

Presbyterian News

First Presbyterian Church of Paw Paw, Michigan

Volume 92 Issue 10

Oct 2023

Please try to attend ...



Greetings Friends in Christ,

We're now at a point in my interim/transitional ministry with you where we will begin work on our Church's Mission Self-Study. This is an important process that needs to be completed before a Pastoral Nominating Committee (PNC) can be formed. The PNC will then begin work on searching and selecting an installed pastor. With our new partnership with First Presbyterian of Decatur, we will also be discerning how we move forward with the probability of calling an installed pastor to serve both congregations.

Interim/Transitional ministry has found that having a Transition Team facilitate the Self-Study works better than having the PNC do this process; this way when a PNC is formed, they can directly begin work on the process of calling a pastor and avoid burn-out.

A Transition Team with Elders from 1st Pres Decatur and Paw Paw has been formed and approved by both Sessions to help us navigate this transitional time and Congregation Mission Self-Study. The members are: Judy Kish, David Vliek, and Marcia Sikkema from Decatur, and Joan Pohl, Tom Shoemaker, and Andy Thorburn from Paw Paw.

Our goal is to have a series of Focus Groups completed before Advent, to finish the Mission Self-Study in the winter-late Spring, and if all goes well, to have a PNC formed in the Spring of 2024.

Focus Groups: One of the steps in moving toward an installed pastor will be important Focus Groups for each congregation. So please, try to attend one of the four being offered for Paw Paw. During these meeting times you will be given the opportunity to share important information to help us focus on our future and eventually form a Pastor Nominating Committee to call an installed pastor. We'll spend some time reviewing important aspects of our congregation and spiritual life, and then transition into future hopes and dreams. Rather than doing another church survey, we want to spend time with you getting direct input from you.

Focus Group Times: please choose to attend one in Fellowship Hall and make sure to RSVP via email or phone call to the church office with the date you'd like to attend at firstpres120@gmail.com.

- **Sunday Oct 29, 11:45am**
- **Wednesday Nov 1, 10:00am.**
- **Sunday, Nov 5, 11:45pm**
- **Tuesday, Nov 14, 6:30pm**

A model of Interim/Transitional Ministry now focuses on five "Focus Points" as we work together to prepare for an installed pastor. They are as follows:

- **Heritage:** what is your history, what has worked, what not so much.
- **Mission:** what is God calling you to do in this time and place and in the future.
- **Leadership:** what is needed, what needs to change? We will review and establish best practices so when an installed pastor is called, they can enter a healthier system.
- **Connections:** the PCUSA is a connectional church; we'll explore this together.
- **Future:** how is God calling this congregation to move forward? What needs to be left behind and how can we be open to new possibilities and ways of doing "church" in order to best serve God and spread the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Dr. Rev David Sawyer, an expert of church leadership and conflict, writes: "According to this model, the church organization will focus on each of these focus points in their own unique ways. The transitional leader's role is to coach, guide, or encourage the outcomes as they emerge. This is not a linear process, but it is important to be aware and address these focus points, realizing some will require more attention than others."

Our goal is for Session, the Transition Team, and myself to communicate and be transparent in what we are doing and how we are moving forward with frequent updates.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask me or a member of the Transition Team.

In Christ's love, light, and hope,
Rev. Gail E. Monsma (Gail)
Cell Ph: 269-275-6998
Email: revgailpcpawpaw@gmail.com

A New Direction For Our Newsletter

With the outset of email and social media, churches have found these various tools to be vital pieces of communication for congregations. Here we've been utilizing a *Weekly Update* via email for over a year, along with Facebook postings, and we're finding these venues help keep people better informed on congregation life than a traditional monthly newsletter. In fact many churches have done away with the monthly newsletter in favor of other creative communication avenues.

So, like many other churches, we will be living into a transition of our monthly newsletter from a mainly events-and-dates emphasis into a discipleship-and-faith-story emphasis. Sure, we'll still carry information on events, but you will notice a change in direction.

The newsletter will begin to reflect to the congregation who we are as a people of faith to ourselves and to the community. Moreover, the emphasis will no longer just be on the pastor sharing faith perspectives, but from a myriad of voices amongst ourselves.

Why? Because we grow from other people's stories in our own faith and discipleship!

Then, in a world where younger generations are asking, "What is church?", this transition will help in assisting all of us to be better witnesses of Christ's transforming presence and power. Furthermore, in a world where Christianity desperately needs credibility, this transition will help us live into this.

We invite you to write about your faith journey or reflections for the newsletter

We invite you to share stories, essays, thoughts, devotionals, and poems, etc. Pictures and art can be submitted too!

Your faith story can be up to one page or as simple as one paragraph. Photos should include a short description. If you're under 18, include your parent's permission.

Send your faith story to Chuck Williams at aroundvanburen@gmail.com. He'll get in touch with you to let you know when we're planning to use it. We reserve the right to edit submissions but we'll contact you if there will be any major changes.

Whatever works for you! It may be easier to text/voice Chuck at 269-621-5359 or simply talk to him at church. Or place it in his mailbox at church. "If we can sit down together in a quiet room at church where I can take notes, that would be best," he says.

Please no politics or writing to change other people's minds. We are sharing our faith struggles, joys, and journeys together here. Remember, we are PCUSA.

Sharing your faith journey, your relationship with our church, and your passions in life and mission are what this is all about. So if you're interested in sharing ongoing stories about your own faith journey or your thoughts on faith, this is for you. Have suggestions for people Chuck can interview? Let us know.

Chuck Williams, Newsletter Editor
Rev. Gail Monsma, Interim Pastor

at the Wine Festival Service





October Anniversaries

10/4 Royal and Judy Haefner
10/4 Gene and Phyllis Sahr
10/14 Robert and Kathy Vought
10/19 Todd and Joan Pohl
10/24 Steven and Karen Racette
10/27 Daniel and Caitlin Stanowick



October Birthdays

10/1 Susan Kaiser Greenland
10/1 Sue Winter
10/2 Meg Waddell
10/5 Nicole Colgren
10/5 Jennifer Combs
10/6 Bobby Yarbrough
10/7 Kristen Garceau
10/7 Todd Peña
10/8 Kathy Vought
10/12 Pat Peters
10/12 Brandon Mroczek
10/12 Matthew Mroczek
10/12 Lauren Mroczek
10/17 Adele Walters
10/21 Ric Baker
10/21 Mary Ellen Smith
10/22 Diane Triquet
10/22 Mike Walters

PRESBYTERIAN Women

- ★ The potluck with the Decatur Presbyterian Women was a great success. And thanks to a fantastic planning committee!
- ★ It was decided to have another Plant Sale next spring. The sale last May was super. So start thinking Plants and Spring. The Plant Sale will be held May 11, 2024 in the church parking lot. If you are doing any trimming of plants this fall, Jan Ogden will store for you this winter. Be sure to label them.
- ★ We are planning to take cookies to all Paw Paw teachers and staff to brighten their days during fall conferences. Cookie donations will be greatly appreciated.
- ★ A potluck is being planned for Oct. 29 right after church service. We will be inviting Decatur to join us. More information coming soon. Save the date.
- ★ Next Presbyterian Women meeting is Oct. 4, 2023 at 6:30pm for fellowship, cider, donuts and Bible study. Meeting at 7:00pm.

Marge McKee

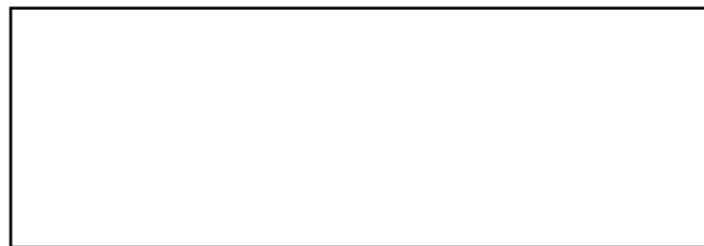
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Return Service Requested

Presbyterian News

[youtube.com/@1stprespawpaw](https://www.youtube.com/@1stprespawpaw)

facebook.com/1stprespawpaw



Church Office 269-657-3111 + firstpres120@gmail.com + Office hours Tues-Wed-Thu 9 am - 3 pm

Rev. Gail Monsma + 269-275-6998 + revgailfpcpawpaw@gmail.com

GOOD FAITH

*"The congregation
has become my
spiritual family"*

For me, coming to this church as an employee has given me a spiritual home, a spiritual family, as well as a work place. The congregation has become my spiritual family. I can hear God speaking to me now. I never got it before but now I do. God is speaking to me.

Billie Stewart has been the 1stprespawpaw Office Administrator for nearly three years and in that time she has touched all our lives. Thank you Billie!