

# Presbyterian News

First Presbyterian Church of Paw Paw, Michigan

Volume 92 Issue 7

July 2023



Dear Friends in Christ,

A few weeks ago, I attended my Uncle Phil's memorial service in Grand Rapids. He was my mom's brother and the last of four siblings to complete his baptism. Now a generational mantle has been passed to myself, my brother, and cousins. Many of you are familiar with this shifting of generations too. It causes one to pause and think about our purpose and meaning in life and community.

Phil Holtrop was a philosopher, pastor, writer, and religious professor for many years. To no one's surprise, on the back of the memorial bulletin, he left us some of his thoughts about life and faith in his 89<sup>th</sup> year as he knew his time here was limited.

Now I'm sharing it with you. Why? Because I think it speaks to us in this time and place as we try to discern how to live out our lives within various shifting cultures and values. It's a bit heavy, but stay with it ... I believe it challenges us in good ways.

***A Thankful Conclusion, Opportunity, and Invitation*** by Rev. Dr. Phil Holtrop

The power of grace is not only God's actions and initiatives in our lives — expected or

unexpected. It is also our God-given ability to respond (our response-ability) in each moment. Therefore, it is finally not Christian to separate God's sovereignty and human responsibility, or to see them in conflict. Our "responsibly" is *our* own power because of the power of *God in us*. As "image-bearers," we are most *ourselves*, most free, as we image or reflect God, or "work out the salvation" he "works in" us. Our lifelong task and opportunity, as Christians, is to "seek his kingdom" with that power that he gives. The rewards can be amazing.

God takes the initiative, and if we "boast" (Paul's language here) it is only in the power of the death and resurrection of Christ. In him, we are enabled to die to ourselves, and to live to and for God and others. That is what it means to "seek the Kingdom." In Christ we seek the reconciliation and restoration of all culture, all people, and do not seek "winning arguments" or getting glory or power for ourselves. We "build up" others, to help them wherever and whenever we can; we never "put them down." In the process, we "praise God from whom all blessings flow." We *never* live for our own pleasure, our vacation, our nice home, our money. We "belong to God" – not ourselves, in every moment. In every way, we seek *his Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. In dying to ourselves, we live most fully. To God be the glory.*



Phil uses powerful, "reformed/presbyterian" language to bring home that we are not our own, but belong to God. And he emphasizes that even when we're enjoying life to its fullest and the various pleasures of life, we do so in the light of our identity in God in all things. So, as we enjoy our wonderful Michigan summer, the harvest of our land and gardens, our vacations in God's world, getting together with various friends and relatives, may we do so realizing that we belong to God and that we are called in our lives, in all things, to reflect God's love and glory in the way of Jesus the Christ.

Psalm 103: 1-2 guides us in this way of life: Praise the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits ...

In Christ's love, light, and hope,  
Gail

Rev. Gail E. Monsma, Interim Pastor

# Many Thanks

## AND WELCOME TO ELDERS AND TREASURER

On Sunday, June 18, we ordained and installed three elders into the Session Class of 2025. They join the current serving elders and classes:

### Class of 2023:

- Harold Schuitmaker, co-chair of Administration & Finance
- Wendy Mickle, co-chair of Mission & Stewardship

### Class of 2024:

- Joan Pohl, chair of ShareNet
- Nancy Turk, chair of Worship & Formation,
- Eleda Zygadlo, co-chair of Mission & Stewardship

### New Class of 2025:

- Andy Thorburn, Clerk of Session,
- Laura Wells, Co-Chair of Administration & Finance
- Bill Welling, Chair of Building & Grounds.

We also give thanks to Steve McCloskey who has agreed to come on as our new Church Treasurer!

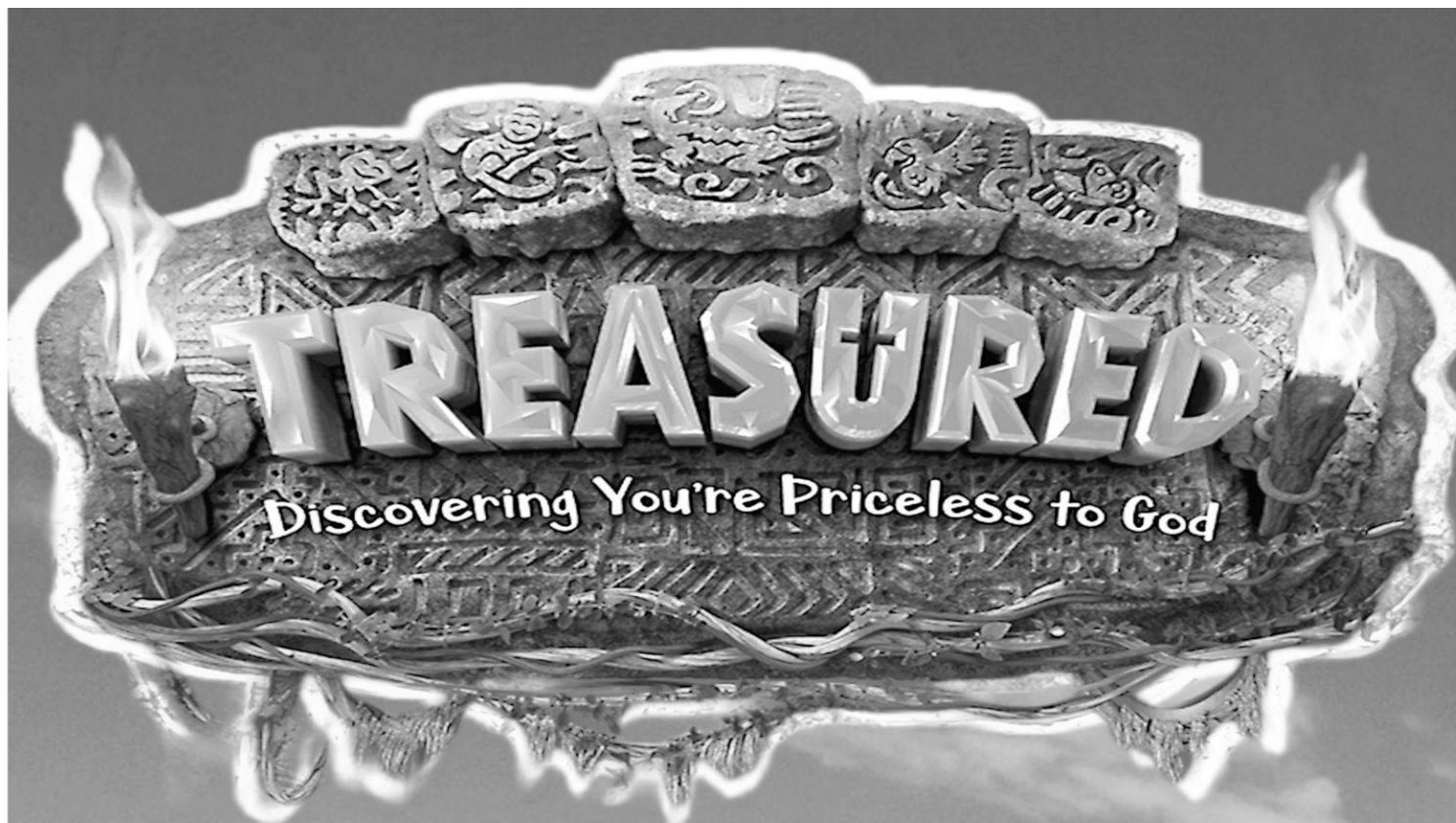
Then we give thanks to the following individuals who served faithfully during the stress and fears of the Covid pandemic and as the church moved through various conflicts as pastoral leadership changed:

- Bert Ogden and Kathy Vought who finished out their terms as Elders as part of the Class of 2022 — thank you!
- Kathy McCloskey who served as Clerk of Session for a number of years — thank you!
- Pat Peters who served a number of years as Church Treasurer — thank you!

As First Presbyterian Church of Paw Paw continues to move forward in faithfulness as a body of Christ, we could not do so without people like those listed above who shared in leadership roles within our congregation. They all agreed to serve, after hearing a distinct call from God, and came on board without knowing what challenges might arise. Yet, the Holy Spirit led them and continues to lead those who now fill these leadership roles.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow .....

Gail Monsma



# **Vacation Bible School Every Sunday June 18 - Aug 27 11am to Noon**

- Kindergarten to 5th Grade Sign Up Now**
- Need Middle & High School Leaders Too**

**SIGN UP NOW AT**

**[vbspro.events/p/events/pawpaw](http://vbspro.events/p/events/pawpaw)**

**First Presbyterian Church of Paw Paw**

**120 Pine Street**

**Paw Paw, MI**

**269-657-3111**

# Mark Your Calendars Joint Worship with 1<sup>st</sup> Pres Decatur

at Decatur

**Sunday, July 30, 10am**

Please come out and join us as our congregations worship together on Sunday, July 30 at 10am. Note the earlier time!

They came over to 1<sup>st</sup> Pres Paw Paw on Easter Sunday, and now they are inviting us to worship with them!

There will be light refreshments afterwards. This is a wonderful way to get to know each other better as we have embarked on a yoked relationship together.



Additional musicians at our June 4 Worship.  
*We thank you guys!*

## You Are Treasured



TREASURED!! VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL, every Sunday June 18 - Aug 27, 11am -12 noon, here at 1st Pres Paw Paw!

We're doing something new. Vacation Bible school this summer has a twist. Instead of having a week-long event, it is every Sunday at 11 am throughout the summer. Hope you can join us.

Pictured above: Our first Sunday VBS.

# July 2023

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
W1	25 • 11am Worship Service • 7pm NA	26 • 2pm Review/Preview • 6:30 Pub Theology • 1:00pm Wings of God staff meeting	27 • noon AA • 10am ShareNet • 5:30 Single Ladies	28 • 7:45am TOPS • 6pm Boy Scouts Troop	29	30 • NOON AA • 10am Yoga	1 • 7pm AA
W2	2 • 11am Worship Service • 7pm NA • VBS 11am	3 • 2pm Review/Preview	4 • noon AA	5 • 4:30 Worship&Music • 7:45am TOPS • 6pm Boy Scouts Troop	6	7 • 10am Yoga • Noon AA	8 • 7pm AA
W3	9 • 11am Worship Service • 7pm NA • VBS 11am	10 • 7:00pm Boy Scouts Comm • 2pm Review/Preview	11 • 3:45 WOG • noon AA • 6:30 Bld&Grds	12 • 7:45am TOPS • 6pm Boy Scouts Troop • 4:30pm WORSHIP & FORMATION	13 • Noon Rotary • 5:30pm DINNER WITH FRIENDS	14 • Noon AA • 10am Yoga	15 • 7pm AA
W4	16 • 7pm NA • 11am Worship Service • Centsibilty Sunday • VBS 11am	17 • 2pm Review/Preview	18 • noon AA	19 • 7:45am TOPS • 6pm Boy Scouts Troop	20	21 • 10am Yoga • Newsletter Deadline • Noon AA	22 • 7pm AA • 8am MENS BREAKFAST
W5	23 • 11am Worship Service • 7pm NA • VBS 11am	24 • 2pm Review/Preview • 6:30pm Pub Theology • 1pm WOG staff	25 • noon AA • SHARENET 10am • 5:30pm SINGLE LADIES	26 • 7:45am TOPS • 6pm Boy Scouts Troop	27 • NOON ROTARY	28 • 10am Yoga • Noon AA	29 • 7pm AA
W6	30 • 10am COMBINED Worship Service • 7pm NA • VBS 11am	31 • 2pm Review/Preview • 7pm Community Chorus	1 • noon AA	2 • 4:30 Worship&Music • 7:45am TOPS • 6pm Boy Scouts Troop	3	4 • 10am Yoga • Noon AA	5 • 7pm AA

First Presbyterian Church of Paw Paw  
P.O. Box 435  
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Paw Paw, MI 49079

Return Service Requested

## Presbyterian News

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[facebook.com/1stprespawpaw](https://facebook.com/1stprespawpaw)



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Rev. Gail Monsma † 269-275-6998 † [revgailfpcpawpaw@gmail.com](mailto:revgailfpcpawpaw@gmail.com)

### **JULY** Anniversaries

7/2 Dave and Judy Combs  
7/2 Mike and Suzy Paynich  
7/7 Make and Christine Lewis  
7/13 Bill and Kristen Welling  
7/19 Bill and Ruth Johnson  
7/28 Todd and Kallie Peña

### **JULY** Birthdays

7/08 Russ Heinsen  
7/19 Nicholas Bolton  
7/22 Les Buhl  
7/27 Heidi Towle  
7/28 Jan Wilder  
7/28 Steve Racette  
7/30 Tom Shoemaker

