

First Presbyterian Church

Everybody's  Church

As Everybody's Church we commit ourselves to serving Christ by cultivating mission, inclusion and community.

First Quarter 2021

Property Improvements During COVID

To meet the challenges of 2020, volunteers and staff acted with great planning and forethought to keep Everybody's Church up-to-date and looking good. Efforts on the exterior care of our church continued as usual and we took advantage of the reduced use of the building interior to get some much-needed improvements done.

The Worship Committee took the lead to completely upgrade the main hallway of the music area. This was made possible using funds from generous contributions over the years to FPC's music programs. Under the able guidance of Cathy Dinkeloo, the hallway was upgraded to make an inspiring atmosphere for the Church Choir and all the volunteers and users of the Music Ministries area. The old flooring tiles that dated back to the construction of the hallway were replaced with a gorgeous hardwood floor. The cinder block walls are now covered with drywall and freshly painted. The ceiling height was raised, making the space even airier and seemingly larger. With the addition of new seating and artwork, the music ministry will enjoy a beautiful space for years to come.

Rev. Bethany Peerbolte and Cathy Dinkeloo got together to completely re-



Music Hallway

conceptualize the Youth Room on the second floor. The youth room project modernized the space and made it more functional for the youth, as well as other groups in our community. The kitchenette remains but everything else has been changed. The teaching area will be comfortable and encourage collaborative discussions. To maintain options for the space we have modular tables that can be arranged into many different shapes and functions, from a conference table,

continued on page 3

First Presbyterian Church

1669 W. Maple Road
Birmingham, MI 48009

248.644.2040

www.everybodyschurch.org

email:

contact@everybodyschurch.org

Weekly Worship

Sundays:

10:00 AM Worship
in the Sanctuary
Online and In-Person with
Limited Seating

Pre-Recorded Special Services

Rejoicing Spirits Worship on
Fourth Sundays at 5:00 PM
on Google Meets

Program Staff

John Judson
Senior Pastor

Bethany Peerbolte
Associate Pastor for Youth
and Mission

Cindy Merten
Director of Christian Education
& All Abilities Inclusion Ministries

Andrew Herbruck
Director of Music Ministries

Julie Madden
Ted Thode
Kate Thoresen
Parish Associates

Pastor's Corner

by Dr. John Judson

Recently in a staff meeting Rev. Bethany was talking about keeping her plants alive. It turns out that one of her secrets to successful plant rearing is a grow light. She told us that the grow light made all the difference between drooping plants and healthy plants. As she was telling us about her plant caring efforts, I began to muse on the possibility of a human grow light. I understand that there are UV lights that are supposed to perk us up and lighten our mood in dark winter months, but somehow those have never quite worked for me. So instead, I wished for a light that would make me feel like I did before Covid-19 arrived on the scene. Later though, I realized that I already possessed a human grow light. It is the light of Christ within me and within us.

The gift of God is that even in the darkest of times there is light, the light of Christ glowing within us. This is the message of Good Friday and Easter morning. The message is that God's light, the light that came in the person of God's only Son, Jesus, cannot be overcome by darkness. That Christ's presence cannot be kept from glowing within us because God's love will

ensure that Christ never leaves us. I realize that in these days of the still-spreading virus, too few vaccines, and the sickness and death of friends and family, that finding the light of Christ can be difficult. Yet over the past several thousand years, God's people have born witness to the reality of the ever-present light of Christ through the most dark and difficult of times. And we can bear witness as well, even before the sun finally breaks through and spring is upon us, even before we are back together, even before we celebrate again Easter morning. Even now we can bear witness to the light of the love of God in Jesus Christ because it is glowing within us.

My prayer for you is you will find the light of Christ's love within you this week and allow it to glow brightly, bringing you the joy and peace God desires for you.

John



Mission

Property Renovations, continued

to group pods, individual work stations, and even a round setup for group conversations. These variable configurations will allow anyone to have exactly the space set-up they need to meet. Of course, one corner will be devoted to games and fun.

We can thank Cindy Merten for her leadership as we now have a Sensory/Dance Therapy room. It was funded by an FPC property care project, made possible by a First Foundation grant, and serves both our AAIM families and FAR. The renovation included a new hard surface floor, a mirrored wall, a sensory wall, a sound system for music, and window treatments.

In late October we finished the repaving and drainage modifications to rid us of the pooling of water at the end of the east driveway (aka, Lake Pleasant). Thanks go to Larry Malover for researching the problem with the city and hiring a knowledgeable contractor. Larry and David Paterson put their heads together and had a locking doorway installed in the cloister (north) hallway to enhance security for

Hand-in-Hand, Sunday school and FAR. Finally, the old tile in the Eagle Entrance was removed and replaced with carpet matching the Welcome Center.

As usual, the Gardening Angels kept our gardens beautiful with seasonal arrangements around the building entrances and doing the intense work of weeding and planting to give such a cheerful appearance to the flower beds and grounds. Also, the courtyard got a major clean-up and pruning to make this area more open, attractive and user-friendly.



The Youth Room conversation area.

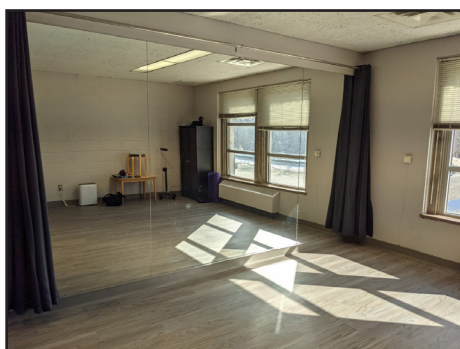


The Youth Room air hockey.

The Gardening Angels also came up with the idea of adding Christmas lighting to the trees and bushes at a time of year when we all need a little extra cheer. This tradition will continue and be expanded in future years.



Youth Room tables and chairs.



Sensory room with laminate floor and mirrored wall.



Sensory room activity wall.

Mission

First Foundation Supports Beds4Kids Mission



Exodus 33:14

The LORD replied, "My presence will go with you and I will give you rest."

Everyone agrees that we all need a good night's sleep. We wake up with some energy, ready to take on the day. But what happens to kids who don't have a bed to sleep in? They are at risk for increased injuries, hypertension, obesity, depression, self-harm and even suicidal thoughts. Their ability to perform well in school is certainly diminished. One area man, Sam Misuraca of Huntington Woods, decided someone should do something about that.

So he did. He and his wife, Becky, formed Beds4Kids which is dedicated solely to building and distributing beds to children and youth who need one.

Our Parish Associate, the Rev. Kate Thoresen, said, "We saw what a widespread difference one person can make! Because of Sam, as many as 800 children and youth in the Detroit metro area now have their own bed."

Sam may have initiated the response, but partnering with Kate and the Faith Communities Coalition on Foster Care fueled it. Kate formed this network when she realized how many children and youth in Michigan needed more support than the state and the state's child welfare workers could give them. Largely through her efforts there are now more than 250 churches, individuals, organizations and agencies across Michigan that work together to

"We saw what a widespread difference one person can make! Because of Sam, as many as 800 children and youth in the Detroit metro area now have their own bed."

provide goods and services to kids who have been removed from their homes.

Kate connected Beds4Kids with FPC's First Foundation last year. The organization asked for \$7,500 for construction materials and bedding. This amount was enthusiastically granted and the funds provided beds for 150 children and youth. One hundred percent of the funds went directly to supplies; none went to overhead or administrative costs. Volunteers, some from FPC, supplied the labor.

The grant to Beds4Kids was one of 16 grants First Foundation awarded in 2020. In all, \$114,000 was given last year. First Foundation, almost 40 years old, now has a balance of more than \$5 million. Most of that has come from legacy gifts given to the foundation over the years and then carefully invested and managed. If you are interested in finding out how you could contribute, please contact the chair, Bruce Nyberg, at 248.720.9051 or any of the committee's members: Keith Butler, Cathy Gearig, Waymond Harris, Leslie Helwig, Cindy Lanzen, or Terry Palleschi.



Be our Advocate on Social Media

You can help the church with only a few minutes of your time each week. If you see something you like from FPC on Facebook, like it! Better, choose the heart reaction. Still better yet, comment on the post. Even one emoji as a comment helps the church's page get noticed more. Once Facebook sees people interacting with our posts they will share our stuff with other people FOR FREE!



Mission

Our Pontiac Partnership Continues to Thrive

Generous hearts and giving souls continue to shine through the congregation to the Alcott community. Just in the last couple of months: Hand-in-Hand preschool children packed



treat bags for 70 Alcott children in late November. Loving hands prepared homemade cookies to accompany groceries that are delivered on



Thursdays in December. We delivered special packages with pajamas, hot chocolate and cookies to more than 50 Alcott children in December. We donated warm coats and other clothing to families in need. And, volunteers continue to deliver groceries from Forgotten Harvest to 16+ families each week.



In addition, the congregation provided Angel Tree gifts to 32 Alcott

children. Each child received two gift bags – one full of clothes; the other with toys. Gift bags were delivered to Alcott mid-December so parents had the opportunity to pick up the gifts from school prior to Christmas. Our



Thursday grocery delivery has also fostered some special bonds between the families and our volunteers. We were able to provide help to some of these families as a result of these special ties. We packed 125 bins of



food in November with Baskets of Love and delivered them to the school in mid-December to help provide additional food to families during the holiday break. Parents were asked to drive through the school parking lot to collect the bins. Volunteers from church were on hand to help load bins into cars.

We collected hats and mittens at the church during the holiday along with a Michigan map (painted by our own Diane Bert). We delivered those, along with a few needed uniforms to Alcott.



Students returned to in-person learning beginning February 1st. The *continued on page 6*

Mission

Caring for Foster Care Kids Grows in 2020

Collectively, you all have provided a remarkable safety net in 2020 for our children, youth and families involved in foster care and for those most in need. In spite of the hard challenges that surrounded us during 2020, there were several ways that you caring people, reached out to help our most invisible and vulnerable kids and families this past year.

While many donations were dropped off anonymously, there is a list of those whom I'm aware of who contributed in one way or another for the well being of our children and youth in need.

Here are a few examples: Together you made 4107 face masks, crafted over 100 hand-knit hats, scarves and throws, as well as created over 75 no-sew fleece blankets and throws for our many kids in need.



Some of you donated gift cards, new items, and in-kind articles valuing thousands of dollars.



Room 141-142 has become like a huge Foster Closet due to many donations.

In addition, several of you have supported our youth aging out of foster care through gifts, prayers, clothing



and household items as some began independent living. Some learned about circumstances leading to foster care through webinars and reading Justin and Alexis Black's heart-wrenching book, *Redefining Normal: How Two Foster Kids Beat the Odds to Discover Healing, Happiness and Love*.

In spite of not being able to be together for most of 2020, we have been able to be a part of that huge jig saw puzzle that comes together to show God's love in this world.



Justin and Alexis Black, authors

Pontiac Partnership, cont'd

start dates were staggered and students are split into two different cohorts to meet the requirements of how many people can be in the building at any one time. By the end of February, all students (with parental consent) will receive two in-person learning days and two virtual learning days. Parents have the option to keep children at home for four days of virtual learning. The principal has asked for prayers for good health and safety of teachers, staff, students and parents during this transition to in-person learning. Volunteer tutors are cautiously optimistic to begin tutoring (virtual or otherwise) early this Spring. We've offered to help provide additional school supplies to the school and/or assistance with mailing packets to the children who remain as virtual learners. Special thanks for Barb Linnenbrink and her small army of Alcott Media Center volunteers who are working hard to prepare the library for the students to return by weeding out-of-date books off the shelves and sharing procedures for checking out books with the teachers.



Mission and Inclusion

Mission Recap from Pastor Bethany Peerbolte

November SERVICE CHALLENGE

9 Churches | 5,000 Hours of service | One Mission

Many things in 2020 got harder; being the Pastor of Mission, however, got a little easier. Our church family has stepped up in ways I couldn't have imagined before. Anytime there was a need we had people offering to drive,

lend a hand, make a purchase, and give their time and energy to the cause.

Our partnership with the area churches in November blew our volunteer-hour goal away. We had blankets being made in homes for nearly two continuous months. Those blankets are already keeping kids warm as they sleep and sit in virtual classrooms at home.

Every time I came to the church, the

donation shed was spilling over with hats and mittens. The Angel Tree still survived even with us not being in-person because of your willingness to go with the flow and try making the purchases and deliveries in a new way.

Thank you for everything you have done for our ministry of mission! I look forward to what God will ask of us next.

Covid-19 Changes, but Doesn't Stop, Angels' Place Ministry

by Terry Chaney



Marcie and I transferred to this church, FPC Birmingham in 2008, primarily due to the congregation's efforts toward the inclusion of people with disabilities. We

heard about, and more significantly, experienced this, as we became involved in the congregation. Marcie and I are both totally blind. Marcie is a rehabilitation professional, now retired, who specialized in blindness and technology.

We became involved in the Rejoicing Spirits services soon after we joined. As the service evolved from once monthly to twice monthly, I found that I could contribute by authoring scripts that allowed participants to act out a story rather than listen to sermons. Also, as the service and its requirements evolved, I saw a need for better transportation coordination to and from the service. Therefore, I became involved in coordinating our bus ministry to several Angels' Place homes.

Finally, as a summer project, I worked at the national level with one

of the founders of Rejoicing Spirits in contacting the ministries that had been established to get information on how they were doing. I became aware that the congregations faring the best had some affiliation with group home ministries. All of this piqued my interest in Angels' Place.

Since I am retired, I was able to take advantage of an opportunity to pursue a Master of Arts degree at Ecumenical Theological Seminary. One of the requirements of my internship project was to initiate a ministry. I chose to start a small group ministry with one of the Angels' Place homes with which our congregation had formed a relationship.

Initially, I saw my purpose as doing some kind of bible study with a lot of people talking. I very soon realized that what I really needed was a music component, and thus asked Marcie to join us. Marcie is a choir member and also plays guitar. She has also probably forgotten more camp and other types of songs than most people will ever learn.

I started with two homes, combining their residents, but as we got to know each other I was asked if the homes could be visited separately. Of course, I said yes. This made me aware of the cultural differences between homes, something we address by how we do

prayer and bible study in each home.

Pre-Covid-19, I was responsible for visiting each of the four homes we worked with and spending time with the residents. I also had to find a volunteer driver for each visit. This coordination required a lot of time. Additionally, at times we would arrive at a home only to find they weren't expecting us, so we would have to cancel our visit on the spot. Now, during Covid-19, I have been able to share the coordination and administrative responsibilities with an Angels' Place care giver who is responsible for spiritual development. We meet through Google Meet and put the events on both the home's calendar and mine. Now, I have fewer administrative responsibilities and coordinate with only one person. If a calendar mix-up occurs, we can easily cancel and I can work out any issues later. With less time spent on administrative tasks, we have been able to add two homes to our work.

I've found the post Covid-19 virtual work less stressful though I do miss the physical contact and doing things like bringing shakers. However I don't miss going out in the weather, worrying about Marcie and her instrument and finding a driver. I hope to continue, and if possible, expand this virtual ministry.

Community

Hand-in-Hand Experiences Christmas in New and Old Ways

Covid-19 could not stop the magic of Christmas happening this year throughout the Hand-in-Hand Early Learning Center. Our four-year old preschool classes and young fives Christmas concerts were videotaped and sent to parents. The children were delightful and the families loved watching their children dance and move to many wonderful Christmas songs.

Cindy Merten traditionally tells a very interactive story of the birth of Christ in person with each of our classes, but this year it was delivered

by her telling the story through a pre-recorded video. The children loved the story of the birth of Christ with some experiencing it for the very first time.

Our Christmas tree, along with our singing Frosty the Snowman, was a big hit with all of the children and created a festive atmosphere. Christmas parties, art projects and memories were created.

We continually thank God that The First Presbyterian Hand-in-Hand Early Learning Center has remained open so we are able to continue the very important in-person teaching with the young children in our community.



Whale and Elephant rooms watching Cindy Merten tell the Christmas Story.



A 4-year old Christmas Concert.



A 3-year old Christmas Concert.

Drive-In Worship Services

We were extremely fortunate to be ahead of the curve with our live-streaming capabilities. We had been online long before the pandemic hit. This meant we were able to pivot quickly when other churches were wondering what to do. Many of those churches began purchasing FM transmitters to do parking lot services. Their success inspired us to also try the format. We had three services on Epiphany that allowed people to gather and sing together safely in their cars. The transmitter was quickly put to use again for a prayer service for our nation in the week leading up to the Presidential Inauguration. Again, our church family was able to gather in a larger number safely in their own vehicles. This format of worship is proving to be a great benefit to what we are able to offer. On Ash Wednesday, we again worshiped at noon in the parking lot together, safely separated.

Luminary Walk Very Meaningful

When we planned the luminary prayer walk we weren't sure who would want to do this. As with much of the planning in 2020, it was a new idea and completely new territory for our church. The weeks leading up to Christmas we gathered prayers and hopes from our church family to place along the walk. The luminaries were put out the Saturday before Christmas and that evening we had our first visitors. Though it is hard to know how many of you took advantage of this walk, it has been a great joy to hear how the experience impacted the Christmas season. We heard from

members who live nearby and loved the lit path around our church every night, praying for the community along the way. We heard stories of it being the first time people were on the church's campus, and how meaningful it was to be here again. You may not know, but many people in the surrounding neighborhoods cut through our parking lot and columbarium on their daily walks and we offer them a moment of beauty and peace. This is what Everybody's Church is all about. Look for our upcoming prayer walk during Holy Week.

Family News

In Sympathy:

- † Maurcine Kaye Reuss, wife of Lloyd Reuss, mother of Charlene Grandelius (Joel) and Mark Reuss (Kim), December 18, 2020
- † Eugenia Robson, mother of David Robson (Keri), January 3, 2021
- † Thomas Kirchhofer, husband of Swid Kirchhofer, January 4, 2021
- † Patricia Kelly Watt, mother of Bill Watt (Diana), January 8, 2021
- † Janice Hatcher, companion of John Rogers, January 12, 2021
- † Katherine (Kay) Capp, mother of Steve Capp (Krista), February 4, 2021
- † Ella Gene Johnston, mother of Gail Currin (Glenn), January 18, 2021
- † D. Eugene (Gene) Thompson, husband of Ann Thompson, February 12, 2021

Baptisms:

- ❖ Anna Mary Quigley, daughter of Kyle and Jennifer Quigley, January 10, 2021
- ❖ Ryan Marshall Samuels, son of Steven and Samantha Samuels, February 28, 2021
- ❖ Owen Christopher Lyttle, son of Chris and Megan Lyttle, February 28, 2021

Births:

- ☞ Noelle Margaret Paterson, daughter of Brian and Anna Paterson, December 27, 2020
- ☞ Alayne Ann Thode, daughter of Rev. Ted and Erica Thode, February 5, 2021
- ☞ Laila Addison Fernander, daughter of Lowell (Allen) and Candace Fernander, February 19, 2021

Community

Five Female Eagle Scouts from Troop 1001 in Inaugural Class



Troop 1001 is purported to be the oldest Boy Scout Troop in Michigan. This year, Troop 1001 has five new Eagle Scouts, all female and part of the Inaugural Class of Female Eagle Scouts in BSA. These scouts earned the rank of Eagle on February 8, 2021, the 111th anniversary of BSA. The Eagle Scouts from left to right are: Chloe Kreindler, 16, Junior, Seaholm High School; Mia Mastrangelo, 18, Senior, Marian High School; Kate Tang, 16, Junior, International Academy Okma; Katie Skaleski, 17, Junior, International Academy Okma; Margot Nardone, 14, Eighth Grader, Derby Middle School. Way to go, Eagle Scouts!

New Elders, Deacons and Congregational Nominating Committee

The new class of Elders and Deacons are, Elders: Morgan Fry, Waymond Harris, Ben Kohns, Stephanie Kummer, Kara Moore, David Simonelli; and Deacons: Ben Black, Steve Capp, Deb Coviak, Rose Gendruschke, Paul Gillin, Liz Perinoff, Dexter Snyder, Donna Stokes, Sean Wallace, Susie Wojtowicz.

The Congregational Nominating Committee is: Anne Barauskas, Mike Caldwell, Steve Coddington, and Charlotte Fischer. Ben Kohns and Andrew Campbell, Session Representatives and Debbie English, Deacon Representative.

Confirmation: Again



confirmed as a youth in a Presbyterian church, others went through the

This fall a group of 10 adults went through the confirmation journey with Pastor Bethany. Some members had been confirmed in another denomination, and some never had the chance to explore their faith in this way. Everyone enjoyed the learning and discussion. We challenged one another and found solid similarities in our faith. A few even chose to write a statement of their faith. These statements will stand as a marker in their faith journey, not to solidify and keep them from changing, but to remind them of where they have come from and how far the Spirit has brought them into the future.

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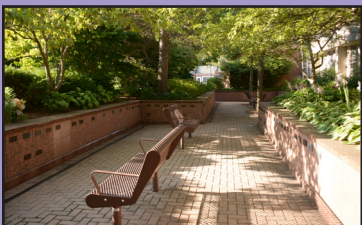
Everybody's  Church



First News
First Quarter 2021



Holy Week and Easter Services



Holy Week, March 28 - April 4, 2021

**Palm Sunday – Pick up palms on Saturday, March 27
10:00am Worship in person and livestreamed**

Holy Week Prayer Walk in columbarium

**Maundy Thursday – 7:00pm Upper Zoom worship
7:00pm Worship in person and livestreamed**

Good Friday – Pre-recorded Worship available anytime

Noon Friday to Noon Saturday – 24-hour Prayer Vigil

**Easter – 7:00am sunrise drive up service in the parking lot
10:00am Worship in person and livestreamed**