP
AT A TIME
CROP HUNGER
WALK

Thank you to all our faithful walkers and generous donors! Because of YOU we had another successful CROP Hunger Walk.

Now is the time to give your money to the walker you sponsored and for the walkers to turn in their envelopes. Please return your envelopes to Tim or Nancy Staal. You can find them in the narthex before and after the second service. Otherwise you can return your envelope to the office. Please make a goal to have your envelopes turned in as soon as possible!

Thank you for joining us on the journey to end hunger, one step at a time.

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT UPDATE

Weekly updates posted at:

[www.fpcholland.org/
community/serve/refugee/](http://www.fpcholland.org/community/serve/refugee/)

I'm sure as you're reading this that it's already out of date. Good things have been happening so quickly. The family has moved from temporary housing to an apartment. The apartment is on the north side; fairly close to their son/brother and his family. It is very close to a bus line as well.

Our church family did a wonderful job gathering the furniture and household items the Zadran family needed for their apartment. A special thank you to Libby Dickinson, Bonnie Cowie, Anne DuMez and Tedd Oyler who organized these donations, and to Larry Lynn, who worked tirelessly to find and secure the apartment. It takes the entire body!



MEMORIAL FUND

What happens when you give a gift in memory of a church member who has died?

Gifts are received by the church bookkeeper and deposited into the Memorial Fund. A list of givers' names is provided to the family of the one being memorialized. It is the Session's responsibility to disperse funds on an "as requested" basis. Typically, the Memorial Fund is used for small projects which will add to the beauty or function of the church building or the sanctuary.

At its last meeting, Session approved the use of Memorial Fund dollars:

- to pay for window treatments in the two classrooms adjacent to the Michigan Room;
- to pay for furniture in the Youth Lounge;
- and for a large outdoor tent to be used for large church-wide events such as the Fall Kick-off and Canoe Trip.

Memorial Fund dollars also funded the M&M kitchen face-lift.

Thank you for past contributions to the Memorial Fund!

These extra gifts are a blessing, allowing for projects not provided for in our operating budget. And, thank you to the families of our members who have requested that Memorial Funds be designated to *First Presbyterian Church* upon a death of a loved one.

**SAVE
THE
DATE**

MAY 1
SPANISH MASS

MAY 8
MOTHER'S DAY

MAY 15
PENTECOST &
GRADUATE CELEBRATION

MAY 22
ONE SERVICE BEGINS
& PEACE FAIR