

Mason First Presbyterian Church

The **CORNERSTONE**



March 2024

You are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus as the cornerstone. Ephesians 2:19-20

Christian Worship: An Introduction (continued)

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is “the giver and renewer of life” (*A Brief Statement of Faith*), who instills our faith and enables us to follow Jesus Christ. The Scriptures describe how the Spirit moved at the dawn of creation, anointed Christ in baptism, raised Jesus from the dead, and was poured out on the Church at Pentecost. The same Spirit is still at work in the life of the Church and the life of the world.

The Holy Spirit manifests God’s gracious action and empowers our grateful response. The Spirit gathers us for worship, enlightens and equips us through the Word, claims and nourishes us through the Sacraments, and sends us out for service. To each member of Christ’s body, the Spirit gives gifts for ministry in the Church and mission in the world.

Word and Sacrament

In Christian worship Jesus Christ is truly present and active among us, by the power of the Holy Spirit, through the gifts of Word and Sacrament. Wherever the Scriptures are read and proclaimed and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are celebrated, the Church bears witness to Jesus Christ, the living Word, and proclaims the mystery of faith. Through these means of grace, God imparts and sustains our faith, orders our common life, and transforms the world. Through these same acts of worship, we share in the life of the Spirit, are united to Jesus Christ, and give glory to God.

Worship and the Church

God’s gifts of Word and Sacrament establish and equip the Church as the body of Christ in the world. The mission of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church flows from Baptism, is nourished at Lord’s Supper, and serves to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to all. In the same way, the Church’s ministry emerges from the font, arises from the table, and takes its shape from the Word of the Lord. Therefore the worship of the triune God is the center of our common life and our primary way of witness to the faith, hope, and love we have in Jesus Christ.

To be a Christian is to worship Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. To be a member of Christ’s body, the Church, is to share through Word and Sacrament in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit.

— from *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*, “Directory for Worship”

Session Synopsis

The Session made further appointments to committees for 2024. The 2024 Scholarship Commission will include Ginnie Gibson representing the Finance Committee, Sharon Ambrose and Suzanne Lang as congregation representatives, and Donna Hujsak and Sandy Leutscher representing the Board of Deacons with Spiritual Growth Director Lori Filka as an ex-officio member. The Memorial Committee of Mary Schrock (Class of 2024), Linda Peterson (Class of 2025), and Suzie Threadgould (Class of 2026), will also include Deb Johnson (Class of 2027) and Vern Schrock as Finance Committee representatives with Pastor Bill as an ex-officio member.

At the last General Assembly of the PCUSA, racial injustice was a priority concern amidst national and global unrest. Following an apology for such injustice, all congregations are required to develop an antiracism policy. Session authorized what is now known as the Bridge Builders for Racial Atonement Task Force being led by Elder Monte Shuck to develop such policy and to also identify programs that support racial atonement and education on racial issues. Congregational input and feedback are encouraged.

The Finance Committee reviewed and submitted revisions that Session approved to the Fundraising Guidelines. The Guidelines outline the process for Session approval of groups, projects, and programs before they may make presentations requesting funds from the congregation. The Guidelines now include a comprehensive list of mission projects, special offerings, programs, and organizations approved to solicit funds within the church.

The Parish Life Committee will be assisting with the Spiritual Growth Family Game Night, now rescheduled for March 9th.

The Personnel Committee reported a very favorable annual review of Music Director Deb Melse.

The Spiritual Growth Committee is seeking new dates for the summer Vacation Bible School. The current schedule of July 9-11 conflicts with Adventure Week at Camp Greenwood. The high school youth are seeking more ways to serve including consideration of assisting in the MSU Suicide Watch project. At least four youth are planning to attend the National Youth Conference at Montreat, North Carolina this summer.

The Administration Committee is pursuing bids to repair the Sanctuary ceiling before excessive sagging and ceiling tile failure occur. There is also needed repair of old water damaged surfaces in the southeast corner. Repairs are pending to the outdoor main heating unit that heats the education wing. The repair of the office heating units will require total unit replacement as component parts and controls are not available for the foreign manufactured office unit. Session approved \$6,000 from Contingency Reserve Funds for the office HVAC replacement unit.

The Worship & Music Committee updated instructions for Communion servers. The task list for the Christmas Eve service is under review.

The Mission Committee made available a notice for a panel discussion by the Justice League on the evening of February 28th at the East Lansing Public Library.

A progress report was received on the preparation of name tags for church members. The growing presence of new friends and visitors has resulted in the need and a request for name tags that were once worn in the past. The Security Team members are already wearing orange name tags while on duty.

Bruce F Archer
Clerk of Session

Worship & Music

March 2024 Worship Calendar

March 3	Third Sunday in Lent ~ The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper
March 10	Fourth Sunday in Lent ~ Ordination and Installation of new Deacons
March 17	Fifth Sunday in Lent ~ Children's Sermon
March 24	Palm Sunday
March 28	Maundy Thursday ~ 7:00 PM in our Sanctuary ~ Communion
March 29	Good Friday ~ 12:00 PM in our Sanctuary
	The Mason Ministerial Association will also be holding an evening service. Details TBA
March 31	The Resurrection of the Lord / Easter ~ Two-Cents-a-Meal Hunger Offering

The Ministry of Members

Membership in the Church of Jesus Christ is a joy and a privilege. It is also a commitment to participate in Christ's mission. A faithful member bears witness to God's love and grace and promises to be involved responsibly in the ministry of Christ's Church.

Such involvement includes:

- proclaiming the good news in word and deed,
- taking part in the common life and worship of a congregation,
- lifting one another up in prayer, mutual concern, and active support,
- studying Scripture and the issues of Christian faith and life,
- supporting the ministry of the church through the giving of money, time, and talents,
- demonstrating a new quality of life within and through the church,
- responding to God's activity in the world through service to others,
- living responsibly in the personal, family, vocational, political, cultural, and social relationships of life,
- working in the world for peace, justice, freedom, and human fulfillment,
- caring for God's creation,
- participating in the governing responsibilities of the church, and
- reviewing and evaluating regularly the integrity of one's membership, and considering ways in which one's participation in the worship and service of the church may be increased and made more meaningful.

from the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Bridge Builders for Racial Atonement Task Force

Members: Jenny Bond, Nancy Sue MacDonald, Mari Nicol, and Monte Shuck (and we welcome more members!)

The Task Force was formed to address the issue of racial inequality within our church, our community, and beyond. We have begun our work on several fronts:

- * As mandated by the Presbyterian Church (USA), we have developed an Antiracism statement, which will be available for your review and comment, and, once completed, will be adopted by Session.
- * Performing research on the racial makeup and history of our community.
- * Begun development of racial issue education for our congregation.
- * Requested purchase of several books on race and racial issues for the Church library.

We acknowledge that race, discrimination, racism, and white supremacy are not comfortable terms and do not make for easy conversations. But, as proclaimed in the PC(USA) Antiracism statement (and included in ours, as well):

Because of our biblical understanding of who God is and what God intends for humanity, we must stand against, speak against, and work against racism. Antiracist effort is not optional for Christians, it is an essential aspect of Christian discipleship, without which we fail to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ."

Finance

Financial Report through January 2024

General Fund Balance January 1, 2023	0
Income through January	\$57,701
Expenses through January	\$35,653
Ending Balance (1/31/24)	\$22,048

General Fund Balance 1/31/24	\$ 22,048	Anticipated pledged income through January
Revolving Accounts Balance	64,524	\$23,823
Reserve Accounts	111,908	Actual pledged income through January
Investments as of 12/31/24 (end of 4th quarter 2023)	520,404	\$51,263
Net Financial Position (1/31/24)	\$718,884	

Thank you for your faithful support!

Deacons

Easter is coming and it is time to order your favorite Easter flowers to honor and remember those dear to you. Easter lilies are \$14.50 and tulips and daffodils are \$12.50 again this year. Please sign-up on the order sheet posted outside the church office. We'll need your order by March 17th.

Thanks to you, 223 pounds of food was collected and delivered to the Mason Food Bank in February. We now have a new grocery list with needed items that include:

Applesauce
 Peanut butter (16 oz)
 Crackers
 Canned tuna
 Chicken noodle and tomato soups (10 oz)
 Any size of hearty soups

Thank you for your continuing generosity to help those in need!

Parish Life

Birthdays in March

Liam Blonshine	3/01	Vern Schrock	3/12
Ray Strayer	3/01	Steve Ware	3/13
Isaiah Hawkins	3/02	Deb Melse	3/14
Connie Cantrell	3/03	Bruce Archer	3/15
Ruth Sablich	3/05	Brenda Strayer	3/18
Ben Pinches	3/06	Luke Mackey	3/20
Travis Archer	3/07	Violet Mackey	3/20
Jacob Castle	3/08	Dan Baker	3/21
Peter Robinson	3/11	Shirley Day	3/22
		Mary Torrey	3/26

Our church-sponsored Boy Scout Troop 763 will be having a Pancake Breakfast on Saturday, March 9th, from 8-11 AM at the Masonic Temple. Tickets are \$10 in advance or \$12 at the door.

PANCAKE
BREAKFAST



Saturday
March 9th
6PM
Church Dining Room

TACOS will be served!

Sweetheart Luncheon guest's responses ~

It was special and enjoyable. The food was great and it was heartwarming to see everyone treated so warmly.

The fellowship with other Christian women was uplifting. The tables were lovely and festive - the food was outstanding!

The service was great, the food was wonderful, and the entertainment was outstanding!

As always, the food was delicious and the decorations lovely, but the best part of the luncheon is getting together with ladies in the community. Thank you for giving us an opportunity to socialize while eating a sumptuous meal we did not have to prepare!

You have a wonderful tradition. Thank you!

Spiritual Growth

Youth Program

Pre-K and Elementary Sunday School –

The youth are dismissed during the worship service and gather for snacks and Sunday school in the upstairs youth education room. Our current lessons focus on Lent activities and the Miracles of Jesus. We will have a small Easter party on March 31st during Kid's church.

Middle / High Sunday School & Fellowship –

The youth are dismissed during the worship service and gather for snacks and Sunday school in the downstairs youth fellowship room. The curriculum topic is "Grace" which is designed to show youth that grace is a real, practical force in their lives in the mist of fear, doubt, and stress.

Youth Fellowship is invited to a concert and talk at Eden Church in Mason on March 3rd at 6pm. This event is put on by a group of churches from Mason whose youth leaders meet monthly.

Wonderful Wednesday –

Every Wednesday after school, the program concludes with a community dinner at 6:00pm. Jesus's walk to the cross will be the focus of lessons during the month. We will also be preparing Easter crafts for the Deacons' Easter goodies that are distributed to "special Members" at their homes.

An Easter egg hunt will take place on March 20th!

There will be no Wednesday program on March 27th and no Sunday school on March 24th and 31st because of Spring Break!

Adult Program

Wednesday Prayer Service -

Please join us for the Wednesday prayer service at noon in the downstairs chapel. This 20-minute guided prayer time is led by Michelle Mackey. Together we pray for and with one another.

Adult Bible Study -

Please join us after worship for a series of topics during Lent.

How to give up worry for Lent in Three Steps

Father, forgive them....tools to forgive

Our identity in Christ through the cross

How to cope with suffering using Paul's advice in Philippians

How to speak about Faith and spread the Word (without getting personal)

Important Dates to Remember

March 3 rd	Youth Fellowship concert at 6:00pm
March 9 th	Family Game Night at 6:00pm
March 20 th	Easter Egg Hunt
March 28 th	Maundy Thursday service
March 29 th	Good Friday - with childcare
March 31 st	Easter Sunday Party

*The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and
be gracious to you;
the Lord lift up his countenance upon you,
and give you peace.*

Numbers 6:24-26

Find the latest, up-to-date church calendar at masonpresbyterian.org

**WORSHIP AT
MASON FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

In-Person and Livestreaming at 10:00am each Sunday
Audio, video, and printed worship is online at masonpresbyterian.org

Bulletin Submissions are due by 9:00am every Monday. Submissions for *The Cornerstone* are due by noon on the 15th of every month. Please be prompt. Late submissions may not be honored. We are now attempting to publish the newsletter the week following Session.

The
CORNERSTONE

Mason First Presbyterian Church

MINISTERS - All Members

PASTOR - Rev. Bill Pinches

PARISH ASSOCIATE - Rev. Dr. Jim Hegedus

PASTOR EMERITUS - Rev. Charlie Herrick

SPIRITUAL GROWTH DIRECTOR - Lori Filka

OFFICE MANAGER - Sheren Wright

SANCTUARY CHOIR DIRECTOR & BELL CHOIR DIRECTOR -
Deb Melse

CHORAL ACCOMPANIST & ORGANIST - Feng Kang

OFFICE ASSISTANT - Nancy Sue MacDonald

SEXTON - Eric VanDyke

ADULT SPIRITUAL GROWTH COORDINATOR -
Michelle Mackey

ELDERS:

2024 - Jerry Ambrose, Lucinda Davenport,
Loren Harkness, Tonya Seely.

2025 - Doreen Chapman, Anita Cote,
Mary Garland Jackson, Monte Shuck (*Recording Clerk*).

2026 - Bruce Archer (*Clerk of Session*),
Ginnie Gibson, Jane Hamelink, Tim Hammond.

DEACONS:

2024 - Donna Hujsak, Issie Nielsen,
Camille Subject.

2025 - Marge Clarke, Julie Dart, Timothy Pinches,
Tom Seely (*Moderator*).

2026 - Ron Dlouhy, Sandy Leutscher, Nancy Sue
MacDonald.

Deacons-Elect - Bill Leutscher, Laurie McGonigal.

The Journey to Easter



MAUNDY THURSDAY



GOOD FRIDAY

Join us for each step on the path.