

FIRST PRESS

First Presbyterian Church

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

April 2010

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

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MINISTRY TEAM - COMING YOUR WAY



Anchors away....

...Come set sail with us this summer on a HIGH SEAS ADVENTURE to discover the AWESOME LOVE of GOD.

June 21-25, 9 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Registration forms are available on line at www.erfpc.org or in the Narthex and Fellowship areas. Please watch the bulletin for further updates on this exciting week and the many ways in which you can be a part of this year's VBS program!

Don't wait; you don't want this ship to set sail without you!



Milestone Sunday is Sunday, April 11. Workshops will begin at 11:45 a.m. Please call the office for more information, 264-8167. Signup sheets are in the Narthex, Fellowship Hall, and downstairs in your child's Sunday School classroom. We hope to see all the children participate in this very special Sunday. Don't forget the potluck lunch before the workshops.

Children's Ministry Sunday is Sunday, April 18, at the 10 a.m. service. The children will be awarded their certificates of completion for the Milestones workshops completed on April 11. Four-year-olds and third graders will be presented with Bible story books and Bibles from their church family. Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to celebrate with the children of our church as they continue on their faith journeys.

Highlights in April

Maundy Thursday Meal & Communion	Thursday, April 1	6 p.m.
Good Friday Tenebrae Service	Friday, April 2	8 p.m.
Easter Sunrise Service @ Lighthouse	Sunday, April 4	6 a.m.
Easter Breakfast in Fellowship Hall	Sunday, April 4	7:15 a.m.
Easter Sunday Worship Services	Sunday, April 4	8:30 & 10 a.m.
No Confirmation Class	Monday, April 5	
Milestones Potluck & Workshops	Sunday, April 11	11:15 a.m.
May Newsletter Articles Due	Monday, April 12	noon
Children's Ministry Sunday	Sunday, April 18	10 a.m. service
No Sunday School	Sunday, April 18	
Youth Fundraiser Luncheon	Sunday, April 25	11:15 a.m.

In This Issue

Associate Pastor	Faithful Servant - Jim Ribby	One Great Hour of Sharing
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Drinking from My Saucer	Mackinac Presbytery Report	Women's Association
Easter Sunrise Breakfast	Mural in the Nursery	Your Blessings are so Many, Lord

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
DIRECTORY**

Interim Senior 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	Mona Nelson, Betty Tezak
Communication	John Moore
Fellowship	Sarah Miller
Nominations	Mel Matchett, Nancy Muhlig
Nurture	Penny Novarro
Outreach	Betty Tezak
Personnel	Bill, Clark, Brenda Corner, Brandon Darin
Stewardship	Dale Wagner
Worship	Nancy Muhlig, John West
Youth Ministries	David Branding, Pete 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

**EASTER SUNRISE BREAKFAST
Sunday, April 4
7:15 – 8:15 a.m.
in Fellowship Hall**

The youth will once again be hosting this wonderful meal for you to enjoy. They will be serving ham and egg casserole, sausage, coffeecake, applesauce, and coffee or milk.

**THE COST IS \$5.00 PER PERSON
OR \$20.00 PER FAMILY.**

All the profits help the youth, who are serving you today, attend future youth group trips.



2010 WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Here are the dates to put on your calendar for April & May 2010. Please note the following activities:

4/8 Women's Association Meeting
1 p.m. – Church Fellowship Hall
Nell Widman, Hostess
Lesson #4 – Joshua Bible Study

4/24 Spring Gathering of Presbyterian Women of the Mackinac Presbytery
Westminster Presbyterian Church
Rogers City, MI 9 a.m.

*****ATTENTION*****

Start gathering your gently-used clothing and household items to donate to Presbyterian Women for the UPSCALE RESALE

May 10-12 Drop-off items accepted.

May 13-15 UP-SCALE RESALE

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.

MESSAGE FROM OUR INTERIM SENIOR PASTOR

Theology Matters is a publication of Presbyterians for Faith, Family and Ministry. From this journal, author Jerry Andrews speaks on salvation in his article, *The State of the Church: A Penitential Self-Examination*.

St. Augustine is one of the Capadocian Fathers of the faith that helped develop the basic doctrine of self-examination that we work from today. In Andrew's summary of Saint Augustine, he gives us a wonderful measure for growth.

Andrew paraphrases St. Augustine who gives an interpretation of a person who has a heart for the Lord and one that doesn't:

Give me a man that loves. He experiences what I speak. Give me one that yearns, one that hungers, one that is traveling in this wilderness and thirsts and pants for the springs of the eternal home; give me such a person and he knows what I speak. But if I speak to the cold man, he will never understand.

Basically, it is up to God to grow and nurture us as we are invited to hunger to grow in God's love. Yet, we need to know the ways that churches grow.

In Loren Mead's book, *More than Numbers: The Ways Churches Grow*, he outlines what growth really means. Mead believes that there are four specific categories of church growth. They are

- Numerical growth
- Maturation growth
- Organic growth and
- Incarnational growth.

As I explain the four measures of growth, it will be up to my reader to discern the importance of each one of these points to acquire growth in our church.

- Numerical growth is exactly what you think it is. Ordinarily we gravitate to this description. Mead describes it as growth in Sunday worship attendance, growth in the size of the budget, growth in the number of activities and programs, and growth in active membership.

- Maturation growth has to do with growth in the stature and spiritual maturity of church members. This has to do with growth in the faith.
- Organic growth is the growth of the congregation as a functioning community.
- Incarnational growth is the ability to take the meanings and values of the faith-story and make them real in the world and society outside the congregation.

All of these avenues of growth have to position themselves from the hunger in the wilderness, a panting for the springs of the love that is shown to those we encounter. These growth avenues work out of a faith that is free to express itself uninhibitedly.

How has your wilderness trip begun to unfold, or has it?

Easter will be upon us in a few days, and I hope your pilgrimage has been one that will bring your journey to the foot of the tomb.

Our Lord wishes for us all a panting for the springs of our eternal home. We learn an unconditional love from the Master Craftsman—our Lord Jesus. This kind of love is a gift. May God's unconditional love unfold in all our hearts.

Peace and God's grace be upon all today as we roll back the stone from our hearts to accept the resurrected Christ anew.

In Christ's Service,

Pastor Hal

MESSAGE FROM OUR ASSOCIATE PASTOR

I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? (Isaiah 43:19)

Dear friends,

At our last Presbytery meeting, we were challenged to see the new thing that God is doing in our Presbytery, in our synod, in our denomination. We were challenged to pray for the synod in particular and our denomination in general. I believe that we, First Presbyterian Church, are being challenged to see the new thing that God is doing right here, right now. God is doing a new thing right now in our midst.

I also know that change is difficult, but we are changing so let's be a part of that change. Wonderful things are happening right now, and I want to challenge us to look for the good things and not to dwell on the negatives or the past. We have wonderful new facilities to use, we have a skilled and dynamic leadership, and we have a devoted and skilled staff so we need to celebrate those things.

God is indeed "doing a new thing" in our midst. I want to invite you to participate in worship, Bible study, small groups, choir, and fellowship activities. I encourage you to be a part of this "new thing" that God is doing in our midst.

Shalom,

Pastor Sandy

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR APRIL

April 1 Maundy Thursday	Ex. 12: 1-4; 11-14 1 Cor. 11: 23-26	Ps. 116: 1-2, 12-19 Jn. 13: 1-17, 31b-35
April 2 Good Friday	Is. 52: 13-53: 12 Heb. 4: 14-16; 5: 7-9	Ps. 22 Jn. 18: 1-19: 42
April 4 Easter Sunday	Acts 10: 34-43 1 Cor. 15: 19-26	Ps. 118: 1-2, 14-24 Jn. 20: 1018
April 11	Acts 5: 27-32 Rev. 1: 4-8	Ps. 118: 24-29 Jn. 20: 19-31
April 18	Acts 9: 1-6 [7-20] Rev. 5: 11-14	Ps. 30 Jn. 21: 1-19
April 25	Acts 9: 36-43 Rev. 7: 9-17	Ps. 23 Jn. 10: 22-30

CHOIR LETTER

Dear Choir and Congregation,

I can hardly believe that we are winding down on winter and that our snowbird choir members will begin returning in the near future.

I want to thank those choir members who have braved the winter weather conditions to attend choir rehearsals and to be at church on Sunday mornings. Our choir attendance has been 25% higher on averages from this time last year.

I wanted to comment on a few musical pieces I have played on the piano that are not identified as religious numbers. The interpretation of music is in the aural perception of the listeners. I do not believe that a religious title automatically creates a spiritual attachment. We are all uplifted in various ways by the sounds created by music. I strive to present a variety of music, so that all of you can find a spiritual moment in the music the choir and I present to you. I hope that you will be moved by the sound of Debussy, Chopin, Beethoven and others who were created by our Lord and given tremendous talents. Please close your eyes and open your hearts to the purpose and not the person providing the music. "Music has the power to raise our spirits and lift our eyes to heaven." The choir and I wish this for all of you.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Knight
Interim Choir Director

NEWS FROM THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MINISTRY TEAM

MURAL IN THE NURSERY

Our new nursery, on the lower level, has been blessed with a beautiful new mural. Peggy Bushnell graciously offered her talents to paint us an amazing picture on the nursery wall.

Peggy found a children's Christian book with gorgeous and unique illustrations and used a picture from this book as her inspiration. We chose to use animals and Jesus, as a boy, with the thought that the children in our nursery would be interested in the mural. They are! Even the youngest of our nursery friends come in and "Baa" when they see the painting of the lamb.

We invite you to stop by the nursery and stick your head in to see our beautiful new mural.

We give special thanks to Peggy for sharing her talents with us.

LIBRARY NOTE

In the current (March) issue of Christianity Today they list what they believe to be the best movies of 2009.

The first list is of the best movies:

1. "The Hurt Locker"
2. "Up"
3. "The Road"
4. "Up in the Air"
5. "A Serious Man"
6. "Summer Hours"
7. "(500) Days of Summer"
8. "Star Trek"
9. "Avatar"
10. "Inglourious Basterds"

Honorable Mentions:

"The Blind Side", "Bright Star", "Crazy Heart", "An Education", "Fantastic Mr. Fox", "Julie & Julia", "The Messenger", "Ponyo", "Tulpan", "The White Ribbon".

The second list is of the most redeeming movies:

1. "Up"
2. "The Blind Side"
3. "Invictus"
4. "The Road"
5. "The Soloist"
6. "Where the Wild Things Are"
7. "District 9"

8. "The Hurt Locker"
9. "Julie & Julia"
10. "Up in the Air"

Honorable Mentions:

"The 13th Day", "Avatar", "Bright Star", "Coraline", "Crazy Heart", "Earth", "Precious", "A Serious Man", "Sin Nombre", "The Young Victoria".

Gary Fangboner, Librarian

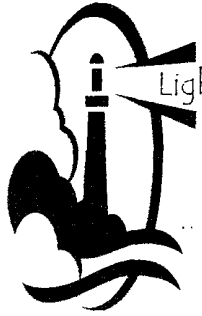
THE 4TH & 5TH GRADE BOYS AND COFFEE CENTRAL

I would like to take a minute of your time to say what a great time my 4th/5th Sunday School boys had volunteering their time at Coffee Central on February 14th. Tommy Derks and Iain Ferguson showed up bright and early at 7:30 to help with making coffee and setting up. The boys happily wore the Coffee Central aprons and proudly assisted serving coffee and goodies to our church family. From about 8:45-9:20, we kept busy playing a game that encouraged the boys to consider the world around them and how they can and do use their faith to make decisions. They were very eager for the second "wave" of Coffee Central folks to come through and got right back to their positions by 9:30.

When Coffee Central was finished, without me having to ask, the boys started doing dishes! It was amazing! Peyton Schindler, Tommy and Iain washed, dried and put all the dishes away without being told. But, it gets even better!!! When we were done, they begged (I'm not kidding) to do Coffee Central again! I wasn't sure if we should do another because I was worried about taking away from their Sunday School lessons. After we talked more about it and I had a few minutes to think, I agreed to let them do one more. They immediately signed us up for and served on March 21!

The fact that they are eager to help and serve others is a wonderful lesson for Sunday School. I am so proud of these boys! What a great example they are setting.

Abbie Mandeville
4th & 5th grade Sunday School Teacher



Lighthouse Youth Info

**MIDDLE SCHOOL
GRADES 6 – 8**

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

Youth Group Meeting

March 28...No MSYG
Spring Break!

April 4...No MSYG
Easter Sunday, the youth will be doing the
Sunrise Service at 6 a.m. and the Sunrise
Breakfast following the service.

April 11...Yes, there is MSYG
Welcome back.

April 16-17...Possible MS-lock-in

April 18...Yes, there is MSYG

April 24...Saturday Night Praise Service

April 25...This is a big day
The youth from Sunday School, the youth who
went to Spring Hill, and the youth who went to
Chicago will be doing both services. There is
no SS that day.
Yes, there will be youth group that night.

Watch for the monthly calendar that is mailed directly with more information

Confirmation

We discussed our Jewish roots, enjoyed a Seder meal
and this month we are working on our faith
statements. Thank you to all the mentors who are an
important part of the program. You are appreciated!

Acolyte Schedule

- 4-4 Dillon Thompson
- 4-11 Brittany & Jordanna Clarkson
- 4-18 Kennedy Reffitt
- 4-25 Raquel Rieck

CAMP

That is right...I said, camp time.

\$100 campships are available for Presbytery Point.
See Gary for more details. Check out the table in the
Fellowship Hall and pick up a brochure!

Check out the websites

Presbytery Point...\$275-\$300/week
www.presbyterypoint.org
MS Camp: July 18-24
HS Camp: July 11-17

Camp Westminster...\$385-\$425/week
www.campwestminster.com
(programs for all ages all summer)

How to Get In Touch With Gary

Church 264-8167 or Cell 313-1448

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

**WHAT'S COMING UP IN
MAY**

May 22: Saturday Night Praise Service

May 23: Confirmation Sunday

May 30: Mission Trip Brown Bag Lunch

**HIGH SCHOOL
GRADES 9 - 12**

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

Youth Group Meeting

March 28...No HSYG
Spring Break!

April 4...No HSYG
Easter Sunday, the youth will be doing the
Sunrise Service at 6 a.m. and the Sunrise
Breakfast following the service.

April 11...Yes, there is HSYG
Welcome back.

April 18...Yes, there is HSYG

April 24...Saturday Night Praise Service

April 25...This is a big day
The youth from Sunday School, the Youth who
went to Spring Hill and the youth who went to
Chicago will be doing both services. There is
no SS that day.
Yes, there will be youth group that night.

Tuesday nights at the LH from 7-8 p.m.

Bible Study on Job
(We meet for 1 hour for an in-depth study at the LH.)

Our trip to the Chicago Zone event was very inspiring.
Our guest speaker was Bob Lenz. He shared many
stories with us and helped give us direction as we
make choices in our daily lives. We heard a Christian
rock band from Nashville by the name of Jacob's Road.
Their music was very meaningful and seemed to hit
home for a lot of us.

We are now preparing for our summer mission trip to
Arkansas.

Watch for the monthly calendar that is mailed directly with more information.

PARENTS

Don't forget to put the above dates on your calendars.
Thank you for your continued support and effort at
home to reinforce what is taught in SS and YG. On
April 25, we will be sharing with the congregation our
experiences at Spring Hill and the Chicago Zone.

I am always open to comments.

Breakfast Club every Wednesday at the Lighthouse.
Doors open at 6:30 a.m. Come for a great breakfast, fun and
a devotion to start off your day.

“Faithful Servant” Series
Jim Ribby

*Our church is filled with an army of marching “faith servants,”
doing God’s work in their own unique ways.*

With a twinkle in his eye and a lilt in his voice, Jim Ribby has conquered one of man’s greatest fears, public speaking.

Jim is the youngest in his family and quickly earned the title as family entertainer. Originally from the Lansing area, Jim has lived “up north” for 15 years and has been attending First Presbyterian for half that time. He has been a probation officer for 34 years and is working through Grand Traverse County.

Self described as “socially awkward”, Jim admits to learning poetry in an effort to woo women. Even though he didn’t particularly like poetry, during breaks from amateur theater he turned to it to help fill that urge to perform. He began his pursuit of poetry at the Stone Circle each summer. His favorite poet is Robert Service. Jim will perform Civil War poetry, which he describes as “guy poetry”, at the ER Township Hall on Friday, April 9, at 7 pm.

Jim brings poetry to life with his amazing intonation. When asked to speak on poetry in schools he tries to infect the children with his passion for the spoken word. He explains reading poetry as “telling someone you care about, about something cool.” It takes him about three weeks to memorize a poem to performance quality; although as he “gets older, it takes longer.”

He brings Scripture to life when he reads from the pulpit. The Scriptures began as an oral tradition and were meant to be heard rather than read. Jim encourages you to try reading Scripture on Sunday mornings and has several suggestions to becoming more comfortable speaking in public:

- ✦ Get the material well ahead of time.
- ✦ Read the passage at least twice out loud each night.
- ✦ Don’t worry about difficult words. Ask the pastors for the correct pronunciation of the name of a Biblical person or place, or choose how you will pronounce it that day and confidently say it.

If you want to conquer the fear of public speaking in a safe and loving place, please call Judy Matchett (264-6377) to schedule a date to read the Scriptures.

But just as you excel in everything – in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us – see that you also excel in this grace of giving. 2 Cor. 8:7

DRINKING FROM MY SAUCER

I've never made a fortune
And it's probably too late now,
But I don't worry about that much
I'm happy anyhow.

And as I go along life's way
I'm reaping better than I sow.
I'm drinking from my saucer
'Cause my cup has overflowed!

Haven't got a lot of riches
And sometimes the going's tough,
But I've got loving ones around me
And that makes me rich enough.

I thank God for His blessings
And the mercies He's bestowed.
I'm drinking from my saucer
'Cause my cup has overflowed!

Oh, I remember times when things went wrong
And my faith wore somewhat thin.
But all at once the dark clouds broke
And sun peeped through again.

So Lord, help me not to gripe
About the tough rows that I've hoed.
I'm drinking from my saucer
'Cause my cup has overflowed!

If God gives me strength and courage
When the way grows steep and rough,
I'll not ask for other blessings
I'm already blessed enough.

And may I never be too busy
To help others bear their loads,
Then I'll keep drinking from my saucer
'Cause my cup has overflowed!

From a song written by: Michael Combs

BUILDING COMMITTEE

On Sunday, May 2, an Open House is being planned to celebrate the completion of *Phase 2* of the Master Plan. Many of us have been able to watch it (with amazement) during the entire process. For those who have missed the excitement, you are in for a very pleasant surprise.

A great big "Thank You" to all of you for putting up with the disruptions, dust, debris, and other inconveniences during construction. Another "Thank You" to so many of you who helped move the offices and storage items and helped with a multitude of other necessary jobs. Many committees also chipped in with time and talents. This has been a collaboration of love and cooperation. Your prayers have been most helpful, and we thank you for offering them and thank God for hearing and responding. The fruits of our labors are listed here:

- The entire staff is now enjoying a central office area with a reception area and a meeting room. (Much more efficient)
- A Multi-purpose room (the old office area) will be equipped with a copy machine, computer, files for ministry teams, and audio visual equipment. It will be a wonderful meeting place with a separate thermostat for heat or air conditioning.
- A new Universal Access Lift (elevator) directly from the ground level at the main level to the Sanctuary level
- A new larger space for coat storage
- An attractive Welcome Center in front of the brick wall near the Sanctuary
- The narthex area is greatly enlarged and has newly-painted walls and new carpet.
- The relocated nursery now has more space on the lower level near children's Sunday School classrooms
- More room for Sunday school with the staff moved out of the lower level.
- Accommodations to move the choir out of the sanctuary basement
- The project is being completed ahead of schedule.

Mark your calendar for Sunday, May 2, and come visit all the new areas and celebrate with us a return to a "new normal" in our beautiful new space.

Again, thank you to all who have supported the work financially and have helped in so many ways with their time and talents on this labor of love for our church.

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

The recent earthquakes in Haiti and Chile have underscored the importance of the One Great Hour of Sharing offering and have touched us once more with human suffering.

By contributing to the One Great Hour of Sharing on Sunday, March 28, using the envelopes in your giving box, we can know that we have made an important difference in someone's life. In Haiti, part of your donation was used by The Presbyterian Disaster Assistance group to fly in health kits, which many of you made, to people who were living without basic necessities. In Chile, One Great Hour of Sharing funds were used for an initial response while PDA works with our ecumenical partner, Church World Services, to assess that country's needs.

Since 1949, One Great Hour of Sharing has given us opportunities to ensure that our gifts can help others live fuller lives. Whether they go to families who suddenly lose everything in war or natural disaster like the recent earthquakes, or to communities that have been struggling for years against hunger and poverty, our gifts to OGHS can help our brothers and sisters change their lives. To the extent that our gifts bring us a step closer to imitating God's love, they can change our own lives.

One Great Hour of Sharing helps us keep individuals, their families, and their community central in our hearts and not just as distantly observing. Our support is directed through the three Presbyterian programs: Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, The Presbyterian Hunger Program, and Self-Development of People.

By sharing our resources and changing lives with a generous gift to One Great Hour of Sharing we can know that:

*"One person can change the world
by changing the world for one person."*

Stewardship Ministry Team

**MEETING OF THE
MACKINAC PRESBYTERY**
February 20, 2010

Pastor Hal, Pastor Sandy, and I traveled to Mackinaw City early Saturday morning for the first of four Presbytery meetings this year. It was held at the Church of the Straits.

There were introductions of new Pastors and new Elder Commissioners, which was my title for the day. It was very much like a Session meeting, with opening prayer, approval of Docket, and the approval of the last Presbytery minutes. A few changes were made, and the minutes will be printed as corrected.

A report from the Staff Search Task Force was presented. A task form will go out to all Elders in our congregation asking if anyone might be interested working with Presbytery on some level.

There was discussion of the new Form of Government (F.O.G). There are some churches in our Presbytery that cannot meet the requirements for certain tasks that are stated in the Book of Order. A task force was created to work on this by simplifying our Book of Order. This will be approved at the July General Assembly meeting in Minneapolis, MN. Pastor Sandy will be attending this meeting. If you would like more information, go to their website, www.PCUSA.org/formofgovernment.

We voted for Stated Clerk and Treasurer. The Treasurer was running unopposed, his name is Beach Hall. The Stated Clerk, an office held by Harry Begley for the last 9 years, was being sought by Harry and Kay Morrill. After the official count we were told that Kay Morrill was elected the new Stated Clerk. Several people stood and told Mr. Begley how much they appreciated all he has done, and Pastor Hal summed it up when he said Harry will be missed. We wish Kay well in her new position.

There was discussion and then approval of the 2010 Presbytery budget.

Margaret Haney, representative from the Synod, explained the transition that the Synod was going through. She asked that we all commit to prayer for the Synod and ask God to move the church to a new vision.

Our motion request for Pastor Dan Herlein to be given the honor of Pastor Emeritus was carried with full support.

I would like to say that I did enjoy my first Presbytery meeting. There was fellowship, laughter, worship, and important discussion of the many issues within our Presbytery. There was discussion of an Elder Assembly. This would be a time for Elders to gather to share our common ministries, missions, our joys, and our concerns. I encourage all Elders to attend a Presbytery meeting. I think it will strengthen our own commitments to being a leader of our church. We are the Presbytery, the more one learns about it will help us to understand our Presbyterian beliefs and our service to God.

Sue Cook
Clerk of Session

**EVER THOUGHT ABOUT BECOMING A
STEPHEN MINISTER?**

First Presbyterian Church will be training another class of Stephen Ministers later this year. Stephen Ministers work alongside our pastors to care, encourage, and provide emotional and spiritual support to people who are going through a difficult time, such as divorce, grief, hospitalization, unemployment, terminal illness, relocation, chronic illness, or loneliness.

If you have a gift for caring, encouragement, and listening, please begin to prayerfully consider whether you might want to be part of this exciting ministry. If you think you might be interested, talk with one of our Stephen Ministry Leaders: Pastor Sandy, 264-8167, Connie Clark, 264-5977, Charlene Hansen, 499-9702, Sue Johnson, 342-2666, or Pam Shuler, 599-2480. We want to thank Lu Wahl and Cheri Hawthorne, two retiring Stephen Ministers, for their services to our church and this ministry.

NOT THE ONLY CERTAINTIES

As we face the April 15 deadline for income tax payments we are reminded of Benjamin Franklin's quote, *"In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes."* As a mother I can agree with Margaret Mitchell who said in her book Gone With the Wind: *"Death, taxes and childbirth! There's never any convenient time for any of them."*

An unexpected death, taxes on top of regular expenses and the process of birthing a child are all painful, if not inconvenient; but they are filled with the promise of the future. As citizens our taxes provide a country of freedom and opportunities. The result of a painful childbirth is a beautiful baby. As Christians, even death has the promise of the future. We have the true certainty of everlasting life through Jesus Christ.

The government plans ahead to collect the taxes by using payroll deductions. The parents of a newborn plan for their baby's arrival and care. We as good stewards should be just as diligent and plan well for our deaths. There are many ways to remember the church and God's work. At First Presbyterian Church there are three endowment funds authorized by Session. The first is the Endowment Fund for Mission which has been in existence since June 25, 1997. Its focus is to help those in need and to provide Christian educational opportunities. For example, both Scott Stephan and Caitilin Richardson-Hoy were supported from the endowment fund as they earned their degrees in ministry. Two new endowment funds were approved by Session last year. One is an endowment for programming and the other is an endowment for upkeep of the buildings and grounds.

These endowment funds use the interest accumulated from the donations to fund projects outside the normal operating budget; which allows the principle to grow for future needs. An example of endowment funds supporting the church of the future is Lakeside Presbyterian Church in Chicago. It was a vibrant congregation in the early 20th century, and its visionary members started an endowment fund. With the growth of the suburbs the congregation started to dwindle. In the 1970's the church almost closed. Its close proximity, however, to the desirable Lincoln Park put Lakeside in a revitalizing area in the 1990's. Its endowment fund allowed the tiny congregation to make major renovations to the building. This facelift has attracted new members to the congregation,

and it is again serving the needs of the surrounding community. If you have questions about the endowment funds please speak to the Treasurer, Wayne Shuler.

Death, like taxes and childbirth, while painful, can have amazing results. Your thoughtful stewardship through your estate planning is a wonderful and enduring testimony of your faith. The true certainty in life is the love of God and everlasting life through Jesus Christ, not death and taxes.

Pam Shuler for the Stewardship Ministry Team

YOUR BLESSINGS ARE SO MANY, LORD!

Your blessings are so many, Lord,
To count them one by one
Would take much longer than a day
That has just now begun!

You fill each day with miracles
From dawn to setting sun.
Each night You hear a million prayers
When day's work is done.

You keep this old world spinning
As seasons come and go,
And each one is a masterpiece
That sets our hearts aglow.

You fill the earth with beauty, Lord,
With flowers, shrubs and trees,
And we marvel at Your rainbows
And butterflies and bees.

Your words still give us comfort
For Your promises are true.
Your blessings are so many, Lord,
In everything we do!

Poet, Clay Harrison

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS FROM FEBRUARY 24

Rev. Hal Shafer called the Session meeting to order on February 24, 2010, at 7:02 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. A quorum was present, and the meeting opened with prayer by Pastor Shafer. Roll was called

Guest: Vice President of Trustees, Jim Mottern

The minutes of January 27, 2010, 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.

- ❖ A motion carried to allow a Minute for Mission requesting funds to help defray the cost of transportation for the Youth Breakfast Club.

Building Committee: Report received.

Director of Operations: Report received

Clerk of Session: Report received.

- ❖ Pastor Hal, Pastor Sandy, and Sue Cook attended the first of four Presbytery meetings.

Interim Senior Pastor: Report received.

Associate Pastor: Report received.

- ❖ By consent agenda, a motion carried to remove the name of Doris Harrison from the rolls of the church as of the date of her death on February 18, 2010.

Worship Ministry Team: Report received.

Youth Ministry Team: Report received.

2010 Nominations Ministry Team: Report received.

Christian Education Ministry Team: Report received.

- ❖ By consent agenda, a motion carried to approve the purchase of "God Loves Me" blanket kits for mission project.

- ❖ By consent agenda, a motion carried to approve the purchase of Lenten materials to hand out to Sunday School classes: "Get Ready for Easter" calendar – Channing Bete;

- ❖ "The Lent and Easter" booklet – Channing Bete; "The Signs of Jonah" devotional – Creative Comm.; "Observing Lent at Home" – Channing Bete

Communication Ministry Team: No report.

Fellowship Ministry Team: Report received.

Nurture Ministry Team: Report received.

Stewardship Ministry Team: Report received.

- ❖ A motion carried for suspension of rules to consider Stewardship request.
- ❖ A motion carried that Sunday, March 28, 2010, is designated as the day the One Great Hour of Sharing offering will be received. The campaign is titled "Feed my Sheep." There are bulletin inserts for four weeks and fish banks for the children.

Outreach Ministry Team: A motion carried to approve \$2000 from the Endowment fund for the Eagle Village Program to support the following projects:

1. "Step Closer"- to purchase Bible study materials at \$200.00.
2. "Inspiring Word" – to cover monthly speakers' expenses. Speakers will bring hope and encouragement to the group. \$1200.00.
3. "Connection" – to pay for the kids to be taken to community churches where they can form a relationship with the congregation or minister where the child will eventually be placed. \$600.00.

New Business: Discussion of our current Mission Statement and our Vision 2020 as it will apply to our search for a new Senior Pastor.

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

Adjournment: The meeting closed with prayer by Mel Matchett at 10 p.m.

Worship Services 8:30 & 10 a.m.

HIGHLIGHTS IN MAY

Blood Drive	Monday, May 3	1 – 7 p.m.
Upscale Resale Sale Set-up	Mon., May 10 - Wed.12	Fellowship Hall
Upscale Resale Sale	Thurs., May 13 - Sat., May 15	Fellowship Hall
Last Day of Sunday School	Sunday, May 16	10 a.m.
June Newsletter Articles Due	Monday, May 17	noon
Confirmation Banquet in FH	Monday, May 17	6 p.m.
All Church Fellowship Potluck	Thursday, May 20	6 p.m.
Teacher Appreciation	Sunday, May 23	
Confirmation Sunday	Sunday, May 23	
Youth Brown Bag Lunch Fundraiser	Sunday, May 23	11:15 a.m.
Memorial Day (office closed)	Monday, May 31	

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

MAY NEWSLETTER ITEM DEADLINE – April 12, 2010

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