



presbyterian *profiles*

A PUBLICATION OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH / APRIL 2024

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Rev. Cathy Caldwell-Hoop

Senior Pastor

Smallest of Kindnesses

Early on the morning of April 8, I caught a plane from Birmingham, Alabama to Reagan International. (I had been in Tuscaloosa for the weekend to celebrate the dedication of Grace Presbyterian's "Table of Grace," a new client choice food ministry building.)

I decided to be "brave" and catch the train into Falls Church, Virginia as I would be attending a conference there for a few days. The instructions sounded simple, but as I stood in front of the machines, I had no idea what kind of ticket I needed. Another woman stood next to me, equally confused, so we were no help to each other. Then, as if by magic, the station attendant appeared between us, and patiently explained to us what we needed to do, even printing our tickets.

I managed to make the transfer from the blue line to the orange and soon I had emerged from the train station into a beautiful spring day in Virginia. I had been up since 4:00am, but the birds were singing, the sun was shining, and the flowers were in bloom. The route to the hotel took me through quiet neighborhoods. Eventually, I made the turn onto the last stretch to the hotel. Headed my way was a line of little preschoolers, all holding on to one of those long ropes with handles that the preschool teachers use to keep up with everyone. I stepped aside with my suitcase (the sidewalk was narrow) and greeted the children as they approached. Their little voices rang out with "bonjour" and "hola"!

I walked on and another line approached. This time they cried out "bonjour" and "nǎhǎo"! The morning had been filled with the smallest of kindnesses.

In this world that is crammed with hard edges, the smallest of kindnesses, offered by strangers...they make it bearable, don't they?

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."
John 13: 34 - 35

Blessings,
Cathy



Rev. Paul Van Kempen

Associate Pastor

Teaching Series

This past Sunday the Youth Group participated in an inter-church youth event. This was the third event of this type from this past year. We have really enjoyed getting to know the other youth groups and have appreciated the camaraderie between like-minded churches.

The activity for Sunday was a cardboard armor battle. After eating lunch together, each student donned armor made from cardboard and prepared for war. To be honest, I had some concerns with the theme. Did we really need to be making armor and engaging in “battle” when there are real wars happening in the world?

I am happy to report that I was wrong. The event was full of joy. The “battle” was a glorified game of tag. The cardboard costume competition was a display of creativity and last-minute-ingenuity. There were carefully crafted and painted helmets, boxes turned into makeshift forts, simple shields made of duct tape and cardboard and many other creative ideas.

And best of all, the winning armor was not the most complex or fear-inducing armor, but instead a simple cardboard box that said in big letters, “Peace, not war.” (To be fair, the vote was conducted by applause and cheers, and I may have been tipping the scales a little bit.)

I am so hopeful for the future of our church (and the churches we partner with) when I see what our youth can do and how they are being shaped to be Christians who seek peace and justice and mercy in the world. We may have engaged in a silly cardboard battle, but our collection of churches and youth are an example of God’s people coming together in peace.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Paul

A great opportunity for our children to be together this summer! Peace Camp will be held August 5-9 from 9-11:45am each day. We welcome campers who are entering Kindergarten through entering 6 th grade. Students entering 7th-12th grade are invited to be teen helpers. As has been the case for the past few years, Peace Camp is totally FREE! If you are ready to register, head on over to our website homepage and begin the registration process.

Please reach out, we have many opportunities available if you are willing to help in some way.



Lori Klinesteker
Children's
Ministry Leader

Worship Center: Keeping In Touch

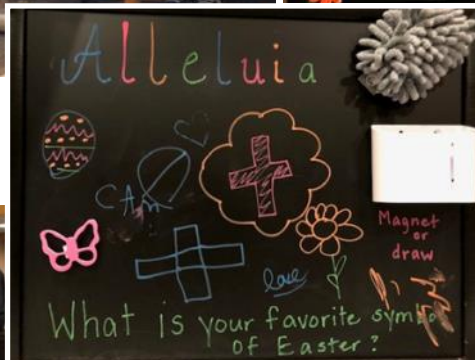
During Lent, at the end of each Story in the Worship Center, the kids were reminded that “This is not the end of the Story because we know that God raised Jesus up and that Jesus lives in a new way”. When celebrating Easter Sunday, kids unburied the Alleluia and sang, arranged vases of fresh flowers for the WC then took home to enjoy, the room was changed into the liturgical color of white and were excited to wear their white stoles. The WC was vibrant and alive as the Christ Candle was lit.



Special moments with the kids – during offering someone prayed silently, a buddy asked what he prayed about, the response “my teacher’s mom is very sick and might die so I’m praying for her”; A reflection after the Easter Story – “I think this is like when you teach, and get very sick and aren’t here, then when you come back it’s like you are teaching again, to which a friend added...” could be like an Angel too!”. During the Baptism of Owen Holmes (and his dad – Jeff), the kids were included as they made promises to Owen that they would like to be his friend, to be kind, to help Owen when

he is in need, to share the stories of Jesus with him, and more. Take some time with your kids, grandkids or a special person and share a personal experience of Baptism with them.

We are so grateful and blessed to be part of the WC with your kids, as they share, experience and witness to all, their faith and love of Jesus.



Thank you for partnering with our children in their WC offering of collecting can goods for those in need. Together we provided 367 pounds of food for Community Action House to share with our community.

Sharing Christ’s Light,
Lori Klinesteker Children’s Ministry





Presbyterian Women

As the Presbyterian Women Bible study since last September helped us understand some of the “Sacred Encounters” of Jesus’ presence in Luke and Acts, we have had some great discussions! We have also supported our own Presbyterian Preschool, provided *Resilience* with new underwear for women and children, and given our “Fellowship of the Least Coin” offerings to an international women’s prayer movement working toward peace and reconciliation for our siblings in Christ. Our Birthday offerings fund up to 5 projects not included in ongoing General Assembly mission support. Our Thank offering supports health ministries throughout the world. Whew!

Our now-combined circle study groups are doing some powerful Bible discussion, sharing of our pennies and dollars for mission, and we inspire special support for church families at a time of grief and loss with a delicious homemade luncheon.

A very special moment happened at our April study gathering when Bev Plagenhoef shared the piece of jewelry given to her by Aline Miller before she passed away. As we passed it around, we realized it was the pin given to PW members to honor their contributions to our group and our church. We give this *Honorary Lifetime Membership* at special times, but we don’t know if Aline was given this honor from our congregation or another in her lifetime of service. Researching our records, but if anyone knows the answer, please advise.

On **June 12** at 11:30am we will have a picnic and annual meeting in the narthex, so the weather is not a factor. Please sign up for your preferred sandwich beginning May 19th after the Sunday service. (If the church parking lot is closed due to replacing the paving, park on the side streets and enter by the doors at the corner of State and 28th Streets.) **All are Welcome.** Plans are underway for some special activities, too.

Janet Magennis
PW Communications
Facebook: FPCHolland PW



GET THE LATEST NEWS from **PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN**

We are adding more content on our Facebook page! // Facebook: **FPCHollandPW**

Online: PresbyterianWomen.org

<> Outreach <>



Mid April, a group from our church met for the kick-off celebration to begin construction on the Zadran's new Habitat home. Attending were the Habitat project manager, Mohammed, wife Radia, their 5 children, and his mother Javlay. (The women do not have their photos taken and the oldest son was not there.) There are several church members that have been helping with other homes in this neighborhood project and are excited to begin the Zadran home. If you would like to help, contact Bill Haines.



hfhc
holland free health clinic
A Healing Ministry of Jesus Christ



During the month of February, FPC congregants donated consumables not covered by food stamps, etc. for distribution by Holland Free Health Clinic. Holland Free Health Clinic is one of the agencies FPC supports through our Outreach contributions. Photos show the generosity of our church. Thank you to all who donated.

<> Session Summary <>

On Tuesday, April 16th, the Session of First Presbyterian Church gathered, opening with Cathy lighting of the Christ candle and offering a prayer.

A joy in the consent agenda was the approval of the baptism of Jeff Holmes and the baptism of Owen Holmes, son of Jeff and Colleen.

The members then moved into a discussion of the second chapter of *Sailboat Church* by Joan Gray. As described by the author, these are some of the signs that a church is a "sailboat church" (powered by the Holy Spirit as contrasted with rowing solely under our own human power):

- Church is experienced as a divine-human relationship
- Nurturing relationship with Jesus Christ is a top priority
- Are Holy Spirit powered
- Live by prayer
- Are shaped and guided by interaction with Scripture
- Require spiritual leaders (this is not limited to the pastors!)
- Take spiritual realities and resources seriously
- Live to sail
- Are places of transformation
- Teach and practice discernment

Council reports included the Personnel Council news that Hannah Campau (office manager) would be leaving the staff (And we can now share that she is going to start a family!). Chuck Norris' last Sunday is July 31, and plans are being made to honor and thank him.

Employee reviews have been completed and 360 reviews of Paul and Cathy were also conducted with helpful feedback being given to both.

Finance Council reminded the Session that they are engaged in conversations about the *A Place For All* (building renovation) mortgage and the concerns that contributions continue to be down from previous years.

In pastor reports, Paul and Cathy were getting ready to swap teaching roles, with Cathy leading Sunday morning youth group and Paul teaching an adult education class as part of his work on his Doctor of Ministry degree.

The meeting was closed in prayer by Paul.

The next regular meeting of the Session will be May 21.

<> Deacon's Caring Corner <>

Deacons sent final exam care packages to FPC's college students. Thanks to all who signed cards and brought treats to encourage our students during what can be a stressful time of year.



We continue to offer home communion as an extension of our community celebration in worship. Anyone who has been ordained in the PCUSA as an elder or Deacon can participate in serving communion to our homebound members. Contact Pastor Cathy or deacons@fpcholland.org if you would like more information about getting involved in this meaningful ministry



<> Happenings Around FPC <>



Easter breakfast and egg hunt festivities! Many thanks to Chris Urbaniak and Lauren Stouffer for capturing the joyous spirit of the day!



CONNECT TOGETHER

Men's Study Group

Meets every other Friday morning at 7:30am in the M&M Cafe. May meeting times; **May 3, 17, 31**. Questions? Contact David Ford.

Men's Book Club

The Men's Book Club gathers on the first Monday of each month at church at 7pm. Our next meeting is May 6.

We welcome anyone to join us even though they may not have read the book(s). Contact Larry Lynn at oldrun09@gmail.com or 616.617.8944 if you have any questions. Our group is always looking for new members.

Women's Book Club

The Women's Book Club gathers on the second Sunday of each month at church at 1pm in the M&M Cafe. **We will not meet on May 12** due to Mother's Day. Join us May 19 when we discuss the book, *I'm Glad my Mom Died* by Jeanette McCurdy.

Contact Bev Plagenhoef at rbplagen@live.com if you have questions.

Common Threads Group

All are welcome to join us the 3rd Monday of each month any time from 1-3pm in the Ontario room. Feel free to work on a prayer shawl, bring a project of your choice, or just come for the fellowship. Yarn is available! Our next meeting is **May 20**.

<> Happenings Around FPC <>

Several folks in the congregation have had some really nice recognitions.

We share your joy and offer well deserved congratulations



Chemistry faculty member named a top public university undergraduate educator

By Peg West, GVSU online headlines
Apr 9, 2024

A Grand Valley chemistry faculty member noted for his mentorship of students is one of three educators from Michigan's 15 public universities recognized for their outstanding contributions to undergraduate student education.

Brad Wallar, professor of chemistry, received the 2024 Michigan Distinguished Professor of the Year Award from the Michigan Association of State Universities. The awards are presented annually to recognize the dedication of faculty members to undergraduate education.

"All three of this year's award recipients are exemplars of a resolute commitment to excellence in undergraduate education that makes them stand out from their peers," said MASU Chief Executive Officer Daniel Hurley. "Each of them reminds us that Michigan's 15 public universities are leading the way in providing exceptional educational opportunities for students throughout the state."

Wallar said he appreciates the recognition, which reflects his fulfilling experience at GVSU. "It is an honor to win an award for doing something that you love," Wallar said. "This award is a culmination of contributions and support from faculty, staff, and students over many years. GVSU is truly a special place, and I feel fortunate to be surrounded by such a positive learning environment."

Fatma Mili, provost and executive vice president for Academic Affairs cited Wallar's dedication to ensuring student success and to providing a robust undergraduate academic experience as key reasons he deserves this recognition.

"He engages in authentic research with students, offering a powerful example of experiential learning while serving as a gifted and dedicated mentor," Mili said. "Professor Wallar is a pioneer at GVSU regarding undergraduate scholarship and has made impactful contributions to the infrastructure for supporting undergraduate research."

Wallar, who joined GVSU in 2003, is lauded for using real-life examples to connect students to cutting-edge concepts from COVID, cancer or antibiotic resistance research. He has designed his Techniques in Biochemistry class to mimic a research lab more typically found in industry or graduate school, enhancing students' understanding of biochemistry techniques.

The entire article can be read online: <https://www.gvsu.edu/gvnext/>



Holland's own Avalon Music Academy has been named runner up for an International Music School of the Year Award. The school made it to the final round as one of the top 7 music schools internationally.

"This was such an amazing experience. I'm still walking on air. We are so excited for this incredible honor.", reports **Rich Burkholder**. He and his wife **Marie** own Avalon, which is celebrating its 20th anniversary as a School of the Arts this year.

Avalon was selected from a group of more than 500 schools from the Music Academy Success System, an international trade association for Music Academies. Rich made a 15- minute presentation at the association's annual conference in Las Vegas on April 9.

"The presentation was a challenge from the standpoint that it was tough to encapsulate how amazing all the people involved in our school are- our students, families, teachers, & staff - and get that into 15 minutes. I explored the soul of our school and all the events that brought us to where we are today. ", Rich declares.

Rich elaborates, "It was a very interesting learning process which has born a new podcast, Avalon State of the Arts! Marie and I host the podcast. We share interesting topics about our school in a fun, easy to listen to format. The first episode is available now on our website, Facebook page, and on all streaming platforms."

Avalon began operations in their new location last September at 144 Coolidge Avenue, conveniently located just off 8th Street & US-31. With over 40 teachers, Avalon has something for kids, adults & everyone in between. Avalon offers dance classes, music lessons, and theatre classes six days a week. You can reach them online at www.avalonmusicacademyofholland.com -or- www.avalonschoolofthearts.com.

SAVE THE DATE

Mark your calendars and make a difference!

On Sunday **May 19** the Holland Hunger Awareness event and CROP Walk will take place at Centennial Park in downtown Holland from 1:00 to 3:00 PM as a part of the Holland Hunger Awareness weekend which also includes the Holland Postal Food Drive on Saturday May 18.

You will have the opportunity to make a difference for hungry people locally and around the world by your participation in the CROP Hunger Walk and Holland Hunger Awareness weekend and your donations.

First Presbyterians are invited to **BYOP** (Bring your own Picnic!). We will meet about 12:15 to picnic in Centennial Park. All people are invited to the Hunger Awareness event. Bring your kids and their scooters or wagons, bring your dogs and your signs - even if you can't walk, come and experience the festivities and

fellowship of other Presbyterians fighting hunger. Those of us choosing to walk should then be ready to walk starting about 1:15pm. You can choose to walk around the park or on an approximately three-mile route. Funds raised will benefit local hunger efforts of eight local agencies and international efforts through CWS.



Please see Tim Staal for any questions.



To join our team of walkers or to donate go online to:
<https://events.crophungerwalk.org/cropwalks/event/hollandmi>

Get ready for the 2024 Camp and Paddle weekend! We're excited for a new location and new memories to be made this summer.

Save the date and mark your calendars to join us **July 12-14** at: Mystery Creek Campground located at 9570 Wisner Ave in Newaygo, MI 49337

You can bring your own kayak, canoe or flotation device or rent it from the campground!



Watch for sign ups coming in May!

We have reserved space for 8 trailers, unlimited tents, and 1 rustic cabin.

Price: \$40/night for trailers

\$40/night for rustic cabin

\$20/night for tents



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

APRIL NATIONAL CHILD ABUSE
PREVENTION MONTH

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month, remembering the millions of children who are victims of abuse/neglect. Child Abuse Prevention is asking the faith community to pray for the victims of child abuse, their rescuers, and caregivers. Let us pray, educate ourselves, and volunteer for the children of our nation until black and blue are just colors in their crayon box.