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 2023

Principles of Presbyterian Government (Part 2)

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) reaffirms, within the context of its commitment to the Church universal, a special commitment to basic principles of Presbyterian polity:

Decision by Majority Vote
Decisions shall be reached in councils by vote, following opportunity for discussion and discernment, and a majority shall govern.

Review and Control
A higher council shall have the right of review and control over a lower one and shall have power to determine matters of controversy upon reference, complaint, or appeal.

Ordination by Council
Presbyters (ruling elders and ministers of the Word and Sacrament) and deacons are ordained only by the authority of a council.

Shared Power, Exercised Jointly
Ecclesiastical jurisdiction is a shared power, to be exercised jointly by presbyters gathered in councils.

General Authority of Councils
Councils possess whatever administrative authority is necessary to give effect to duties and powers assigned by the Constitution of the church. The jurisdiction of each council is limited by the express provisions of the Constitution, with powers not mentioned being reserved to the presbyteries.

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

National Council of Churches
Statement on Israel and Palestine, and the Current Hostilities

October 15, 2023

"As he came near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, 'If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace!'" (Luke 19:41-2a, NRSVUE)

Just days ago, the fragile peace in the Middle East was shattered, with an unexpected, brutal assault from Gaza by Hamas on the State of Israel. In response, Israel declared war, and began to retaliate with foreseeable force. On the day of the assault, and in the days following, thousands of people have been killed, including civilians on both sides of the border now counted among the dead, and hundreds of Israeli men, women, and children have been taken hostage by Hamas forces, likely to be used as human shields to lessen Israel's continued retaliation in the Gaza Strip.

The National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA began its annual Christian Unity Gathering in the days following the initial attack, with the NCC's governing board meeting on Wednesday and Thursday, October 11-12. After praying for peace in Israel and Palestine, and in the wider Middle East region, the governing board called upon both Israelis and Palestinians to cease hostilities. We did so confident in the fact that the land is considered holy by Jews, Christians, and Muslims; with the knowledge that the Israelites of old were our forebears in the faith; and in solidarity with the Christian Churches of the Holy Land, whose adherents comprise a significant percentage of the Palestinian community.

While we condemn the Hamas attack and recognize Israel's right to protect its people, we affirm the value of all human life. We therefore call upon Israel, with its overwhelming firepower, to temper its response in the name of human decency. The innocence of both Israeli and Palestinian civilians cannot be ignored. While Israel's response against Hamas is understandable, its anticipated retaliation in Gaza, from which Palestinian civilians cannot flee due to the closed border, must not match, or exceed the brutality of Hamas' assault. This includes both military action and the shutdown of critical infrastructure. In turn, Hamas must release all hostages immediately.

Finally, we call upon all international actors to take actions that will lead to an end of the conflict, including the assurance of humanitarian assistance. In particular, we call upon the United States and the Biden Administration, even though in support of Israel in the current crisis, to not allow the conflict to deflect from a consideration of root causes of the enmity between Israelis and Palestinians. This is not the time for such consideration. Nevertheless, care must be taken not to enable the kind of extreme force that would preclude this consideration in the future.

We end this statement with a prayer for God's comfort for all those directly impacted by this conflict, and for the eternal memory of those who have lost their lives.

Committees Open to New Members

Several of our committees are currently feeling a little under-equipped and would gladly welcome some new members. If you would like to "try out" any committee, these committees are all open to new members:

Administration Committee	Typically meets on the first Thursday at 7:00 PM	See Bruce Archer for more information
Finance Committee	Typically meets on the second Thursday at 8:00 AM	See Jerry Ambrose for more information
Mission Committee	Typically meets on the first Monday at 4:00 PM	See Rex Hauser for more information
Parish Life Committee	Meeting times vary	See Mary Garland Jackson or Gladys Welker
Spiritual Growth Committee	Typically meets by Zoom on the second Thursday at 6:00 PM	See Lori Filka for more information
Worship and Music Committee	Typically meets on the second Wednesday at 1 PM	See Mary Ozee or Monte Shuck for more information

Session Synopsis

Session received notification from City Hall of forthcoming meetings to clarify the role of community emergency shelters and protocols to open shelters for access. The church is considered one of the City's emergency shelters. Notification was also received from the Presbytery of Lake Michigan on a change in office staff.

The Deacons reported progress in supporting the Mason area CROP Walk and Coat Drive. They are also hoping to develop a church emergency plan to contact church families during designated community emergencies, such as threatening storms, to address emergency needs.

Pastor Bill reported 11 participants in the Explorer Class series for potential new Active members. The Pastor will be vacationing Thanksgiving week and Christmas week with Rev. Tony Patrick filling the pulpit November 26th and December 31st.

Presbytery took action to increase the presbytery portion of the per capita tax by $1.00. With Synod and General Assembly maintaining the same level or decreasing their portion of per capita by $.05, the total 2024 per capita tax increases by $0.95 to a total of $27.

The Security Team submitted revisions to the Security Policy. After healthy discussions on topics of events covered, supervision, door locking responsibilities, and clarity on concealed weapons, the Session approved the revised policy with additional amendments.

The Personnel Committee reported a very favorable evaluation of the Adult Spiritual Growth Director, Michelle Mackey. This month the committee will focus on Pastor Bill's 2024 Terms of Call to present to the congregation at a special congregational meeting on November 19th.

The Spiritual Growth Committee is teaming up with other Christian Education teams in the Mason area for mutual support and program enrichment potential. The annual youth Urban Plunge this year will focus on local projects in lieu of past years of Presbytery group projects.

The Administration Committee reported completion of annual maintenance by contracted service companies of the heating/cooling system and fire protection systems. A fall clean up of the church yard and gardens is scheduled for November 4th beginning at 9 AM.

The Worship & Music committee will be coordinating a new program of recognizing veterans in the congregation during the November 12th worship. December 2nd is scheduled for the seasonal Hanging of the Greens. Officially, the postlude music performed by the pianist/organist at the end of service is NOT part of the service. Attendees may depart the sanctuary after the blessing, charge, and choral benediction respecting those that wish to remain to hear the music by exiting quietly.

Mission Committee will coordinate members of the adult mission trip presenting their thoughts on the Pine Ridge Reservation experience at a dinner following worship on November 26th. The committee designated mission funds to international child relief efforts by Red Cross with Nagorno-Karabakh refugees and UNICEF for kidnapped children in Ukraine. The committee will soon be resuming the sale of "Fair Trade" goods following worship services, a good source of coffee and chocolate in support of the family farms in Central America.

News from U-Kirk reports continuation of their Book Project, distributing books throughout greater Lansing. The next Trivia Night fundraiser will be Friday evening (7 PM), November 3rd at the Presbyterian Church of Okemos.

The Finance Committee reported on the progress of the 2024 Pledge campaign and alerted committees of the timeline to submit 2024 expense budget requests by December 14th. The committee conducted a Financial Review of 2022 finances. The review found no significant discrepancies in reporting an accurate picture of church finances. Recommendations to further improve finance operations and processes will be topics of further discussion.

The Nominating Committee has developed a lengthy list of candidates to consider as nominees as Elders of Session, Deacons for the Board of Deacons, or members of the 2024 Nominating Committee. A slate of nominees will be submitted for election by the congregation at the special Congregational Meeting on November 19th.

Parish Life reported the October rummage sale was cancelled due to the lack of items. The next sale is scheduled for March 2024. The committee is preparing luncheon meals and hosting the Explorer Class series.

Session is calling a special congregational meeting following worship on November 19th for the purpose of electing Elders, Deacons, and Nominating Committee members and to approve the Pastor's 2024 Terms of Call.

Bruce F Archer
Clerk of Session

Deacons

Thank you for your generous support of the CWS CROP Walk and the Coats For Kids projects in October.

We are looking forward to preparing and delivering Thanksgiving Baskets to some special members this month, in hopes of bringing smiles and happiness in this giving season.

It is time to start thinking about our biggest project of the year – filling Christmas Baskets with food, gifts, and the joy of Christmas. We have a new list of grocery items needed, including:

- Canned vegetables
- Canned fruit
- Stuffing mix
- Mashed potato mix
- Canned gravy
- Crackers
- Cereal
- Mac & cheese
- Powdered milk
- Shelf-stable milk (almond, soy)
- Peanut butter
- Jelly
- Spaghetti noodles and sauce
- Pasta/rice mix
- Canned cranberry sauce
- Canned chicken
- Tuna
- Tea bags
- Juice boxes
- Laundry soap
- Dish soap
- Hand soap
- Paper towels
- Toilet paper

Items can be brought to the church and put on the table in the Memorial Room AFTER October 29th. Thank you again, for your big hearts and generosity. Watch for details to sign up for specific gifts needed after Thanksgiving. We will be using the online Sign-Up Genius program again this year, as well as the traditional paper gift tags.

BSA Troop 763 is now taking orders for 24" fresh fir wreaths at $25 each. Payment is expected upon delivery or soon thereafter. Delivery is the week of Thanksgiving to enjoy throughout the entire holiday season. The sale will continue as long as this year's limited supply lasts. Place your order at the office bulletin board, or by contacting Andrew Mackey, Luke Mackey, or Bruce Archer. Please make your checks payable to BSA Troop 763. **The sale of the wreaths helps support the Scouts annual purchase of hams and turkeys that benefit the Deacons' Christmas baskets.**

Worship & Music

November 2023 Worship Calendar

November 5 **All Saints Day** ~ Remembrance Sunday ~ Communion
(Daylight Savings Time ends)

November 12 **Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost**
Rev. Dr. Jim Hegedus preaching

November 19 **Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost** ~ Volunteer Appreciation
Children's Sermon ~ Congregational Meeting following worship

November 26 **Christ the King Sunday** ~ Rev. Tony Patrick preaching
Two-Cents-a-Meal Hunger Offering
Pine Ridge dinner and presentation following worship

Mission

The Sunday after Thanksgiving, November 26, you are invited to enjoy fellowship in the dining room over a Native-inspired menu. (Sean Shephard is known as the "Sioux Chef," hailed by a James Beard award. He is of the Oglala Lakota tribe, and his cookbook may be an inspiration to those who want to learn more about cuisine based on traditional foods.) Members of the Pine Ridge mission team will host, offering music and artwork obtained at the Rez (reservation).

After lunch we will go upstairs and enjoy a slide presentation drawn from Pine Ridge photos by participants, along with their commentary. You are encouraged to bring your friends and family.

You are not obliged to bring anything but appetites, curiosity, and Christian love for peoples of all sorts.

Finance

Financial Report through September 2023

General Fund Balance January 1, 2023	0
Income through September	$272,412
Expenses through September	$253,801
Ending Balance (9/30/23)	$18,611

General Fund Balance 9/30/23	$ 18,611	Anticipated pledged income through September
Revolving Accounts Balance	58,450	$220,239
Reserve Accounts	80,258	Actual pledged income through September
Investments as of 9/30/23	483,254	$213,820
Net Financial Position (9/30/23)	$ 640,573	

Parish Life

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

John Zipp	11/01	Ginnie Gibson	11/12	Laurie McGonigal	11/21
Jane Hamelink	11/06	Kyle McGonigal	11/15	Bob Caltrider	11/23
Marty Subject	11/09	Jason Blonshine	11/16	Lloyd Fett	11/26
Suzanne Caltrider	11/10	Mari Nicol	11/19	Bonnie Friend	11/29
				Steve Sowles	11/29

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 19, 2023

2023 Thanksgiving Pies

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

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Total $_____ Paid? Yes No

Remember to let the office know if your contact information changes so we can keep the directory up to date, and publish those changes each month in *The Cornerstone*.

The Administration Committee is planning a fall yard clean-up on Saturday, November 4th, beginning at 9AM! Questions? Contact Bruce Archer.

Spiritual Growth

Youth Programs

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 - Following their third-year rotational curriculum, we will be using Cokebury's, "*Celebrate Wonder-all ages."* We will be studying Solomon to start the school year. Through play, Bible exploration, and faith conversations, the goal of Celebrate Wonder is to deepen faith and grow in spiritual identity as children of God.

Middle and High School - The Cokesbury curriculum being utilized is entitled "*Groove"* and the topic is "Grace." The youth are working on lessons regarding Grace for themselves, each other, and the greater community. They are starting with what it means to be empathetic, as well as what it looks like to be their best selves. They will also be exploring personal values, and how they intersect with our Christian beliefs. This group of students shares a special bond, and a love for service.

Middle & High School Fellowship

*Take the time to check-out the downstairs youth room. Our youth group tie-dyed some cool wall hangings.

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 at 6pm is the perfect way to end our Wonderful Wednesday.

Seasonal projects are underway! Also, the youth will be making new 2-cents a meal containers to be made available to the congregation.

Please contact Lori Filka if you need help with transportation to the Wednesday Activities

Adult Programs

Adult After Worship Discussion Group

Please join us for an Adult Discussion Time after worship from 11:20am-12:00pm in the library. We are continuing the video series "The Chosen" back by popular demand this Fall. Bring your coffee and treat and join us.

Noon Prayer Service in the Chapel

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

Minute for Mission, Oct. 22, 2023

You have heard about the conditions at Pine Ridge, South Dakota, in a Sept. 24 sermon by Pastor Bill. You probably know that this Native neighbor of ours is a neighbor defined by Christ, in whom there is no East or West, no North or South. In Matthew 25 we re-member and recognize them. The chapter is about being a worthy servant, invested in growing faith. We are to use our 'inheritance' to build the Kingdom, to give water and food to God's Creation and his Children. We are to know and make neighbors with those most in need, for they bring out our best selves in answer to Christ the most holy, the anointed, the most royal and the greatest. The least and the most: we have it all in Jesus and our neighbor.

We also know that it is *between* the gentile, or one viewed as foreign or different to us, and the believer, that the work of God's enduring Spirit is being done and will be done. It is a drama which brings us and the Spirit into play.

For example, the good Samaritan: one such example in our national history is the Wampanoag native people saving our Mayflower ancestors through Native hospitality and caring, even before we knew that their customs are so Christian, in so many ways. (And did not the Creator make them and their customs?)

Another example is the three different versions of the *Canaanite woman with Jesus* story. She believed on Him, in an edgy encounter where both of them overcame obstacles put in their way by belonging to each of their nations. Both of these nations were as tribal as most of their descendants are today, where Jesus and the Canaanite woman still pose a solution.

Similarly, a deep love of God and neighbor has taken five of us, against many odds, to the Pine Ridge Oglala Sioux reservation. There, the mission of re-member.org has grown deeply, in following the principles and cooperation of the Oglala Lakota tribe. Twenty-five years they have been there, keeping the elders in winter firewood. (Even with this, just last December, people froze to death in mobile homes lying far out on the prairie.) For twenty-five years ReMember has been there, making wooden beds for the kids and families, to keep them off of cold floors at night. It is not charity, it is not help, and it is not 'us' fixing anything, that is the goal. Re-member provides jobs for Oglala youth and older employees, and we go there to learn as much as to serve.

Our church is invested. Last year we wound up giving a third of our windfall funds, in a check for $5,000, to ReMember. Our firewood served, as we had asked. Perhaps we had an impact on fewer people freezing to death, than would have been otherwise. Three trips, and perhaps the start of a fourth one, have now been devoted to youth and Adult Mission budgets: 2001, 2019, and 2023. Warmth, friendship and learning abound, for more trips--- 2024!

Please come to our Pine Ridge Event, on Nov. 26, the Sunday after Thanksgiving. It follows after church services, featuring your curiosity and an appetite for sharing--- of kids and adults alike—in Native Lakota music, some artwork, and a commentated slide show. Partake of fry bread, mac n cheese, Three Sisters Bowl, desserts… So bring your family, bring your friends.

"We are all related," the Lakota expression says. (Repeated with congregation, "we are all related.")

"Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." (Matt. 25, v. 40) We don't often emphasize that these "brothers and sisters of mine" are of the Lord, indeed, and so they must be our relations as well.

Thank you, Rex Hauser, chair of Mission

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 on Facebook and YouTube at 10:00 am 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 Monday following the Session meeting. *We are now attempting to publish the newsletter the week following Session. Announcements for Sunday and Living Stones are due by noon on Wednesday. Please be prompt. Late submissions may not be honored.*

The CORNERSTONE

Mason First Presbyterian Church
MINISTERS - All Members
PASTOR - Rev. Bill Pinches
PARISH ASSOCIATE - Rev. Dr. Jim Hegedus
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
OFFICE ASSISTANT - Nancy Sue MacDonald
SEXTON - Eric VanDyke
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 - Doreen Chapman, Anita Cote, Mary Garland Jackson, Monte Shuck.
Clerk: Bruce Archer.

DEACONS:
2023 - Lisa Castle, Jay Harkness, Vern Schrock.
2024 - Donna Hujsak, Issie Nielsen, Camille Subject.
2025 - Marge Clarke, Julie Dart, Timothy Pinches, Tom Seely.
Moderator *Pro Tem*: Lisa Castle

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

*There will be a **congregational meeting following worship on Sunday, November 19,***
for the purpose of
electing Elders and Deacons for 2024-2026,
electing Nominating Committee members for 2024,
and approving the pastor's terms of call for 2024.
Business to be conducted at the meeting is limited to those items.