


presbyterian *profiles*

A PUBLICATION OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH / APRIL 2021



He is Risen

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Rev. Linda Male

Interim Pastor

Linda's Keyboard

*I was glad when they said to me,
"Let us go to the house of the Lord!" (Psalm 118)*

One of the most consistent questions asked of the pastoral staff has been, "When can we worship again in the sanctuary?" Created by God to live in community, we are feeling the loss of communal worship even more keenly now that more of our congregation is able to receive the vaccinations for COVID-19. Restaurants and shopping malls, other churches, and family gatherings seem to be opening. "Why not us?" is a valid question.

The session has created a plan for stages of opening. The office is open at various times and the main entrance door is unlocked during those hours. AA continues to meet in a specific area in the building. The pre-school is open. Recordings of the trio and the Sunday services are taking place in the sanctuary. Paul and I are making appointments for in-person meetings as requested. These are all steps towards fully opening the church. Our primary concern is for safety for all and not only the vaccinated.

We complain a bit about ZOOM meetings, but they have been one of the biggest blessings during this delicate time of closing our doors. Church remains church. It's different, and in most opinions not as good, but the ministry carries on. Gradually we will add other small groups who can meet at church, and finally we will go to sanctuary worship with masks (or without if it is safe).

We have continued the parking lot communion services, weather permitting, and now can announce worship outside with a full service including communion. The pre-recorded services will not be dropped until we find that they are no longer needed. We will add more music as it becomes safer.

Read the eWEEKLY (Wednesday email) for more information regarding worship:

- Outside Easter sunrise service at 7:00a on April 4 in the parking lot includes communion. The regular Easter worship time will be pre-recorded and posted on YouTube. There is no afternoon communion.

Continued on page 9

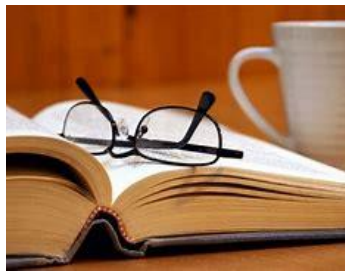


Rev. Paul Van Kempen

Associate Pastor

The Greatest Story Every Told

Have you ever wondered how much a story is worth? Two anthropologists, Rob Walker and Joshua Glenn, wondered just this and they decided to put the value of stories to the test. To do this, they purchased items at thrift stores for a couple of bucks each. They then had writers craft short stories for each item. Rob and Josh listed these items for sale on eBay with the short story as the item description. They ended up selling 200 items (average price of \$1.25) for nearly \$8000. They took ordinary objects, and by adding a story, they increased their price by about 3200%. You can read about this experiment at significantobjects.com.



I love experiments like this that give us real data that confirms something that we suspected to be true. We know that stories have value. We cherish stories from our family's history, we read and reread our favorite books. Maybe you have some special objects in your home that have very little practical value but you hold on to them because they remind you of a story that you love.

In the liturgical year, we are in the midst of retelling the greatest story ever told (The Greatest Story Ever Told is also a movie). Each year during Holy Week, the story of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection is retold. This story influences our lives; it influences our culture, our media, our popular movies and books. It is a story of great value. But more than any of these things, this story gives us life and a reason for living.

But sometimes, when we tell and retell the same story over and over, it gets stale. It becomes rote. We forget the way it made us feel the first time we heard it. My son Benjamin used to love the book *The Gruffalo* by Julia Donaldson. It is a charming book, but after I had read it to him so many times that we both had it memorized, it lost some of its charm.

Has the story of Holy Week become rote for you? Are you going through the motions as we celebrate Maundy Thursday and Good Friday? How will you feel when we say "He is risen indeed!" on Easter morning?

My hope and prayer for all of us this Holy Week is to hear the story anew. To remember that this is the greatest story ever told. To really listen to what God is saying to us this year. Stories have value, and this ancient story is worth listening to again. May it shape our lives and reshape our world.

Amen.





Lori Klienesteker

Children's
Ministry Leader

Worship Center: Keeping In Touch

~ Written by Lauren Stouffer

Amy-Jill Levine, the author of the book that our church used for this year's Lent sermon series and book study groups, has also written some great books for kids. One of those books, called *A Very Big Problem*, co-written by Amy-Jill Levine and Sandy Eisenberg Sasso and illustrated by Annie Bowler, imagines the different parts of creation--from the rain to the animals, from the earthworms to the children--bragging about the reasons why God should love each one the best.



needed, and that the diversity of experiences, gifts, and interests is good and important.

We just might get to hear the book read during a Children's Time this month, and if you miss the service, you can find the book in the Book Nook or on the new children's activity cart that will be available at our outdoor worship services this summer.

We can hear ourselves, sometimes, in these thoughts. We certainly have heard plenty of debate over the past year about which parts of our society are most important, about who deserves to be noticed, which communities' voices matter, who should be vaccinated first, which jobs and schools and businesses should reopen when. In the book we are reminded that all parts of God's creation are important and loved and

The children at FPC had a great time together at our outdoor Easter celebration and have been watching their Resurrection Gardens grow throughout the season of Lent.

During the month of April, we will hear the stories of the Resurrection and Jesus appearing to his followers. Join us online each week to enter into these stories together. Let us continue to let Christ's light shine.



Thank you to those of you who sent in photos of your Resurrection gardens.

Gabe and Eli Kregger (left), Liz Peterson (middle) and Nora and Daphne Teutsch (right)



Presbyterian Women

Looking back at this year of health concerns, masks, not gathering in our church building, and especially not seeing one another, we are closer to the end of that. We have continued to study the spiritual practice of lament by ZOOM technology or small gatherings. The latest data indicates that WE ARE ALL COVID-19 VACCINATED! That is certainly an answer to prayer.

Our study of Lament in scripture and in our world was timely. Each lesson included practice in putting into our own words the spiritual practice of lament.

On the day it was finally my own appointment for the one-shot vaccine, I got there early as directed to a CVS about 20 miles north of us in Florida. No lines, just two curtained areas. On the dot of 2p I got the card and the shot, and was asked to wait there about 15 minutes. Sitting there alone, watching an alarm clock, I found myself in tears, my chin quivering behind its mask. Since that was not the reaction that would have alarmed anyone, I made it back to my car and headed back south.

As I was thanking God for this shot and its promise for normal behavior again, it hit me: I had just come through the entire Lament practice.

-My grumblings for weeks to God that the Florida vaccine process was awful;
-God needed to help me get through this;
-Hope that this gift of vaccine would get to everyone faster;
-Tears and thanks to God for this release of emotion and sorrow.

Notice, please, that God was my partner through ALL of this, and that I carried that promise of God's love.

Okay, a little testimony never hurt any Presbyterian! Our Bible study groups continue to gather and we hope to have an outdoor catered picnic in June to enjoy sunshine and being together. More details later. We are ending a particularly bleak year, yes, but with God's gift of new tools for Spiritual Practice. Join us in new adventures next September. Or come for a picnic!

~ Janet Magennis, Past Moderator



Hannah Circle Leader: Janet Magennis, 616-490-4989 jmmagennis@yahoo.com

Hannah Circle will meet on April 8 (Lesson 8), and May 13 (Lesson 9) at 1:30p by ZOOM.
Call Janet Magennis if you want the link: 616-490-4989.

Miriam Circle will meet on April 14 (Lesson 8), and May 12 (Lesson 9) at 9:30a.
Please call Bev Plagenhoef for information.

In June—both circles will gather for a catered picnic / Annual Meeting.

GET THE LATEST NEWS FROM PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

online: PresbyterianWomen.org / Facebook: Presbyterian Women in the PC (USA)

Mission and Outreach



We received the following letter from a Good Samaritan Housing Program participant this week. We are thrilled to share these inspiring words with you!

THIS is why we do what we do --- walking alongside individuals and families in their time of need and helping them on their journey toward thriving. We could not do this critical work without you. Thank you for your continued support of our mission to end poverty and homelessness.

The below is from a Good Samaritan newsletter:

To all whom it may concern;

My experience working with Good Samaritan is a profound one. When I was homeless, staying at the local shelter, I needed to find stable housing and a viable job to support myself. Little did I know that by applying for a housing voucher, my life was going to change for the better.

When I was first introduced to Good Samaritan, they helped me find a local landlord with a unique program to occupy a local room with a few tenants. I was

especially relieved to have landed a local job and at the same point, move out of the local shelter and into a room where I could get back on my own two feet. During my stay in the local room, Good Samaritan took it upon themselves to go above and beyond by helping me acquire the things I needed to get started.

At this point, I thought things couldn't get better. I was wrong.

When I lost my job due to a work injury, Good Samaritan was there for me. While being supported by Good Samaritan, my housing voucher was pulled from the list and Good Samaritan staff helped me acquire a place in another town to be close with my family.

To those of you out there, let it be known that this was a miracle for me. These people working at Good Samaritan are truly miracle workers. The work they do is remarkable to the point that your resolve will be strengthened that there is a higher power out there and He still cares for you!

~ Thank you!

Mission and Outreach

What a year it has been! Reflecting back on 12 months of work with our ACTS children and families during a global pandemic, we realize it's been a season of constant change.

Last March we began distributing meal, snack, and activity packs twice weekly. Seeking to help provide food and safety supplies that were difficult to acquire early on in the pandemic, we made sure ACTS families had access to TP, hand sanitizer, and masks. Our community of supporters showed up in many ways by providing single-serving snacks, art materials, bulk amounts of paper products, and cloth masks to be included in these distributions.

As we moved into summer, we were able to begin seeing one family of kids at a time, in-person, and at a distance. ACTS families were grateful for this intentional in-person contact that their kids were really missing.

When fall arrived, we were able to open back up in-person at ACTS, but it looked a bit different than usual, using the garage as an outdoor and distanced classroom/art studio. We had themed clubs that the kids could sign up for based on their age and interest.



During the winter months, we were not able to meet daily in-person as cases spiked in local schools and below freezing temps made meeting outside difficult. So we pivoted again and created once a month outdoor pop-up events. This way we could still connect with our families and also keep everyone safe. December-March pop-up events have all been a hit, with themes and activities to match celebrating Christmas, Valentine's Day, and most recently, we celebrated St. Patty's Day and the beginning of spring by planting terrariums/fairy gardens.

As we look ahead, we are happy to announce that in-person daily ministry is on the horizon. Our goal is to be back to a "new normal" in mid-April. We will wrap up the school year meeting once again in our garage studio space and then look forward to summer programming.

We thank each of you at FPC for the countless ways you partnered with us and supported the mission and work of ACTS over this last year. Thank you for committing our kids and staff to prayer. Thank you for the additional funds to help provide food for families this fall and to make Christmas possible for them this winter. Your care and commitment to ACTS and the Holland community is incredible; you are truly being God's love and His provision in our lives.

In Him,
Jaime Blom, Director



Photos courtesy of
www.actsholland.com

Mission and Outreach



“So, what are you going to do with all your furniture?”

This question was frequently asked this past December, when I shared with family and friends that I was selling my condominium and moving to a small apartment in downtown Holland! A huge decision! Epic downsizing!

First things first! Due to the size of my new home, my piano needed a new location. Through a friend, I learned that Escape Ministries (an Outreach organization, supported by our church, whose mission is “to equip, inspire, and empower youth to become positive community leaders”) might be interested.

After contacting the Program Director, AJ Westendorp, he was very happy to accept my donation, as their program had a an old piano, with broken keys and was nearly unplayable. He arrived the next day with about eight students, who were very excited to know the piano was going to their music studio!

While AJ was there, supervising the students, I asked if there was any need for furniture. He responded enthusiastically, and took pictures of what I wanted to donate.

The next day, AJ returned with more students and adults, two trucks with trailers. He also shared with me a spreadsheet that indicated the item of furniture, the person and address where it would be going. All of the furniture was delivered directly to the recipients. A few examples: a teenager without a bed ~ a twin bed ; single Mother with three small children ~ a large dresser for their clothes ; a family of seven, with little furniture ~ living room furniture.

It was overwhelming to me.

AJ sent me some photos of people getting their new things, but my favorite was a video of a young man, playing the piano and clearly loving every minute of it! He states on the video, “...no broken keys and it sounds good!”

The students were very polite, appreciative and hard-working. AJ is an impressive young man, who is deeply dedicated to his job. The programs, work and efforts at Escape Ministries are positively impacting these families and especially the students.

First Presbyterian Church is supporting this important outreach for the benefit of all of us in the Holland community.

Submitted by ~ Janet Morrow



Photo courtesy of Escape Ministry Program
Director, AJ Westendorp

Linda's Keyboardcontinued from page 2

- Outside worship at 10:00a on Sunday, May 2 and every Sunday after, weather permitting, until we begin to worship inside. Masks are still in order, and bring your own chairs. We will use the parking lot for worship, there will be activities for younger members, and the play area will be open for smaller children. Parents will be contacted about how childcare is handled outside. The Lord's Supper will be celebrated during the morning service May 2 and not in the afternoon. Services also will be pre-recorded and posted on YouTube.

Your pastoral staff listens to your comments, suggestions, and questions. We, too, long to be together with the congregation in worship. Thank you for your support of the online services and for your patience as we move ahead in this journey that is taking longer than anyone expected. Are we there, yet?? Not quite, so pay attention to the beauty of the trip and find ways to celebrate the coming spring and the new life it brings. Resurrection is all around us. Blessings abound in this Easter time.

Grace and peace,
Linda

Preaching schedule:

March 28 Paul Van Kempen (Palm/Passion Sunday)
April 4 Two Easter services:
Paul Van Kempen (Sunrise Service 7:00a with communion outside)
Linda Male (Easter Sunday)
April 11 Barb Schreur
April 18 Paul Van Kempen
April 25 Paul Van Kempen
May 2 Doug Brouwer (10:00a worship with communion outside)



SMALL GROUP LEADERS

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charlesenorris@gmail.com

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MEN'S BOOK GROUP

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MEN'S DISCUSSION GROUP

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YOGA

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YOUNG FAMILIES

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616.298.4164

CONNECT TOGETHER

Recognizing our Graduates

2021 High School and college graduates will be recognized during a worship service in May. Please let us know if your child is graduating so we can celebrate their accomplishments together. Email lauren.stouffer@gmail.com and please include a photo, school/course of study, and plans for next year if known.

Preschool Scholarships

FPC is offering scholarships to children of current FPC members who would like to attend First Presbyterian Preschool for the 2021-2022 school year. These scholarships are available regardless of financial need. Contact Lauren Stouffer lauren.stouffer@gmail.com for more information

Dear First Presbyterian members,

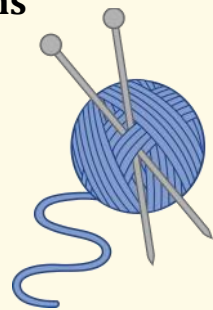
Your contribution of \$755.00 helped us to earn another \$1000.00! Thank you so much for your generosity and thoughtfulness. Your kind giving is helping to alleviate poverty.

The Holland/Zeeland CROP Hunger Walk Committee

Thank you to Chris Urbaniak for taking these photos during our last parking lot communion on March 7. It was so good to see each other!

From our Deacons

Deacon's Prayer Shawl Ministry. Do you enjoy knitting or crocheting? The Deacons would like to invite you to use your skills to make prayer shawls for members of our church family (men and women) who are going through difficult times. Shawls are made with Lion Homespun yarn in any color. Patterns are available and the Deacons can also reimburse for yarn or provide yarn to use. We will collect the shawls and distribute them. Don't knit or crochet? You can still help by donating funds or Lion Homespun yarn (3 skeins is enough to make one shawl) or by letting us know when you hear of members in need of prayer and comfort so that we can give them a shawl. If you have any questions or want to help, email us at: Deacons@fpcholland.org



Let's Pray Together

IN SYMPATHY

Our heartfelt condolences to Gary and Pat Smith as they mourn the loss of Pat's brother, Joe who passed away March 29

FOR FPC

- For the congregation as they prepare for Easter services
 - For caregivers of mature adults
 - For college students and professors navigating Covid-19
 - For First Presbyterian Preschool families and teachers
 - For those struggling with mental illness
-

IN PRAYERS

Lynette VanOss and her friend, Pam who are healing from bruises received in a car accident

Christina, a family friend of Don and Bonnie Cowie who was recently diagnosed with a rare form of stage 3 ovarian cancer

Jack Bonham who is suffering from injuries from a fall

Pat Smith's mother Sally recovering from a fall

Dick Bennett who is recovering at home following surgery

Stephanie Edwards who was recently diagnosed with Ewings Sarcoma

Sheri Harris who is on medical leave

Dick Gebben (son of Linda Gebben) recent ALS diagnosis

The McBeth family, specifically Scott who has been diagnosed with cancer and Kathy who is undergoing tests

Neal Harris who is receiving physical therapy after breaking his arm

Eric Heller and his wife Megan as Eric receives treatment for prostate cancer which has spread to his bones

Those grieving with the loss of loved ones

All people who are without a home

YOUTH@FIRST

- For our seniors as they prepare for graduation
 - For our youth as they ask questions during confirmation curriculum
 - For a Covid-safe environment for students, parents and educators
-

LONG-TERM CARE & ASSISTED LIVING

JoAnn Karn - Oak Crest Lighthouse Manor

Glenn Van Haitsma - Freedom Village

Charles Huttar (father of Sarah Anderson) -

Appledorn Living Center South

Beau Bennett (son of Mary and Dick Bennett) -

Medilodge of Holland

Wiley Wilson - Appledorn Living Center South

Lois Rust - Appledorn Living Center South

Marilyn Chamberlain - Resthaven Maple Woods

Lois Kane - Resthaven Maple Woods

Prayer requests are shared in the **Member Area** on the church website: www.fpcholland.org/member-log-in. To maintain confidentiality, the Member Area, including the prayers, are password protected. The password is **Presby659**.

If you would like to submit a prayer request for publication on this list, please send it to office@fpcholland.org.

If you would like to share a confidential prayer request, please contact:

Rev. Linda Male, Interim Pastor: pastor@fpcholland.org

Rev. Paul Van Kempen, Associate Pastor: associatepastor@fpcholland.org.



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