

# FIRST PRESS

## First Presbyterian Church

404 Spruce Street  
 Elk Rapids, MI 49629  
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**August 2010**

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

## ANNUAL ECUMENICAL WORSHIP AND PICNIC IN THE PARK AUGUST 2 AT 6 P.M., MEMORIAL PARK

What could be more delightful than a community-wide church service and potluck in beautiful Memorial Park on a lovely summer evening? Join with neighbors and friends in this meaningful annual event. This year's picnic will take place on Monday, August 2 (Harbor Days Week), at 6 p.m. Bring your spiritual and physical appetites and a favorite dish to pass...and leave fully satisfied with delectable "food for thought," friendly fellowship and the wonderful home cooking of our community.

## CONFIRMATION CLASS 2011

Time sure flies; it's that time of year again . . .the planning of Confirmation 2011. We wanted to find out who may be interested in Confirmation this year. Confirmation will take place during the school year; a day has not been decided yet. This is an exciting period in our church's history and we are looking for kids that want to commit themselves to this program. Confirmation will help you in your walk and journey of faith, to see how God will use you. Confirmation will also help you understand the history of the church universal and the history of First Presbyterian Church. Parents and kids who are interested, please contact the church office (264-8167), or feel free to speak with Pastor Hal, Pastor Sandy or Gary.

## PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE (PNC) UPDATE

Your Pastor Nominating Committee continues to meet weekly to evaluate the Personal Information Forms or PIFs (candidate resumes) that come to us through the Presbyterian Church Leadership Connection (CLC) in Missouri. (We welcome referrals from other sources, but note that all PIFs will first be referred to this CLC for verification purposes.)

We have begun the process of watching and listening to sermons from candidates whose resumes seemed a possible match for our church. We are learning much about both the candidates and ourselves as this process evolves! And we are being fed by the many sermons we hear.

We continue to ask for your prayers both for the PNC as we search for our new Senior Pastor and for our church in this time of transition and waiting. May we all listen to God's leadings in this process.

## Highlights in August

Blood Drive	Monday, August 2	1-7 p.m.
Ecumenical Worship & Picnic @ Memorial Park	Monday, August 2	6 p.m.
Presbyterian Women's Celebration Sunday	Sunday, August 15	8:30 & 10 a.m.
90 <sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration	Sunday, August 22	9:30 a.m.
Historical Walk around Elk Rapids	Sundays, August 22 & 29	See article on pg. 2
Saturday Night Praise Service @ Lighthouse	Saturday, August 28	6 p.m.

## In This Issue

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## 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	Penny Novarro
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

Here are the dates to put on your calendar for the rest of summer of 2010. Please note the following activities.

**August 12 – 7 p.m.** – We will meet at the church with Nancy Muhlig as our Hostess. We will be studying Lesson 6.

**August 15** is our "Celebration of Presbyterian Women" Sunday. The Women's Association will be involved in the whole service for Sunday Morning. We will be greeting you, ushering the service, serving and providing "Coffee Central", providing the music, and other parts of the worship service. Don't miss out! This will be a great service.

**Sept 9 – 7 p.m.** – We will meet at the church with Ellie Holdsworth as our Hostess. We will be studying lessons #7 & #8.

**Sept 24-26 – PW in Mackinac Presbytery Fall Retreat, Cedarville, Michigan**

**October 2 – HARVEST DINNER**

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

## A WALK AROUND HISTORIC ELK RAPIDS SUNDAYS, AUGUST 22 AND 29 AT 6:30 P.M. OLD TOWN HALL

Back by popular demand – saunter the historic haunts of our village with guides Adam Schuler and Terry Miller (both of whom grew up here) – a great way to burn off some of those calories from dinner! Last year, more than 100 people joined our walks. Adam will guide one walk and discuss historic homes around town and share memories of growing up here. Terry will lead the other walk through the downtown and harbor areas, talking about historic buildings and other places of interest along the way. Please invite your friends and neighbors to come along. Choose either tour, and you're welcome to come back the next week for the other one. We'll meet at the Old Town Hall at 6:30 p.m. and leave from there.

For those who prefer to ride, we've reserved the church bus on both days (holds 12 people) for a tour starting from the church at 2 p.m.

## MESSAGE FROM OUR INTERIM SENIOR PASTOR

Sunday July 18, 2010, First Presbyterian Church experienced Mission Sunday with Mrs. Veeda Javaid from Pakistan. She moved all present in worship as she expressed what the Presbyterian Missionaries had done since the early 1800's in her country. We were able to see what our forefathers and mothers had done and the successes witnessed in Pakistan. Veeda's love for the Presbyterians and her compassion for her country were inspiring. But what struck me most was how she spoke of the transforming love of Jesus Christ for those less fortunate. I loved the message she gave that as a Christian, we are to do good wherever we are and whenever we can. No one could have spelled it out any better than that.

Today in many of our Presbyterian churches throughout America, we have forgotten why we come to worship. One of my colleagues, the Rev. Dr. Graham Standish, has recently been vocal on the church and its worship in today's culture. Standish wrote an article in my weekly *Alban Institute Newsletter* entitled "Why Do We Worship the Way We Have Always Worshiped When People Keep Changing?" I felt this article was profound and wanted to share some of Graham's insights. He began his article by saying,

For most of my life I have really disliked worship. My wife tells me that if I weren't a pastor, I would never go to worship. Fifteen years ago she was right about that, although I have managed to change over time. I am a constant tinkerer when it comes to designing worship, always working with our staff and members to figure out how to tweak our worship in a way that will touch people and open them to what I think is paramount in a worship service: *encountering and experiencing God in a way that transforms us, even if just a little bit.*

Standish states,

The unfortunate reality is that in North American society, neither the surrounding culture nor the church culture embraces the transforming encounter with God. Many mainline churches quit asking long ago whether our worship leads people to an encounter with Christ and the Holy Spirit. Think about why we do what we do in worship. Do we worship the way we do because it is how we have always

done it? Do we worship the way we do because it is what we are best at? Do we worship the way we do because it makes certain members of the church happy? These reasons reside at the center of what has caused so many people to walk away from the church. Many people have wanted a tangible, transforming encounter with God but have never found it in worship, because worship has been focused on everything but that transforming encounter. To foster an encounter with God means designing worship that is deliberately focused on making a spiritual and psychological impact on people. If people are to experience God in worship, it needs to resonate with where they are psychologically and spiritually. If we don't offer people a venue through which they can access the spiritual, they will gladly find some other venue or ignore their spiritual yearnings and substitute the pursuits and pleasures of the world.

This is the question asked us today in today's society, "Are we meeting the spiritual yearnings and questions of the culture today and leading them to a transforming encounter with God?" One thing I've always loved about our Reformed Faith is the action many growing churches live by. The statement that is good to understand is, "Reformed and always Reforming." This means we are people who continue to change, looking to God for direction to guide us in our spiritual encounters with Him.

We had a spiritual encounter with Veeda Javaid. God said to us to redirect our hearts to those in today's culture, in our country, and help them experience the transforming love of Christ.

During this transitional time period FPC is looking inwardly to focus outwardly. FPC has a strong mission focus! It is that type of focus and direction that will compel this church to further exhibit its transforming goodness in Jesus Christ to a culture that is suffering and needs to experience God's love through the people. This is what enables the psychological impact that transforms one person at a time. Witnessing the goodness FPC has for people is the attracting measure that keeps and solidifies relationships.

May we continue to be the people who offer access to the transformational encounter with God witnessed in our Christian faith and lives. I hope to see all in worship as we glorify the One who gives us all the goodness we have.

In Christ's Service,

Pastor Hal

## MESSAGE FROM OUR ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Dear Friends,

As I sit down to write my newsletter article, I have been back from the 219<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) for a week. Several people have asked me about my experience. I want to share with you a few of my own feelings about GA. (Elsewhere in the newsletter you will find a letter from the new Moderator and the Stated Clerk, telling you a little more about GA.) First of all it was a wonderful but exhausting experience. Stan Ott in his newsletter "Building One Another" compared it to bungee jumping. I kind of thought it was like being on a roller coaster. One moment you feel like you are on a real high, and the next moment you are plunging down. One moment you feel connected, and the next you feel alone. I went from joy to sorrow back to joy. I had feelings of great unity and then division and then back to unity. In many ways that is exactly how life feels to us. We have ups and downs. We have times of feeling very connected, and then other times we feel like we are very alone.

Before commissioners and others at GA left home they were asked to bring underwear for children, men and women in homeless shelters throughout the Minneapolis area. More than 7700 pieces of underwear were donated. We were also asked to bring water from our area to be added to the water that poured out at each opening of General Assembly plenary and at the opening worship service. The theme for the 219<sup>th</sup> General Assembly was "Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38).

On Saturday, we elected a new moderator. There were six very fine and qualified people running for moderator. After four ballots, Elder Cynthia Bolbach was elected. She was the only elder running for Moderator. Throughout the week I appreciated her humor and her effectiveness as moderator.

On Sunday, we had a wonderful worship service that really spoke to the diversity of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. Music and dance spanned the gamut of styles and cultures that make up our denomination. A first at GA, was the baptism of a baby from the Kwanzaa Presbyterian Church of Minneapolis. It was a very moving moment as we participated in that child's baptism.

On Sunday afternoon, Sunday evening, Monday and Tuesday, the committees of General Assembly met to go through the business that was to go before GA in the plenary sessions later in the week. I was on the committee that reviewed business that had to do with Church growth, Christian Education, and the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program. This was a wonderful experience. One of the items we were responsible for was reaffirming the "Growing the Church Deep and Wide" program. This is a program that encourages Presbyterian Churches to reach out into their communities. One of the things that was unique about this committee is that we covenanted to base our meetings on spirituality and relationships, letting business be the fruit of the former. Another opportunity we had was to visit two very different Presbyterian churches in the Minneapolis area. Both churches are deeply involved in mission in their communities and in the world.

Wednesday through Saturday morning we went through the plenary sessions which were sometimes long and tedious and sometimes very enriching. I didn't agree with every decision, but I know that God was working in our midst. Also, it is important to remember that decisions made by the General Assembly go to the Presbyteries for ratification before becoming a part of the Book of Order.

I was blessed to be a commissioner to General Assembly for Mackinac Presbytery. I was blessed to work with some very dedicated Presbyterians over the week. I was blessed by some wonderful worship and prayer opportunities. I was excited to see 122 young adult volunteers and 17 new mission workers commissioned for service around the world. I love the church, and I was excited to see the wonderful ministry being done by the Presbyterian Church, (USA). If you would like information about specific overtures or actions of GA, go to [www.pcusa.org/ga219](http://www.pcusa.org/ga219).

Shalom,

Pastor Sandy

## HELP US CELEBRATE

We will be honoring our 90 year olds Sunday, August 22, at 9:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. The Nurture Ministry Team will host a special birthday party for Mary Foster and June Whittaker and will also honor those who are 90 years/plus. Please join us for cake, a rousing round of Happy Birthday, and you may want to bring a birthday card for our special honorees. [Bags for cards will be provided.]

# NEWS FROM THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MINISTRY TEAM

## HIGH SEAS CAPTAIN'S REPORT

Today I put the last name tag away and straightened up the last VACATION BILBE SCHOOL (VBS) folder. As I sit here in my office, so quiet...it is hard to believe just last week this church was a huge sailing vessel of activity. We had 135 sailors (children) plus 40 or more crew members (volunteers) playing, learning, and worshiping together all week long. We spent the week exploring the Mighty Love of God! On Thursday we had the largest number, 124. Out of the 135 sailors, 36 were from First Presbyterian Church, 18 were from Sacred Heart (our partner for the week), 46 were from other churches, and 35 didn't list a church home on their registration sheet. We had many sailors who came from all over the United States, some from Utah, Kansas, Illinois, and Florida. It was an amazing group of children!

The week after VBS is always bitter sweet. There is so much planning, work, praying, and love prior to this one week. My entire focus was on this one activity, getting everything set, so the sailors and crew members could experience the best VBS week possible. I didn't work alone. There were so many people putting in hours of time making sure that there were wonderful decorations, crafts, snacks, stories, most importantly prayer, and setting the stage for when the children walk in the door on Monday morning. For me and all of the other crew members it was a labor of love, so when it was all done, it was also just a little sad.

We were also blessed to be able to give 17 Bibles out during the week to sailors who didn't have one of their own. This, too, was exciting.

The generosity and kindness of our congregation never ceases to amaze me. A program of this magnitude could not happen without the full support of all the church members. The Fellowship Ministry Team hosted a delicious celebration picnic on Friday. The Deacons helped with paper products and supplied the special treats on Sunday during Coffee Central, and Outreach Ministry Team generously donated to our program. I believe the seeds we have planted and the memories we have created for these sailors will be long lasting and life impacting.

God's blessings were everywhere, from the choice of the program all the way back in January to the very last note sung on Sunday morning, as the children shared their wonderful week with the congregation. We encouraged the children to look for *God Sightings* throughout the week, and it is a

powerful reminder to us all to look for and remember the wonderful ways God works in our everyday lives.

It is with a very fond farewell that Captain Pam signs off for the last time.

God Bless you all for your love and support of our VBS program.



## NEVER TOO LATE...OR EARLY...

Christian Education is already looking ahead to this fall. We are looking for individuals interested in teaching an adult class, helping with the youth programming, and teaching a children's Sunday School class.

We have a wonderful curriculum, which is user-friendly. Grab a friend and join in on a very rewarding and enriching endeavor. Please contact Pam or Gary at 264-8167 if you are interested. We would love to hear from you. Your ideas and comments are always welcome and appreciated. Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to share God's Good News.

## LIBRARY NOTE

PRESBYTERIAN TODAY magazine recently issued a special edition entitled, "Welcome to the Presbyterian Church!" It is a very detailed and helpful introduction to Presbyterianism - what it means and what it stands for.

Included are 1) Culture; 2) being Presbyterian; 3) Where in the World are Presbyterians?; 4) Faith and Politics; 5) Worship-It's All About God; 6) Your Money and Your Life; 7) An Invitation to Read the Bible; 8) Decently and in Order; 9) What Presbyterians DON'T Believe; 10) How to Speak Presbyterian; and 11) Key Resources for Presbyterians.

If you want to know what Presbyterians are all about, take a look at the magazine. It can be found on the hearth in the library. When you are done with it, please put it back on the hearth.



Lighthouse Youth Info

## A Note from the Youth Director

It has been a great July! We have had a few youth group meetings down at the Dam Beach and a couple of other youth gatherings. We have been very busy painting faces every Wednesday night on River St. (It's still not too late to come and check it out.)

Don't forget the big Pillo Polo tournament, Thursday, August 5. The Lighthouse Youth and the Alden Store Company sponsor this event. This is our 4<sup>th</sup> year!

We have also been busy planning for the new school year. I am very excited to start up the regular meetings and with new ideas.

A couple of key events in August will be the leader training night, the 6<sup>th</sup> grade transition night, and the freshman transition night. (Check your calendar or the web page for this information.)

I would like to share with you a few of our needs for the upcoming year.

### **\*\*The Youth Ministry Team is looking for members.**

If you have a love for the youth, have ideas on how we can better serve our youth from our church and the community, are willing to help promote the Youth programs, and are willing to help bring these ideas to life as a team member, we would love to have you as a part of our team for this next school year!

### **\*\*We are looking for leaders for our Middle School program.**

We meet every Sunday night from 5-6:30 p.m., and you can help us weekly or every other week. You will have the opportunity to build relationships with the kids, share your story, help lead discussions, and join them on a few of their retreat weekends.

### **\*\*We are looking for leaders for our High School program.**

We meet every Sunday night from 7-9 p.m. You can help us weekly or every other week. You will have the opportunity to lead discussions, share your story, hear their story, build relationships with them, and join them on retreats and mission trips.

### **\*\*We are looking for a couple of Sunday School leaders.**

We meet every Sunday morning from 9:45-11 a.m. You will have the opportunity to help by leading the discussion and by participating and learning from the youth themselves.

### **\*\*We are also looking for Breakfast Club Cooks.**

We have a great crew now, but there is always room for new cooks. We will even provide the training.

If you have a story to tell and would like to share it with our youth we would love to have you as a guest speaker some night. I hope you will pray on how God can use you in our church and if you feel God directing your path to the Youth, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

### **How to Get in Touch With Gary**

Church 264-8167 or Cell 313-1448 or E-mail: [garybgaryb@hotmail.com](mailto:garybgaryb@hotmail.com) or [www.erfpc.org](http://www.erfpc.org)

## *“Faithful Servant” Series*

*John “Terry” Moore*

*John West*

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

They are not blood brothers but share a common passion moistened with sweat. John and his wife, Marilyn, invited Terry and his wife, Kathy, to join their small group which meets at Matchett’s on Tuesday nights. From this invitation they discovered a common passion for service and a new ministry was begun. Terry, who was a high school industrial arts teacher, has made many wood projects for the church on his own. With the help of John they have turned this service into a small group ministry based on a skill. John says the name for the group, “The Good Wood”, was the idea of Don Bellinger.

They begin their work with prayer and a passage from the Bible. As they work together they discuss the passage and its relevance to their lives. They are presently working on a cabinet for the office, and in the future, with the help of Stan Holzhauer, Bob Bremer and George Knight, will be working on a table for the conference room.

Their work has expanded to landscaping and yard work. They offered their services for bid at the Presbyterian Women’s silent auction last fall. The church member who won the bid again donated money to the church for their services this spring.

John and Terry were “caught in the act” of service when they were installing the new sod around the front of the office addition and at the Lighthouse. They put in several 12-hour days on this project aided by a few others. John, who is recently retired, was an IT control engineer, a self-professed “geek at heart”. He said that in retirement he wants to work in a “Christian environment”. His excitement and vision for service combined with Terry’s skill and ability to teach have started a wonderful ministry. They welcome others to join them.

John said, “Small groups have really changed me. It is a setting where you are all friends and it’s safe to ask the big questions.” Terry concurs and adds that every member of the church can volunteer their time for something, especially prayers for our church and our Christian family.

## **SENIOR PROJECT FRESH**

Senior Project FRESH provides qualifying seniors in Antrim County with coupons to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at Michigan farmers markets and roadside stands. The program is open to seniors 60 years of age and older, total monthly income of less than \$1,669 for one person or \$2,246 for two people. The program runs through October 31<sup>st</sup>. For more information, contact Elizabeth at the Commission of Aging Office at 533-8703. See flyer on the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall for more information.

## **SNEAK PEEK - COMING IN SEPTEMBER PROGRESSIVE DINNER**

Yes, we FPC "progressive" Presbyterians look forward to making new friends, savoring long-time friendships, and enjoying each other's company as we share a dinner together! Save the date of Saturday, September 11, for a delicious progressive dinner. We'll start at the church at 5:30 p.m. for hors d'oeuvres, and then progress to a host's home for dinner and another host's home for dessert (same menu at each home). The evening promises to be filled with food, fun and great FPC fellowship. Ticket signups will begin in the Narthex between services later this month. Watch for more details this month in Sunday bulletins and in the September newsletter.

## **SCHOOL SUPPLIES NEEDED**

School supplies are now going on sale in the stores and this is a great time to contribute to our School Kit program for children in Haiti and other poverty stricken countries around the world. Listed below are the supplies needed to fill one kit. Please keep them together in a bag, and we will transfer them to the tote bags that members of our congregation have been making.

### **School Kit**

- 1 — pair of blunt scissors (rounded tip)
- 3 — 70-count spiral notebooks or tape-bound pads of 8" x 10 1/2" ruled paper or pads with 200-210 sheets of ruled paper. Do not include filler paper.
- 1 — 30-centimeter ruler (12")
- 1 — hand-held pencil sharpener
- 6 — new pencils with erasers
- 1 — large eraser
- 1 — box of 24 crayons

**All supplies and tote bags are due by Sunday, August 15, so they can be sent off for distribution.**

## KEEP CONNECTED TO THE MISSION IN PAKISTAN

Following the recent visit of Veeda Javaid, you are invited to subscribe to the Friends of PEB e-newsletter to stay informed about the school and projects of the Presbyterian Education Board in Pakistan. This newsletter is published every 2-3 months. To subscribe, visit the website [www.friendsofpeb.org](http://www.friendsofpeb.org) and click on "join e-mail list." If you have any questions (or would prefer to receive our annual print newsletter only), please contact Lynn Miller at (320) 493-6243 or [lynn.miller@friendsofpeb.org](mailto:lynn.miller@friendsofpeb.org).

## WEBMASTER UPDATE TERRY MILLER

Many changes to the church Web site ([www.erfpc.org](http://www.erfpc.org)) are underway. Here is a summary of recent modifications.

- Removed Photos from the menu and added links to photos in appropriate sections
- Modified the home page to add links to *God's Five Purposes* and the *2020 Vision*
- Updated the VBS information in Christian Education
- Added a link to the photos of the 2010 Arkansas Mission Trip
- Substantially reorganized the Organization section

There will be more changes coming soon. Keep perusing the site.

A reminder: you can listen to sermons, read the current bulletins and newsletters, review archived publications, and check the online card catalog of our church library – all on our church Website.

## STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE

Stewardship, like worship, ideally is a daily component of our relationship with Christ. However, many of us have compartmentalized stewardship and worship and only do them on Sundays. For some, stewardship is further confined to two or three weeks in the fall. When that happens, the stewardship campaign can feel like the church has its hand in your pocket or wants to guilt money from you.

The Stewardship Ministry Team, through these articles and the Faithful Servant articles, has tried to emphasize that stewardship is an

integral part of our spiritual walk. It is an act of worship, a measure of discipleship, and an act of love.

In the Old Testament God instructed the people to build the tabernacle where they could worship Him. Laws were drawn up for the priests and for the worship of God, including offerings to be given. The purpose of the laws was that the people "Be holy, because I, the Lord your God, am holy." (Lev. 19:2) Giving a portion of your resources was an act of worship. Giving of your "first fruits" rather than what was left over made God a priority.

As Christians we know that these principles of giving still hold true. The Biblical way of giving is to set aside (or pledge) a portion to give to God first. This method of giving indicates that God is of foremost importance to you and acknowledges how much He has given to you.

Giving as a measure of discipleship is not about the amount of money given, but the attitude with which it is given. Even giving a *tithe*, if done like paying a bill, isn't what God wants. I feel that God expects us to ask Him what we should give, and I believe that He will let us know what to give. The amount may be uncomfortable for us going beyond what we feel is a safe amount to pledge. The growth in discipleship, by placing reliance on God to help you fulfill your commitment, is measured by the joy of obedience. The blessing of giving in this manner is the impact it will have on the ministries the church could provide.

First Presbyterian Church is a church of love, and its members' giving reflects that love. Whenever there is a need expressed, the members rush to meet those needs. We have also expressed our love for others by providing the Lighthouse, a place where youth from the community can gather for fellowship and fun, and maintaining the exterior of our buildings to give the community an example of steadfastness and commitment. Our support of the general budget shows that we believe in the mission of the church. We personally can express our love for our neighbors by our acts of service, either through the ministries of the church or on our own.

When our stewardship campaign begins September 5, we hope that you will seek God's guidance on the amount you will pledge, His strength to fulfill that commitment, and ways to serve others in love.

Pam Shuler for The Stewardship MT

## General Assembly - July 10, 2010

To Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregations:

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

"Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38)

Just one week ago, the 219th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) convened with Scripture and music and prayer. Commissioners and advisory delegates from every presbytery across the church gathered around the baptismal font with hopeful expectation of what God's Spirit would do in and through them as they sought to discern together the mind of Christ for the PC(USA).

As the week progressed, prayer was a foundational part of each day's deliberations and decisions, and the presence of the Spirit was palpable!

### "Out of the believer's heart..."

While all assemblies are significant, this one holds particular significance in the life of the PC(USA). Among the assembly's decisions - to be ratified by presbyteries - are the addition of the Belhar Confession to The Book of Confessions and a revised Form of Government. Both of these items give a clear signal that we are a church that is not afraid to change - an important perspective to have in these days of great change in the church and the world.

The assembly celebrated and was greatly encouraged by the commissioning of 122 young adult volunteers and 17 new mission workers for service around the globe. Commissioners voted unanimously to renew the call to "Grow Christ's Church Deep and Wide" and were inspired by the stories (<http://gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/evangelism>) of congregations that are growing in evangelism, discipleship, diversity, and servanthood. They celebrated the generosity of Presbyterians who have contributed more than \$10.5 million to relief and redevelopment work in Haiti in the wake of January's devastating earthquake.

The assembly also engaged in discussion about significant matters of faith and life - ordination standards, justice and peace in the Middle East, and civil union and marriage, to name just a few. Information on the more than 300 assembly actions is available at <http://pc-biz.org>. Answers to frequently asked questions about the items that have already garnered media attention are attached to this letter and available online [www.pcusa.org/ga219](http://www.pcusa.org/ga219). We commend these resources to you for their accurate and straightforward information.

While the content of the assembly's decisions is important, what may be of equal or greater importance is the manner in which commissioners and advisory delegates did their work. They debated, but did not fight. They tackled tough issues while refraining from

tackling each other. They placed great value on finding common ground as they displayed gracious, mutual forbearance toward one another. They sought the will of God within their actions, rather than regarding their decisions as the will of God. One commissioner called the experience of seeking - and finding - common ground truly "miraculous."

In short, this assembly exhibited to the whole church and, indeed, to our society and the world a way to engage in difficult issues while maintaining respect for one another. To put it another way, they exhibited well what it means for the church to "a provisional demonstration of what God intends for the world" (Book of Order, G-3.0200).

### ...shall flow rivers of living water."

Just a few short hours ago, the 219th General Assembly ended in the same worshipful manner with which it began, as well as with a similar same sense of hopeful expectation that the hard work done in Minneapolis will continue forward across the church.

Michael East and Caroline Sherard, elected by their peers as co-moderators of the young adult advisory delegates to this assembly, shared their thoughts in a blog entry ([www.pcusa.org/ga219](http://www.pcusa.org/ga219)): If all our commissioners and advisory delegates returned to their places of community and encouraged others to continue similar stories, what great things could be next for the PC(USA)?

These narratives have the ability to inspire discussions on new, creative, and innovative ways of being the Church. At the heart of being Presbyterian is the principle belief that our discernment is best done when we gather together. Being able to gather in one place, as one people, for the one Church is a powerful and transformative experience--one which dramatically shapes future generations.

The assembly has commended to the church a number of items for further study, out of which is hoped will come, as Michael and Caroline write, "new, creative, and innovative ways of being the Church."

May the good and faithful work begun in Minneapolis truly be just the beginning of a season of respectful, earnest, and gracious engagement - both in our words and in our deeds - all for the sake of the gospel.

In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord,

Elder Cynthia Bolbach  
Moderator, 219th General Assembly

The Rev. Gradye Parsons  
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly

The Rev. Landon Whitsitt  
Vice Moderator, 219th General Assembly

Elder Linda Bryant Valentine  
Executive Director, General Assembly

"BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND"

**AN INVITATION TO YOU  
STEPHEN MINISTRY**

Please consider becoming a Stephen Minister. Every two years, a Training Program prepares a new group to join this important ministry.

As a Stephen Minister you are not thrust into ministry alone. You will receive 50 hours of in-class training, with reading discussion and practice in how to support and help others effectively. You will engage in supervision and will receive continuing education.

No Stephen Minister is asked to do what he or she is not prepared to do. You will learn the limits of confidentiality, how to pray with others, how to refer people with serious problems to professional help.

Listen for God's call. Ask questions. Talk with any of the current or retired Stephen Ministers and Leaders. Visit with Stephen Ministers during Coffee Central between services.

Application forms are available in church and are due August 1. Classes begin September 7 and end November 16.

For more information, contact Pastor Sandy, 264-8167, Connie Clark, 264-5977, Charlene Hansen, 499-9702, Sue Johnson, 264-6994, Pam Shuler, 599-2480, or Greg Socha, 264-9471.

**SCRIPTURE READINGS  
FOR AUGUST**

<b>Aug. 1</b>	Hos. 11: 1-11 Col. 3: 1-11	Ps. 107: 1-9 Lk. 12: 13-21
<b>Aug. 8</b>	Isa. 1: 1, 10-20 Heb. 11: 1-3, 8-16	Ps. 50: 1-8, 22-23 Lk. 12: 32-40
<b>Aug. 15</b>	Isa. 5: 1-7 Heb. 11: 29-12:2	Ps. 80: 1-2, 8-19 Lk. 12: 49-56
<b>Aug. 22</b>	Jer. 1: 4-10 Heb. 12: 18-29	Ps. 71: 1-6 Lk. 13: 10-17
<b>Aug. 29</b>	Jer. 2: 4-13 Heb. 13: 1-8, 15-16	Ps. 81: 1, 10-16 Lk. 14: 1, 7-14

**BLOOD DRIVE  
MONDAY, AUGUST 2  
1-7 P.M.  
IN OUR FELLOWSHIP HALL**

**NOTES FROM THE BOARD**

**FACILITIES COMMITTEE**

Under the direction of Harry Widman, members of the Facilities Committee and the Board of Trustees have completed a major roof repair project. They built a new roof over an existing flat roof on the north side of the church; an area that previously was responsible for interior leaks near the drinking fountain and library.

You might like to take a walk around the exterior of the church where you may take pleasure in the many new plantings from the Building Committee and in work completed or in progress by the Facilities Committee and our sexton, Mark Blackmore.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Members of the Finance Committee review FPC income and expenses at every monthly meeting. In July the committee performed their mid-year review of the 2010 Budget. No changes are being recommended at this time.

The committee also began the process to draft a budget for 2011. The first step in this process is to contact all Ministry Teams and Committees for their input. Each team and committee is asked to submit to the Finance Committee (by August 25) their estimate for 2011 budget line items in their budget. From this information, the committee will prepare the first 2011 Draft Budget, which will be discussed at September meetings of the Finance Committee, Board of Trustees, and Session.

**RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

At their May meeting Bill Clark presented a written report of his observations and recommendations of our current staff and volunteer liability coverage. Jared Shilton presented a proposal from Brotherhood Mutual to address our insurance needs. The committee is now in the process of evaluating coverage options, including updated information from our current insurer, Church Mutual. (Meetings for this committee are conducted semi-annually, or on an as-needed basis.)

Jane Croftchik  
Board of Trustees

## SESSION HIGHLIGHTS FROM JUNE 23, 2010

Rev. Hal Shafer called the Session meeting to order on June 23, 2010, at 7 p.m. The meeting was held in the Lighthouse. A quorum was present; the meeting opened with prayer and roll was called.

**Guests:** Member Sue Johnson, and member Carol Sinclair. Carol presented to Session the idea of a prayer group. This prayer group would be in the Senior Pastor's office during the services. She explained this was an invitation from Jesus to stop with busy work, to listen and be quiet, and pray. They would take prayer requests, and the members of the congregation would know that during the service they and their prayer requests were being prayed for. We gathered a list of Elders that would be interested in sharing in this time of prayer and the list was given to Carol. We thank her for this wonderful thought and we hope it is a successful and loving endeavor.

The minutes of May 26, 2010, Session meeting were approved as printed.

**Treasurer's Report:** Report received.

- A motion carried to accept the Treasurer's report.

**The Board of Trustees:** Report received.

**Building Committee:** Report received.

**Director of Operations:** Report received.

**Clerk of Session:** Report received.

- The report shared with Session that the COS attended the Annual Administrative Review of Session Minutes. It was pointed out that there are a few items that need to be included the minutes, otherwise all final minutes were approved

**Interim Senior Pastor:** Report received.

- A motion carried to approve the request for FPC to be the host church for an "Elder Assembly" in the fall of 2010.

**Associate Pastor:** Report received.

- By consent agenda, a motion carried to remove the name of Helen May Gibbs from the rolls of First Presbyterian Church effective the date of her death, April 28, 2010.
- By consent agenda, a motion carried to remove the name of Anne Therese Avery-Miller from the rolls of First Presbyterian Church effective the date of her death, May 4, 2010.

Membership count is now at 516.

**Elder Commissioner to Presbytery:** Verbal report by Elder Penny Novarro.

**Board of Deacons:** Report received

**Nurture Ministry Team:** Report received.

**Stewardship Ministry Team:** Report received.

- By consent agenda a motion carried to approve the 2010 Stewardship dates and theme of "Continuing the Journey."

**Mission Outreach Ministry Team:** Report received.

- A motion carried to approve \$385.00 from the Endowment fund to pay the air fare for Veeda Javid from Minneapolis/St. Paul to Traverse City for her visit on Mission Sunday, July 18, 2010.
- By consent agenda, a motion carried to approve the request to allow the Mission Outreach Ministry Team to plan and coordinate periodic Kit Projects as needed. Kit Projects would include, but not be limited to, Hygiene Kits, Schools Kits, and Baby Kits.
- A motion carried to approve the request of \$3,000.00 for the Armonia Mission from the Endowment Fund. \$1,000.00 of this could be used for partial flight transportation for FPC students. Up to \$3000.00 will be used for Christian education and a life skills curriculum.

**Personnel:** Verbal report.

**Spiritual Outreach:** Verbal report.

**Worship Ministry Team:** Report received.

**Youth Ministry Team:** Report received.

**Christian Education Ministry Team:** Report received.

- By consent agenda, a motion carried to approve the Veggie Tales Kids Worship Unit 1: Getting to Know God – for Children's Church or Large Group Programming, by Big Idea Inc.

**Communication Ministry Team:** Report received from Webmaster.

- A motion carried to approve the request to switch the website host as soon as possible and to match the domain name and email addresses of the church.

**Fellowship Ministry Team:** Report received.

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

**Adjournment:** The meeting closed with prayer by Rev. Hal Shafer at 10:35 p.m.

## Worship Services 8:30 & 10 a.m.

### HIGHLIGHTS IN SEPTEMBER

Labor Day – Office closed	Monday, September 6	
Stephen Ministers Training begins	Tuesday, September 7	6:30 p.m.
Progressive Dinner	Saturday, September 11	5:30 p.m.
Youth Kick-off	Sunday, September 12	To be determined
Sunday School Starts	Sunday, September 19	10 a.m.

### The Mission Statement of First Presbyterian Church

*In Christ, we share, grow, and live our Faith*

Introducing Jesus Christ to those who do not know Him;  
Deepening the faith and commitment of those who already know Him;  
Demonstrating Christ's way of love in service to the world.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
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ELK RAPIDS, MI 49629

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SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER ITEM DEADLINE – August 16, 2010  
Website – [www.erfpc.org](http://www.erfpc.org)  
Church Email - [info@erfpc.org](mailto:info@erfpc.org)