

Presbyterian *Profiles*

A PUBLICATION OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH / NOVEMBER 2024

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Rev. Cathy Caldwell-Hoop

Senior Pastor

Staying Informed

Each month I pull together a summary of our church's Session meeting so that you can stay informed about the work that your elected leaders are doing. Much of their work happens behind the scenes: preparing the sanctuary for the church seasons, organizing coffee fellowship, taking care of repairs and maintenance, staying in touch with our mission partners, meeting with worship center and youth leaders, caring for the staff. The elders are also responsible for the budget (fun job!) and the stewardship efforts, as you have been hearing.

Decisions about the ministry of the church also come to our Session for discussion, and one of those discussions has been about the need to improve the technology in both the sanctuary and Michigan room. (Please see the Session Summary for more information about the specific upgrades to these spaces.) We will all benefit from these improvements... and we are especially excited that the sound quality for those worshipping from home will be greatly improved! The ability for those who participate from home, whether here in Holland or in another state, will also carry over for meetings and classes in the Michigan room.

One piece of this conversation that has been perplexing and anxiety producing is the addition of screens to the sanctuary. Though, from what we have heard, more members are supportive of the idea than opposed, this isn't about a simple "majority vote." We hear the serious concerns... concerns about the aesthetic changes to the sanctuary, concerns about having one screen-free space in your life, concerns about whether this will change the shape of our worship.

The Session approved the installation of screens for two reasons:

1. We heard from those who see this as a major accommodation for the physical challenges with which they live. Whether it is the ability to stand while holding a hymnal, or the need for a font that is even larger than what the large print bulletin provides, screens will make worship much more accessible for many.

2. Financially, it makes sense to install the screens while the other work is being done, and then they are there to use as we see appropriate. One use we already anticipate is for memorial services, as family members typically bring a slide show which they want to share.

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Rev. Paul Van Kempen
Associate Pastor

Anticipation

My kids have been reading through my Calvin and Hobbes books recently. I loved Calvin and Hobbes when I was a kid (and I think I love them even more now that I am not a kid!). I asked my son, Ben, what his favorite Calvin and Hobbes strip was, and he suggested the storyline where Calvin gets his propeller beanie.

The story begins with Calvin eating box after box of sugary cereal to save enough proofs of purchase to send in to get the beanie. He mails them in and then waits and waits (6 weeks!) for the hat to come, dreaming of what it will be like to put on the hat and fly off. Finally, the hat comes and as he is assembling it, Calvin breaks part of it. Calvin, distressed, brings the hat to his dad, who fixes it, but they have to wait for the glue to dry. After all the waiting, finally, Calvin gets to try it on:

After all the waiting and anticipation, Calvin is met with disappointment. The hat wasn't what he expected.

We are entering into the season of Advent, a season of waiting and anticipation. We aren't waiting for a propeller beanie; we are waiting for the birth of the savior. And, unlike Calvin, our anticipation will not be rewarded with disappointment, but with the promise of new life, born in a manger to bring about a new way of living.

As we journey together through Advent, let us linger in the anticipation as we await the birth of our Savior.





Lori Klinesteker

Children's
Ministry Leader

Worship Center: Keeping In Touch

For Christians, Advent is a time of preparation and waiting. We prepare our hearts and our lives for the birth of the baby Jesus. The book, *Faithful Families for Advent and Christmas* written by Traci Smith, shows us how by using Spiritual Practices to grow hope, peace, love and joy in our homes with fresh and engaging ideas. A copy of this book is available for each family (young – youth) and can be found in the Book Nook on the shelf. Please, one copy per family.

Preparation and waiting. Children and youth have begun rehearsals for the pageant, *A Shepherd's Story*, during the Education Hour. In Worship Center it is with hope that when hearing a story from year to year, that children will experience it in a new and different way. This year they are experiencing Advent in a unique and special way – they are the story.

A Shepherd's Story takes place Sunday, December 22 during the 10am worship service.

A peek into the Pre-K – 2nd grade Worship Center. Parable of the Lost Coin was being shared, child in circle “this is a lot like the Good Shepherd, isn't it?” a second child “it's like magic that the coin was lost and found”. A different day while sharing with each other, child mentions they were going on a ski trip, asked if the child had skied before, child responds “not really I'm kind of scared, but my cousin is going and she gives me confidence, so it will be ok”. If you are seeking joy, consider joining us in the Worship Center.

We prepare, anticipate and wait together for the Birth of the Baby Jesus,

Lori Klinesteker



Presbyterian Women

Simple Gifts

Our Bible Study this year is based upon justice issues and has generated much discussion. It is different than most PW studies; more based upon how justice issues face us in this time. Beyond Bible study, PW leads our focus on many justice issues, but our other focus is mission. Right here in our lovely part of Michigan we have children who are not going hungry all weekend because of Kid's Food Basket. We also have families uprooted by domestic violence who flee without many basics, like underwear, tees, socks, coats. We have a top-rated preschool experience right here at FPC Holland.

RESILIENCE - We support this organization with new/unwrapped underwear for women and children. Just leave on the tags and everything. There is a basket by our elevator entrance for sharing these simple gifts.

KID'S FOOD BASKET - "Working collaboratively to meet the needs of every child and family we serve, we aim to pursue a hunger-free West Michigan in a way that promotes the experiences and passion of our local community." They have served 227,666 meals to kids in a 4-county area since 7-1-24. Our Outreach Council helps support this mission, and we decorate the lunch bags used to hand a kid a meal or weekend provisions.

PRESBYTERIAN PRESCHOOL - While PW no longer receives a \$1,000 stipend for wearing Dutch costumes for 9 busy Tulip Time days as

information guides (honestly, we don't miss that), we remain committed to supporting our preschool program. Our supply of funds we called Gail's Gift has all been given to the preschool and to support the winter women's retreat. So...help us provide support with the Quality Car Wash deals that provide about 40% of those tickets received to our preschool. Great stocking stuffers and birthday gifts. Available until Dec. 1st.

On December 11, we will meet after 9:30am Bible Study, by 11:30am in the narthex, to help decorate the Kid's Food Basket lunch bags and enjoy a homemade 3-soup luncheon with DeBoer's breads and dessert, all for a \$5 contribution. Of course we will take more! The best decorated bags, judged by church staff, will receive the lovely prizes above. Hey, if a child in our Sunday nursery can conceive, color, cut, and tape together a walking carrot, we can decorate these bags! Sign up in the narthex.

All women of FPC are welcome.



GET THE LATEST NEWS from **PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN**

We are adding more content on our Facebook page! // Facebook: **FPCHolland PW**

Online: PresbyterianWomen.org

<> Session Summary <>

The Session held its regular meeting on Tuesday, November 19th. We were opened in prayer with a devotional from Ben Rund-Scott, our youth elder.

At the top of the evening's agenda was a presentation by Tim Richardson on behalf of the Buildings Council. The proposal detailed technological improvements to the sanctuary and the Michigan Room.

The sanctuary improvements include new microphones, including slender drop down mics which will be located over the chancel. This will improve the amplification of the choir, and of any spoken pieces that are shared from the chancel. The piano will also receive amplification so that their will be better balance with the organ. The technology upgrades will also greatly improve the sound quality of our worship stream. We have been well aware that the music does not come through cleanly on the YouTube version, and we would love for everyone's worship experience to include the beauty and inspiration of the music ministry.

The Michigan Room has also been of great concern. Many individuals who would like to participate in an adult education program, simply can't hear. Also, when a hybrid set up is needed, both visual and auditory aspects are a challenge. The

improvements to the Michigan Room will include the hearing aid loop, as well as wireless microphones for presenters, and a fully integrated hybrid option that will not be too difficult for members to use!

While there is still concern about screens in the sanctuary (please see the pastor's page), the Session gave full consensus to move ahead with these improvements as they are being paid for by the same generous bequest that made it possible for us to repave the parking lot, mend the roof, and upgrade the HVAC system throughout the building.

The Session then moved on to a discussion of chapter nine of Sailboat Church, "Preparing for Storms." This chapter addressed how churches can move through conflict in healthy ways. Conflicts are a reality of life in community, but how we respond to them can have a great influence on future health and stability. We had a very frank conversation, and reviewed the author's suggestions about prayer, having healthy boundaries and avoiding triangulating conversations. We also considered how we have handled conflict in the past and what we could learn from that experience.

The Session received Council reports and closed with prayer. The next regular meeting of the Session will be on December 17th.

<> Deacons <>

Senior Tailgate Luncheon took place Saturday, Nov 16 at noon in the fellowship. It was a themed fall soup luncheon and attendees were invited to wear their favorite team's colors. Non-sports fans were welcome, too :)



A wonderful time of laughter and delicious food.

<> Connect Together <>

Men's Discussion Group

Meets at FPC every other Friday morning at 7:30am in the M&M Cafe. We will meet December 13 & 27. Join us. Contact Ross Hamlin (616) 399-0509 or Bob Gansen (269) 753-7024 if you have any questions.

Women's Book Club

The Women's Book Club meets the second Sunday of each month at church at 1pm in the M&M Cafe. Our next meeting is December 8 discussing the book, *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer. Contact Bev Plagenhoef at rbplagen@live.com if you have questions.

Common Threads Group

We hope that "Common Threads" reflects the fact that all are welcome. Many of us are crocheting or knitting prayer shawls, hats, scarves and chemo socks. Feel free to come and work on other needlework or crafts, or just come for the fellowship! We meet the third Monday of each month from 1-3pm in the Ontario room. Come and go as you are able. We hope you'll join us! Our next meeting is December 16.

Grief Support

Once a month, a small group gathers for grief support...we listen, we share, we pray. One month we explored how grief is portrayed in art, another month we made memory jars and journal prompts. Most recently, we shared cookies and read children's books about grief. It was a beautiful experience. The group is open to all who need a safe space as they journey with grief. We meet the third Wednesday of the month at 2pm in the Superior Room. Our next meeting is December 15.

<> Happenings Around FPC <>

- Dec. 1 **Advent Potluck** // Following the education hour on **December 1**, you are invited to join your church family for an Advent potluck beginning at noon. Bring a dish to share and spend some time in community making ornaments and preparing for Advent!
- Dec.1 **College Student Care Packages** // Let's show FPC's college students we love them! Bring snacks, coffee gift cards, Post-its, highlighters, or other study treats small enough to fit in a manilla envelope and mail to FPC's college students to let them know we are thinking of t them, and stop by to sign cards or write notes of encouragement on **Sunday, December 1**. We hope to send out packages to 12-15 students. If you have a college student in your family who would like a care package, email their current address to deacons@fpcholland.org by November 27.
- Dec. 1 & 8 **Children's Advocacy Center Holiday Advocates** // We had a great response to our request for advocates and have assigned all of the children we were given. Thank you FPC. If you are still wanting to participate, there is a list of Stocking Stuffers that we would like to collect for the holiday store. The list will be at the Outreach Kiosk for you to pick up. Gifts can be brought unwrapped to the church on **December 1 & 8**.
- Dec. 3 **Parade of Lights** // Downtown Holland parade of lights is Tuesday, December 3rd at 6:30pm. The bus will leave the church at 5:15pm if you would like to join us there. You can also meet the bus on the corner of 10th and Central before 6:30pm. If you would like to help decorate the bus contact Chris Urbaniak or Lauren Stouffer. If families would like to ride the warm dry bus rather than sit along the route you are welcome to join us!
- Dec. 5 **Yoga at First Pres!** // Are you interested in learning or practicing yoga? Gwen Boeve will be offering instruction one Tuesday per month, to anyone of any level or experience. Next class is Thursday, **December 5** at 9:30 in the fellowship hall. Please email Gwen at ghekman@gmail.com if you are interested or have any questions.
- Dec. 6 & 7 **Nutcracker Performance** // There are six individuals from FPC performing in this year's production of the Nutcracker at Avalon School of the Arts: Mae Boeve, Whitney Boeve, Gia DeFeyter, Kyle Magennis, Liz Peterson, and Marian Reynolds. Performances are Friday, **December 6 @ 6pm** and Saturday, **December 7 @ 11am & 3pm** and Zeeland Cityside Middle School (320 E. Main Ave). Tickets are available online at <http://www.avalonschoolofthearts.com/>
- Dec. 8 **Congregational Meeting** // Sunday, **December 8** immediately following morning worship a congregational meeting will take place for the purpose of electing elders and deacons.
- Dec. 8 **Parents' Day Out / Christmas Craft Day** // Sunday, **December 8** from 12-2p the deacons invite parents to leave your kids at church after the education hour and enjoy a couple of hours to yourselves. Kids will have pizza in the fellowship hall and make some Christmas decorations for our homebound seniors. Sign up your kids at church, or email deacons@fpc.org to let us know who is attending and their pizza preference (cheese, pepperoni, or veggie).
- Dec. 12 **Habitat Workday** // Our next Habitat workday day is **December 12**. Work dates are typically the second Thursday of the month. 2025 dates include January 9, February 13 and March 13. If you are looking for more information or have questions, please contact Bill Haines, wehaines@icloud.com

<> Happenings Around FPC <>

- Dec. 15 **Christmas Caroling to homebound members** // On Sunday, **December 15** we will meet at 2pm and take the bus to visit and carol for several homebound church members. Sign up in the narthex if you would like to join us!
- Dec. 19 **Service of Longest Night** // Thursday, December 19 at 7pm. The Christmas season brings joy and sorrow, hope and stress. Please join us for this time of worship as we acknowledge the realities of our lives. Whether you are missing a loved one or just overwhelmed by the Christmas rush, we invite you to be with us for a time of honesty and hope.

<> Announcements <>

Advent Display // The Worship and the Arts Council would love to display your Nativity scenes again in the M&M Cafe during our season of Advent. If you would like to contribute your Nativity scene, please drop them off in the office. Make sure your box is clearly labelled so we can return them to you after Christmas. Thank you for your contributions!

Advent Book // Families with younger children through youth are welcome to have a copy of the book, *Faithful Families: for Advent & Christmas -100 ways to make the Season Sacred*, by Traci Smith. Books are located on a shelf in the Book Nook. One copy per family, please.

Preschool Fundraiser // Our Presbyterian Preschool fundraiser is happening now, and our PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN have pledged to help them with the campaign this year. They are set with the Quality folks to participate in WASH WITH A MISSION. They offer the Single Use Vouchers, Quality Wash, Express Interior Cleaning, or the 30 Days of Unlimited Car Washes. Choose your program. Car wash vouchers are handy birthday and Christmas stocking gifts. 40% of what level you buy goes back to our wonderful preschool program. PW representatives will be ready to help on Sundays for 3 weeks. Please help us clean up Holland one dirty car at a time!

Volunteers Needed // Out On The Lakeshore is looking for volunteers to package books and deliver to local schools, a project that takes a few hours on one day a month. These will all be at Bluestocking Bookshop (near the corner of Butternut and James on the north side) from 10am-12pm. Volunteers are needed December 11, January 8, February 12, March 12, April 9, May 13. Please contact their office for more details, 616-994-8090. Thank you!

Children's Advocacy Center Holiday Advocates // We had a great response to our request for advocates and have assigned all of the children we were given. Thank you FPC. If you still want to participate, there is a list of Stocking Stuffers that we would like to collect for the holiday store. The lists will be in the Outreach Kiosk for you to pick up. Gifts can be brought unwrapped to the church on December 1 & 8.

Zadran Home Dedication Gifts // We will be participating in providing dedication gifts for the Zadran family in coordination with the First Reformed Church of Zeeland. We will fill a laundry basket with gift cards, brand new cleaning supplies, and home items. (Think Clorox wipes, Swiffer dusters and any items that are helpful to setting up a new home.) There are two labeled collection baskets in the Outreach Kiosk. The date of the dedication ceremony has not been set, but we will share it when it is. Thank you!



Rev. Cathy Caldwell-Hoop
Senior Pastor

Staying Informed ...Continued

How will the screens be used? Thoughtfully and carefully. We know that it will be important to craft guidelines for their use and we will look to other congregations for their suggestions. An example of a guideline might be that if hymns are on the screens, the music will be included (we already own the digital version of our hymnal). And if they don't prove to be a true benefit to those who hope they will be a significant improvement? Then we will re-evaluate their use. The screens are one of the least expensive pieces of our upgrades.

We appreciate everyone who has shared their honest responses regarding the question of installing screens in the sanctuary. We know it isn't easy to be on what feels like "the other side" of an issue. We hope that everyone will be willing to try to experience worship after the screens are installed because we will want your feedback. But I also ask you to trust Paul and I and the worship council to make thoughtful decisions about how we use this technology.

Blessings and peace –
Cathy

CHRISTMAS SERVICE TIMES

Join us in celebrating the birth of the Christ Child.

Sunday, December 22 - Children's Christmas Pageant

Tuesday, December 24 - Christmas Eve

3pm - Family Friendly Christmas Eve Service

5pm - Candlelight Communion Service

DECEMBER OFFICE HOURS

The church office will be closed December 24-27.

New Years Eve the office will close at noon and remain closed on New years Day.

Normal business hours resume

Thursday, January 2, 2025.



first
presbyterian
church

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*worshipping, serving, and living with a fresh
vision of God's vibrant energy and grace for all.*