

Highland Herald

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

A place to worship. A place to belong. A place to serve.

Salt: Dispersed

FPC Muskegon's Faith Development Council, in cooperation with the Worship & Arts Council, Outreach, Communication, & Technology Council, and Property Council invites you to attend its presentation at **3:00 pm on Sunday, February 5**, of the dramatic monologue **Salt: Dispersed**, a powerful, deeply personal exploration of Black identity and the present-day impacts of the Atlantic slave trade.

Conceived and crafted by British performance artist Selina Thompson, this award-winning composition explores Thompson's outward and inward experiences during her retracing of the cargo route known as the "Atlantic Triangle," a painful journey through the grief, confusion, and pride that comprise the legacy of slave descendency.

Our video presentation will be followed by discussion of the film and the issues it raises guided by George Barfield, a Called Deacon of the Lake Michigan Presbytery. Mr. Barfield, a resident of Spring Lake, is a "Harlem Renaissance Fellow" and Adjunct Professor of Sociology at Lake Michigan College, as well as a National Consultant and Trainer for Cultural Sensitivity. Mr. Barfield has facilitated discussions and led workshops and book studies on the origin and impact of racism in our society in thirty-five states and on Zoom. Please join us for what promises to be an important conversation.

*Adam Bell, Community Engagement
and Education Director*
Roxanne Deibel, Music/Choir Director



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Pastor's Corner

*"We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish."
And Jesus said, "Bring them to me."
—Matthew 14:17-18*

Dear friends,

I often feel for the disciples in this story recorded in all the Gospels. In Matthew's rendition, these poor disciples have been working nonstop for days. They are hoping to get away with Jesus for a little break, but the crowds keep following them. And Jesus asks them to figure out how to get food for this crowd.

Their response is that they only have five loaves and two fish. I don't know about you, but sometimes when I ponder the problems of the world, or the problems of the church or even of my life, I feel like there is no way I have or we have what it takes even to make a dent in these problems. I look in my hands and heart and all I can find are the equivalent of five loaves and two fish: a few ideas, a tired spirit, maybe a few talents, love for humankind.

Or I look at my life or the church or the world and can only see what I lack – what we lack. Not enough time. Not enough energy. Not enough help. Not enough resources. Not enough enthusiasm. Not enough wisdom.

If you read farther in Matthew's telling of this story you will note that after the five loaves and two fish are brought to Jesus, he blesses them and gives the food to the disciples to give to the crowd. And there is enough. There is more than enough.

I know that some of you have been working nonstop days caring for sick loved ones. Some of you may not be working nonstop days, but you look at the world's problems or even your own problems and feel overwhelmed or uncertain. The good news of this text is that Jesus takes whatever we have to offer – a wee bit of time, a reluctant "yes," a broken heart, or even a joy-filled heart – and blesses it. And we are given it back to give. And it will be enough. And you will be enough.

As a congregation in 2023, we will likely be welcoming a new pastor! I've already heard much excitement. But there is always that uncertainty that comes with any change. In addition to welcoming your new pastor with joy and love and support, your job will be to offer your own version of the five loaves and two fish to Christ and to his church. Hear Jesus' words to you, "Bring them to me." He will bless those offerings, friends. And there will be enough. Actually, there will be more than enough.

Happy New Year!

With love,
Pastor Laurie



Souper Bowl of Caring

February 12, 2023

In 1990, a simple prayer: “Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those who are without a bowl of soup to eat” was delivered during a church service at Spring Valley Presbyterian Church in Columbia, SC led by Brad Smith, who was serving as a seminary intern at the time. This gave birth to an idea. Why not harness the energy and enthusiasm of Super Bowl weekend, a time when people come together for football, food and fun, to unite the nation for a higher good? Youth groups could collect

dollars in soup pots and canned food for those in need and send every dollar and food donation DIRECTLY to a local

charity of THEIR choice. Now people of all ages tackle hunger to help support local hunger relief.

Souper Bowl of Caring is a youth-inspired and youth-led movement which provides many opportunities to build upon leadership skills, philanthropic endeavors, and network with their peers on hunger-related issues within their local communities. Thousands of participants including: churches, schools, youth groups, community partners, grocery partners, local businesses, media partners, NFL teams, passionate individuals and the youth of First Presbyterian Church have contributed to this annual event raising over \$170 MILLION dollars nationally since it

started in 1990. Every year ensures that every penny, dollar, or food item collected by Souper Bowl of Caring participants goes directly to hunger-relief charities.

We are still very much involved in contributing to this cause. We will have a Souper Bowl of Caring Soup Luncheon following worship on February 12th. Please consider sharing a crockpot of your favorite soup with your church family. A sign-up sheet will be posted on the bulletin board. Breads, crackers, and

beverages will be provided. If you are unable to bring a crockpot of soup, please join your church family for lunch anyway.

There will be plenty of soup to share!!!

We will also have two large soup pots to collect your donation to the Souper Bowl of Caring. Each pot will have the name of the teams participating in the Super Bowl. Drop your donation in the pot of the team you think will win the game!! Donations will also be accepted through the mail or online at www.fpcmuskegon.org. Please indicate that your donation is for Souper Bowl of Caring.



The C.E.E.D. Garden

A new year brings new beginnings, and we are excited for the new year at First Presbyterian.

Our youth group continues our study of Luke and Acts, tracing the ministry of Jesus and the formation of the early Church. We are planning a worship field trip to Westminster Presbyterian on the last Sunday of the month, and we are excited to begin this new ministry partnership.

We are also excited to host the Glenside Neighborhood Association meetings in January and February, as we continue to be good neighbors and grow strong relationships with our neighbors. We will be working with them again in the Spring for their Easter Egg Hunt, with our actors from the workshop providing story hour again.

February is Black History Month, and we are hosting a live stream of “Salt: Dispersed,” a one-woman show about the slave trade and the affect it had, and continues to have on the African Diaspora. Please join us February 5th for this presentation and a discussion afterward with George Barfield. You won’t want to miss this program.



Melody's Notes



What has struck me, at First Presbyterian Church, in the short time I have been here? It seemed to make sense to let you all know in this initial writing.

I guess we always see what we actually EXPERIENCE when we are with people. Actions and demeanor are everyone's strongest words.

I can still speak somewhat as an outsider with a view similar to anyone attending FPC for the first time.

These qualities are too obvious to ignore or take for granted:

Respect
Graciousness
Hopefulness
Anticipation
Gratefulness
Openness
Maturity
Attentiveness
Steadfastness
Humility
Wisdom
Honesty
Support
Gifts and talents
Healthy transparency
Patience
Kindness

I have been on the receiving end of all these already from staff, volunteers, and members. No, like me, you're probably not without flaws... but your joyous cooperation with God's Spirit is very evident. That is the pervasive atmosphere here. There must be a majority of people in this body who actively and humbly spend personal time with Him.

Thank you. To every one of you. Your personal surrenders to Him over and over are making much room for Him to release power, presence, love, and revelation here.

I am confirmed in a sense of peace and joy in His very deliberate placement of me with you. I will try to stay in

step with Him... and with you all at His pace, with His ideas, and His ways... in music, in relationships, and interactions.

God loves to reward faith-filled trust in His simple yet unbelievably effective way of doing things... so looking forward to whatever He purposes here: It will be GOOD!

You are ALL a blessing. And... thank you, Pastor Laurie, for your leadership at this time with your personal heart connection to Him. It is full of joy, wisdom, and wonder of Him.

Yayyy!!!

I am so grateful I listened to the Spirit-directed influencers in my life who encouraged me to open the door. God always wants to use us in each other's lives to be messengers of His favor.

2023 is the next opportunity for us all to grow in deeper awareness of His good overcoming ALL. Hallelujah!



Blanket Sunday

February 12th



Brrr! When the weather outside is cold and deep with snow, we burrow under warm blankets every night to stay warm as we fall fast asleep. Now imagine a man on a cold bench or a family standing outside of their home, looking at the devastation caused by a natural disaster... how will they find warmth? For many, a simple blanket given when they most need it is a loving way to offer warmth, to offer hope. Many people without homes have a daily challenge of fighting the bitter cold.

Around the world, civil war, and disasters force people from their homes, sending them to shelters and refugee camps where a blanket can make a big difference.

The CWS Blanket program provides warmth, hope, and care during cold and trying times. A gift of just \$10.00

provides a sturdy, comforting blanket to children, men and women who are struggling against the cold. Those living in warm climates receive light weight blankets.

Blankets of all sizes, including baby blankets, will be collected in the Wickham hallway, and delivered to Every Woman's Place and the MAP Household Pantry. Blankets will be collected throughout the month of February.

Contributions to Church World Service Blankets means CWS will be ready to help families around the world recover from disasters and displacement. Financial contributions to CWS Blankets will be received throughout February.

January 2023 Mission Box Muskegon Rescue Mission

This month, items will be collected and delivered to Muskegon Rescue Mission. Donations of the following foods and personal items, placed in the MRM box in the Wickham hallway, are appreciated:

Food, such as . . .

- spaghetti sauce, pasta, canned tomatoes
- soup
- juice, Jell-O
- boxed dinners, canned meats
- cereal, sugar, powdered milk.

Personal items, such as . . .

- shampoo, soap
- toothpaste, toothbrushes
- hairbrushes and combs
- hand lotion and tissues
- paper towels and laundry soap
- diapers, baby toiletries.

Please donate unopened items. Your donations are greatly appreciated by people in our community. Thank you.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

First Presbyterian knitters can provide a prayer shawl for anyone in our church community. If you know someone who would benefit from receiving a prayer shawl, please call or email one of the knitters: Julie Anderson, Joan Barnes, Dona Demirjian, Betty Dunn, Pam Foster, Carol Giblin, Sue Kacprzyk, and Ellen Prowant.

On these cold days of winter, what better way is there to spend an hour than knitting? The Prayer Shawl Ministry meets the first Tuesday of the month at 11:30 in the youth room up the stairs. It's a friendly group and everyone is welcome to join. We have yarn, needles, and knitting patterns available for you to use or you can bring your own supplies. Experienced knitters can give brush up or beginning instruction. The next meeting is Tuesday, February 7, at 11:30. Hope to see you there.

SUPPER HOUSE CHRISTMAS PARTY

Many thanks to everyone who contributed to the Supper House Christmas Party. Over 300 guests were served dinner, were entertained by some musicians and were given gift bags. (The few bags that remained were given the next week to people who weren't able to attend the party.)

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| <p>10am - Worship 11am - Alter Worship Hospitality 11:20am - Youth Bible Study</p> | <p>6pm - Disciple Class</p> | <p>10:30am - Dwelling in the Word 9pm - Choir Rehearsal</p> | <p>7pm - Property Council Mtg.</p> | <p>3:45pm - Supper House 7pm - Actor's Workshop</p> | <p>World Day of Prayer</p> | <p>10am - Girl Scouts</p> |
| <p>10am - Worship 11am - Alter Worship Hospitality 11:20am - Youth Bible Study 11:30am - MCKS Council Meeting</p> | <p>6pm - Disciple Class</p> | <p>10:30am - Dwelling in the Word 9pm - Choir Rehearsal</p> | <p>7pm - Actor's Workshop</p> | | | |
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First Presbyterian Church

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FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

A place to worship. A place to belong. A place to serve.

First Presbyterian Church of Muskegon's mission is to nourish minds, bodies, and spirits, crossing boundaries, and devoting ourselves to serve in the name and the spirit of Jesus Christ. Rooted deeply enough to risk being reshaped, we will have the courage to continually explore new ways to move in the direction in which God calls us.