



The Good News

of First Presbyterian Church for June 2020

I will sing of your steadfast love, O Lord, forever;
with my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations.
I declare that your steadfast love is established forever;
your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens. (Psalm 98.1-2)

A message from Rev. T. J. Parlette

Before moving to Rochester in 2010, Juliet and I spent much of our free time working in the theater world as actors, directors and producers of local theater. We loved the theater – still do, but we’re not as involved as we used to be. Part of that is a change in priorities, as swimming activities have taken over our lives. So when I came across a poem last week that revolved around the theater world, I was intrigued. In the most recent issue of *Christian Century* (May 6, 2020), a poem by Steven Peterson was printed. I thought I’d share it with you. It is called “Ghost Light.”

“We’ve closed our theatres – a silence rules.
Homebound with Internet and iPhones, stocked
With everything we’d want as hoarding fool,
We double check to see our doors are locked.
Elizabethans closed their theatres
In plague years; Shakespeare scribbled poems for praises.
Today each playwright (one is me) utters
In keyboard clacks: free verse or formal phrases.
Yet theatres keep one bare light bulb burning
On stage, illuminating emptiness.
Tradition calls it a “ghost light,” discerning
Substance from shadows – like our faithfulness.
Let’s ask the ghost light of our soul: Explain
This wait for life, or death, or deathless gain.”

Steven Peterson, *Christian Century*, May 6, 2020, p26.

A stage manager friend of mine once explained to me the reason for the ghost light tradition on an empty stage. Your typical stage is full of potentially hazardous obstacles – everything from props and set pieces laying around to trap doors foolishly left open. In the dark, if you’re not paying attention, you

could seriously injure yourself – so the ghost light tradition was born, to illuminate and safeguard against potential harm.

“Ghost Light” struck me as an interesting concept as we live in a time full of uncertainty and potential hazards. What is it that lights our way, helping us in “discerning substance from shadows”? I think the poet was right when he pointed to our faithfulness pointing us away from the shadows and fear and darkness that seems overwhelming whenever I watch my thirty minutes of news a day and toward the substance of life, which is love and faithfulness and hope.

I pray that you will leave your own ghost light on to help you find your way through the shadows of life.

Peace and Blessings to you all!

T. J.

Contact: Parlette.TJ@FPCRochester.org

A message from Rev. Jay Rowland

To the Class of 2020



Four years ago or so, when you found yourself beginning high school or college, the world was far different than it is now. But so are you. And while these recent weeks and months of pandemic have been challenging and hard to accept in so many ways, you have persevered.

And your perseverance matters. It matters in ways you may only intuit right now. It matters to us in ways we may never fully understand. And your perseverance matters to this world God made, to this world God loves, indeed I would say it matters to God in ways that God surely understands and will utilize to the fullest possible extent.

Whether or not you believe in God right now, or are understandably angry at God right now, here’s what I (and your church) believe concerning you: “I have it all planned out,” says the Lord, “plans to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for. When you call on me, when you come and pray to me, I’ll listen. When you come looking for me, you’ll find me. Yes, when you get serious about finding me and want that more than anything else, I’ll make sure you won’t be disappointed. God’s Decree. I’ll turn things around for you.” (Jeremiah 29:10-14a MSG).

In the meantime, please remember, we are all cheering for you, supporting you, and praying for you, that somehow all of this will lead you toward fulfillment and prepare you for life in ways that nothing else could. For such is the way of hope and trust in God.

Grace & peace to you,

Jay

Contact: Rowland.Jay@FPCRochester.org



Ministry of Music

*John Stender, Director of Music
Katie Kuisle, Cherub and Calvin Choirs
Janine Yanisch, First Players*

*The aim and final end of all music should be none other
than the glory of God and the refreshment of the soul.
(J. S. Bach)*

It's difficult to believe that it has now been about a year since Sarah and I re-visited Minnesota to start looking for a house to buy.

Personally, I am still grieving the loss of in-person time with our FPC congregation and the chance to build relationships and momentum for the ministry ahead of us. I keep trying to remind myself that the Israelites wandered in the desert for at least 40 years, and other biblical exiles exceed the length of time that we have been shut away. For the short-term, congregational and choral singing has a very unclear path forward. Nonetheless, I can't wait to get back together.

One way to do that is to employ some of the learning I've been attempting surrounding digital recording projects and possibilities. Thanks to easing restrictions and the seemingly acceptable ability to (distantly) gather in very small groups, I'm looking forward to inviting you into the fold for our continuing digital services. As we enter summertime I look forward to continuing the familiar tradition of variety and special music.

"Virtual choir" and other types of digital projects are not easy to accomplish. Arguably, they can be less satisfying to make than desired. I've talked with many church musicians who have posted videos. They all say it takes between upwards of 10 or 20 hours and the use of multiple professional-level editing programs to produce the types of things you're seeing on the internet. Sunday's Thomas Tallis anthem took more than 10 hours over three days!

So - I look forward to creatively using the resources at hand and making the best of our situation. However, I think we must focus on quality liturgical music, inclusive participation, and how these can elevate digital worship. I don't think we should invest much in entertaining video fads but stay focused on how our ministry will serve us and serve the wider community in future years.

~ John Stender



Contact: Stender.John@FPCRochester.org

Good News of First Presbyterian Church - 3 - June 2020

Hello, church family, from Katie!

It feels like forever since I've seen any of you, and that's a hard thing to swallow. As much as I've loved this time at home with Holland, the time away from YOUR kids has been extremely difficult. I've loved seeing pictures posted on Facebook of the kiddos, and especially appreciated videos of them singing. I truly hope we can start singing TOGETHER again soon, but please know that I have some great ideas for them should we not be able to congregate for a bit.

Holland is SIX MONTHS OLD this week. It is so hard to know that as a six-month-old, she has only been to the church we hold so near and dear a very sad amount—three times. We had so hoped that church would be a part of her routine early on, and that her church family would love her, hold her up, and help her know God. We know that you are all doing that at home, but as someone who has seen the church community do that for so many children in person since I started there six years ago, I just saw it a little bit differently. Isn't it funny how visions and reality can change, but there are also happy sides to it? I know we're all praying harder, thanking God harder, and I know I am really feeling the words I sing harder.

Until we sing again!

Katie Kuisle (contact: KatieKuisle@gmail.com)

Greetings from First Players!



Janine Yanisch
First Players
Director

Many First Players band students are continuing their music study in this time of Covid-19 by having weekly Zoom lessons. It is a good way to stay connected with these young musicians and to champion their music-making, even though the sound on Zoom is less than good! Most have been working on solos and hopefully one day they'll have the opportunity to perform them.

We won't be having our annual Meet the Instrument Night anytime soon, and it's unknown when it will be safe to meet and make music together as a band. Therefore, my next project is to create a Recruiting Video for prospective students.

This video will have information about our great First Players program here at First Presbyterian Church, and will demonstrate the various band instruments that students can choose to play once we are up and running again. It will let them know that WE ARE HERE for them when things get back to "normal." This video will be placed on the First Players facebook page and distributed to current FP parents (and anyone else who would like it) to share with others. Please let me know if you'd like a copy of the video to share with friends or family who have children going into 4th grade or older. This will be my first venture into creating a video - another opportunity as a result of the virus. (Yikes!)

Wishing you all good health, and as ever, I am grateful for your support of the First Players program.

Peace, and be well,

Janine (contact: FPCFirstPlayers@gmail.com)

Good News of First Presbyterian Church - 4 - June 2020



Christian Education / Youth Group News

Susanna Stone
Coordinator of Youth
& Christian Education

Summer is arriving and we are continuing to provide Christian Education and Youth programming. If your family or children need anything else or have any ideas on how we can better serve the families of FPC, please send Susanna an email!

Children's "Sunday School"

• **Sunday School Storytime:** Check out the FPC YouTube site or FPC Facebook page for each week's "Sunday School Storytime with Susanna." Each week you'll find a different Sunday School lesson, Bible reading, and craft idea aligning with that week's lesson from the Deep Blue Sunday School curricula.

Other resources: Susanna has a variety of other resources available (coloring pages, devotions, etc.). Please contact Susanna if you would like other resources.

Adult Bible Study:

- **Al Depman** continues to send out a creative, thought-provoking, enjoyable weekly email with a short Bible Study topic (and many funny comics). Please contact Susanna or Al if you'd like to be added to the email list.

Youth Group:

- **Join the email list:** Please contact Susanna if you would like to be added to the Youth Group email list. Emails are sent out weekly during the school year and sporadically during the summer. Being on the email list is the best way to stay informed about Youth Group news.
- **Summer Youth Group Events:** During the summer, there is typically one Youth Group outing a month. With health and safety guidelines still being formed, it is uncertain whether we will be able to hold these traditional summer Youth Group outings. However, there will be some monthly Youth Group "event", even if we must hold it virtually. Stay tuned for more details!

If you have any ideas for other ways to connect, please contact Susanna. And as always, please get in touch with any needs, questions, or concerns you may have.

2020 VBS: POSTPONED

Given the current uncertainty surrounding gathering in groups, the Christian Education Committee has decided to postpone our June VBS. We are hoping to provide VBS in some form at some point during the summer, though it might look different than past years' VBS formats. Once we have more definitive plans, we will send out an update. Stay tuned!

Contact: Stone.Susanna@FPCRochester.org; AlDepman@aol.com

Good News of First Presbyterian Church - 5 - June 2020

Hats off to our 2020 graduates

Graduates, we assure you of our continued love, and promise to remember and uphold you through our prayers. We pledge to always be your "family." No matter where you are or in what circumstances you find yourselves, we care about you and stand ready to rejoice with you in your accomplishments, to support you in your failures, to remember you in prayer, and to grow with you in faith. We love you, "kids"!

High school seniors who are members of First Presbyterian or whose parents are members include

Miranda Harrer Novalee Tollefson Bennett Zmolek
Brandon Hunter Patrik Tollefson

Congratulations and God's blessing upon our college graduate

Jessica Leigh Dahl graduated from South Dakota State University with degrees in Mathematics and Business Economics (double major) with a minor in Statistics. Jessica is the daughter of Mark Dahl and Leigh Gomez- Dahl and the granddaughter of Ed and Fran Gomez.

from the FPC Parish Nursing program

June is Men's Health Awareness Month

Studies show that men are less likely to seek care than women until they are having serious symptoms. So what are some things men should keep in mind?



Cardiovascular health - men are more likely to suffer heart attack and stroke. Check in with your doctor about your blood pressure and your cholesterol, and remember it's always better to get checked out than to ignore heart attack or stroke symptoms.

Depression and suicide - men are more likely to commit suicide and use lethal means. Our culture also makes male depression and asking for help difficult. 1-800-273-TALK is a great resource if you or someone you know is feeling suicidal and there is also an online chat option.

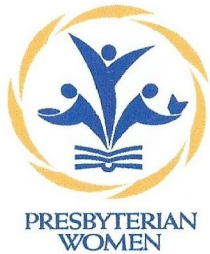
Accident safety - men are more likely to die in accidents. Helmets, speed limits, warnings and cautions are there for a reason. Just like in surgery, it is always good to take a one minute pause before you do something risky and prioritize safety.

Male-specific screenings - self exams for testicular cancer and blood or physical exams for prostate cancer save lives every year.

Although many non-urgent health visits have been put on hold, clinics are reopening and summer is a great time to get checked out! Don't wait - make that appointment today!

~ Ariel Boswell / FPC Parish Nurse Coordinator

Good News of First Presbyterian Church - 6 - June 2020



News from Presbyterian Women

* *Sylvia Swede, facilitator*

Thanks to all who contributed to the national Birthday Offering, \$1500 is being sent to help support the following projects:

1. **The Gap Ministries of Atlanta.** The funds will expand access and service space for meeting the needs of those without homes.
2. **Center for Social Assistance in Russia.** The funds will establish a Christian model of housing and community for adults with developmental disabilities as an alternative to state-run nursing homes.
3. **Northside Healing Space in Minneapolis.** This project, in our own Presbytery, is connected to Liberty Church, formerly called Kwanzaa. This "healing homeplace" is aimed at providing supportive housing, workforce development, K-12 school initiatives, and care for survivors of commercial exploitation and other trauma.
4. **Community Presbyterian Child Learning Center in Arizona.** The funds will provide daycare and prekindergarten programs for children in Payson, Arizona, the Tonto Apache tribe, and neighboring communities.

Native Americans struggle to get promised relief money

A group of people who seem to have been forgotten during the COVID-19 pandemic are the Native Americans. The tribes were to have received \$8 billion of the COVID -19 relief fund from the \$2 trillion bill that was passed on March 27. The Treasury Department has been failing in its dealings with the 574 federally recognized tribal governments. A letter was sent by legislators directing them to disperse the funds immediately, but no action has taken place.

The Native American Concerns Committee of our Synod of Lakes and Prairies PW has been in direct contact with Native American PW members. One of their concerns is the need for face masks. If you are a sewer, would you be interested in providing some masks? If you send any, our PW will pay for packaging and postage. Just submit your bill to **Peg Parsons**, PW treasurer, at 2607 5th Avenue NW, Rochester 55901.

Three groups would appreciate receiving some masks -

1. Pine Ridge Reservation. Send masks to Sonia Weston, PO Box 254, Pine Ridge, SD 57770.
2. Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate. Send masks to Susie Amos, PO Box 104, New Effington, SD 57255.
3. Yankton Sioux Reservation. Send masks to Ida Brown, 38630 SD Hwy.46, Lake Andes, SD 57356.

~ *Sylvia /Swede / PW facilitator*

Church Family News

Anniversaries

Congratulations to these couples who will celebrate fiftieth (+) wedding anniversaries in June.

- 6/2: **Michael and Carol McDonough (58)**
- 6/5: **Elmer and Mary VanDerHeyden (66)**
- 6/8: **Dan and Suzanne Tolman (63)**
Ronald and Nancy Kreinbring (52)
- 6/10: **John and Elaine Griffith (59)**
- 6/13: **Titus and Carol Evans (56)**
- 6/14: **James and Jean Miner (59)**
- 6/18: **John and Judith Thistle (60)**
James and Sandra Walker (54)
- 6/24: **Robert and Gretchen MacCarty (53)**
- 6/25: **Lyle and Zoe Abrahamson (59)**
Jay and Carolyn Beck (54)

Birthdays

Happy Birthday to **Ralph Spiekerman**, who will celebrate his 91st birthday June 10.

Happy Birthday to **Don Cain**, who will celebrate his 93rd birthday June 15.

Happy Birthday to **Virginia Christiansen**, who will celebrate her 92nd birthday June 18.

Happy Birthday to **Ruth Huizenga**, who will celebrate her 90th birthday June 19.

Deaths

We extend our condolences to **William Johnson** on the death of his wife, **Jean Johnson**, May 2. A private service was held May 8 at Oakwood Cemetery.

We extend our condolences to **Ursula Thedens** on the death of her husband, **Alfred Thedens**, May 14. A family service was held May 18 at Oakwood Cemetery.

Thank you, everyone, for your continuing and generous support!

First Presbyterian Church Financial Statement / April 2020

<i>General Operating Budget</i>	
Balance (4/1/2020)	\$ 96,239.91
Receipts (April)	+ 63,157.71
Disbursements (April)	- 58,259.22
Balance (4/30/20)	\$ 101,138.40

*Grace to you and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

How we stay in touch in this time of separation

Missing again this month is the calendar. We don't know for how long this will be in effect, but we'll let you know when we start scheduling meetings and events again. In the meantime, we'll keep you informed through various means.

- » **Sunday bulletins and sermons on our web page.** Go to www.FPCRochester.org. Below the top banner is 'Worship @ FPC' and below that click on 'Learn More'. That will bring up a choice of sermons (click one and click 'read more') and bulletins (click a date, read more, and download PDF).
- » **Sunday worship.** Since March 15 we have presented an informal Sunday worship service with T.J., Jay, and John at 10 a.m. on YouTube and Facebook. We are now pre-recording the service and airing it at 10 a.m. each Sunday. If you miss it, it will stay on our WEB page and you can watch it later.
- » **Prayer requests.** Because we are pre-recording the Sunday service, prayer requests should be e-mailed to either Rev. Parlette (814-715-0290) or Rev. Rowland (990-1367) by Thursday noon.
- » **How do I access the services?** The easiest way is on our church's WEB page:
 1. Go to www.FPCRochester.org. You may need to click on 'First Presbyterian Church - located near Mayo Clinic.' Wait until the FPC page loads.
 2. There should be a red banner across the top of the screen. If there is, click on that. If there isn't, scroll down to 'Highlighted Events' and click on the middle panel. The link to the service is under the picture. Click on the link and you should be ready to watch. Until we actually go on the air, the space you get may be blank, so don't panic and please be patient!

In these challenging times, supporting one another means more than ever. We'll communicate information as it becomes available. For now, please continue to take care of yourself and look out for one another.

First Presbyterian Church
512 3rd Street SW / Rochester, Minnesota 55902
507-282-1618 / www.FPCRochester.org / web@FPCRochester.org

Pastors: Rev. T. J. Parlette, 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: See "Sunday School Storytime with Susanna" on our web page.
Office hours: The office is closed until further notice.
Member Presbyterian Church (USA)

Office Manager position open at First Presbyterian Church, Rochester, MN

As the Office Manager at FPC you are an extension of the leadership, development, administration and care of our Church. You will manage a multi-disciplinary plan encompassing four general areas: Membership, Operations, Communication and Finance. The Office Manager role is instrumental in our ability to provide the ministries FPC seeks to implement in both our congregation and our community.

Logistics: The OM works in a Church office environment. 40 hours, Monday-Friday, with seasonal peaks (Christmas and Easter) and valleys (summer months).

Compensation package target: \$45,000 mixture of salary and benefits

The Office Manager will be the Church's first point of contact for members, visitors, vendors and others.

- Coordinate FPC tasks, projects, events, and communications.
- Manage and update the church's website and social media platforms.
- Lead volunteers to assist with ministry projects while helping other teams accomplish their goals.
- Assist the treasurer with the development and execution of the church's budget, endowment and stewardship strategies.
- Work with a contracted accounting firm to maintain church finances and financial reporting.
- Prepare weekly service bulletins, and assist the pastoral staff with programs for baptism services, weddings, funerals, and other events as requested.
- Maintain membership records and reports to Presbytery.
- Manage courtesy staff scheduling & coordinate support staff as needs shift through each season.
- Manage human resources needs/issues for staff and ensure FPC's policies and procedures are effective and executed.
- Oversee the office supplies and keep equipment up-to-date and operational.

Education and Experience

This position requires a minimum of five years of experience as an operations professional in a business or church environment. Possession of a business, finance, or a related degree is helpful. Experience with budget and financial reporting is necessary. The successful individual will be a strong leader with a solid work ethic, and will possess a clear call to ministry with the ability to lead and develop staff and volunteers.

Personal Characteristics

- Cares about maintaining a spiritually positive environment.
- Is exceptionally organized with an operational and administrative mind.
- Has an ability to create and manage strategic plans.
- Has an eye for detail but also the capacity to see the larger vision.

Required Skills:

- Microsoft Office; Excel
- Squarespace or similar web management software
- Experience with online financial software (i.e. Quickbooks or similar)

Preferred skills:

- ServantKeeper; ParishSoft; Adobe Creative Cloud; Mailchimp or similar
- Facebook page manager, other social media; Signup Genius

*For further information or to apply, contact **Karen Sessler** or any member of the Personnel and Administration Committee.*