



presbyterian *profiles*

A PUBLICATION OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH / JANUARY 2026

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Rev. Cathy Caldwell-Hoop

Senior Pastor

Washed Once More

Jane, who works hard to keep our church facilities clean and shining, always worries this time of year. She worries because it is so hard to keep the floors clean. The “snow melt” tracks in on the soles of our boots, leaving a cloudy residue behind. It’s an endless task, cleaning the floors. You probably know the feeling.

At my house, it’s a constant battle to clean off the dog nose smudges on the glass pane of the front door. The floors? That’s another battle entirely. I’m just relieved it isn’t mud season...yet. With eight paws running in and out, it’s a lost cause. So much cleaning to do. I wonder if that is how God feels sometimes, gazing at us and all the mess we stir up on this earth.

In January, we gathered to remember Jesus’ washing in the waters of the Jordan. I have no idea what the Jordan looked like when Jesus waded into it, but by the time I visited it a few years ago, it was a rather murky stream. Not really the kind of thing you would wade into to get “clean.” As we renewed our baptisms, we acknowledged both God’s claim on our lives as God’s own beloved and our need to be washed once more by God.

Soon, we will smudge ash on our foreheads. We will mark a cross of black ash on our skin as a different reminder. It is temporary, worn for just a short time. There are so many ways to think about these ashes. Here is one, from poet, Jan Richardson.

So let us be marked
not for sorrow.
And let us be marked
not for shame.
Let us be marked
not for false humility
or for thinking
we are less
than we are
but for claiming
what God can do
within the dust,
within the dirt,

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Rev. Dr. Paul Van Kempen
Associate Pastor
and Director of Music

A Warm Heart

Our Youth Group bundled up and braved the cold (10°!) with our friends from Holland UCC for a night of ice skating at the new Holland Ice Park. I think my toes are still warming up! We had a great night. It was heartwarming to watch the youth teach each other how to skate. It was a great reminder of how community can keep you warm even when the temperature says otherwise!

Meanwhile, our confirmations students have begun an important part of their faith journey: writing their own Statements of Faith. This is a great practice, not just for our confirmands, but for all of us.

We started with a simple sentence structure:
“I believe...because of this...”

For example:

I believe God's love is inclusive, because of this, I extend love to all people.

When was the last time you put words to what you believe? What would your statement of faith look like? How has it changed over the years? You might be surprised what your heart has to say!

Pastor Paul





Lori Klinesteker
Children's
Ministry Leader

Worship Center: Keeping In Touch

During the Pre-K – 2nd grade Worship Center time, we journeyed through the early life and ministry of Jesus. From the Boy in the Temple, growing in wisdom and faith, to His time in the wilderness, and finally to His calling of the disciples, children explored how Jesus listened to God and followed His calling. These stories connect with baptism, helping all to understand baptism as a response to God's love and an invitation to follow Jesus in their own lives.

Our 3rd – 5th grade Worship Center time: Children recalled that before people began to follow Jesus, He had some learning and growing to do. From birth to about 33, Jesus was “getting ready” for the important (and lifesaving) work which God had called Him to do. Once Jesus said, “I am the Way”. We hope the children experience that “Way”. They witnessed how Jesus spoke to people no one else would speak to (story of Zacchaeus), they experienced Jesus healing people because He did not believe their sickness was a result of sin (story of The Paralyzed Man), they heard how Jesus cut through the rules and regulations to show people that the Law was meant to help not hurt people (Jesus and the Pharisees).

We nurture a community where children grow together through God's stories—responding with wonder, learning with curiosity, and playing with joy.

Christ's Light is shining,

Lori Klinesteker
Children's Ministry

Dates Worship Center and Youth Education Time do not meet:

February 8 – Winter Break

April 5 – Easter Sunday

Easter Breakfast with Easter egg hunt

April 12 - Spring Break

May 24 – is our last Sunday for the summer.

Save the Date!

Peace Camp - June 22 – 26, 2026



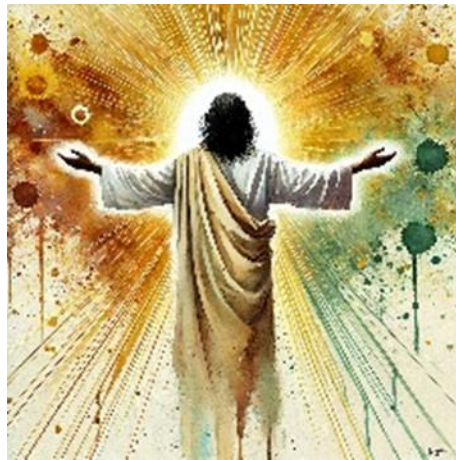


Presbyterian Women

All women at FPC Holland are welcome to attend the Miriam Circle on February 11 at 9:30 am as we study Lesson 6. Read Philippians 4: 1-23. Reminder that if Holland Public Schools are closed we will also stay at home, enjoying the snow safely.

This joyful artwork is the cover art of our 2-25-26 Bible Study. I write a Lesson ahead to meet deadlines, and in reading this Philippians passage I recognized pieces of joyful choral work I have sung over 40 years here at FPC Holland that is drawn from this passage, humming lines and parts from it. I currently miss singing in the choir but while still recovering from back surgery it is difficult to balance with a choir folder and a walker. "Rejoice! Again I say rejoice!" "God will supply everything I need."

Even in times of trial when we struggle to find joy, we have a rich life as Christian women to draw from. Certainly our current times are not always joyful but Light shines in many ways. We have a



retired pastor in our congregation whose daughter, a pastor in Minneapolis, was interviewed by an onsite reporter after the terrible tragedy there. I wondered if it was her, and his own writing confirmed it. I found joy in that sad moment that our Presbyterian heritage includes such women in pastoral leadership so unafraid to speak out, to be present when families are scared and afraid.

Paul wrote this letter to the new Christians at Philippi from prison. Among his coworkers in that early church were the women Lydia, Euodia, and Syntyche, described to be influential and perhaps in charge of ministries such as administration, finance, hospitality, pastoral care, and teaching by a modern day theologian. So this Lesson is rich in rejoicing. "And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Verses 4-7.

Janet Magennis
PW Communications

Our next meeting is February 11 @ 9:30 am in the Michigan Room.

GET THE LATEST NEWS *from* PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

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

Online: PresbyterianWomen.org

<> Connect Together <>

Men's Book Group // We meet at FPC the second Monday of each month at 2:30p in the Superior Room. Our next meeting is February 9 and we will be discussing the book, *The President's Club*. Contact Don Cowie with questions.

Grief Support // We meet at FPC the fourth Wednesday of each month at 2pm in the Superior Room. Our next meeting is February 25. We are a small group that gathers for grief support...we listen, we share, we pray. The group is open to all who need a safe space as they journey with grief. Contact Cathy with any questions. All are welcome.

Men's Discussion Group // We meet at FPC every other Friday morning at 7:30am in the M&M Cafe. Future meeting dates are planned for February 6 and February 20. Join us! Contact Ross Hamlin 616-399-0509 or Bob Gansen 269-753-7024 if you have any questions.

Women's Book Study // We meet at FPPC the second Sunday of each month at church at 1pm in the M&M Cafe. Our next meeting is February 8 discussing the book, *West with Giraffes* by Lynda Rutledge. Contact Bev Plagenhoef at rbplagen@live.com if you have questions.

Common Threads Group // We meet at FPC the third Monday of each month from 1-3pm in the Ontario room. Our next meeting is February 16. We hope that "Common Threads" reflects the fact that all are welcome. Many of us are crocheting or knitting prayer shawls, hats, scarves, and chemo socks. Feel free to come and work on other needlework or crafts or just come for the fellowship! Come and go as you are able. We hope you'll join us!



SAVE THE DATE!

The date for the 2026 Paddle Weekend Trip is July 10-12, 2026. We will be on the river Saturday July 11. It's a fun time of community! We'd love for you to join us this year! Watch for more details. Collen Ball can answer your questions!

<> Happenings Around FPC <>

Holland Community Theatre // Join us to see, *Mom's Gift* at HCT on Valentine's Day, **February 14** at 7:30pm. Optional dinner at the Curraugh at 5:00pm. \$18 Tickets are payable in advance to Chris Urbaniak. Sign-up in the narthex.

Mom's Gift - A year after her death, Mom shows up as a ghost with a mission—she has to accomplish one final task to earn her wings. The Problem? She doesn't know what that task is, and only her uptight daughter can see or hear her. As buried secrets, heartfelt revelations, and unexpected humor unfold, the family must confront the past to move forward. *Mom's Gift* is a touching, funny, and ultimately uplifting story about forgiveness, love and the enduring bonds of family – even beyond the grave.



Ash Wednesday // As the season of Lent begins, a time for reflection, gratitude and hope, we invite you to join us for worship and the imposition of ashes on Wednesday, **February 18**, at 12 Noon.

Justice Reads: A New FPC Book Group

For: Everyone

Time & Date: 7:00 pm, February 26th

First Read: *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents* by Isabel Wilkerson, winner of the Pulitzer Prize and the National Humanities Medal

Beyond race, class, or other factors, there is a powerful caste system that influences people's lives and behavior and the nation's fate. Linking the caste systems of America, India, and Nazi Germany, Isabel Wilkerson explores eight pillars that underlie caste systems across civilizations, including divine will, bloodlines, stigma, and more. Using riveting stories about people—including Martin Luther King, Jr., baseball's Satchel Paige, a single father and his toddler son, Wilkerson herself, and many others—she shows the ways that the insidious undertow of caste is experienced every day. Finally, she points forward to ways America can move beyond the artificial and destructive separations of human divisions, toward hope in our common humanity.

For more information, contact Jan Brashler or Cathy Hoop



The Annual Women's Retreat // Join us Saturday, February 28 from 9:00 am until 4:00 pm at First Presbyterian Church, Holland. Our speaker will be Rev. Barb Schreur.

We would love to have you join us! Invite a friend to share the day with you!

Brochure including a registration form will be available in January. Online registration will also be available on the FPC website.

<> Session Report <>

FPC Session Summary, January 20, 2026

The FPC Session held its regular monthly meeting on January 20th via Zoom with all members present, and Cathy Hoop moderating. Tom Salley offered an opening devotion and prayer. We spent time in reflection with our outgoing elders, Carleen Bauer, Bill Evenson, Cassie Kregger and Bruce Rosensteel, offering them time to speak to their experience of serving on session. They acknowledged both the joy and sometimes burden of being an elder for our community.

New elders, Alana Coconaur and Paula Perkins were welcomed to the Session!

The proposed budget was presented by treasurer, Rob Colten, who offered encouragement about our financial status and strength. The budget will be presented to the congregation at the annual meeting on Feb. 1.



A new year and a new entrance! In 2026, the front entrance to FPC will receive a major facelift. The extended porch space, accessible ramp and power door opener will make our facilities even more welcoming. We are so grateful for the financial support which makes this beautiful upgrade possible. Many thanks also to Jon Kreple and the Buildings Council for their ongoing supervision for this project.

The Outreach Council presented a motion recommending the Declaration of Intent to support the Shared Mission of the Presbyterian Church (USA) in the amount of \$14,000.00 for the year beginning January 1, 2026, with 38% going to the General Assembly, 1% to the Synod of the Covenant, and 61% to the Presbytery of Lake Michigan.

The pastors were dismissed in order that Bruce Rosensteel, chair of personnel, could present the recommended terms of call for the pastors. The terms of call are then voted on by the congregation at the annual meeting.

Rob Colten's appointment as treasurer was continued for 2026 as was Lori Klinestecker's role as clerk of the session.

The meeting was closed with prayer by Paul Van Kempen.

Washed Once More ...Continued

within the stuff
of which the world
is made
and the stars that blaze
in our bones
and the galaxies that spiral
inside the smudge
we bear.

Blessings to you, as we prepare once more, for the Lenten journey.

Cathy

Lenten Devotional: *The Work of Imagination*

Lenten devotionals will be available online and in print. Resources for adults, youth, and children will be available before Ash Wednesday, February 18th.



first
presbyterian
church

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