

December 2020



First Presbyterian Church E-News

Connect with First Presbyterian Church

September Session Highlights

The Session of First Presbyterian Church met virtually at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, November 19, 2020 for its stated monthly meeting. The Rev. James Young served as Moderator. Jeff Getty served as Clerk.

The Session took the following actions:

- Approved the Membership Records as of November 18, 2020.
- Approved the request from the Buildings and Grounds Committee to contract with Valley Masonry to complete repairs on five sections of the wall behind the church at a cost of \$23,000.00 with work to be done in the Fall 2020 weather permitting.

In addition the Session heard:

- a recommendation from the Worship and Music Committee to extend for an additional two-week period the suspension on in-person worship services due to COVID-19 infections and then reassess how and whether the church can return to in-person worship at some point in advent and during the Christmas holidays.

- an announcement from the Congregational Care and Worship Committees that the December 11, 2020 concert by the St. Olaf Choir scheduled to be shown in the sanctuary had to be cancelled due to the COVID infection spike.
- a report from the Nominating Committee that it has completed its work for the new slate to nominate for the Session class of 2024 and will present the recommendations at the Congregational meeting in January 2021 to elect:

Judy Stern

Josh Gilhart

Bob Courtney

Aaron Hendreickson

If you have any questions, please contact the Clerk or the Moderator.

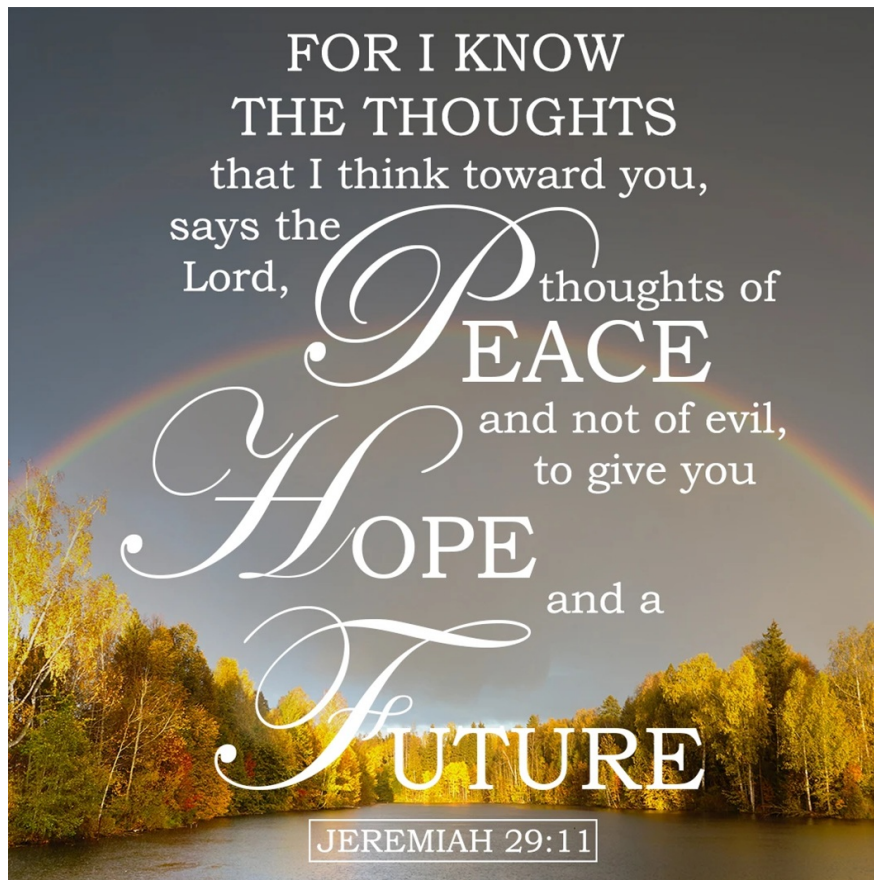


Thank you for your faithful support of the mission and ministry of First Presbyterian Church during 2020. Remember that year-end contributions must be received by the church no later than Wednesday, December 30th in order to qualify as 2020 contributions for tax purposes.

Please note that the church office will be closed on Thursday, December 24th, Friday, December 25th, Thursday, December 31st and Friday, January 1st in observance of Christmas and New Years.



Peace, Hope, and a Future 2021 Stewardship Campaign



If you have not had a chance to fill out your pledge card, you may get one from the church office or submit your pledge for the upcoming year online via our webpage. If you are interested in submitting your pledge online, [click here](#). Please help us to be able to plan our 2021 mission and ministry by making your pledge for the new year. Thank you!

Online Pledge Submission is Now Available!

Pastor Nominating Committee-

Stewardship Campaign Progress Update

Provided by: Carolyn Mathews, PNC Chair

Recently I received in change several brand new quarters. Knowing that the Federal Reserve has been recognizing national public lands, parks, wilderness areas, monuments etc .I looked at them closely. One caught my eye as it featured a person planting a tree. I had to get a hand lens to read the writing on it. - Land Stewardship

Land Stewardship is on the bottom, Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller is on the arch across the top. I had to look up that park. Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park in Vermont is the only national park to tell the story of conservation history and of land stewardship in America. Today, the park is a living symbol of three generations who preserved, protected and conserved that forest land. We are gathered here in this building that was built and supported by the many generations before us and we are the stewards of today looking to sustain this faith community beyond tomorrow.

I am here with a progress report and to emphasize how the success of our stewardship campaign will carry forward into appropriate compensation for our new minister and the continuation of our programs and projects. Most people do not give to support budgets. We give to support people and programs. I take to heart these words I've paraphrased from our campaign scripture from Jeremiah "the thoughts that I think toward you, to give Hope and a future."

The Pastor Nominating Committee has felt the lift of your prayers in our work. The committee is working well together, being deliberate with our review of applicants and moving along at a good pace. Let me remind you of our members who are dedicating hours of their time to the process. The committee includes: Judy Stern, Phil Mills, Jane Belt, Eric Ringler, Janet Hendershot, Josh Gilhart, Deb Hendrickson, Aaron Hendrickson and myself.

To date our church has been matched with over 71 pastors who are searching for a call to another church via the Presbyterian Church Leadership Connection website. After a conscientious review most of these applicants have been eliminated. Our interest has narrowed to consider just a few as candidates. Video conferencing is a reality of our lives these days of living in a public health crisis. All of us have learned to work, visit family, attend meetings and socialize via one of the platforms available, so interviewing our candidates once or twice via zoom is the next step in our process.

We feel confident that we will have at least two viable candidates very soon but after that we may be stalled in our progress as the Advent season is right around the corner. We've been told that pastors will most likely not want to travel here for a face to face interview during this very special season of the church. Willingness to travel in a pandemic and to be away from their pulpit will be up to God but you can be sure that we will have plans in place to make rapid and big steps forward right after the first of the new year.

I was browsing various church websites and newsletters last week and saw an article highlighting an old post from the Alban Institute at the Duke

Divinity School. The article was titled the "10 Marks of a Healthy Church". Reading down the list I believe that we are a very healthy church. We are mission driven with a vision and purpose beyond our walls; we respond to God's presence through our lives in worship, fellowship and care for each other; we are a servant church with outreach to the local community and around the world; we are inclusive and make an effort for everyone to feel at home here; we understand conflict and manage it; we listen to the voices inside and outside our doors with flexibility to new people, new ideas, and new resources; we have leaders who lead and guide and are resources for others; we work at having direct and honest communication as we try hard to avoid engaging in gossip; we examine what is effective and don't continually recycle old programs; and finally, we value everyone's contributions of their gifts of talents and skills. We have much to offer to our next pastor who looks to join us in what God has in store for this church.

As we each prayerfully consider what we will personally contribute to continue the work of this church, we know that our financial resources are a gift from God which directly affects what we do together and how well we do it. And let's flash back a moment to the seedling on the quarter celebrating land stewardship...our ginko tree, planted in celebration of our milestone anniversary several years ago, is glowing with golden leaves. Be sure to look at it on the right side of the driveway as you leave church today – it is a living symbol of our stewardship and Presbyterian faith community.

I didn't write the description detailing the work of the PNC in the narrative budget but it states very well what you, the congregation, contributed to the process and how we are working to find the pastor who God will call to our church. I quote: our motivation is in this congregation's vitality and the direction God is leading us. We look forward to a future of new opportunities, new challenges, new missions, and new experiences."

Please continue to keep us and our work in your prayers and also pray that God is whispering in the ear of our next pastor, (whispered) it's time to move to the mountains of Maryland.

Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love. Thank you for your faith in us and please support our efforts with your generous pledge to First Presbyterian.

Nurture

Joys and Concerns



Happy Birthday!

Thara Bonebreak 4-Dec
George Campbell 7-Dec
Katie Jan 7-Dec
Jane Williams 7-Dec
Aaron Stroup 14-Dec
Chandler Stroup 14-Dec
Samuel Kauffman 18-Dec
Robin Bissell 26-Dec
Jan Layman 28-Dec

Georgene McKenzie 5-Jan
Mike Fiscus 7-Jan
Royce Hodges 9-Jan
Sharon Kazary 9-Jan
Renee Kiddy 9-Jan
Alleine Courtney 12-Jan
Betty Richtmeyer 12-Jan
Juliana Parker 15-Jan
Brittany Jackson 18-Jan
John Brown 20-Jan
Barbara Leasure 25-Jan



If you have prayer requests that you would like to add to First Presbyterian Church's prayer chain, please contact the church office or you can now submit your prayer request on the FPC website under the nurture tab.

Opportunities to Serve



CHRISTMAS JOY
SPECIAL OFFERINGS
CHURCH LEADERS—PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

**BECAUSE CHRIST IS
GIVEN, WE GIVE**



WHAT DOES THIS CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING DO?

SUPPORTING OUR PAST AND PRESENT LEADERS:

By supporting the Board of Pensions (BOP), the Christmas Joy Offering honors the faithfulness of current and retired church workers and their families in need. Thanks in part to support from this offering, church workers can receive critical financial assistance to support them through life's challenging circumstances. These generous actions bear witness to our faithful response to God's charge to love one another as Christ commanded.

PREPARING THE WAY FOR FUTURE LEADERS:

PC(USA), with its historic commitment to higher learning, has long promoted education and leadership development through the establishment and support of racial ethnic schools and colleges. Our future racial ethnic church leaders can receive much-needed assistance while they discover and pursue their professional goals at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges. Your gifts allow these ministries to continue—sustaining a tradition Presbyterians have carried out for nearly 140 years.

On **December 20, 2020** our congregation will have the opportunity to give to the Christmas Joy Offering.

Reason for the Season

As we've learned all too well this year, viruses can spread around the world bringing sickness, increased poverty and hunger, and death. In contrast, what would the opposite look like? A "virus" that spreads God's contagious love?

Mission is one way to do that. Through "Reason for the Season", our church has been spreading such a "virus" locally and around the globe for over 20 years. It's an alternative giving opportunity that can be a donation or a gift to another person.



Please prayerfully consider how you can help spread *this* "virus".

Presbyterian Education Board of Pakistan (PEB) provides quality education to "poorest of the poor" (aka Christian) children through scholarships if parents cannot afford the \$2/month tuition. A scholarship to one student spreads the benefits of an education to future generations. The cost per student is \$365/year, or \$31 per month, which covers tuition, books, supplies, and uniforms. Boarding student scholarships are twice that. We currently sponsor 7 students through this donation and the Mission

budget.

"This Child Here" in Ukraine currently trains all foster families and social workers in the Odessa region. There are 751 orphanages in Ukraine and 106,000 youth and children in them. The hope is to get kids back into healthy families: families of origin or foster families, to give them a strong foundation for their life. The cost for two staff people to lead a session is \$400. Training covers 3 days and includes classes on childhood development and skills in effective parenting. Up to 10 people are allowed in each session due to COVID, but previously it was 25.

Q Mountain Connection Emergency Food Fund, Lesotho is a lifeline for the people of Qholaqhoe where there has been a drought and crop failures for more than four years. There are no unemployment funds, PPE, or healthcare benefits. No food pantries and very little food support of any kind. The World Food Program has warned that a hunger pandemic could eclipse the coronavirus. Our church supports 5 high school students with scholarships who, along with 57 other high school students, will benefit from the emergency food fund. \$75 provides supplementary food for a child for 10 months.

Western Maryland Food Bank supplies food to 80 local agencies, emergency needs, and the school backpack program. In the last six months it distributed 482,389 pounds of food. Of that, 220,820 pounds were fresh produce. The Food Bank now has an outlet of fresh food but needs a refrigerated truck in order to bring it to people of the Cumberland area, for a more healthy diet. Since the food bank relies entirely on donations, a truck is a major expense for them.

Interfaith Food Pantry is an all-volunteer emergency food resource for people who live in Cumberland. Located at 301 Cumberland St., it formed in 1975 by the 23 local churches of the Interfaith Consortium. The pantry provides non-perishable food, and vouchers that can be used in three local markets to purchase perishable foods. Distribution of food is governed by family circumstances, family number, and number of times the pantry has been used during the current year. Volunteers are also always needed and welcome.

Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) believes every abused or neglected child deserves to have a dedicated advocate speaking up for their best interest in court, at school, and in our community. Non-profit CASA

trains and supervises community volunteers who ensure each child's needs remain a priority in an overburdened child welfare system. For these children, CASA means having a home instead of feeling lost, and being a priority instead of feeling invisible. Two church members have taken the training to become advocates.

Other ministries that our church supports can also be chosen: **WACT, and Shanti Nepal; Juna Amagara (Uganda); Mulanje Hospital) Malawi; Ihanktonwan Learning Camp (SD); Union Rescue Mission; Family Crises Resource Centre; NAILS; Salvation Army; Allegany Health Right; Allegany Law; United Campus Ministries**

REASON FOR THE SEASON GIVING FORM - 2020

NAME: _____ **PHONE:** _____

Please make your total amount payable to "First Presbyterian Church", and marked "Reason for the Season".

Presbyterian Education Board (PEB), scholarships, Pakistan \$ _____

This Child Here _____

Q Mountain Connection Emergency Food Fund _____

Western Maryland Food Bank _____

Interfaith Food Pantry _____

CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) _____

OTHER: _____

(WACT, and Shanti Nepal; Juna Amagara (Uganda); Mulanje Hospital) Malawi; Ihanktonwan Learning Camp (SD); Union Rescue Mission; Family Crises Resource Centre; NAILS; Salvation Army; Allegany Health Right; Allegany Law; United Campus Ministries.)

TOTAL: \$ _____

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Worship With Us

A Note from our Director of Music Ministries

Dear Friends,

Happy Advent! As I am writing this, we are again preparing to have at least one more week of completely virtual worship. This year has truly been like no other, and the holiday season will be no exception.

While we may now be uncertain of how we will be worshipping in the weeks ahead, be assured that the treasured music of this season will be present in worship, be it virtually, live-streamed, or in person.

In the meantime, as we pray and make decisions, I would love to hear about your favorite Christmas songs and carols, be they sacred or secular, and to include them in some Advent and Christmas playlists. Send your favorites to bryanlohr@comcast.net. I look forward to hearing from you!

Wishing you peace and safety,

Bryan Lohr
Director of Music Ministries

Christmas Fundraiser 2020

In the place of the Christmas Music Offering this year, Session has approved the motion presented by the Worship & Music Committee to collect funds to purchase a new projector for the sanctuary. The new projector will enhance our ability to stream and project during services and allow us to continue to host simulcast and movies in the future.

NAME: _____

PHONE: _____

TOTAL GIFT: \$ _____

To the Glory of God in Memory or Honor of: (Please circle one)

If you wish to dedicate your Christmas Fundraiser donation in honor or memory of a loved one, please complete the tear-off sheet and place it in the offering plate, or return it to the church office.

Please print all the names exactly as you would like them to appear in the bulletin and attach a check designated "Christmas Fundraiser 2020" in the memo line. Proceeds from the Christmas Fundraiser will be used to purchase a new projector for the church. Please submit offering and dedication no later than Sunday, December 20th.