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 & February 2023

The Calling of the Church (Part 3)

The Marks of the Church

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

The Holiness of the Church

Holiness is God's gift to the Church in Jesus Christ. Through the love of Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God takes away the sin of the world. The holiness of the Church comes from Christ who sets it apart to bear witness to his love, and not from the purity of its doctrine or the righteousness of its actions.

Because in Christ the Church is holy, the Church, its members, and those in its ordered ministries strive to lead lives worthy of the Gospel we proclaim. In gratitude for Christ's work of redemption, we rely upon the work of God's Spirit through Scripture and the means of grace to form every believer and every community for this holy living. We confess the persistence of sin in our corporate and individual lives. At the same time, we also confess that we are forgiven by Christ and called again and yet again to strive for the purity, righteousness, and truth revealed to us in Jesus Christ and promised to all people in God's new creation.

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

Session Synopsis

Session welcomed as guests, Elder-Elect Mary Garland Jackson and Monte Shuck to experience Session in action.

The Deacons reported a record successful community coat drive this fall. This year the community churches were joined in the community effort through the coordination of Mason Community Services.

Pastor Bill attended a Presbytery regional meeting addressing Presbytery finances, especially following the financial problems at Mount Hope Presbyterian Church. Various financial and administrative guidelines were made available at the meeting and referred to the Administration Committee for review.

The Evangelical Covenant Fellowship renewed their interest in the use of the church for their worship. The number of issues involved will require further meetings with delegates from the Session and the Fellowship.

Session members will need to consider committee liaison assignments for 2023.

The December meeting of Presbytery resulted in an approved 2023 Presbytery Budget, introduction of new Associate Presbyter Rev. Chrissy Westbury, and the formal closing of Mount Hope Presbyterian Church.

The Mission Committee continues to involve other congregants with the weekly Advent House bag lunch program including additional donations to support the effort. Holiday outreach includes fleece and flannel to friends in Green Acres. U-Kirk made known a College Conference in January at Montreat, NC for interested college students. The Book Desert effort continues to share books with youth. New or gently used children's books can be left for U-Kirk at their book drop at East Lansing Eastminster Church.

Session took action on three Finance Committee recommendations. With 68 pledges providing adequate support, Session approved the 2023 General Fund Budget of $339,590 (5% more than the 2022 budget). Session also approved the Operational Budget Procedure to implement the current and future budgets. And Session concurred with the committee in appointing Sandy Diehl as Assistant Financial Secretary for 2023.

The Nominating Committee will continue to seek a nominee for one remaining Session Elder position. Hopefully, a nominee can be presented at the Annual Congregational meeting in February.

The Parish Life Committee has been diligently reviewing the membership rolls of the church. Session supported the committee's recommendation to drop 5 Active Roll and 38 Associate Roll member from the respective rolls of the church. All members remain in the Baptized Register of the church throughout the church's history. The Affiliate and Baptized Rolls will also be adjusted with the family members affiliated with the affected Active and Associate members.

The Personnel Committee announced bonus checks will be awarded to some staff considering the additional efforts through the summer with the Head of Staff on medical leave. The Personnel and Spiritual Growth Committees are continuing a review of the Child Protection Policy with special attention to transportation of youth from schools to church activities by non-family church members. Session concurred with the Personnel Committee's recommendation to make some minor changes to the church Employee Handbook. All employees will receive a statement of their expected wage or salary for the ensuing year. The Choir Accompanist and Organist will be paid with separate checks to accommodate the differing time of service, part-year and year-round, respectively. The description and responsibilities of the Office Manager are being reviewed, especially since Session approved the description for an Office Assistant to directly relieve some duties of the Pastor.

The Spiritual Growth Committee reported a successful Presbytery Youth Urban Plunge hosted by Mason First, regardless of the lack of promised funding from Presbytery.

The Administration Committee reported ventilation improvements to a storage closet and storage sub-basement (former boiler room). Air conditioning allows moisture to condensate on cooler stone walls that can become a source of mold and mildew without circulating air. Roots have been cleared from the church sewer lead avoided back up in the sub-basement during times of heavy water usage (restrooms and dishwasher). A new part-time Sexton position description is under review with the Personnel Committee based on continuance of the contracted weekly cleaning service. *(continued on next page)*

The Worship & Music Committee is offering a Christmas Choir Concert this year, in addition to the scheduled worship services.

Session expressed their grateful appreciation for the services of Elders Ed Clarke (3 years), Debbie Shellenbarger (3 years), Gladys Welker (3 years), and Jenny Bond (6 years) as they complete their terms on Session. New Elders and Deacons will begin their terms following Ordination and Installation at the January 15th worship service. Session Elders were reminded that annual reports of the 2022 committee and group activities are due January 20th.

The establishment of a new community social agency, Mason Community Services (MCS), gave cause for the Session to re-designate the Christmas Eve and Christmas Worship services loose offering; it will be evenly split between CACS and MCS.

Bruce F Archer
Clerk of Session

An Invitation: task force regarding racism

As we reported previously, the Presbyterian Church (USA)'s General Assembly recently adopted a statement offering an apology to African Americans for the sin of slavery and its legacy, and an accompanying Litany of Repentance. The Presbytery of Lake Michigan (our regional judicatory) also recently adopted the same statement of apology and litany. The denomination is encouraging individual congregations to "prepare a history of their community to facilitate and deepen their study and understanding of these issues and to share the resources they find helpful in that preparation with the larger church," and also directing congregations to "seek the resources provided by the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the Stated Clerk tools to enact restorative justice measures in their communities that will close gaps in economics, health, education, environmental well-being, and the criminal justice system created out of the legacy of slavery and white supremacy. These gaps have existed since our development as a country and still exist today." To this end, the Session recently authorized the creation of a task force to "study the statement and related issues and report to Session any recommendations for further consideration of the statement." We are currently looking for individuals who would be interested in serving on this task force. If you are potentially interested, please contact either Pastor Bill or Clerk of Session Bruce Archer. Task force members will be appointed at an upcoming Session meeting. We will provide the task force with a basic orientation to the General Assembly and Presbytery actions, and then let the task force chart its own course, ultimately reporting back to Session with recommendation(s) for further action.

Worship & Music

January - February 2023 Worship Calendar

January 1	**The First Sunday of Christmas** ~ Communion ~ Guest Organist: Caitlyn Brown
January 8	**The Baptism of the Lord** ~ Renewal of Baptismal Vows
January 15	**Second Sunday after Epiphany** ~ Ordination and Installation of Elders and Deacons
January 22	**Third Sunday after Epiphany** ~ Children's Sermon
January 29	**Fourth Sunday after Epiphany** ~ 2-Cents-a-Meal Offering
February 5	**Fifth Sunday after Epiphany** ~ Communion
February 12	**Sixth Sunday after Epiphany**
February 19	**Transfiguration of the Lord** ~ Children's Sermon
February 22	**Ash Wednesday** ~ service at noon with Communion and imposition of ashes
February 26	**First Sunday in Lent** ~ 2-Cents-a-Meal Offering

New Job Posting:

Please help us get word out about the new position we are creating to relieve some burdens on Bill and Sheren. The administration of this church has grown in complexity to the point where we now need an additional part-time staff member. We are estimating an average of about six hours per week. We need someone with excellent clerical skills and very strong attention to detail. Comfort and familiarity with computers and various software platforms is essential. We will train this person as needed, but we want someone who already possesses a strong background with programs like Word, Excel, and Publisher. Please direct inquiries to Pastor Bill or Steve Sowles.

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Office Assistant

MASON FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Purpose: To provide clerical support to the Pastor in implementing the mission of the Mason First Presbyterian Church.

Accountability: The Office Assistant is accountable to the Session through the Pastor as Head of Staff.

Responsibilities: The general areas of responsibility of the Office Assistant position include a range of clerical duties such as:

Data entry, especially to track worship attendance;

Preparing the weekly worship bulletin, based on the detailed liturgy provided by the Pastor;

Proofreading and editing, especially with the weekly worship bulletin and monthly newsletter;

Securing copyright permissions for worship music;

Routine weekly website updates, especially posting files pertaining to the weekly worship service, including audio files; and

Other similar duties, as assigned by the Pastor.

Most tasks will need to be completed in a timely fashion once a week. The specific duties may change over time.

Relationships: The Office Assistant works in close cooperation with the Pastor, and as part of a collegial team with other members of Staff as needed.

Evaluation: Performance reviews will be conducted annually by the Pastor as Head of Staff, and the Personnel Committee of Session. The Personnel Committee shall review the hours and compensation of the Office Assistant position on an annual basis.

Finance

Financial Report through November 2022	
General Fund Balance January 1, 2022	0
Income through November	317,525
Expenses through November	286,432
Ending Balance (11/30/22)	$ 31.093

General Fund Balance 11/30/22	$ 31,093
Revolving Accounts Balance	53,850
Reserve Accounts	90,183
Investments as of 9/30/22 (end of 3rd quarter)	425,249
Net Financial Position (11/30/22)	$ 600,375

Anticipated pledged income through November
$249,534
Actual pledged income through November
$249,944

Thank you for your faithful support!

Deacons

Happy New Year! We ended 2022 with a successful annual Christmas Basket project. Thanks to your wonderful and generous support, we were able to make Christmas a little merrier for 6 local families, including 15 children, 8 seniors, and several Veterans. Thank you for sharing the joy of Christmas!

We remember the care and concern shown to so many in need of some TLC during 2022, with phone calls, visits, cards, flowers, and meals. We remember the many important projects we were able to support because of your continuous generosity: Walk for Warmth, sharing the joy of Easter with special Easter baskets, the Backpack Project, helping get kids back to school with needed clothing and supplies, supporting the CROP Walk, the Give A Kid A Coat Project, helping to provide warm winter coats and accessories to those in need, sharing Thanksgiving baskets with members needing extra TLC, and lastly, the Christmas Basket project. It is a blessing to be part of such a caring church family, and we thank you!

Parish Life

Birthdays in January

Rod Guy	1/05
Joann Caltrider	1/14
Sandy Diehl	1/15
Dale Miihlbach	1/17
Sloane St. George	1/27
Timmy Pinches	1/28
Linda Myall	1/29

Birthdays in February

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

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!

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your thoughts, prayers, cards and special gifts, since beginning my journey with chemo. Without your kindness, I know my treatments would have been so much more difficult. I wish to thank you also, for your prayers for my nephew Chuck, as he learns to make a new life without his beloved wife. We speak multiple times each day, and know that Jeremiah 29:11 is our rock, as are your thoughts and prayers.

I look forward to when I can return to church and choir, hopefully with hair that has begun to grow.

Again, bless you all.
Sue Riley

Spiritual Growth

Happy New Year from Spiritual Growth!

Youth Program

Pre-K and Elementary Sunday School –
The youth are dismissed during the worship service and gather for snacks and Sunday school in the upstairs youth education room. Our current lessons focus on what happened to David after being anointed by Samuel. They include David & Goliath, David & music, and David & Jonathan.

Middle / High Sunday School & Fellowship –
The youth are dismissed during the worship service and gather for snacks and Sunday school in the downstairs youth fellowship room. This group will finish the curriculum topic entitled "Dilemmas" which explores making deliberate, thoughtful and faithful decisions consistent with their character and their faith.
The next curriculum topic will be "Grace" which is designed to show youth that grace is a real, practical force in their lives in the mist of fear, doubt and stress.

Wonderful Wednesday –
Every Wednesday after school, the program concludes with a community dinner at 6:30pm. The youth will be assisting with our yearly Valentine's Day mission project for our current college students. We will be making treats and special dorm room crafts to send out. Youth will also assist with making Valentines for our church's at-home and special outreach friends.

Adult Program

Wednesday Prayer Service-
Please join us for the Wednesday prayer service at noon in the downstairs chapel. This 20-minute guided prayer time is led by Michelle Mackey. Together we pray for and with one another.

Adult Bible Study-
In January we will begin a study by Anne Graham Lotz entitled *Jesus In Me*. The author shares her story and rich biblical knowledge to help us understand the Holy Spirit.

Important Dates to Remember

Sunday school starts on January 8th.

Wonderful Wednesday starts on January 11th.

Wednesday prayer time starts on January 11th.

Youth/parents should look for information in January regarding a winter outing & campfire dinner on the Herricks' property. Date TBA

Spiritual Growth and Parish Life will be having a game night and dinner at the church in February. Date TBA

New Bibles and Hymnals

We will soon be purchasing new Bibles and hymnals that are in 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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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:
2023 - Bruce Archer, Tim Hammond, Mary Ozee, Steve Sowles.
2024 - Jerry Ambrose, Lucinda Davenport, Loren Harkness, Tonya Seely.
2025 - Anita Cote, Mary Garland Jackson, Monte Shuck.
Clerk: Bruce Archer

DEACONS:
2023 - Lisa Castle, Jay Harkness, Vern Schrock, Steve VanDyke.
2024 - Donna Hujsak, Issie Nielsen, Camille Subject.
2025 - Marge Clarke, Julie Dart, Timmy Pinches