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

September 2024

Christian Worship (continued)

Symbols

Certain biblical images have come to have deeper significance, multiple associations, and lasting meaning for the people of God. We call these symbols. There are numerous examples in the Old Testament—tree, temple, rainbow, river, sheep, scroll, building, body. New Testament writers drew on this treasury of common meaning to convey their understanding of Christ, the gospel, the Church, and the realm of God. Certain prominent symbols from Scripture, such as light, book, water, bread, cup, and cross, play an important role in Christian worship. Such things are not objects to be worshiped, but signs that point to the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

We come to know God's Word more fully when it is both proclaimed and enacted in worship. The Old Testament describes symbolic actions in worship—fasting and feasting, rejoicing and lamenting, dancing and singing, marking and anointing, cleansing and offering, doing justice and showing mercy. The Gospels demonstrate how Jesus brought new meaning to existing practices of faith—especially baptism and breaking bread—and transformed ordinary acts of compassion—healing the sick, giving alms to the poor, feeding the hungry, and washing feet—into new ways of serving God. Christian worship includes a variety of symbolic actions, with strong ties to these and other biblical practices—gathering and sending, kneeling and standing, speaking and singing, cleansing and offering, marking and anointing, eating and drinking, blessing and laying on of hands. All of these convey the gracious action of God and communicate our grateful response.

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

Session Synopsis

Session convened this month after the usual two month summer break. Over the break the active membership declined by one with the passing of Sheren Wright and increased by five with the reception of Debi and Mike Buchman, Tessa Edmondson, Isaac Reyes, and Barbara Georgescu. The Active Member Roll stands at 150 members.

Pastor Bill expressed his gratitude for the church family's support in continuing church operations in the absence of Sheren, especially the efforts of Sally Hughes, Sandy Diehl, and Ginnie Gibson. Debbie Johnson has also stepped in for Sally in the office.

The Administration Committee reported the west wing AC is still malfunctioning and awaiting more parts and repair. With Sheren's position being redeveloped into two positions, another office is being set up in the basement adjacent to the elevator mechanical room. An additional phone for that office has been ordered to be installed. The sound and livestream team continue to seek better microphone systems, especially for Parish Associate Jim Hegedus, needed for sound quality.

The Worship and Music Committee intends to decorate the sanctuary for Fall following the September 8th worship service. The committee is also updating the various worship procedures.

The Mission Committee has been continually consulting with Mason Community Services to support community social services. MCS is sponsoring a fundraising golf outing on September 7th.

The Bridge Builders Task Force met with a representative of the Edgewood United Church of Christ to share experiences in support of the Justice League. The Task Force and Mission Committee are considering the scope of ongoing support for Justice League. The Task Force is planning to review the community impact of the 1970's project building I-496 amidst downtown Lansing residential neighborhoods. Members of the Task Force are also preparing book reviews of recent church library acquisitions addressing race and ethnicity.

The Finance Committee is taking the opportunity of transitioning the Financial Secretary position to also upgrade the finance procedures to less paper and more digital accounting and reporting. Session supported the extension of Ginnie Gibson's services until a new hire is on board.

Parish Life continues to consult with less active members who may wish to consider being Associate members instead.

The Security Team has been on duty for each worship service and Wonderful Wednesday events. The Team updated the list of office key holders and Team members to include new Team members Barry Chapman and Isaac Reyes. The Team has discovered internal doors occasionally unsecured over the summer.

The Personnel Committee completed the annual favorable evaluation of Organist/Pianist Feng Kang. The Board of Pensions provide Clergy retirement and medical coverages. The medical benefits have been dramatically revised and will require selection of new medical option plans this Fall. The committee is working with Pastor Bill and the impact of the benefit changes to recommended 2025 Terms of Call. Session supported the appointment of Suzanne Lang to the Personnel Committee to replace Emelia Hammond who is wishing to pursue other service to the church. Session also approved new separate part-time position descriptions for Office Manger and Financial Secretary to be immediately posted for hiring.

The Spiritual Growth Committee clarified the lack of chaperones that resulted in cancelling the church youth attending the Montreat Youth Retreat this summer. The roles of Spiritual Growth participation on the Scholarship Commission and budgeting Camp Greenwood Association partnership were also clarified.

The annual joint gathering of Deacons and Elders is to take place on August 25th, hosted by Jane Hamelink and Ron Dlouhy.

Elders will be attending Presbytery required Boundary training at the Holt Presbyterian Church on August 24th.

Bruce F. Archer
Clerk of Session

Deacons

Deacons are collecting coats, hats, gloves, mittens, boots and scarves. Please put them in the box in the closet in the Memorial room. They will be given away in October.

A total of 120 pounds of food was delivered to the Mason Food Bank in August, thanks to your generous donations. Thank you all!! A new collection of the foods listed below has started and will continue through September 9: macaroni and cheese, tuna, peanut butter, canned corn, and canned peas.

The Harvest Table is offering your homegrown produce each Sunday in the Memorial Room. Please bring in any extra produce you would like to share.

The annual Crop Walk is scheduled for October 13. This year it will begin and end at the First Congregational Church, 120 North Jackson Street, in Jackson. Watch for more information in the Sunday bulletins.

The annual Coats For Kids Drive in on the schedule this fall. This community project collects and distributes warm winter coats, hats, gloves, boots, etc. to children and adults in need. Gently used or new items can be dropped off at the church any time. Issie Nielsen has polar fleece fabric that would be great for making hats for the Coat Drive. The hats are simple. We would need people to cut out hats, some to cut the fringe and tie the top of hats, and some to sew them. A few machines would be helpful, and Issie will have her Serger available. If you would like to work on making them at the church sometime in September, please text Issie at 676-5210 and let her know what time might be best for you. Thank you!

Please continue to pray for those in our church family that are in need of our love, care and support.

- Donna Hujsak, Secretary

Parish Life

Birthdays in September

Tami Chapman	9/03	Gift Tayong	9/22
Ron Dlouhy	9/03	Marge Clarke	9/23
Eleanor Simpson	9/07	Tessa Edmondson	9/23
Jenny Bond	9/09	Diane Tayong	9/24
Suzie Threadgould	9/10	Shirley Kline	9/25
Marla St. George	9/16	Colin Pinches	9/27
Jerry Richards	9/18	Rebecca Cornish	9/28

Spiritual Growth

Mark your calendars for Family Camp Weekend at Camp Greenwood!

When: September 6-8
Where: Camp Greenwood in Gowen, MI (near Greenville)
Who: YOU! This is an all-ages event: singles, couples, families and friends.
Please join us beginning Friday evening around 7 for a campfire, s'mores and fellowship, followed by a day of fun activities including adult Bible Study, kids' activities, hiking, swimming, kayaking, fishing and general relaxing. Sunday morning, we have a beautiful, causal Worship service in the Chapel in the Woods. Come for a day, stay for the weekend, whatever fits your schedule! Sign-up sheets are posted outside the office door for cabin requests.
For questions and additional information see Lori Filka or Sarah Fay-Koutz.

Youth Programs

September 11th—Wonderful Wednesday program begins!

- Youth of all school ages are welcome to come following dismissal from school. As per usual, there will be snacks and recreation when the youth first arrive followed by a small lesson and craft. This year we will continue to have "Chapel with Pastor Bill!" This has become a great HIT over the years. Much of the work that goes into our various youth mission projects takes place during the time together on Wednesdays.
- In many ways, the midweek youth program's philosophy has been a blessing to our church family for over 20 years. We provide a space and the tools necessary to build-up the trusting friendships between our growing group of young believers in Jesus Christ. Sunday…..to the following Sunday…. is a LONG time no matter what your age. Youth need to feel God's love and the powerful, trusting friendships they have made at church – midweek. The interactions between multi-aged youth is wonderful to watch as they help each other grow.

Please let Lori Filka know if you need assistance with transportation.

September 15th –Sunday School begins!

- The Sunday school classes will take place during the traditional Kid's church time- during the actual worship service. There will be 2 classrooms divided by age groups.
- Lori Filka will be teaching the younger youth from ages K-5th grade, and Sarah Koutz will be teaching middle/high school.
- More information will be coming directly to the parents regarding Sunday school curriculum.

A BIG THANK-YOU TO OUR CAMP GREENWOOD SPONSOR!

We were able to send 24 youth to camp this year at no cost to their families! This is such a blessing to our church family! We thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

Adult Programs

September 17th Adult Bible Study-
Please join us after worship for the 4th year of the exciting video series entitled "The Chosen". The video ncludes an accompanying Bible study and discussion time. Season 4 involves: "Threated by the reality of Jesus' growing influence, religious leaders do the unthinkable—ally with their Roman oppressors. As the seeds of betrayal are planted and opposition to Jesus' message turns violent, he's left with no alterative but to demand his followers RISE UP."

Winsome Women Fall Retreat at the Grand Hotel Mackinac Island - October 24 & 25

Please let Michelle or Lori know if you are interested in attending this conference. Learn more at wswretreats.com.

Worship & Music

September 2024 Worship Calendar

September 1 **Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost** ~ Communion ~ Musical Trio
September 8 **Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost** ~ Rev. Dr. Jim Hegedus preaching
~ Message from the Mission Committee
September 15 **Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost** ~ Choir returns ~ Children's Sermon
September 22 **Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost** ~ Message from the Worship and Music Committee
September 29 **Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost** ~ Two-Cents-a-Meal Hunger Offering
~ Message from the Finance Committee

An Invitation to Sing or Ring!

The Sanctuary Choir will return to regular rehearsals starting on Wednesday, September 4, from 7:10 to 8:30 p.m. The Sanctuary Bell Choir will return to regular rehearsals starting on Wednesday, September 4, from 6:30 to 7:00 p.m. Both the Bell and Sanctuary Choirs are always looking to welcome new Ringers and Singers. Just show up and we will have a place for you. If you have any questions, contact Deb Melse or any Choir member.

Finance

Financial Report through July 2024

General Fund Balance January 1, 2024	0
Income through July	$ 235,332
Expenses through July	$ 212,067
Ending Balance (7/31/24)	$ 23,265

General Fund Balance 7/31/24	$ 23,265
Revolving Accounts Balance	57,628
Reserve Accounts Balance	82,285
Investments as of 6/30/24 (end of 2nd quarter 2024)	535,701
Net Financial Position (7/31/24)	**$698,879**

Anticipated pledged income through July
$166,763
Actual pledged income through July
$178,935

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 on the Monday following each month's Session meeting. *Please be prompt. Late submissions may not be honored. We try 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
TEMPORARY FINANCIAL SECRETARY - Ginnie Gibson
SANCTUARY CHOIR DIRECTOR & BELL CHOIR DIRECTOR - Deb Melse
CHORAL ACCOMPANIST & ORGANIST - Dr. 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.