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

October 2024

Christian Worship (continued)

Culture

God has poured out the Holy Spirit on all flesh; Scripture promises that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. The book of Acts and the New Testament epistles record the challenges and controversies of an emerging Church that would be "no longer Jew or Greek" (Gal. 3:28), but one in Jesus Christ. As the Church has grown and spread over two thousand years, it has taken root and flourished in cultures and lands all around the globe—bearing witness to the love of God for all the world and Christ's sovereignty in every place. Finally, from the book of Revelation, we know that the company of the redeemed will be a great multitude from every nation, tribe, and people, singing praise to the Lamb of God.

Christian worship is contextual—emerging from a particular community and incorporating the words, images, symbols, and actions that best convey the good news of Jesus Christ in that gathering of God's people. It is also cross-cultural—reflecting the diversity of traditions and cultures within and beyond the community of faith. Christian worship is transcultural—proclaiming the universal message of God's grace in Jesus Christ and rooted in common elements of human life that transcend all cultures. It is also countercultural—asserting the scandal of the gospel and anticipating God's reign of righteousness, justice, and peace. Finally, faithful worship should be an intercultural event—fostering mutuality, dialogue, and equality among all people.

Whenever and wherever we gather in Jesus' name, we join the praise and prayer of the people of God in every time and place. Therefore, it is fitting that we share stories and sing songs from cultures other than our own as we pray for and with the Church throughout the world.

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

Session Synopsis

The September meeting of the Presbytery established the 2025 Minimum Terms of Call and recommendations for the new options in the changing Board of Pensions (BOP) medical coverages. With medical benefit costs increasing, the BOP is attempting to balance costs across churches of all sizes and situations. Presbyterian congregations are required to provide BOP medical coverage for at least the Pastor. As more information becomes available, the impact on Pastor Bill's 2025 Terms of Call recommendations will be evaluated. Also announced at the Presbytery meeting were the new increased honorarium for pulpit supply to $200 plus IRS mileage for 2025.

Pastor Bill reported on the status of new staff interviews with the selection of Frances Miller for Financial Secretary and Le Ji (Claire) as Choral Music Accompanist. Interviews continue with candidates for Office Manager and Worship Music Accompanist. With separation of the Office Manager and Financial Secretary duties, offices have separated and the need for another printer for the special check printing requirements was recognized. A new printer was authorized for the Financial Secretary's office (basement, adjacent to the elevator mechanical room). Session Elders also commented on the recent Boundary Training required for all Teaching Elders (Pastors) and is now also required for all Presbytery church leaders, including Session Ruling Elders.

Session affirmed earlier e-mail votes supporting the timely hiring or Francis Miller as Financial Secretary and Le Ji (Claire) as Choral Music Accompanist. A similar action will be on next month's agenda to affirm the e-mail vote supporting the hiring of Jessica Tessman as Office Manager in the days following this meeting of Session.

The Spiritual Growth Committee reported a successful family camp at Camp Greenwood involving 30 some church family participants. On average church youth activities engage some 30 youth (3 pre-school age, 7 elementary age, and 20 middle/high school age).

The Administration Committee has identified resources within the congregation to repair the sanctuary ceiling in the near future. The heating/cooling system has been returned to normal operations. The bees have been eradicated from the east entry porch. The committee is anticipating further requests for office furnishings once the new staff members have sorted their duties and needs.

Session reviewed and approved revisions in Worship and Music procedures supporting worship services.

The Mission Committee is requesting a 10% increase in 2025 mission support activities.

The Nominating Committee begins meetings this month to provide a slate of nominees for Session Elders, Deacons, and Nominating Committee members. The slate is scheduled to be presented at the Special Congregational Meeting on November 24th.

The Bridge Builders Task Force is planning a screening of the video "They Even Took the Dirt" in October or November. Discussion will follow on the community and racial impact of the 1968-1970 project building I-496 through Lansing.

Committees should have submitted 2025 budget requests to the Finance Committee in September. The 2025 per capita of $42 will be applied to the 155 members on the Active Member Roll as of the end of 2023 ($6,510). The staff changeover has thwarted efforts for a financial review of 2023 records. Session approved revisions of the Finance Committee Description & Responsibilities and for the Memorial Committee.

The Parish Life Committee has noted that donations for Wednesday night dinners are not sufficiently covering inflationary food costs. The encouragement of more and larger donations was suggested before tasking budget support or impacting other funding supporting other mission projects. Session approved the Parish Life recommendation to transfer 5 inactive Active Members to the Associate Member Roll.

The Security Team announced another new member who will also be assisting in the rotating security assignment of Wonderful Wednesday activities. More volunteers are welcome especially for the Wednesday events. The Team has now established an authorized list of 9 office key holders.

The Personnel Committee is preparing the Session recommendation, in consultation with Pastor Bill, the 2025 Terms of Call especially impacted this year by the changes in BOP medical plans. Session approved a revised Choral Music Accompanist position description.

The review of *The Book of Order* Session responsibilities continues under review. Each review highlights specific responsibly aspects and assigns that aspect to a committee best for the implementation of the responsibility area. Several areas remain for review and assignment.

Bruce F. Archer
Clerk of Session

Deacons

A total of 102 pounds of food was delivered to the Mason Food Bank in September, thanks to your generous donations. Thank you all!! A new collection of the foods listed below has started: macaroni and cheese, tuna, peanut butter, canned corn and peas, chunky hearty soup, and chicken Noodle soup.

Unfortunately, there will not be a Mason CROP Walk this year. You are welcome to support the Jackson CROP Walk, scheduled for Sunday, October 13 at First Congregational Church, 120 N. Jackson St., Jackson, MI.

More winter coats, hats, gloves, boots are needed for the annual Coats For Kids Drive happening October 26, 8:00am-2:00pm, at St. James Catholic Church. This community project collects and distributes warm winter gear to children and adults in need. Gently used or new items can be dropped off at the church any time. Thank you!

We have 2 open Sundays for sanctuary flowers in 2025 – January 5 and June 1. The cost is $25. If you would like to donate flowers in honor or memory of someone, please contact Donna Hujsak or Sandy Leutscher.

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 October

Kurt Immekus	10/02	Linda Peterson	10/15
Jacob Edmondson	10/03	Sam VanDyke	10/17
Matthew McGonigal	10/04	Tim Caswell	10/22
Sarah Fay-Koutz	10/06	Kate Barber	10/29
Doreen Chapman	10/14	Erin McGonigal	10/29
Mary Garland Jackson	10/15	Bill Pinches	10/30
		Tyler Harkness	10/31

Boy Scout Troop 763 is now taking orders for the annual wreath sales. Price remains at $25 each for a 22” diameter fresh fir wreath. See Luke or Andrew Mackey, Scouts in the church family or sign up on the order sheet (Bruce Archer, Scout Adult) on the office bulletin board. Sale lasts until the remaining 90 of 180 wreaths are sold. Delivery is prior to Thanksgiving to last though the Christmas and New Years holidays.

Spiritual Growth

Youth Programs

Children's Sunday School

The new curriculum this year is called "Big Faith" by Cokesbury. The kids will start with God creating the earth, people, and helpers. We will also be talking about Jonah and the whale, Noah's ark, Abraham and Sarah….for starters. It will be a fun review of the Old Testament!

Middle/High Sunday School

The youth continue with the "Groove" curriculum by Cokesbury. Their study is entitled "I Am", where they dive into the Bible and discern the following topics: I am a child of God, I am a disciple, I am a servant, and I am called. This year the youth are taking turns leading the lessons.

Wonderful Wednesday

Such a fun start to the Wednesday program! We are making spooky crafts and playing spooky games. Given the themes of Halloween, sometimes there is fear for young people. Therefore, we have been learning about Psalm 34:4---I prayed to the Lord, and he answered me. He freed me from all my fears.

Our youth will be making "unleavened bread" for World Communion Sunday taking place the first Sunday in October.

Urban Plunge! November 9th & 10th

The middle/high school youth will be spending the night at the church and engaging in local mission work during the day on Saturday leading into the Sunday worship time. We are super excited about this yearly event!

Adult Programs

Adult Bible Study

Please join us after worship for the 4th year of the exciting video series entitled "The Chosen." The video includes 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."

Wednesday Noon Prayer Time

This is a brief (15-20 minutes) gathering in the downstairs chapel led by Michelle Mackey. It is a meaningful time together where we pray for and with one another. We look forward to seeing you on Wednesdays at noon!

Worship & Music

October 2024 Worship Calendar

October 6	20th Sunday after Pentecost ~ World Communion Sunday
October 13	21st Sunday after Pentecost
October 20	22nd Sunday after Pentecost ~ Children's Message
October 27	23rd Sunday after Pentecost ~ Two-Cents-a-Meal Hunger Offering
	~ Message from the Finance Committee

Finance

Financial Report through August 2024

General Fund Balance: January 1, 2024	0
Income through August	$ 265,940
Expenses through August	$ 239,233
Ending Balance (8/31/24)	$ 26,707

General Fund Balance 8/31/24	$ 26,707
Revolving Accounts Balance	60,802
Reserve Accounts Balance	72,288
Investments as of 6/30/24 (end of 2nd quarter 2024)	530,026
Net Financial Position (8/31/24)	**$689,823**

Anticipated pledged income through August
$190,586

Actual pledged income through August
$194,240

A few words from your Finance Committee – Preparing for 2025 is underway!

October is the month when our members and friends are asked to consider their financial commitment for the next year and to return their pledge card no later than the last Sunday in October. Pledged income comprises about 78% of the sources of income supporting the Church's General Operating Budget, so knowing this number is vitally important in developing it!

Your commitment to financially support your church in 2025 is critical as your Session begins developing the spending plan for the next year. Our current annual operations budget is $367,110. 65% of that goes to support the dedicated individuals who have been chosen to direct and assist us, and most of the remainder (22%) goes to keeping our church building open and functioning. The remaining 13% – in addition to the donations to the many projects spearheaded by our Board of Deacons – goes to support our youth and help those in need in our community and elsewhere. Our 67 pledges for this year provided us with $285,879, or 78% of the income supporting this budget. Looking forward, inflationary pressures will increase the amount of funds needed to just continue what we are currently doing. And there is no doubt that we could do more!

It is our life in and our commitment to our church which will be of immense help in following the two commandments which guide our life – LOVE GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART and LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF!

If anyone has questions about the importance of your financial commitment, please contact myself, any member of the Finance Committee, the Session, or Pastor Bill Pinches.

Please prayerfully consider your financial commitment for the next year and return your pledge as soon as possible, but no later than Sunday, October 29. If you have not received a pledge card by October 10, please contact the church ASAP.

Thanks! Jerry Ambrose, Chair, Finance Committee (517-230-9793; gambrose49@gmail.com)

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
SANCTUARY CHOIR DIRECTOR & BELL CHOIR DIRECTOR - Deb Melse
OFFICE MANAGER - Jessica Tessman
FINANCIAL SECRETARY - Frances Miller
CHORAL MUSIC ACCOMPANIST - Le Ji ("Claire")
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.

Directory Update: Gladys Welker has a new phone number: 517-883-5016. This replaces the old one.

Dear Mason First Presbyterian Church,

Thank you for all your prayers, thoughts, and support during this most recent loss in my extended family. I appreciate the prayer chain keeping everyone up to date, and we especially were so appreciative of the luncheon provided to my family and our friends. It gave us more time to be together when we had the chance, to share stories and memories. Thanks for all.

In Christ,

Kathy Oesterle and Family