

The Carillon

First Presbyterian Church, Battle Creek, MI
269-964-3700
firstpresbc.org
Vol. 30 Issue 2



February 2023





From Pastor Mike Wicks

Dear Friends,

“Back when I was a young man...” (Please supply an appropriate tone of voice here), I had a colleague who was about my age now. He was really old - grey hair and all. We were talking at this time of year – and as would be appropriate in 2023 I said, “*Lent is early this year – it arrives in February.*” He smiled, gave a bemused look, and asked, “Have you ever noticed that Lent and Easter are never on time? They are either late or early.” He was right. We never say, “Easter is right on time this year.”

This is your notice that Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, will be February 22nd – officially early. We will have a special service that evening, and I encourage you to take advantage of all special services which will occur in this holy season.

This is also a reminder that God’s grace manages to move life along in a meaningful way whether we feel God’s leading is too slow or too fast at any given moment. We trust God’s leading is just what we need when we need it – no matter how it feels. In Isaiah God says to the people who are still in captivity, “*In a time of favor I have answered you; on a day of salvation, I have helped you.*” I suspect some of them were perplexed as they were still in exile. But it was as good as done. Be of good courage. God’s grace is sufficient for us no matter the situation. God’s work in our lives is always “on time.” (Even if Easter isn’t)



Session Notes

Carl McCune, Clerk of Session

The lack of consistent heating in the Sanctuary and the need for repair of the front doors, which are letting in cold air, were discussed and work is ongoing for solutions.

A **motion** prevailed to eliminate the part-time staff position of Youth Coordinator. Thanks go to Doug McCune who has held that position for many years.

Financial reports through December were made available. Revenue in 2022 exceeded expenses by \$53,812. Of the surplus, \$26,000 will be used as income in the 2023 Annual Budget and the rest of the surplus will go into the Long-Term Capital Fund.

Loren Rex presented the 2023 Annual Budget which has income of \$415,100 (which includes the \$26,000 from the 2022 income) and expenditures of \$405,741. A **motion** prevailed to approve the Budget which will be presented to the congregation at the Annual Meeting to be held on February 19. Besides seeing the Budget and the Annual Report, the congregation will vote on the following change to the Church Bylaws concerning reducing the size of Session:

The ruling elder classes of 2024 & 2025 shall consist of 5 elders each, the class of 2026 shall consist of 4 elders, and thereafter each class shall consist of 4 elders.

Membership Update

Current Active Membership is 220.

The next regular meeting of Session will be on February 13 at 7:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall.

Epiphany Celebration



The Epiphany Celebration on January 8th was so much fun! This The Epiphany Celebration was a new event this year in an effort to “Keep Christmas” just a little longer.

The celebration included the option to select your Star Word, or word of intention, for this year. Once selected you had the option to create either a beaded bracelet with your word or stamp the word on a metal disk.

As the Magi brought gifts, we brought wrapped used books for exchange.

The luncheon included seven different kinds of soup, cheese, crackers and a full dessert table with star cookies, a variety of pies and cupcakes.

The highlight of the day was singing “We Three Kings” while our lucky Magi walked among the tables carrying their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Fun, food and fellowship. Who could ask for anything more?

Sincere thanks to the Connection and Discipleship Ministry teams that made this event happen.



Mission Ministry Team Hosted Holiday Party

Safe Place held their Client Christmas Party at First Presbyterian Church in the parlor. Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus were there along with the Grinch. Comments from their Facebook page were that they had had the best client holiday party.

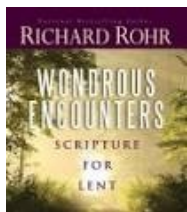
Their clients and their families along with their staff enjoyed a yummy meal prepared by members of the Mission Ministry Team. The parlor was decorated beautifully for Christmas and their staff had planned wonderful activities for all to enjoy! A very special evening of blessings for them.



Winter Coats Wanted!

The Mission Ministry Team is again collecting winter coats and snowpants for the Charitable Union’s 2023 October Winter Coat Distribution. Coats and snowpants are needed for children and teens (boys and girls), Watch for those good sales in stores or online!!!

We’ll continue to collect through March and store the items for them. Bring your donations to the Mission Corner in the Parlor.



Six Sundays of Lent

Join Pastor Mike for a six week book study to begin on Sunday, February 26 directly after worship. **WONDROUS ENCOUNTERS**, Scripture for Lent by Richard Rohr is the book we’ll be using.



Ash Wednesday

Traditionally, the Christian church has observed the seven weeks before Easter as a time of penitence and spiritual self-examination.

Ash Wednesday, which marks the beginning of Lent, derives its name from the ancient practice of marking the foreheads of worshipers with ashes from the unused palm branches of the previous year. Ashes historically have had a dual significance.

First, they are Old Testament symbols of sadness and humility. Job, in the midst of all his troubles, cried out to God from the ash heap.

The second symbolic meaning of ashes is as a reminder of our mortality. Each of us faces the inevitability of physical death. Our bodies and material possessions eventually will turn to dust and ashes. This is a reminder that we dare not trust in things that crumble. But Lent does not leave us on the ash heap. It begins with Ash Wednesday, but ends with Easter. And Easter proclaims that, through Christ, God resurrects us from our dust and ashes, makes us new creatures and brings life out of death!

Our Ash Wednesday Service will be held at 6:30 p.m. on February 22.



Sue Stetler	February 1
Bonnie Martens	February 4
Linda Tuls	February 5
Kyle Trainor	February 6
Vickie Grant	February 7
Kay Scofield	February 7
Bob Bursley	February 8
Donna Bidelman	February 11
Barb Smith	February 12
Gretchen Bursley	February 16
Owen Van Winkle	February 18
Doug McCune	February 21

Be Still

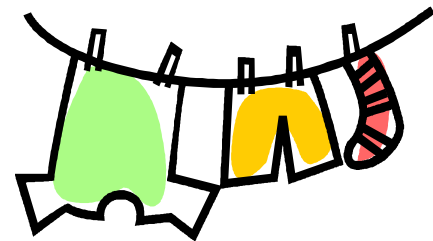
How does the soul wait upon God? Picture it this way: We're in an art gallery and a certain painting catches our eye. We want to get as much meaning and inspiration from it as possible. Do we rush past it and expect meaning to leap out as we pass? No, we have to wait in its presence, stand or sit in front of the painting and wait for it to speak to our innermost soul.

So it is with God. We have to open our souls to let God's personality invade ours. We must wait and not rush. In this Lenten season, let us find occasions to be still and come to know God. "Be still and know that I am God!" (Psalm 46:10).



Communities in Schools Donation

The Mission Ministry Team allocated \$500. for healthy snacks, and "on the run" breakfast food for the Communities in Schools program housed at Battle Creek Central. The food was purchased and delivered in December to the school. The food will provide additional nutritional snacks or breakfast at school, or during vacation times for those students who are food insecure. Those who work with the Communities in Schools were very appreciative of this donation. Responsible for this project were Cindy Koerner, Jean Parker, Paula Coleman and Lori Kneeland (Pictured on the cover.).



Donations Needed

Presbyterian Women are collecting socks and underwear through the end of this month. Please bring your donations of new undies to the collection box in the Parlor.



The Church Office will be closed on Monday, February 20, in observance of Presidents' Day.



Lenten Schedule

Ash Wednesday - February 22 Worship Service @ 6:30 pm

Palm Sunday - April 2 Worship @ 10 a.m. (One Great Hour of Sharing Dedication)

Maundy Thursday - April 6 Service with Communion @ 6:30 pm



A HUGE THANK YOU to our congregation for the laundry detergent, coffee, creamer and personal hygiene items that were donated for the Battle Creek Shelter to help serve the homeless in our community. They were very appreciative of our generosity. Ruth and Arden Hetletved, Lori Kneeland, Susan Keitel, Cindy Koerner and Jean Parker from the Mission Ministry Team made the delivery and then had the opportunity to tour the shelter. The shelter and the program it provides truly meet the day to day needs of the homeless in our community.

Thank you to the church family for the prayers, cards, meals and rides while I was off work with shoulder surgery. Also a big thank you to the Deacons for dinners every week. Very much appreciated. From my brother Bill and myself, Tina Johnson



Just a reminder that we have prayer shawls and walker totes available for you or someone you know.

Prayer shawls can be of great comfort to someone needing an extra hug – they will be found in the main hallway – there's a sheet to indicate the giver and recipient for each shawl.

Walker totes fit over the main bar of a walker - they have a large pocket and two half pockets – great for carrying a book, wallet, cell phone, snacks, Kleenex, etc. Contact Kathy Baker to see the current choices.

We are always looking for cotton fabric in SOLID colors. When making the walker totes, having solid colors is a great help as we make sets. Minimum size is 16" by 42"/44" in length. Sharon Weaver or Kathy Baker will be pleased to take your donations.



Soles for Souls

February kicks off our campaign to raise funds to benefit Charitable Union's steel-toed boot program. Every \$55 donated buys one new pair of boots for people needing such footwear for work, but without the means to purchase them.

Can't afford to buy a whole pair? Gifts of \$20 or \$30, combined with other donations, will get workers the shoes required to start working, and, more importantly, for their safety.

Please make your checks payable to First Presbyterian Church, with "Soles for Souls" written on the memo line.

Donations can also be made on line at firstpresbc.org.

Thank you for being the *Help that Brings Hope!*

First Pres Calendar

First Presbyterian Church 111 Capital Avenue NE Battle Creek, MI 49017 269-964-3700 firstpresbc.org



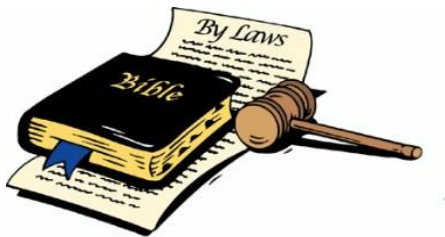
February 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			Feb 1	2 Women/Care 11A Handbells 5:30P Choir 6:30P	3	4
5 Worship 10A (Communion)	6 Retreat Ctr. 5:30P	7 Prayer 8:30A (Zoom) Exercise 10A	8	9 SewNSews 9:30A Elizabeth 10A Handbells 5:30P Choir 6:30P	10	11
12 Worship 10A	13 Deacons 6:30P Session 7P	14 Prayer 8:30A (Zoom) Exercise 10A Lydia/Miriam 1P	15	16 Mission Min 5P Handbells 5:30P Choir 6:30P	17	18
19 Worship 10A Annual Mtg 11A	20 <i>Office Closed</i> Cabinet 6P Worship Team 7P Discipleship 7P	21 Prayer 8:30 A (Zoom) Exercise 10A	22 ASH WEDNESDAY Worship 6:30P	23 SewNSews 9:30A PW CT 10 A Handbells 5:30P Choir 6:30P	24	25
26 Worship 10A Llenten Study 11	27 Men's Fellowship 7P	28 Prayer (Zoom) 9A Carillon 9:30A Exercise 10A				

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

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Annual Meeting
Sunday, February 19
11:05 a.m.
Sanctuary

ASH

WEDNESDAY
SERVICE
February 22
6:30 pm