Mason First Presbyterian Church

The CORNERSTONE

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

October 2021

Give Thanks With a Grateful Heart

Session Synopsis

The Board of Deacons reported new challenges in acquiring family names in need of the holiday baskets. Social services are overwhelmed throughout the pandemic and school social workers have not had the opportunity to work with students until in-person school resumed. The backpack, Thanksgiving basket, and Christmas basket programs are continuing in spite of the challenge.

Pastor Bill addressed the attendance at worship services since the resumption of in-person worship. Overall attendance has averaged about 65 people per week since the resumption of in-person worship in July. In-person attendance has ranged from 29 to 55 while online attendance has ranged from 7 to 22. Zoom attendance is typically higher than Facebook attendance, although it is impossible to track all Facebook viewers. There has been a significant lack of families with young children attending in person and several parents have raised concerns about safety. Session, with a split vote 8-2-2, opted to follow the Ingham County Health Department school guidance of requiring masks in indoor venues, regardless of vaccination status. Meanwhile staff is consulting with experts to address improvement in the quality of livestream services.

The Parish Life Committee opted to not participate in this year's Relay for Life. Church members are encouraged to individually contribute resources and effort to the relay. There will be a September drive-thru church family meal. The family meal for October may also be drive-thru or in-person, yet to be determined. A fall rummage sale is being scheduled in October.

The Personnel Committee conducted an annual evaluation of Choir/Bell Director Deb Melse this month. We are blessed with the talents of Deb in support of the music programs. All expressed concern with overburdening the Choral Accompanist, Hrant, with worship music until a worship musician or organist is hired. The committee submitted an updated Organist position description that Session approved to begin pursuit of a new organist.

The Spiritual Growth Committee announced the start of hybrid youth Sunday School following worship began on September 19th. The committee will be discussing the status of the invested Youth Activities Fund with the Finance Committee for future use or reallocation for other church activities.

The Administration Committee reported completion of flat roof leak repairs. Committee members will now proceed with replacing damaged ceiling tiles. The downstairs refrigerator, upstairs garbage disposal, and a vacuum cleaner have been repaired or replaced and are all functional again. The rust rings on the multi-purpose room floor continues to be addressed.

The Worship and Music Committee expressed concern about the minimal activity of the Liturgical Arts sub-committee. It may be time to refresh the sub-committee manpower.

The Mission Committee continues with a Thursday sack lunch program preparing and delivering 50 sack lunches for Lansing's Advent House, an alternate pandemic safe soup kitchen. The committee is looking at opportunities to support the anticipated influx of refugees to the greater Lansing area. A policy for the use of the Mission Fund established this year remains under consideration.

The Session was impressed with the new e-newsletter on U-Kirk activities.

The Finance Committee reviewed a comfortable surplus balance of the General Fund Budget, noting that pledged giving is almost on target and operational expenses were less than anticipated. The committee also opted to convert low yielding Scholarship CDs into the higher yielding invested Scholarship Fund when the CDs mature. The Scholarship Commission reported $8,000 dispersed to seven 2020 and 2021 scholarship applicants this year. There were no scholarship awards in 2020, those applicants were included in this year's scholarship awards. The Commission has received written notes of Thanks from all this year's recipients. All committees and activities are urged to begin preparing 2022 budget needs for the Finance Committee to consider in November.

Bruce Archer
Clerk of Session

Parish Life

Birthdays in October

Matthew McGonigal	10/04
Nicholas Trout	10/05
Sarah Fay-Koutz	10/06
Chloë Caltrider	10/09
Kaitlyn Caltrider	10/09
Doreen Chapman	10/14
Mary Garland Jackson	10/15
Linda Peterson	10/15
Sam VanDyke	10/17
Hrant Bagrazyan	10/17
Tim Caswell	10/22
Hope McElhone	10/25
Erin McGonigal	10/29
Kate Barber	10/29
Bill Pinches	10/30
Tyler Harkness	10/31

And whatever you do,
in word or deed,
do everything in the name
of the Lord Jesus,
giving thanks
to God the Father
through him.

Colossians 3:17

Deacons' Corner

The Mason CROP Hunger Walk will be on Sunday, October 10 at 2:00 pm. The walk begins and ends at All Saints Lutheran Church (740 W. South Street). There are two routes (1 mile and 2.7 miles). The CROP Walk supports the work of Church World Service to fight hunger in the U.S. and around the world. 25% of the walk proceeds will support the Mason Food Bank and our local Meals on Wheels. We hope that many of you will choose to walk or donate to someone you know who is walking as we have done in the past. Our young people will be walking as a group. But life is still different due to Covid, and our end goal is to support CROP, so feel free to send checks or money to the church with CWS-CROP as the designation. On October 11th from 11:00 AM to 7:00 PM the Mason A & W will be donating part of the proceeds of their daily special meal to CWS Crop Walk. Your meal can be eaten inside the restaurant or you can drive through and take it home.

In September, the Deacons provided 6 backpacks for school students through our annual back to school project, and we are very thankful for everyone who helped to donate supplies; we could not have done this without you!

One of the ways that we serve our congregation is by sending meals to our members who are sick or recovering, have lost a loved one, or are in other similar situations. If you would like to volunteer to deliver meals to members of our church family, please contact Sandy Diehl.

We are still collecting donations for our coat drive on October 23rd. Coats of all sizes are appreciated.

Thank you for all the ways you have supported our various projects!

Colin Pinches ~ Board of Deacons

Spiritual Growth

SPIRITUAL GROWTH OCTOBER 2021

YOUTH PROGRAMS

DATES!!!!

Crop Walk	October 10th
Registration forms due for Urban Plunge	October 17th
Possible Fall Clean-up day at Camp Greenwood	October 23rd
Urban Plunge 6th-12th grade mission trip	November 6th

FOR THE WELLBEING OF ALL THE CHILDREN WITHIN OUR CHURCH,
THE FOLLOWING SAFETY MEASURES HAVE BEEN PUT INTO PLACE:

Parents should bring children infants – 4th grade to the upstairs education wing prior to the start of the worship service. Youth in middle/high school should go to the downstairs youth room prior to worship. The best door for the entrance of youth is the "handicapped accessible door" on the west side of the church. Masks are required while inside the church for children 2-years and older.

THE FOLLOWING ADJUSTMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE IN THE YOUTH EDUCATION PROGRAM:

Nursery – (infants to 2 years old) – (offered during Sunday worship service 9:45am-11:30am in the upstairs education wing) The nursery is open and we are lucky to have Lucy Simons helping with nursery aged children. Youth of all ages seem to be VERY happy to play once again in our fun nursery!

Kid's Church – The time that was once Kid's Church during the worship service is now in-person Sunday school time for youth of all ages.

Pre-Kindergarten – 4th grade Sunday School - Lori Filka will be teaching this age group. For the 2nd year we will be using the Cokesbury curriculum "Celebrate Wonder". The curriculum is designed for a "one room schoolhouse." The topic is the same, but the lessons are age-appropriate. In the weeks leading up to Advent the youth will be studying Joseph (we made an awesome new coat!), and Moses.

Almost all parents have requested in-person Sunday school. Although, if needed this particular curriculum can transfer into an on-line program without difficulty.

Middle and High School Sunday School- Sarah Fay-Koutz will be teaching this age group, Colin Pinches will be assisting and teaching by himself 1 Sunday per month.

The older youth will be using the lessons put into place by PC(USA) entitled the "Matthew 25 vision," which encourages their faith communities to work toward *building congregational vitality *dismantling structural racism and *eradicating systemic poverty. These seem like big concepts for a youth group – but this is a large group of students that actually THINKS BIG! The introduction says this study will encourage youth to proclaim "from the rooftops" the call of Jesus to love, justice and mercy in our world. Half of the time during this class is devoted to mission. We have joined forces with the Mission Committee to be aware of mission opportunities. They would welcome ideas that you might have too. To date, they are within a few hundred dollars of meeting their goal of $1,000 that will be matched by an anonymous donor to present $2,000 to Camp Greenwood. A BIG THANK-YOU TO THE WOMAN'S ASSOCIATION that doubled the amount of money they made at Down Home Days selling handmade crafts and snacks. And to everyone within the church that has purchased these items.

Wonderful Wednesday! – (ages K – 12th grade) – (youth come after school)

WELCOME BACK TO WONDERFUL WEDNESDAY! We will be having our midweek program outside for as long as possible. Teens arrive around 3:00pm, and elementary students around 4:00pm. Please let Lori Filka know if you need assistance with transportation. A thank-you to Michelle Mackey and Colin Pinches for being the adult present while "the rounds" are made to pick-up elementary youth. Since our older and younger youth do not get a chance to interact during a Kid's Church or Sunday school, they appreciate the opportunity to be together once a week. Our "one room schoolhouse" curriculum includes lots of extra activities and games that are a good fit for a midweek program. Plus, we have Storytime with Pastor Bill every Wednesday at 5:00pm.

**Be sure to fill out a new Parental Release Form for 2021/22.

ADULT PROGRAMS

DATES!!!

Spiritual Growth Meeting	**October 10th**
CROP Walk	**October 10th**

Wednesday Prayer Service – The noon Wednesday prayer service has started again. This is a brief (15-20 minutes) gathering in the chapel led by Michelle Mackey. It is a meaningful time together where we pray for and with one another. We look forward to seeing you on Wednesdays at noon!

A Thank-you to Michelle Mackey who has included so many of her inspirational devotionals to Pastor Bill's daily *Living Stones* during our time apart and who will continue including them through the Fall. Michelle was asked to contribute to a new Devotional Book for purchase on Amazon entitled "Faithful: Recalling the Goodness of the Lord." It's edited by Shante Grosset and Sammy Porter. Congratulations Michelle!

Adult Bible Study- Be on the lookout for a new study led by Michelle entitled "Jesus In Me" by Ann Graham Lotz. This weekly study will focus on "Experiencing the Holy Spirit as a Constant Companion." More details TBA.

Finance

It is time for us to prayerfully plan giving commitments to our church for the 2022 fiscal year. You should be receiving pledge cards soon.

As you are determining your pledge amount, we ask that you consider a few things. The church community belongs to each of us; therefore, it is our responsibility to ensure that the church is here for us and others now and into the future. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the importance of our church. If we did not have this strong community of faith, we may not have been able to continue our worship and music programs, our educational programs, and our mission work. Your commitment to your pledge helped us in the past year and half. Your pledge for the 2022 fiscal year will help us to continue this good work.

Your Session is committed to a balanced budget and will not prepare next year's budget without knowing what the congregation has pledged. This helps us develop a much more accurate picture for the 2022 budget. **We ask that you return your pledge information by Commitment Sunday, October 31st.**

We are tremendously grateful for your faithful support to God's ongoing mission in this church.

Financial Report through August 2021

General Fund Balance 2021	
Income through August	$194,486.30
Expenses through August	$180,433.82
Ending Balance (8/31/21)	$ 14,052.48

General Fund Balance 8/31/21	$ 14,052.48
Revolving Accounts Balance	124,822.64
Investments from 2nd quarter 2021	523,952.07
Net Financial Position (8/31/21)	$ 662,827.19

Anticipated Pledged Giving through August	$176,321
Pledged Giving **Received** through August	$175,366

Thank you for your faithful support!

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 day of every month. ***Please be prompt. Late submissions may not be honored.***

The CORNERSTONE

Mason First Presbyterian Church
MINISTERS - All Members
PASTOR - Rev. Bill Pinches
PASTOR EMERITUS - Rev. Charlie Herrick
SPIRITUAL GROWTH DIRECTOR - Lori Filka
SANCTUARY CHOIR DIRECTOR & BELL CHOIR DIRECTOR - Deb Melse
OFFICE MANAGER - Sheren Wright
CHORAL ACCOMPANIST & PIANIST- Hrant Bagrazyan
ADULT SPIRITUAL GROWTH COORDINATOR - Michelle Mackey

ELDERS:
2021 - Doreen Chapman, Lucinda Davenport, Ginnie Gibson, Tonya Seely
2022 - Jenny Bond, Ed Clarke, Debbie Shellenbarger, Gladys Welker
2023 - Bruce Archer, Tim Hammond, Mary Ozee, Steve Sowles.
Clerk: Bruce Archer

DEACONS:
2021 - Ann Butler, Laurie McGonigal, Colin Pinches, Peg Shaub.
2022 - Marge Clarke, Sandy Diehl, Linda Myall, Mari Nicol.
2023 - Lisa Castle, Jay Harkness, Vern Schrock.