

# FAIRPLAIN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## MARCH 2020

*Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.*

*-Isaiah 51:1-2, NRSV.*

Dear friends,

Welcome back to Lent. It's a kind of spring cleaning of the Christian calendar, a time to pare back and let go of things we don't need in our lives anymore. It starts with Ash Wednesday, a reminder that death is coming for us all. And if death is coming for us all, why hold on to the things that are holding us back?

Have you ever noticed that no matter how many times you do spring cleaning, the next year you just have to do it again? Even if you've gotten rid of stuff every year prior, somehow more stuff manages to accumulate. But one fine spring day, you look in that room you've been throwing stuff in, or the garage, and ask yourself, "Why am I living like this?" And you get to work, putting things away, getting rid of things, maybe buying new storage bins.

The problem with clean houses, like clean hearts, is that they just tend to get dirty again. This happens faster if you have a toddler running around helping with it. I wonder if we all have little toddlers running around in our hearts pulling books off shelves and throwing papers on the floor, forming new anger puddles that harden into grudges, and stuffing time closets full of things that Seem Very Important at the Time. Maybe we try to get to things, and every time we get one room clean, it's just in time to find a mess in another.

For example, last year during Lent, I logged out of Facebook. When I logged back in after Easter Sunday, I experienced a jarring feeling. It seemed like Facebook was intentionally putting things in front of me to make me angry. I logged out immediately. Facebook was taking my peace in exchange for whatever change they got paid for marketing to me. But gradually, I got used to it again. I got used to a gently simmering anger in the background of my life. So I'm thinking of dropping off for lent again this year.

That's part of the idea behind Lent, I think: an annual time to stop and think about what we're doing that's hurting us, others, and God's world, and to stop doing it. At least for a while, to realize the bin of television-watching wasn't making us happy anyway. It might not last, but we can enjoy it while it does.

Peace to you, and may you have a good cleaning. Maybe good enough to develop habits to try to *keep* it that way, as I am hoping to do.

Rev. David M. Schell, Pastor



## WEDNESDAY FAMILY DINNER

### We Feed People!

Again this year we will be preparing and hosting Free Community Dinners the last Wednesday of each month at 6:00 pm in the Courtyard Room. You are invited! We need volunteers to help prepare, serve, clean up or bring cookies or brownies for dessert. We also need volunteers to sit and fellowship with our neighborhood friends and share in the food, though you don't need to sign up for this.

We do not collect any money at the dinners, because the expenses are covered by special contributions from Fairplain Church members and friends. So mark your calendars for the last Wednesday of each month, and look for the volunteer sign-up sheets in the Sunday bulletins. We look forward to your participation and support for this continuing outreach service to our community!

Please join us at our next Community Dinner on Wednesday, March 25, at 6 pm.



## MARCH BIRTHDAYS

- |                   |                     |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| 8: Ernie Lewis    | 23: Thelma Smith    |
| 9: Linda Zitta    | 23: Augie Meyer     |
| 10: Kim Edinger   | 25: Phyllis Myers   |
| 11: Drew Kelleher | 25: Greg Powell     |
| 13: Matt Kodis    | 27: Shaney Mulligan |
| 20: Fred Welch    | 30: Halley Kelleher |
| 22: Anita Ong     |                     |

## DONATIONS FOR COMMUNITY DINNERS

If you would like to make a donation for the Community Dinners, please make your check payable to "Fairplain Presbyterian Church", memo: Community Dinners. You can place your check in the offering plate or drop off at the church office.

The donations go toward the cost of meal, paper products, and refreshment supplies. Thank you - Community Dinners Committee.



## MUSIC NEWS

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 02 – Vladimir Slavujevic vocal and piano solos

February 09 – Chancel Choir and Family Slavujevic Chimes & Bells

February 16 – Praise Team “Wherever Two ...”

February 23 – Chancel Choir and Ladies’ Chorus

While the church was searching and auditioning for a new pianist / accompanist / organist, I served as an interim organist for 4 consecutive Sundays – on January 19, 26, as well as on February 02, and 09. Knowing that the congregation enjoys to hear organ sound I decided to spend extra hours each week practicing and preparing suitable organ preludes and postludes. All other service music I also played on the organ.

Our new keyboard player is Muyu Zou. He is a young man originally from China currently studying Master of Music degree in piano performance at Andrews University. He will write a short biography introducing himself to the congregation in the April newsletter.

\*\*\*\*\*

Here is an interesting article about a well-known hymn “Beneath the Cross of Jesus” (# 92 in our church hymnal) adopted from Randy Petersen’s book “Be Still My Soul.”

They called her “Sunbeam.” Although Elizabeth Cecilia Douglas Clephane lived a difficult life, she maintained a cheery presence.

Born in Edinburgh, Scotland, she grew up in the smaller town of Melrose, where her father was sheriff. But both her parents died when she was young, and she herself was often ill. Still, she did what she could for people who were needier than she was, often providing money and service - and, of course, good cheer.

Elizabeth, who lived a few miles from the home of the great Scottish poet Sir Walter Scott, loved to read poetry. She also wrote some verses that expressed her faith. Unfortunately, most of her poems weren’t published until after her death.

Article Continued on Page 4 ...

“Sunbeam” never reached the age of 40. A year before she died, she wrote the words of this hymn. The first verse holds an allusion to the opening verses of Isaiah 32, in which the prophet hails the coming of a righteous king. This king would provide shelter from wind and storm and burning heat. The rugged terrain of Judea was a far cry from the Scottish hillside, but Clephane understood the prophet well. In all the difficulties of her own life – her own “weary land” – Jesus had provided “home ...rest.” And she was about to enter her eternal rest, leaving her health struggles behind forever.

A few of Elizabeth’s poems had already been printed in the *Family Treasury*, a Scottish Presbyterian magazine, but a posthumous collection of her work appeared there in 1872. Editor W. Arnot commented, “These lines express the experiences, the hopes and the longings of a young Christian lately released. Written on the very edge of life, with the better land fully in view of faith, they seem to us footsteps printed on the sands of time, where these sands touch the ocean of Eternity. These footprints of one whom the Good Shepherd led through the wilderness into rest, may, with God’s blessing, contribute to comfort and direct succeeding pilgrims.”

A few years later, another of Elizabeth’s poems came to the attention of song leader Ira Sankey, who put it to music and used it in revival meetings. “The Ninety and Nine” retold Jesus’ parable of the shepherd who leaves ninety-nine sheep to search for the one sheep that is lost. In an era in which people were beginning to crow about the “victorious Christian life,” Elizabeth Clephane had no such bravado. She knew she was just a lost lamb found by a loving Shepherd.

“Sunbeam” had learned to “ask no other sunshine than the sunshine of His face.”

\*\*\*\*\*

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

Vladimir Slavujevic,  
Director of Music



## PASSION PLAY

On Saturday, April 11 (Easter Saturday) Andrews University in Berrien Springs will host a “Passion Play” – an in and outdoor presentation of Jesus’ last week on this earth, including crucifixion and resurrection scenes. Dozens of volunteers dressed in authentic clothes, resembling those from Jesus’ time will participate as actors. It is free but pre-registration is needed as this event will attract thousands. Please contact Andrews University/Passion Play website for more information:

<https://passionplay.andrews.edu/index.html> - Vladimir

## CLERK'S CORNER – MARCH

Membership as of 2-18-2020 is 86 active members.

Attendance-average for January was **33** people in worship.

Communion was served to 34 during worship on February 2.

### Coordination of Calendar

- March 1 - Love Your **Depressed** Neighbor
- March 8 – Love Your **Autistic** Neighbor, Ann Williams
- March 15 – to be finalized
- March 22 - Love Your Neighbor **Suicidal Awareness**
- March 25, Community Dinner - 6:00 pm, Courtyard or Fellowship Hall
- April 4 - Southwest Michigan Ministerial Alliance Meeting at Fairplain
- June 28-August 3 - Youthworks participants staying in our building
- August 6 - Lifeline Screening in Fellowship Hall
- September 11 - Church women United



I would like to bring your attention to the calendar of Events taking place at Fairplain. We have a dynamic **Sunday School** class that has been taking place for the past few months. I would encourage you to attend if you can. It is held in the Library where it's comfortably warm and our speakers have been very knowledgeable. They are people who have actually experienced whatever the topic is about. For example; hunger, addiction, depression, and crisis. Class lasts about an hour, and they are interactive so you can ask questions.

**Reminder:** If you have not yet paid your **Per Capita** of \$35.20, then please put a check in the offering plate made out to Fairplain Presbyterian and put in the notation line that it is your Per Capita. Thank you. Our Per Capita is the primary source of funding for our Presbytery, our Synod and the General Assembly. They each offer us services on which we depend, like helping us find a new minister.

If you have not been in church in the past few weeks, you may not be aware that the Courtyard Room is quite chilly! The heat exchanger on the roof of the building developed a crack and was emitting carbon monoxide into the building. We turned off the heat until it can be repaired, so the room is currently unusable, or at least uncomfortable. Since the exchanger is 21 years old, its Freon is obsolete and cannot be used anymore. We were grandfathered in, but now the entire unit must be replaced. We are in the process of getting bids from three heating and cooling companies and hope to have the room in use fairly soon. Yes, it's expensive.

Marlene Smith-Clerk



## 6

### SECRETARY SUPPLY

While Linda Cogswell is on vacation from March 18 through March 27, volunteers are scheduled in the church office from 9 am-noon. Linda is seeking one more person to fill in on Thursday, March 26, and Friday, March 27. This person should be knowledgeable in computer skills as well. If you think you can help out, please contact Linda in the church office. The schedule is printed below.

Thursday, March 19: Leslie Gilreath	Tuesday, March 24: Linda Zitta
Friday, March 20: Leslie Gilreath	Thursday, March 26: to be confirmed
Monday, March 23: Leslie Gilreath	Friday, March 27: to be confirmed

### 3<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY BREAKFAST

On Sunday, March 15, immediately following worship, Sean Schaul will be serving a hot/cold breakfast in Fellowship Hall. Invite your neighbors and friends who don't have a home church to join us. Please plan to stay after church on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month to enjoy a free breakfast following the worship service. We will have a donation basket available to help cover the cost of groceries.

### SOUP KITCHEN

February 13 was a very cold and snowy day preparing lunch at the Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen. Only 75 people were served a meal that included hot dogs and baked beans, buttered bread, fresh green salad, chips, applesauce, homemade blueberry cake, and milk or juice. Volunteers were Eloise and Harold Gundersen, Lew Burchard, George Pica, John Kauffman, Leslie Gilreath, Amy Reutlinger and Pastor David.

### WOMEN'S CIRCLE

Women's Circle will meet on Tuesday, March 10, at 10 am, in Fellowship Hall. Eloise Gundersen will present the lesson and Jo Ann Hartzell will provide refreshments. All women are welcome. Hope to see you there. Jo Ann Hartzell

### ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

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 include Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and Self-Development of People.

1. Disaster Assistance works alongside communities as they recover and find hope after the devastation of natural or human-caused disasters, and support for refugees. They receive 32% of funds raised.
2. Hunger Program takes action to alleviate hunger, care for creation, and the systemic causes of poverty so all may be fed. They receive 36% of 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. They receive 32% of funds raised.

The offering will be received on Easter Sunday, April 12. Please make your check payable to Fairplain Presbyterian Church – on memo please indicate: OGHS.

## 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.**



Donations  
are greatly  
Appreciated!

## CHURCH STAFF

The Rev. David Schell, [pastor@fairplainpc.com](mailto:pastor@fairplainpc.com)

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

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

Wednesday: Closed

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

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

Muyu Zou, Pianist – email: [raining1@gmail.com](mailto:raining1@gmail.com)

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

Jill Wendel, Financial Secretary – email: [jillannwendel@yahoo.com](mailto:jillannwendel@yahoo.com)

Bud Cornelius, Custodian