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

April 2024

Christian Worship (continued)

Creation and Redemption

Time, space, and matter are all created by God, redeemed by Christ, and made holy by the Spirit. Through Christian worship—at certain times, in particular places, and with material gifts—we participate in God's plan for the redemption of time, space, and matter for the glory of God.

Time

Because God is the author of history, we may worship at any time. The psalms reflect the daily worship of the people of God, while the Torah teaches that one day in seven is to be set apart as holy to the Lord. The prophets anticipated God's judgment and triumph over evil on the day of the Lord. The Gospels all testify that Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week. The apostles came to speak of this as the Lord's Day, claiming God's victory over sin and death through the power of Jesus' resurrection. The first Christians began to celebrate Jesus' resurrection every Lord's Day, gathering to proclaim the Word and celebrate the Sacraments. The Church continues to gather, traditionally on the first day of the week, to hear the gospel and break bread in Jesus' name, with the confidence that the risen Lord is with us.

Through two thousand years of Christian worship, the Church has developed ways of keeping time—many of them adapted from the feasts and fasts of Israel that Jesus kept. This pattern of the Christian year keeps us centered in Christ as we seek to proclaim the story of our faith, grow as Jesus' disciples, and serve Christ's mission. The year begins with a focus on Christ's incarnation, with the seasons of Advent and Christmas encompassing the Nativity and Epiphany of the Lord. After Epiphany we celebrate Jesus' Baptism and Transfiguration. At the heart of the Christian year is the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection, with the seasons of Lent and Easter encompassing Ash Wednesday, the Great Three Days—Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil—the Resurrection and Ascension of the Lord, and the Day of Pentecost. After Pentecost we commemorate Trinity Sunday, All Saints Day, and the Reign of Christ.

The pattern of daily prayer also connects the Church with the worship of ancient Israel, centuries of Christian tradition, and Jesus' own practices. Whether in large assemblies, with small groups, or at home, daily prayer serves as a bridge between public worship and personal affairs, helping us to live out our faith each day.

We mark other occasions in worship, reflecting the cycles of civic and agricultural life, cultural and family celebrations, the commemoration of significant persons and events, and the programs and activities of the church. It is appropriate to observe such things, provided that they never distract from the worship of the triune God.

— from The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), "Directory for Worship"

Session Synopsis

Session welcomed the return of Elder Lucinda Davenport to Session, following her recent loss.

Pastor Bill reported new Presbytery requirements that not only ordained clergy continue receiving periodic boundary training but also Ruling Elders will need the training also. Efforts for regional training sessions are being encouraged. The Pastor also reported the developing financial and leadership challenges at the Lansing area Advent House ministry. Also reported was the Board of Pensions is proposing significant changes in the benefits offered to clergy and staff which will likely impact future Terms of Call. And the good news is that another Explorers' Class for prospective members will begin after Easter.

At the most recent Presbytery meeting, the guest speaker (the new President of Princeton Theological Seminary) discussed a projected shortage of church leaders. Declining enrollments in seminaries are short of filling the 85% of clergy retirements in the next ten years.

The Nominating Committee will be looking for a possible candidate to complete a partial term of a Ruling Elder on Session following the acceptance of a letter of resignation from an Elder due to health concerns. Contact Elder Doreen Chapman if you are willing to consider the role.

The Bridge Builders Task Force received and reviewed comments on the drafted Antiracism statement released at the congregational meeting. Session adopted the statement as policy (7 yeas, 2 nays, 1 abstention). The policy will continue as a resource for the Task Force studies and for congregational discussions and education. The policy is an ongoing working document subject to changes in the future.

Session supported the recommendations of the Finance Committee to allocate unallocated funds from the previous year to the adopted budget and adjustment of current reserve accounts. Anticipated unbudgeted building maintenance expenses will be funded from Contingency Reserves and Webb Fund as needed. Session also supported making $5,000 available for the Scholarship Commission to make scholarship awards for 2024.

The Parish Life Committee is reaching out to less active members to encourage more active roles, build relationships, and consider possible change in membership status. Three less Active Members were transferred to the Associate Member roll with their consent.

The Security Team noted an unlocked interior door following a visit from an outside maintenance vendor. The vendor has been contacted and reminded to secure the interior door(s) and return keys after completion of their services.

The Personnel Committee reported favorable annual reviews of the Choir Director, Deb Melse, and Administrative Assistant, Nancy Sue MacDonald. In April the position of Sexton, Eric VanDyke, will be reviewed.

The Spiritual Growth Committee reported four Mason First Presbyterian youth among the fifty youth in the a Community Christian Education event that involved participation from seven area churches. Several youth also attended a Game Night here at church. Youth also served a once a month lunch to the homeless this month. To support the young adults, a Trivia Night will be at the Okemos Presbyterian Church on April 25th at 7 PM to benefit UKirk.

The Administration Committee reported repair by replacement of the office HVAC units. Repair of one of the multiple main units requires additional modification components to counter alleged wind tunnel effects resulting from placement of the units between the church and adjacent Hillard Building. The committee is also pursuing repair options for part of the sanctuary ceiling that is degrading. The committee supports the upgrade of the office bookkeeping software and new office computer if recommended by the church IT service vendor.

The Worship & Music Committee is focused on Holy Week events. A review of committee procedures will begin next month. The Mission Committee expressed care for others. Church Sexton Eric VanDyke has donated transportation services for the Mission Committee's weekly Advent House lunches. The Mission Committee has donated a gas card to assist with Eric's assistance. Meanwhile, Eric is interested in an affordable replacement vehicle.

The Session is beginning a review of the specific services committees provide to meet the needs and responsibilities of the church. An initial Elder survey will be followed by discussion and working towards greater consensus in subsequent meetings.

Bruce F Archer - Clerk of Session

Worship & Music

April 2024 Worship Calendar

April 07	Second Sunday of Easter ~ The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper
April 14	Third Sunday of Easter ~ Rev. Dr. Jim Hegedus preaching ~ Children's Message
April 21	Fourth Sunday of Easter ~ Recognition of Fifty-Year Members
April 28	Fifth Sunday of Easter ~ Two-cents-a-Meal Hunger Offering

Many people have admired the wall of crosses in our Memorial Room. This project was started many years ago by the Liturgical Arts Committee. The hope was that each family in our congregation would bring in at least one cross to represent their family. Some families have contributed crosses that have been in their family for years, some have found interesting crosses on trips, others have created one. The wall may look nearly full, but there is still room for more! We hope you keep this in mind in the coming year, and find a way to bring in a symbol of your family's commitment to Christ to add to our wall.

Sandy Diehl

Finance

Financial Report through February 2024

General Fund Balance January 1, 2024	0
Income through February	$92,612
Expenses through February	66,449
Ending Balance (2/29/24)	$26,163

General Fund Balance 2/29/24	$ 26,163
Revolving Accounts Balance	56,464
Reserve Accounts	105,760
Investments as of 12/31/24 (end of 4th quarter 2023)	520,404
Net Financial Position (1/31/24)	$708,791

Anticipated pledged income through February
$47,647
Actual pledged income through February
$72,760

Deacons

We had the pleasure of delivering Easter Baskets to sixteen of our members needing some extra Easter joy and love, in hopes of brightening their day.

Thank you again for helping with our last food collection for the Mason Food Bank. We'll be having another collection soon.

There are many in our church family who are in need of our prayers, love, and care. Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers. And, thank you for your continuing generosity to help those in need!

Donna Hujsak

Parish Life

Birthdays in April

Paul Blonshine	4/01
Shirley Herrick	4/02
Ted Welch	4/02
Tonya Seely	4/03
Rachael Greene	4/07
Bruce Caltrider	4/11
Anne Slavin	4/11
Andrew Pinches	4/16
Sally Trout	4/18
Calvin Hammond	4/22
Lucinda Davenport	4/23
Scott Robinson	4/29
Suzanne Lang	4/30

DIRECTORY ADDITIONS and CORRECTIONS

Abel, Evelyn, Diane, Gift, & Keren Tayong
54 Lilac Lane
Mason, MI 48854
517-885-8576
ngonongolevy@yahoo.com
email correction

Shirley Day
Quincy Place Senior Living
12300 Quincy Street
Holland MI 49424

Merrilee & Lyle Brockman
2050 S. Washington Road
Holt, MI 48842
517-709-3746

There will be an **Explorers Class** for anybody who wants to learn more about our various ministries or who might be considering membership. It will be on Sundays following worship from April 7 through May 5. You'll learn about our Presbyterian identity, all the different things that go on around this church, and different ways you can get involved. Lunch will be provided. Please let Sheren or Bill know if you are interested!

THE NEXT CRAFT AND LUNCH DATE IS APRIL 23, AT 10AM
(NOTE TIME CHANGE).

THE COST IS $5.00 FOR SUPPLIES. LUNCH IS PROVIDED BY THE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION.

PLEASE SIGN UP ON THE SHEET OUTSIDE THE OFFICE OR CONTACT GLADYS OR DEBBIE!

The Women's Association will hold the spring Rummage Sale on April 18th & 19th. Please bring your gently used items to the conference room downstairs. If you call ahead in the morning, we'll open the dining room door for you for easy access.

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 Lent activities, and the Miracles of Jesus. An Easter egg hunt was held March 20th, definitely our coldest one ever! A big thanks to the older youth for hiding the eggs while we had snow flurries. Several youth participated in a Palm Sunday celebration including a palm parade led by Pastor Bill. We have a special craft to complete on Easter Sunday and look forward to an Easter party.

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. The curriculum topic is "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. The older youth enjoyed attending a community-wide concert/speaker on March 3rd. The event was held at Eden church and seven churches in the Mason area participated.

Wonderful Wednesday –
Every Wednesday after school, the program concludes with a community dinner at 6:00pm. Lenten activities this month included making Easter crafts for the Deacons to include in their Easter baskets for "special members." A few of Jesus's miracles has been the focus of lessons during the month.

*** Scholarship Applications have been sent out to several students in college or just graduating. There will also be extra Applications on the table outside of the office. The completed form is due in the office by May 7th.

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-
During Lent, several people have participated in lessons developed and taught by Michelle Mackey. "The Chosen" video series will start again after Easter. The video includes an accompanying Bible study and discussion time.

Important dates to remember

March 22nd – March 31st	Spring Break for Mason schools
March 28th	Maundy Thursday service at 7 PM
March 29th	Good Friday service at noon, childcare will be provided
March 31st	Easter Sunday party during Sunday school
April 3rd	No Wednesday program. Lori will be out of town.
April 7th	Start of Sunday school
April 10th	Return of Wednesday program as usual

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
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:
2024 - Jerry Ambrose, Lucinda Davenport, Loren Harkness, Tonya Seely.
2025 - Doreen Chapman, Mary Garland Jackson, Monte Shuck (*Recording Clerk*).
2026 - Bruce Archer (*Clerk of Session*), Ginnie Gibson, Jane Hamelink, Tim Hammond.

DEACONS:
2024 - Donna Hujsak, Issie Nielsen, Camille Subject.
2025 - Marge Clarke, Julie Dart, Timothy Pinches, Tom Seely (*Moderator*).
2026 - Ron Dlouhy, Bill Leutscher, Sandy Leutscher, Nancy Sue MacDonald, Laurie McGonigal.