

Presbyterian News

First Presbyterian Church of Paw Paw, Michigan

Volume 91, Issue 11

Nov 2022

Start with the Why

Greetings Friends in Christ,

Autumn reminds me that as Christians we are offered life within a rhythm and pattern that offers stability and hope within all of life's changes and challenges. As Christians, we can be assured that hope, reconciliation, resurrection — new life — are patterns that God offers to our individual and communal lives.

We can take comfort that God the Creator is sovereign and working in the midst of all life! We have this grounding along with the Spirit of the Risen Christ to guide and sustain us. We can take comfort that there will be rebirth and new beginnings to live into within our lives.

As your interim pastor, I am realizing and witnessing the incredible rhythm of life that is lived out within this congregation as you follow Christ. In the time I've been here, I've been so impressed by your friendships and ministries. Without a doubt, this can be an exciting time for the congregation as together we learn from our past and move forward discerning God's call to grow in faith and service.

As you might have seen or heard, our Presbytery has given us some areas to work on as we live into our call as a congregation:

- 1) Structural Change: restructure, simplify, and streamline the church's leadership bodies, particularly Session and Deacons.
- 2) Session Size: reduce the number of Elders serving on Session to no more than 9 members.
- 3) Minutes and Record Keeping: improve the overall record and minute keeping within all committees of the church and Session.
- 4) Membership Rolls & Annual Statistics: clean up our membership rolls and complete the annual statistical report in January 2023.

As your interim pastor, these recommendations will be focal points for me as I put together a Transitional and Restructuring Team to work on structural change. These changes will come from a team effort, not just me, and they will go through Session. Moreover, this won't be a quick fix, it will take both discernment and time.

In moving forward and in preparation for this work, one of the exercises we did at our Session Retreat on Oct 24 was to watch the video by Simon Sinek that instructed us to "start with the why." (https://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action) Why do we exist? Why would people come to our church? Who are we, and who are we called to be?

(continued)

Getting to the core of why we do what we do took a while. We listed a number of things pertaining to our Why: to serve others; we love God; God loves us; to share and live into the message of Jesus; to bring about peace; to bring about the Kingdom of God; to bring heaven here on earth; to enjoy one another, bring everyone up in spirit and in life; to help people out of poverty, to help the oppressed; to help people experience unconditional love.

Wow! All good observations, but we still hadn't gotten to the essence, the core of why we are a church. WHY do we do these things?

We whittled it down to the fact that: *We are in the ministry of Transformation!* We have a message that can change and does change people's lives! It is the message of God's unconditional love and acceptance in the way of Christ.

That means we as a congregation need to be open to transformation. Yet, as Christians, we are assured that hope, reconciliation, resurrection — new life — are patterns that God offers to us. So, although the path will be challenging and at times frustrating, let's remember that God calls us into the ministry of transformation through the way of Jesus the Christ. That's exciting! May it be so, Amen!

In Christ's love, light, and hope, Gail
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Fellowship Hour Volunteers Needed

Are you a person who enjoys a cup of coffee and conversation after the Sunday Worship Service? If so, perhaps you would be willing to take a turn for one week of 'Fellowship Duty'.

Responsibilities Include:

Sign up for Fellowship (chart is on the Bulletin board in Fellowship Hall) for a Sunday of your choice.

Plug in the coffee maker, set up coffee cups and fixings before the church service (coffee supplies are already in the kitchen cupboard above the coffee maker). A 3-5 minute coffee/kitchen 'How To' is available from any Deacon. You can brew a pot of coffee before church and leave it in the thermos so you will be ready, or you can leave the service a few minutes early to finish your coffee.

Provide a plate or package of cookies to share.

Cleaning up the kitchen and wiping the tables when fellowship is finished is also included in "the duties" so our kitchen can continue to be clean and safe for the next event.

Contact Barb Dundon or Pat Peters if you have questions or just use the sign up sheet. Thank you!





CHRISTMAS JOY SPECIAL OFFERINGS

LEADERSHIP: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

And the Word became flesh
and lived among us...

—JOHN 1:14

Jesus came to us as a helpless baby who was destined to lead us and bring us joy, peace and salvation. The perfect gift.

This special offering begins November 27 and runs through December 18. When we give to the **Christmas Joy Offering** we connect with the leaders of our Church — past, present and future. 50% of our gifts make it possible for students to learn and grow in faith at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. The other 50% provides assistance to current and retired church workers and their families with critical financial needs. By giving we honor and celebrate leaders who have faithfully guided and led us and also we celebrate emerging leaders.

This special offering has been a Presbyterian commitment for 140 years.

Eleda Zygadlo, Mission Chairperson



Anxiety at Our First Community Dinner

It had been a mixed up weather day and was supposed to culminate in wind, rain, lowering temps and hail. The traditional October dark and stormy night. It fit my mood exactly. I had spent a month planning, replanning, examining every detail and worrying about the Community Dinner to be held on this tempestuous night, and I was engulfed in anxiety. Joe has been gone two years now, and I continue to have difficulty with groups where I have to maintain a part of the conversation. I either cancel invitations at the last minute, sit in the car at a destination and then drive away, or just ignore the outlet folks are offering me. Bad behavior on all three levels, but necessary for me at this point, so I was dreading this night.

I met Jan at church mid afternoon and we worked on set up, food prep, etc. We have worked together for years, and it was a very comfortable experience. Others came one by one, Pat Peters and Eleda, and again no red flags from these caring people. Then Tom and Bill came, and still, I was good. Then, people came. Some I knew, some I didn't and I realized it was too late to escape. The anxiety bubbled up, and however it exploded was going to be in the face of all these folks for whom I have such a respect and affection. I had no idea what this outcome would be – I considered fleeing the entire event.

But then it happened. I just stood there and looked around at the tables of people, the folks in the kitchen, and basked in the comfort of that place at that moment. This church and the Spirit that guides it sucked away my anxiety and replaced it with multitudes of memories of years in

that kitchen providing for our congregation and others. And it was good. So, as Gail would say, "May it be so".

I am reminded of the objective of "Dinner with Friends" which is to provide caring and community to the lost, homeless, lonely and disenfranchised.

In this lengthy message, I see how easy it is to become self absorbed and focus on the tree instead of the forest. I am reminded of the objective of the "Dinner with Friends" which is to provide caring and community to the lost, homeless, lonely and disenfranchised. I think often of the three rules of paying it forward:

1. It has to be something that really helps people.
2. Something they can't do themselves.
3. What we do for them, they pass on to others.

Please join us as we pay it forward on the second Thursday every month at 5:30 pm. Come to have dinner, meet others, and be that friendly face at the end of a possibly difficult day. You will go away satisfied in body and spirit, and you might just learn something valuable about yourself!

News from the Worship and Music Commission



Welcome November!! It is great to see our church pews filling up weekly. The Worship and Music Commission has been at work planning with Reverend Gail for upcoming worship services. We will welcome Madelyne Lambert to our pulpit on November 6 as Gail has a planned day away from us. Madelyne is a candidate for the ministry under the care of our Presbytery. Gail returns on the 13th as we look to close out the liturgical year that ends with Christ the King Sunday on the 20th of the month. The season of Advent begins on the 27th of November. Yes friends, we are that close to Christmastide. Terry Vaughn and Chris Gray will be sharing accompanist duties during the month of November. We are blessed to have such talented musicians to help lead us in worship. We hope you can join us in person but if not you can find us live at 10 AM every Sunday or recorded on our church website.

And Welcome Madelyne!! On November 6 we will have the pleasure of welcoming a candidate for the ministry under the care of our Presbytery to our pulpit.

Madelyne (Maddie) Lambert is joining us from Holland, Michigan. She has 9 years experience working in children, youth and young adult ministries. Currently, she is a co-creator of WayFolk Arts: a group of liturgical artists who aim to provide resources for individuals and communities to engage the divine in the sacred and seemingly mundane.

Maddie is in the final year of her M. Div program at Western Theological Seminary and is seeking ordination into the PCUSA. She and her husband, Dylan, are expecting their first child around Christmas time this year!

Maddie loves coffee, liturgical art, creating sacred spaces, and empowering others to become their integrated selves.



Plan to join us on November 6 for our 10 AM worship service. Let's help welcome Maddie to Paw Paw First Presbyterian.

More from Mission!

The first **"Dinner with Friends"** held on October 13 was a great success! Over \$2000.00 has been donated by the community to support this endeavor of bringing people together. Our next dinner is Thursday, November 10, 5:30 to 7 pm in Fellowship Hall. Everyone is welcome! Please come and see old friends and make new ones.

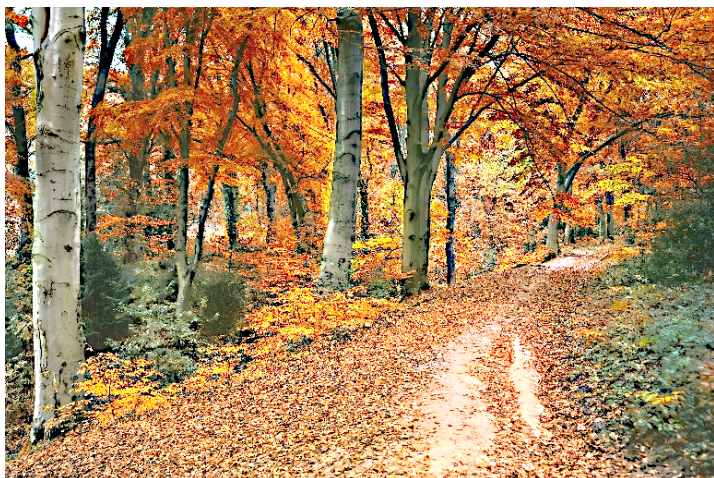
Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Hurricane Ian **"Gift of the Heart Kits"** campaign. Once again our congregation came through to help those in need.

NOVEMBER



Moving Forward in Faith and Service

We are reading the November newsletter! Is it just me, or does it seem as if we are living through the fastest moving year ever!



Fall is the favorite season for a multitude of folks - familiar words resound with so many of our senses - autumn colors, soups and stews, cozy fires, and crisp morning air. Also with Fall comes our annual stewardship drive to support our church and congregation for the upcoming year. It is an important and thoughtful decision we all make based on our personal situations and how we unite to see the future of our church. This year our theme is **"Moving Forward in Faith and Service"**. It acknowledges our past yet challenges us to charge into 2023 with enthusiasm and kindness as we faithfully serve God and others. Let 2023 be the year that we end with great joy, knowing our existing ministries have flourished

and new endeavors have sprouted. That we have lived in our purpose of changing lives. And that we have done it all with the time, talents and tithes of our faithful congregation.

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

- Jeremiah 29:11



November Anniversaries

11/07 Rick and Mary Diemer
11/18 Jack and Mary Wyatt
11/23 Dave and Connie Nielsen



November Birthdays

11/3 Brenda Mattson
11/4 Sandi Henson
11/6 Sherry Eggleston
11/7 Barb Kruse
11/9 Thelma Bennett
11/9 Brad Rhodes
11/11 Juliann Bradish
11/11 Trevor Smith
11/12 Deb Walters
11/13 Sue Martin
11/13 Ben Hulst
11/14 Emily Turanzas
11/15 Mike Seymoure
11/17 Catey Bolton
11/17 Monica Watkins
11/19 Bill Henson
11/21 Laura Wells
11/23 Kathy Murphy-Brown
11/30 Jacob Bolton
11/30 Mary Wyatt

November 2022

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
W1	30 • 10am Worship Service • NA • All Saints Day	31 • 10am YOGA	1 • Noon AA	2 • 7:30am TOPS • 4:30 Worship&Music	3 • 9:30 Tech Comm	4 • Noon AA • 10am Yoga	5 • 7pm AA
W2	6 • 10am Worship Service • NA • 8:45 Bible Study	7 • 10am YOGA	8 • 6:30 Bld&Grds • Noon AA • 10am ShareNet	9 • 7:30am TOPS • 6:30 Deacons • 11am Admin/Fin Comm	10 • 5:00 Community Dinner • Noon Rotary • *OFFICE CLOSED*	11 • Noon AA • 10am Yoga	12 • 7pm AA • 9-4 Quilters
W3	13 • 10am Worship Service • NA • 8:45 Bible Study	14 • 10am YOGA	15 • Noon AA • 6pm Session Meeting	16 • 7:30am TOPS	17	18 • Newsletter Deadline • Noon AA • 10am Yoga	19 • 7pm AA • Men's Breakfast
W4	20 • 10am Worship Service • NA • 8:45 Bible Study	21 • 10am YOGA	22 • Noon AA	23 • 7:30am TOPS	24 • Noon Rotary	25 • Noon AA • 10am Yoga	26 • 7pm AA • 6:30 Games/Euchre Night
W5	27 • 10am Worship Service • NA • 8:45 Bible Study	28 • 10am YOGA	29 • 3:00 Personnel Meeting • Noon AA	30 • 7:30am TOPS • 6:30 MISSION	1	2 • Noon AA • 10am Yoga	3 • 7pm AA

Latest updates always at pawpawpres.org/calendar

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Return Service Requested

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“How greatly we understand the uniqueness of the Presbyterian Church in its call to help people as Christ commands. And now, having so carefully laid out the importance of giving to the Christmas Joy Offering in the rural area congregations where Ben was pastor, we are so grateful to directly benefit from such financial assistance in our great need since Ben’s stroke.”

**Helen Whitfield,
wife of Rev. Ben Franklin Whitfield,
Honorably Retired, Rochester, IN**

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