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

December 2022

The Calling of the Church (Part 2)

The Marks of the Church

With all Christians of the Church catholic, we affirm that the Church is "one holy catholic and apostolic."

The Unity of the Church

Unity is God's gift to the Church in Jesus Christ. Just as God is one God and Jesus Christ is our one Savior, so the Church is one because it belongs to its one Lord, Jesus Christ.

The Church seeks to include all people and is never content to enjoy the benefits of Christian community for itself alone. There is one Church, for there is one Spirit, one hope, "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all" (Eph. 4:5–6).

Because in Christ the Church is one, it strives to be one. To be one with Christ is to be joined with all those whom Christ calls into relationship with him. To be thus joined with one another is to become priests for one another, praying for the world and for one another and sharing the various gifts God has given to each Christian for the benefit of the whole community. Division into different denominations obscures but does not destroy unity in Christ. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), affirming its historical continuity with the whole Church of Jesus Christ, is committed to the reduction of that obscurity, and is willing to seek and to deepen communion with all other churches within the one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

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

Worship & Music

December 2022 Worship Calendar

December 4	**Advent II ~** Communion ~ Advent Candles: Sally Hughes and Darlene Martin
December 11	**Advent III ~** Guest pianist: Yihui Chen (Feng is going home to Taiwan for several weeks) ~ Advent Candles: Sandy & Bill Leutscher
December 18	**Advent IV ~** Guest pianist: Yihui Chen ~ Christmas Pageant and special Christmas anthems ~ Advent Candles: Nancy MacDonald and Vicki Drown
December 24	**Christmas Eve –6:30 pm** ~ Guest pianist: Yihui Chen
December 25	**Christmas ~ Nativity of the Lord** ~ Guest organist: Caitlyn Brown ~ 2 Cents a Meal Offering

Sunday, December 18

There will be a potluck dinner following worship.
Meat and beverages will be furnished.

Following dinner at 3PM
The Sanctuary and Bell Choirs will present a Christmas Concert in the Sanctuary. Refreshments will follow and you'll have an opportunity to contribute to the Mason Food Bank.

New Bibles and Hymnals

We will soon be purchasing new Bibles and hymnals for the pews, and are inviting members and friends of the congregation to donate a Bible or hymnal in memory of a loved one.

The Bible will be the brand-new Updated Edition of the New Revised Standard Version, which is what Pastor Bill has been using from the pulpit since it was released online about a year ago. The text of the pew Bible will match what is read from the pulpit and shown on the screens. The NRSVue (as it is called) is the long-awaited official revision of the New Revised Standard Version, which was first published in 1989.

The hymnal will be the *Glory to God* hymnal that was published by our denomination in 2013. Our choir has been using this hymnal for supplementary music for several years, and most other Presbyterian churches have already made the switch in the pews. It contains over 850 hymns and service music, many of which are old favorites and some of which are new. Generally speaking it is good practice to update the hymnals in the pews about once a generation, as new music is being written all the time. Some of that new music will turn out to be popular and long-lasting; every single hymn that you know and love was, at some point, a brand new hymn that was unfamiliar to people in the pews!

The new pew Bibles will replace the Common English Bible that is currently in the pews. The new hymnal, on the other hand, will be added to the pews, without removing *The Worshiping Church* for the time being. We will leave both hymnals in the pews for a while (maybe about a year?) while we get used to using the new hymnal. The new pew Bibles will be black, and the new hymnals will be purple.

We are inviting members and friends of the congregation to participate in this effort by donating one or more pew Bibles or hymnals to the church in memory of a loved one. Labels will be placed inside the front cover of the Bibles and hymnals, like a bookplate. This could make a nice Christmas gift to the church! The Bibles cost $17.50 and the hymnals cost $20.00. Use the form below, and return it to the office before Christmas. Add additional forms as needed.

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Session Synopsis

Session positively responded to correspondence from Mason Community Services (MCS). MCS is coordinating efforts for the City of Mason for an emergency shelter plan during declared times of extreme heat, severe weather, and extensive power outages. During such declared emergencies point of contact personnel of available shelters, that may include the church, will be contacted to make the shelter available to the public during the immediate duration of the emergency. The plan involves participation of the City area churches and other large civic facilities.

The Board of Deacons is now focusing efforts to gather food and gift items for Christmas baskets. The effort is being supported by another record sale of 180 wreaths of BSA Troop 763. First use of the sale proceeds provides for the ham or turkeys for the Deacon's Christmas Basket Project.

Pastor Bill suggested Session consider additional office staff for relief from administrative tasks of the Pastor and Office Manager. The pandemic witnessed the consolidation of less prevalent duties that have since become more time consuming. An Administrative Support position and Parish Associate position were suggested. In response to Presbytery's stated apology to African-Americans, some church members expressed hope that Mason First may want to further consider the statement. A Task Force of interested Deacons, Elders, and members will gather to consider how to address further understanding. Pastor Bill also intends to promote the development of church lay leaders (Elders and Deacons) by providing excerpts from church doctrine, especially *The Book of Order* and *The Book of Confessions* that make the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church USA.

The church Trivia Team won the recent fundraising Trivia event to support U-Kirk, the local Presbyterian higher education ministry of MSU and LCC.

The Finance Committee reported a decrease in the number of pledges with an overall 3%+ increase in pledged funding compared to this same time last year. The policy on use of invested returns of the Perpetual Pledge Fund to support the annual General Fund revenue require maintaining a minimum fund balance. Session approved the transfer of Contingency Reserve funds to the Perpetual Pledge Fund bringing the Fund balance to the minimum $175,000. A draft of the proposed of the 2023 General Fund Budget of $339,590 was provided for review and action at the December meeting.

The Nomination Committee reported a full slate of nominees for Session Elders. (One Elder nominee withdrew from consideration for personal reasons between the Session meeting and the congregational meeting.) The Committee is seeking more candidates for the Board of Deacons and Nominating Committee.

The Parish Life Committee continues to contact absent members. The committee is preparing for refreshments following the Christmas Concert. The Hanging of the Greens is scheduled for December 3rd.

The Security Team reports the church office door lock and key have been changed. Discovery of some exterior door keys also working in the office door lock was cause for the change.

The Personnel Committee requested 2023 budgeting for an 8.7% increase in staff salaries (except the Choral Accompanist just recently hired). Session concurred with the committee to reimburse Pastor Bill two-thirds of his Colorado retreat expenses incurred during the recent medical leave that were not covered by Presbytery. A large reimbursement is expected from medical insurance for the medical leave. Session concurred with the recommendation of the Personnel Committee to the congregation of the 2023 Terms of Call for Pastor Bill that includes an 8.7% increase over 2022.

The Spiritual Growth Committee was pleased with the recent Urban Plunge of Presbytery youth hosted at Mason First. Preparation is underway for the Youth Christmas Pageant as part of the December 18th worship service.

The Administration Committee is researching the need for exterior lighting of the Barnes Street ramp entry. A draft position description and duties list were made available to Session and the Personnel Committee to consider a Sexton in addition to the existing contracted cleaning.

Session approved the Worship & Music proposal to replace pew Bibles and hymnals with funds donated for such purpose. The committee is active in coordinating volunteers for upcoming services and transportation of substitute pianist. The recent lengthy Communion service was discussed.

The Mission Committee announced the upcoming retirement of a staff member of the new Mason Community Services (MCS) organization. MCS coordinates the new FRIENDS group that meets monthly at the church and is coordinating the City's emergency shelter plan. Session concurred with the committee's recommendation to utilize the $800 Adult Mission Trip budget line item for Mission Outreach yet in 2022.

Bruce F Archer
Clerk of Session

A special congregational meeting was convened by Pastor Bill in November for the purpose of electing 2023 church leaders and approving the Pastor's 2023 Terms of Call.

Nominations Committee Moderator, Elder Deb Shellenbarger placed in nomination for Session Ruling Elder, Class of 2025, Anita Cote, Monte Schuck, and Mary Garland Jackson that were elected by unanimous ballot. The committee will continue to pursue a nominee for the required 4th ruling elder.

Placed in nomination for the Board of Deacons were Marge Clarke for Class of 2025 and Timothy Pinches for the Class of 2023 to fulfill a vacated position. Nominations from the floor included Julie Dart for Class of 2025. They were elected by unanimous ballot.

Placed in nomination for the 2023 Nominations Committee were Peter Robinson, Steve VanDyke, and Barb VanDyke that were elected by unanimous ballot.

Personnel Committee Moderator Steve Sowles presented the 2023 proposed Terms of Call (TOC) for Pastor Bill. The 2023 TOC included a 7.08% increase above 2022 Total Effective Salary at $82,383 and 8.7% total increase above total 2022 TOC at $14,014. The total increase is equitable with the proposed staff salary increases in the 2023 General Fund Budget. The Committee reported a 95% satisfaction evaluation rating among families surveyed among the congregation. The 2023 TOC for Pastor Bill were approved.

Bruce F Archer
Clerk of the Congregation

Finance

Financial Report through October 2022	
General Fund Balance January 1, 2022	0
Income through October	$284,891
Expenses through October	253,765
Ending Balance (10/31/22)	$ 31,126

General Fund Balance 10/31/22	$ 31,126
Revolving Accounts Balance	42,520
Reserve Accounts	91,836
Investments as of 9/30/22	425,249
Net Financial Position (9/30/22)	$ 590,731

Anticipated pledged income through October
$226,849
Actual pledged income through October
$222,780

Offering envelopes will be available for pick-up in the Memorial Room on December 18th. Some may be in your office or choir mail box.

If you don't have envelopes and would like them, please contact the office.
sheren@masonpresbyterian.org
Please indicate if you'd like weekly or monthly envelopes.

Thank you for your faithful support!

Deacons

The Deacons are collecting **items for Christmas food baskets** to be given to needy families in the area. They would appreciate donations. Items needed include: pasta mix, hamburger helper, rice mixes, spaghetti sauce, spaghetti noodles, canned chicken, canned tuna, peanut butter jars, jam or jelly jars, mac & cheese, canned corn, canned green beans, stuffing mix, canned gravy or gravy mix, instant potatoes, canned soup, cracker boxes, fruit cups, applesauce jars, cereal boxes, hot chocolate mix, kids' juice boxes, laundry soap, dish soap, hand soap, paper towels, and toilet paper. The online sign-up for gifts for children and veterans is at https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040949AAAB23A0F49-giving. Monetary donations are also accepted.

Deadline for ordering poinsettias isy December 4. The signup sheet is posted outside the church office.

Spiritual Growth

IMPORTANT DATES!!!!

December 3st Family Advent Celebration from 11am-1pm. Please join us while we decorate the church and enjoy food together. Youth will be making a special Advent wreath.

December 4th Youth pageant practice after worship from 11:15am-12:15pm.

December 11th Youth pageant taping after worship from 11:15am-1:00pm. Pizza will be served.

December 18th The pageant will be played via video during the church service. Following the pageant presentation, all youth are invited to a Happy Birthday Jesus party in the back youth room! Games, Prizes, and Gifts! Please join us for a Christmas luncheon following the worship service in the dinning room.

December 24th The Christmas Eve Service will take place starting at 7pm. Several older youths will be participating in readings during the Christmas Eve service.

December 28-29th Older youth (12-17 years old) should have received an emailed invitation to the Camp Greenwood Lock-In starting on Friday, December 30th at 5pm and ending on Saturday, December 31st at noon. The cost is $30.00.

Advent materials for youth of all ages can be found outside of the office. Sunday school and Wonderful Wednesday lessons during December will focus on the meaning of Advent and celebrating the birth of our Savior Jesus. Additionally, youth will be making Christmas crafts for the Deacon Christmas Baskets.

There will be no Sunday school on December 25th or January 2nd.
And no Wonderful Wednesday on December 21st 28th, or January 2nd.

We will resume youth Sunday school class for all ages on January 9th and Wonderful Wednesday on January 12th.

ADULT PROGRAMS

Wednesday Prayer Service – Please join us for the Wednesday prayer service! We gather in the downstairs chapel at Noon. Led by Michelle Mackey, it is a very meaningful time together where we pray for and with one another. We look forward to seeing you on Wednesdays at noon! **There will be no Wednesday Prayer Service on December 21st , 28th or January 5th.**

Adult after Sunday Worship Discussion – Please join Michelle Mackey for a lively discussion after worship in the library from 11:15am–12:15pm during the Sundays of Advent.

Adult Bible Study- Adult Spiritual Growth will begin a study in January by Anne Graham Lotz, entitled *Jesus in Me*. Just as Jesus is the exact representation of God the Father, the Spirit is the exact representation of Jesus' mind, will, and emotions. The Holy Spirit is ... Jesus in me! Ann Graham Lotz shares her story and rich biblical knowledge to help you understand the Holy Spirit. It is a person who prays for us, guides us in our relationships and decisions, comforts us in pain, and stays by our side at all times. Discover how you can better love and rely on the Person of the Holy Spirit - and embrace how much He loves you.

Adult Advent materials are available in the office entrance.

Parish Life

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Peggy Stolz	12/05	Jay Harkness	12/23
Jerry Woolston	12/05	Susan Blonshine	12/24
Zoë Caltrider	12/08	Jesus	12/25
Andrew Mackey	12/11	Dave Barber	12/27
Tim Hammond	12/13	Lisa Castle	12/28
Eric Foster	12/14	Becket Barber	12/30
Mary Lou French	12/17	Caidra VanDyke	12/30

We're missing some birthdays - especially for new people!
If you've not been celebrated in the *Living Stones* or *The Cornerstone*,
please let the office know the date of your special day!

Mark Your Calendars

December 11th - 8:15 Sharp!
Men's Breakfast!

Sunday, December 18

There will be a potluck dinner following worship and before the concert at 3PM.
Bring a dish to pass if you're able. Meat and beverages will be furnished

Wednesday Dinners
The last dinner of 2022 will be on December 7th.
Dinners will resume on January 11th.

Dear Church Family,

Thank you so much for all the prayers sympathy notes and cards and your caring hearts that has helped my family through the past ten months and five deaths that we have endured.

We have also been leaning heavily on the everlasting arms of Jesus to get us through this year of grief.

Thank you - Donna and Bruce Archer

Mission

Mission efforts at our church can use some fresh participation.

Are you able to shop for sandwich materials on Tuesdays at Kroger? (1-2 hour effort; food costs are reimbursed)
Would you be able to deliver in your own vehicle the 64 lunches that we send to Advent House? (1 hour round trip maximum)
Please consider these tasks so that the same old people do not have to do them every week.

Thank you.

A $15,000 allocation for Mission Outreach made by the Session in 2022, the committee sent $5,000 each to St. Vincent Catholic Charities, Re-Member and Mason Community Services. Here are excerpts from their thank you letters.

From St. Vincent Catholic Charities -

Because of your support, refugees who fled their countries of origin because of war and persecution are settling in new, welcoming communities here in Lansing. Family members from other countries are being reunited with their loved ones here in the United States and becoming legal citizens. They are also able to find afford housing, food, and other necessities because of your generosity. Thank you for helping to transform the lives of those in need.

From Re-Member -

Thank you for facilitating the generous gift of warmth from your church. Our winter heating program grows every year and we appreciate our friends and partners.

From Mason Community Services -

Thank you for your incredible generosity to not only help us pay off the balance owed on our van but for funds for future vehicle maintenance. We are awed by your faith in what we are trying to do in Mason to support families that are facing challenges right now.

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.