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

February 2026

Worship on the Lord's Day: Sacrament

(Continuing a discussion of various elements in the worship service)

Responsibility for Baptism

Baptism shall be authorized by the session and administered by a minister of the Word and Sacrament. The session's responsibilities for Baptism include: encouraging parents (or those exercising parental responsibility) to present their children for Baptism without undue haste or undue delay; encouraging new believers to be baptized; examining candidates for Baptism, or their parents, and instructing them in the significance of the Sacrament; enrolling those who are baptized as members of the congregation; and providing for their ongoing nurture and formation for baptismal life in the world. The congregation as a whole, on behalf of the universal Church, is responsible for nurturing baptized persons in Christian life. The session may designate certain members of the congregation as sponsors or mentors for those who are baptized or for their parents.

When a young child is presented for Baptism at least one parent (or person exercising parental responsibility) should be an active member of a Christian church, normally the congregation in which the baptism takes place. The session may consider a request to baptize a child whose parent is an active member of another church. If the session approves such a request, it should communicate with the council of the other congregation and notify them when the Sacrament has been administered. Those presenting children for Baptism will promise to nurture and guide them until they are ready to make a personal profession of faith and assume the responsibility of active church membership.

A council may authorize a Baptism, to be administered by a minister of the Word and Sacrament, in certain situations beyond the congregational setting, such as hospitals, prisons, schools, military bases, or other ministry settings. In these cases, the minister of the Word and Sacrament is responsible for ensuring that the name of the newly baptized person is placed on the appropriate roll of a council.

Presentation

The minister of the Word and Sacrament introduces the Sacrament of Baptism with sentences of Scripture; other sentences of Scripture may be spoken by ruling elders, members of the congregation, or ecumenical witnesses. On behalf of the session, a ruling elder presents each candidate for Baptism. Those desiring Baptism for their children or themselves express their intent to receive the Sacrament. Parents, sponsors (if applicable), and the congregation make vows to support and nurture those being baptized. No one comes to Baptism alone; we are encouraged by family or friends and surrounded by the community of faith.

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

(continued next month)

Session Synopsis

The first Session meeting of 2026 began with the usual organizational details. Both Bruce Archer and Monte Shuck were reelected for one-year terms as Clerk of Session and Recording Clerk, respectively. Session also reappointed for one-year terms Vern Schrock as Treasurer, Sue Riley and Laurie McGonigal as Assistant Treasurers, Becky Moots as Financial Secretary, and Sandy Diehl as Assistant Financial Secretary.

Session approved the Annual PC(USA) Statistical Report stating 2025 ended with 136 Active Members. This count will establish the 2027 per capita for the Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly.

The Board of Deacons announced the 2026 leadership will be shared among Co-Moderators Sandy Diehl and Rick Cote.

Pastor Bill reported the 2025 average worship service attendance (in person and online) to be at least 120 friends and congregants. Attendees include an average 75 in-person, average of at least 12 by Facebook, and 33 by YouTube. Pastor Bill also provided an updated list of some 14 church related activities beyond worship service, that he participates in.

The Bridge Builders for Racial Atonement Task Force have prepared presentations to involve the church members and friends in considering issues of racism and diversity. Session approved the Task Force request to conduct Safe Space discussions starting in the spring, moderated by Rev. Dr. Fran Lane-Lawrence, Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Lake Michigan. The Task Force will continue in 2026 under the leadership of Monte Shuck.

The Finance Committee is reviewing the 2025 budget results. Session approved a withdrawal of $9,400+ from the Webb Fund to cover the unanticipated HVAC and roof repairs that were not otherwise included in the General Fund 2025 budget. Ginnie Gibson will continue to lead the Finance Committee in 2026.

The Parish Life Committee did not meet over the month of holidays but was active just the same, supporting the funeral luncheons for Jenny Bond and Jerry Woolston and anticipating the special meal for Ash Wednesday.

The Security Team has added yet another member and is requesting the Session appoint another Team Leader. The current leader has new conflicting family duties involving coaching of youth sports.

The Personnel Committee presented two prospects for staff positions. Session approved Sarah Fay-Koutz as Youth Ministry Coordinator to continue her efforts with Pastor Bill, Spiritual Growth Director Lori Filka and the Spiritual Growth Committee. Session also approved Caitlyn Brown on a temporary basis through summer as guest organist under Pastor Bill, Music Director Deb Melse, and the Worship and Music Committee.

The Spiritual Growth Committee is preparing a presentation to Session of potential mental heath program(s). To help Camp Greenwood, the youth are considering a fund raising project(s) for Session approval at an upcoming meeting. The committee has been requested to name another committee leader other than a church staff member.

In final action, Session Elder liaison assignments with the various committees are under review. All committees have been addressed except the Nominating Committee. Also needed is an Alternate Elder Commissioner to represent Mason First at Presbytery. Monte Clark accepted reelection as Elder Commissioner for 2026.

Bruce F Archer
Clerk of Session

Spiritual Growth

Children's Sunday School

The children's curriculum is following Pastor Bill's sermons leading up to Lent (which should give you something to talk about at the dinner table!). We have covered Epiphany, John the Baptist baptizing Jesus- along with flavored dried crickets and grasshoppers, Jesus calling the fishermen, the Beatitudes and many more.

Wonderful Wednesday

The focus for February will be making cards, crafts and goodies to pack and send out to our 8 college students for Valentine's Day. And to make Valentines to be delivered to Green Acres retirement center.

Youth Fellowship

The older youth are using curriculum from Cokesbury entitled "Groove" that they have used for a few years. They choose the topics to discuss using God's word from the Bible, journaling, and devotions. The topic leading up to Lent is "Relationships". The class will discuss relationships relating to "Family, Friends, The Opposite Sex, and Conflict".

Adults

Starting in February we will start watching "The Chosen" season 5. We invite you to come after worship to view each episode and participate in discussion following the episode.

Important Dates

Mark your calendar for a Family Game Night Saturday, March 14th at 6pm! Everyone is invited and a light dinner will be served.

Important Information

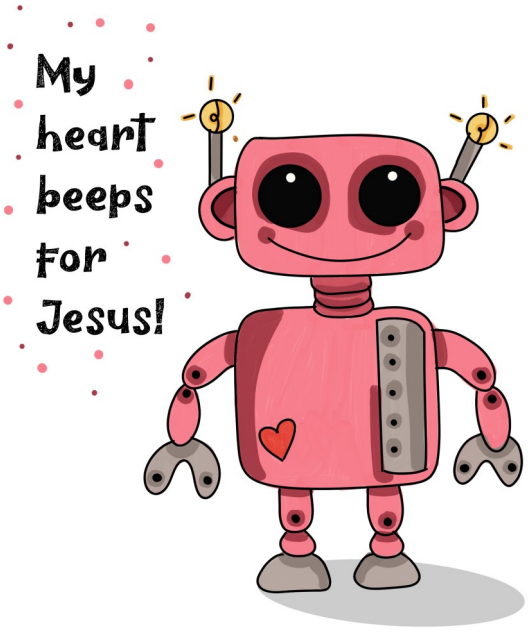
Please inform Lori if you know of any youth or adults that need free gently used tennis shoes from Playmakers. We have many sources to give these shoes away.

A Special Thank you:

Thank you from all our family. You delivered a beautiful service and helped all of us heal in a difficult time. Our hope was that we would be able to show our extraordinary love for our son, Ethan, with a service that would he would be looking down and smiling upon. We cannot thank you enough for the time, energy, and thought everyone put into the service, and also the luncheon following. It all meant so much to us and our entire family. Forever grateful.

Jason, Cheryl, Jackson, McKenzie and Brooklyn Lockwood

Deacons



Hello All! We've made it to February and we've got Spring to look forward to! Thank you Jesus!

We welcome our new class of Deacons – Pattie Yanz, Torrie Yanz, and Sandy Diehl – as we continue to provide care and concern to so many in need of some TLC in our church and in the community. We remember the many important projects we were able to support in 2025 because of your continuous generosity: sharing the joy of Easter with special Easter baskets, the Coats for Kids Drive, Harvest Table, sharing Thanksgiving baskets with members needing extra TLC, and lastly, the Christmas Basket project. It is a blessing to be part of such a caring church family, and we thank you!

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

Parish Life

Birthdays in February

Will Ozee	2/1	Sloane St. George	2/19
Debbie Shellenbarger	2/3	Issie Nielsen	2/21
Greg Lang	2/4	Noah Santana	2/23
Jill Castle	2/10	David Torrey, Sr.	2/23
Linda Guy	2/11	Colson Tessman	2/26
Tom Seely	2/12		

Presbyterian Social Witness: Family, Aging, and Pastoral Care (Part 1)

This is the 13th part of a series exploring different aspects of our church's social witness policy.

These policies address a range of topics, including child abuse, domestic violence, changing families, pornography, gambling, contraception and abortion, aging, end-of-life issues, elder care, and elder abuse.

1. Rights and Responsibilities of Older Persons (1973)

Agism, characterized by discrimination and alienation and the profound changes that it has brought in the status and needs of persons sixty-five years and over in American society, demands our interest and concern. These changes, and today's prevailing attitudes toward the elderly, tend to move—almost push—them onto the edges of the mainstream of society's life. The dehumanizing and antisocial forces of discrimination and alienation are widespread among all people today, but as experienced by those of the later decades of life, these elements are escalated.

https://pcusa.org/sites/default/files/2024-11/Rights-and-Responsibilities-of-Older-Persons-1973.pdf (15 pages)

2. Contraception and Abortion (1983)

Deeply aware of the concern and pain in the church expressed in many overtures from presbyteries which dealt with the question of abortion, and disturbed by abortions elected only as a convenience or to ease embarrassment, the 195th General Assembly (1983) adopted two reports: "The Covenant of Life and the Caring Community" and "Covenant and Creation: Theological Reflections on Contraception and Abortion."

https://pcusa.org/sites/default/files/covenant-of-life-and-covenant-and-creation.pdf (122 pages)

3. Gambling – Summary of Resources (1935-1996)

A 1950 statement described gambling as "an unchristian attempt to get something for nothing or at another's expense." Twenty-five years later, a Presbyterian General Assembly adopted a statement calling upon its members "to exert influence on local, state and national legislative bodies to oppose all forms of legalized gambling, e.g., lotteries, bingo, pari-mutuel betting, dog racing, horse racing, betting on sports games, casino games and numbers." A 1992 statement petitioned civic and government leaders to resist state-sanctioned gambling and the false promises for fiscal benefits from such, and encouraged state councils of churches and related public policy advocacy groups to be active in resisting the spread of legalized gambling. The General Assembly reaffirmed its opposition to legalized gambling in 1994, and it encouraged church leaders and members to become better educated and active about this issue. In 2000, the General Assembly again reaffirmed its opposition to organized and institutional forms of gambling, and it called upon Presbyterians to refuse to participate in such gambling as a matter of faith and to join efforts to regulate, restrict, and eventually eliminate these forms.

https://pcusa.org/sites/default/files/Gambling-resources-1935-1996.pdf (2 pages)

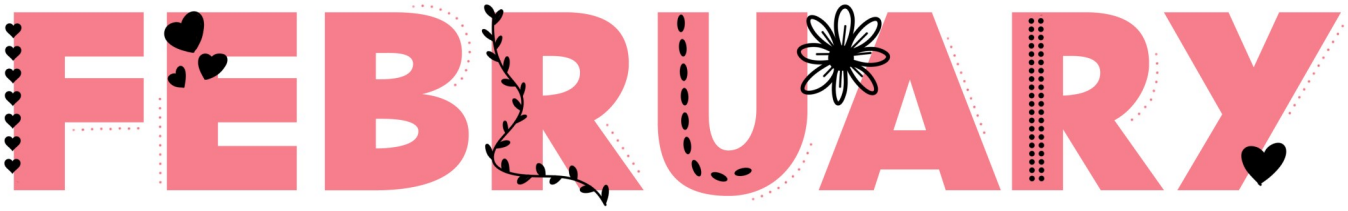
I would encourage you to pick one or more of these documents to read and study.

Worship & Music

February 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

February 2026 Worship Calendar

February 1	Fourth Sunday after Epiphany	Communion
February 8	Fifth Sunday after Epiphany	
February 15	Transfiguration of the Lord	Children's Sermon Scout Sunday
February 18	Ash Wednesday	Service at 12 pm in Chapel Service at 5:30 pm in Chapel (both with Communion and (optional) Imposition of Ashes
February 22	First Sunday in Lent	Two-Cents-a-Meal Hunger Offering



Financial Report through December 31, 2025

General Fund Balance: January 1, 2025	0
Income through December	$ 378,472
Expenses through December	$ 372,427
Ending Balance	$ 6,045

General Fund Balance 12/31/2025	$ 7,745
Revolving Accounts Balance	$ 90,481
Reserve Accounts Balance	$ 47,208
Investments as of 12/312025	$ 583,083
Net Financial Position (12/31/2025)	**$ 728,517**

Anticipated pledged income through December
$266,984
Actual pledged income through December
$293,660

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 Annual Congregational meeting will take place following the worship service on February 22, 2026. The agenda will include congregational action to (1) receive the 2025 Annual Report, and (2) to reapprove the church Bylaws to comply with legal requirements of the State of Michigan. It was discovered recently than when the name of the church was changed from "First United Presbyterian Church" to "First Presbyterian Church of Mason" in our Bylaws many years ago, that name change did not get properly recorded with the State.

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 - 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.