

Mason First Presbyterian Church

The **CORNERSTONE**



March 2025

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

Leadership in Worship and Ordered Ministries (continued)

Ruling Elders

Ruling elders are called to nurture the common life of the people of God through their gifts of discernment and governance. They should also cultivate an ability to teach the Word when called upon to do so. When appropriately prepared and commissioned by the presbytery, ruling elders may proclaim the Word and administer the Sacraments in a particular congregation.

In a particular congregation, ruling elders shall provide for the church's worship and encourage the people's participation. Specifically, when serving together on the session, ruling elders and ministers of the Word and Sacrament: make provision for the regular preaching of the Word and celebration of the Sacraments, corporate prayer, and the offering of praise to God in song; oversee and approve all public worship in the congregation, with the exception of responsibilities reserved for the minister of the Word and Sacrament; determine occasions, days, times, and places for worship; and have responsibility for the arrangement of worship space, the use of special appointments (flowers, candles, banners, paraments, and other objects), and the ministries of music, drama, dance, and visual arts.

Ministers of the Word and Sacrament

Ministers of the Word and Sacrament (also called teaching elders and pastors) are called to proclaim the Word, preside at the Sacraments, and equip the people for ministry in Jesus' name. Specifically, ministers of the Word and Sacrament are responsible for: the selection of Scriptures to be read, the preparation of the sermon, the prayers to be offered, the selection of music to be sung, printed worship aids or media presentations for a given service, and the use of drama, dance, and other art forms in a particular service of worship.

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

(continued next month)



*God's Gifts Equip
Us for Ministry.*

Session Synopsis

The first order of Session business was an interview with Laird Eddie, who with his wife Sonja (close friend of member Evelyn Tayong), have been attending services via livestream. They have been members of First Presbyterian Church in Lansing, but health issues keep Sonja at home. Session accepted their request to transfer their membership from Lansing First. Session also approved the membership transfer request of Eva Schlenner to Harvest Methodist Church in Bismarck, North Dakota, and Mari Nicol's request to move to the Associate Member Roll.

Session approved the Board of Deacons' concept to provide communion service at home by interested Elders and Deacons, upon request of shut-in members. The concept will allow the development of further details to implement such services.

Pastor Bill is pleased with the number of participants and the vigorous conversations on the book study of *The False White Gospel*. Parish Associate Rev. Dr. Jim Hegedus will preaching March 30th while the Pinches family visits son Andrew in Montana.

Session accepted the resignation of Timothy Pinches from the final year of his term with the Board of Deacons while away attending college in Kalamazoo. Session then made one-year appointments of Vern Schrock as Treasurer, Sue Riley and Laura McGonigal as Assistant Treasurers, Jess Weber as Financial Secretary, and Sandy Diehl as Assistant Financial Secretary.

The Bridge Builders Task Force is impressed with the interest displayed in the book study. The Task Force is working with the Misson Committee which is arranging another presentation from the Justice League of Lansing.

Upon the recent receipt of bequests and grants, the Finance Committee is reviewing policies and procedures to handle the \$1,800 Foy Estate bequest, a \$15,000 specific donation, and a \$3,000 Presbytery grant to help offset the significantly increased cost of the medical premium for the Pastor.

The Parish Life Committee reported that there were 100+ attendees at the Sweetheart Luncheon. The committee is preparing for the upcoming Family Game Night and a Baby Shower for Jessica Tessman.

The Security Team requests that those exiting the vacant church check to make sure the exit door securely latches, especially alley door.

The Personnel Committee is reviewing the accounting logistics to accommodate the revised Michigan State law on Sick Time for our employees.

The Spiritual Growth Committee announced this year's Vacation Bible School will be at Mason First Presbyterian from July 15-17th.

The Administration Committee is researching updated costs for the building use fee schedule. The current schedule was last revised in 2014. The committee is also addressing repairs to cracking pew supports.

The Mission Committee clarified that donor funds for the planned Pine Ridge Mission Trip are intended to cover all costs to encourage more participation.

Recent inclement weather events raised concerns about the current church policy on such events. The Worship and Music Committee is tasked to review the policy for potential updates.

Congregational Meeting Notes

The Annual meeting of the Congregation was held following worship on February 23rd. The first order of business was the election of Sally Hughes as Deacon for the Class of 2027. After the opportunity to review the annual reports on membership, Pastor activities, Session activities, Session committees, and other groups, the congregation voted to receive the reports.

Bruce F Archer, Clerk of Session

Presbyterian Social Witness: Immigration

This is the third part of a series exploring different aspects of our church's social witness policy.

The Presbyterian Church has issued several statements pertaining to immigration over the years. Here are summaries of three of those statements, with links to the full documents:

1. Transformation of Churches and Society Through Encounters with New Neighbors (1999)

We need to face our fears and insecurities honestly as pastoral issues of central significance. We need to develop the resources that will enable us through mutual support to venture in faith to enter new friendships with the confidence that God will continue to open the way for future steps. Let us challenge ourselves to trust in the promises of God that God's Kingdom will be on earth as it is in Heaven. The vision of God's Kingdom calls us to participate in God's work by breaking down barriers, healing divisions, guarding each person's dignity, advocating for the voiceless, and extending the Gospel of reconciling love to all. It is a wonderful opportunity for many of our predominantly Anglo churches in the United States to change our face, indeed our whole body, into a multicolored face and body, in this way anticipating the future God has in store. Whereas fears may incline us to self-protectiveness, faith in the promise of God in Christ can launch our churches into adventurous encounters with new neighbors that will transform churches and energize us all for more expanded ministry.

<https://pcusa.org/sites/default/files/4-encounter-with-new-neighbors-1999.pdf> (43 pages)

2. Human Rights Update 2003-2004

This report includes five categories of concern brought to the attention of the General Assembly Council (GAC), for the most part, by the partner churches around the world. They are civil, political, economic, social and cultural, and religious. The "Human Rights Update 2003-2004," however, should not be construed by the members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as the definitive statement of all the human rights violations received by the GAC during the course of the year. The 216th General Assembly (2004) encourages the members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to continue to pray and work to end all forms of human rights violations worldwide. The "Human Rights Update 2003-2004" includes an action study guide developed to assist the middle governing bodies, sessions, and individual members to engage and focus on human rights issues.

<https://pcusa.org/sites/default/files/6-human-rights03-04-2004.pdf> (100 pages)

3. Resolution Calling for a Comprehensive Legalization Program for Immigrants Living and Working in the United States with Study Guide

As the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) seeks to increase its diversity and expand its ministries to racial, ethnic, and cultural minorities, we find that increasing numbers of immigrant workers are present in our midst. Our friendship with these neighbors can become a window to a deeper realization of the cruelties and vulnerabilities many immigrants experience in the U.S. The church is called to witness to the reconciliation that Christ brings to the world. It is no cheap covering over of divisions and differences. Instead, reconciliation points to a dynamic unity of richly diverse humankind in which justice is established and each one is treasured as a gift of the Creator. General Assembly policies consistently emphasize that the "confession of Jesus Christ as Lord transforms 'strangers' into neighbors who are welcomed into our communities."

<https://pcusa.org/sites/default/files/1-immigration-resolution-2004.pdf> (24 pages)

I would encourage you to pick one or more of these documents to read and study.

Deacons

Hello All! We've made it to March and we've got Spring to look forward to! Thank you Jesus!

Thanks to you, 142 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: canned corn, canned red kidney beans, chicken noodle soup, tomato soup, rice side dishes, au gratin potatoes, scalloped potatoes, and low sugar cereals. Please bring donations to the table in the memorial room. The end date for this collection is April 13 (Palm Sunday). Thank you for your continuing generosity to help those in need!

Please continue to pray for those in our church family that are in need of our love, care and support.

Parish Life

Birthdays in March

Ray Strayer	3/01	Deb Melse	3/14
Isaiah Hawkins	3/02	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	Nora Edmondson	3/21
Vern Schrock	3/12	Shirley Day	3/22
Steve Ware	3/13	Mary Torrey	3/26

Thank you!

Dear Church Family,

I would like to thank the Deacons and all others for all the many prayers, calls, cards, visits, and meals that I have received after my hospital stay. I appreciate all the thoughtfulness and kindness from you all. You are the best!

With Christian Love,

Mary Lou French

A BIG
Thanks!

Worship & Music

March 2025 Worship Calendar

March 2	Transfiguration of the Lord	~ Communion ~ Rev. Dr. Jim Hegedus preaching
March 5	Ash Wednesday	~ Communion and Imposition of Ashes ~ Identical services at 12:00 pm (Chapel) and 6:00 pm (Dining Room) ~ Lenten Meal follows the 6:00 pm service (donations appreciated)
March 9	First Sunday in Lent	
March 16	Second Sunday in Lent	~ Children's Sermon
March 23	Third Sunday in Lent	
March 30	Fourth Sunday in Lent	~ Two-Cents-a-Meal Hunger Offering ~ Rev. Dr. Jim Hegedus preaching

The Liturgical Arts committee will be **preparing the sanctuary for Holy Week** on Saturday, April 12th at 10:00 am and on Saturday, April 17th at 10:00 am. Volunteers who would like to participate will be welcomed with open arms.

Bridge Builders

Review of "Racism, The Bible and the American Dream" by Elreta Dodds

In the liner notes, the author states that "the purpose of the book is to dispel any misconception of the Bible as a racist book...". In my opinion, it does a poor job of fulfilling this goal, not because the Bible is a racist book (which I do not believe), but because of the often flawed logic employed by the author. For example, although the author acknowledges that the concept of race is not defined or referenced anywhere in the Bible, she states this is proof that the Bible is not a racist Book, and God and Jesus are not racist – this is false logic and proves nothing. She spends the first two thirds of the book giving a history of racism in America and not talking about the Bible at all. When she does address biblical issues, her main point is that, while the Jews were "chosen" (since they were the first to receive the Gospel), they aren't "special" (because Jesus told preached to all people and instructed his disciples to do likewise).

The writing style is very textbook-like and is full of factual errors (e.g. she states that Theodore Roosevelt imprisoned Japanese citizens during World War 2) and many misspellings and improper word usage, making it a difficult read (at least to me). Not recommended.

Monte Shuck

A Personal Message

We have been truly blessed during the past fourteen years as "Friends" of Mason First Presbyterian Church. It was indeed a welcoming and caring congregation, and we thoroughly enjoyed the Church activities in which we participated. Anne was so proud and fulfilled to be a "kitchen angel." We always treasured, and thanked God, for our many friendships within the Church.

Since our relocation to East Lansing at an independent living senior community, and Anne's subsequent passing last year, my participation in church activities has been limited. I do wish to remain a "Friend," and stay on the communication network. I am so grateful for the kind thoughts and good wishes from many in the Church family. First Presbyterian, and its high calling and mission, will forever be in my prayers.

Till we meet again,

Lloyd Fett

Mission Committee

The Mission Committee is once again planning an adult mission trip to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. The trip is through the Re-Member Organization and takes place during Senior Week which is September 13-19, 2025. Thanks to a generous donation, the lodging, meals, and transportation expenses while on the reservation are all being covered, so there is *no cost* to participants from our church this year. The Mission Committee will cover any remaining travel expenses, including hotel rooms, meals, and gas money for the trip there and back.

This will be our third adult mission trip to Pine Ridge. While on the Rez, we will be building outhouses, ramps, and beds for families who need these things. We also may be skirting trailer homes to provide better protection against the winter conditions or working at Feather II to harvest and care for the gardens that provide fresh vegetables for families. The most important things we will be doing are interacting with the Lakota people, learning about their culture, and recognizing how the injustices of the past affect the lives of the Lakota people today.

If you are interested in going on this mission trip, feel free to contact Debbie Markiewicz or any member of the mission committee.



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

Bulletin Submissions are due by 12:00pm every Wednesday. Submissions for *The Cornerstone* are due by 20th day of every month. Please be prompt. Late submissions may not be honored. Our goal is to publish the newsletter prior to the first day of the month.

*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

From The Bridge Builders For
Racial Atonement Task Force:

If you were unable to join us for the viewing of the video "They Even Took The Dirt" and would like to watch it, it is available on YouTube:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o5LXCcEes2c&t=43s>

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

SANCTUARY CHOIR DIRECTOR & BELL CHOIR DIRECTOR -

Deb Melse

OFFICE MANAGER - Jessica Tessman

FINANCIAL SECRETARY - Jess Weber

CHORAL MUSIC ACCOMPANIST - Le Ji ("Claire")

OFFICE ASSISTANT - Nancy Sue MacDonald

SEXTON - Eric VanDyke

ADULT SPIRITUAL GROWTH COORDINATOR -

Michelle Mackey

ELDERS:

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

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

2027 - Travis Archer, Evelyn Tayong, Dan Baker, Steve Sowles, Sally Hughes.

DEACONS:

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

2026 - Ron Dlouhy, Bill Leutscher, Sandy Leutscher, Nancy Sue MacDonald, Laurie McGonigal.

2027 - Donna Archer, Rick Cote, Debbie Johnson, Issie Nielson.

