

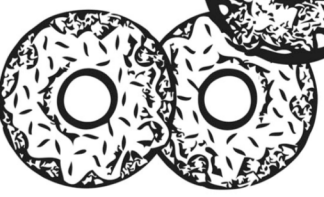


First Presbyterian Church
512 3rd Street SW
Rochester, Minnesota 55902

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A Special Thank-you!

The Welcoming and Nurturing committee would like to say "thanks" to all who came for coffee and donuts following the livestreamed church service Sunday, April 18. The weather was perfect and we had approximately 45 attendees! Those present enjoyed a variety of pastries from Otto's Bakery in Byron, Bloedows of Winona, Dunkin Donuts and Sweet House bakery.

Thanks, everyone,
a good time was had by all!



Jane Marl, Welcoming and Nurturing

We are Excited to be Coming Back!

I am happy to report that at our March meeting, the session targeted Sunday, June 13th as the date to resume “in-person” worship with some restrictions. Here are the details for how we plan to worship together for at least this summer (because, who knows, things might change by the time this newsletter even gets to you).



Before Sunday:

Make a reservation using Signup Genius on the church website. We plan to seat up to approximately 85 people between the sanctuary and the social hall. We will ask for your email address and a phone number to assist with contact tracing. For groups of more than two, you might want to consider sitting in the social hall since we have more flexibility for seating options there. The multipurpose room will also be available for families with children who need to move around during the service.

Before coming to church:

Do a self-assessment of your own health and the health of your family members. If you feel sick in any way, please stay home.

Upon arrival:

Enter the building using the Atrium doors only.
Masks will be required; sanitize your hands.
Maintain social distancing of 6 feet.
Confirm your reservation at the welcome desk.
There will be baskets set-up near the welcome desk to leave an offering and make prayer requests.
Proceed to the sanctuary or the social hall.
Bulletins will be left by the doors for you to take.
The pews will be marked with tape with “x’s” marking the seating areas.

During the service:

We will not be singing.
The children will remain in their seats for Children’s Time.
We can do baptisms with no contact, as you have seen in our digital services.
When we celebrate communion, we will use pre-made, sealed packets of wafers and juice that will be consecrated during the service and taken home afterwards.

After the service:

Ushers will dismiss pews individually. Please exit the building through the Atrium doors, making sure to keep proper social distance, and sanitize your hands on the way out.

For those who are not ready to worship in person just yet:

We will livestream the service on our YouTube channel.
You can also park in the parking lot and tune in to FM 88.5 and listen to the service from your car.

I hope that this will only be necessary for our summer worship. I pray that we can go back to our normal routine in the fall, after the Labor Day weekend. The session will re-visit the situation as things develop. But for the summer, we appreciate your cooperation and your prayers as we strive to keep everyone as healthy and safe as we can.

Peace,

Contact: Parlette.TJ@FPCRochester.org
Phone: (814) 715-0290

Good News of First Presbyterian Church — 2 — May 2021

The Good News of First Presbyterian Church

On the day I write this in April, the temperature is 37 degrees. The wind clocks in at whatever-puts-a-depth-charge-chill into me. Sun lost behind gray-layered clouds. I don’t like to complain about the weather and I wouldn’t do it here if it didn’t affect me the way it does from time to time. Certain kinds of days at certain times of year bring me down. Like the cloudy, windy, down-right-cruel 37-degree April day a few days removed from a radical 70-degree April day. Nevermind the magnolias’ glory leading the way. Nevermind the various apple trees holding their breath-blossoms. Nevermind the trees have shed their bud-shells. Nevermind those two (or three) random warm, lovely April days were so immediately invigorating, so filled with life-force and life-spirit, sights and feelings. All that did was leave me petulant today.

But that’s how April goes up in these here parts. *True Spring* rarely, if ever, arrives on time; at least not on my timeline. It answers to other, more powerful, age-old, deeply-hidden forces. And so, we wait. Our anticipation creates its own kinetic energy, ready & waiting to ... spring.

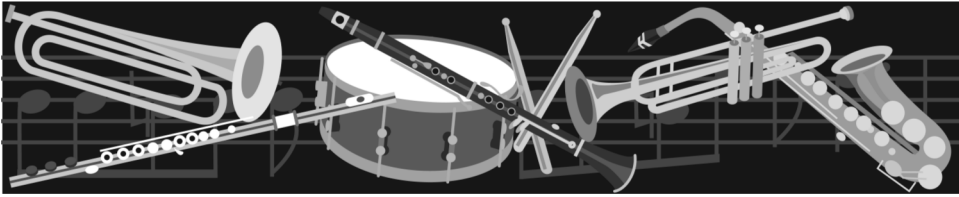
April’s antics have me thinking about our Black sisters and brothers. They who anticipate spring as in *Justice*. For generations. We don’t know what that’s like. Not really. Only the metaphor of April in Minnesota comes close, with its tantalizing promises. Led by the glorious April day dropping in to remind us why we live here--why we put up with winter--until it suddenly disappears leaving us wondering, how much longer will it take?! April blossoms longing to open and stretch toward the warming sun are forced to wait, vulnerable to getting crushed under foot (or knee) while waiting. Perhaps the closest we get is the glorious April day when all creation is bursting to Spring only to be hushed by the lingering cold front. To make ourselves feel better while enduring the delay, we’re adept at shifting perspective (“it’s not that bad”) or offering explanation (“well, it’s because of ___”).

Where the metaphor fails, the anguish speaks volumes. If it is your son, your brother, your husband, your uncle, your father; your daughter, your sister, your wife, your mother; your neighbor down the street, your friend from church or school who suddenly dies a preventable death, then you would feel differently. This current anguish and trauma has been going on not merely for years but for GENERATIONS. Until we see or feel what we haven’t seen or felt, only then can the truth about race in America pierce our white veil or shine like the bold, elusive, warm April sun. Otherwise, it remains in the realm of metaphor. Yet all creation moves with longing for the day when you and I join the May Day procession marching in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ to reveal God’s vision for God’s suffering beloved.

Contact: Rowland.Jay@FPCRochester.org
Phone: (507) 990-1367

Good News of First Presbyterian Church — 3 — May 2021





Greetings from the First Players band program!

Janine Yanisch, Director

I am happy to say that First Players has been going strong all year, thanks to the cooperation and assistance from the FPC staff. *Thank you!* Lessons for beginners in their first two years of playing have occurred in person - individually, masked and distanced, in large spaces - for the whole year. Yay! The group bands have been meeting in-person (distanced, masked, in large spaces with good circulation) for most of the school year, the exception being when the church was tightly restricting the number of households allowed. During that time, the bands met together on Zoom and instead of playing together, we had music theory lessons, guest speakers, student sharing days, and general fun and games.

We are planning on having an informal **outdoor performance on Thursday, May 27 at 5:00 p.m.** Yay! This will take place on the front patio, and audience members will please maintain a safe physical distance. The students and I are eager to share our music with others after so many months of working and playing in such an odd manner! (Our last performance was December of 2019!) If the weather is poor on the 27th, the performance will take place the following Thursday (June 3rd). Please pray for good weather so that our youth can do something normal and special again — perform as a band for others!

Also in May, First Players will be hosting an **Instrument Demonstration** night for those who are thinking of learning to play a band instrument. We won't be able to let the students actually blow into the instruments as we have in past *Meet the Instrument* nights, but hopefully hearing and learning about the various instruments will whet the appetite of many young people to start playing, and hopefully join the First Players family. The date is TBA. Please let your friends and families know about this great opportunity!

Our annual **First Players Band Camp** will be **August 23-27**. This is a fun time for all current First Players students.

I believe that having FP functioning during the pandemic has helped many, many students during this time of isolation and uncertainty. Music indeed is nourishing, to the mind, the body, and the soul. Long live music!

Wishing you all peace and good health,

Christian Education & Youth Group News

Susanna Stone, Coordinator of Youth and Christian Education



April was a busy month for the FPC Christian Education Committee. During April, the CE Committee:

Hosted an outdoor **Easter Egg Hunt** on April 3. We were blessed with gorgeous weather and welcomed 15 families and 25 children, separated into different timeslots, to hunt for Easter eggs. While remaining masked and socially distant, everyone enjoyed the fellowship and spending time in God's creation. Families were also invited to chalk the FPC sidewalks with uplifting Easter messages to spread God's love to the Rochester community.

Supported the **Youth Group** as we moved to in-person meetings on April 14. The youth enjoyed an egg hunt of their own, decorated and mailed postcards for the FPC families we have been praying for, learned new ways to pray, and enjoyed fellowship with one another. The Youth Group will continue to meet outside at FPC every Wednesday from 4:15-5:15 p.m., weather permitting. Our last Youth Group meeting of this school year will be **May 26**.

Led virtual Sunday School for children in Pre-k through high school. Zoom Sunday School is held each Sunday at 9:30 a.m. and there are two groups: Pre-k through 5th grade and middle/high school. The last Zoom Sunday School will be **May 23 (Pentecost)**.

While we will miss our traditional spring activities (Celebration Sunday in the Social Hall, Confirmation Sunday, Graduation Sunday) we plan on re-creating each of these events in their own way.

Many thanks to all of the volunteers who make our programs successful. The CE Committee would also like to thank John Stender for leading the Sunday School children in song, resulting in the lovely anthem seen during the Easter worship service.

Wishing you all a blessed May,



Week of August 2: VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL!

While we will not know the exact format of VBS until the summer, the CE committee is working on tentative plans for an in-person VBS. More details will be released in June. Whatever the format (virtual or in-person) VBS will be held during the week of August 2.

Introducing Beth Stuebing and Ben Adams, *Nancy Boutelle*

Introducing Dr. Beth Stuebing, a trauma surgeon, her husband, Ben Adams, a psychotherapist, and their three young children. Going to the mission field has been a goal for Beth and Ben since before they met. It has been amazing to see how God has been putting together the pieces for years in finding the perfect fit for their gifts and skills in Malawi.

Board certified in surgery and intensive care medicine, Beth will be joining a medical team establishing a new surgical residency at Nkhoma Presbyterian Mission Hospital in central Malawi. The residency will formally train young Malawian physicians to become certified surgeons. After graduating from the 5-year program, these surgeons will be placed at the various Presbyterian mission hospitals in Malawi that currently have no surgeons at all. Ben is a psychotherapist who specializes in treating patients who have experienced trauma. Beth and Ben will be instrumental as part of a larger plan to equip the Presbyterian Church to create an innovative national healthcare network.

Malawi is a country in Southeast Africa about the size of Pennsylvania. It is the third poorest country in the world. The capital city of Lilongwe has a population of 1.1 million people.

Please keep Beth, Ben, and their family in your prayers. We will share information with all of you as it evolves.

UPDATE: Bdecan Presbyterian Church Ministry Team, *Marylynn Aalderks*

The FPC Bdecan Ministry Team had been hoping to make a trip to the Bdecan Presbyterian Church in Tokio, North Dakota, to provide a three-day vacation bible school in July of this year; however, the COVID situation is still very uncertain.

The Bdecan planning committee has been meeting and we have decided just to send the planning committee (Marylynn Aalderks, Jane Hallman, Cindy Kunzman and Vicki Wintheiser) over a weekend in September to provide a fun weekend church experience for the children of the church and to continue the relationship between First Presbyterian

Church members and the members of the Bdecan Church. We fully anticipate that we will be able to send a full mission team to the Bdecan Church in 2022 and to provide a four day VBS program.

In addition, Larry Boutelle, a retired Presbyterian Pastor, will be going to the Bdecan Church to preach a sermon, provide communion and baptize any new babies in August.

Many of the adult members of the Bdecan Church have been hit hard by COVID, but they are recovering. COVID vaccines are available to them at the Fort Totten Health Service and vaccinations have been going well.

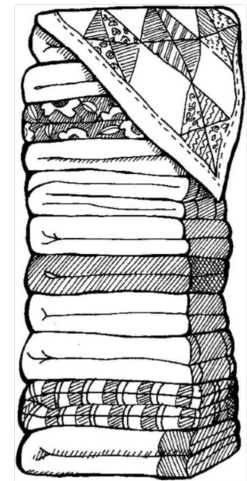
A more recent problem on the reservation has been wildfires with four fires very near the Bdecan Church. The church remains safe and none of the church members' homes have been reported damaged by the fires.

Thank you for your continuing willingness to help the people of the Bdecan Presbyterian Church, our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Blankets for Bdecan

Marylynn Aalderks

The Bdecan Mission Team at FPC asked Rosie Helland, the youth and outreach pastor of the Bdecan Presbyterian Church, about the needs of the children and members of the church. One such need is blankets, both for children and adults, because it is so cold in the winter and the homes may not be very warm. Households never have enough blankets. We are asking the members of our church to donate blankets. Any size blanket is welcome, either new or gently used and preferably recently washed. The FPC PW are sponsoring the blanket donations. Please bring your blankets to the church office by August 15th and Cindy Kunzman will collect them and pack them away until September, when they will be taken to Bdecan.



BDECAN

Bdecan Messages of Hope

Jane Hallman



Needed: Women from FPC willing to share messages of hope with the women of the Bdecan Church.

Elsewhere in this newsletter, you can read about the Bdecan Mission Team's plan to visit this fall. Not only are we seeking to build our relationship with the children of Bdecan by providing a shortened vacation bible school, we also are planning a project to demonstrate our support of the

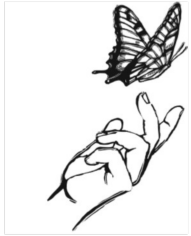
Bdecan women (the grandmas, aunts and mothers) by dedicating time on the Sunday afternoon to the women.

We are asking the women of FPC to create a book, "*Messages of Hope*," that compiles poetry and prose and will be presented to the Bdecan women. We will intersperse blank pages among your submissions so that each recipient can also journal, draw or create their own art among our messages.

We hope YOU will join us in providing entries for the book plus art work for the covers. The books will be 6 X 9 inches with 5½ X 8½ inch pages. Content can be original or shared – just be certain to credit the source – and should fit onto one page. Topic ideas include family, friendship, nature, love, and hope. Page submissions will be duplicated so that each book contains the same material.

Books will each contain an original artwork cover created on kraft cardstock paper. Cover stock can be picked up in the church office. If you feel particularly creative, please consider contributing more than one. We plan to make 15-20 books.

We hope you are as excited about this project as we are and will use this opportunity to share your time and talent and spread some hope. Please submit your contributions by June 15. This isn't a contest—all submissions will be included! If you have any questions, please contact Cindy Kunzman (507-282-1618) or Jane Hallman (507-993-6652).



**News from
Presbyterian Women**
Sylvia Swede, Facilitator

A Reflection on Hope

*"Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer.
Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers."
(Romans 12: 12-13)*

"Rejoice in Hope" was the theme chosen for the Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women, which had to be cancelled in February because of the pandemic. What follows is a reflection on HOPE written by Sharon Falck, PW moderator of the Des Moines Presbytery.

I find if I open my Bible, read God's word and want to discern what it says to me at that moment, it is comforting and gives me hope. It seems there is always a message that is appropriate to my needs and the needs of my family, my church, my community and the world.

According to the concordance in my Bible, there are 34 references to hope in the Scriptures, with Romans and Psalms having the most. A few of my favorites are:

Psalm 62:5*"Find rest, O my soul, in God alone. My hope comes from him."*

Psalm 130:5*"I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I put my hope."*

Psalm 147:11*"The Lord delights in those who fear him, who put hope in his unfailing love."*

Romans 8:24-25*"In this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all, for who hopes for what he already sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it patiently."*

Take time to search the Scriptures for hope and believe them. Another way to look at HOPE is to look at each letter separately so you can see another picture of what God has in store for you as you think about HOPE. In doing this you may think:

H = honesty, healing, health;

O = openness, others, oppportunity;

P = persistence, prayer, peace;

E = eyes to see the world through God's eyes and ears to hear God's messages.



Circle Meetings in May

Esther Circle on May 17 at 1:00 p.m.

Priscilla Circle on May 19 at 9:30 a.m.

Ruth Circle on May 15 at 10:00 a.m.

Prayer Shawl Group on May 12 at 1:00 p.m.

May 6 is International No Diet Day

Ariel Boswell, Parish Nursing Program

You read that right! May 6th is a chance to take a break from your rigorous healthy diet and remember that God made you and you are beautiful the way you are.

"Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies."

(1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NIV)

Our bodies are temples, to be taken care of and appreciated. Too often we focus on pictures in magazines and how far from perfect we are, and we focus too much on our control. As a result we suffer eating disorders, yo-yo dieting, and a feeling of never being good enough. We should not covet our neighbor's body and metabolism any more than we covet their house. Although balanced meals and physical activity are important to a joyful God-honoring life, there is no room for body hatred or shaming, or for dangerous short-term fad diets. Instead be sure to appreciate the body you have and live in. Tall, short, fat, slim, round, square - we are all made in the image of God!



Among our church family

MAY BIRTHDAYS ...

May 4—*M. Pauline Krieger*, 93

May 6—*Donald Wiegert*, 91

May 10—*Lonnie Martin*, 97

May 17—*Barbara Madsen*, 91

May 23—*John Brandrup*, 91

May 29—*Melvin Hicks*, 95

... CELEBRATIONS ...

Congratulations to *Robert & Cindy Sannes*, who celebrate their 56th wedding anniversary on May 15.

Congratulations to *Robert & Ann Groover*, who celebrate their 57th wedding anniversary on May 23.

Congratulations to *John & Jane Tietjen*, who celebrate their 51st wedding anniversary on May 30.

... AND OUR CONDOLENCES

We extend our sympathy to *Judy & John Kruesel* and their family on the death of Judy's mother, *Marilyn "Lynn" Postier*, who died on April 10.

We extend our sympathy to *Roger Kemper* on the death of his wife, *Marcia*, on April 6. Roger and Marcia were both ordained elders at FPC.

We extend our sympathy to the family and friends of *Mary Beyerle*, who died on March 29.

FPC Launches *Sitter Service Reads*

John Stender, Director of Music

It did the Stender family much good to interact with people at the recent donut social hosted by the Welcoming and Nurturing committee. Thank you for this inter-generational festivity! That's something we have missed the most throughout this past year in exile. Especially, Daniel, who has grown up attending every kind of worship and church event, thrives on visiting with folks, and he loves the church environment.

That's one reason I got to thinking back in October of last year that we needed to create some sort of inter-generational connection that we could still enjoy in spite of COVID-19 restrictions. It has been so lovely to receive occasional messages and cards filled with love and happy wishes from Sitter Service volunteers. That got me thinking, too ...

... So, I'm glad to present a project that has been in the works for a long time. This began last fall, I forgot about it several times, came back to it a few times, and book publishers kept extending their 'read-aloud copyright permissions plans.' Now I've finally finished the editing and posting process.

With the help of many caring individuals, we have created a collection of 17 videos that we're calling *Sitter Service Reads!* The volunteer readers chose some of their favorite children's books, found new ones, and took time to imagine how they'd like to relate them to their own grand- and great-grandchildren as well as the people of FPC.

Having been the only person in the room besides each reader, I can attest that my emotions ran high while these stories were lovingly shared. Some of the books are just plain fun and silly, most of them have wonderfully deep and even challenging morals to impart, all of them teach something valuable. Some are sad at times, some are happy, some are dreamy and imaginative.

I invite EVERY member of FPC and any friends and family you'd like to share these videos with to dive in to this collection of good old storytelling. If ever there was a truly inter-generational church production, this is it. You'll need a link to access the unlisted playlist of videos on YouTube – [let us know if you need it!](#)

Who doesn't enjoy the thrill of a truly shocking pop-up book, or evidence that the love of reading has been shared over many decades from grandparent to parent to child to grandchild? I cannot imagine that anyone could honestly say these videos are only for the children in our congregation. When was a so called 'children's book' only edifying for young minds? To me, when the family of God comes together and finds ways to share in ageless ways, we are supporting a rich community of faith where discipleship can mean not only imparting the Gospel to future generations; but we show each other how to live it.



Fellowship and donuts ...

Photo courtesy of William Nichols

a delicious combination!

First Presbyterian Church

Financial Statement / March 2021

General Operating Budget

Balance (02/28/2021)	\$	41,379.31
Receipts (March 2021)		54,386.2
Disbursements (March 2021)		61,950.09
Balance (03/31/2021)		<u>\$33,815.42</u>

First Presbyterian Church

512 3rd Street SW / Rochester, MN 55902

507-282-1618 / www.FPCRochester.org / web@FPCRochester.org

Senior Pastor: Rev. T.J. Parlette

Associate Pastor: Rev. Jay P. Rowland

Director of Music: John E. Stender

Coordinator of Youth and Christian Education: Susanna L. Stone

Sunday worship at 10 a.m. on YouTube and Facebook

Education classes: Sunday School One Room Zoom at 9:30 a.m.;

also a weekly video with a Bible story is available on YouTube.

Office hours: Mondays, Wednesdays & Thursdays, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Ring the bell or call the office at 282-1618 for entry into the church.

Member: Presbyterian Church USA

