

First Presbyterian Church

Everybody's  Church

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

Second Quarter 2021

New, Meaningful Holy Week Experiences

Covid-19 has certainly left its imprint on the way we worship, but services and events at Everybody's Church during Holy Week, 2021, brought out original and meaningful prayer, word and music for everyone to experience. The week began on Palm Sunday with worshipers having the choice of attending from home through a livestream or in person among the magnificent display of flowers in the Sanctuary.

In addition to communion being served on Maundy Thursday, the service presented a three-movement musical masterpiece from Stabat Mater by Giovanni Pergolesi. It was composed in 1736 and was scored for five strings, continuo and soprano vocalists. Notably, this was the first time we've had an instrumental ensemble or more than one singer in the building for a worship service since February, 2020. Communion and Maundy Thursday was celebrated in a new way during an "Upper Zoom" online service.



Lara Alami singing on Easter Morning



Maundy Thursday ensemble



Easter announcements and liturgy

The Good Friday Tenebrae services was pre-recorded and featured a diverse group of pastors from around the Detroit Presbytery. They reflected on the final words of Jesus and shined a new light on His final moments on the cross.

The 24-hour Prayer Vigil, typically held in the chapel, went ahead with people praying from their homes. Using prayer requests from the congregation, they prayed continuously

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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
In-Person by reservation
and livestreamed

Pre-Recorded Special Services

Rejoicing Spirits Worship on
Select Sundays at 5:00 PM
on Google Meet

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 - Update on the Matthew 25 Work Group

by Dr. John Judson

I want to bring everyone up to speed on the work of the Matthew 25 Work Group. The work group has been diligently working to discern a direction for our congregation in regards to Matthew 25. As a reminder, Matthew 25 is a movement within our denomination, The Presbyterian Church (USA), in which congregations and presbyteries agree to work toward one of the following: Building Congregational Vitality, Eradicating Systemic Poverty, or Dismantling Structural Racism. The work group believed that we, as a congregation, were already engaged in building congregational vitality and eradicating systemic poverty. For that reason, they decided that the focus of their efforts would be on Dismantling Structural Racism.

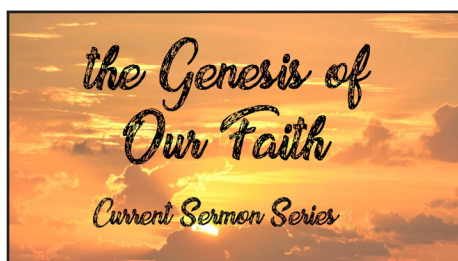
Making this choice raised multiple questions. What is structural racism? Does structural racism exist? Where is structural racism at work in our society? How does one go about dismantling structural racism? How do we help the congregation understand what structural racism is, how it impacts the world and what they can do to help dismantle it? To answer these and other questions, the work group members spent hours and hours reading, watching videos, and attending online lectures/webinars to learn about structural racism. Then they met (and continue to meet) every other week to share what they learned, to seek to answer the critical questions about structural racism, to agree on answers to some of the critical questions, and

to discern a plan to move forward. Though they have not finalized a plan, they do have a direction.

The direction is based on the belief that structural racism does exist in our society. Though there are multiple definitions of structural racism, I will offer one given by Dr. Tricia Rose (Director of the Center for the Study of Race and Ethnicity in America and Chancellor's Professor of Africana Studies, Brown University), which is *"The normalization and legitimization of an array of dynamics – historical, cultural, institutional and interpersonal – that routinely advantage whites while producing cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for people of color."*

The direction of the work group's plan can be summarized as **listen, learn, and live**. What this means is that the work group's hope is that they can offer opportunities for the congregation to **listen** to speakers talk about structural racism, then **learn** about what structural racism is through a "learning toolbox" comprised of books/articles/videos, and then to **live** actions that help to dismantle structural racism. This three-pronged process is intended to educate and empower our members to live into our calling from the prophet Jeremiah to *"seek the welfare of the city where God has sent us, because in its welfare we will find our welfare."* (Jeremiah 29:7) In other words, our welfare is bound up with the welfare of all those with whom we share this city, nation, and world. And by understanding and working to dismantle structural racism, we will be seeking not only the welfare of others, but our welfare as well.

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Mission

Matthew 25, continued

As the work group continues its work I encourage you to pray for them and if you so choose, to do some of your own research, or to contact me for some resources that might be helpful in your own exploration.

The members of the work group are Janet Mostofizadeh (chair), Jeff Bozell, Marcy Brink-Chaney, Mary Gholz, Leslie Helwig, Patricia Padilla, and Judy Perryman, with me as staff liaison.

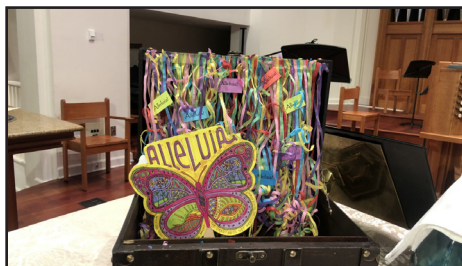
Blessings, John



New, Meaningful Holy Week Experiences, continued

from noon on Friday to noon on Saturday.

An Easter Egg Hunt is always fun, Covid or no Covid. Children and adults from our All Abilities Inclusion Ministry (AAIM) and others who attend our Rejoicing Spirits services hunted for Easter eggs, flowered the cross and received goody bags. They walked through the Story Walk and read the Easter story as seen through the eyes of Mary Magdalene.



Easter Sunday began with a drive-in Sunrise Service at 7:00am in the parking lot. Participants could listen to the service on their FM radio from the comfort of their cars. They celebrated communion together and drove away with fun, joyful streamers. Some also walked the Easter Story walk after the service. Holy Week services concluded with a traditional Easter service at 10:00am in the sanctuary, and also live streamed at home.



"Twas the Morning of Easter" Story Walk, March 31-April 10



People of all ages and stages walked the perimeter of the church moving from sign to sign to read "Twas the Morning of Easter" a newly published book written by author Glenys Nellist. Many also participated in decorating the cross with fresh flowers for Easter and continued with the prayer walk

through the events of Holy Week. The walk concluded with an Easter egg hunt in the playground and each child received an Easter goody bag. The story walk remained up for the week following Easter, April 4-10, for the community to enjoy.



Mission

First Foundation Grant Spurs Greater Food Distribution



"For I was hungry and you gave me food..." Matthew 25:35

A new collaboration enables Everybody's Church to provide more food assistance to Alcott families than we were able to provide pre-Covid. When Covid-19 scuttled the five-year old "Shop and Drop" program which provided one meal a week for 20 Alcott families, church member Stephanie Kummer and Christian Education Director Cindy Merten knew they had to try something different. So, they called upon First Foundation to award Forgotten Harvest \$6,000 and created a more effective approach than our previous efforts yielded in order to help families needing food assistance.

Stephanie explained, "I visited Forgotten Harvest's food pantries in Oak Park and Lake Orion and saw huge quantities of available food—everything from staples to fresh produce, dairy products and meat. We're now able to provide several meals for each of the 20 families every week, more than we were able to provide before."

These pantries are open to the public. Anyone who needs food can receive it at no cost. Forgotten Harvest does not charge FPC for the food we use for our Alcott ministry. First Foundation was pleased to award the money to the non-profit organization so that our Alcott families, along with so many others who depend on Forgotten Harvest, can get the help they need.

Every Monday Stephanie, sometimes Cindy, and a few volunteers

"The opportunity to give back is something we're very grateful for. First Pres enables us, as a family, to do that."

drive to the warehouses, pick up food and bring it back to the church. They take it downstairs to the kitchen in Knox Auditorium to store and refrigerate it. Joyce and Steve Uzelak, members since the 1970s, arrive at church on Thursday afternoons to sort the food and pack it into boxes for each family.

"It's a small thing," explains Joyce, "but we're in our 80s and it's something we can do, and do together."

Then, more volunteers arrive at church to pick up boxes and drive them to the Pontiac families. Jeff and Adrienne Bozell share the experience with their children.

"The opportunity to give back is something we're very grateful for. First Pres enables us, as a family, to do that. By involving our children – Jacob, 5, Thaddeus, 3, and Ruthie, 1 – we hope to create the same sense of gratitude and service that our church fosters in its members."

While this covers the basics, other members often step in to add a few extras. Cousins and third graders



Gabby Sheckell and Brady Barauskas, who attend FPC regularly, spent an afternoon with their grandmother, Margaret Sheckell, to make Valentine cookies. They cut out heart shapes, baked, decorated and packaged the cookies in order to make that week's delivery special.

"So many volunteers are involved in this!" exclaimed Stephanie. "The families who receive the food boxes are very grateful."

First Foundation awarded \$114,000 in 2020 and \$26,270 so far in 2021 to a total of 18 different organizations. If you would like to know more about it and how you can leave a bequest in your will to continue this work, call Chairperson Bruce Nyberg at 248.720.9051.



Mission



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!

Knitting Ministry Provides Comfort

Our knitting ministry has continued all through the pandemic. Joyce Uzelac has knit preemie baby caps for Pontiac St. Joseph and Detroit Children's hospital, blankets for baptism and new babies, and shawls for convalescing or grieving members and friends. Stephanie Kummer also knit shawls and blankets along with prayer squares for our Pontiac food delivery volunteers. While invisible to most, these faithful volunteers continue to knit and provide joy and comfort to many.



Joyce Uzelac with a cap and blanket she knit for a newborn baby.

May is National Foster Care Month



Due to our limited storage space at church, as well as at our service agencies, we cannot receive more donations of used items at this time.

However, we are still taking new items that can be passed along right away when an infant or child goes into foster care. These Care Kits are picked up by the social worker and taken directly to the new foster parent when the child arrives in their home. The following is a list that most foster parents have found useful in those first days:

For infants and toddlers (Your choice of size and gender):

- Diapers, wipes and ointment
- 3, 6, 12, 18 or 24 month onesies

- 2 sleeper outfits
- Baby body wash and no tears shampoo
- Baby formula and 6 bottles
- Baby cereal and infant food
- Receiving blanket

For children sizes 3T to 10 (Your choice of size and gender):

- New play outfit
- PJ's
- Underwear and socks
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Light blanket
- Healthy foods, cereal, milk or juice boxes, and snacks
- New stuffed animal

Thanks for supporting our Michigan children going into foster care! Please

remember them and all the foster parents who open their hearts and homes.

How else can you help at this time? If you'd like to find out what it's like to become a foster or adoptive parent, mentor, or respite care giver, please call 1-855-MICHKIDS. Or you can also see pictures and brief stories about children hoping for forever families at www.mare.org (Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange). Select one child and keep them in your prayers. For more information, contact our Parish Associate for Foster Adoptive Families Partnerships, Rev. Dr. Kate Thoresen at katethoresen@fpcbirmingham.org

Mission and Inclusion

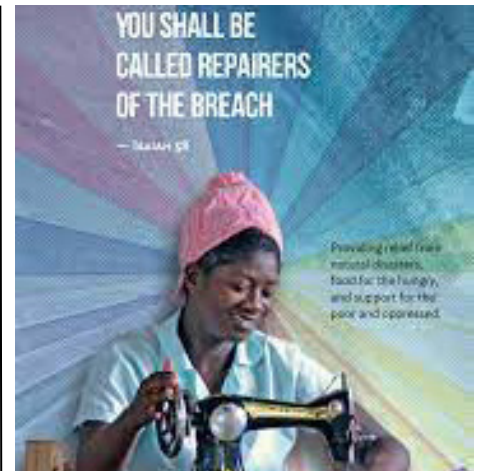
Baskets of Love Make a Difference at Easter



It takes many volunteers to organize, help pick up groceries at Aldi, pack the bins full, move them into and out of the truck trailer and deliver 125 Baskets of Love to families at Alcott Elementary.

Thank you for participating in the many ways that make our Baskets of Love program continue to thrive for food insecure families in our community.

One Great Hour of Sharing



Thank you, Everybody's Church! We gave \$5,200 to One Great Hour of Sharing this year!

Gaillards Host Pizza and Root Beer Float Zoom Cooking Class

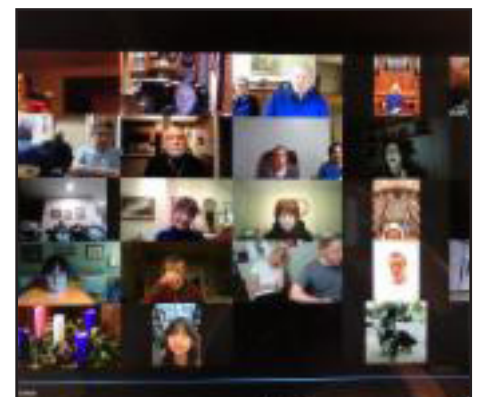
Souri and Claudine Gaillard hosted a fun evening on Zoom making Detroit style pizza and root beer floats with our AAIM community. Souri prepared easy-to-use kits with the ingredients prepped and ready to assemble. Participants picked them up and everyone gathered to make their pizzas and floats together. It was a great way to see one another, welcome all ages to the table, and socialize while preparing and sharing a meal together.



Rejoicing Spirits Community Still Going Strong

Even though our Rejoicing Spirits Community has not been able to gather in person for more than a year, we have made periodic deliveries and visits to homes of our participants. At Easter we were able to surprise some of our friends living in Angels' Place homes by delivering Easter baskets and scattering 100 Easter eggs in the yards of Angels' Place Homes. Lyn Martens and others have assembled and delivered craft projects for some of the

women in one of the homes, and Terry and Marcie Chaney have continued their ministry virtually on Google Meets with four different homes. Once a month we host a virtual Rejoicing Spirits service. We are looking forward to the day when we will be able to gather again in person. Some of the Rejoicing Spirits Community also participated in the Story Walk and Prayer Walk during Holy Week.



Family News

In Sympathy:

- † Francis (Fran) Broxton, mother of Richard Broxton, Jr., Rick Broxton (Cindy) and the late Joy Broxton, March 17, 2021
- † Blanche Thompson, mother of Trish Heinonen, Kathy Moehring and Bill Thompson, April 5, 2021
- † Daria Faber, sister of Swid Kirchhofer, April 9, 2021
- † Waymond Eli Harris, Sr., father of Waymond Eli Harris Jr., (Angela), Kayren Harris (LeRoy Jackson), Kimberly Watson (Robert II) and husband of Leola Harris, April 20, 2021

Births:

- ☞ Audrey Darlene Drainville, daughter of Katie and Rob Drainville, granddaughter of Anne and Ron Hintch, March 24, 2021
- ☞ Allison Jean Merten, daughter of Kristen and Mark Merten, granddaughter of Cindy and Forrest Merten, April 10, 2021
- ☞ Donald Bernard Mancini IV, son of Kendra Lanzen Mancini and Donald Bernard Mancini III, grandson of Terry and Cindy Lanzen, April 30, 2021



Community

Hand-in-Hand Stays Open and Thrives During Pandemic



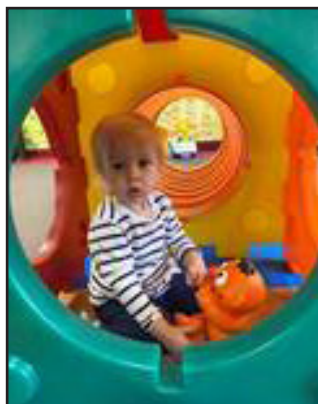
Hand-in-Hand rang in the new year with lots of continued learning and activities for our 100 students which included our annual HIH Spirit Week, the One Hundred Days of School celebration with the young fives, Ground Hog Day, Valentine's Day, Earth Day, Easter and many more.

Our Hand-in-Hand students are thriving and we have seen so much growth during this school year. This

group of HIH students are very special and have been amazing, funny and so smart as we have navigated through this most unusual school year. We have 25 students who will be graduating this year and we wish them well as they enter Kindergarten this fall.

Our school year is coming to a close at the end of May. Over the summer we will be busy moving around some of our classrooms and getting ready for the 2021-22 school year. We continually thank God that we have been able to remain open for this 2020-21 school year.

Thank you for all the church's continued support of the First Presbyterian Hand-in-Hand Early Learning Center.



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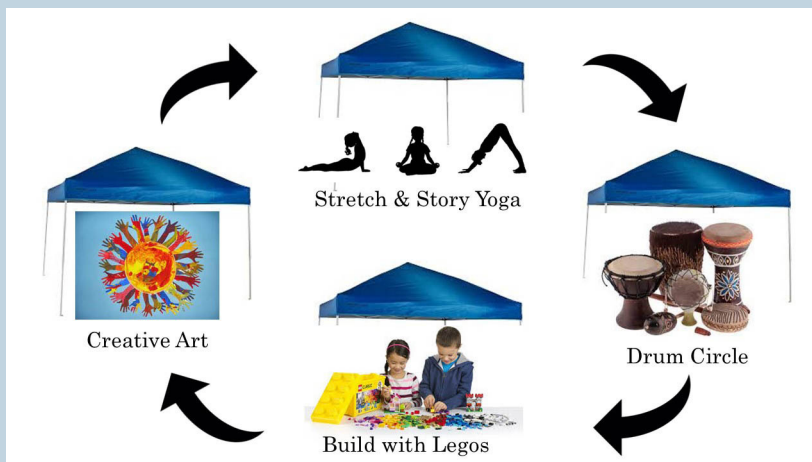
GENERATIONS STRETCH & GROW TOGETHER IN FAITH

When: Sundays, June 6th, 13th, August 8th, 15th

Time: 4:00 - 5:30 PM

Where: Outside @ the Church

Who: Families of all shapes & sizes with children 4 years to 5th grade



- Rotate as families through four (4) areas/tents learning one Bible story in four (4) different ways.
- Parents, grandparents, and/or other adults will accompany and participate alongside their children.
- Register on the website for one or multiple days at **everybodyschurch.org under events/generations.**
- Different Bible story each week.