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 2024

Sources and Principles of Worship

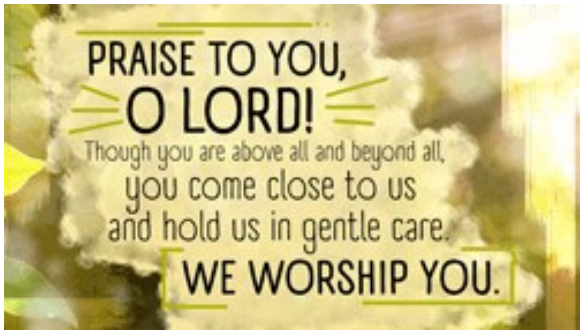
Sources of Order

Worship shall be faithful to the Holy Spirit who speaks in Scripture. The witness of Scripture provides the Church's preeminent, authoritative source for the ordering of worship. Those responsible for planning and leading worship are also to be guided by the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), instructed by the wisdom of the Reformed tradition, attentive to the traditions of the universal Church, and sensitive to the culture and context of the worshiping community.

Form and Freedom

Christian worship has always been marked by a tension between form and freedom. Some traditions have emphasized established orders of worship, seeking to be faithful to the Scriptures. Others have resisted fixed forms of worship, asserting our freedom in Christ. We acknowledge that all forms of worship are provisional and subject to reformation according to the Word of God. Fixed forms of worship are valuable in that they offer consistent patterns and practices that help to shape lives of faith and faithfulness. More spontaneous approaches to worship are valuable in that they provide space for unexpected insight and inspiration. In whatever form it takes, worship is to be ordered by God's Word and open to the creativity of the Holy Spirit.

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



Session Synopsis

Session approved the request of an Associate Member to return to the Active Member Roll. The Session also, by consensus, agreed with the Clerk of Session's recommended disposition of items that have been secured in a safe deposit box. Items to be retained include the property deeds to the church and playground parcels, and a videotape of the church and shed contents.

Pastor Bill reported the initial completion of name tags. Once a name tag is claimed it may be worn during church activities and then remain at the church in one of two name tag cabinets, one at the east entry and one at the main entry.

The Personnel Committee reported on a very active month processing new hires and continuing annual position evaluation of the Spiritual Growth Director, Lori Filka. Lori's efforts have resulted in increased participation, especially among youth. The committee has been asked to consider the staffing of a Youth Spiritual Growth Coordinator position.

The Administration Committee reported completion of the sanctuary ceiling repair with no impact on the budget. Talents among the church and committee personnel and resources from church members reduced expenses considerably from the $20,000 contractor quote. Costs were covered by an anonymous donor. The committee negotiated a proposed 35% increase in cleaning services down to a 17.5% increase for the 2025 budget year. Other alternative cleaning services will be considered while continuing the use of the existing cleaning service. The committee designated Saturday, November 16th for the fall church yard clean-up beginning at 9 AM.

The Worship & Music Committee received many favorable comments on the use of unleavened bread for Communion. The committee is preparing for Remembrance Sunday, November 3rd. A list to add names to the remembrance list is available at the office bulletin board. The committee is also preparing to honor veterans during the November 10th service.

Session approved an agreement with Advent House committing $2,700 through the Mission Committee to support assistance to families or individuals setting up households and to aid the homeless in a continuing mission at an encampment.

The Nominating Committee reported the progress having nominees for 1 of 1 partial term and 3 of 4 full term Session Elders. The Board of Deacons have nominees for 2 of the 4 full term and still need a partial term Deacon nominee. There are currently 1 of 3 nominees for the Nominating Committee. The slate of nominees will be placed for election by the congregation at the Special Congregational meeting on November 24th.

The Bridge Builders Task Force will host a screening of the video "They Even Took the Dirt" following the service on October 27th. Discussion and light refreshments will follow the screening of the impact on the Black community for the 1970 construction of I-496 through Lansing.

Session approved the purchase of new software supporting a new payroll module and online Quick Books program for ongoing financial operations. Session also approved revised Financial Policies and Procedures. Subsequent revisions may follow addressing the use of credit cards and business lines of credit. An update of the proposed 2025 General Fund Budget will be presented at the October 27th worship service.

Session discussed the shortfall of donations not covering the increasing food costs of the Wednesday night dinner. The fall rummage sale has been postponed and will be rescheduled or deferred until spring.

The Security Team received a report of the Barnes Street door propped open on a weekday with no one apparently around. Subsequent building checks revealed nothing out of the ordinary. A list of 9 people authorized to have a key to the office has been established and will be maintained by the Security Team.

The Session continues a review of Book of Order responsibilities for Sessions to determine the appropriate committee to perform the specified responsibilities. By consensus, directing the ministry of deacons and all organizations of the congregation is by Session with the assistance of the Pastor. Leading the congregation in participating in the mission of the whole church is the Pastor with support of the Session. And serving judicial matters in accordance with the rules of Church Discipline is by Session. The review continues through the long list of responsibilities.

Bruce F. Archer
Clerk of Session

Deacons

A total of 114 pounds of food was delivered to the Mason Food Bank in October. Thank you for your generous donations! We are now collecting food items for the annual Christmas Basket Project. Our grocery list includes: canned vegetables, canned fruit, stuffing mix, instant potatoes, canned gravy, crackers, cereal, mac & cheese, peanut butter, jelly, spaghetti noodles and sauce, pasta/rice mix, cranberry sauce, apple sauce, canned chicken, tuna, Hershey's miniatures candy, laundry soap, dish soap, liquid hand soap, paper towels, toilet paper. There are copies of the shopping list on the table in the Memorial Room and items can be dropped off there.

We are looking forward to preparing and delivering Thanksgiving Baskets to some special members this month and bringing smiles and sharing love.

There is still an open Sunday for sanctuary flowers on June 1. Please let us know if you would like to donate flowers in memory of a loved one.

Christmas is coming! It is time to start thinking about our biggest project of the year – filling Christmas baskets with food, gifts, and clothing for local families. Watch for details to donate specific clothing and toy gifts needed for our recipient families.

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 November

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

The fall yard and garden clean-up will commence at 9 AM on Saturday, November 16. The church has some yard tools but you are welcome to bring your own. Any further questions, contact Greg Lang or Bruce Archer.

Parish Life asks for donations to cover the costs of the Wednesday Night dinners.

Worship & Music

November 2024 Worship Calendar

November 3	24th Sunday after Pentecost	~ All Saints Day/Remembrance Sunday
		~ Sacrament of the Lord's Supper
		~ Rev. Dr. Jim Hegedus preaching
November 10	25th Sunday after Pentecost	~ Recognition of our Veterans
November 17	26nd Sunday after Pentecost	~ Children's Message
November 24	27rd Sunday after Pentecost	~ Two-Cents-a-Meal Hunger Offering
		~ Message from the Deacons
		~ Congregational Meeting following worship

The Congregational Meeting following worship on Sunday, November 24, will be for the purpose of electing Elders, Deacons, and members of the Nominating Committee, and to approve the Pastor's Terms of Call for 2025. Business is limited to those items.

Finance

Financial Report through August 2024

General Fund Balance: January 1, 2024	0
Income through September	$ 280,768
Expenses through September	$ 265,386
Ending Balance (9/30/24)	$ 15,382

General Fund Balance 9/30/24	$ 15,382
Revolving Accounts Balance	61,132
Reserve Accounts Balance	72,363
Investments as of 6/30/24 (end of 2nd quarter 2024)	535,701
Net Financial Position (9/30/24)	$684,578

Anticipated pledged income through September
$214,409

Actual pledged income through September
$208,067

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

As you know, October was the month when our members and friends were 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.

THANKS to the 67 members, families, and friends who by the end of October made their financial commitment to the church for 2025! Hopefully we will receive additional pledges over the next few weeks, as our financial planning for 2025 is underway, and a critical component of that is knowing the financial commitment of our members and friends.

We currently estimate that $394,002 is necessary to continue what we are currently doing. Approximately 65% of that amount will go to support the dedicated individuals who have been chosen to direct and assist us, 22% will go to keeping our church building open and functioning, and 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. The $256,124 currently pledged does not appear sufficient to continue all that we are currently doing.

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 you have not yet sent in your pledge form, please do so as soon as possible. Pledges can be returned by mail to the church at 131 E Maple Street, Mason 48854 or by email to jess@masonpresbyterian.org. Pease contact the church office at (517) 676-9333 if you would like a pledge form. If you have any questions about the financial aspects of your church, or the importance of your financial commitment, please contact Finance Chair Jerry Ambrose, any member of the Finance Committee, any member of the Session, or Pastor Bill Pinches.

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

Bridge Builders

A book review of
The False White Gospel
by Jim Wallis

In this book, the author references several well-known biblical verses and asks the reader personal questions about them. For example; Genesis 1:26: "Then God said, Let us make humankind in our own image, according to our own likeness." Do we believe that all of us were created after God's own image and likeness – or not? and John 8:32: "You will know the truth and the truth will make you free." Do we believe that not knowing the truth and submitting to lies will take away our freedom – or not? He challenges the assertion of many white Christian churches today that faith is a private affair – it's only about them and God, a vertical faith and not a horizontal one that reaches out to the world. And he calls us all to action, to bring the challenges our democracy is facing into our churches and confront them in a faith-based effort to spread the scripture-based truth to all people in the country.
This book was recommended by PC(USA) and I urge everyone in our congregation to read it.
Monte Shuck

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

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 - Jess Weber
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.

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