

presbyterian *profiles*

A PUBLICATION OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SPRING 2020



Coming Soon to a Driveway Near You!

You see us in Worship each week, but we don't get to see you. When the Stay-At-Home order is lifted, Pastor Paul and Pastor Linda have a plan to see you! We will come to your driveway (or deck / patio) for a fresh air, socially distanced visit.

We'll bring our own chairs and beverages. Or ask us to go on a walk with you!

In the next few weeks, watch for a link to an electronic sign-up sheet in the *eWeekly*. Linda is available Monday, Tuesday, or Friday afternoons. Paul is available Wednesday and Friday afternoons and Thursday mornings. Think about a time that will work to visit.

Hope to see you soon!



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Rev. Linda Knieriemen

Pastor

Hello!

Hi, Everyone.

Haven't we had some magnificent days of sunshine and warmth?! We need days like that to remind us that spring and summer are indeed on the way!

I'm here in my home office with two items to share with you, questions which have come from many of you I've spoken with on the phone.

First, there is some puzzlement about why I'm here. After all, wasn't I supposed to be on Sabbatical!? Yes, that was the plan... before David died and before Covid-19.

After David died, realizing that I could not care both for me in my own grief and be available to you, I requested of Session, and they granted, a four-week Bereavement time. That took us to Easter.

The plans I had for Sabbatical focused on End of Life and included some travel. David's death was enough focus on End of Life for a year, and with Sheltering in Place, travel wasn't feasible. So, Sabbatical is on hold at least through the end of the year. Although life is very different now, I do feel rested and prepared to continue to pastor, preach, and lead this terrific staff team.

And two. So many are so eager to return to the sanctuary for worship on Sunday mornings. Me, too.

Session and staff are beginning to identify a timeline for reopening. That timeline is dependent on our governor's recommendations, based on as much solid science and epidemiological findings as possible. I promise we will communicate that timeline to you when it has been solidified and approved by Session. It's a timeline based on decisions yet to be made, however, so we await the wisdom of our state leaders.

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Rev. Paul Van Kempen

Associate Pastor

Look! There it is!

When I lived in Chicago, I spent a lot of time walking along Lake Michigan. It was common on nice days to see people flying kites along the lake. I have always found kites to be somewhat magical, so I would often stop to watch.



We recently celebrated Pentecost as the church. On Pentecost, we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit isn't seen like the wind holding up the kite, but the Spirit's effects on the world are seen. The wind of the Spirit gives us life and breath and enlivens us to live life like Christ.

One day I was walking with some friends when we came across a crowd gathered around a man who was presumably flying a kite. I say presumably, because the man was looking into the sky and holding a string that he was slowly letting out between his fingers, but the string didn't seem to go anywhere. It just disappeared into the blue sky.

Soon, someone in the crowd started pointing to a spot far in the distance. "Look! There it is!" By following their guiding finger, I finally spotted the kite. It was the teeniest, tiniest speck in the sky. It must have been half a mile away. Maybe more. It seemed impossibly far away. I could hardly believe that the kite, so far away, could hold up that much string and fly that high. As I said, there is something magical about kites.

I think the allure of kites is that they seem to ride on nothing. We can't see the wind, but the kite holds on to the wind and soars into the sky. The invisible wind gives the kite the power to fly.

For Pentecost, we gave young families of the church a kite. The kite was a reminder of the Spirit moving all around us. As the families put it together, they talked about the kite and the wind. They talked about the Spirit moving among us. They talked about the mystery of faith and the beauty of seeing signs that God is at work all around us.

When you see a kite this summer, or when you fly a kite this summer, remember the power of the Holy Spirit that is moving all around us.



YOUTH@FIRST
Empty the Pallet
Youth@First raised over \$2,104 to support Community Action House!
Way to go youth!



Dear FPC Friends,

The psalmist wrote, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble."

Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, the Beatitudes, said, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."

Paul, writing to the church in Corinth wrote, "Praise be to the God of Jesus Christ the God of mercy, the God of comfort who comforts us in all our sorrows so that we can comfort others in their sorrow, with the consolation we have received from God."

These are words I have read many many times during graveside services and Memorial Services in our sanctuary. They are words which bind us together in sorrow and remind us to turn to God for comfort. Words like these lead us to be able to say that we can trust God in life and in death.

At First Pres of Holland since New Year's Eve, eleven of our regular worshipers and at least two parents and a son of members have died. This is overwhelming, particularly in this time when we hear the death counts from Covid-19 in our community, state, country, and beyond.

I come to you today to acknowledge that all this death is overwhelming, and it seems that we are unable to express the grief this brings because

we cannot gather as families and as the congregational family at First for Memorial Services. That it is risky to gather in the sanctuary, or even to extend a hand or hug, adds a sharpness to the pain of loss.

In a moment, I will list the names of members who have died since the beginning of the year. I invite you to simply imagine them --- their faces, their families, the memories you have of some or all of them. to hold them into the light of Christ's love. Eventually, we will be able to gather again, to cry, to laugh, to tell stories, to honor and thank God for each of them. For now, it is good and right that we recognize them by saying their names and expressing whatever is in our hearts which needs to be released.



Rev. Jim Rea
David Walter Sr.
Rev. Don Brower
Elaine Evenson
Ron Sisson
Bonnie Jones

Jim Oswald
Vern Gebben
Dave Cuthbertson
Mary Robertson
Ted DuMez

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Presbyterian Women



In the 19th Century, it was much easier to practice social distancing. Now in the 21st Century, we are faced with a virulent pandemic virus and must practice mask-wearing in public and social distancing when near others. Our church building is closed to keep us all safe, but we remain active in our mission to our community and each other through online worship. Church Session and committees are meeting on Zoom – an app that allows us to meet electronically. Our pastors, staff, and volunteers are keeping in touch with the entire congregation.

Our PW Annual Meeting is another thing to be canceled due to the pandemic. Freedom Village is not yet open to the public, for which we are grateful, since keeping at-risk people from the COVID-19 illness is a priority. We don't have a crystal ball, but will plan on a gathering for a BYO lunch in the fall. We will see some video of the two parts of this year's study we missed in April and May, and have a short Annual Meeting. Then, Pastor Linda will help us kick off the new study, too.

Even though we did not have Tulip Time this year, and did not receive the \$1,000 stipend for that service to the community, our PW Coordinating Team decided to commit to our annual gift of \$1,000 to our Presbyterian Preschool anyway. They were delighted to hear this news.

The new study is a very timely theme of Lament, and we are very open to working on our own feelings of lament. We may need to do some creative gathering, use an app like Zoom, or have lesson leaders reach out by a video, but our Bible study will continue.

MAY THE LORD WATCH BETWEEN ME and THEE,
WHILE WE ARE ABSENT, ONE FROM THE OTHER.

GET THE LATEST NEWS FROM PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

online: PresbyterianWomen.org

Facebook: Presbyterian Women in the PC (USA)

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A Place for All Building Update

May 13, 2020 update from Larry Grinwis.

Just as our construction project was winding up in early March, we were hit with the Corona virus pandemic, and our church facility was closed to all activity for the health and safety of all.

Recently, with the Governor's plan for re-opening portions of our economy, construction projects have been authorized to start up again—following stringent health and safety precautions. Based on this, our Session has authorized Lakewood construction to complete our construction project.

At this point, there are 28 items on the “punch list” of remaining items. Our committee has reviewed each with Lakewood and they will begin to address them almost immediately. Their target for completing all components of the project is June 1 or shortly thereafter.

Now, all we have to do is “beat this virus” to begin to be able to use and enjoy our renovated facility! We look forward to the opportunity for all of us to explore what's new in our facility and look for ways we can use our facility to support our congregation and the community we serve.

Thanks to everyone for their patience as we've worked to bring the project to a close so we can continue to be “A Place for All.”

A Place for All Construction Committee: Jon Kreple, Larry Briggance, Sandy Peterson, Bill Haynes, Larry Grinwis, Linda Knieriemen.



Hello! ... Continued from page 2

Among the first activities to resume will be granting Lakewood Construction access to the building in order to finish the final details for our building. When we do return, we expect a final product.

In the meantime, although the church building is closed, God's people are always open for ministry. Yes, even from home. Call someone who lives alone. Show particular kindness to your grocery check-out person (with your mask on). Pray for our health care workers and first responders. Share the FPC website and YouTube worship experience with a friend.

Grace and Peace be yours!

~ Linda

Dear FPC Friends ... Continued from page 4

And, Barbara Johnson, the mother of Sherry Martens and Beth McShane, the mother of Joy Oyler. And this past week, Jan Van Faasen's son Bill.

In sure and certain hope, we commend them all to God.

Oh Lord, support us all the day long until the shadows lengthen, and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then, in your mercy, grant us a safe lodging, a holy rest and peace at the last.

And let the people say, Amen.



High School Graduates

Elijah Brown	Bryson Anderson
Will Anderson - National Merit Scholar	
Katherine Bowen	Faith DeFeyer
Ben DeWaard	Joshua Laux
Cameron Wallar	

College Graduates

Congratulations to Emma Martens, B.A. Candidate, Human Services & Social Justice, Summa Cum Laude at The George Washington University class of 2020.

Teresa Larson graduated from Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary with her Master of Divinity degree on May 16, 2020.

Thank you

We'd like to express our heartfelt thanks for the prayers, cards, calls and love shown to us in the passing of our husband, father and grandfather and to Pastor Paul for the beautiful burial service conducted on April 8.

~ The family of Jim Oswald

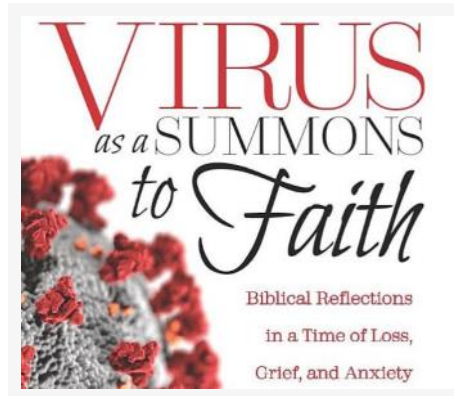
Bible Study with Linda

We've all heard opinions about God and the virus, usually some variation on the following: it's God's punishment (with opposing ideas about what sin God is furious about); it has nothing to do with God; it's a sign of the End Times.

What do you think the relationship is between this pandemic and God?

Over the past six weeks in worship, I've begun to make connections between our lives and the lives of the disciples in their grief and displacement following Jesus' life and death and resurrection. In worship this summer, we're stepping away from direct conversation about the virus with a series called "Mountain Top Experiences" where we'll explore events of the Bible taking place on mountain tops. More on that later.

For those who are curious about and already thinking about faith and virus, I'm proposing a six week Zoom Bible Study, Monday evenings from 7-8:30 pm. beginning June 8. I'd like at least 5 but no more than 15 in order to optimize the Zoom format. If you are interested in attending please, email Sheri at office@fpcholland.org and the Zoom link will be emailed to you. If there is an overwhelming response, we'll offer it a second or concurring time.



One of my favorite Biblical Scholars, Walter Brueggemann, has just published a small book *Virus as a Summons to Faith: Biblical Reflections in a Time of Loss, Grief and Anxiety*. He writes in its introduction: "It is my hope that my thinking may be of some encouragement and suggestion about how we think and speak

critically, theologically, and biblically about our current crisis of virus in order that the community of faith may maintain its missional identity with boldness and joy." Parts of this seven chapter collection are new, some are adapted from his abundant previous essays and books.

I will be using the Brueggemann book extensively as I prep for the Bible Study. If you wish to purchase the book (not required), Amazon carries it.

I look forward to these conversations with you.

~ Linda

From the Outreach Committee

The below report is what I presented at the last outreach meeting in regards to the \$1000 gift from the church's housing budget, to Resilience's emergency shelter. ~ Sherry Martens

The \$1,000 gift from FPC's housing budget donated to Resilience's residential program was utilized to support a family's stay at our emergency shelter with the goal of eventually finding a more stable permanent home.

While staying at Ginny's Place Emergency Shelter, survivors are provided basic necessities to help make their lives as "normal" as possible – food, personal care supplies, clothing, etc. On average, Resilience spends \$1,659.22 per day to keep our emergency shelter running. In 2019, Resilience provided 6,587 nights of emergency shelter, with an average of 18 individuals in our shelter each night. During their stay at Ginny's Place, survivors are able to meet regularly with advocates to help overcome the many barriers that keep Domestic Violence survivors from a safe and stable home.

Martha* entered our emergency shelter after years of violence and stalking. Married for 15 years to a man who beat her starting during her first pregnancy, she suffered every degradation possible – verbal abuse, financial abuse, emotional abuse, and terrifying physical abuse. Martha had no money to her name, her ex-husband ruined her credit, and she had broken leases as her husband forced the family to move. Obtaining a stable home for herself and her children was impossible. Martha and her



RESILIENCE

children bounced between different homeless shelters, moving often due to her ex-husband's determination to find the family.

Martha was referred to Resilience, where she was admitted immediately to our emergency shelter. There, she began a four month stay (which would typically be a three month stay) and connected with an advocate. She tells us, "Resilience made it possible for me and my children to find stability. I worked daily with my advocate on everything from budget-making, fixing my credit

score, goal setting, and even parenting. My children can make friends now. All those years moving from place to place, they could never make any friends. Receiving assistance from Resilience changed my life. It's that new start, the chance for a better future. The guidance I received helped me become a positive part of my community."

**Name changed for confidentiality.*



Images courtesy of Resilience website.

FPC: Giving Revenue Update

Year to Date Giving

Thousands of Dollars

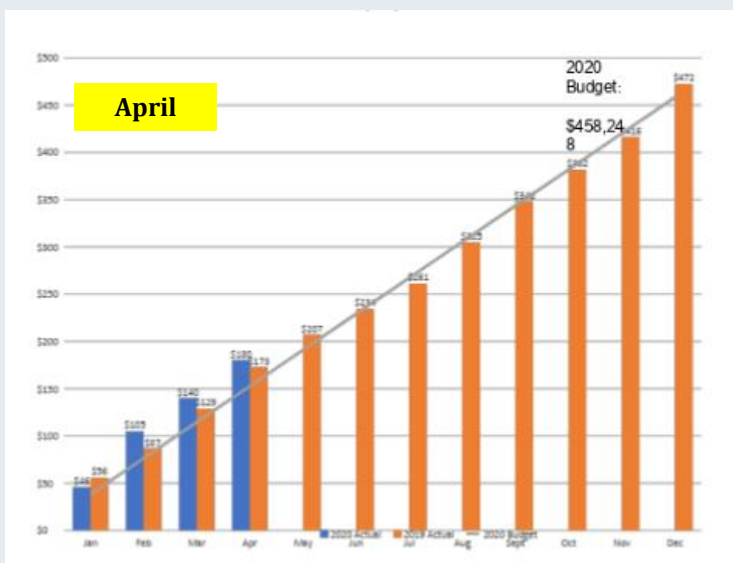
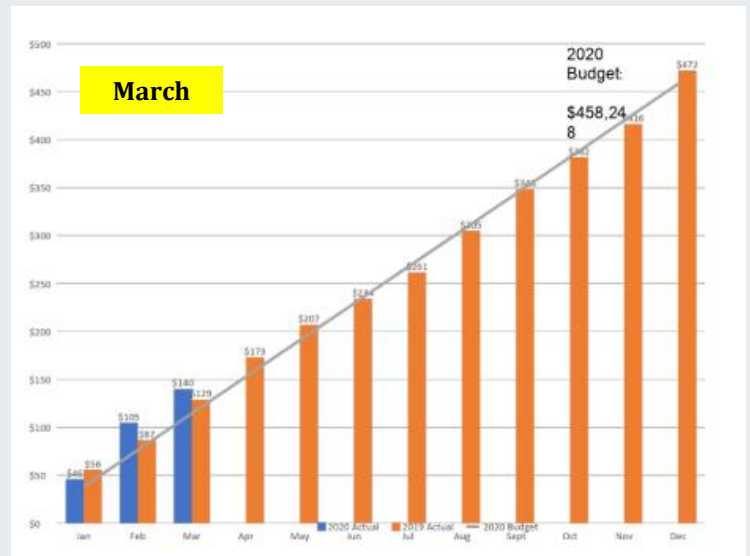
Giving updates will be published on a monthly basis. Thank you for your financial gifts.



Thanks to Don Cowie for the updated information.

Online giving is a secure, easy and convenient way to support your church financially .

Visit [www/fpcholland.org /give](http://www/fpcholland.org/give)



Thank you for your stewardship!



*worshipping, serving, and living with a fresh
vision of God's vibrant energy and grace for all..*