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 2026

What's Going On at Delta and Dimondale?

(Or: Why is Pastor Bill having to leave quickly after worship so frequently?)

There have been a number of times this year when I have had to leave pretty promptly after worship to get to a meeting at either the First Presbyterian Church of Dimondale or Delta Presbyterian Church in Lansing. Most of you are probably aware, to some degree, that these two churches are considering consolidating into one faith community. I'm writing this to give you a little more background, and also to invite your prayers for these congregations, their leaders, and their members, as they consider their future together.

Both churches have been served by Rev. Ben Rumbaugh for the past two or three years. They began worshiping together, alternating between the two buildings on a monthly basis. They also began enjoying fellowship activities together, and some committees opened their doors to welcome members from the other church. Last fall (about a year ago) they approached the Presbytery of Lake Michigan to ask for support in considering a possible consolidation of the two churches. An Administrative Commission was formed to help guide them, and I was asked to be a member of that Commission.

Rev. Jeff O'Neill, who served the First Presbyterian Church of Lansing (the downtown church) until his retirement several years ago, was the Moderator of our Administrative Commission, but unfortunately he passed away in February. I was then asked to become the Moderator of the Commission. Those were very big shoes to fill, but there was no other logical alternative.

The Sessions of the two churches have been meeting both separately and together on a regular basis, conducting normal church business and considering all the various ramifications of a consolidation. That included financial matters, administrative matters (church bylaws, committee structure, etc.), community and fellowship matters, and – most significantly – building and property matters. The proposal is to consolidate the Delta church into the Dimondale church, which could lead to the closure and sale of the Delta church building. Some Delta members, understandably, have concerns about that. Some Delta members (who are accustomed to a fully-accessible building) have also expressed concern about the fact that the Dimondale Sanctuary is on the second floor of the building and accessible only via an elevator or a full flight of stairs. These concerns have resulted in

many meetings, a consultation with the local Fire Chief, meetings with two architects (including Jackie Hoist, the architect in charge of our own church's renovation about ten years ago), and a whole lot of questions, conversations, and emails.

In the midst of all this, Rev. Rumbaugh recently announced he had accepted a call to become the Designated Pastor at the First Presbyterian Church in Lansing. There was considerable grief in the Delta and Dimondale churches when he made that announcement. His last Sunday for those two churches was August 9, and now the two churches are lining up pulpit supply for upcoming Sundays. Various members have stepped up to help with both administrative and pastoral care matters in the wake of his departure. But only an ordained clergy can moderate their Session meetings … so guess who has been asked to do that. Yes, it's me. Once again, there was no other logical choice. We are dealing with an acute clergy shortage both nationally and locally, with the result that pastors of strong, stable churches (like ours) are frequently being asked to take on additional responsibilities.

The Delta and Dimondale churches will be voting on the consolidation proposal on Sunday, September 20. They will have to have two separate meetings simultaneously, in different rooms with different moderators. I will be moderating one of those meetings and another pastor will be moderating the other. At the present time we honestly do not know which way the vote will go, given the complexity of the situation. The two churches could choose to consolidate, in which case all of Delta's assets, property, and membership rolls would be transferred to Dimondale. There would be numerous steps in that consolidation process, which would take a number of months to complete. A decision would also need to be made regarding what to do with the Delta church property, which is currently being used by several outside groups. Alternatively, one or both churches could choose not to consolidate, with the result that they would remain separate congregations. Decisions would then need to be made regarding whether to continue worshiping, serving, and fellowshipping together, and whether to seek new pastoral leadership separately or together. There would also be concerns about the long-term viability of at least one of those congregations.

I have been enjoying working with the leadership of both congregations; they are fine people who are wrestling with some really difficult questions. I was also very pleasantly surprised to discover that one of our former members is now a member at the Dimondale church – indeed, it's the person who was the chair of the Pastor Nominating Committee that called me to our church way back in 2008, John Zipp! John and his wife Irene now live in Grand Ledge, and have been actively involved in the Dimondale congregation for some time.

I would earnestly invite your prayers for these two congregations. Regardless of which way the vote on September 20 goes, they need our prayers and support!

Thank you for your understanding and patience with my frequent need to leave quickly following worship. Our two sister congregations on the west side of Lansing are very grateful for your willingness to share me with them!

Blessings,
Bill

Session Synopsis

Since the last meeting in May there has been a Presbytery meeting in June with presentations by representatives from the Synod of the Covenant and also various Presbytery Administrative Commissions.

The Board of Deacons report that the home communion program is being well received. Some families prefer the in-person home service with the live fellowship, while others prefer using home element kits during our livestream services. There is clearly a need for more volunteer Elders and Deacons for the program.

Pastor Bill provided an update on the Administrative Commission he serves discerning the future of the Delta and Dimondale Presbyterian Churches. He also has been involved with upgrading the office software to a program called Church 360, enhancing member directory, communications, and contribution records. The Community VBS went well with support of Mason First teenager aids, but none of the Mason First elementary youth were able to participate this year? Pastor Bill appreciates the service of new Office Manager Kathryn. Fading attendance will see the end of the midweek prayer services at the end of August. Pastor Bill outlined his vacation Sundays for Fall, to include Family Camp, Administrative Commission duty, family reunion, and an anniversary celebration.

Action on the Consent Agenda affirmed the summer e-mail activities revising the position descriptions of the Office Manager, Worship Music Accompanist, and Choral Music Accompanist. Summer e-mail activities also included the hiring of Kathryn Loffreda as Office Manager and Yinzhe Li "Ashlyn" as Choral Music Accompanist.

The Administration Committee reported completion of the repairs of the choir room and choir office flat roof. There remains a roof drain issue in the multi-purpose room. The hall light by the Chapel was replaced and will be investigated as to why it never turns off. The committee opted to continue meeting the 2nd Tuesday of the month at a new 9 AM start time.

The Worship and Music Committee is preparing for Fall, beginning with decorating the church at 10 AM on August 29th with any congregational help available. Updated Communion Server Guidelines have been placed in the upstairs coffee kitchen.

The attending Mission Committee members were recognized as honored guests at the summer family picnic of the Friends Group at Laylin Park. The committee continues the support of the church youth preparing PCUSA relief kits, and the youth periodically serving breakfast in Lansing. Mission funds were distributed to the usual local needs including restock of the Mason High School needs closet. Funds were also contributed to the national relief effort of the western U.S. wildfires.

The Nominating Committee will begin gathering a slate of nominees after Labor Day for the November congregational meeting to elect Deacons, Elders, and Nominating Committee members.

Session Synopsis (Cont'd)

Session approved the title change of the *Antiracism Statement* to *Antiracism Policy,* recommended by the Bridge Building Task Force to comply with *Book of Order* policy requirements. Safe Space #3 discussion will be scheduled after the return of the discussion moderator from her sabbatical later this fall.

The church received a $20,000 bequest from the estate of Jenny Bond. Session approved the distribution of the bequest among the invested New Covenant Funds for Scholarships and Perpetual Pledges and for the Mission revolving account as recommended by the Finance Committee and in concurrence with estate representatives. Session received the financial review report of 2025 from the accounting consulting firm Countryside Accounting. Session also approved the Finance Committee's recommendation for the creation of an invested New Covenant Fund for the music program. The endowed fund will support various music activities and music equipment maintenance and needs in accordance with the wishes of a pending donor.

Parish Life hosted luncheons for departing Organist Caitlyn Brown and welcoming Office Manger Kathryn Loffreda and Financial Secretary Becky Moots this summer. Wednesday Night dinners resume beginning on September 16th at 6 PM.

At a special morning meeting, Session and the congregation received new members Erica Isomura, Sheri Miller, Bonnie Ritter, and Charlie Woznack.

Bruce F Archer
Clerk of Session

Presbyterian Social Witness: Environmental Issues (Part 2)

This is the 20th part of a series exploring different aspects of our church's social witness policy.

These policies speak to climate change, extractive industries, energy policies, and the restoration and protection of creation.

1. Agriculture and Sustainability: "We Are What We Eat" (2002)

This report calls on the whole Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) – rural, suburban, and urban – to participate in the current agricultural revolution that is effecting everyone who produces and consumes food. The interdependence between food producer and consumer is significant, although it is a linkage we don't often acknowledge. Now, we have a unique opportunity to witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ through our daily food production and consumption decisions that will support sustainability, stewardship, compassion and community of all God's creation.

https://pcusa.org/sites/default/files/4-we-are-what-you-eat-2002.pdf (36 pages)

2. Globalization: "Globalization and the Environment – A Study Paper" (2003)

The focus of this paper is environmental degradation, in particular the attitudes toward nature that are still assumed in economic and political decisions and hence in the process of globalization. These assumed attitudes are now in conflict with newly emerging attitudes more conducive to environmental integrity. These old and new attitudes are also foundational to four major perspectives that are at the heart of the environmental debate over globalization. If economic globalization contributes to environmental degradation, it is certainly not the only contributor. Environmental degradation is a complex phenomenon with many causes. It is not a necessary consequence of globalization. Matters could be otherwise; but until the world's affluent learn to alter their desires to consume and to modify their attitudes toward nature, globalization will remain a cause of environmental degradation.

https://pcusa.org/sites/default/files/3-globalization-environment-2003.pdf (40 pages)

3. Water: "Report and Recommendations on Limited Water Resources and Takings" (2004)

The purpose of this study is to help the church understand and struggle with the issues surrounding limited water resources and takings, to think about the impact humans and groups have on the natural world and environment, and to explore why care for God's creation is part of our Christian call. The resolution affirms that the "issues of water rights and regulatory takings are exceedingly complex." It also affirms that the "spirit of love and justice and the creation of humans in the image of God that give foundation to rights are God-given." The report, however, reminds the church that rights are "limited by the community's responsibility to promote the common good and to restrain those who seek individual gain at the expense of others and the community as a whole."

https://pcusa.org/sites/default/files/water-resources1.pdf (34 pages)

I would encourage you to look at one or more of these documents to read and study.

Spiritual Growth

Important Dates

September 11-13 Family Camp at Greenwood
September 16 Start of Wonderful Wednesday
September 16 Start of Wednesday Night Dinner (6pm)
September 20 Start of Sunday School for all ages
September 20 Start of Adult Education (after worship)

Please join us for our annual Family Camp at Greenwood! September 11-13. A fun filled weekend of food, water sports, crafts, and lots of fellowship. A cabin sign-up sheet is outside the office. Please see Lori Filka or Sarah Fay-Koutz with questions.

Parish Life

BIRTHDAYS IN SEPTEMBER

Tami Chapman	9/3	Gift Tayong	9/22
Ron Dlouhy	9/3	Marge Clarke	9/23
Eleanor Simpson	9/7	Tessa Edmondson	9/23
Suzie Threadgould	9/10	Diane Tayong	9/24
Marla St. George	9/16	Shirley Kline	9/25
Jerry Richards	9/18	Colin Pinches	9/27

HAPPY
Birthday
FROM YOUR
CHURCH FAMILY

Deacons

Hello Everyone. The Deacons truly appreciate your support for the Back to School Project. This year, our church combined with other local organizations provided clothing and school supplies for 140 Mason children.

The Coats for Kids Project is another important program to support families in need in our community. This will provide warm outerwear, like coats, hats, boots, sweatshirts for all ages of people, infant to adult. By September 6, we will have two boxes for collecting new and gently used items in our Memorial Room. We will collect items until October 18. Financial donations clearly marked for the ***Deacons Coat Project*** will also be accepted.

Another way to support our community will be through our September food drive for the Mason Food Bank. We will post information regarding items needed in the September bulletins and Living Stones.

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

THE HARVEST TABLE — Our Harvest Table is a place where generosity grows. Each week, members of our church family bring in extra produce from their gardens—fresh vegetables, fruits, herbs, and other blessings from the soil. Anyone is welcome to take home what they need, and if you're able, a donation is appreciated. Every dollar given at the Harvest Table goes directly to the **Deacons Fund**, allowing our deacons to extend help to individuals and families facing hardship. Your homegrown gifts and kind donations become practical support—groceries, gas cards, emergency assistance, and other acts of care that make a real difference. It's a simple idea with a big impact; sharing what God has provided so others can feel His love in a tangible way. Thank you for giving, for growing, and for helping our church care for those in need.

Thank you for all the prayers, calls, cards, and words of encouragement while I have been on this journey with DBS (Deep Brain Stimulation) for Parkinson's. I am at the end of this journey; the wires are attached and the generator is on. Now, I just need to be programmed and fine tuned.

Thank you again for all your support!

Sincerely, Debbie Shellenbarger

Worship & Music

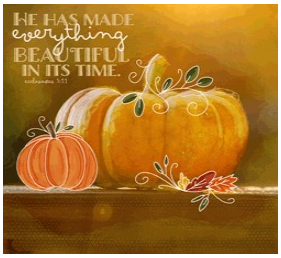
September 2026 Worship Calendar

September 6	15th Sunday after Pentecost	Communion
September 13	16th Sunday after Pentecost	Rev. Jim Hegedus preaching
September 20	17th Sunday after Pentecost	Children's Sermon Choir and Bell Choir Return Rev. Karen Kelley preaching
September 27	18th Sunday after Pentecost	Two-Cents-a-Meal Hunger Offering

Sanctuary Choir and Bells

The Sanctuary Choir and Bells are returning for another season of Music and Worship. We welcome you to join us!! Beginning Wednesday, September 9 Sanctuary Bells rehearse 6:30pm-7pm and Sanctuary Choir rehearses 7:10pm-8:30pm. Enjoy breaking out in song when you are in your car? Always wondered what it's like to sit in the Chancel? Enjoy donuts? Have a desire to ring a handbell? Enjoy being around good people to worship with? **TRY IT OUT!! WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU!** If you have any questions, please see Deb Melse or any Choir/Bell Ringer.

Fall Decorating



DECORATE THE CHURCH FOR THE FALL SEASON! As we move from a blistering hot summer into autumn, we look forward to cooler weather and the changing of the seasons. A tradition we have at our church is to decorate the church and the sanctuary to celebrate the power and glory of God. We plan to undertake this on August 29 at 10:00am. We are hoping the congregation will join us and enjoy the glorification of our Savior. If you can help, please see Mary Ozee. We really appreciate having the congregation take part.

Be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. *Joshua 1:9 (NLT)*

Give generously to them and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to. *Deuteronomy 15:10 (NIV)*

Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep. *Romans 12:15 (NIV)*

Financial Report

The July financial numbers are not available
due to continued issues with the financial software.
We apologize for the inconvenience.

Scholarship Commission

The Scholarship Commission included Ginnie Gibson (Finance Committee, Chair), Nancy Sue MacDonald and Sally Hughes (Deacons), Deb Schellenberger and Camille Subject (Session), and Lori Filka (Spiritual Growth Director, ex officio). The Commission met in June to review and discuss the six applications received. After careful consideration, the Commission agreed to award scholarships to all six applicants: Gift Tayong, Timothy Pinches, Andrew Mackey, Hannah Koutz, Lucy Simons, and Owen Brickner. We wish each applicant a wonderful 2026-2027 school year!

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 12:00 PM every Wednesday. Submissions for *The Cornerstone* are due by noon on the 20th day of every month. *Please be prompt. Late submissions may not be honored. We are attempting to publish the newsletter the week following Session.*

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.

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 - Kathryn Loffreda
FINANCIAL SECRETARY - Becky Moots
CHORAL MUSIC ACCOMPANIST - Yinzhe Li ("Ashlyn")
SEXTON - Eric VanDyke
YOUTH MINISTRY COORDINATOR: Sarah Fay-Koutz
ADULT SPIRITUAL GROWTH COORDINATOR -
Michelle Mackey

ELDERS:
2026 - Bruce Archer (*Clerk of Session*), Ginnie Gibson, Jane Hamelink, Tim Hammond.
2027 - Travis Archer, Evelyn Tayong, Dan Baker, Steve Sowles.
2028: Mary Garland Jackson, Greg Lang, Suzanne Lang, Monte Shuck.

DEACONS:
2026 - Ron Dlouhy, Bill Leutscher, Sandy Leutscher, Nancy Sue MacDonald, Laurie McGonigal.
2027 - Donna Archer, Rick Cote, Sally Hughes, Debbie Johnson, Issie Nielson.
2028: Sandy Diehl, Pattie Yanz, Torrie Yanz.