



presbyterian *profiles*

A PUBLICATION OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

JANUARY 2021

A Message from Linda	2
A Message from Paul	3
Children: Worship Centers	4
Presbyterian Women	5
Mission & Outreach	6
Connect Together	7
10 Commandments for Pastors	8
Letter from Linda <i>continued</i>	9
Covenant of Closure Letter	10
FPC Prays	11

CHURCH STAFF

Deacons

deacons@fpcholland.org

Sheri Harris

Administrative Assistant
office@fpcholland.org

Karla Kammeraad-Bos

Bookkeeper
bookkeeper@fpcholland.org

Lori Klinesteker

*Clerk of Session &
Children's Ministry Leader*
children@fpcholland.org

Linda Knieriemen

Pastor
pastor@fpcholland.org

Chuck Norris

Director of Music
music@fpcholland.org

Jane Oosterhouse

Custodian
custodian@fpcholland.org

Thom Samuelson

Maintenance
maintenance@fpcholland.org

Sue Stock

Publications Specialist
publications@fpcholland.org

Paul Van Kempen

Associate Pastor
associatepastor@fpcholland.org



Rev. Linda Knieriemen

Pastor

A Letter from Linda

Last June when I began contemplating retirement in January of 2021, it felt years away. When I made the announcement to Session in October, January 10 was still too far off to feel real. But here we are. This Profiles article is my last. December 15 is my last Session meeting, and after Advent IV on December 20, just two more sermons.

Last week I began cleaning out my office closet with its collection of black academic robes (mine and my father's), white albs (old and ragged, new and crisp), and colorful stoles. Symbols of the yoke of Christ and weighty responsibility of ordination, some bought, some gifted, some handmade by me and others, they provide my most cherished memories of worship. One, green for ordinary time, needlepointed by a church member in New York; another woven by a gifted weaver in Grand Rapids. A butterfly embroidered stole I created for Easter one year. And most recently, the gift of a stole in shades of blue — an alternative liturgical color for Advent.

And then there are the books. Some come home to shelves now empty thanks to a rigorous thinning of David's books. Some have been given to colleagues. Others will find their way to Goodwill or Community Action House for sale online. I have loved my books. They are friends, resources, conversation partners, inspirations. In some cases, proof of survival -- Hebrew is a wonderful language, but I never grasped onto it like I did Greek. Books, like stoles, have meaning; they enliven with symbol and language esoteric concepts of God, ministry, worship, life, and death. But they aren't alive.



My real work, my essential and tender work just now isn't in cleaning an office. It is remembering you -- which service you usually attended, where you sit in the sanctuary, the circumstances around which I have visited you at home or in a hospital. Sharing sorrow

Continued on page 9

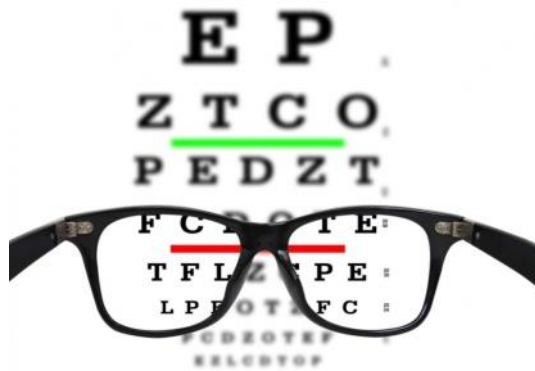


Rev. Paul Van Kempen

Associate Pastor

Hindsight is 20/20

If you can remember all the way back to January of last year (it feels like forever ago, doesn't it?) you might remember that Pastor Linda preached a sermon on "20/20" vision. She talked about a vision come to fruition in the building project and a vision for 2020 as we lived into this new space—I don't remember the exact details of the sermon (sorry Linda...). But what I do know is that there was no way Linda's vision and plans included a global pandemic and a transition to virtual church! We really had no idea what 2020 was going to look like!



Over the past year, our entire understanding of Sunday morning has been deconstructed and reconstructed. We totally reimagined Sunday worship which opened up new avenues of

creativity and spiritual connection. This has prepared us for the reconstruction of our worship services as we transition to hybrid worship (in person and virtual) as the vaccine becomes widely available.

2020 was a hard year, but challenges breed new opportunities and I think we are going to come out of this stronger than before. Hopefully 2021 doesn't have any pandemics up its sleeve!

~ Pastor Paul

So this year, I hesitate to look ahead, and instead will look back over the past year—hindsight is 20/20 after all. And when we look back over the past year, in many ways, 2020 has prepared us for 2021 in some exciting ways. Let me list a few:

We have a refreshed and renewed building waiting for us. This building is longing for people to fill its halls and pews again. We have new furniture, a new elevator, a new ramp in the sanctuary, a new lower level, and new possibilities to use this building for God's work.

2020 has given us a new understanding of how to use technology to stay connected with each other and to reach out into our community. These are tools that will serve us well moving forward.



Lori Klienesteker

Children's
Ministry Leader

Worship Centers: Keeping In Touch

~ Written by Lauren Stouffer

In the middle of winter, one of my favorite things to do is watch birds at the feeder in the backyard. Even more entertaining than the birds, though, is watching the squirrels trying to get the food. The persistence of the squirrels is impressive--in spite of spinning squirrel baffles, spring-loaded, automatic closing openings in the feeders, and a dog that is eager to run out on the deck and chase them away. I admire that the squirrels never seem to give up--which is a reminder that we often need in this



cold, dark season.

In our online recorded worship center stories this month, we will explore the persistence of Jesus as a child in the temple, already curious about scripture. We will remember Jesus' baptism and hear stories about Jesus in the wilderness and think about how Jesus might have felt during those times. Join us in remembering and keep the light of Christ shining bright.

The children of FPC have been busy this winter! Here is some of the art our children have created using the art boxes they received for advent. Worship Center offerings also helped purchase coats for the winter coat drive for Child Advocacy Center.



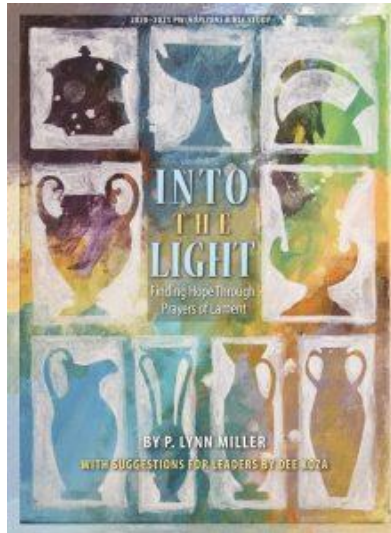
Worship Center children sharing their light, warmth and love to children in need with coats purchased with their offering. Coats were donated to Children's Advocacy Center for distribution.



Presbyterian Women

Let's face it, 2020 lacked the usual luster of life and holidays. Now it is a new year, we have some hope a virus vaccine will come to a shot clinic nearby, and we yearn for a time to celebrate being with each other once again. Our regional denomination office has just suggested that we not plan in-person worship before the end of March. ***So, we dream ahead of our gardens and riotous tulips peeking up to God's light and warmth.*** We continue our study of Lament in the "INTO THE LIGHT: Finding Hope Through Prayers of Lament." We meet on 2nd Wednesdays in homes or 2nd Thursdays by ZOOM, with notices in the weekly email from church.

Still, we plant.



Gardeners who select seeds from glossy catalogs, schoolchildren who plant tiny seeds in cups, and seasoned farmers who plant acres of crops to feed thousands all share a similar dream—a dream of a future harvest. Anyone who chooses to plant and cultivate seeds (from seed to sprout to squash!) discovers miracles anew each day. A tiny seedling peeking through soil is an awe-inspiring experience.

"Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree." This quote, attributed to Martin Luther, speaks to our call as Presbyterian Women, living with purpose and hope, in certain and uncertain days. We know that apple trees in our future are only possible because of choices we make and actions we take today.



GET THE LATEST NEWS FROM PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

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

Mission and Outreach 2020 Expenditures

The First Presbyterian Church of Holland is very fortunate to have a congregation with a historical commitment to supporting local, national, and world causes.

God's Work.
Our Hands.



\$20,000 is distributed to the General Assembly and Presbytery to support church wide missions.

\$20,000 is distributed to our 10 Partner Agencies: Children's Advocacy Center, Community Action House, Good Samaritan Ministries, Escape Ministries, Resilience, ACTS, Holland Free Health Clinic, Kids' Food Basket, 70x7 Ministries, and Out On The Lakeshore.

\$1,000 was distributed to the housing programs at Habitat for Humanity, Good Samaritan Ministries, and Resilience (previously Women in Transition).

The Council supported our Pre-school program with \$4,000 for Scholarships.

Due to the tremendously challenging year our partners and other agencies experienced due to the pandemic, the Council distributed from the Emerging Needs budget the following:

<u>Community Action House</u>	\$1,000 for food support \$1,000 for the Refresh (Methodist) Homeless program \$500 for Homeless program (clothing)
<u>Kids' Food Basket</u>	\$2,500 for additional support of food distribution.
<u>ACTS</u>	\$1,000 for food and programming.
<u>Out On The Lakeshore</u>	\$1,000 to support the merger of PFLAG and SAFE.
<u>Resilience</u>	\$900 for additional housing and food support.
<u>Escape Ministries</u>	\$900 for food and support for families.
<u>Free Health Clinic</u>	\$900 for upgrades to reopen during pandemic.
<u>Children's Advocacy Center</u>	\$400 for expanded programming.
<u>70x7</u>	\$400 for additional programming.
<u>Nestlings Fundraiser</u>	\$1,200 for diapers provided to local agencies.

The Pastors also have discretionary funds to address community needs.

The Mission and Outreach Council also coordinates the congregation's involvement in the following fundraising:

Crop Walk **and** Empty the Pallet

Special Offerings:

One Great Hour of Sharing (PDA, PHP and SDOP)
Pentecost Offering (children, youth, and young adults at risk)
Peace and Global Witness (peacemaking and reconciliation)
Christmas Joy (financial support for past church leaders)

CONNECT TOGETHER

OUTDOOR COMMUNION //

Sunday, December 6, First Presbyterian Church gathered for outdoor communion. Thanks to Chris Urbaniak for capturing our time together with photos.

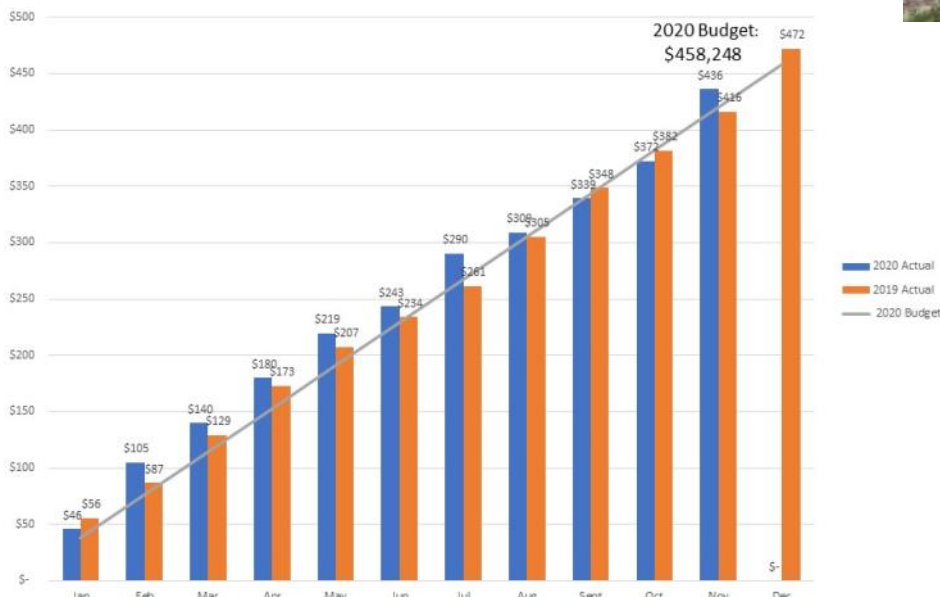


OUTDOOR ADVENT TREE // Thanks be to God for the time during Advent where we can slow down, and wait in hopeful expectation for Christ's light to come into our world and into our hearts. Many thanks to those of you who beautifully-crafted an ornament to hang on the tree. Photo courtesy of Chris Urbaniak.



FPC Giving Revenue Update

Year to date Giving through November.
Thousands of Dollars



Thank you for your faithful giving during this very difficult year and also for your pledges into 2021.

Ten Commandments for a Pastor Leaving a Congregation

Below is a continuation of Pastor Linda's article, (December edition of *Profiles*) centered on the *Ten Commandments for Pastors Leaving a Congregation* – published by her mentor of 30-years, Larry Farris.

Part Two: Ten Commandments for a Pastor Leaving a Congregation.

Last month I introduced this little volume to you by summarizing its first five chapters. I promised the remainder this month, so here they are:

Thou Shalt Help Thy Successor Have a Good Beginning.

How? Good records (I thank Lori and Sheri for enabling this!). Up-to-date personnel files, an offer to have coffee, notes about significant community leaders and events. But most of all, a clean departure facilitated by ample opportunities to celebrate and grieve.

Thou Shalt Take Care of Thyself

Change causes stress! Even with the limitations of Covid-19, it will be mid-day naps for me. Indulgent reading of novels. Walks and eventually meals with non-member friends, and opportunities to be a tourist in my own town, my own state, and country! And ah, for regular and safe therapeutic massage again. Maybe I'll run into you at Evergreen Commons or the Aquatic Center.

Thou Shalt Attend to Thy Family

Without a spouse, without children or surviving parents, attending to my family means a trip to West Africa to be with my sister, Marily, and more regular visits to my 97 year old cousin in southern



Wisconsin. Perhaps Porter will have more frequent Dog Park visits, too!

Thou Shalt Stay Away Once Thou Hast Left

I know. This is the hardest, and perhaps the most important for the church's transition to a new pastorate. You'll find a description of the Covenant of Closure within this *Profiles*. Please don't ask that I officiate at a wedding or memorial service or similar. You'll have a new pastor to walk with you during those times! I'll be in Holland which could make a clean separation difficult, but I will respect and ask you to respect denominational wisdom about boundaries. If I say "no" it's not because I don't love you... it's because I love you and the congregation enough to abide by what is best for you and for me.

All of which brings us to the last chapter in Larry's book:

Thou Shalt Grieve

I'm not dying! But retirement brings change and loss for us all. The next year may be unsettling, awkward, and irritating. Life happens in a cycle of "orientation" / "disorientation" / "reorientation." Theologically we speak of life, death, and new life resurrection. Therein lies the hope. Always. After goodbye, there will always be a hello. For me. For you.

May it be so.

Linda

A Letter from Lindacontinued

and hope at a graveside. Playing on a canoe trip. Feasting at a shrimp boil. Challenges we've had, joys we've shared, long meetings we've endured together (!). Our pastor-to-congregant relationship must change to allow a new pastor to become your pastor. But my memories of you and of our time together cannot be tossed out, or recycled, or regifted. Being your pastor has brought change -- to you, to me, to the community, and I thank God for that. And I thank you for sharing yourselves with me. That -- not my books, not my stoles - - will be my lasting treasure.

Life at First will change -- and that's as it should be. My retirement and the retirement of the Covid pandemic will drive some of that change, but so will the Holy Spirit. Keep your hearts and minds and souls attuned to what She is doing among you. It will be good!

All will be well, all will be well, all manner of things shall be well.



Linda



SMALL GROUP LEADERS

CHOIR & MUSICIANS

Chuck Norris
charlesenorris@gmail.com

DINNER & THEATRE GROUP

Chris Urbaniak
cmurbaniak@comcast.net

MEN'S BOOK GROUP

Larry Lynn
oldrun09@gmail.com

MEN'S DISCUSSION GROUP

Dave Ford
davidford56@comcast.net

WOMEN'S BOOK GROUP

Bev Plagenhoef
rbplagen@live.com
616.335.3942

WOMEN - MIRIAM CIRCLE

Bev Plagenhoef
rbplagen@live.com
616.335.3942

WOMEN - HANNAH CIRCLE

YOGA

Gwen Boeve
ghekman@gmail.com
616.502.4642

YOUNG FAMILIES

Cassie Kregger
Cassie.hildebrandt@gmail.com
616.298.4164

Covenant of Closure Letter

Linda Male, COM
December 15, 2020



How Do We Say “Good-bye” during a COVID-19 Shutdown?

The Rev. Linda Knieriemen is retiring! It feels like another loss during this season of distancing, masking, closures, and general sorrow for so many reasons. Now what?

The Presbytery’s Commission on Ministry follows certain guidelines to make sure that all changes in pastoral positions are done with care and consideration for both the pastor and the congregation. After the initial announcement of her retirement a COM liaison stepped up to help with the transition. The Rev. Fran Lane-Lawrence has already had a discussion with the session, and the Rev. Linda Male has guided the signing of the Covenant of Closure for the pastor and session.

Online worship complicates the ways to say “farewell.” There will not be a big gathering at the church in January, complete with good food, hugs, and tributes to a pastor who is loved. Some are asking, “What does the Covenant of Closure allow us to do after Linda is no longer our pastor?”

The session will thoroughly and thoughtfully confront that question along with others that might arise by communicating clearly to the congregation what is planned. The Covenant of Closure is intended to delineate the lines of difference between pastoral responsibilities and normal human interactions. After her last Sunday and formal severance date:

- Don’t ask the pastor to provide counseling or pastoral care;
- Don’t expect her to preside at a funeral or a wedding without prior agreement and approval of the current session moderator;
- Don’t assume that she can be asked to preach, baptize, or serve communion just because she still lives in Holland;
- Don’t ask her opinion about the interim pastor or the next called pastor;
- Don’t try to involve her in a discussion about any controversy in the congregation or session or in the work of the PNC.
- Don’t feel hurt when she adheres to the Covenant of Closure boundaries. She is helping you move on to the next chapter in the life of First Pres Holland.

You get the picture! Linda and the session have agreed to these closure terms.

- Do say “hello” if you see her downtown, in the grocery store, at a cultural event but refrain from making comparisons between her and the next pastor;
- Do pray for her and yourselves during the transition;
- Do participate in a proper celebration of her ministry when the COVID danger is past — session will be working on something later in the year 2021.





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