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

December 2025

Merry Christmas from all the staff at Mason Presbyterian Church!

Session Synopsis

Session was presented correspondence addressing the need to correct the church name listed with the State of Michigan. The listing reflects the church name in the early church history prior to the reunion of the northern and southern branches of the Presbyterian Church, after they split during the Civil War. Listing with the IRS and PC (USA) were corrected years ago at the time of the national reunion. Also presented was a proposal for CPR training that was referred to the Administration Committee.

The Board of Deacons delivered 195 pounds of food to the community food bank and is considering additional efforts to support those losing SNAP benefits. The Board is preparing the gift tree and food support for the annual Christmas baskets for as many as 20 children and seniors.

Pastor Bill anticipates a large funeral service on December 5th for the young adult, Ethan Lockwood. Pastor Bill will also be serving on the Presbytery's Administrative Commission on the potential consolidation of the Lansing Delta and Dimondale Presbyterian churches.

The Security Team has been coordinating with the Mason Police Department, providing church meeting times and building diagrams to aid the Department in more effective patrolling and knowing the entry points of the church.

The Personnel Committee reported performance reviews for both Michelle Mackey, Adult Spiritual Growth Director and Lori Filka, Spiritual Growth Director. The Committee and Session recommended the presentation of Pastor Bill's proposed 2026 Terms of Call for congregational approval at the November Special Congregational meeting.

The Spiritual Growth committee reported the completion of mission projects by the church youth during a weekend overnighter. The projects supported Mason Community Services , Veterans, Samaritans Purse, and the church coffee hour.

The Administration Committee reported a successful fall yard clean up that included removal of degrading playground equipment. The church supply inventory of melting salt has been restocked for the forthcoming winter season. The committee suggested livestream equipment upgrades to the Memorial Committee for consideration of support from future bequests and estate donations.

The Worship and Music Committee is preparing for the Advent season with the hanging of the greens on December 6th. An inquiry was made if the committee is considering any upgrade to the 50+ year old pew cushions. Currently attendees may bring their own seat cushions for added comfort.

Session recommended the slate of nominees prepared by the Nominating Committee for presentation to the congregation at the November Special Congregational meeting for election of officers.

The Finance Committee reported resolution of payroll tax issues resulting from the review and recommendations of the outside tax consultant. The review continues on the internal controls and other financial practices of the church finances.

The Parish Life Committee reported about $700 in proceeds from the fall rummage sale. A November pie sale is underway. The committee is reviewing attendance of Active and Associate members and consideration for change in membership status.

Bruce F Archer
Clerk of Session

Presbyterian Social Witness: Peace (part 2)

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

These policies promote the church's peacemaking ministries and address topics including violence, war, nuclear weapons, drones and surveillance, terrorism, international intervention, and humanitarian rescue.

1. Peace Discernment Interim Report - Encountering the Gospel of Peace Anew: An Invitation to Discernment and Witness (2012)

This document invites members, congregations, and all organizations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to participate in a process of discernment, to "encounter the Gospel of Peace anew." The hope is not simply to help the church "count the costs" of grievous wars and violence in our culture, but to "meet the Prince of Peace again, as if for the first time." 219th General Assembly (2010) put that basic question of war and violence before the whole church in relation to a wide range of Christian responses to our changing context in our nation and our world.

https://pcusa.org/sites/default/files/3-peace-discernment-interim-report-2012.pdf (27 pages)

2. Drones, War & Surveillance (2014)

Drones, War and Surveillance analyzes the new faces of war, their applications in counter-terrorism and asymmetrical warfare, and the threats to civil and even religious liberty.

https://pcusa.org/sites/default/files/2024-12/drones_war__surveillance-2014.pdf (24 pages)

3. Risking Peace in a Violent World (2014)

The commitment of the church to peace and reconciliation has a central role in Christian vocation. For Presbyterians, it is a matter of creedal standing, briefly yet powerfully set forth in the Brief Statement of Faith (1991), and outlined at greater length in The Confession of 1967. We acknowledge not only a "fearful" but a violent world, even as we hear God's call in our time to take new risks to challenge our country's over-reliance on military might and under-investment in "the things that make for peace."

https://pcusa.org/sites/default/files/1-ga_221_item_11-11_risking_peacemaking_in_a_violent_world-2014-1.pdf (31 pages)

4. Risking Peace In A Violent World: Five New Peacemaking Affirmations (2016)

The five affirmations that frame the Risking Peace report come out of a discernment process begun in 2010 that involved about 100 congregations and presbyteries. The affirmations increase the PCUSA's teaching of nonviolence for social transformation, while also recognizing how implicated most US citizens are in structural violence and the violence of several long-term wars. The report includes a careful reassessment of Jesus' nonviolence in relation to the Reformed tradition, Just War, and Just Peacemaking approaches.

https://pcusa.org/sites/default/files/Risking-Peace-In-A-Violent-World-Five-New-Peacemaking-Affirmations.docx (48 pages)

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

Deacons

Thank you for your generous support of the Coats For Kids project. It was a very large and successful drive. 1,693 coats, 539 snow pants, 841 shoes, and 66 boots, among other miscellaneous items of clothing were given to 1,063 people.
Our last collection for the Food Bank totaled 195 pounds of food. Thank you for your generous donations!
Our last general food drive collection ended on Sunday, November 8.
We prepared and delivered 21 Thanksgiving Baskets to some special members on Saturday, November 22, bringing smiles and sharing love.
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 who are in need of our love, care, and support.
Nancy Sue MacDonald, Secretary

Parish Life

Birthdays in December

Le (Claire) Ji	12/01	Mary Lou French	12/17
Gerald Woolston	12/05	Jessica Tessman	12/19
Melissa Baker	12/08	Jay Harkness	12/23
Andrew Mackey	12/11	Susan Blonshine	12/24
Coley Johnson	12/12	Barbara Georgescu	12/25
Rick Cote	12/13	Dave Barber	12/27
Tim Hammond	12/13	Lisa Castle	12/28
Eric Foster	12/14	Beckett Barber	12/30
Jane Sommerville	12/14		

Mission

On Nov. 3 we met and were happy to hear from a Chicago-area church that our help for their refugee assistance was aiding people "get on their feet." They have invested very wisely, and have a great success rate. This helps us to continue the tradition of welcoming strangers, thus applied Christianity. Then our meeting turned to fulfilling other duties through Habitat (shelter), Shop With a Hero (various needs of children and families), Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (for Caribbean disasters), and World Central Kitchen (dependable food emergency assistance). Every month we think of men and women sustaining their families locally, and contribute to Mason Community Services; this month we are supplying 16 pies to the community Thanksgiving which they sponsor (thanks to Women's Association and two individuals of the congregation).

What shall it be like for you to join Mission, at whatever level you choose? 1) prayer sharing about ourselves, our family and people whom we know, world situations and broad issues requiring our part in these (however you may wish to have your voice heard). 2) meet folks who like to work together (Wed. lunch program, 10:15ish every Wednesday, though we had our first break in years on 11.26). 3) stay attuned to giving communities such as MCS, plus regional, national or international causes or charities. 4) Finish our meetings with prayer relating to all that we are trying to do on behalf of the hungry, the sick, homeless, the children and needful areas of the world, with grateful thanks to our church that is supporting the work.

Your giving to the church and your pledging helps us to continue the good work and news (see James, chapter 2, about the poor and our challenges to meet theirs--- especially verses 5-11, 14-24). Thank you in advance for your giving.

On behalf of the Mission committee,
Rex

Our Mission Committee Activities

Did you ever wonder how many mission-related activities are supported by Mason First Presbyterian? Certainly there was the recent trip to volunteer with Re-Member at Pine Ridge on the Oglala Lakota Nation, but Mission is involved in so many more causes month by month on behalf of our congregation – so far in 2025, our congregation has provided financial support for:

- Mason Community Services, Lansing Loaves and Fishes, Lansing City Rescue Mission, Haven House, Mason Food Bank, Dansville Food Bank, Meals on Wheels, and Advent House lunch deliveries, for outreach to the less privileged in our immediate communities and beyond (e.g., the Otsego Food Pantry in Gaylord)
- Our missionaries, Mark Bent and Jenny Hare, in Costa Rica
- A Compassion International student
- Chef Jose Andres' World Central Kitchen's work to feed first responders and people displaced by events like the fires in Los Angeles, hurricanes in the Carolinas, and the war in Gaza
- Doctors Without Borders' essential humanitarian medical work in war zones worldwide
- The Red Cross and the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance funds for natural disasters in the U.S.
- Lincoln Park (Chicago) Presbyterian Church's Asylum fund (to help house, cloth, and feed asylum families in Chicago awaiting their hearings and work permits)
- St. Vincent Catholic Refugee Services, the Samaritan Purse Shoe Box program, and our youth's disaster relief bag preparations for Church World Service
- The Luke Commission's work to improve public health and hospitals in southern Africa (e.g., Eswatini, formerly Swaziland)
- Re-Member's ongoing efforts at Pine Ridge for agricultural food production, firewood for winter heating, etc.

For our modest congregation in our small mid-Michigan town, we have a pretty extensive reach, obeying Jesus' directive to feed the hungry and cloth the poor, since in helping to provide for the least of our brothers and sisters, we are doing so for Him!

Spiritual Growth

***The Youth Pageant will be December 14th during the worship service for all youth and teens. Please plan to arrive at 9:15 to get costumes on. A Christmas Party will take place after the pageant for youth!

Wonderful Wednesday

The youth made individual crafts for each of the 20 Thanksgiving Baskets that were delivered this year. And the youth will again make items to be included in the family Christmas Baskets.

Youth Fellowship

8 of our youth, along with Sarah and Lori, made and served meals to at least 160 people during our downtown Lansing homeless event. The youth plan the meals, cook the food, and serve people on a Saturday morning. We have been part of this group for several years and have made/served food over half a dozen times. A big thank-you to the Mission Committee for financially supporting this worthwhile project.

Adult Programs

We have been using a curriculum entitled "The Wired Word" that is sent to us electronically weekly. The topics included are current events in our world today. During the adult Sunday school time following worship, we discuss one of the topics and the curriculum gives us scripture passages that apply. Also questions that assist us to apply God's word to everyday life. It provides for thought provoking and stimulating conversations. Please feel free to drop in anytime. See Michelle Mackey to get on the email list to receive the topics via email, but there is no prior preparation to attend this group.

Important Dates

December 3rd - return to Wonderful Wednesday after Thanksgiving break.

December 14th- youth pageant.

December 17th – the last Wonderful Wednesday prior to Christmas break.

December 21st- the last Sunday school for both youth and adults.

January 7th – resume Wonderful Wednesday.

January 11th – resume Sunday School.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

For 2025 we are pleased to offer an in-person Christmas Eve worship service for all generations, beginning at 6:30pm. Prelude music will begin at 6:15 pm. The service will include familiar carols, music from the Sanctuary Choir, Bell Choir, pianist Yinzhe Li, and guest organist Caitlyn Brown, a storytelling time for the children, and a candlelit singing of "Silent Night." The service will be about an hour long. A collection will be taken during the service to benefit Mason Community Services and the Mason Food Bank. You are invited to bring a non-perishable item to place under the Christmas Tree, which will be delivered to the Food Bank. Following the service, meet and greet friends, family, and new acquaintances. Children of all ages are welcome at the service. If your little one needs a break you are also welcome to take them to the nursery (which will not be staffed). The service will be broadcast live on our Facebook and YouTube pages. Use the links on the main page of our website (www.masonpresbyterian.org). We look forward to seeing you there!

Worship & Music

December 2025

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	29	30	31			

December 2025 Worship Calendar

December 7	Second Sunday of Advent	Sermon by Rev. Dr. Jim Hegedus Communion
December 14	Third Sunday of Advent	Children's Christmas Presentation Meditation by Rev. Dr. Jim Hegedus
December 21	Fourth Sunday of Advent	Children's Sermon
December 24	Christmas Eve Nativity of Jesus Christ	Worship for all ages at 6:30 pm, with organ and strings
December 28	First Sunday of Christmas	The Sanctuary Choir will be singing a cantata, "O Holy Night" By Mary McDonald Two-Cents-a-Meal Hunger Offering

Financial Report through October 31, 2025

General Fund Balance: January 1, 2025	0
Income through October	$ 333,759
Expenses through October	$ 306,744
Ending Balance	$ 27,015

General Fund Balance 10/31/2025	$ 27,015
Revolving Accounts Balance	$ 77,138
Reserve Accounts Balance	$ 47,136
Investments as of 10/31/2025	$ 580,178
Net Financial Position (10/31/2025)	**$ 731,467**

Anticipated pledged income through October
$222,487
Actual pledged income through October
$256,317

A Message from the Finance Committee:

It is time to thoughtfully plan giving commitments to our church for the 2026 fiscal year. The deadline for pledges was October 26th, but we will still accept them. If you are planning on making a pledge for 2026 and haven't turned one into the church office, please do so as soon as possible. The Session is dedicated to maintaining a balanced budget and will wait to finalize next year's financial plan until all congregational pledges have been received.

Last year, we began a new practice of asking each Committee to provide their estimated expenses for the upcoming year in September. This process helps members and friends understand how much funding is required for the next fiscal year. Church expenses for 2026 are estimated at $389,686, a 6% increase ($23,000) over the 2025 budget.

Each gift supports our church's ministries—including worship, education, outreach, and care ministries—and every pledge, regardless of size, matters to our congregation and community. Please consider how your contribution furthers our mission and reflects gratitude and stewardship. We trust you will thoughtfully determine your pledge to help sustain our work.

Please send your completed pledge sheet to the church office or send an email to bookkeeper@masonpresbyterian.org at your earliest convenience.

Find the latest, up-to-date church calendar at masonpresbyterian.org

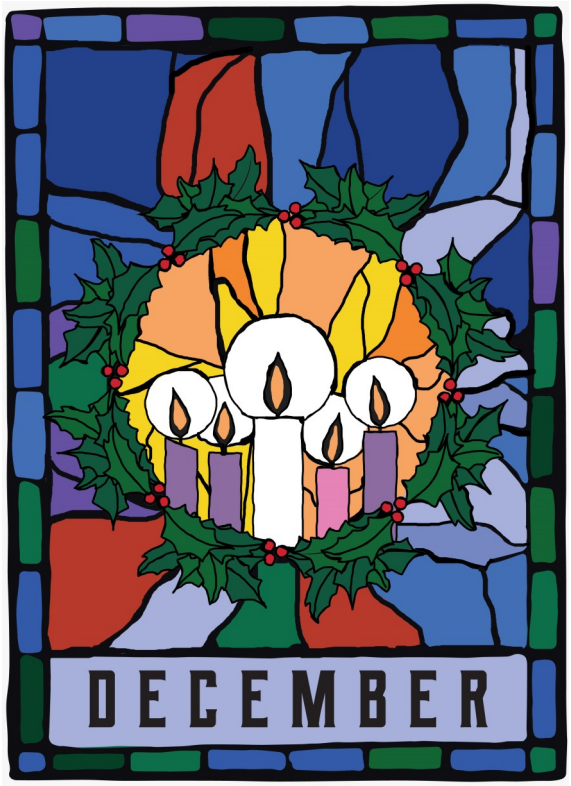
WORSHIP AT
MASON FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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 Ses-*

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 - Jessica Tessman
FINANCIAL SECRETARY - Becky Moots
CHORAL MUSIC ACCOMPANIST - Yinzhe Li ("Ashlyn")
SEXTON - Eric VanDyke
ADULT SPIRITUAL GROWTH COORDINATOR - Michelle Mackey

ELDERS:
2025 - Doreen Chapman, Mary Garland Jackson, Greg Lang, Monte Shuck (*Recording Clerk*).
2026 - Bruce Archer (*Clerk of Session*), Ginnie Gibson, Jane Hamelink, Tim Hammond.
2027 - Travis Archer, Evelyn Tayong, Dan Baker, Steve Sowles.

DEACONS:
2025 - Marge Clarke, Julie Dart, Tom Seely (*Moderator*).
2026 - Ron Dlouhy, Bill Leutscher, Sandy Leutscher, Nancy Sue MacDonald, Laurie McGonigal.
2027 - Donna Archer, Rick Cote, Sally Hughes, Debbie Johnson, Issie Nielson.