

FIRST PRESS

First Presbyterian Church

404 Spruce Street
Elk Rapids, MI 49629
231-264-8167
231-264-0162 (Fax)

January 2010

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

HAPPY NEW YEAR - 2010

As we start another New Year, it seems to be the appropriate time to look ahead in the life of our church. We are truly blessed to have dedicated people who are willing to serve the Lord in so many important ways.

The following persons were ordained and installed into their perspective offices on Sunday, December 13, 2009. We ask that you pray for them.

Ruling Elders	CLASS OF 2012 Deacons	Trustees
David Branding	Sandy Blackmore	Mark Blackmore
Bill Clark	Dianne Hall	Tom Calkins
Sue Cook	Mark Haskell	Ken Cook
Penny Novarro	Phyllis Staley	Jim Mottern
(Vacant)	Cathy Weidman	David West

We encourage you to volunteer whenever you can. And, to hold fast to the faith that God is guiding our endeavors.

Opening our new **Lighthouse** brought a joyful close to 2009. With anticipation, we watch our new **Office Addition** take shape for a possible opening in March!

Highlights in January

New Year's Day
No Sunday School
New Adult Bible Study Begins
February Newsletter Articles Due
Ecumenical Worship & Potluck
2009 Annual Reports Due

Friday, January 1
Sunday, January 3
Wednesday, January 13
Monday, January 18
Tuesday, January 19
Friday, January 29

Office Closed

10 a.m.
Noon
6 p.m. @ Sacred Heart
9 a.m.

Our Ministry Teams ***Always Welcome New Members!***

Fellowship, Nurture, Worship, Communications,
Outreach, Youth Ministries, Christian Education,
Stewardship

Other Opportunities

Be part of the Care Team by providing a meal or transportation, attend Presbyterian Women's Association, host Coffee Central, knit for Prayer Shawl Ministry, care receiver for Stephen Ministry, be a greeter, be an usher, help in the library, join a small group, experience Bible study, attend a Sunday school class, teach a Sunday school class, volunteer for Vacation Bible School, join a Mission trip, be part of a Presbytery Point work group, sing in the choir, share your musical talent at a worship service, contribute an article for the newsletter, invite a friend to church, be part of the prayer team, get involved with the Community Cupboard and more.

Learn, Grow, and Serve **By Becoming a Stephen Minister**

Watch for information about a new training class to be offered after Labor Day!

In This Issue

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Associate Pastor	"Hope" - Don Bellinger	Recipe - Fruit & Cheese Bits
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Ecumenical Service	Per Capita - Stewardship	Thanks to All - Cheryl Knight
Faithful Servant "Nathan Atkinson"	Presbyterian Women	Wednesday Morning Bible Study

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	
Vice President	
Treasurer	Wayne Shuler
Secretary	
Assistant Treasurer	John Werner

2010 Session

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

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	Jonathan Heeke	Kenneth Cook
Ken Weitschat	Richard Schurch	James Mottern
Harry Widman	(Vacant)	David West

Ruling Elders Ministry Team Assignment

Christian Education	
Communication	John Moore
Fellowship	Sarah Miller
Nominations	
Nurture	
Outreach	Nancy Muhlig
Personnel	Brenda Corner, Brandon Darin,
Stewardship	Mel Matchett, Dale Wagner
Worship	Peter Eckardt, Nancy Muhlig
Youth Ministries	Bill Clark, Peter Eckardt,

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

2010 WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

**** A Big Thank You****

We would like to thank all those who worked so hard to make the Christmas Tea a big success again this year. Cheryl Knight and Nell Widman worked very hard on the "savories" and "sweet treats", as well as all the women who helped them. We would also like to thank those who decorated and hosted a table. The beautiful tables are always a special treat. Thanks!

Here are the dates to put on your calendar for the first three months of 2010.

January 14, – NOON at Cheryl Knight's home, 10707 Shore Dr., Williamsburg, 264-8899. This will be a salad luncheon. All women are welcome; just bring an item of food that is good to put on a tossed salad.

We will be starting our new Bible Study series on the book of Joshua. It is titled Joshua: A Journey of Faith. We will do Lesson #1. New study books are in the Presbyterian Women mailbox and will be at the January Meeting. See page 10 for a preview of this Bible Study.

February 11, 1 p.m. – Bakeless Bake Sale, Letter Mailing and Joshua Bible Study - Lesson #2. This will be held at the home of Kathy White, 12304 Sutter Rd., Kewadin, 264-0564.

March 11, – 1 p.m. – Joshua Bible Study - Lesson #3. Location is to be announced. Watch the newsletter and bulletin for details.

We look forward to seeing you at any of our meetings and activities. If you have questions, please call Jennifer Haskell, 599-2946.

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

2009 Ministry Teams & Group Chairpersons ANNUAL REPORTS DUE

Now is the time to begin putting together your Annual Report, covering the activities of your particular group or ministry team for 2009.

The deadline for submission of these reports is Friday, January 29, 2010. If possible, please put your report in a Word document and email them to the office (info@erfpc.org). This will facilitate putting these reports together. If you have any questions, please contact Sandy Lake (264-8167).

THANK YOU NOTE FOR THE LIGHTHOUSE

Dear Church Family,

We are writing to let you know how truly grateful we are for the new youth facility. Watching the rebuilding and expansion of the original Lighthouse with this beautiful new facility has been a joy for all of us. Our children participate in the youth activities on a regular basis and they are so excited to be part of the Lighthouse Youth.

As parents it is our goal to pass along our Christian Faith to our children so that as they reach maturity they can make the decision to make our Christian Faith their own. The Lighthouse has been instrumental in making this dream come true. We truly feel that our church families, and our Youth Director, are a huge support to us as we work to accomplish this task. With the leadership and commitment of Gary, our children feel like being involved in church and growing as Christians, is fun and really the "cool" thing to do. In an age when parenting requires keeping our children safe from so many secular influences that are unhealthy for them, we sincerely appreciate the fact that our children happily and enthusiastically attend the programs designed for them at the Lighthouse.

We look forward to the exciting future growth and expansion of the youth programming in the new youth facility. We thought it might be nice for you to hear from the parents of the students actually involved with the Lighthouse about how very pleased we are. We would like to share with you a few of the exciting programs that are currently meeting in the Lighthouse.

- Sunday school during second service for both middle school and high school youth.
- Youth groups for both middle school and high school students have been very well attended. They will be enhanced with the new audiovisual and technology elements now available in the Lighthouse.
- Breakfast Club- Breakfast Club has traditionally been very popular and upon moving into the new Lighthouse we had a record breaking 42 middle school and high school students in attendance. (This is especially exciting when you realize that these kids had to get up extra early on a school morning to attend. Anyone that has had to get a teenager up in the morning understands what an accomplishment this is!)
- Bible Study for youth also meets in the Lighthouse.

Some of the other ideas that might be possible in the future include:

- Contemporary Worship Services designed and produced by our youth

- A Worship Band and Musical group to lead in singing during contemporary services and Youth Group meetings
- Study groups and homework help in the Internet Café environment of the lower level of the Lighthouse.
- Special impromptu programming for snow days and other days that students do not have school.
- Lock-ins and Retreats

The children in our homes are overwhelmed with the show of support and interest that the building of the new Lighthouse represents. They were thankful when the original Lighthouse was purchased and given to them for their activities. They are so impressed that the members of our church family worked together to provide this fabulous new facility. We have all heard the saying that "actions speak louder than words." In our church, actions clearly send the message that the young people in our midst are very important to us. As parents we are so thankful that our kids have the opportunity to attend programs that entice them with high energy and creativity, and allow them to express themselves in age appropriate activities in a safe, caring, Christian environment. Thank you for your part in making all of this possible.

Appreciating our many blessings,

Donna Eberle, on behalf of the Parenting Sunday School Class

"HOPE"

Lord you know that I love you,
You know I truly care.
Dispel my doubts and give me **hope**,
That you will always be there.

I struggle Lord so often with
What comes beyond our days.
Even though I know Your word
Gives **hope** in so many ways.

Is it true, will I really see
The faces I loved so much.
The ones that meant so much to me,
That I long again to touch

Will You come when my time is up?
Will you show the way
That I must travel to get to heaven
Where I'll spend my eternal days.

Oh Lord, I place my trust in You,
Please take away my fears.
Give me **hope** I will dwell with You
At the end of my earthly years

*Don Bellinger
December 1, 2009*

MESSAGE FROM OUR INTERIM SENIOR PASTOR

Christmas was spectacular and the love from the people at First Presbyterian Church poured into the streets of Elk Rapids. The New Year is upon us. From observing the joy and expectant hearts of this beloved community, the love of the people from our church truly spoke. There is an evident joy of knowing Jesus in this church from a level of sincerity witnessed when those at First Presbyterian Church come together.

It was very evident in the new members' class on December 12, 2009, when those who had been to this church just a short while, experienced Christ's presence among them by coming and joining in worship. These prospective members experienced floods of kindness that made them feel special. Our church can feel special that Christ's love is experienced. We are people of the covenant, people who have built a good spiritual backing with the ability to show it to others.

Spirituality is a key avenue toward continuing and developing our strength within fellowship, and showing the people in the community of Elk Rapids their love for Jesus. The people's spiritual nature at First Presbyterian, witnessed by others, is the key factor why visitors want to become members. In Graham Standish's book, *Becoming A Blessed Church*, Graham says in order to be such a church, God's purpose has to be the key foundation everyone works towards building.

First Presbyterian Church has defined God's purpose in our Mission Statement: "Sharing, growing, and living our faith in Christ, with the vision to seek to accomplish this by introducing Jesus Christ to those who do not know Him; and demonstrating Christ's way of love in service to the world." Fulfilling God's purpose becomes more defined in the spiritual gifts of the people of ERFPC as they reach out to those who don't know Jesus.

This is God's purpose and what all are striving to do at First Presbyterian Church. The question that becomes evident is how can we capitalize on our gifts to fulfill this purpose. The question becomes two-fold when we experience knowing our gifts. One, just how effectively can we use them? And two, will we use them? From

knowing and using our gifts to enhance God's purpose, we continue to build disciples and become a more grace filled church.

As we continue in ministry this year, may we remember God's purpose is given in a servant's heart, putting ourselves in the other person's shoes. As we become more purposeful in working to uplift others in their spiritual journey, may we help point them continually to our Risen Lord Jesus.

Happy New Year to all. I hope to see all in worship this year, and may we continue to grow in His love.

In Christ's Service,
Pastor Hal

FIRST PLACE 4 HEALTH

You are invited to join us in learning to live healthy and balanced in four areas. The Bible is our guide to becoming healthier spiritually, physically, mentally and emotionally.

We will meet on Tuesday and Thursday mornings at 9 a.m. Tuesdays will be gentle exercise and Thursdays will be Bible study and stretching. We will begin a 12 week study beginning February 2, 2010. Everyone is welcome, men and women.

For more information call Charlene Hansen at 499-9702.

SMALL SEEDS, MIGHTY TREES

Paul wrote, "I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow"
(1 Corinthians 3:6).

Is it time to add more water to the seeds of faith that have been planted in you? Consider serving our congregation as a Stephen Minister. A **new** training class will be offered in the fall. For more information, please contact one of our Stephen Leaders: Pastor Sandy, 264-8167, Connie Clark, 264-5977, Charlene Hansen, 499-9702, Sue Johnson, 264-6994 or Pam Shuler, 599-2480. God has plans for you to grow.

MESSAGE FROM OUR ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Dear Friends,

I read an interesting article online from The Presbyterian Leader.com regarding membership and thought that I would share part of it with you.

Wednesday, November 18, 2009
By Susan Andrews

The Three Cs of Church Membership

There are three central values or ideas that shape our understanding of church membership:

1. **Covenant.** As with all aspects of the Christian life, church membership begins with God---with God's covenant made with each one of us through baptism. From the beginning of the Bible to the end, God says to us, "I will be your God and you will be my people—no matter what." And God fulfills this covenant promise again and again by forgiving us and re-creating us and encouraging us through all the failures and all the struggles and all the perplexities of life. The ultimate expression of God's tenacity and love for us comes through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus—where God's Word becomes flesh and dwells among us—taking every moment of human living and transforming it into the likeness of God. Such extraordinary love and faithfulness is the heart of God's covenant with us. And this holy covenant becomes the model for our human covenants, our human promises to be loving and faithful and constant in all the relationships of our living. Church membership is our primary covenant response to God's dependable presence in our lives.

2. **Commitment.** Just as God stays connected to us no matter what, we are called through church membership to stay connected to God faithfully, regularly, permanently—in good times and in bad. Loyalty and fidelity are becoming rare values in our fast-paced and novelty-oriented world. But it is only through long-term commitment and disciplined participation that church membership can change us and root us in what is really important. Every member of a church is a "minister"—one who serves God. And commitment is the fuel that energizes our ministry, year in and year out.

3. **Community.** In his letter to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul offers an organic image of the church. We are the body of Christ, an interconnected, interdependent, integrated community of believers, dependent on one another to make the church whole. Our covenant commitment is not just with God but with one another. And so as church members we admit our need for others and their need for us.

Conclusion

And so, becoming a church member is a commitment to a covenant relationship—a relationship with a living and risen Jesus, and a relationship with a vulnerable and growing community of faith. Or, as the Book of Order says: "One becomes an active member of the church through faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and acceptance of his Lordship in all of life." (G-5.0101)

Profession of faith in Jesus Christ is first of all a matter of *trust*—not intellectual certainty or moral perfection. In the Presbyterian Church, we do not have to understand or know all the doctrines of the faith. Neither do we have to master all the disciplines of a mature spiritual life. Profession of faith is the beginning of a journey toward the knowledge and certainty of God, and it will take the rest of our lives to complete this journey. To trust is the key.

But trust in Jesus Christ only comes alive through *discipleship*—through obedient living, loving service, and daily disciplines of faith. The *Book of Order* is explicit about what faithful church membership requires:

- a. proclaiming the good news,
- b. taking part in the common life and worship of a particular church,
- c. praying and studying Scripture and the faith of the Christian Church,
- d. supporting the work of the church through the giving of money, time, and talents,
- e. participating in the governing responsibilities of the church,
- f. demonstrating a new quality of life within and through the church,
- g. responding to God's activity in the world through service to others,
- h. living responsibly in the personal, family, vocational, political, cultural, and social responsibilities of life,
- i. working in the world for peace, justice, freedom, and human fulfillment. — (G-5.0102)

Active church membership calls us and equips us to be God's yeast and salt and light in the unfinished cathedral of the world.

May it be so!

Shalom,
Pastor Sandy

WEDNESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

Come and study the stories of Joseph from Genesis beginning Wednesday, January 13, through March 10, 2010. The class will meet downstairs in the yellow classroom at 10 a.m. and will be led by Pastor Sandy.

Everyone is welcome!

NEWS FROM THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MINISTRY TEAM

A SHOW PLACE?

I was in the Village Market one Sunday afternoon and heard something distressing. There were two ladies visiting next to the vegetables. They were discussing our wonderful new LightHouse. I was looking for some nice apples, so didn't feel it was really bad manners to listen in on their conversation. "It looks so nice." "Yes, and so big." This all seemed good. I was just about to move on when I heard the term that gave me pause for thought and a little concern. "It sure is fancy...a real show place" HMMMMMMM

Now, I have not spent years on the Building Committee and hundreds of countless hours working on this project. However, I can't imagine wanting something I had so lovingly worked on following God's direction, to be minimized as a "show place."

As lovely as the LightHouse is, it is nothing more than brick, mortar and wooden beams. It is the hard work of many faithful people. Yet, it only is precious because of why it is here. It is here because we, as a church, had a vision. We, as a church family, prayed for and followed God's prompting to make a new home for our youth programs. The Lighthouse is here because this same church family gave faithfully during economic times when giving might have stretched pocket books. Our Lighthouse is here because God wanted it to be here, just the way it is, for the purpose it was built, our youth.

It is a house of worship because it was built by God and His people. It was built to be a place where our youth could grow in their relationship with God. I don't believe it was ever meant to be a "show place." I don't think it was meant to impress, but welcome.

God is here! God is alive and well in our community, in our church, and in our hearts. God built a LightHouse for His Glory. It is exciting to be a part of something so special. I pray that God blesses everyone that walks through those doors. I hope they don't see beauty in the building, but in the LOVE that built the building.

Pam Bekkering

CE NEWS

The Sunday School children have very generously given almost \$50 to support our Compassion child, Nesly Joseph. This comes in on a weekly basis of pennies, dimes and nickels. Each child is learning about the importance of Stewardship.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU

Our Family Christmas program was a wonderful evening. Thank you to everyone that helped to make this evening so much fun. The Deacon's Ham Potluck Dinner was delicious. Thank you, Deacons!

We also want to thank the Youth for assisting with the program by reading Scripture. We would also like to say "Thank You" to Cheryl Knight for playing for the program. Another big "Thanks" goes to Sandy Lake for printing the bulletin. It takes a big team effort to make a special evening come together. We appreciate everyone's support!

The CE Ministry Team

**There is no Sunday School on January 3, 2010.
We will see you on January 10.**

Christian Education Ministry Team meets the first Tuesday of every month at 6:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. If you have ideas, concerns, or an interest in joining this vibrant group of people, we would love to have you join us. If you have specific questions you can contact Barb Johnson, 264-9529.

THE NEW NURSERY

If you have not had a chance to take a peek at our new location, please stop by and say, "Hi." Everyone seems to be having a wonderful time. The children have settled right in. Melissa has made it a very warm and welcoming environment. Each Sunday she teaches a lesson from the Baby Beginnings Program. Last week I enjoyed watching two little ones make angels, with glitter. Very exciting stuff!

Please check your calendars and see if there is a week or two you can help in the nursery.

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 scholarship. Please call the office to sign-up.



Lighthouse Youth Info

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

MIDDLE SCHOOL

GRADES 6 – 8

We meet from 5 – 6:30 p.m.

Come for some fun, food and a time to find out exactly where Jesus fits into your life. We will be discussing our upcoming trip to Spring Hill and the fundraisers we need to do. One of the fundraisers we will be discussing is our cookie bakes and the Shrove Tuesday dinner.

HIGH SCHOOL

GRADES 9 - 12

We meet from 7 – 9 p.m.

We have some new topics we will be discussing and trying some student leadership discussions. We will start talking about student led and designed worship services. We will need to wrap up our weekend retreat to Chicago and discuss our Mission Trip.

Yes, we will have some food and fun too.

College

I hope you enjoyed your evening at the new Lighthouse. It was great to meet with you and catch up with how life has been for you in your post-high school adventures.

Watch your emails for updates and who knows when you will receive cookies again...

How to Get In Touch With Gary

Church 264-8167, Home 264-5702, Cell 313-1448

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

WHAT'S COMING UP IN FEBRUARY...

Shrove Tuesday
Sweetheart Dinner
MS Spring Hill Trip

Thank you!!!

To everyone who made the Grand Re-opening a huge success, thank you! What a great day! It was so awesome to see kids all day long helping serve, playing games indoors and a physical game of Broomball outside. The movie was great...even with a few of the technical difficulties we had...thank you for your patience.

Chili cook-off results:

People's Choice Award

Abbie Mandeville (#6) (and her cookies)
Cone Corral (#6)

Judges Choice Award

Abbie Mandeville (#6) (and her cookies)
The Moose (#4)

Thank you to Kay Goodall and LeRue Werner for the trophies and aprons. Thank you to all who entered the contest and helped make the cook-off a great success. Start preparing for the next one!

With all the 'busyness' of life, we cannot forget how God was manifested in the flesh to be a part of our lives. The God of the universe came down from heaven that first Christmas night and took human form! The servant role was completed in Jesus.

As Eugene Peterson said, *"He made a career of rejecting marks of status or privilege; He touched lepers, washed the feet of His disciples, befriended little children, encouraged, and finally submitted to crucifixion by a foreign power. Everything about Jesus spoke of servitude."* Let us remember this example as we approach a New Year. Let us give all to the Maker who gave all.

"Faithful Servant" Series

Nathan Atkinson

There is no minimum age nor required years of experience needed to be a Christian servant. Nathan, son of Robert and Liz Atkinson, is a 10th grader at Elk Rapids High School. Gary Bekkering, our Youth Director, identified Nathan as a great example of a faithful servant because "he has always dropped anything to help out, especially if it is doing something for others."

Nathan helps out with the youth fundraisers, ladling soup at the lunches and selling wreaths for Christmas. He has participated in many of the youth activities and spoke highly of the Chicago Zone trip where he attended a class on defending your faith. "It was a lot of fun, celebrating your faith with kids your own age."

When asked about the new Lighthouse facility, Nathan said, "It will attract more people to God, because of its safe and attractive atmosphere."

Nathan has a younger brother and sister, Andy and Katie, who attend youth group and Sunday School with him. He would like to attend the Air Force Academy when he graduates from high school. In the meantime, in addition to youth activities at church, Nathan is on the ER High School tennis team and debate team.

Although quiet and unassuming, Nathan has a real servant's heart. He says, "Serving is fun and you feel good after you do it."

Lighthouse Youth on Sunday Evenings
Middle school, grades 6 - 8 from 5 - 6:30 p.m.
High school, grades 9 - 12 from 7 - 9 p.m.

SANCTUARY FLOWERS

If you would like to sign up for flowers, the Flower Calendar is located on the temporary wall put up by the builders.

Flower arrangements can mark a special occasion, a memorial, or a tribute, and enhance the Sanctuary on a Sunday morning. Flowers can be self-arranged or come from your favorite florist.

Please call Mark Haskell (599-2946) if you have any questions. Both Elk Lake Floral and Twisted Fish Gallery can delivery on your behalf. If bringing your own arrangement on a Saturday, make arrangements ahead to get into the church.

CHOIR NOTE

Dear Congregation,

The Sanctuary Choir has enjoyed preparing Advent music for our worship services. Several of our anthems are from past Christmas Cantatas. This has provided instrumental parts that have enabled participation with our clarinet player, Doug White, and a frequent musician with the Community Choir bassoonist, Julie Medlin.

In addition, we had a few guitarists join us. I planned this to enhance our worship services during the Advent season. Please thank them for their time, individually when you see them.

A Happy New Year to everyone!
Cheryl Knight & the Sanctuary Choir

**WARM GREETINGS
FROM BEADFORLIFE**

Thank you for opening your heart for BeadforLife. We received your BeadParty Return along with \$1,071 in funds raised as of November 18, 2009. Your return is complete, and the funds raised make such a big difference in the lives of our beaders!

We now have more than 390 women involved in making bead jewelry. Since the average family size is about 10 people, this means 3900 people (and more) are directly benefiting from the opportunity to earn a living. Your willingness to educate yourselves and others regarding the situation in Uganda is most appreciated.

We have made good progress in the last months - thanks to you and others around the country. If you read THE BEAD Newsletter, you will know we are making great strides in expanding the services to our beaders and their communities. Please revisit the website for more news and features at www.beadforlife.org.

We hope you know how much we appreciate you and how your efforts over the past months have helped.

Thank you and "Appoiyo,"

The BeadParty Team

WE COULD USE CREATIVE VOLUNTEERS

The Christian Education Ministry Team will be working this winter to reproduce a beautiful wooden Nativity Set like the one we borrowed from The Presbyterian Church in Traverse City for our Children's Christmas Program on December 6. There are many pieces that will need to be cut out of wood and then painted. Our plan is to have the figures cut out this winter and then we will need painters in the spring.

This is an interactive set of animals, Biblical characters and many shapes that will help our children to better understand the real story of Christmas. Children will be allowed to select a figure and place it near the manger, making them a part of the actual story as Bible passages are read.

Loyal Cobb, Merle Morgan, Mark Haskell and Harry Widman have already volunteered to cut out some of the pieces and would love more volunteers. If you are interested in cutting the wood this winter or painting the figures this spring, please call Joanne Teague, 264-6162 or during this winter at (239) 261-1851, or email her at jtltermi@sbcglobal.net.

NURTURING OUR SHUT-INS

The Nurture Ministry Team will soon begin making phone calls and visitations to our wonderful shut-ins. We know that our caring Pastors and Care Team already make visits and calls but our ministry team would like to add another level of care. If you know of any special needs or wants of any shut-ins, please let our team know by calling Joanne Teague, 264-6162, Sue Flowers, 938-1381 or Denise Heeke, 264-5346.

The team enjoyed sending "Subway" gift cards and personal notes to our College Students for Thanksgiving, and we were happy to receive several kind thank-you notes. We thank all those who responded to our recent request for small meals to be put into our freezer at church and many of these have and will go to our shut-ins. It's all about LOVE!

ECUMENICAL POTLUCK & WORSHIP SERVICE

The Elk Rapids Churches invite you to join them for the Annual Ecumenical Potluck and Worship Service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The service this year is at Sacred Heart Catholic Church on Tuesday, January 19, at 6 p.m. Please bring a dish to pass and join your friends and neighbors for a wonderful opportunity for fellowship and worship.

THANKS TO ALL!

We had a very successful Christmas Tea. We cleared approximately \$1,200. We had 94 attendees. Thank you to everyone who had a helping hand in this event.

Cheryl Knight

Following is a recipe requested by many of you.

Fruit and Cheese Bites Makes 18 (recipe can be doubled)

½ cups shredded reduced-calorie cheddar cheese, at room temperature
4 ounces light cream cheese
4 drops hot pepper sauce (such as Tabasco)
½ cup dried apples, chopped
1/3 cup dried apricot, chopped
¼ cup dried pineapple (such as Sunsweet Philippine Pineapple) chopped
¼ cup finely chopped walnuts

1. Beat together cheddar cheese, cream cheese and hot pepper sauce in a small bowl until blended, about 1 minute,
2. Stir in dried apple, apricot and pineapple with a wooden spoon. Using a tablespoon, form mixture into balls, and then roll between palms. Coat balls in chopped walnuts.

(I used dried tropical fruit in place of pineapple and apples)

NEW ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS

- Have you ever wondered what your spiritual gifts are?
- Have you ever wondered where you fit into Christ's body, the church?

The answer lies in the unique gifts God has given you. Spiritual gifts are unique, attributed of the Holy Spirit, and generously shared with Christians in community for building up the body of Christ in practical ways.

Come discover God's vision for your life.
Come discover how to use your gifts in the Church.

Join us for an opportunity to discover your spiritual gifts. "Discovering God's Vision for your Life" starts Sunday, January 17, 2010, at 10 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. The class will be led by Pastor Sandy. For further information, please contact Pastor Sandy.

PER CAPITA STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY TEAM

In January of each year, we give members an opportunity to pay their own per capita expense. Per Capita is the amount (\$25) that every Presbyterian Congregation pays for each of its members to support the ministry and mission of their Presbytery (Mackinac), their Synod (The Synod of the Covenant) and General Assembly. This is required giving and is already included in the general budget.

Providing an opportunity to give directly to the per capita expense, allows members who were unable to increase their pledge this year to take a step forward in their giving. For those who have pledged, this is a second-mile giving opportunity to cover one of the large expense items in the general operating budget. Per Capita is not dues to be paid to the church, but rather a form of mission giving to the larger work of the Presbyterian Church. You will be receiving a letter explaining Per Capita in more detail. In your giving envelope box is an envelope marked Per Capita. Although we offer this opportunity in January, it can be paid at any time throughout the year.

COMMUNICATIONS MINISTRY TEAM

The Communications Ministry Team was formed by Session in 2008. In its short existence, it has many accomplishments:

- ✦ redesigned the welcome brochure
- ✦ compiled and printed a photo directory
- ✦ prepared bookmarks featuring the different ministry teams
- ✦ revitalized the website
- ✦ modernized the newsletter
- ✦ started email distribution of newsletter
- ✦ initiated an electronic church calendar on the website
- ✦ created a wedding planner

These members are retiring from the team this year after two years of faithful service. We give special thanks to Kay Goodall for all of the graphic work on several of the projects, Jim Ducharme, webmaster and responsible for several innovations to the website, Leah Nicholson and Pam Shuler.

Terry Miller has joined the team as the new webmaster. If you enjoy creative writing, advertizing, or photography, there is a place for you on the team. Please contact Sue Johnson at 264-6994.

NEW LOOK FOR WEB SITE

Our church website, www.erfpc.org now sports a new, professional design to complement its informative content. Thanks to the prior efforts of Jim Ducharme and recent tweaks by Terry Miller, our new webmaster, the site is better than ever. Here are some of the key things available:

- Current Sunday bulletin
- Monthly newsletter
- Lighthouse youth news
- Audio of recent sermons (New!)
- Recent photos of Lighthouse Dedication and ongoing renovation work

And, just for fun, see if you can find these items on the site:

Library weasel
Coffee Central page

If you have trouble using the site, wish to suggest improvements or just want to boast about how easy it was to find the weasel and coffee, contact our Webmaster at webmaster@erfpc.org

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN STUDY JOSHUA IN 2010

"Joshua: A Journey of Faith" is the title of the study that Presbyterian Women will be doing in 2010. Joshua is the personal name of the main character of the book of Joshua.

According to the New Bible Dictionary, the word's basic meaning is "salvation". Joshua was probably called Hoshea by his family, but Moses added the divine name, calling him Y'hosua - that is "The Lord saves." The Arabic name is the equivalent of the English name Jesus. The special significance of the name Joshua will become apparent as we consider the content of the book, for this is a book "devoted to the deliverance of a displaced people, the people of ancient Israel."

The author of this study, Mary Mikhael, is an elder in the Presbyterian Church in Beirut, Lebanon. She was born in the Middle East, in Syria, and grew up in a Greek Orthodox family that traces its Christian ancestry back to Pentecost. She is a graduate of Haigazian University and the Near East School of Theology. Mary will guide us on this journey through the book of Joshua. She believes there are countless lessons to nurture our faith and that Joshua certainly has a message for us today.

Come study with us. You will find our schedule of meetings on page 2 or call Jennifer Haskell 599-2946. Thank You!

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS FROM NOVEMBER 18

Rev. Hal Shafer called the Session meeting to order on November 18, 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

Guest: Presentation and examination of Elder Elect Dr. David Branding. Lighthouse discussion presented by Charlene Hansen-Prebee from the Building Committee and as a member of the FPC.

The minutes of October 28, 2009, Session meeting were approved as corrected.

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

The Board of Trustees: Report received.

❖ A motion carried to approve the Facilities Committee request for Traverse Bay Roofing Co. to install new roofing on the south side of the sanctuary at the same time the southeast addition roof is done, for a cost of \$11,495. This is to be expensed from the Major Maintenance Replacement Fund.

Building Committee: Report received.

Interim Senior Pastor: Report received. Class of 2012 Elders, Elders-elect and Deacons have been trained and tested in compliance with the Book of Order, and these Elders, Elders-elect, Deacons, and Trustees have indicated their willingness to serve. The Moderator asks for the following motions to be recorded in the Session minutes:

- ❖ A motion carried to approve that these persons are willing to serve in the offices to which they have been duly elected on October 18, 2009, by the congregation of First Presbyterian Church.
- ❖ A motion carried to approve the examination of these Elders, Elder-elect, and Deacons for the purpose of ordination and/or installation; and that these Trustees are approved for installation.
- ❖ A motion carried to approve the date set for the ordination/installation service to be Sunday, December 13, 2009 at the *10 a.m. service.

Associate Pastor: The activity report of Rev. Murray was received.

Worship Ministry Team: Report received.

❖ A motion carried to approve the request that Session ask the Building Committee to consider adjusting the Phase II Building Plan to incorporate a temporary relocation of the choir room.

Youth Ministry Team: Report received.

❖ By consent agenda, a motion carried to approve that Gary Bekkering will accompany Middle School youth to Presbyterian Point, July 18-24, 2010.

Christian Education Ministry Team: Report received.

❖ By consent agenda, a motion carried to approve the purchase and distribution of Advent Calendars, "Jesus is Coming," from Channing Bete.

Communication Ministry Team: Report received.

- ❖ The motion to pull the regular ad in the local newspaper for the winter and in its place, put ads for specific church events did not pass.
- ❖ A motion carried to investigate ways to continue funding for the regular ad.

Nurture Ministry Team: Report received.

- ❖ By consent agenda, a motion carried to remove from the church membership rolls the following per their request upon their relocation: George and Terri Kimble, Kaila and Mitchell Crandall, and Kurt and Cathy Hildorf.
- ❖ By consent agenda, a motion carried to remove the following member from our church rolls per his request – Greg Hamilton.
- ❖ By consent agenda, a motion carried to approve the curriculum/book for small groups: "On Being Christian...Thoughts from John the Apostle by Dr. John Oswalt."

Stewardship Ministry Team: Report received.

❖ By consent agenda, a motion carried to approve the Christmas Joy Offering to be received on December 20, 2009. The receipts are distributed equally to the Board of Pensions for assistance programs and to National Ministries of the General Assembly Council to support Presbyterian racial ethnic education.

Outreach Ministry Team: Report received.

❖ By consent agenda, a motion carried to approve the making of gift/donation and note cards available year round.

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

Adjournment: The meeting closed with prayer by Pastor Hal at 9:39 p.m.

*Since our November Session meeting, the time for the ordination and installation of the class of 2012 officers has been changed to the 8:30 a.m. service

Worship Services 8:30 & 10 a.m.

HIGHLIGHTS IN FEBRUARY

Blood Drive	Monday, February 1	1-7 p.m.
First Place 4 Health	Tuesdays & Thursdays, beginning Feb. 2	9 a.m.
Sweetheart Dinner	Thursday, February 11	
Becoming Disciples through Bible Study	Sunday, February 14	3-5 p.m.
March Newsletter Articles Due	Monday, February 15	Noon
Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner	Tuesday, February 16	5-7 p.m.
Ash Wednesday Service	Wednesday, February 17	TBA
Annual Meeting	Sunday, February 28	11:05 a.m.

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.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
404 SPRUCE STREET
ELK RAPIDS, MI 49629

Non-Profit STD Rate
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Elk Rapids, MI 49629
Permit No. 52

FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER ITEM DEADLINE – January 18, 2010

Website – www.erfpc.org
Church Email - info@erfpc.org