

# presbyterian *profiles*

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Rev. Linda Knieriemen

Pastor

## A Letter from Linda

Six weeks from my retirement date I'm leaning into the words of my mentor of 30 years, Larry Farris, now retired himself and living in Minneapolis. His words to me: "Linda, leave well."

Larry was the teaching assistant for my first preaching class at Princeton Theological Seminary. He believed in me as a preacher when I believed I was being called to anything *but preaching*. He has encouraged me in times of spiritual uncertainty and insecurity from 1990 to the present. Larry represents wisdom for me, so when he says, "leave well," I'm paying attention.

Fifteen years ago, Larry published *Ten Commandments for Pastors Leaving a Congregation* -- an accompaniment to *Ten Commandments for Pastors New to a Congregation*. In his introduction, he says this: "Good endings to pastorates open the door, for both pastor and congregation, to promising futures of new faithfulness to God's work in the world. Abbreviated, curt, lack-of-closure endings, on the other hand, encumber both pastor and congregation with unnecessary burdens that will impair new beginnings...Both pastor and people can rejoice in growth in faith; both can laugh at lessons learned through folly; both can weep for sorrows shared."

So, what are these Ten Commandments which can help a pastor and congregation part well? Here are the first three:

**Thou Shalt Know When It's Time to Go**  
**Thou Shalt Explain Thyself**  
**Thou Shalt Not Steal Away**

My approaching Medicare age, the death of my spouse, and my energy meter in this time of Covid tell me that it is "time to go." I have no intention of leaving in the stealth of night, but we'll need an extra measure of creativity to enable goodbyes. The time may seem short, but a protracted lame duck period is not helpful for pastor or congregation.

*Continued on page 8*



Rev. Paul Van Kempen

Associate Pastor

## Advent Calendars

Our family has a small collection of Advent Calendars. We have at least 2 Lego Advent calendars. We have a Little People Advent calendar. Last year we purchased a wine Advent calendar and a cheese advent calendar from Aldi. One year Shanna even bought me a whisky advent calendar. (That was a pretty good year!) These are all wonderful innovations in the realm of Advent calendars, but I still have a special place in my heart for the Advent calendar of my childhood. You know the one—a thin cardboard box with perforated flaps on the front. When you open the flaps you find the cheapest, sweetest milk chocolate ever produced molded into festive Christmas shapes.

I loved (still do!) these chocolate advent calendars. I loved opening the little doors. I loved eating the chocolate. I loved guessing what shape the chocolate was going to be that day. (A bell? A sleigh? Santa? The possibilities were endless.) But most of all, I loved watching the doors open one by one as we slowly marched toward Christmas. I loved the feeling of anticipation and expectation as Christmas approached.



Believe it or not, this isn't just a fun idea for kids who can't wait for Christmas to come, it is a religious practice. We have the season of Advent because waiting for the coming of Christ is a spiritual discipline that helps us to focus on God and trains us to wait with expectation and with hope. The feelings of anticipation and expectation are central to the season of Advent. We aren't waiting for presents on Christmas morning, we are waiting for the birth of a child and for the coming of Jesus to make all things new.

This spiritual practice of waiting is especially important this year because it trains us to be hopeful in seasons of waiting. Yes, we are waiting with hope for Christmas Day, but we are also waiting for Covid to be over. We are counting the days (with trepidation) to Linda's last Sunday. We are counting the days until we can again gather in our sanctuary and pass the peace and join in song. The season of Advent teaches us to wait with hope.

So as you open your Advent calendar this year, or as you watch December 25 slowly approach, remember what we are waiting for, and who we are waiting for, and give thanks for seasons like Advent that give us practice in waiting with patience and with hope.





Lori Klienesteker

Children's  
Ministry Leader

## Worship Centers: Keeping In Touch

~ Written by Lauren Stouffer

During Advent we wait and prepare for the coming of Jesus. As we tell the story of Jesus coming as a baby, we also think about the way Jesus is coming forth inside each of us as we grow and learn how to love and care for each other. We also wait and prepare for the time when Jesus will come again and make everything right with the world.

Waiting is not easy. We have gotten lots of practice waiting this year, in new and often hard ways. Many of us are sick of waiting for things to be back to normal. We long to see our friends and family, to be together at church, and to be able to go to work or school without having to worry.

Mary and Joseph probably worried a lot too. There were probably times when Mary wished things would get back to normal -- that she didn't have to travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem (a 90 mile trip!) during her pregnancy and give birth in a smelly stable. Joseph probably wished he hadn't had to pack up his family and run away to



Egypt to save his baby's life.

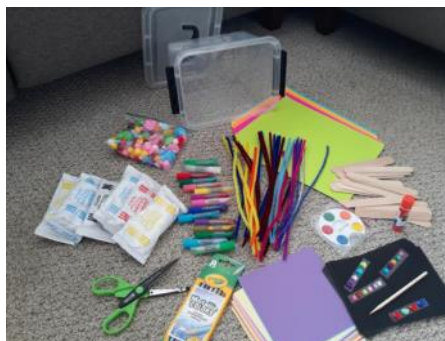
As we hear the story of Advent this year, we wish we were celebrating the way we usually do. We wish we could be together, in our classrooms and sanctuary, singing, and hanging our family stars on the Christmas

tree. While we wait and long for things to get back to normal, let us try to recognize the ways Jesus is coming into our lives in new ways during this strange year. Let's also try to remember every day to choose to live in ways that show that God is working through us to make the world right again.

Recently, the children at FPC received materials to help them tell the story of Advent with their families as they listen to and watch the recorded Worship Center stories each week. A special gift also allowed us to send a fun box of art supplies for each family to use to respond creatively to the stories as we continue to worship remotely.

Join us this month as we journey through the story of Advent, wondering and waiting

Art supplies, advent wreath and worship center story pieces received by each of our worship center families.





## Presbyterian Women

Presbyterian Women of FPC – No annual Christmas Gathering is planned. We wish you a peace-filled Advent and a lovely Christmas with those who can be together.

Be safe and stay well.

Thank you, Pastor Linda!

Our dear Pastor Linda Knieriemen has been a study resource for PW since her arrival 16 years ago. We want to thank her for providing the study leaders with background on the focus and scriptural texts of our annual studies. We wish her many grand adventures in retirement!



The Presbyterian Women are continuing Bible Study in two formats until we are all able to meet together again. The original Miriam group is finding space outside of the church to meet in person on 2nd Wednesdays at 9:30 am. The original

Hannah group's monthly "gatherings" are by ZOOM on 2nd Thursdays of each month at 1:30 pm.

**Miriam Group** – Bev Plagenhoef:  
DEC 9 #4, JAN 13 #5, FEB 10 #6, MAR 10 #7

**Hannah Zoom Group** – Janet Magennis:  
DEC 10 #3, JAN 14 #4-#5, FEB 11 #6, MAR 11 #7

### **Hannah:**

Lesson 3 study will focus on Women's Lament, following in January combining Lessons 4 and 5 as we lament death and then life. We are learning the scriptural format of laments and reading the incredible stories of lament in the Bible, allowing us to develop our own abilities to channel our feelings about things happening around us and affecting us personally. Find the stud guide online here: (<https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/2020/09/29/into-the-light-lesson-three/>)

We made a decision to continue our annual gift of \$1,000 to support our great Presbyterian Preschool, while not receiving the Tulip Time gift for participating in the canceled Tulip Time in 2020. We remain unsure about that opportunity again in 2021. We received a directed gift from Gail Ruisard's estate, and we believe she would be delighted to serve our youngest students in this way.

If women of FPC would like to participate in a pledge to support Presbyterian Women of FPC, we would be happy to receive your gifts, directed to:

**First Presbyterian Church**  
PW Treasurer Mickey Harris  
659 State Street  
Holland, MI 49424

### **GET THE LATEST NEWS FROM PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN**

online: [PresbyterianWomen.org](https://www.presbyterianwomen.org) / Facebook: Presbyterian Women in the PC (USA)

# Mission and Outreach



## Thanks to Escape Ministries Interim Executive Director, Bob Ellis for this update.

Our current push is to really invest in the education gap, providing as many resources as possible to the most vulnerable students. We have around 12 students attending ASAP daily, receiving continuous support from our staff and volunteers to complete classes as well as study skills and life skills. Additionally, 10-15 students are attending our After School Tutoring program, many of them online students who don't receive the support they need at home.

Escape Ministries wants to provide additional time for tutoring students through ASAP and our After School Tutoring program. Holland Police shared with us that 75/80 "radar kids" in Holland had opted for online school, and that their academics had suffered noticeably. More vulnerable students are home without the resources, accountability, transportation and relationships to empower their education in this public health crisis. We are also intentionally investing in some of the "fringe kids": youth who come to ESCAPE intermittently but are in danger of falling through the cracks, for example, violating probation, dropping out of school, and getting kicked out of their homes. With at home & online learning limiting the opportunity for schools to monitor their well being and educational progress, these youth are especially vulnerable and need additional support to fill that gap. We can provide that support. Through these relationships we have also built up trust with students' families as we work together with them for transformative outcomes for the kids. This requires a continued investment to hire and retain high quality staff and amazing volunteers who share a passion for youth and a posture of compassion and understanding.



## New Volunteer Training

Are you interested in learning more about Resilience- Advocates for Ending Violence? Perhaps you'd like a better understanding of how you can be a community advocate for Domestic and Sexual Violence? Or maybe you'd like to volunteer on Resilience's 24 hour helpline?

Whatever the reason, please join us virtually in January for our New Entry Training! Whether it's for your own development or wanting to get involved. For more details go online to <https://resiliencemi.org/about-us/>. For more information contact Sherry Martens at: [sherrym@resiliencemi.org](mailto:sherrym@resiliencemi.org) or 616 494-1747



Photos courtesy of [resiliencemi.org](https://resiliencemi.org)



## Mission and Outreach



### **Outreach Committee Assists Nestlings Diaper Bank**

A request came to the November Mission and Outreach meeting that

the Nestlings Organization was in dire need of financial support in their need to purchase size 6 diapers for the five organizations, (CAH, CAC, Free Health Clinic, Good Sam and Resilience) that they supply. Diaper manufacturers have had limited supplies of size 6 diapers since March. Nestlings has been offered a ONE TIME OPPORTUNITY to purchase size 6 diapers from a manufacturer if ordered by December 1. However, they will need to raise \$40,000 and order a year's supply. These diapers are utilized by families who have suffered through the pandemic. Without clean diapers, many babies suffer physical, mental, and emotional abuse along with the developmental and mental impact of their needs not being met.

The Outreach Council approved \$1,200 out of emerging needs to support this critical situation. First Presbyterian Church is fortunate to have a supportive congregation and funds available to respond to situations such as these!

If you would like to contribute, contact Nestlings Diaper Bank at 616-298-1009 or their website at [nestlings.org](http://nestlings.org)



Photo courtesy of nestlings.org

## Stewardship Campaign Update

Thanks to each of you who have participated in various Fruits of the Spirit Connecting activities:

- Contributing to art project
- Submitting recipe
- Taking a "memory walk" in honor of a loved one
- Connecting with others
- And other ways

Additionally, thanks to each of you who have submitted pledges.

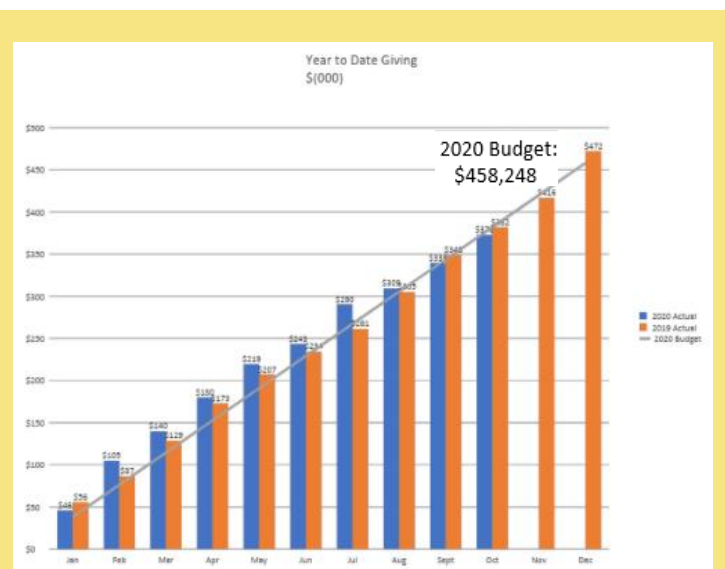
- A reminder that it is not too late for those who have not yet pledged

- Drop off or mail to church and address to the attention of the Bookkeeper



## FPC Giving Revenue Update

Year to date Giving through August.  
Thousands of Dollars



Thank you for your financial gifts.

## A Letter from Linda ....continued

The fourth and fifth commandments ask intentional engagement between pastor and congregants:

### **Thou Shalt Affirm Thy Congregation.**

Remembering has always been a prominent theme in scripture and an essential activity in the community of faith. So, let's remember together. How is FPC different now than it was in 2005? What accomplishments in FPC's ministry are you most grateful for? What challenges have we overcome, and what did we learn? What might we together have done differently? I'll be looking initially to the Session and Pastor Nominating Committee who first introduced me to FPC to explore these themes.

The fifth commandment **Thou Shalt Try to Mend Fences** is a difficult one. In this "midwestern nice" culture, it might be easier to brush any conflicts or disappointments under the rug, or to use a more Biblical metaphor, "shake off the dust from your feet as you leave town." (Matthew 10:14) Where I have a sense I have hurt or offended, I'll seek to

make amends. A blanket "I'm sorry" feels necessary, but inadequate. So, please, if I have hurt or offended any one of you, or if we have unfinished business, will you share honestly with me so we can work toward forgiveness, for you, for me, and for your next pastor?

There are five more:

### **Thou Shalt Help Thy Successor Have a Good Beginning**

**Thou Shalt Be Gentle with Thyself**

**Thou Shalt Attend to Thy Family**

**Thou Shalt Stay Away Once Thou Hast Left and...**

**Thou Shalt Grieve.**

More on those next month.

*Linda*

## Church Garage Exterior Remodeling Project

### **From the Business and Building**

**Committee:** Major thanks go to Elders Tim Richardson, Jon Kreple, and Gary Smith for their work on the garage in the church parking lot to re-clad the exterior. It was damaged and rotted in places and needed to look as good as the new church building. They did it on a couple weekends in late October and got it painted before the worst weather arrived.



New siding, trim and paint on the church storage garage.



## Outdoor Communion at FPC

Sunday, November 1, First Presbyterian Church held communion outdoors. Thanks to Chris Urbaniak for capturing our time together with photos.



## Meet our New Bookkeeper

In mid October, Karla Kammeraad, our bookkeeper of seven years, was offered a position with more hours and subsequently resigned. Karla was financially astute, gracious, supremely trustworthy, and a valuable member of the staff team. By the grace of God and a great network within the community among churches, Personnel Council learned that the bookkeeper at Grace Episcopal was available to provide our bookkeeping needs as well. Nancy Rodgers began with FPC in early November. A native of Michigan, Nancy lived in Kansas for a number of years where she received a BS in Business Administration before returning to Douglas, Michigan, several years ago. Nancy will be working on Monday and Wednesday afternoons and can be reached either at [bookkeeper@fpcholland.org](mailto:bookkeeper@fpcholland.org) or by leaving a message at 616.392.9022.

### SMALL GROUP LEADERS

#### **CHOIR & MUSICIANS**

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[charlesenorris@gmail.com](mailto:charlesenorris@gmail.com)

#### **DINNER & THEATRE GROUP**

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#### **MEN'S BOOK GROUP**

Larry Lynn  
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#### **MEN'S DISCUSSION GROUP**

Dave Ford  
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#### **WOMEN'S BOOK GROUP**

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616.335.3942

#### **WOMEN - MIRIAM CIRCLE**

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616.335.3942

#### **WOMEN - HANNAH CIRCLE**

#### **YOGA**

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616.502.4642

#### **YOUNG FAMILIES**

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616.298.4164

## Outdoor Advent Tree at FPC

Worship Council is providing an opportunity for folks to be involved in Advent at church outside in lieu of hanging our stars on the tree inside.

Beginning November 24 through December 30, we will have a lighted outdoor tree installed on the south side of the building. We hope that everyone will take time to craft a simple do-it-yourself ornament to hang on the tree so it can be included in worship. The ornament should be "weather friendly."

The best ideas are natural things, as simple and inexpensive as a lemon or orange slice, a pine cone, a walnut, or other things that are nature friendly. Other ideas on the websites include painted clothes pins. For those who want to venture to craft stores, the opportunities are endless. Please don't forget to bring your own ornament hook or string

Please come, and hang an ornament!



The Van Kempen family decorating the tree.



## CONNECT TOGETHER

### **Sunday, December 6—Parking Lot Communion**

For hearty bodies and hungry souls, we will continue a service of Holy Communion at 2 pm on the first Sunday of the month, YES, right through a Michigan winter. Dress warmly and gather in the parking lot, socially distanced and masked. The service will be 15-20 minutes and the faces you worship with will warm your hearts.

### **Advent Reflections 2020**

In preparation for Christmas this year, members of FPC have spent time reflecting on the meaning of "gifts" in their lives. Each day you will receive a little gift in your inbox—a brief reflection, poem, video, photo, that we hope will help you to prepare for the coming of Christ this season. Enjoy.

### **A Quiet Christmas**

For a December such as this with emotions frayed from the election season, Covid, an uncertain economy, and educational shifts, a virtual service reflecting a quieter more calming Christmas celebration will be made available via YouTube beginning on December 11. This candlelight service may be particularly appreciated by those who are grieving a recent death.

### **Women's Retreat 2021**

The planning committee has decided that it probably will still be unsafe for large group gatherings in February 2021, so the retreat has been cancelled. We look forward to resurrecting the retreat in February 2022. Hope to see you there!



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