presbyterian *profiles*

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A Message from Rev. Cathy C. Hoop 2

A Message from Rev. Dr. Paul Van Kempen 3

Worship Center 4

Presbyterian Women 5

October Session Report 6

Outreach Partners 7

Pastoral Leadership Survey 8

FPC Prays 9

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Rev. Cathy C. Hoop
Senior Pastor

Dear Friends,

I wonder how many of you would be able to recite FPC's mission statement? Would you even know where to find it? (Hint: check the worship bulletin or the website!)

Here it is:

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

This mission statement has been around for quite a while and it says so much about our theology and mission as a congregation. It leads off with "worship," which is the experience that forms us, nurtures us and connects. In worship, we bring to God our very being, trusting that God will meet us there as a community.

Renewed by our worship, we then go out to serve one another, to serve and care for our neighbors, to be a witness through ministries of feeding, sheltering, and comforting those in crisis. We support dynamic nonprofits who invite us to be Christ's hands and feet in the world.

Worshiping, serving, *and living*...all we do, all we say, the choices we make are influenced by our belief in a God of mercy and compassion. A God of "vibrant energy!" (I would bet we are the only church with this wonderful phrase in its mission statement!)

And we can't forget the words, "fresh vision," the reminder that we are always learning more about who God is and how God is moving in our community, who God is calling us to be.

When the Session held its retreat in July, we had very meaningful conversations about this statement. Did it still hold true? Was it an accurate reflection of who we are? After some time to reflect, we came back to it, and one suggestions was offered: it needed one word, "love."

As of our October meeting, our mission statement now reads:

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

Amen!

Blessings,
Cathy



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

Hidden Beauty

Outside my office window I can see the beautiful fall colors. The trees I can see are alive with bright oranges, reds, and yellows. Early in the morning the leaves on the trees glow like they are on fire. Each day as I gaze at them, I am reminded of the beauty of creation, but I am also reminded of our Youth@First who are exploring scripture through trees this year. We are discovering the story of God's love for all the world, and we are beginning our exploration with the trees.

As I was preparing for this season of learning with the Youth, I read a book called *Reforesting Faith*. The book (in a beautiful section called "An Ode to Sugar Maples") reminded me that the bright orange and yellow colors on display now, have been hidden in the green leaves all summer long. The bright green chlorophyll, used for photosynthesis, simply overpowers the underlying carotenoid colors of fall. The beauty is always there hiding beneath the surface.

Often the work of faith is uncovering beauty that has been obscured, lost or broken in some way. When we work for justice, we try to peel back they layers of injustice to reveal the goodness beneath. When we serve the broken, we walk alongside them to restore their hope and joy. When we read scripture, we ask the Holy Spirit to open our eyes to see God anew, without obstruction.

Like the trees alive with color, the goodness and joy have been there all along. Our work as a community of faith is a work of uncovering the goodness and beauty that infills the world all around us.

Let us look for the hidden beauty all around us and in doing so, discover a God who made this world and called it good.

Peace,
Pastor Paul





Lori Klinesteker
Children's Ministy Leader

Worship Center: Keeping In Touch

As we enter the season of Advent, there is much to celebrate in the life of our Children's Ministry. Through Worship Center, our children continue to experience God's love and learn His story in engaging and meaningful ways.

Recently, 3rd-5th grade kids acted out the story of Jonah, bringing the biblical story to life. Our pre-K through 2nd grade kids gathered around the Desert Box to hear the story of Isaac's birth and that the meaning of Isaac is laughter. After the story, Ellarie wondered what her name meant, they enjoyed exploring the meanings of their own names. Through storytelling and hands-on participation, they explored God's faithfulness, mercy, and call to trust Him.







Left and top: 3rd-5th graders enacting the story Jonah.
Bottom: Exploring the meaning of our names.

Check out the new children's library area in the lower level to the NE of the steps. We encourage you to borrow what you like and return it when you are finished.

Our 4th and 5th grade students received their Bibles during worship on October 11. We give thanks for this important milestone and pray that God's Word will continue to guide them as they grow in faith.

Looking ahead, we invite everyone to join us for Advent Family Night on November 22 from 4p – 6p as we gather for an evening of fellowship, food, activities, and preparing our hearts for the coming of Christ. Christmas Pageant practice begins November 29, and we look forward to celebrating the Christmas story together on Sunday, December 20 through the gifts and participation of our children and youth.

Thank you for your prayers, encouragement, and support as we partner with families to nurture the faith of our youngest disciples. As we journey through Advent together, may we all prepare our hearts to welcome the hope, peace, joy, and love found in Christ.

All are invited and welcome; Christ's Light continues to shine,

Lori Klinesteker,
Children's Ministry





Above: New bookshelves.
Right: 4th and 5th graders receiveing their Bibles.



Presbyterian Women

For November our study of 1 Corinthians leads us into Chapters 5 & 6. We are talking about church politics, sex, abuse of power, and abusing the freedom we have in Christ. Paul is writing to the Church at Corinth. And a big word…ACCOUNTABILITY. If any of this sounds like the current November election, then it is timely.



Recently a past member of FPC Holland who remains my friend, wrote a note about our requirement to understand/comply with our Youth policies before working with children/youth of our community. We learn them before working in the nursery, leading the lessons in children's worship, or with our teens. Our weeklong summer program requires many adults also. The friend recounted how well we do in this requirement, a glowing recommendation. (Big thanks to our Clerk of Session Lori and her staffers!). In his letters to the church at Corinth Paul urged them to exact justice by holding each other accountable for our actions.

In these 2 chapters of 1 Corinthians Paul also dived right into the church treatment of sexual relationships, so part of this Lesson 3 is a discussion of how we in this century have perhaps been working from older interpretations that have historically led us to mistranslations leading to harm and oppression, where Paul is concerned about looking out for our most vulnerable members. Perhaps uncomfortable discussions? We will talk about this part of the Lesson within our Circle, where we speak freely, with Love and Respect for each other.

In retirement, I look back on my work experience as Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Lake Michigan, a required, elective office in the PC(USA) Book of Order. We had 69 congregations at that point, and it was not always peaceful and in order. We had work to do. The church officers who set Presbytery policies, and the church Clerks of Session who reported annually to them, had to come into the corral, so to speak, with my role being to help them find the way to that corral. I attended so many meetings, plus gatherings just for Stated Clerks, and 3 PC(USA) General Assemblies in San Jose, Minneapolis, and Pittsburgh. The hardest part was when a church, or a pastor, was in conflict, and constructing peace together required the Presbytery to become involved. Heartbreaking work at times; hard decisions; painful situations. Protecting the most vulnerable in those situations was vital. We walked with each other on the road, sharing the load, with love, as Christ directs us. Best job ever!

We always invite all women of FPC Holland to join us. Our Bible studies are pathways to learning to be God's people – and how we love and serve each other and all our neighbors. Come on those second Wednesdays for a cup of coffee and a treat. Bring an open mind and your tender heart. And please sign up in the narthex for our annual Christmas Soup Luncheon on December 9th at 11:30 am. Our speaker will focus on the PW Thank Offering $40,000 grant to Lakeshore Habitat for Humanity, now at work in our own area!

Janet Magennis
PW Communications

Get the latest news from Presbyterian Women
Facebook: FPCHollandPW -OR- Online: PresbyterianWomen.org

Connect Together

Men's Book Group // We meet at FPC the second Monday of each month at 2:30pm in the Superior Room. Join us November **9** discussing, *Words that Work* by Frank Lutz. December's read is, *The Fort Bragg Cartel* by Seth Hart. Contact Don Cowie if you have any questions.

Grief Support // We meet at FPC the fourth Wednesday of each month at 2pm in the Superior Room. Our next meeting is November 18, a week earlier than usual due to Thanksgiving. 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. Join us November 13 and 27. 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 November 8 discussing the book, *More Things In Heaven and Earth* by Jeff High. 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 November 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!

October Session Report

On Tuesday, October 20th, the Session of FPC held their regular monthly meeting. Tom Salley opened the meeting with a devotion and prayer.

The highlights of our meeting:

The Session welcomed Leah Waller, the deacons' moderator, to join them and hear about the work they have been doing and some questions they are exploring regarding their focus. Years ago the deacons were organized differently, with each deacon being responsible for a geographic "parish." Many members have commented on how much they appreciated the regular interaction with "their" deacon. (If you found this to be a meaningful experience, please share your thoughts with Leah or any of our deacons. Their names are included in the worship bulletin.)

Paula Perkins, chair of the Personnel Council, presented a revised vacation policy for non-ordained staff members, which was adopted. Cathy and Paul were excused so that Paula could present the results of the congregational surveys on the pastors' ministries. Paula will also be sharing this information with the congregation through this newsletter.

The Session also adopted a small, yet significant change to the church's mission statement. Our statement has read:

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

It now reads:

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

After much conversation and reflection at our Session retreat, the elders agreed that our mission statement is unique and offers a true witness to who FPC desires to be. We did not believe it needed to be rewritten, but we whole heartedly embraced the suggestion to add "love" to our statement.

The meeting was closed with prayer.

The next meeting of the Session will be Tuesday, November 17th at 7:00pm.

Looking Forward

Stewardship // *Grace in Action* is the theme for our Stewardship season, which begins Sunday, November 1 and concludes with Giving Sunday on November 22nd. Through the story of creation in Genesis to the parables of the Forgiving Father and the Good Samaritan we will explore an idea at the heart of the Christian Gospel: God is a gracious, generous giver, and since we're made in God's image, we're born to be gracious and generous, too. Watch for more information.

Advent Event// Save the date: Sunday, November 22 from 4 – 6pm. Join us for an intergenerational gathering.



Enjoy fellowship and creativity as we join together to prepare for the Advent Season.

Outreach

Habitat for Humanity // Our next work date is November 19. We will not work in December. Please reach out to Bill Haines with any questions, wehaines@icloud.com

Good Samaritan // Good Samaritan is hosting their second annual, *Serve Your Neighbor Pickleball Tournament* on November 7-8 at Holland Charter Township community Center. The tournament supports their work helping individuals and families experiencing housing instability in Ottawa County. They especially are looking for players in their First Timers tournament which is designed for people of all experience levels who want to have fun and support a good cause. You can find more information and registration details at goodsamottawa.org/pickleball

Escape Ministries Work Teams // Could you use a little help around the yard this fall? A team from Escape Ministries would love to help you out! Call Escape Ministries for more information, 616-396-4481

Children's Advocacy Center Holiday Advocates // It's that time of year! Children's Advocacy Center is again asking our help to bring holiday cheer to the children & families affected by child sexual abuse. Last year the agency was able to support over 80 children and we became advocates for 20. This year we are committed to 25 children. We are excited to take on an even larger challenge.

There are several ways you can get involved.

1. Sponsor one or more children by purchasing gifts. Children's wish lists will have items in four categories: wear, read, want, & need. You will pick items in each category with a suggested spending total of $150 per child.

2. Join with friends to sponsor a child. Either shop together or each purchase gifts from one or more areas and put your gifts together.

3. Donate any amount of money and we will find shoppers to purchase the gifts for a child.

4. Buy stocking stuffers. We will have a list of items. When caregivers come to pick up their child's gifts, they are offered the opportunity to 'shop' in CAC stocking store to fill a stocking for their child.

Here's the timeline;

Nov. 15 & 22 - Names with wish lists will be available in the Outreach Kiosk.

Nov. 29 to Dec. 6 - collect gifts at the church unwrapped but with wrapping supplies. You are also welcome to take gifts directly to CAC if you prefer, but be sure to let us know.

If you have questions or want to get a name, but won't be at church those Sundays, feel free to call or text Janet Hostetler 740-704-4822 or by email janethostetler@gmail.com

Can't wait to see our lobby full of Christmas cheer again. It's one of the things we do really well at FPC!

Update on Cathy's Doctor of Ministry Program

I am so grateful to be in a congregation which supports ongoing education for its pastors, and I believe this is a benefit to us all. Not only am I appreciating the academic challenges, but I am being nourished by a diverse cohort of individuals (one Presbyterian from the U.P.!), from all over the country and from a variety of denominations.

Currently I am enrolled at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary for a three-year program: Creative Writing and Public Theology.

In January and June I will be out of the office for one week attending classes on campus. In between those sessions, I will participate in virtual classes one day a week for 12 weeks. When possible, I will be able to participate in those in the evening, but when they are during office hours, I can use my day off to make up that time.

I want to reiterate that my first commitment is to the church, but I believe this experience will be deeply beneficial to our faith community. If you have questions or want to know more, please let me know!

~ Cathy



thank you

Thank You for Sharing Your Voice

Thank you to everyone who completed this year's pastor questionnaires.
We received 78 responses for Pastor Paul and 83 for Pastor Cathy, along with many thoughtful written comments. Session is grateful for the time and care you gave.

Your responses showed deep appreciation for both of our pastors. Many of you highlighted meaningful, thought-provoking preaching; compassionate pastoral care in times of illness and loss; a vibrant, inclusive music ministry; and growing energy among our children, youth, and young families. Many also noted how well Pastor Cathy and Pastor Paul work together as a team.

You also shared ideas for how we can continue to grow, including more opportunities to connect across generations and ways to support our pastors' heavy workloads. We heard you.

The Personnel Council has reviewed the results carefully and met with each pastor to celebrate their ministry and set goals for the coming year.

Both Cathy and Paul also want you to know that their doors are always open. They invite you to contact them whenever you have a question, concern or observation to discuss.

With gratitude,
Personnel Council

Let's Pray Together

PRAYERS FOR

> Janet Haines, recovering from surgery

> Mike Van Houzen, receiving treatment for cancer

> Cindy Helder's friend, Roxanne, who is experiencing heart problems

> Jamie Blom's parents (Jim & Nancy) both dealing with health issues

> Danielle Peterson's father, Dennis Mishoe, dealing with cancer

> Steve Magennis' sister, Joan, who has cancer

> George Rust, who is currently incarcerated, and struggles with mental health issues

> Linda Holmes continued recovery

> Those struggling with loneliness, living with mental health needs, processing emotional pain, and struggling with addictions

> Those grieving the loss of a loved one

> Prayers for those who join us in worship online that they will sense the love and peace of Christ

HOSPICE

Mary Gray Nelson

Lenore DePree

YOUTH@FIRST

Prayers for students, parents and teachers for a safe and fun school year.

COLLEGE STUDENTS

Prayers for college students to find community

LONG-TERM CARE & ASSISTED LIVING

Beau Bennett (son of Mary and Dick Bennett) – Appledorn Living Center South

Lenore DePree – Farmstead Assisted Living

Dean Effken – Riley's Grove in Zeeland

JoAnn Karn – Medilodge (Rm 301)

Lois Rodgers – Appledorn Living Center

Carolyn Russell - Resthaven Maplewoods

Lois Rust – Appledorn Living Center South

Phil Sturdevant – Resthaven Care Center

Ron Williams – Michigan Veteran's Home, Grand Rapids



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