

FIRST PRESS

First Presbyterian Church

404 Spruce Street
Elk Rapids, MI 49629
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February 2010

The Rev. Harold (Hal) Shafer, Interim Senior Pastor
The Rev. Sandra Murray, Associate Pastor
Website: www.erfpc.org
Church Email: info@erfpc.org

136th ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday, February 28, 2010

Immediately following the 10 a.m. Service

The purpose of this meeting is to approve the minutes of the 2009 Congregational meetings as printed, or with additions and/or corrections. We will also receive the Year 2009 Annual Reports.

Non-members are welcome to attend. Members are asked to please make it a point to attend. Please remember that our bylaws require that 10 percent of our active membership be present for a quorum. Last year's meeting took only a few minutes. Please plan to stay for this brief but required Congregational meeting.

BE A PART OF THE PASTORAL NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Ministry Team is now accepting names of individuals to be considered for service on the upcoming PNC (Pastoral Nominating Committee). Candidates must be a member of First Presbyterian Church and willing to commit their time and talents for this important assignment. Please email to Sue Cook, Clerk of Session, [sukay@charter.net] the following information: your name, phone number, email address and a brief statement about why you would like to serve. Please be aware that the PNC has not been authorized yet. This is just a preliminary step in the process.

Elder Sue Flowers, Co-chair of the Nomination Ministry Team

Highlights in February

Blood Drive	Monday, February 1	1-7 p.m.
Movie Night for Grown-ups	Saturday, February 6	7 p.m.
Relay for Life of Antrim County – Kick-off	Wednesday, February 10	6:30 p.m.
Sweetheart Dinner @ TJ Charlie's	Thursday, February 11	6 p.m.
Memorial Service for Deb Morrow	Saturday, February 13	11 a.m.
Disciples Bible Study (34 weeks) each Sunday	Sunday, February 14(begins)	3-5 p.m.
March Newsletter Articles Due	Monday, February 15	noon
Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner @ LH	Tuesday, February 16	5-7 p.m.
Ash Wednesday Service	Wednesday, February 17	7 p.m.
Prayer Shawl Knitters	Sunday, February 28	10 a.m.
Annual Congregational Meeting	Sunday, February 28	11:05 a.m.

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Everyone's Job, Everyone's Joy	Relay for Life Antrim County – Kick-off	Women's Association

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

DIRECTORY

Senior Interim Pastor	The Rev. Harold E. Shafer
Associate Pastor	The Rev. Sandra K. Murray
Director of Youth Ministry	Gary Bekkering
Director of Christian Education	Pamela Bekkering
Director of Operations	Wayne Shuler
Clerk of Session	Susan Cook
Interim Organist/Choir Director	Cheryl Knight
Administrative Assistant	Sandra Lake
Financial Secretary	Liz Atkinson
Child Care Coordinator	Melissa West
Church Sexton	Mark Blackmore
Church Custodian	Ronnie Blackmore

Pastor Emeritus

The Rev. Dr. Daniel K. Herlein

2010 Corporate Officers

President	Jane Croftchik
Vice President	James Mottern
Treasurer	Wayne Shuler
Secretary	Tom Calkins
Assistant Treasurer	John Werner

2010 Session

Class of 2010	Class of 2011	Class of 2012
Brenda Corner	Brandon Darin	David Branding
Melvin Matchett	Peter Eckardt	William Clark
Sarah Miller	John Moore	Susan Cook
Nancy Muhlig	Ramona Nelson	Penny Novarro
Dale Wagner	Betty Tezak	John West

2010 Board of Deacons

Class of 2010	Class of 2011	Class of 2012
Shanna Branding	Sandra Davids	Saundra Blackmore
Mary Anne Frey	Jan Johnson	Dianne Hall
Denise Heeke	Len Orzechowski	Mark Haskell
Ellie Holdsworth	Diane Thompson	Phyllis Staley
Adam Schuler	Marge Weitschat	Cathy Weidman

2010 Board of Trustees

2010	2011	2012
James Goodall	Loyal Cobb	Mark Blackmore
Donald Shurte	Jane Croftchik	Thomas Calkins
Pete VanDenBerge	Charlene Hansen	Kenneth Cook
Ken Weitschat	Jonathan Heeke	James Mottern
Harry Widman	Richard Schurch	David West

Ruling Elders Ministry Team Assignment

Christian Education	
Communication	
Fellowship	
Nominations	Mel Matchett
Nurture	
Outreach	
Personnel	Brenda Corner, Brandon Darin
Stewardship	
Worship	
Youth Ministries	

Others

Acolyte Ministry	Gary Bekkering
Building Committee	John Werner
Elder Commissioners to Presbytery	Lou Letsche
Librarians	Gary Fangboner, Jane Lund, Diane Wagner
Membership Secretary	Carolyn Gauthier
Newsletter Editor	Sandra Lake
Stephen Ministry Referrals Coordinator	Sue Johnson
Webmaster	Terry Miller
Women's Association	Cheryl Knight, Jennifer Haskell
Worship Audio	Terry Miller, Peter VanDenBerge

BLOOD DRIVE

Monday, February 1, 2010
1:00 – 7:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall

FREE MOVIE NIGHT FOR GROWNUPS SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2010

Mesdames et messieurs, welcome to an evening of French frolic and fellowship fun when we celebrate the art of French cooking! We'll begin our culinary delight by creating and sampling our own French hors d'oeuvres. And then we'll enjoy the film, "Julie & Julia." Free admission, but please sign up on the signup sheet in the Narthex between services so we can estimate the quantity of ingredients for our pre-movie fantastique, gastronomique extraordinaire! See you at 7 p.m. **at the Lighthouse** on Saturday, Feb. 6, 2010.

Fellowship Ministry Team

SWEETHEART DINNER

Thursday, February 11,
6:00 p.m. at TJ Charlie's

King Crab Legs or Prime Rib Dinner
Watch bulletins for more details.

The Senior High Youth will once again be bringing you this wonderful fundraiser. Watch upcoming bulletins for complete menu and to sign-up.

Don't be shy; get your reservation in early.

SHROVE TUESDAY DINNER

All-U-Can-Eat Pancakes and Sausage
Tuesday, February 16
5:00 -7:00 p.m. at the Lighthouse

\$5.00 per person

Children 5 and under free

Dinner includes sausage and pancakes with toppings like: whipped cream, chocolate chips, cherry, blueberry, applesauce, M&M's, powdered sugar and, of course, syrup. Coffee, orange juice and milk will be served.

Come and support our Middle School youth in their fundraiser!

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

Wednesday, February 17
7:00 p.m.

Beginning at 7:00 p.m. and concluding by 7:30 p.m., we will gather together in our sanctuary for an Ash Wednesday Service. In addition to the Sacrament of Holy Communion, we will offer the application of ashes as authorized by the Presbyterian Church (USA) Book of Common Worship.

MESSAGE FROM OUR INTERIM SENIOR PASTOR

The past five plus months that I have been at First Presbyterian Church have been an exciting experience, one of learning and enjoying the people of the Church. In a fuller way, I have experienced the unique qualities and gifts God has given me in ministry to help be a manager of change. With consultation, the church will work through a transitional period before a called pastor is put into place.

There are some who ask me what an interim pastor is all about and others who quietly have their rendition of what an interim does. The word "interim" means a time period that is only temporary. While the interim is to work during a temporary stay to help a group (in this case FPC) look within them and find out who they are and what they expect of their next called pastor. Always remember, transition is occurring whether in an interim period or during the time of a called minister's time at a church. This is because life in this world for a Christian is temporary!

An intentional interim position in called ministry is much like a called pastor. In my interim training at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, I'll never forget one of my professors. Dr. Barry Jackson met me in the hall to ask what I was doing back at Seminary. I told him I was taking a course in interim training. Dr. Jackson looked at me and said, "Always remember, Hal, we are all interim pastors whether we are at the church for a year-and-a-half, five, or ten years."

No matter a pastor's length of stay at the church, Barry was saying to me God has given that person a designated time. We are all interims whether called, designated, an intentional interim or an unintentional interim. Though I am here temporarily, I have learned, like John the Baptist, that I have to convey what God wishes His church to be — one that is always displaying the gift of our Savior Jesus Christ.

In reading *The Elephant in the Boardroom*, by Carolyn Weese and J. Russell Crabtree, I found this wonderful quote in the last chapter. "*The reason that change is a spiritual issue is that without the resources of heaven it rarely happens.*"

An interim minister helps manage the change within the time period he or she is given, always pointing to the One — Jesus — who gives the strength to endure the changes that occur. Pastoral Interim work is a wonderful profession, and I am happy to be a part of a fellowship that is working out God's will in the life of this church.

In Christ's Service,

Rev. Hal Shafer, Interim Senior Pastor

POINTS FROM PAST SERMONS

1. The first mark of maturity is the ability to deal constructively with reality, to face facts, to not cover up reality or call it something else, but to deal with it as it is. Mature people do not kid themselves.
2. The second mark of maturity is adapting quickly to change. We all experience change, whether it be physical, at work, in the family, or whatever.
3. The third mark is freedom from the symptoms of tension and anxiety. The worried look, the frown, the ulcers, the palpitations of the heart— all come because a person is upset, anxious and worried. Maturing means you have begun to see that God is in control of this world. He is working out purposes that we do not always understand, but it is how gracefully we can accept it.
4. Fourth, being mature means to be satisfied more with giving than receiving. Then you truly have discovered the true value of life and the sign you are maturing.
5. The fifth mark is related to others with consistency, helpfulness and mutual satisfaction. Yes, maturity is learning to get along with other people, to be a help, not a hindrance, to contribute to the solution and not to be always a part of the problem.
6. Here is the big sixth point. Finally, maturity is elevating and redirecting anger to constructive ends. Maturity is the ability to use the adrenaline that anger creates, not to lose your temper and add to the problem, but to correct a situation or to contribute to changing the nature of the difficulty. This is maturity.



MESSAGE FROM OUR ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Dear Friends,

As I write these words, I am reminded that while I may be concerned about a variety of things, all of my basic needs are being met. I may have broken my finger but I have access to good medical care. Many people, in our world and particularly in Haiti today, are struggling to get food, water, shelter, and medical care. In addition, people in Haiti are up against thugs who want to take what little they have left. They are also dealing with overwhelming loss of many friends and family members.

It is appropriate in times like this to pause and be thankful for God's blessing. At the same time let us be fully aware of all who are hurting in our world today.

Many years ago, I read an essay in Ann Lander's column written by Robert Hastings. It brought to my attention that as Christians we need to focus on today: daily work to do, daily benefits to receive and daily tending to perform. But we also need to keep our todays linked with God's tomorrow. One line from the essay has stuck with me, "Yesterday's a fading sunset; tomorrow's a faint sunrise. Only today is there light enough to love and live."

Today, I can care for others. Today, I can pray for the Haitian people. Today, I can give from my resources to help in Haiti. When life is difficult it is wonderful to remember that God is with us every step of the way. God invites each one of us to trust in Him each and every day, despite what may be going on.

Shalom,

Pastor Sandy

25 DIFFERENT SAYINGS TO PONDER

1. Give God what's right
not what's left.
2. Man's way leads to hopeless end
God's way leads to endless hope
3. A lot of kneeling will keep you
in good standing.
4. He who kneels before God can stand
before anyone.
5. In the sentence of life, the devil may
be a comma, but never let him be
the period.
6. Don't put a question mark where God puts a
period.
7. Are you wrinkled with burden?
Come to church for a face-lift.
8. When praying, don't give God
instructions . . . just report for duty.
9. Don't wait for six strong men to
take you to church.
10. We don't change God's message . . .
His message changes us.
11. The church is prayer-conditioned.
12. When God ordains, He sustains.
13. WARNING: Exposure to the Son may
prevent burning.
14. Plan ahead It wasn't raining when
Noah built the ark.
15. Most people want to serve God, but
only in an advisory position.
16. Suffering from truth decay?
Brush up on your Bible.
17. Exercise daily walk with the Lord.
18. Never give the devil a ride
he will always want to drive.
19. Nothing else ruins the truth like
stretching it.
20. Compassion is difficult is difficult to give away
because it keeps coming back.
21. He who angers you controls you.
22. Worry is the darkroom in which negatives can
develop.
23. Give Satan an inch & he'll be a ruler.
24. Be ye fishers of men
You catch them & He'll clean them.
25. God doesn't call the qualified,
He qualifies the called.

Author unknown

NEWS FROM THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MINISTRY TEAM

DATES TO REMEMBER

Milestone Sunday is April 11.

Children's Ministry Sunday is April 18.

Please watch the bulletins and newsletters for more information. These are two very special Sunday's in your child/children's faith walk. We hope you and your family will participate!

VBS 2010 will be the week of June 21 - 25, with VBS Celebration Sunday on June 26.

We will be setting sail on the "High Seas Expedition," exploring God's mighty love. Mark your calendars for this fantastic week of fun and fellowship. More details are coming soon!

The **Christian Education Meeting date** has been changed for 2010. We will be meeting on the first Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. The Christian Education Ministry Team is an energetic group of individuals. We cover a wide range of opportunities to help, including nursery, children's education, adult education, and the Library. Please let one of our members know if you have an idea or suggestion.

CE Members are: Mona Nelson (Session), Betty Tezak (Session), Pastor Sandy, Linda Sisson, Gary Fangboner, Melissa West, Joanne Teague, Abbie Mandeville, Nikii Brown, Barb Johnson, and Pam Bekkering. If you have an immediate concern, please contact Barb Johnson at 264-9529.

The CE Ministry Team is still looking for some **helping hands**, as we try our best to utilize all the space we have at church. We are in desperate need of some powerful organizing skills! We have several cabinets and tubs which need to be sorted and organized. You can work at your own pace and your own time frame. Please let Pam know if this is where one of your special gifts and talents lies. We would love your help! 264-8167

Sunday School offering: Our Sunday School children helped support Nesley Joseph, our Compassion Child. They gave over \$55 dollars since September to send to Haiti. These funds will help with clean water, medical and school supplies, purchasing a goat, and other needs that Nesley might have. We will continue to collect offerings in all of our Sunday School rooms for this Stewardship project. Thank you for your support.

Thank you to all who offered your assistance for an area of CE during Stewardship this year. Someone from CE should be contacting you very soon.

ADULT BIBLE STUDY OPPORTUNITY

Paul Wonacott and Pastor Sandy will lead us in the Disciple Study course, "Becoming Disciples through the Bible Study." This is a 34 week study of the whole Bible. This class starts Sunday, February 14, 2010, 3-5 p.m. Please, advance sign-up is necessary in order to purchase books and supplies. The cost for the books is \$34. You may contact Pastor Sandy for possible scholarships. Please call the office to sign-up.

RELAY FOR LIFE OF ANTRIM COUNTY KICK-OFF

**Wednesday, February 10, 2010
6:30 p.m.**

Shanty Creek Resort, Bellaire

Join us as we *celebrate* cancer survivors, *remember* those lost to the disease and *fight back* against cancer.

You will receive information about this event, forming a team, fundraising, sponsorships, celebrating our survivors and much more.

To register your team, please go to:
www.relayforlife.org/antrimcountymi

For more information please contact Diane Jorgensen, Community Representative at:
231.947.0860
800.723.0370
or diane.jorgensen@cancer.org

**2009 CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS
HAVE BEEN MAILED**



Lighthouse Youth Info

**508 Elm St.
(Corner of First & Elm)**

**MIDDLE SCHOOL
GRADES 6 - 8**

Sunday nights
5 - 6:30 p.m. at the Lighthouse.

Activities

3 important things to mark on your calendar...

February 16: Shrove Tuesday

All-U-Can Eat pancake dinner at the LH.
There will be 2 shifts for you to sign up to work.
(Pancakes with all the toppings, sausage and refreshments)

Watch the bulletin for further details!

February 20 & 21: Cookie Bake and Sale

(Our last bake sale made a profit of \$110.
We had a lot of fun baking the cookies!)

We will bake from 10-noon on Saturday and sell them on Sunday.

February 26 - 28: Spring Hill Winter Retreat
(More information to follow in the mail)

ACOLYTE SCHEDULE

2-07	Ryan Shivley
2-14	Cole Schindler
2-21	AJ Anderson
2-28	Andy Atkinson

CONFIRMATION

January has been a great month. We have quickly scanned the Bible, discussed the Apostle and Nicene Creeds and tried to understand the Trinity and the mystery of God.

This month we will be looking at the Lord's Supper and the Reformation.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate in contacting me, Pastor Hal or Pastor Sandy.

WHAT'S COMING UP IN MARCH

Youth Serving Hot Lunch
March 14 following second service

High School Chicago Zone
March 19 - 21

MS & HS Youth Sunday

**HIGH SCHOOL
GRADES 9 - 12**

We meet every Sunday night from
7-9 p.m. at the Lighthouse.

Activities

Important things to mark on your calendar...

February 11: Fundraiser-Sweetheart Dinner
This is a great fundraiser for the Mission Trip youth.

You will be working from 4-10 p.m.
It will be held at TJ Charlie's.

- The youth will serve a seven-course meal.
- The main entree will be your choice of King Crab Legs or Prime Rib.
- Of course, there will be much more including roses and chocolates!

February 20: Saturday Night Praise & Worship
This will be held at the Lighthouse from 6-7 p.m. and is a multi-generational service.

February 21: Fundraiser-Potato/Chili/Salad Lunch.
This month we are serving baked potatoes, chili and a salad with all the fixings. This is the best way for you to earn money for our winter retreat to Chicago or for the summer mission trip to Marvel, Arkansas.

**Tuesday nights in February, 7-8 p.m.
Bible Study on Job**

We meet for one hour for an in-depth study at the LH.

PARENT

Don't forget to put the above dates on your calendars.

Winter Retreats

Middle School: February 26 - 28
High School: March 19-21

How to Get In Touch With Gary

Church 264-8167, Cell 313-1448

E-mail: garybgaryb@hotmail.com
www.erfpc.org

“Faithful Servant” Series
The Parish Nurses

Each month the Stewardship Ministry Team wants to bring a faithful servant’s story to life. Our purpose is two-fold: to honor the person who donates time in a consistent way and to demonstrate areas where additional volunteers are needed.

In February hearts are everywhere. At First Presbyterian the people who serve with a heart and who are concerned about our hearts are the Parish Nurses. **Jan Bellingham** has taken classes to be a certified Parish Nurse. Joining her on this team are **Christy Bingham, Sherri Boucher, Shanna Branding, Jan Shurte, Carol Sinclair, Marge Weitschat, and Kathy White.**

The third Sunday of the month between services, the Parish Nurses are available in the library to take your blood pressure. A health indicator which is easily determined, blood pressure can be an advanced warning of heart disease, stroke and other serious conditions. “We believe in prevention,” said Sherri Boucher. A record is kept of your blood pressure readings each month so you can have an informed conversation with your doctor. About 15-20 people have their blood pressure checked each month.

The Parish Nurses are also responsible for checking the AED, the defibrillator, located in the narthex. They can answer general health questions but are not a substitute for a check-up with your doctor. They also can serve as a resource in planning for long-term care. Carol Sinclair’s passion is care of the dying.

The Parish Nurses also serve as the core of the Care Team. The Care Team assists church members with transportation to and from medical appointments, meals and visitations. Volunteers are needed to handle most of these functions and do not require a nursing degree. June Baaki has agreed to do the scheduling for the Care Team.

For more information about the Parish Nurses or the Care Team, please contact Jan Bellingham. If you have a need that could be filled by the Care Team, please contact Pastor Sandy.

From our hearts, thank you, Parish Nurses.



2010 WOMEN’S ASSOCIATION

Here are the dates to put on your calendar for February and March. Please note the following activities.

- February 11** – Women’s Association Meeting at Church – Jana Gillstrom – Hostess
12:30 – Stuff Envelopes for Bakeless
Bake Sale Mailing
1:00 – Regular Meeting & Lesson #2
Joshua Bible Study
2:00 – Sarah Juntune to Share
Global Exchange to Eastern Europe

March 11 – Women’s Association Meeting at Kathy White’s home, 12304 Sutter Rd., Kewadin, 264-0564. Lesson #3 – Joshua Bible Study

We look forward to seeing you at any of our meetings and activities. Extra Study books are available in the Women’s Association Mail Box in the Narthex of the church. If you have questions, please call Jennifer Haskell 599-2946.

EVERYONE’S JOB, EVERYONE’S JOY

When was the last time you heard someone say, “That is the pastor’s job,” when referring to some aspect of ministry? Ministry is not just the job (or, better yet, the opportunity) of the clergy. The opportunity and responsibility for doing ministry has been given to all Christians.

Join us this fall for a Stephen Ministry training class. This is a chance to be trained and equipped for this caring ministry of supporting another during difficult circumstances. Talk to any of our Stephen Ministers; they will tell you that it is a joyous privilege to share Christ’s love with others. Is this ministry the one for you? Think about it.

For more information, please contact Pastor Sandy, 264-8167, or any of our Stephen Leaders: Connie Clark, 264-5977, Charlene Hansen, 499-9702, Sue Johnson, (342-2666 cell) or Pam Shuler, 599-2480.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Jill Donberg *Son* – Antoni
Residence: 212 Chippewa St.
 Elk Rapid, MI 49629; (231) 360-5784
Occupation: Acupuncturist, Business Owner
Interests: Kids, gardening, cooking, diving hiking

Carol Erhart *Spouse* - Donald
Residence: 708 S. Bayshore, P.O. Box 853,
 Elk Rapids, MI 49629; (231) 264-5156
Occupation: Homemaker
Interests: Gardening, reading, Bible Study, family and grandkids

Donald Erhart *Spouse* – Carol
Residence: 708 S. Bayshore, P.O. Box 853,
 Elk Rapids, MI 49629; (231) 264-5156
Occupation: Retired Engineer with Michigan Bell
Interests: Family and grandchildren

Diane Klingler *Spouse* – Thomas
Residence: 7772 Hoiles Dr.,
 Williamsburg, MI 49690; (231) 267-9352
Occupation: Retired Fiscal Coordinator of Midland American Red Cross
Interests: Reading (British mysteries and history in general), Chinese cooking, gardening

Thomas Klingler *Spouse* – Diane
Residence: 7772 Hoiles Dr.
 Williamsburg, MI 49690; (231) 267-9352
Occupation: Retired R&D Business Director,
 Dow Chemical Company
Interests: Golf, fishing, ESLA, Rotary

Lynda Mangene *Children* – Michael & Gwen
Residence: 7803 Cherry Ave.
 Rapid City, MI 49676; (231) 322-3017
Occupation: Teacher
Interests: Crafts, reading, water activities, cross country skiing, cooking, computers

Donald Reynolds
Residence: 719-A Ames St.
 Elk Rapid, MI 49629; (231) 264-5977
Occupation: Retired Police Officer
Interests: Fishing, bike riding, history buff (points of interest, museums, etc.), minor household repairs/projects like woodwork/refinishing

Garry Sumerix *Spouse* – Marcia
Residence: 14460 Williams Dr.
 Elk Rapids, MI 49629; (231) 482-5256
Occupation: Retired Public School Administrator
Interests: Choral music, skiing, gardening, bicycling, reading, traveling, golf, fine dining

Marcia Sumerix *Spouse* – Garry
Residence: 14460 Williams Dr.
 Elk Rapids, MI 49629; (231) 964-1420
Occupation: Retired Dean of Students, Bay City Public Schools
Interests: Choral music, skiing, gardening, bicycling, reading, traveling, golf, fine dining

Watch for the names of additional
 new members to welcome!

BUILDING COMMITTEE NEWS CHURCH OFFICE RELOCATION & EXPANSION

Information Update

Our Office Addition project is on schedule. We are currently planning for our move into the new offices to occur on February 8 and 9. During that time we will also have the computer network shut down. We plan to be back in operation by Wednesday morning, February 10.

The week of February 15 our contractor will begin demolition and modifications to the entry area. There are extensive modifications to be made to the ceiling and the floor level will be raised. The contractor is working to arrange for handicapped access through the new handicapped lobby during that time, but the general entrance to the church for that week should be through the west door, the one nearest the kitchen. It will be routinely unlocked during the day for that one week period and should be used in lieu of the main entrance.

The main entrance will be open for regular use both Sunday, February 14, and Sunday, 21. Use of the alternate entrance is only necessary during the week.

The construction will then begin in the current office and Pastor Hal's office, phase 2. That area will become a coat room and a multi-purpose room. The contractor expects to be finished with this work about the end of March. Lastly, there will be new carpet installed in our Narthex.

Please bear with us as we try to stay ahead of the unusual housekeeping problems that occur with this construction. By early April we will have lots of new and more useful space when we are finished with phase 2.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS,
 please contact anyone of the Building Committee:

Nancy Gribi – 264-6474	Karen Shaw – 264-5735
Charlene Hansen – 499-9702	Wayne Shuler – 599-2480
Stan Holzauer – 322-2594	John Werner – 264-0397
Nancy Muhlig – 264-9434	

or send e-mail to:

BuildingCommittee@erfpc.org

To OUR CHURCH FAMILY

Carol and I thank you for all your prayers and support during my unexpected stays in the hospitals. I'm home and doing well. Thanks be to God.

God bless you all, Don and Carol Erhart

VERHAGE ROMANIAN FUND

It started almost ten years ago. I had always wanted to join the Peace Corps and I did. I went to Romania as a volunteer in social work development in 1999-2001. A small country in Eastern Europe struggling after the fall of the communist block, I was put to work assisting an anti-AIDS organization. Most of their clients were children between the ages of 8-10 who had been infected by poor medical treatment with many living in the State orphanage. I had an idea to start a big brothers and sisters program with high school kids from the community. I was told it could not be done. Young people could not handle children, especially orphans. At last, the director of the orphanage decided to let me try. We started weekly activities outside of the orphanage, walking to parks, having picnics, shopping, and snack bars. Money? I could not get any from Peace Corps for such a project so I started writing emails home asking for support.

Today, **kids from the orphanage are now going to college – unprecedented!** At 18 their days of care by the State are over, they live on the streets, girls get pregnant, they marry young and there is little hope for them. Felicia, orphanage director, credits the “Brothers and Sisters of Piatra Neamts” for this achievement. Why? Social skills. Children never leave an orphanage, they all go to the same or orphanage schools and are made fun of by other children. They don’t know how to order food or a drink, go shopping, buy a movie ticket, play in a park, swim, have a picnic or socialize with others. This project taught these kids how to do lots of things because of their weekly activities outside the orphanage. They had cultural training by teachers paid by the VRF in theater and dance. Some of the older boys did not go on vacation this past summer because they are part of a professional traditional dance troupe and didn’t want to miss any work opportunities. They have confidence to move away from the orphanage and explore new opportunities because they have the social skills to do it. Papers were filed two years ago making this project a registered Romanian non-profit organization. This was a really amazing accomplishment.

To make things even better, Elenor Doamna House for Children was awarded a huge renovation grant by the Government. Felicia said they won the grant because of our project of almost 10 years. This proved that they are able to maintain and actually do a long term project. The House is beautiful, with kitchens in every wing where the kids often prepare their own meals by request. Landscaping?? Still done by the kids – they each have their own area to maintain. An activity started in 2001, that many believed “could not be done by kids”. I think the look of pride in their eyes was the most rewarding feeling for me.

“Hope for the Future” with the handicapped children continues its outreach to these families with special needs children, many in wheel chairs in a very poor, mostly underemployed city on the other side of the country.. One of the boys, Ionuti, died this spring. I

missed his smiling face. His mom is still very active in the group where she has found comfort and a large extended family that continue to support each other in their daily difficulties. They have a special home.

Thank you, members of this church! I wish you could experience the joy felt by kids, parents, volunteers and directors because someone in the USA cared enough to help them.

Judy VerHage

RELATIONSHIPS STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY TEAM

“Hearts and flowers”, “love and marriage”, and my personal favorite, “horse and carriage” – in February especially, we’re reminded of the importance of relationships. As good stewards, care of relationships is definitely on our “to do” list.

The husband and wife relationship begins with romance and total focus. As life continues and the world in the form of jobs, children and other commitments impinge on that relationship, romance can get “left in the dust”.

The parent-child relationship is one we really strive to get right. Most parents willingly set aside their priorities to meet the needs of their children. Time, resources, and love are showered on our children.

In addition to these, our connection with others, our friends and co-workers, color our lives. However, the relationship that many give little thought to is our relationship with God.

So what does it look like to be a good steward of relationships? Here are three ideas:

1. Recognize the importance of that relationship to you. How would your life be different if that person was not in your life? This “attitude of gratitude” will spur us to be more intentional and thoughtful in our relationships.
2. Listen, listen and then listen some more. The greatest gift you can give is your undivided attention. Kids want it more than anything else. Husbands and wives long to be understood not fixed. How God must delight when He is our focus! He certainly speaks to us if we can only tune out all the noise in our life.
3. Give. Give encouragement, affection, love, time, and your real self. God, children and dogs (horses, too) know when you are being a phony.

There are many books written on the care of relationships; but as Christians, we recognize the Bible as certainly the best. Delve into it to learn how to be more intentional, thoughtful and giving. Once again, stewardship is not all about the money. It is a way of living, an act of worship and a measure of discipleship.

-Pam Shuler for the Stewardship Ministry Team

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS FROM DECEMBER 16, 2009

Rev. Hal Shafer called the Session meeting to order on December 16, 2009 at 7 p. m. in the Fellowship Hall. A quorum was present and the meeting opened with prayer by Pastor Shafer. Roll was called

Guests: New members are Lynda Mangene, Donald Reynolds, Jill Donberg, Diane Klingler, Thomas Klingler, Carol Erhart, Donald Erhart, Garry Sumerix, and Marcia Sumerix. The new members introduced themselves, stated their reasons for becoming members of First Presbyterian Church and then were welcomed by all Session members.

Mark Haskell, chairperson of Lighthouse planning sub-committee, discussed the initial Lighthouse Guidelines.

Gary Bekkering, Youth Director, presented to Session the newly formed Confirmation program.

The minutes of November 18, 2009 Session meeting were approved as printed.

Treasurer Report: Report received. A motion carried to accept the Treasurer's report.

The Board of Trustees: Report received.

- (1) A motion carried to approve the revised "FPC Bus Policy & Procedures" to replace the previous Bus Policy of 2004.
- (2) A motion carried (with one nay) to approve the Initial Lighthouse Guidelines dated November 24, 2009 as written with the exception of #2 which became void, and #3 which was revised to read Beginning in January the facility should be opened up to church sponsored activities, scheduled around the planned youth events, which will always have priority. The Lighthouse Facility Use Policy was referred back to the Facilities committee to revisit the showing of movies.
- (3) A motion carried with one nay vote that the recently donated dollars from Don Berg's family remain in the Building Fund through Phase 2 of the church construction.
- (4) By consent agenda, a motion carried to approve the following officers for 2010: President-Jane Croftchik, Vice President-Jim Mottern, and Secretary-Tom Calkins.

Building Committee: Report received.

Director of Operations: Report received.

Clerk of Session: Report received.

Interim Senior Pastor: Report received.

- (1) A motion carried to remove from the table, the motion to reconsider passage of Pastor Hal's 13 week confirmation class curriculum.
- (2) A motion made by Nancy Muhlig, was carried to withdraw her motion for reconsideration of approving the 13 week confirmation curriculum.
- (3) A motion carried to approve the 16 week confirmation curriculum program, described by Gary Bekkering, and to be taught by Pastor Hal, Pastor Sandy and Gary Bekkering.

Associate Pastor: Report received.

Personnel: Report received.

- (1) A motion carried to approve the updated Personnel Policies & Procedures to - **a.** Increase paid sick days to a maximum of 10, earned at a rate of one day for every two (2) months worked. **b.** Change full time employee from 32 hr/wk to 30 hr/wk.
- (2) A motion carried to change the Personnel Ministry Team from five members to "six". There will be Three Ruling Elders (one from each class) and "three" members at large.
- (3) A motion carried to approve the revised Child Protection Policy with the previous Child Protection Policy becoming null and void.

Worship Ministry Team: Report received.

Youth Ministry Team: Report received.

2009 Nominations Ministry Team: Report received.

- (1) A motion carried to approve the following candidates for the vacant positions on the Session and Trustees.
Trustees, Class of 2011 - Charlene Hansen
Session, Class of 2012 - John West
- (2) A motion carried to approve that the 2009 Nominations Team can begin seeking and collecting names for consideration for the PNC.
- (3) A motion carried to have a special Congregational meeting, Sunday, December 27, 2009 to approve the Trustee and Session nominations.
- (4) A motion carried to appoint Elder Mel Matchett and Nancy Muhlig to serve on the 2010 Nominations Ministry Team, with Mel Matchett as Chairperson.

(Continued on next page)

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

Christian Education Ministry Team: Report received.

Communication Ministry Team: Report received.

Fellowship Ministry Team: Report received.

- By consent agenda, a motion carried to approve the 2010 fellowship activities with January 19, 2010 for the Ecumenical Potluck and worship service and February 6, 2010 for Movie Night showing the movie "Julie and Julia".

Nurture Ministry Team: Report received.

Outreach Ministry Team: A motion carried to approve Suspension of Rules for the following motion.

- A motion carried to approve the recommendation that the Endowment use \$2400 for Schools of Hope for teacher's salary in Zambia, Africa and \$2397 for Foreman Christian support of students.

Approval of Reports: A motion carried to approve all reports, less the Treasurer report

Adjournment: The meeting closed with prayer by Pastor Hal 10:54 p.m.

ADDENDUM

We neglected to announce the December 27, 2009 Special Congregational Meeting in the Sunday bulletin. Thus the two weeks advance notice was not possible. We had to readdress the current minutes with a further motion to follow placing the announcement in the next two Sunday bulletins. By email vote, the following motions were approved. December 23, 2009.

- (1) A motion carried to approve Jan. 3, 2010 for a Special Congregational meeting at 11:05 to elect John West to the Elder class of 2012 and Charlene Hansen to the Trustee class of 2011.
- (2) A motion carried to approve Sunday, January 10, 2010 for the installation and ordination to Session of Elder elect David Branding and Elder -Elect John West. Install Cathy Weidman, Sandy Blackmore and Dianne Hall as Deacons, and to install Mark Blackmore and Charlene Hansen-Prebee as Trustees.

PLEASE RETURN YOUR CHURCH KEY

Reminder to Elders, Deacons and Trustees – when going off your ministry team/committee, please return your church key so we will have it for the new Elders, Deacons and Trustees.

Thank You

SAVE THE DATE March 10, 2010 Catered Lenten Dinner

Be sure to save Wednesday, March 10, for another of Jon and Denise Heeke's scrumptious catered Lenten dinners in Fellowship Hall. Watch for more details to come.

AFFORDABLE SNOW REMOVAL AVAILABLE FOR AREA SENIORS

The Antrim County Commission on Aging offers snow removal to area seniors who are year around residents of Antrim County. Seniors who are 60 years of age or older, can take advantage of the program for just \$10 for each snow removal. Snow removal is free for those seniors at or below the poverty level.

Snow removal can be provided when four or more inches of snow has accumulated in the senior's driveway. Funds are limited, so those who can afford to pay private contractors are asked to do so and allow this program to be available to those with limited income.

More information and necessary vouchers are available at the Commission on Aging in Bellaire or by calling the office at 533-8703.

The Commission on Aging in Grand Traverse County offers snow removal based on a sliding scale for area seniors. More information for snow removal in Grand Traverse County is available by calling Commission on Aging at 922-4688.

SUPER BOWL PARTY PACKS

Several local businesses generously donated Super Bowl Party packs to the Youth Group auction to support winter retreats. Sunday, January 31, will be the last day to bid on these Party Packs. We recognize and thank:

Chang Express	The Cone Corral
Chef Charles	The Moose
Java Jones	The Wine Shop
Pearl's	Village Market
Silverspoon Catering	

Worship Services 8:30 & 10 a.m.

HIGHLIGHTS IN MONTH MARCH

Lenten Catered Dinner	Wednesday, March 10	6 p.m.
Daylight Saving Time Begins	Sunday, March 14	
Lenten Cantata	March 21	4 p.m.
Palm Sunday	Sunday, March 28	

The Mission Statement of First Presbyterian Church

SHARING, GROWING, AND LIVING OUR FAITH IN CHRIST

This we seek to accomplish by
Introducing Jesus Christ to those who do not know Him;
Deepening the faith and commitment of those who already know Him;
And demonstrating Christ's way of love in service to the world.

YOUR 2010 GIVING ENVELOPES

If you have not already done so, please pick up your envelopes ASAP! They are on the table by the front entrance, in alphabetical order. PLEASE, help the church save postage by taking your envelopes home today. *If you do NOT wish to receive them, please let the office know.*

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MARCH NEWSLETTER ITEM DEADLINE – February 15, 2010

Website – www.erfpc.org

Church Email - info@erfpc.org