

Volume 26
Issue 1

JANUARY 2019

Battle Creek, MI

First Presbyterian Church

111 Capital Ave., NE

JOY TO THE WORLD





Dear Friends:

When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh (Matt 2: 10-11 NRSV).

January 6 is Epiphany. The word Epiphany means “a shining forth” and we associate it with the Star of Bethlehem which led the Magi (the Wise Men) to the infant Jesus. Millions of Christians around the world will set aside that day (Epiphany) to exchange gifts in honor of the birth of Christ.

Perhaps you have heard this humorous but gender-based parody of the Visitation of the Magi:

Question: Do you know what would have happened if it had been Three Wise Women instead of Three Wise Men who came to see the Christ child?

Answer: They would have asked directions, arrived on time, helped deliver the baby, cleaned the stable, made a casserole, and, brought practical gifts!

But the historical account is even more astonishing than the parody if we realize that these people (the Magi) should not have been there in the first place. For these were outsiders with lives that were different and homes that were distant. Herod had not invited them. He spoke to them only after he learned they had arrived. The Romans had not invited them. The religious leaders certainly had not invited them. Not even Mary and Joseph had asked them to come. But God had invited them and God continues to invite others even to this day.

Yours in Christ,



From Our Associate Pastor

Ten years ago I met with Dr. Jeff Carlson at Clara's to discuss the possibility of me working for BC First Pres, as a part-time Pastoral Care Associate. Ten years! Wow. We've laughed and cried. I've heard some sad stories from you. You carried me through a serious cancer. So many things have happened in 10 years and we've gotten into a pretty comfortable routine.

Routines are good. I like normal days and usual traditions as much as the next person, maybe even more! But I like progress and spiritual growth, too. We've grown as a church, to be more inclusive, outwardly focused and friendly. We've learned and experienced, laughed and cried, and we serve our risen Savior in the best ways we know how.

New years and milestone anniversaries are great times to reflect and to dream. Part of a prayer I use with those finishing this life is that they “look back with no regrets and ahead with no fear.” That's how I feel as we begin a new year, and a new decade of ministry together, too: no regrets and no fears!

Can you say the same thing? Let go of any regrets and look ahead with anticipation that the God who brought us this far will be with us, forever.

God loves you and so do I

NOTES FROM SESSION

Carl McCune, Clerk of Session

There was no Session meeting in December. However, here is some further information about the Church Board Reorganization which has received approval from the Session and the Board of Trustees in their October and November joint meetings. A proposed change to the Church Bylaws which will accomplish the reorganization will be voted on by Session in January for presentation to the Congregation for a vote at the Annual Meeting in February. The reorganization transfers the current responsibilities of the Board of Trustees into the committee structure of the Session. This is the case with most Presbyterian churches. Four new committees of Session would be created: Finance, Generosity, Personnel and Property. The six current committees of Session (Benevolence, Christian Education, Connection, Ministry Advisory, Safety and Worship) would be somewhat modified with new Purpose Statements. The Nominating Committee remains as a committee of the Congregation.

Here are abbreviated Purpose Statements for the new committees:

Finance - to oversee and manage the operating and capital finances of the church in order to honor Christ by providing sustainable financial resources to enrich, strengthen and support the ministries of the church.

Generosity - to encourage the graces of generosity and faithful stewardship of personal and financial resources and foster a biblically responsible approach to the use of our time, talent and treasure.

Personnel - to assist in employing the administrative staff of the congregation and to enable our church to recruit, retain and motivate staff in a supportive work environment.

Property - to manage the physical property of the congregation for the furtherance of its mission. In doing so, they will oversee the use, maintenance, repair, security and enhancement of all church buildings, land and vehicles.

The rationale for reorganization is that all committees of Session will be more focused on their purpose and that they will have flexibility in deciding the number of times to meet, the size of their membership and the length of service for their members. They will be able to make many decisions on their own and will have direct reporting back to Session at its regular meeting time. Only certain committees will be required to have a member of Session as their chair. Each committee will have responsibility to prioritize the resources they need (money as well as people, talents, & time) and will have responsibility to participate in the budget process which will be led by the Finance Committee.

DEACON'S CORNER

Discussion was made for the new by-laws which will be affecting all of the church members and the make up of the Deacon Board. Progress is being made for the changes.

A huge "Thank You" to Ruth Hetletvedt who will be hand-making birthday cards to be sent out to First Church members by the Deacon Board.

The Christmas Baskets are in good shape financially - food has been obtained and gift cards bought. We will be serving 21 families

The Soup Kitchen had ten volunteers and served 268 people for Thanksgiving

The Food Pantry is still in need of canned fruits and vegetables, spaghetti, Mac and Cheese and canned fruit juices. Thank you for your donations which can be placed in the West entrance food basket.

Thank you to Steve Heeter who will be busy with Bronson Hospital visitations on Wednesdays.

“Why wear a stick-on nametag?”

10 Compelling Reasons

By Lisa Brown

(with insights from the blogger *Hello, My Name is Blog!*)

A new calendar year is a great time to form new habits! After much discussion, thought, and prayer, the Connection Team is inviting you to create a new habit of filling out a stick on name tag each Sunday when you come for worship. Why? I’m so glad you asked! Here are 10 compelling reasons....

- 1. A nametag reduces psychological distance.** The minute you know someone’s name, you immediately feel closer and more connected to that person. Simply stated, names reduce the distance between people.
- 2. A nametag is a conversation advancer and engagement tool.** The hardest part about conversations is getting the ball rolling. That’s why names are so great. They are THEE basic building block of conversation. The sooner you know people’s names, the sooner you feel comfortable around them.
- 3. A nametag is an invitation for friendliness.** It’s like walking around saying, “Here. Take it. I’m giving you an opening. I’m making this really, really, easy. All you have to do is say hello.”
- 4. A nametag is an equalizer.** When nametags are plain and handwritten, with no last names, logos, titles, acronyms, degrees, positions or designations (just the first name your mama gave you) you successfully level the playing field.
- 5. A nametag is a disarming gesture.** Sigmund Freud discovered that a person’s name is the single context of human memory most forgotten. So, wearing a nametag means one less name people have to worry about remembering.
- 6. A nametag triggers positive feelings.** From the time we’re born, the name given to us is the word someone uses to gain our attention. When someone says our name with a positive tone and facial expression we feel valued.
- 7. A nametag personalizes and humanizes someone.** Instead of being just another face in the crowd, now I have an identity. A name. I’m a person. Which, in a fast-paced, overpopulated society, is almost an accomplishment.
- 8. A nametag is a white flag.** Human beings avoid conflict, and nametags are natural eliminators of conflict. Think about it: Ever avoided someone because you couldn’t remember their name? Remember: Psychological Distance. Disarming people. Building comfort. It works.
- 9. A nametag is a time machine.** The farther you go back in time, the friendlier people become. Spooky, but it makes sense: Decades ago, the world was smaller, slower, simpler and safer. So, of course people were friendlier. Ironically, at this point in our world’s history, friendliness is so rare it’s become remarkable and magnetic.
- 10. A nametag INSINUATES instead of IMPOSING.** A nametag is non-threatening. It doesn’t force anybody to do anything. People can choose to say hi or ignore it. No hard feelings. Either way, it’s still an act of friendliness. The nametag is there if you want it.

A few final thoughts – “Wherever you are on your journey with God, **you are welcome here**” - these are the first words that appear when you click on our website’s home page. Stick on nametags are a simple & easy way to begin communicating a sense of welcome the moment someone walks through the door. Nametags aren’t just stickers, they’re statements. Statements about friendliness, about identity, and about our church culture.



Be sure you're ready for the big game by ordering

Super Bowl

Subs assembled by our youth group!

The subs are \$3.50 each or 6 for \$18.00.

Order forms will be on the first floor bulletin boards. Subs may be picked up in the Parlor after service on February 3, Super Bowl Sunday

Proceeds benefit the youth summer mission projects.

Doug & KB



Anticipating Christmas

Thanks to all who helped make our second Anticipating Christmas a wonderful event! We had more participation from local community families this year. Thank you Luke 10 warriors!

Mark your calendars now for Sunday, December 1st, 2019. The raffle has been such a fun part of the afternoon--SO--when putting away your Christmas decorations, if you have any to donate, the Anticipating Christmas Committee will gladly accept them!



Off the Pres

Sunday January 13th at 4pm will be another Epic Escape Room.

Come on down to the Youth Center and test your skills!

Sunday January 27th (time-to-be - determined) will be an Echo Valley trip or game night at the Youth Center. Watch for more info on this.

And get February 2nd on your schedule now. That's the day we will assemble the sub sandwiches for Super Bowl Sunday!

Thanks, Doug

Volunteer Vibe

Volunteers are needed to **provide transportation** to church for Sunday Service. If you can help with this activity please let the church office at 269-964-3700 know of your availability.

The office needs extra help now and then with the **Carillon mailing**. If you are available call Marilyn Sauder, 968-8895, head Carillon Volunteer.

Volunteers are needed to provide **prepared finger-foods**: fruit, veggies, sweet and/or salty treats for the Sunday morning coffee hour. Simply leave in the kitchenette next to the parlor on Sunday morning. Refreshment goodies are welcome any Sunday morning. Many thanks to those providing these treats!

Have a New Year's resolution to be a church or community volunteer? Go to the church website, firstpresbc.org: click on "serve" at the top of the screen; then choose category—"church or community"; from there click on area of interest; then fill in form and "submit". If this won't work for you contact Lisa Brown (968-2020) or Jan Emery (979-4734) and they will be happy to help you with it.

"Volunteer Vibe" is a monthly feature from the Connections Team, focusing on places where volunteers are needed and who you can contact to offer your services. If your group or program has a special need for volunteers, contact Jan Emery Barney at 979-4734 or jyreme@aol.com to have your re-



All committee, team, and ministry reports covering 2018 are due to the church office by **January 22nd** please! The Annual Meeting will take place on February 17th. Thank you.

Like First Pres? Share it!



Today, most people looking for a church to visit will start online with Google. So open Google on your computer, type in First Presbyterian Church, and put in a review! Stars or words are accepted That helps others learn we have a welcoming "Heart for God in the Heart of the City!"

Renewal of Baptism January 13, 2019

At the beginning of his ministry, Jesus presented himself to his cousin John for baptism. The Holy Spirit came upon him like a dove and God said, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased" (see Psalm 2:7). The Baptism of the Lord is celebrated in January of each year. We not only remember Jesus' baptism, but we celebrate our own; the baptism we share with Christ.

On January 13, 2019 we will explore this idea in more detail featuring a message entitled, "What Makes Forgiveness Possible." (Hebrews 9:19-28). We will also provide an opportunity, for those who wish to do so, to renew the meaning of their baptism.



Richard Black	1-1
Mary Ellen Hayward	1-1
Martin Ashley	1-8
Fredrique Klooster	1-9
Christian Brown	1-11
Jackie Allen	1-12
Laura Miller	1-15
Kathy Sawchuk	1-15
Arthur Angood	1-16
Barbara Randolph	1-16
Wayne Chapman	1-17
Marilyn Cagle	1-17
Nicholas Sharp	1-24
Charlotte Nagel	1-25
Jennifer Garver	1-26
John Mairs	1-27
Mary Kate Henry	1-28
Bill Hammons	1-30
Jim Noble	1-30
Jean Whitman	1-31

Roses and Thanks

Thank you to all those that supported the youth's greens sale to benefit the summer mission trip.

From Charitable Union:

We would like to thank the First Presbyterian Church for allowing us to store coats...all....year...long and then letting us empty everything from their building in a single morning. The coordinated effort the parishioners and staff at the church provide for storing everything as we collect it is invaluable to our efforts to clothe so many children so very quickly each fall! Also thanks to Bob Bullard (with the use of his van and trailer) who helped move the entire volume of materials from the Charitable Union's building, the First Presbyterian Church's building, and our storage locker, to the gym by 2 pm the Friday before the October 22-24 distribution, when 1,500 sets of winter gear; coats, hats, mittens, and scarves were provided to the community.

Plan ahead!



Michigan Presbyterian

Pilgrimage #49

April 25-29, 2019

At the Amigo Centre in Sturgis, The weekend is an experience in Christian sharing and living.

See Sue Keitel or Pat Weatherwax for details.



FOOD PREP AT FIRST PRES

To remain code compliant with the Calhoun County Health Department, First Presbyterian Church must have a certified food prep person on site whenever food is prepared.

Paul Yettaw and I are working to put a process in place to make this easier. Until that process is established it is very important that the church office knows when you or those with your event will need to be preparing food so a certified person can be available.

Thank you for your patience while we work through this.


Jenny Moore

FirstPres Calendar

J

JANUARY 2019



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
111. Capital NE Battle Creek, MI	269.964.3700 firstpresbc.org		2 9:30A PW Bible Study 11A Staff	3 7A Church at Prayer 8A Sr Pastors' Prayer Group 6:15P Handbells Rehearsal	4	5
6 10A Worship <i>Communion</i>	7 3:30P CIR 3:30P ECC Music First 6:30P Boy Scouts	8 7A Pray for the Church 10A Exercise Class 10A Toddler Group 10A Safety Ministry 12:30P Lydia Circle	9 11A Staff 5:30P Bible Study	10 7A Church at Prayer 8A Sr Pastors' Prayer Group 12P PEO 4P S.A.F.E. Place 6:15P Handbells Rehearsal 7P Elizabeth Circle	11 9:30A SewNSews 12P Charitable Union 4P S.A.F.E. Place	12 9A S.A.F.E. Place
13 10A Worship <i>Renewal of Baptism</i>	14 3:30P CIR 3:30P ECC Music First 5:30P Trustees	15 7A Pray for the Church 10A Exercise Class 10A Toddler Group	16 11A Staff 5:30P Bible Study	17 7A Church at Prayer 8A Sr Pastors' Prayer Group 6:15P Handbells Rehearsal	18	19 9A MLK Community Breakfast- Maranatha
20 10A Worship <i>Pulpit Exchange</i>	21  3:30P ECC Music First 6P Cabinet	22 7A Pray for the Church 10A Exercise Class 10A Toddler Group	23 11A Staff 5:30P Bible Study	24 7A Church at Prayer 8A Sr Pastors' Prayer Group 10A PW Coordinating Team 6:15P Handbells Rehearsal	25 9:30A SewNSews	26
6P Praise Team						
27 10A Worship <i>Praise Worship</i>	28 3:30P CIR 3:30P ECC Music First 6:30P Boy Scouts	29 7A Pray for the Church 9:30A Carillon Mailing 10A Exercise Class 10A Toddler Group	30 11A Staff 5:30P Bible Study	31 7A Church at Prayer 8A Sr Pastors' Prayer Group 6:15P Handbells Rehearsal		

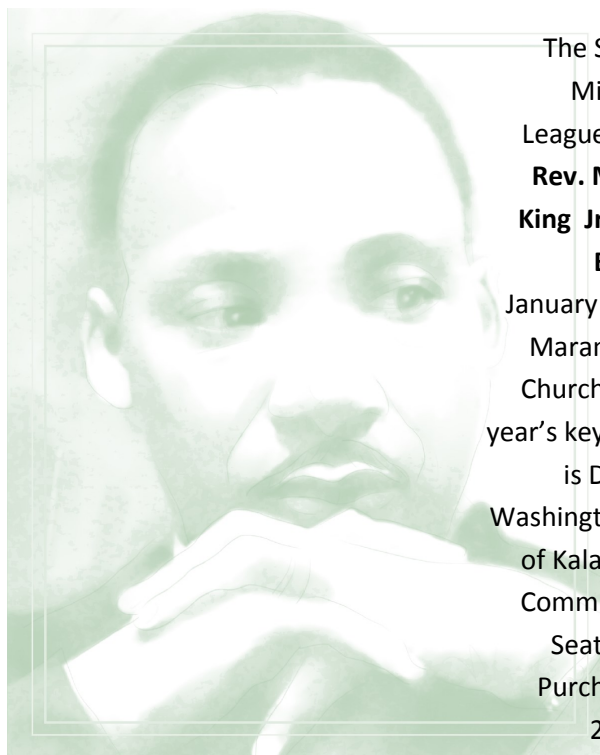
First Presbyterian Church
111 Capital Avenue, NE
Battle Creek, MI 49017



We have four students who will be graduating from high school in the spring of 2019. Please pray for

Betsy Martens,
Daniel Janz,
James Burns and
Keegan Aimesbury

as they see the finish line approaching!



The Southwestern Michigan Urban League is hosting its **Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Breakfast** on January 19th, 9AM at Maranatha Original Church of God. This year's keynote speaker is Dr. L. Marshall Washington, President of Kalamazoo Valley Community College. Seating is limited. Purchase tickets at 269.962.5553.