

# FAIRPLAIN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## MARCH 2018 NEWSLETTER



Grace and peace to all in Jesus' Name!

As I drive to work now I see a small portion of the flooding that has swamped, literally, many places of SW Michigan. Church members have dealt with water locally, one family forced to leave their home as utilities were shut off, and neighboring communities have suffered even worse. Niles has now become a site where Presbyterian Disaster Assistance is working to bring relief. Pastor Fran Lane-Lawrence has said almost every family in the Niles area is affected by the flooding one way or another. This makes the small amount of water that has seeped into our basement so small as to be insignificant. I urge your prayers and support for our neighbors and friends as they seek to dry out and recover.

In addition to local flooding, our nation continues to reel from the acts of violence being committed across our country. As I wrestle personally with better ways to prevent such actions, I find myself in the same crunch between personal freedoms/rights and the need for personal and community safety that our legislators face. One area where my opinions have become crystal clear is the area of health where some individuals are determined to be a threat to themselves or others. There needs to be some way that still respects privacy where such information can flag and stop a purchase of a weapon which could be used to end lives. I invite you to join me in prayer for the victims, their families and friends, and for all who can influence our country to a safer, healthier future.

The season of Lent through which we are now living is a journey. As Jesus walked toward Jerusalem, knowing the cost He would have to pay for our sin, we are encouraged to walk into lives of deeper trust and faithfulness to our loving God. While you may have removed some items as a 'temporary fast', I encourage you to add in additional times for listening to God in prayer, for reading and meditating on God's Word (your favorite Bible passages are a great place to start), and perhaps add a biography of a faithful Christian to your reading list. While I still turn to some of my favorites during lent, people like C. S. Lewis and Thomas a Kempis, I'm currently reading a book by John Ortberg entitled *God Is Closer Than You Think*. Full of good storytelling, this book challenges thinking while providing resources for growing Christians. I hope and pray I never stop growing closer to God in Christ Jesus, and I desire the same for all of you.

May our great and loving God richly bless you through these often wet and changing days of late winter as we yearn for the warmth and joy of spring. In all seasons, in all conditions, to God be the glory, now and forever!

In Christ's service,  
Pastor LaVerne



## WEDNESDAY FAMILY DINNER

Don't want to eat alone?  
Come find good food, good company and new friends at the FREE Wednesday Family Dinner, on March 28, at 6 pm, in the Courtyard Room. Everyone is welcome – young, old, singles, families. Just bring yourself. We provide food and fellowship.

We are thrilled with the response to our dinners so far, and are happy to have many guests as well as members. Join us to make visitors welcome. We plan to continue these dinners the last Wednesday of each month, so mark your calendars.

If you can bring a dessert, help cook or clean up, call Linda Cogswell at 925-0041. We can also use financial donations to support this program. Just put in the offering plate Sunday or bring/mail it to the church office. Please mark your donation for Community Dinners. See you March 28!

## MARCH BIRTHDAYS

- 8: Ernie Lewis
- 9: Linda Zitta
- 10: Kim Edinger
- 13: Matt Kodis
- 20: Fred Welch
- 22: Anita Ong
- 23: Thelma Smith
- 25: Phyllis Myers
- 25: Greg Powell

## COMMUNITY DINNER COORDINATORS REQUESTED

If you would like to help coordinate one of our monthly Community Dinners, please contact Linda in the church office.

Responsibilities include planning the meal, purchasing necessary food items, for which you will be reimbursed. You may also ask another committee member to assist you as well. Linda coordinates volunteers to help serve and set up including refreshments, and clean up and donate desserts.

## JANUARY FOOD PANTRY

In January, in spite of some rough weather, Food Pantry distributed 67 bags of groceries to 25 families who visited, plus 12 on Food Delivery Sunday. We also provided bread, frozen meat products and other extras to the families who visited the Pantry.

People who helped in January included Chris Corbitt, Sandi Corbitt, LaVerne Davenport, Mary Jane Davenport, Leslie Gilreath, Joann Hartzell, David Kauffman, John Kauffman, Mitchell Kauffman and his fiancée Emily, George Pica, Larry Smith, Pat Smith, Sonja Stormo, and Jill Wendel.

Many thanks to all our volunteers. If you'd like to help with Food Pantry, call the church office.



## CLERK'S CORNER

SNOW - Some of us love it, some of us tolerate it, and some of us leave for several months in order to avoid it. I am in the category of loving snow as long as I or my beloved husband do not have to drive any great distance on it. I love the serene feeling while walking at the State Park, only one quarter mile from I-94, and not being able to hear the highway because the snow has muffled the sound. I love watching the chocolate lab we walk everyday stuff his entire snout and head into the deep snow upon catching the scent of something buried or moving under the snow. It's beautiful watching the snow fall so silently to the ground. It makes me feel safe and protected as I walk, kept warm by my snow clothes.

I think of how important the snow is to us. It nourishes the ground by replenishing the water table below the ground so that we continue to enjoy having plentiful amounts of water with which to drink, bathe, and to enjoy all sorts of recreation in and on water. God provides this for us whether we enjoy the snow or not. God provides for us in so many ways that we don't think about on a daily basis. He/she has plans that work for our benefit. We live in a little bit of paradise here in Southwestern Michigan.

By the time you read this, all the snow may have melted, not to return until next winter. But one never knows. God may have a hot, dry summer planned and think we may need more snow to help us later this year.

Marlene Denekas was called home on February 13, 2018. She served as the organist for Fairplain Presbyterian Church for 46 years. Her smile and her talent will be missed.

Fairplain Presbyterian Church now numbers 98 active members, with 77 inactive members on our register. Our January services numbered 35 each Sunday with February numbering 21 and 24 the first two Sundays probably due to heavy snow. The third Sunday in February numbered 35 attending Sunday worship. In January we served Communion to 35 in Worship and another 4 with Home Communion. In February we suspended Home Communion because the flu has been unusually bad this season.

### UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES

March 1- Habitat Build begins working and needs volunteers

March 3, 11:00 AM – Yoga in the Courtyard Room. We will be using chairs which makes yoga possible for every age.

March 28 – Community Dinner

April 3 – Life Line Screening in our building- If interested sign up soon. Information is posted in the Courtyard.

Marlene Smith- Clerk of Session



## HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

Harbor Habitat for Humanity is looking for volunteers for their continuing upcoming build beginning in March. They will be building a neighborhood of 6 homes on 2.7 acres on Williams and Territorial, which is known as the Sand Creek Development. One of the homes is complete and the other five are in various statements of construction.

Volunteers work Monday-Friday from 8:00 am-3:00 pm or 9:00 am-4:00 pm and sometimes on Saturdays. If you wish to be a volunteer, please contact Linda in the church office and she will contact Brenda Butler, Volunteer Coordinator at Harbor Habitat. Linda has information packets available on the table in the Courtyard. The packet includes meeting location, attire, and other information along with a Release and Waiver of Liability to be completed and signed by each volunteer.



## LIFE LINE SCREENING

Please see the display in the Courtyard to register for Tuesday, April 3, when Life Line Screening will be at our church. The packet includes various screening tests listed here as well as cost information. Ultrasound screenings to identify risk factors for Carotid Artery, Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm, and other tests related to heart issues, as well as Osteoporosis risk assessment. Being proactive about your health by knowing your risks helps you and your doctor address problems early.

To register online go to [www.lifelinescreening.com/communitycircle](http://www.lifelinescreening.com/communitycircle) or call 1-866-229-0469 and receive your “Community Circle” discount and your preferred appointment. Space is limited to 90 persons and 45 people have already signed up.



## RECORDING OF SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP SERVICE

If you would like a CD of today’s service, please contact the church office. *NEW for 2018* - An .mp3 file can also be made available on-line if you would prefer to listen to it on your computer. Email Chris Corbitt, [cpc1\\_1999@yahoo.com](mailto:cpc1_1999@yahoo.com) and he will send you an invitation to listen to it via DropBox. You will NOT need to have DropBox installed on your computer.

Greetings to all from 2. Chronicles 5:12-14

*“All the Levitical singers, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, their sons, and their kinsmen, attired in fine linen, stood with cymbals lutes and lyres to the east of the altar, together with a 120 priests who blew trumpets. Now the trumpeters and the singers joined in unison to sound forth praise and thanksgiving to the Lord, and the song was raised with trumpets, cymbals and musical instruments, in praise of the Lord, because ‘it is good, for his love endures forever’; and the house was filled with the cloud of the glory of the Lord. The priests could not continue to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God.”*

The following music groups and soloists embellished our Sunday Worship experience in February:

February 04 – LaVerne and Mary Jane Davenport (vocal duet)

February 11 – Family Slavujevic Chimes & Bells and vocal trio

February 18 – Praise Band “Wherever Two ..” (2 songs)

February 25 – Dorothy Trachte (piano solo) and Vladimir Slavujevic (vocal solo)

The Chancel Choir will resume its rehearsals on February 28 and participate regularly in our worship services from March through July.

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Here is an interesting article about a well-known hymn “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” (#101 in our church hymnal) adopted from Randy Petersen’s book “Be Still My Soul.”

The Apostle Paul had a lot to brag about, and he did brag sometimes, but not for long. In Philippians 3 he produces his credentials – good pedigree, a master of religion, a keeper of God’s law – but then he trashes it: “Whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ (Philippians 3:7). In another letter he says explicitly, “May I never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Galatians 6:14).

That’s the attitude Isaac Watts presents in this hymn: “My richest gain I count but loss.” Watts himself was a brash young man who often complained about the church’s stuffy psalm-singing. His father apparently asked Isaac whether he thought he could write something better, and young Isaac did just that, churning out a new paraphrase of a psalm each week for a couple of years.

The precocious youth turned into a prolific adult. Many of his hymns were drawn from the Psalms, but this one is simply a Communion hymn. It appeared in his 1707 collection, when Watts was just 33. Some different tunes have been attached to it, but Lowell Mason’s “Hamburg,” written in 1824 and based on Gregorian plainsong, has had the longest-lasting connection.

If Isaac Watts were still around to hear the accolades for this hymn, he would probably have enjoyed them. He had taken his father’s “challenge” and won. But then he would remember that his richest gain was still a loss, compared to the greatness of knowing Christ.

May God bless us all, grant us protection, guidance, good health, prosperity and an opportunity to be a blessing to others.

Vladimir Slavujevic, Music Director



## MONTHLY REPORT OF THE PNC – FEBRUARY 21, 2018

Since the congregation elected the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) in late January, the team of six has been busy building up momentum. As you know, the six members are Chris Corbitt, Leslie Gilreath, J. Michael Hall, John Kauffman, Jenna McAllister and Robert Smith. Leslie was appointed chair, and I volunteered to be the secretary. We will keep you informed of our progress -- though any hiring process must be highly confidential.

In early February we received training from our Transition Counselor, the Reverend Sarah Schmidt-Lee from Kalamazoo. The following week we met with Session and received our marching orders. February 20 was our first official meeting directed toward preparing the Ministry Information Form (MIF). Our timeline for preparation of this document, to alert pastors to our search for a new spiritual leader, is a tight 30-day window. The form must be approved by Session at its March meeting and then by Lake Michigan Presbytery's Committee on Ministry, which we hope to see just before Easter.

We are basing our writing decisions not only on prayers and deliberation but also upon recent work by the congregation. This includes the surveys you filled out, the all-day Visioning Workshop in November, and the Conversation on Visioning held in December. You may give input to the committee members as you see us in church or by calling us -- or by emailing us at our specific address – [fpcpnc18@gmail.com](mailto:fpcpnc18@gmail.com) .

Thank you for your support and prayers.

Robert Smith, Secretary



## CONDOLENCES

- Marlene Denekas family, recent death of Marlene – memorials have been designated for the Music Fund
- Mary Knapp, recent death of her brother, Lloyd Knapp
- Nan Meyer, recent death of her mother, Capitola Daron
- Dorothy Trachte, recent death of her sister, Marilyn Anderson
- Sandi Corbitt & family, upon the recent death of Sandi's aunt, Inez (Neni) Stoothoff (Visin)

## ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

Did you know that our congregation had one of the top giving rates per member in our Presbytery last year? On Easter Sunday, April 1, we will be receiving the One Great Hour of Sharing offering. Please use your offering envelope that will be provided in your bulletin on Easter Sunday.

Around the world, millions of people lack access to sustainable food sources, clean water, sanitation, education and opportunity. The three programs supported by One Great Hour of Sharing are Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program and Self-Development of People.

1. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance works alongside communities as they recover and find hope after the devastation of natural or human-caused disasters and support for refugees and receives 32% of funds raised.
2. Presbyterian Hunger Program takes action to alleviate hunger, care of creation, and the systemic causes of poverty so all may be fed and receives 36% of the funds raised.
3. Self-Development of People invests in communities responding to their experiences of oppression, poverty and injustice and educates Presbyterians about the impact of these issues and receives 32% of funds raised.



## WOMEN'S CIRCLE

Women's Circle will meet on March 13, at 9:30 am in the Courtyard. Hoping to see many of you there.

## SOUP KITCHEN

On Thursday, February 8, a happy crew of 8 volunteers prepared and served lunch at the Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen. A total of 95 adults and 1 child enjoyed cheese potatoes with diced ham, buttered mixed greens, spiced apple rings, buttered bread, cookies and juice or milk. Volunteers included John Kauffman, George Pica, Eloise and Harold Gundersen, Marlene Smith, Leslie Gilreath, Deb Morris and Julie Nash.



## EASTER FLOWERS

You have an opportunity to order Easter flowers this Lenten season. Easter Lilies and Tulips cost \$10 each and Hydrangeas cost \$15 with selections listed below. A portion of the proceeds will go towards the funeral fund. Please complete the order form no later than **Sunday, March 18** and place in the offering plate, or drop off at the church office. Your check should be made payable to the **Board of Deacons**.

6" Easter Lily (\$10 each) Number ordered: \_\_\_\_\_

6" Tulip (assorted colors, \$10 each) Number ordered: \_\_\_\_\_

8" Hydrangeas (assorted colors, \$15 each) Number ordered: \_\_\_\_\_

In memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

In honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I would like my flower(s) to be delivered to a homebound member: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to take my flower(s) home: \_\_\_\_\_

Ordered by: \_\_\_\_\_ Check # \_\_\_\_\_ Cash \_\_\_\_\_





## TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

We have experienced some technical difficulties with the startup of the new streaming of the church's worship service. Wrinkles are always anticipated when dealing with technology. Thankfully we have Bill Cundiff and his expertise to help iron them out. We also have done some upgrading to our internet service to help with the uploading speed of the streaming to the internet, which should help.

Here is how you get to the streaming link.

On your web browser (Internet Explorer, Google, Chrome, Firefox, etc.) in the URL line type in front of the <https://www.fairplainpc.com>. This will take you to the church's website. Click on the Steaming-Live & Recorded tab. On that page you will see the first line which says "*Streaming will start 9:20 am with audio at 9:25 am.*" NOTE: If you start the streaming BEFORE 9:20 am, you will only see the SPLASH screen of the church with "*Sorry, the live streaming is offline now.*" You will need to close out and come back in at the correct time, no sooner than 9:20 am.

To start Live Streaming click on the link, "[//iframe.dacast.com](http://iframe.dacast.com)..." that is below the line that reads "*Click on the below link to start streaming Sunday's Live Service.*" It may take a few seconds for the upload to connect. Be patient.

If you wish to view the recorded church service at a later time and/or date, you can go to the next line that says, "*Click on below link to view Recorded Sunday services.*" Click on the link below the date that you want to watch.

We hope this will be an outreach to our church members and non-members that are homebound, the snow birds, and anyone that is new moving into the community. This will also give any pastors that may be interested in our church as we begin the search for a new pastor, a view into our church and its current worship service.

As always, if you have any input, concerns and/or comments about the streaming service, contact Bill Cundiff, Chris Corbitt, Mike Hall or Pastor LaVerne. If you have viewed it live or recorded we would love to hear your feedback.

Chris Corbitt, Streaming Team Member



## LIBRARY

Mission Statement:

The purpose of the Fairplain Presbyterian Church Library shall be:

- to provide books and material that will help promote a better understanding of our Christian heritage;
- to encourage members to grow in Christmas faith and spiritual living; and
- to provide wholesome literature and audio/video materials for entertaining and learning.

**Click on this link to go to our library catalog:**

[www.librarything.com/catalog/fairplain](http://www.librarything.com/catalog/fairplain)

There are several ways to browse the books in our church library:

1. Use the “search this library” window to search for a particular book or author.
2. Scroll through the listing of books which are in alphabetical order by title.
3. Search by categories – to do this, click on the “Tags” heading. The categories are:

Art & Literature

Biblical Studies

Biographies

Christian Living

Christian Theology

Church History

Church Leadership

Commentaries

Devotionals

Local History

Media

Missions

Prayer

Presbyterian Church

Reference

Stephen Ministries

World Religions

Worship

**The following books have been added to our library recently – take a moment and check one out:**

- Understanding the Koran, a Quick Christian Guide to the Muslim Holy Book
- Islam & Christianity, compares teachings and beliefs
- The Kurds, Creating of the Modern Middle East
- Waking up White
- Always With Us? What Jesus Really Said About the Poor



## DEACONS OUTREACH

### YELLOW PEW ENVELOPES

As you will notice in the pews, the yellow envelopes have been reprinted for your donations toward Deacons General/Funeral Fund and Food Pantry/Soup Kitchen.

#### **Deacons General Fund:**

Goes towards the purchase of communion cups, oil for candles, Advent wax candles, flowers for shut-ins (Christmas and Easter), printed support materials for members: These Days devotional, Care Notes (various topics), greeting cards and postage for members; CD players for shut-ins.

#### **Deacons Funeral Fund:**

Goes towards any funeral luncheon expenses that are not reimbursed by the family.

**Donations to the Deacons General Fund and/or Funeral Fund should be made payable to Fairplain Presbyterian Church.**

#### **Food Pantry:**

To purchase products we are low on, or take advantage of good sales on products, we normally furnish in food bags from our local retail grocer.

#### **Soup Kitchen:**

To purchase the needed side dishes for our once-a-month meals we prepare at the soup kitchen in Benton Harbor.

**Donations to the Food Pantry and/or Soup Kitchen should be made payable to the Community Food Pantry at Fairplain Presbyterian Church.**



## CHURCH STAFF

LaVerne Davenport, Pastor – email: [portoflm@yahoo.com](mailto:portoflm@yahoo.com)

Office Hours: Tuesday-Friday: 9 am-noon and by appointment

Linda Cogswell, Church Secretary – church email: [fairplainpc@gmail.com](mailto:fairplainpc@gmail.com)

Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday: 8:30 am-noon, 1:00-3:00 pm

Wednesday: Closed (Pastor LaVerne available by appointment)

Friday: 9:00 am-11:30 am (closed in the afternoon)

Vladimir Slavujevic, Director of Music – email: [vladoslavujevic@yahoo.com](mailto:vladoslavujevic@yahoo.com)

Mary Jane Davenport – Organist/Accompanist – email: [portofmj@yahoo.com](mailto:portofmj@yahoo.com)

Jenna McAllister, Treasurer – email: [jennabetz@comcast.net](mailto:jennabetz@comcast.net)

Chris Corbitt, Financial Secretary – email: [cpc1\\_1999@yahoo.com](mailto:cpc1_1999@yahoo.com)

Bud Cornelius, Custodian