

# PRESBYTERIAN NEWS

First Presbyterian Church of Paw Paw, Michigan

Volume 88, Issue 4-5

April/May 2020

## “HOW LONG, O LORD, HOW LONG?”

--*Habakkuk 1:2*

It is nearing the end of April, and we have yet to hear whether the governor’s “stay home” order will be extended or lifted. The number of daily confirmed cases of COVID-19 decreases and rises, and is still registering at a rate that is threatening the safety and functionality of our hospitals and health care workers. The future for small business owners looks bleak. Neighbors’ views range from thinking we should stay in longer to advocating that we go back to business as usual.

Regardless of what our neighbors and our state lawmakers decide, we as a church will have to come up with our own way of being church and determining our “new normal,” within all legal requirements, of course. When you picture returning to church for worship, what do you need to feel safe? How do you see the church functioning in the weeks and months to come so that all feel welcome to participate in various ways? What is our calling as church to foster and grow community in a world still vulnerable to unpredictable epidemics and disease?

The prophet Habakkuk lived at a time when corruption and evil threatened society. Habakkuk longed for a community that would behave justly and fairly, and cried out in despair to God while waiting for a “new normal” that never seemed to emerge. God’s word to Habakkuk encouraged the prophet to turn not to false, empty idols, but to trust that the Lord would do as the Lord has always done, bringing glory and salvation to God’s people. Habakkuk’s lamenting turns to adoration, even in that moment of despair:

*Though the fig tree does not blossom, and no fruit is on the vines; though the produce of the olive fails and the fields yield no food; though the flock is cut off from the fold, and there is no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will exult in the God of my salvation.*

---*Habakkuk 3:17-18*

Let us be the church that remembers the big picture of what God has done, that sees what God is doing, and encourages one another so that all may rejoice in the Lord!

Peace,

*Tiffany*



*Springtime buds remind us that God’s promise of new life is sure and true.*

## WHAT SESSION WANTS YOU TO KNOW

Our church Session continues to meet on a regular basis via Zoom. Since the time that we suspended in-person worship, Session has been committed to caring for our congregation, our community and our church staff.

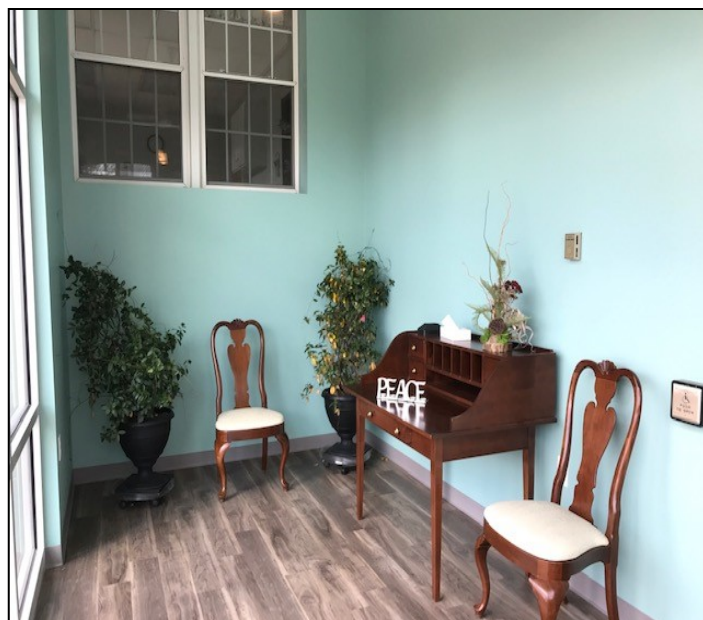
At the March Session meeting, the elders voted affirmatively to continue to pay our church staff their regular salaries and benefits, and staff continue to do their jobs in some capacity, though for the most part, remotely. In April, Session again affirmed the decision to keep paying our staff through the extended shelter in place order.



*Treasurer Dave Nielsen continues to work with Bookkeeper Joan Ford to keep the church's finances up to date.*

As Treasurer Dave Nielsen reported in a video message last week, pledged giving for the first quarter of 2020 is slightly ahead of budget, and the trend in giving for the period during the shelter-in-place order is no different than the giving for the weeks prior to sheltering in. There has been a dip in unpledged giving and loose offering, understandably, along with an expected decrease in rent since outside groups are no longer able to use our church building. We hope to make up for this loss of income, however, by adding an on-line giving link to our webpage and social media posts.

Our 2019/20 Property Improvement Project (adding a new back entrance) was completed through Phase I just prior to the shut-down. The finishing touches on the interior of the vestibule include a modern gray-toned wood grain laminate floor and a soothing coat of light teal paint.



*Thank you to the decorating sub-committee of Long Range Planning for creating this soothing, welcoming atmosphere in our new entrance.*

The shutdown is not necessarily delaying Phase II of our project, which is the paving of the new parking area, as the ground has needed more time to thaw and settle. Once the paving companies are back in business, our Long Range Planning Committee will get updated bids on the parking lot and put a plan in place to complete the project.

See more updates from Session in the reports from Mission, Formation and Worship and Music Commissions in this newsletter.

## NEW WORSHIP SERIES GETS TO THE HEART OF THE MATTER

*Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.*

-- Acts 2:46-47

For those first followers of Christ, being church meant engaging in intentional yet natural ways: spending time together, breaking bread, praising God, and having the goodwill of all the people. For the Easter Season (now through the end of May), we'll also follow those same moves in how we worship on-line and in our homes with a new liturgical format inspired by Dr. Marcia McFee of Worship Design Studio and her series, "The Heart of the Matter."

The Easter story sets the tone: After the events of Holy Week, the disciples are devastated. They are in the midst of full-blown grief and disbelief. Into the heart of that grief came a stunning revelation—life had overcome death. God's faithfulness would build them up once again and bind them together.

Is it possible to feel this way today? The way we worship in the coming weeks will say, "Yes, it is! Come and see! Live and love! This is the heart of the matter!"



*Worship at home may look and feel a little different, but also provides opportunities to be creative and have fun.*

With our new video worship format, you are invited to spend time together in the temples we create in our homes, with fresh flowers from the garden or family photos, painted rocks and candles and whatever else makes your space feel special. We'll break bread and be encouraged to have our breakfast or brunch while we worship (something we wouldn't do in the sanctuary!), and give thanks with glad and generous hearts for whatever feast we are able to muster in these oddly-stocked times. We'll praise God by hearing God's word and reflecting through song and prayer, and end each worship with an invitation to do something - a hug, a card, a prayer - to foster the goodwill of the people.

As Dr. Mcfee says, "It may feel odd to have moved into the season of Easter, a season of celebration, in the midst of these difficult times. Perhaps it is an opportunity to really take into consideration that, at the heart of our Christian faith, we are called to live our lives in the belief that death is not the final word. This is why Christians are called "Easter People." The tomb becomes the womb of new life. We cannot wait for everything to be alright to proclaim our Easter faith of resurrection hope. And so we, like so many Christians under duress since those first disciples, are invited to worship our everlasting God, and do what we can to help people continue to worship wherever they are.

## MONDAY MUSICAL MEDITATIONS

We may be missing our choir and singing hymns together, but our talented team of church musicians continue to share their gifts through recordings, which have become weekly "Monday Musical Meditations," and Church School music videos shared on the church's webpage and Facebook page. Thank you Terry, Chris, Brandon and many others who contribute pictures, painting, words and more to go with the music.

**Pastor Tiffany &  
Worship and Music Commission**



## FORMATION COMMISSION: CONFIRMATION CLASS CONTINUES VIA ZOOM



***Sam Vought, Bridget McCafferty and Braelynn and Brandon Mattson help Pastor Tiffany lead Palm Sunday Worship.***

Please pray with gratitude for our 2020 Confirmation Class: Braelynn Mattson, Bridget McCafferty and Sam Vought. These three eleven and twelve year-olds are pioneering the most unusual Confirmation Class yet!

Our class had just started meeting when the “shelter in place” order went into effect. But it did not take long at all for these kids to figure out Zoom (and teach Pastor Tiffany how to use it too!) And they very capably helped lead our first Zoom service for Palm Sunday.

The class continues to meet online, using the latest PC USA Confirmation Curriculum, “Big God, Big Questions,” but with a bit of a twist. One of the students, Bridget, has an interest in exploring multiple faiths before affirming her beliefs, and has also been learning about Taoism, Judaism, Islam and other faiths. The whole class has benefitted from already seeing that we have much in common with other faiths and cultures.

Look forward to seeing and hearing more from the 2020 Confirmation Class in the coming weeks, and pray for all our students—especially our seniors—as they end their year on a very unexpected note. More to come on how we help to celebrate our graduates in May or June.

## MISSION COMMISSION: REACHING OUT GLOBALLY AND LOCALLY

The Pentecost Offering has begun for this year. The monies raised help our youth by supporting young adult volunteers, ministries with youth and children at risk. These three comprise 60% of the monies received. The rest, 40% stays with our congregation to help develop and support our young people in the church and our community.

We have reached our goal for Montana de Luz. This year we raised over \$750.00 which will cover our donation to support Erick and Loida this year.

United Christian Services continues the work in providing emergency assistance while encouraging self-sufficiency in the greater Paw Paw area. Last year the organization provided over \$59,533.00 in financial assistance to people in need. This winter they provided over 850 winter coats through Operation Warmup. Help was given to over 1,173 families or 3,481 people. People came from all ages and special needs.



***Patrick McCafferty (second from left) joins UCS volunteers passing out food boxes to families in need. Patrick will also be serving as the manager of the Michelle Peaslee Learning Garden this season.***

United Christian Services and Eleanor’s Pantry are both funded by our church’s monthly Cents-Ability offering. This year because of the pandemic, the need has been even greater. Your support this year is very important. Without your help and generosity the programs could not be possible. Thank you!

***Eleda Zygadlo***  
***Mission Commission Chairperson***

## BIBLE STUDY CONTINUES VIA EMAIL

Friends, Dave Nielsen and I have had the pleasure of leading a Bible Study group that traditionally meets on Sunday morning before worship. Since the Corona Virus has forced us to be at home we have continued the class via email. We are presently completing our journey through the book of Luke. This week Dave will take the passages from the Road to Emmaus through the Ascension of Jesus in Chapter 24. Each week Dave or I prepare a lesson of Power Point slides and images with



*As inviting as a fireside chat, Tom Shoemaker and Dave Nielsen's PowerPoint lessons on the Gospel of Luke are available to all who seek a deeper connection with God's word.*

commentary from our study Bibles and other reliable sources. The only unreliable sources might be our own words or thoughts that are sometimes added.

Next week I will take up the leadership as we return to the book of Luke in Chapter 15 and look at many of the stories of Jesus' ministry while here on earth. The lessons are usually 20 to 30 slides in length and cover the entire text of the sections under study. I am using the New International Version of the Bible for my scripture text.

Missing church? We would love to have you join us and doing so is easy. All you have to do is send me an email at [tommyshoe@yahoo.com](mailto:tommyshoe@yahoo.com) requesting to join our study and I will add you to our weekly list. The best part is that like God's gift of grace to us all, it is FREE.

You can have the study for your own as long as you have memory on your computer and a willingness to keep it. Some people have been known to read the study more than once. When you are done, the delete key is like magic, poof and it disappears. You can read each lesson at your own pace, all at once or in bits and pieces. And that's not all, each section is pulled from a best-selling book and an incredible life changing story. Dave and I are happy to share.

*Grace and Peace,*

*Tom Shoemaker*

## MEN'S CLOTHING NEEDED

United Christian Services Director Alison Harrop has reported a shortage of men's clothing for distribution. So, if the stay at home order has helped you gain weight or encouraged you to sort out the clothes that no longer fit, please consider donating items you no longer need.

Lydia's Closet, the clothing ministry of UCS, is looking for clothes for men. Clothes should be wearable and clean. All sizes are accepted. The clothes will go to any who need them.

Many of those supported by the closet are coming out of our local jails or state prisons and are arriving in Paw Paw for short-term housing with few or no personal belongings. Thus, the need is ongoing and can use the support of any in our congregation who are willing.

Clothing donations can be dropped off at UCS in the Freshwater building, or left inside the Pine Street entrance at our church. Due to space restrictions, only men's clothes are being accepted at this time.

Thank you for sharing if you are able. Together we are the body of Christ!

*—Tom Shoemaker*



## EASTER GREETINGS FROM NEAR AND FAR!



### APRIL/MAY BIRTHDAYS

04/02	April Miller Sheeran	05/01	Hayden Beck	05/25	Barb Dundon
04/02	Joan Pohl	05/01	Jeff Marcelletti	05/27	Mallory Paynich
04/04	Jerry Miller	05/06	John Faul	05/28	Randy Thorburn
04/06	Kailyn Walters	05/06	Marge McKee	05/29	Kathy McCloskey
04/07	Kristen Welling	05/07	Zoe Schuitmaker		
04/08	Mary Adams	05/11	Hanna Moore		
04/10	Scott Beck	05/12	Taylor Vanderveen		
04/10	Randal Rhodes	05/12	Dave Wilder		
04/11	Marlene Suter	05/13	Jim vanWestrienen		
04/11	Samuel Vought	05/13	Susan J. Rhodes		
04/11	Connor Willard	05/14	Dave Nielsen		
04/12	Tyler Burns	05/15	Per Hagard		
04/13	Ginnie Moore	05/16	Braelynn Mattson		
04/14	Timothy Combs	05/18	Sophie Wilder		
04/15	Sally Yarbrough	05/19	Todd Pohl		
04/19	Kathleen Weisner	05/21	Joshua Walters		
04/21	Betty Wassman	05/21	Bob Yarbrough		
04/24	Don Weaver	05/24	Emily Duncan		

### April/May ANNIVERSARIES

04/03	Robert & Crecia Tiffany	05/01	George & Catey Bolton	05/26	Josh & Juliann Bradish
04/05	Rick & Sally Yarbrough	05/01	Allen McNeil & Julia Payne	05/30	Tom & Kristen Garceau
04/05	Fred & C. Sue Martin	05/11	Jerry & Barb Dundon	05/30	Nick & Erica Bolton
04/10	Harold & Freida Durringer	05/12	Brian & Lexis Fath		
04/13	John & Carie Faul	05/14	Tom Shoemaker & Tonda Boothby		
04/15	Bert & Jan Ogden	05/18	Randal & Susan J Rhodes		
04/25	Doug & Colleen Stiles	05/24	Matthew & Tiffany Hess		
		05/26	Ryan & Emily Turanzas		

Editor's Note: The birthdays and anniversaries are computer-generated. If we are missing your special day or our information is incorrect, please notify Sue in the church office at 657-3111 or email: [firstpres1@btc-bci.com](mailto:firstpres1@btc-bci.com).

### QUARANTINE CREATIVITY

What crafts or hobbies have you found time to explore during this time of sheltering in place? Painters Mary Martin and Bill Buhl have found time to keep their brushes wet, and Marlene Suter is already cultivating her Michigan garden. Are you sewing? Baking? Hanging new cabinets in the garage?? Help us fill our newsletter with more creativity - send pictures of your latest creative endeavors to [firstpres1@btc-bci.com](mailto:firstpres1@btc-bci.com).



*"He is Risen!" Mary Martin painted this stunning picture while sheltering in with Wayne in Florida.*



First Presbyterian Church  
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Return Service Requested

# Presbyterian News

First Presbyterian Church of Paw Paw, Michigan

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## STAYING CONNECTED THROUGH APRIL/MAY 2020

- **WORSHIP EVERY SUNDAY.** By Sunday morning, worship videos will be posted on Facebook and on the VIDEOS page at [www.pawpawpres.org](http://www.pawpawpres.org). A link will also be sent out by e-mail. **If you are not receiving e-mails from us, please let us know!!!**
- **MID-WEEK DEVOTIONS:** Monday Musical Meditations, Covenant Devotions, Session Updates and special messages for our Church School Kiddos go out most mornings via e-mail, at [www.pawpawpres.org](http://www.pawpawpres.org) and on Facebook.
- **SCHEDULE A PASTORAL CARE CALL.** Pastor Tiffany is available to meet with you by phone, FaceTime, Zoom and will even come serenade you through a window upon request. Please don't hesitate to call and keep in touch: (614) 596-1995, or [tkomccaff@gmail.com](mailto:tkomccaff@gmail.com)
- **Sunday, May 3 @ 11:30.** Formation Commission monthly meeting via Zoom.
- **Thursday, May 7 @ 9:00 a.m.** Long Rang Planning Committee meets via Zoom.
- **Thursday, May 14 @ 6:00 p.m.** Worship and Music Commission meets via Zoom.
- **Tuesday, May 19 @ 6:30 p. m.** Session/Deacons meet via Zoom.
- **Now thru May 31.** Pentecost Offering—See insert.

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