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

November 2022

The Calling of the Church (Part 1)

The Church Is the Body of Christ

The Church is the body of Christ. Christ gives to the Church all the gifts necessary to be his body. The Church strives to demonstrate these gifts in its life as a community in the world (1 Cor. 12:27–28):

The Church is to be a community of faith, entrusting itself to God alone, even at the risk of losing its life.

The Church is to be a community of hope, rejoicing in the sure and certain knowledge that, in Christ, God is making a new creation. This new creation is a new beginning for human life and for all things. The Church lives in the present on the strength of that promised new creation.

The Church is to be a community of love, where sin is forgiven, reconciliation is accomplished, and the dividing walls of hostility are torn down.

The Church is to be a community of witness, pointing beyond itself through word and work to the good news of God's transforming grace in Christ Jesus its Lord.

— from The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), "The Foundations of Presbyterian Polity"

Worship & Music

November 2022 Worship Calendar

November 6	**All Saints' Day ~** Remembrance Sunday ~ Communion ~ Urban Plunge Youth will be assisting with worship leadership
November 13	**23rd Sunday after Pentecost**
November 20	**Christ the King Sunday** Volunteer Appreciation ~ Children's Message Congregational Meeting following worship
November 27	**Advent I** Two Cents a Meal Offering

News from the Wider Church

This past summer, our denomination's national General Assembly adopted a statement offering an apology to African Americans for the sin of slavery and its legacy. This statement has been commended to the rest of the church for further study and consideration. It was formally adopted by our regional body, the Presbytery of Lake Michigan, at its September meeting. African American members of the Presbytery stood up front to receive the words of this statement as the white Christians in the gathering verbally read the statement aloud. After the reading, an African American pastor and an African American elder offered sincere words of gratitude and appreciation. Pastor Bill was present for the reading and found it an incredibly moving experience. The statement is printed here for your reflection.

A LITANY OF REPENTANCE

As white Christians we repent of our complicity in the belief in white supremacy: the belief that people of European descent are superior in intelligence, skills, imagination, and perseverance. We acknowledge that this belief in white supremacy has been the foundation of, and an excuse for, atrocities against people of African descent in the United States and in the world. We repent of our failure to recognize and take responsibility for the legacy of slavery.

We repent of the injustice, pain, humiliation, and suffering imposed on African Americans by our ancestors and ourselves through actions and inaction. We repent of our complicity in failing to act in mutual loving relationship.
We repent of closing our eyes to the degradation and injustice forced upon African Americans who were enslaved, segregated, terrorized, and imprisoned.

We repent of covering our ears to the crying of families torn apart, to the sound of human flesh being struck, while songs of freedom and heavenly grace flow from our lips.

We repent that we have failed as an institution and as individuals to use our voices to abhor and end lynching, segregation, and racial profiling. We regret our generations of silence on these issues so that we could maintain a comfortable life in our churches, homes, and communities.

We repent of shutting our hearts to the experiences of fellow humans whose stories of pain, suffering, hardship, struggle, love, and joy mirror our own life journeys, yet are deprived of privilege and marred by racism. We have turned our backs and walked away pretending not to see, yet we saw, pretending not to know, yet we knew, and convincing ourselves that we were not complicit, yet we are.

We now know that we as white Christians have benefitted directly and indirectly from these injustices. We name ourselves as complicit and repent.

Finally, we repent of our violent actions to suppress Black agency. African Americans, since the time of slavery, have actively pursued their freedom … built this country … laid foundational structures … and demonstrated their capacity to fully participate in the construction of this American society in spite of white supremacy.

As repentance means turning and going the other way, with Christ's help we seek to do so. At the same time, we commit ourselves to walking with people of African descent toward the goal of healing, reconciliation, and eliminating racism as we seek to dismantle white privilege.

Session Synopsis

Session acknowledged correspondence from the Mason Community Services appealing for the collection of various gift cards, snacks, and hygienic items to make up a holiday bag for the homeless. The bags are to be dispatched on November 13th at the annual Methodist Church event, Night of a 1,000 Blessings. The request is being forwarded to the Board of Deacons. A letter from a member was discussed and a letter in response is to be prepared and dispatched to the member. Other correspondence announced the installation of Rev. Chrissy Westbury as Associate Presbyter of the Presbytery of Lake Michigan.

Pastor Bill reviewed his duties and responsibilities throughout his recent medical leave. The review included referencing the Book of Order, the authoritative guideline of the PCUSA. The Book of Order states Elders and Deacons, as ordained members of the church, share in the duties and responsibilities of mandatory reporting of misconduct and abuse to the appropriate church and civil authorities. Pastor Bill also reported receipt of approval by the Presbyterian medical insurer that the medical leave expenses qualified for temporary disability coverage and appropriate reimbursement. The Pastor also discussed the intricacies of publishing copyright information required with the public airing of music and litanies for livestream services.

The report from the September meeting of Presbytery included the proposed 2023 budget to be approved at the December meeting and the formal PCUSA apology to African-Americans that was first presented at the 225th General Assembly this summer.

The Finance Committee reported progress on the ongoing pledge campaign and announced the timeline for Session Committee budget requests. The 2023 General Fund Budget will be initially presented at the November meeting of Session with final Session approval at the December meeting to include the congregation's approved Pastor's 2023 Terms of Call of the scheduled November 20th Congregational meeting. Session also approved the Finance Committee's recommendation to make available $500 of Contingency Reserves to support the request of the Board of Deacons for Christmas baskets this year in lieu of inflated food costs.

The Nominating Committee reported good progress in seeking Session Elder nominees. They are proceeding to fill the slate of nominees for the Board of Deacons and next year's Nominating Committee all to be presented for election at the November 20th Congregational meeting.

The Parish Life Committee is concerned with the reduction by illness and death of kitchen angels, especially with an upcoming funeral dinner, resumption of Wednesday night activities, and pie sales.

The Personnel Committee is developing criteria for the self-evaluation of each church employee. The Personnel and Administration Committees will also be developing a position description to re-establish the duties and responsibilities of a Sexton position.

The Spiritual Growth Committee is preparing to host the annual Presbytery Youth Urban Plunge November 4-6th. Hopefully, new 9-Square game equipment will be in place for time between projects. Session is interested in various options to transporting youth to Wednesday activities from schools to relieve this burden from Spiritual Growth staff.

The Administration Committee has accepted the proposal of Z-Solutions to upgrade the church communication systems to be integrated the new wi-fi systems required for livestream. The proposal offers significant monthly savings from the current combined phone and internet services of ATT and Verizon. Session will continue discussion of a City of Mason proposal of area public facilities, to include churches, to become available for relief shelters in the event announced adverse conditions during City public events. The new Mason Community Services organization will also have a key role in coordinating which facilities to be opened.

The Worship & Music Committee is completing preparations for the upcoming Remembrance Service with volunteer readers and bell ringer. New worship materials are being considered to include votive candles, black pew Bibles and red hymnals. Special funding may be requested. The committee continues an ongoing review of worship protocols to include liturgists assisting with the collection of the offering and educating the congregation that the service officially ends after the Pastor's blessing and choral response. The musical postlude, by definition, follows the conclusion of the service.

The Mission Committee has witnessed very rewarding experiences with the social interactions of the Friends group that now meets in the church dining room on the 2nd Tuesday of the month from 3:30-5:30 PM.

Bruce F Archer
Clerk of Session

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

There will be a ***congregational meeting following worship on Sunday, November 20,*** *for the purpose of electing Elders and Deacons for 2023-2025, electing Nominating Committee members for 2023, and approving the pastor's terms of call for 2023.*
More details will follow as the meeting draws nearer.

Fall Clean-up Day Saturday, November 5 - 8:30AM

Finance

Financial Report through September 2022	
General Fund Balance January 1, 2022	0
Income through September	$261.716
Expenses through September	232,625
Ending Balance (9/30/22)	$ 29,091

General Fund Balance 9/30/22	$ 29,091
Revolving Accounts Balance	43,068
Reserve Accounts	93,486
Investments as of 9/30/22	425,249
Net Financial Position (9/30/22)	$ 590,894

Anticipated pledged income through September
$204,164
Actual pledged income through September
$204,428

Please return your 2023 Pledge Card as soon as possible.

Thank you for your faithful support!

Deacons

The annual Crop Walk was a great success with 39 walkers! Your generous donations allowed for approximately $977 to be given to the Mason Area Food Bank and that same amount given to Mason Meals on Wheels. Online donations alone totaled $3408.29! Thanks to all who walked or made a donation!

The Give A Kid A Coat Drive was October 22. Our church collected and donated nearly 200 items and made a $300 donation towards the purchase of new coats. Thank you for your generosity and making the drive a great success!

It is time to start thinking about our biggest project of the year-filling Christmas baskets with food, gifts, and clothing for local families. Please consider bringing food donations for our Christmas Basket project, especially canned vegetables, canned fruits, boxed stuffing, instant potatoes and rice, gravy, etc. any time. Monetary donations are also much appreciated.

Spiritual Growth

Youth Sunday School

Sunday school for youth of all ages will be held during the worship service from 10:20am-11:00am. Youth are dismissed from the sanctuary after the Lord's Prayer. They enjoy a light snack together in the education room and then start Sunday school according to their age group:

Pre-K through 5th grade- This class is taught by Lori Filka with assistance from Aimee Cruickshank and Lucy Simons. Following Cokesbury's "*Celebrate Wonder-all ages"* we have been studying both Samuel and David to start the school year. Through play, Bible exploration and faith conversations the goal of Celebrate Wonder is to deepen faith and grown in spiritual identity as children of God.

Middle and High School- This class is taught by Sarah Fay-Koutz, who reports the large group is enjoying their new curriculum. The Cokesbury curriculum being utilized is entitled "*Groove"* and the current topic is "Dilemmas." These studies invite tweens and teens to "learn the essentials of their faith, own their story and engage the world in serving Jesus."

Middle & High School Fellowship

*Take the time to check-out the downstairs youth room. Our youth group, supervised by Sarah Koutz, painted an amazing mural on the north wall! They also applied a fresh coat of paint to the swing set on the church's playground.

Urban Plunge

This Presbytery-wide mission event will take place at our church November 4th – 6th. Youth from many different churches will be staying the weekend in our church and visiting several local mission sites around the Mason/Lansing area. The youth attending will assist at 5 different mission sites in the Mason/Lansing area. They will also be assisting with several onsite mission projects. Look for the youth during the worship service on Sunday, October 6th.

Wonderful Wednesday!

Our mid-week program for youth of all ages has started and is well attended. This weekly afterschool event allows our youth to gather, socialize and learn in a casual setting. A biblical/spiritual lesson is taught each week through games, play, food, crafts, socializing and a special lesson from Pastor Bill! The Wednesday night church family dinner is the perfect way to end our Wonderful Wednesday!

Adult After-Worship Discussion Group

Please join us for an Adult Discussion Time after worship from 11:20am-12:00pm in the library. Michelle leads a 5-week video series based on the book *Friend of Sinners: why Jesus cares more about relationship than perfection* by Rich Wilkerson Jr. No preparation is needed and no homework is required to attend this enriching series. Bring your coffee and snacks to the library for a lively discussion!

Tuesday Afternoon Discussion Group

A discussion group on Tuesday afternoons using the book *Jesus In Me* by Anne Graham Lotz is being scheduled. This wonderful study focuses on the power of the Holy Spirit. Please let Michelle know if you are interested in attending.

Noon Prayer Service in the Chapel

Join us for a 20-minute, Spirit-filled guided prayer session each week in the downstairs chapel.

Parish Life

Thanksgiving Pies

$15.00 per pie donation

All proceeds benefit the First Presbyterian Church's Women's Association projects.

You may pick up your pies on 11/21 & 22, between 1 & 4 PM at the church .

Return form to the church office no later than Sunday, November 20, 2022

2022 Thanksgiving Pies

Choices	Quantity
Apple - Frozen	
Cherry - Frozen	
Mixed Berry - Frozen	
Pecan - Baked	
Pumpkin - Baked	
Total Ordered	

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Total $_____ Paid? ○ Yes ○ No

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

John Zipp	11/01	Mari Nicol	11/19
Marty Subject	11/09	Laurie McGonigal	11/21
Suzanne Caltrider	11/10	Bob Caltrider	11/23
Ginnie Gibson	11/12	Lloyd Fett	11/26
Kyle McGonigal	11/15	Bonnie Friend	11/29
Jason Blonshine	11/16	Steve Sowles	11/29

Mission

The Presbyterian Church of Lansing and the Justice League of Greater Lansing welcomed one of the top leaders of our denomination at the downtown Lansing church for a sermon and an informative talk on Sunday, Oct. 16. Rev. Jimmie Hawkins is with the PCUSA Office of Public Witness, in Wash. DC. He is authorized to speak for the church, especially when we are trying to affect policy decisions at the national or international level (Congress, UN). "Roll Call on the Hill" provides related updates from Washington. You can also go to 1) the officeofpublicwitness@blogspot.com for Rev. Hawkins' thoughts 2) or see pcusa.org/washington, plus 3) write to the leader at jimmie.hawkins@pcusa.org.

Pastor Hawkins also spoke briefly about his succinct yet wide-ranging history of African American events in history, *Unbroken and Unbowed*.

You may be aware of the Mason Leaders coalition which meets monthly to share what gaps and opportunities exist among the needy of our area. (It meets at the Methodist Church or the Mason Community Church.) Rex Hauser attends and networks with leaders of the Food Bank, Mason Community Services, churches and civic organizations.

1) Methodists and Presbyterians treasure many old ties between us. On Nov. 13, the former are sponsoring a 5:30PM Spaghetti Dinner to help fund the Night of 1,000 Blessings. Call the Methodist venue at 676-9449 to reserve, or just show up.

2) The Lutherans led our last Crop Walk a few weeks ago, with the help of our own church and St. James, where $730.00 was raised to help people stay warm through the cold months. The new Lutheran pastor, Gerald Ferguson, attended and introduced himself.

3) Marina Poroshin of CACS is going to be honored at a Dec. 2 (Friday evening) retirement party, so please tell friends and family if you, too, are interested. Marina has been a woman of constant service to the homeless and elderly in need. It will be held at our church dining room.

4) Does anyone want to take part in a holiday project benefiting kids? 1200 postcards go out to those who include their addresses in notes to Santa (dropped at the Santa Mailbox) on the square). Call Doug Klein (517-775-8601) if you can help with this.

5) Looking to volunteer where you will be much appreciated? Try masoncommunityservices.org and click the tab titled 'volunteers.' You can do as much or as little as you choose, ideal for busy folks or retired folks. Also, MCS (whom our Mission Committee helped to pay off their service van) will be having a Sat. Nov. 5 painting project (see Rex if you can scrape and/or paint). Forty families have been helped by MCS since May--- they sponsor a diaper bank, and drive people to medical appointments, for example.

6) Do you know of people needing funds to keep their homes--- help with taxes, mortgages, and utilities? The CAHP at 332-4663 can help qualifying individuals or families.

7) Remember from these examples that many problems can be solved by people working together. We may be grateful to live in a society which (in the main) follows the gospel of uplift and aid to the unfortunate. "There but for fortune go you or I," as the saying goes.

Rex Hauser

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 & ORGANIST - Feng Kang
ADULT SPIRITUAL GROWTH COORDINATOR - Michelle Mackey

ELDERS:
2022 - Jenny Bond, Ed Clarke, Debbie Shellenbarger, Gladys Welker
2023 - Bruce Archer, Tim Hammond, Mary Ozee, Steve Sowles.
2023 - Jerry Ambrose, Lucinda Davenport, Loren Harkness, Tonya Seely.
Clerk: Bruce Archer

DEACONS:
2022 - Marge Clarke, Sandy Diehl, Linda Myall, Mari Nicol.
2023 - Lisa Castle, Jay Harkness, Vern Schrock, Steve VanDyke.
2024 - Donna Hujsak, Issie Nielsen, Camille Subject.

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Many Hands make light work!