

MARCH 2023

# Highland Herald

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## ! ART !

### IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN!

We'll be collecting art in April to display in the May exhibit. If you'd like to contribute, or have family and friends that have original art, we'd love to see it!

Paintings, drawings, sculpture, photography, textiles/fabrics, and writings are all works of art. Our goal is to keep our display original work so if you have something you'd like to share contact Mary Eschman, Pam Foster or Susan Homan no later than the end of April.

Thank you for supporting this project to beautify our church and inspire our members and anyone who visits us!

A publication of First Presbyterian Church - Muskegon, Michigan

- Sunday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> – Palm Sunday Worship at 10 am followed by the youth-sponsored Pancake Brunch.

- Thursday, April 6<sup>th</sup> – Maundy Thursday Service, including communion, in our chapel at 7 pm.

- Friday, April 7<sup>th</sup> – We will commemorate the crucifixion of our Lord at New Jerusalem Missionary Baptist Church beginning at 6:15 pm.

- Saturday, April 8<sup>th</sup> – An Easter Egg Hunt with our friends at McGraft Park from 10 am to noon.

- Sunday, April 9<sup>th</sup> – Easter Sunday! We will celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord with joy, beauty, music, prayers, and the preaching of God's Word! Alleluia!





**A LENTEN PRAYER  
by Susan Homan**

They welcomed you like a King  
Over and over your name they  
Did sing  
You healed the sick and poor  
You were loved and adored  
But there were some who would  
Deny you  
And their hate grew  
You were beaten and scorned  
As your followers mourned  
You wore a crown of thorns on  
Your head  
Hanging on the cross where you bled  
People wept and prayed by your side  
Men, women, and children cried  
You died so that we may live  
Your love you did give  
You died to free us of our sins  
Our lives could begin  
You died for us  
In you we did trust  
You arose on the third day  
We were filled with dismay  
You said do not fear  
You will always be near  
Your love will never end  
Until we meet again

**“I believe in God...” – The Apostle’s Creed**

Dear friends,

How many times in your life have you said, “I believe in God.” For those of us in the church, we say this in the form of a creed almost every Sunday. And throughout the course of our lives, we often affirm this. Sometimes I hear people who are doubting certain points of dogma say, “Well, at least I believe in God.”

We often say these words to justify something to ourselves or others, to make a case for our righteousness or to make ourselves feel OK. Or sometimes we say these words to remind ourselves that, despite what is going on in our lives and our world, I believe in something greater than what is happening or something far, far greater than I can imagine.

How often do we think about what a radical statement it is to say, “I believe in God?” When we say these words, our words join those of many who have gone before us. When we say these words, we are saying that we hope this is what grounds our lives. Belief is not just a statement about facts we hold. Belief in this context reflects an intimacy, a relationship. We believe – we cling to, we hold fast to, we ground ourselves in, we long for – God.

Others may believe in politics. Others may believe in their own strength or efforts. Others may believe in their wealth or their achievements. And, truth be told, we all “believe” in those things time and again.

But when we say “I believe in God” we are saying that we hope that God and God’s ways can eclipse all the other beliefs in our lives.

God is love. God is grace. God is mercy. God is holy. When we say, ‘I believe in God,’ we are also saying that we are throwing our lives on the side of love, the side of grace, the side of mercy, the side of holiness.

So, as we live into the rest of Lent, may we affirm together again that we believe in God. We believe in our God who keeps loving us and forgiving us and reaching for us. Our God, whose grace and mercy never end. Our God, who loves all people – even us – despite all our failings and shortcomings and even lack of belief.

So, say it with me, friends: “I believe in God.” And God believes in you. In me. In us. God, help our unbelief.

Grace and peace,

*Pastor Laurie*

## An Invitation

The Worship and Arts Council is very happy to extend an invitation to all members and friends of FPC Muskegon to enjoy a concert of the **Grand Valley Jazz Combo on Sunday, May 7 at 2:00**. The event, which is free of charge, will be held in the sanctuary at First Presbyterian, and features GVSU's top jazz ensemble, a quartet consisting of saxophonist John Dannug, bassist Josef Drost, drummer Evan Hodson, and pianist Tumaini Sango. The foursome will present the music of a wide variety of jazz composers, including Christian McBride, George Duke, Bill Evans, Cedar Walton, and many others, as well as original compositions by Tumaini Sango and John Dannug. We hope you'll join us for a unique opportunity to hear this exciting ensemble!

Please contact Roxanne if you have any questions about the concert by e-mailing [music@fpcmuskegon.org](mailto:music@fpcmuskegon.org).



### INTERIM UPDATE:

*“Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!” – Psalm 27:14*

Dear friends,

Your PNC is diligently working. This task of finding a new pastor has proven to be a marathon and not a sprint. As PNC co-chair, Bob Bengston, told us at the annual meeting in January, there are many more pastoral positions open than pastors seeking calls. The PNC is looking for someone who is a good fit for our faithful and hardworking congregation. Many PNCs/ congregations are experiencing this “longer than they expected” wait time to find a new pastor.

For some of the PNC members and some of you, this wait can be tough. Pastor Jim left in late July of 2021 and the interim period can be long and tiring. It is at times like these that it is important to remind ourselves that our congregation belongs to God and God is leading us. As the psalmist writes, “Take courage and wait for the Lord.” There is light at the end of the proverbial tunnel.

As I’ve mentioned before, many times churches put their ministries “on hold” during the interim period, you have not! You continue to faithfully follow Christ, try new things and bring energy, intelligence, imagination and love to our councils, Session and community. Your new pastor is going to be excited and proud to join you!

So, please pray for your PNC daily. Don’t underestimate the importance of your prayers. And when you see a PNC member around, give them an extra thanks, high-five, or hug. Let them know we are thinking of them and supporting them, and they are not alone.

Grace and peace,  
Pastor Laurie



Join the youth for the annual PALM SUNDAY PANCAKE BRUNCH following worship on APRIL 2<sup>ND</sup>



GLENSIDE EASTER EGG HUNT McGraft Park April 8<sup>th</sup> 10 - 11 a.m. Ages 12 and under

### The C.E.E.D. Garden

As our Michigan Winter Wonderland turns to spring we are continuing our seed planting efforts with our youth group and our neighbors.

Our youth took a field trip on March 5<sup>th</sup> to worship and connect with the youth of Westminster Presbyterian Church in Grand Rapids. It was a blessed time of worship and community, and Yuri and Harper got to make some new friends. We are continuing to nurture this relationship and are excited to see what God is doing in our congregations.



We are also excited to announce that our Sunday Youth Bible Study is opening up for anybody who is interested. Our "new" inter-generational study will begin March 26<sup>th</sup>. We are studying the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts through the remainder of the school year. Please join us!

Our seed planting also continues in our neighborhood. We are partnering again with the Glenside Neighborhood Association for their Annual Easter Egg Hunt at McGraft Park on April 8<sup>th</sup>. Join in the festivities as a volunteer – or just come for fellowship with our neighbors in Glenside. We will meet at McGraft Park at 9:00 a.m.

Volunteers are needed to help stuff the Easter eggs with candy and trinkets for the kids following worship on Sundays, March 26<sup>th</sup> and April 2<sup>nd</sup>.

We are also continuing to nurture relationship building in our own congregation, as well as supporting our Youth Group activities with our Palm Sunday Pancake Breakfast, April 2<sup>nd</sup>. We hope to see you all there.



### Donations Needed

This year we will be joining with the Glenside Neighborhood Association in their Easter Egg Hunt. The Egg Hunt is Saturday, April 8 at 10 a.m. in McGraft Park. A volunteer sign up is on the bulletin board outside the office.

They have plenty of eggs and candy. In lieu of donating candy this year, we are asking congregation members to donate the cash they would normally use to buy candy. This cash will be used to buy one or two bikes that will be raffled off at the Easter Egg Hunt for some lucky child in our neighborhood. A special donation basket will be available in the narthex on Sunday. For more information, speak with Henry Flores or Adam Bell.



**General Fund Financial Figures  
2023 Dollars & Sense Summary**

	February	Year-to-Date
<b>Actual Income/Expense</b>		
Income	\$ 15,518	\$ 44,088
Expense	22,931	59,333
Net Increase (Decrease)	(7,413)	(15,245)
<b>Budgeted Income/Expense</b>		
Income	\$ 17,339	\$45,427
Expense	21,914	57,852
Net Increase (Decrease)	(4,575)	(12,425)

The actual income was slightly lower than the budgeted income. Thank you for your support of our church. ~ Finance and Stewardship Council

**DONATE THROUGH A QUALIFIED CHARITABLE  
DISTRIBUTION (QCD)  
AND SAVE MONEY ON TAXES.**

How a qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) works:

A distribution from a traditional IRA normally incurs taxes since the account holder didn't pay taxes on the money when the money was paid in. But account holders age 70½ or older who make a contribution from an IRA held at a financial institution and have it sent directly to a qualified charitable organization such as First Presbyterian Church (FPC) can donate, without it being considered a taxable distribution. The deduction effectively lowers the donor's adjusted gross income (AGI).

Discuss with your accountant or financial advisor on how to save on taxes by donating directly from your financial institution to the First Presbyterian Church.

**OOPS!**

No Capital Improvement Fund green envelopes are in the envelope packet box this year.

- The Capital Improvement Fund "green" envelopes are not in the donation packet this year. The green envelopes are placed in the pew racks or can be found on the desk in the narthex.
- Please take a green envelope from the pew rack and make a donation.
- Donations received are used for maintenance and repair type expenses for the church building and grounds.

## March 2023 Mission Box Love In the Name of Christ

Thank you for your generous donations to Love INC, which provides basic needs and support to people, while encouraging their self-sufficiency. Love INC now has its offices on Peck Street, on the bus route for clients' convenience, and collects food at its store on Sherman Avenue, just east of Highway 31. Your donations to Love INC are distributed to eleven (11) local food pantries.

These are the most recent food needs of Love INC:

- Canned meats and hamburger
- Tuna and tuna helpers
- Canned vegetables, fruits, juice
- Cereal, pancake mix, syrup
- Peanut butter, jelly
- Chunky soup, crackers
- Flavored rice, instant oatmeal
- Spaghetti sauce and noodles.
- Personal care items requested include the following:
- Deodorant, hand lotion, hand soap
- Tissues, feminine hygiene products
- Toothpaste, toothbrushes
- Shampoo, hair conditioner
- Hand soap and shaving products.



Thank you for your donations.

## Prayer Shawls Ministry



The next meeting of the Prayer Shawls ministry is Tuesday, April 4, 2023, at 11:30 am in the youth room. Hope to see you there.

Everyone reading this is invited to request a prayer shawl for someone experiencing a challenging time in their life or a special, joyous season. Call, email, or text one of the knitters: Julie Anderson, Joan Barnes, Dona Demirjian, Betty Dunn, Pam Foster, Carol Giblin, Sue Kacprzyk, and Ellen Prowant.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>10am - Worship 11am - After Worship Hospitality 11:30am - Bible Study</p>	<p>9am - Disciple Class</p>	<p>10:30am - Dwelling in the Word 3pm - Shepherd's Meeting 6pm - Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>14:50pm - Emergency Policies Work Group</p>	<p>7pm - Actor's Workshop</p>		
<p>10am - Worship 11am - After Worship Hospitality 11:30am - Bible Study</p>	<p>12:30pm - Book Club 6pm - Disciple Class</p>	<p>9:30am - Staff Meeting 10:30am - Dwelling in the Word 11:30am - Prayer Shawls Ministry 6pm - Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>7pm - Property Council Mtg.</p>	<p>Maundy Thursday 3:45pm - Supper House 7pm - Maundy Thursday Worship</p>	<p>Good Friday 6:15pm - Worship at New Jerusalem MFC</p>	<p>8am - Lakeside Easter Egg Hunt 10am - Girl Scouts</p>
<p>10am - Worship 11am - After Worship Hospitality 11:30am - Bible Study</p>	<p>Church Offices Closed 5pm - O &amp; C Council Meeting 6pm - Disciple Class</p>	<p>10:30am - Dwelling in the Word 12:30pm - Sarah Circle 2pm - Faith Development Meeting 6pm - Choir Rehearsal 6:30pm - Finance/Stewardship Council</p>	<p>7pm - Actor's Workshop</p>			
<p>10am - Worship 11am - After Worship Hospitality 11:30am - Bible Study</p>	<p>12:30pm - Book Discussion Group 6pm - Disciple Class</p>	<p>10:30am - Dwelling in the Word</p>	<p>6:30pm - Session Meeting</p>	<p>7pm - Actor's Workshop</p>		<p>10am - Girl Scouts</p>
<p>10am - Worship 11am - After Worship Hospitality 11:30am - Bible Study</p>	<p>2pm - O &amp; C Council Meeting 6pm - Disciple Class</p>	<p>10:30am - Dwelling in the Word 6pm - Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>7pm - Property Council Mtg.</p>	<p>3:45pm - Supper House 7pm - Actor's Workshop</p>		<p>10am - Girl Scouts</p>
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*Easter Blessings!*