

FAIRPLAIN PRESS—MARCH 2010

INTERIM PASTOR'S PAGE

After serving in assorted installed positions for 8 years I found my true calling which is interim or transitional ministry. Fairplain Presbyterian Church will be my 14th interim position in 22 years in 12 presbyteries from Genesee Valley in western New York to Grand Canyon in Arizona. Each congregation is unique, as I'm sure you know, but there are some things we interim pastors have come to expect in every church.

There will be some anxiety in the congregation about the interim period. When there has been trauma there will be a great deal of anxiety, but even in the healthiest, best prepared congregations, transitions are not easy. I'm here to try to help you deal with some of that anxiety and to assure you that you will survive and we can do good work together. Ideally, interim pastors have the skills any pastor should have, plus we have training and experience in dealing with transition-time issues. I'm not merely a substitute, in place to fill the pastoral role until you find someone. I'll be guiding you through some activities designed to take a look at where you are and where you discern God wants you to be with regard to your mission.



There will be those among you who are sure that the best thing for the congregation will be to find a new pastor as soon as possible and get this interim time over with. While it's true that I'm not in a hurry to move again, that's not why I'll counsel you to take your time and find your new pastor in God's time. There are many pastors out there looking for a new call so it would be easy to fill the slot with a warm body, but we want to make sure it is the right person. After a ministry as long as John Munson's, it will take some time just to recover from the inevitable grief before it's time to think about committing to a new pastor. We interim pastors consider ourselves to have failed if the pastor called to follow us doesn't stay very long. We call that "unintentional interims." You want to have an interim pastor during a transition; you do not want to have an unintentional interim.

I look forward to getting to know you. I've encountered many things in the congregations with which I've been involved over the years and some of the ideas I bring are sure to be things you'll enjoy. I'm already anticipating a meaningful Maundy Thursday service and I've even been talking to some of your elders about Advent. I've been worshipping with First Presbyterian since I arrived in town and talking with Laurie Hartzell about the possibility of our congregations doing things together. I'm very excited to be here and I'm certain that I have come to the place that God wants me to be.

Pastor Alice McDowell

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>PASTOR'S PAGE CE NEWS</i>	1-2
<i>BIRTHDAYS FYI MUSIC NEWS RECEPTION</i>	3-4
<i>PRAYERS FINANCE UPDATE</i>	5-6
<i>MINUTE CLERK OUTREACH</i>	7-8
<i>YOUTH MISSION CALENDAR</i>	9-10



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS!

DATES TO REMEMBER:

March 14 (Sunday) DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME

March 21 (Sunday): Children’s Worship (9:30 a.m.)

March 28 (Sunday): Palm Sunday

Children will process with palms and distribute during worship

April 3 (Saturday): Children’s Easter Party (10 a.m.)

Exploring Spiritual Disciplines – Sunday mornings 11 a.m.

Join Leslie Gilreath as she leads an exploration of spiritual disciplines: What are they? Why are they important for our life of faith? The first 2 weeks will introduce various elements of a Christian spiritual life and then specific disciplines will be discussed in the following weeks. Fasting, prayer, and simplicity are the suggested topics, but Leslie is open to your suggestions for specific disciplines on which to focus.

JESUS SAID, “I AM...

THE BREAD OF LIFE,”

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD,”

THE GATE,”

THE GOOD SHEPHERD,”

THE VINE”

Come and explore these images of Jesus during our

Intergenerational Lenten Program

Wednesday evenings from 6:00 – 6:55 p.m.

March 3, 10, 17, & 24

Light supper at 6:00 p.m.

Informal, family friendly, experiential worship at 6:30 p.m.

Worship will end in plenty of time for choir, bedtime routines,
and a restful evening at home



FOR YOUR INFORMATION!



MARCH BIRTHDAYS

- 3: Lois Jancha
- 8: Ernie Lewis
- 9: Linda Zitta
- 10: Kim Edinger

- 10: Mary Lou Duncan
- 11: Robby Reed
- 11: Paula (Reed) Bruskotter
- 11: Drew Kelleher
- 13: Matt Kodis
- 14: Jon Cole
- 14: Tom Taylor
- 14: Grant Jaques
- 19: Kim Taylor
- 29: Fred Welch
- 20: Elizabeth Paine
- 22: Anita Ong
- 23: Thelma Smith
- 23: Margaret Cartter
- 25: Greg Powell
- 25: Phyllis Myers
- 27: Shaney Mulligan
- 28: Brian Welch
- 30: Halley Kelleher
- 30: Evan Kiel
- 31: Dorothy Wright

PRAYERS

Lew Stryker passed away February 21. A memorial service will be held at Fairplain Presbyterian Church on Saturday, February 27, at 2:00 pm with light refreshments following.

Condolences may be sent to Judy Karnes, 1007 Michigan, St. Joseph, MI 49085.

WOMEN'S CIRCLE

The Women's Circle will meet on Tuesday, March 9, at 9:30 am in the Courtyard. The lesson will be led by Marion Crossman and refreshments by Ellen Woerner and Rae Rotgers.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

Union Memorial AME Church will host World Day of Prayer on March 5, at 1:00 pm. Refreshments will be served following the program. The church is located at 911 S. Crystal, Benton Harbor.



WANTED: ADDITIONAL SECRETARY SUPPLY

If you would like to help out in the church office when the secretary is on vacation or ill, please contact Linda Cogswell.

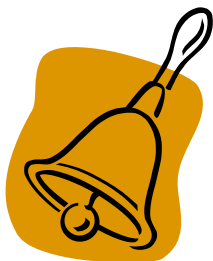
Looking for one additional person who can work on the computer and perform general office duties.

CONGRATULATIONS

Andrew Hamilton has advanced to Finalist standing in the National Merit Scholarship Program of 2010 by demonstrating distinguished performance high potential for future academic accomplishment. All Finalists will be considered for National Merit Scholarships to be offered in 2010. (information provided from St. Joseph High School web site).

MUSIC NEWS! WELCOME RECEPTION!

We are planning on hearing the Chorale from Cornerstone University in Grand Rapids perform at our church on Friday, March 26th if all goes as planned. This is a group of thirty-five college students who will be on tour in the Chicago area and would like to give a concert here before returning to Grand Rapids. Several of us have listened to tapes sent by their director, Kent Walters, and they are a superb group of singers. We hope you will mark this date on your calendars. The concert will begin at 7 p.m. We will have more information to follow.



We have some new members in our Youth Bell Program and it is very exciting for me to work with all nine young people each Monday at 5:15 pm. They are extremely talented, conscientious and eager to ring their bells to perfection. Members of the group are Teagan Butler, Emily Cole, Val Hegedus, Maddie Hodgson, Dana Slabbekoorn, Paige Thomas, Jalen Harvey, Conner Kiel and Keith Myers. They will be playing for a service in early March.

Our thanks to Mae Reed for all of her planning and hard work in preparing for Reverend Munson's final service, with program and fellowship afterwards. The Chancel Choir was very pleased to be a part of it and we also want to give special thanks to Chris Corbitt for coordinating the music with the slide presentation. We will all miss him.

Dorothy Trachte, Music Director

WELCOME RECEPTION!

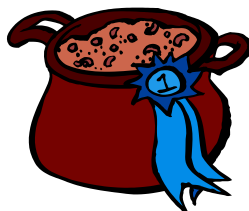


Join us Sunday, March 7, during coffee hour, for a special reception to welcome our interim Pastor Alice McDowell. She is excited to be here and is looking forward to meeting all of us as quickly as possible, so plan to be there.

CALLING ALL BOOK LOVERS!

Did you know that we have a church library in the Lounge? Susan Slabbekoorn and Deborah Prince need a few volunteers to help bring the church library back to life. If you can help, please contact either one of them. Thank you.

CHILI COOK-OFF



Join us on Sunday, March 14, at the conclusion of worship and coffee time for our Chili Cook-off! Sign-up to bring your best chili recipe - only 12 recipes accepted for the tasting so get on the list early! Vote for your favorite chili! Nominal fee for tasting! All funds will support Parish Life events!

PRAYER REQUESTS

The following people welcome your prayers:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Prayer Requests</u>
Eleanor Armstrong & family Mary Bartels's daughter, Barbara	Acceptance of the change in our lives That her cancer be conquered and her pain from the three major surgeries be eliminated
Bill Bentley Peg Bentley Elsie Berberick	To give him the strength he needs to help Peg To keep up exercises and regain strength Minimize the damage from a recent stroke and slow the progress of her dementia
Ruth Caldwell & family Margaret Cartter Eloise & Harold Gundersen's daughter-in-law, Mari Gundersen John Kauffman's neighbor,	To help them through their grief To help her cope with her diabetes and arthritis For the success of treatment for chronic lyme disease Susan Lane and her family, on the death of Susan's husband, Craig
Don Leatz's family	To help them through their grief from the recent death of Don
Jenna McAllister's sister, Tory Thomas	Continue recovery from a head injury as a result of automobile accident
Pat McAllister Sgt. Zach Meyer	For the strength to face the challenges of each day That the Lord watch over his family while he is away in service to our country
June Muchmore Ron Price & family Betty Schneider	To save the vision in her one good eye To give them strength to get through this time of grief Help doctor get her blood platelets under control and help get her family through their crisis
Sally Schnese Sonja Stormo's friend, Taylor Strand	"I go to the hills for my help, which comes from the Lord" To continue the good progress in recovering from severe burns
Pat Van Huis' sister, Dolores Barkel Sandy Welch's brother, Bob Engel	Provide peace in coping with her cancer For the success of the chemotherapy in treating his lymphoma
Dorothy Wright Linda Zitta	That she won't fall again and pray for others in need The passing of Linda's brother, Martin Johnson, and cousin, Evelyn McIntyre

FINANCE UPDATE

OPERATING BUDGET

January 2010

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Variance</u>
Income			
Offering and Pledges	\$ 27,487	\$ 26,487	\$ (1,000)
Other Income	<u>\$ 4,038</u>	<u>\$ 2,344</u>	<u>\$ (1,694)</u>
Total Operating Income	\$ 31,525	\$ 28,831	\$ (2,694)
Expense			
Total Expense	\$ 25,768	\$ 27,210	\$ 1,422
Net Income	\$ 5,757	\$ 1,621	\$ (4,136)

MISSION STATEMENT

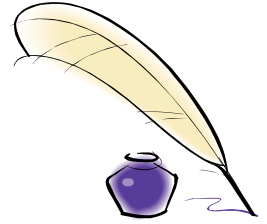


We, the members of Fairplain Presbyterian Church, rejoice in God's grace and redeeming love through Jesus Christ. We believe we have been called as God's children to create an open and welcoming community, to worship and praise God, and to nurture and support each other.

We are called to develop our God-given gifts and to equip ourselves to reach out to the world in love and compassion. Thus prepared, we will share our faith, preach the gospel, feed the hungry and be peace-makers according to God's will.

MINUTE CLERK: FEBRUARY 15, 2010

Session welcomed the Rev. Dr. Pat Ramsden, pastor of First Presbyterian in Buchanan, as our moderator. The presbytery's Committee on Ministry supplies a pastor to moderate sessions when a church does not have a pastor or interim pastor. Many thanks to Pastor Ramsden for guiding our meeting.



We ratified the contract with the Rev. Alice McDowell as interim pastor beginning March 1. We voted to approve the annual statistical report required by General Assembly.

Elder Ron Jacobs reported that pledges are a little behind so far, but it's early in the year. We anticipate members will get on track with pledges soon. He also reported the building fund campaign is running as expected, but we did not pay off much of the principal in 2009. This is the final year of the fourth campaign, so we will be facing some hard decisions before next year.

Session is concerned that people understand we have many willing officers and members to call on or assist other members in the few weeks before our interim pastor begins. We voted to include a note in the bulletin that anyone needing pastoral care or visits should call the church office or Elder Pat Van Huis at 983-5103. Anyone with requests or questions about the building should call Elder Bill Bentley at 429-2060.

In organizing for 2010, session elected Leslie Gilreath, clerk; Sandy Welch, treasurer; Chris Corbitt, financial secretary. We also elected Mike Denekas chair of nominating and Jenna McAllister as elder for nominating. Session agreed to create a separate Finance Committee. Ron Jacobs will chair, and members are Fred Welch and Don Jones.

Other committee chairs so far are Bill Bentley, Building and Grounds with Carol Kiel as elder/member; Susan Slabbekoorn, Christian Education with Carol Kiel as elder/member; Don Jones, Mission and Stewardship with Pat Van Huis and Jenna McAllister as elder/members; Mae Reed, Parish Life with Pat Van Huis as elder/member; Becky Hungerford, Personnel with Marlene Smith as elder/member; Leslie Gilreath, Worship and Music with Jenna McAllister as elder/member.

Session also VOTED

- To approve Parish Life's providing a light supper Ash Wednesday at the church before members carpool to First Presbyterian for Ash Wednesday worship.
- To approve a concert by Cornerstone Chorale of Cornerstone University, Grand Rapids, in the sanctuary on March 26. Parish Life will provide supper for the group, and we will be seeking overnight housing for the 33 members.
- To approve use of a Thoughtful Christian curriculum on Spiritual Disciplines (2 overall discussions, plus fasting, prayer and simplicity) for adult study during the Sunday School hour February 21 to March 28. Leslie Gilreath will lead the study.
- To approve (with one opposed) Deborah Prince's request to use bread and grapes as visual elements in informal worship services in the sanctuary during Lent.

NOTE: Any member is welcome to attend session meeting to address a specific issue or concern. Contact clerk Leslie Gilreath to be added to the docket.

OUTREACH NEWS!

FEBRUARY SOUP KITCHEN

Things were a little slow at the Soup Kitchen this month. The piles of snow and cold weather kept people from coming. However, we did serve 100 people hot turkey sandwiches with mashed potatoes and gravy, green beans and corn medley, fruit cocktail and delicious homemade brownies. I personally tested all of the pans of brownies for quality control. For drinks we had juice and milk.

Our hard working volunteers included Keith Zitta, Ted and Cindy Pietruska, Tina Schneider, John Kauffman and Sonja Stormo. Brownie bakers were Linda Zitta and Rae Rotgers. Leslie Gilreath and Marlene Smith thank everyone for their hard work.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY BUILD

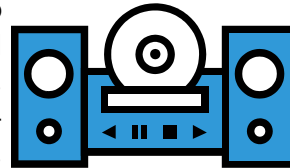
Fairplain Presbyterian Church will be organizing volunteers for this year very soon. No experience is necessary. If you are interested in building or providing food for the builders please call Shellie Jaques at 408-1133.

DRIVERS WANTED

Volunteers are needed to help drive people to church on Sundays. If you are willing and able to drive someone to church and back when needed, please contact the church office. Thank you - Chris Paine, Deacon.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



Bill Bentley needs volunteers to be trained to run the sound system. If you can help, please contact him at 429-2060.

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

Since 1949, Presbyterians have joined with millions of other Christians through One Great Hour of Sharing to share God's love with people experiencing need. Your gifts support ministries of disaster response, refugee assistance and resettlement, and community development that help people find safe refuge, start new lives and work together to strengthen their families and communities.

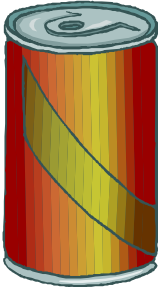


Your financial support and partnership enables Presbyterian Disaster Assistance to witness to the healing love of Christ and bring hope to communities and individuals recovering from natural and human-caused disaster situations.

General relief and undesignated program support supplements the One Great Hour of Sharing offering and enables members and congregations to make general designations to use funds where they are most needed as determined by PDA.

Please use the offering envelope provided on Easter Sunday and make your check payable to Fairplain Presbyterian Church, designation: One Great Hour of Sharing.

YOUNG YOUTH MISSION PROJECTS



1 MILLION BOTTLES FOR HAITI

Please bring in your 10 cent returnable cans and bottles and drop them in the box in the courtyard. We will be collecting through the month of March and will add our cans and bottles to those collected as part of the Berrien Springs drive.

HYGIENE KITS for Church World Service

An urgent request has been sent for CWS kits. At this time CWS has requests for 165,000 kits that cannot be filled with the present inventory. The need is great! With many remaining requests to fill, our young youth are organizing the assembly of Hygiene Kits. You can help by bringing in the following items and dropping them in the flower wrapped box in the Courtyard:



- hand towel measuring approximately 16" x 28" (no fingertip or bath towels)
- washcloth
- wide-tooth comb
- nail clipper
- bar of soap (bath size in wrapper)
- toothbrush (in original packaging)
- six standard size Band-Aids®
- NO TOOTHPASTE, PLEASE

The youth will be packaging the items and delivering them to the April 24 Presbytery meeting in Lansing.