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

January and February 2022

Epiphany of the Lord

"Epiphany" means manifestation or revelation. At the Epiphany of the Lord we celebrate the manifestation of God's saving purpose to all the nations of the world. Just as the magi came from a distant land to worship the Christ child, God's covenant of grace is extended to all people who believe the good news of Jesus Christ. The symbolism of light is important—not only because of the star that guided the magi, but as it suggests the bright dawning of God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ. As Christians, we are called to bear Christ's light in the world.

Traditionally, the Epiphany of the Lord is celebrated on January 6, the conclusion of the season of Christmas; Epiphany may also be observed on the previous Sunday.

An old Epiphany tradition involves using chalk to write the letters CMB and the numbers of the current year, separated by crosses (+), over the doors of congregations and Christian homes: 20 + C + M + B + 22 or CMB + 2022. The letters CMB are said to stand for the names of the magi (Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar) or the Latin phrase *Christus mansionem benedicat* (Christ bless this house). Before or after chalking the doors, the following or a similar prayer may be said:

> God of doors and homes,
> bless this home this year and every year.
> Bless all who come and go through this door,
> both those who live here and those who visit.
> May all who enter through this door
> come in peace and bring joy.
> May all who come to this door
> find welcome and love.
> May the love and joy in this home overflow
> and spread into the community and the world.
> And may Jesus the Christ watch over us all. Amen.

Baptism of the Lord

At the beginning of his public ministry, Jesus presents himself to John to be baptized in the Jordan. This is a Trinitarian event: as Jesus emerges from the water, the Holy Spirit descends from heaven as a dove, and we hear a voice naming Jesus as God's beloved Son. In ancient Christian tradition, the Baptism of the Lord is closely connected with the Epiphany as both manifestations of God's saving purpose through Jesus Christ; accordingly, these festivals are adjacent to one another in the Christian calendar. The Baptism of the Lord also foreshadows the season of Lent, as the Gospels tell us that Jesus was driven into the wilderness for forty days after his own baptism.

At this festival of the Christian year, we not only remember Jesus' baptism, but also give thanks for the baptism we share with Christ. Therefore, this Sunday is an appropriate time to celebrate the Sacrament of Baptism or for the reaffirmation of the baptismal covenant.

— from the *Book of Common Worship* (2018)

Session Synopsis

Session welcomed Elder-Elects Jerry Ambrose and Loren Harkness to the meeting. They will be joined by Elders Tonya Seely and Lucinda Davenport continuing a second term to make up the Class of 2024. All four will be installed and Loren will be ordained during the January 16th worship service.

All committee and group leaders were reminded to submit annual reports of the 2021 group activities to the office NO LATER THAN January 21st. The Annual Report for 2021 will be available for study and review by February 20th, prior to the Annual Congregational Meeting on February 27th following worship.

The Deacons reported that all efforts are focused on the preparation and delivery of Christmas baskets to support six families, some veterans, some seniors, and an adult group home. BSA Troop 763 supported the effort with proceeds from a record sale of 170 wreaths to provide 12 large hams and 6 small hams for the baskets.

Pastor Bill provided an update of church members and friends dealing with COVID. With so many children now being vaccinated, consideration is being given to returning the children to the beginning of worship services, probably beginning with the January 9th service. Safety considerations were discussed for choir soloists and possible resumption of the Sweetheart Luncheon. A soloist remaining in the Chancel area may perform without a mask, much like the liturgist. A possible Sweetheart Luncheon will be discussed further by the Parish Life Committee.

Session is looking forward to ending 2021 with a surplus in the General Fund. The congregational meeting minutes of November were corrected to reflect Vern Schrock was elected to the Nominating Committee and not Mary Schrock.

The Mission Committee welcomes those that wish to help prepare sack lunches on Thursdays for Advent House. The count has increased from 50 to 65 sack lunches.

U-Kirk recorded a worship service for use by area supporting congregations on December 26. The pre-recorded service will be viewed on livestream in lieu of the December 26th worship service. As part of their book project, a number of books were given by U-Kirk to our Deacons, for inclusion in the Christmas baskets.

Session approved the 2022 General Fund Budget of $323,749, supported by $272,219 of pledged income, other income sources, and up to $19,800 from reserve sources. A new staff position is being created to relieve Pastor Bill of many of the tech matters that he has been tending to. A large cost-of-living adjustment is being given to all employees in light of the current economic situation. The 2022 budget represents a fairly substantial increase above the 2021 budget, which totaled $296,232.

The Parish Life Committee has begun a substantial review of the Active and Associate member rolls. The committee has scheduled January 4th to take down the greens and redecorate the sanctuary appropriately for the season.

The Security Team is on duty during worship services. We are working to increase coverage and review our policy.

The Personnel Committee will begin an annual review of child abuse and harassment policies this month.

The church staff and various committees found joy and appreciated the holiday crafts and cards sent by the church youth, who also decorated the Memorial Room Christmas tree. The youth are able and willing to assist in rearranging tables and chairs, pick-up, clean-up and other behind the scenes support of church activities.

The Administration Committee is seeking information on incidences of a possible critter scurrying about within the walls, especially in the area of the chapel.

The Worship Committee is busily preparing for the Christmas Eve service.

Session set the installation and ordination of Elders and Deacons to take place during worship on January 16th.

The meeting closed by expressing gratitude and appreciation for 6 continuous years of serving on Session by Elder Ginnie Gibson. Ginnie continues her service on the Finance Committee.

Bruce F Archer
Clerk of Session

Planning Ahead

In the event of a Covid surge…

Some people have been asking what our plan will be if there is another huge Covid surge. Our plan is to keep offering in-person worship, with livestream worship available on Facebook, YouTube, and Zoom. If things get bad, we may need to cancel the choir on some Sundays; if things get really bad, there may only be a handful of people in the sanctuary; but we are just going to try to keep going. If our staff musicians get sick, we might be singing *a capella*! And if Bill gets sick, we will do the best we can to provide some kind of worship service. We would kindly ask and urge you to *stay home if you are not feeling well* or are concerned that you may be carrying the virus. Updates will be in *Living Stones* as needed.

Worship in January and February

January 2
The Second Sunday of Christmas
Charlie will be leading worship

January 9
Baptism of the Lord
Communion

January 16
2nd Sunday after Epiphany
Ordination and Installation of Officers

January 23
3rd Sunday after Epiphany

January 30
4th Sunday after Epiphany
Two-Cents-a-Meal Collection

February 6
5th Sunday after Epiphany
Communion
Scout Sunday
(celebrating the 50th anniversary of the chartering of Scout Troup 763, which we sponsor)

February 13
6th Sunday after Epiphany

February 20
7th Sunday after Epiphany

February 27
Transfiguration of the Lord
Two-Cents-a-Meal Collection
Annual Meeting following worship

Parish Life

Birthdays in January

Ann Butler	1/01
Rod Guy	1/05
Bill Friend	1/08
Joann Caltrider	1/14
Sandy Diehl	1/15
Dale Miihlbach	1/17
Parker Seely	1/19
Glenn Cruickshank	1/19
Sloane St. George	1/27
Timmy Pinches	1/28
Linda Myall	1/29

Birthdays in February

Will Ozee	2/01
Elise Filka	2/02
Debbie Shellenbarger	2/03
Barbara Gibson	2/04
Greg Lang	2/04
Jill Castle	2/10
Cody Cameron	2/11
Kayleigh Cameron	2/11
Linda Guy	2/11
Tom Seely	2/12
Kelli Green	2/19
Issie Nielsen	2/21
David Torrey, Sr.	2/23

Finance

Financial Report through November 2021

General Fund Balance 2021	
Income through November	$257,951.74
Expenses through November	249,750.70
Ending Balance (11/30/21)	$ 8,201.04

General Fund Balance 11/30/21	$ 8,201.04
Revolving Accounts Balance	118,001.98
Investments from 3rd quarter 2021	519,924.42
Net Financial Position (11/30/21)	$ 646,127.44

Anticipated Pledged Giving through November	$242,442
Pledged Giving **Received** through November	243,589

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. 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
PASTOR EMERITUS - Rev. Charlie Herrick
SPIRITUAL GROWTH DIRECTOR - Lori Filka
OFFICE MANAGER - Sheren Wright
SANCTUARY CHOIR DIRECTOR & BELL CHOIR DIRECTOR - Deb Melse
CHORAL ACCOMPANIST & PIANIST- Hrant Bagrazyan
ADULT SPIRITUAL GROWTH COORDINATOR - Michelle Mackey

ELDERS:
2021 - Lucinda Davenport, Ginnie Gibson, Tonya Seely
2022 - Jenny Bond, Ed Clarke, Debbie Shellenbarger, Gladys Welker
2023 - Bruce Archer, Tim Hammond, Mary Ozee, Steve Sowles.
Elders-Elect - Jerry Ambrose, Lucinda Davenport, Loren Harkness, Tonya Seely.
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.
Deacons-Elect - Donna Hujsak, Issie Nielsen, Camille Subject.

Weather-Related Cancellation of Church Worship Services and/or Other Activities

If local authorities declare a state of emergency (such as an ice storm, blizzard or extreme freezing temperatures), then worship service, committee meetings, after-school activities and/or other church events will be cancelled for the duration of the emergency.

If Mason Public Schools are closed on Wednesday, then youth activties and the fellowship dinner, if scheduled, will be cancelled.

Other regularly scheduled activities (choir rehearsal, committee meetings, etc.) not affected by school closures will proceed as planned, *unless participants are notified otherwise*.

Whenever safe travel is questionable due to weather or road conditions, use your best judgment. Your personal safety is key, regardless of the church activities calendar.