

# FAIRPLAIN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## JULY 2020 NEWSLETTER

*As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. -Galatians 3:27-28 NRSV*

Dear friends,

As the Fourth of July rolls around, I am reminded of one of my old favorite songs by the band Brooks and Dunn titled “Only in America.” It celebrates the myriad ways that this country is a place where anyone can become or do anything they want if they only put their minds and / or muscles behind it. I grew up believing I could accomplish anything I set my mind to, and it has worked out well for me.

I also remember sitting in our predominantly-African-American church as a teenager watching Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I have a dream” speech. I was so proud of my country for living up to his vision and creating a world where people were judged not by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

Only in college did I realize that my experience of equality in America was not universal. A friend posted on Facebook that a police car slowed down driving by him and he was afraid he might be arrested for “Walking While Black.” I looked up “Walking While Black” on the internet and was horrified to learn Black Americans are often stopped by police while doing nothing wrong. This has never happened to me.

In seminary, I met others who experienced a different America than I did. A pastor friend was pulled over by Pittsburgh police for being a Black man driving a nice car in a poor neighborhood. Black friends told me stories about people *I knew* who always treated me with kindness and consideration, but who treated my Black friends differently than they treated me, with no difference I could see other than the color of their skin. Stories of being followed in stores, of things I never imagined happened here.

I was further horrified to learn that even though I hate racism, I have unconscious racial bias. I remember walking in Pittsburgh at night and seeing Black men on the sidewalk and feeling myself become afraid. Here in Benton Harbor, when a Black man at a gas station tried to call me over to his car to ask me something one evening, I assumed he wanted money. That was wrong.

Friends, these are hard times for people who look like me. Our country is facing a moral reckoning over centuries of harm done to Black and Brown bodies, and over the fact that some of those horrific abuses still continue to this day – usually in less obvious ways than the Minneapolis police officer who suffocated George Floyd for 8 minutes and 46 seconds.

It can be easy to fall into the trap of “white guilt,” feeling guilty for things we haven’t done, or even things we have done, rather than doing the work of God of fighting racism in our country, our cities, and, most perniciously, in our own hearts.

It can also be easy to fall into denial, convincing ourselves that the countless instances of racially-motivated bad behavior only reflect a few bad apples, rather than the pattern of systemic racial disparities our Black and Brown brothers and sisters in Christ are experiencing.

As our country continues into this moral reckoning, I would encourage us all to work hard to listen to the experiences of Black and Brown Americans, even those whose experiences suggest that this country we love may not treat everyone else as kindly as it treats us. Please pray with me that our country will be face its original sin and do justice for Black and Brown Americans.

Rev. David M. Schell, pastor

## JULY BIRTHDAYS

3: John Kauffman  
4: Judy Kuhlman  
6: Marion Crossman  
9: Diane Cronk

22: Linda Cogswell  
24: Sandi Corbitt  
27: Eva Bodnar  
27: Elaine Holt



## LIFE LINE SCREENING

Life Line Screening, a leading provider of community-based preventive health screenings, is pleased to offer a preventive health event at Fairplain Presbyterian Church on 8/6/2020. Five screenings will be offered that scan for potential health problems related to: blocked arteries which is a leading cause of stroke; abdominal aortic aneurysms which can lead to a ruptured aorta; hardening of the arteries in the legs which is a strong predictor of heart disease; atrial fibrillation or irregular heart beat which is closely tied to stroke risk; and a bone density screening, for men and women, used to assess the risk of osteoporosis.

Register for a Wellness Package which includes 4 vascular tests and osteoporosis screening from \$149 (\$139 with our member discount). All five screenings take 60-90 minutes to complete. **There are three ways to register for this event and to receive a \$10 discount off any package priced above \$129, please call toll-free 1-888-653-6441 or visit <http://lifelinescreening.com/communitycircle> or text the word circle to 797979**

Friends and Family Savings – Life Line Screening has provided us with a \$10 off coupon for Friends and Family. If you would like a coupon, please contact Linda in the church office.



### THANK YOU

With gratitude, I wish to thank Session for their efforts in allowing me to continue to be paid throughout the stay-at-home order. We have such a caring, generous church, and I surely do appreciate all of you. You will see below the church office information effective June 15.

### CHURCH OFFICE

The church office is now open during regular hours listed below. Only essential and scheduled appointments are allowed at this time. If you do have a scheduled appointment you will need to ring the doorbell at the main entry doors and Linda will greet you. You will be required to wear a mask and if you do not have one you may use one provided by the church. Linda will also be taking your temperature as well. Lysol wipes will be used to sanitize the door handles.

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

Friday: 9:00 am-11:30 am



### SECRETARY SUPPLY

Linda will be on vacation from Wednesday, August 12 through Wednesday, August 19. The church office will be open from 9 am-noon on the following days: Thursday, August 13, Friday, August 14, Monday, August 17, and Tuesday, August 28.

### REV. DAVID SCHELL

Per the Governor's Executive Order, Fairplain's Session is encouraging everyone to work from home whenever possible. Pastor David is working from home. If you need his phone number, please contact the church office.

### SOUP KITCHEN

A total of 110 bagged lunches were packed for Soup Kitchen delivery on Thursday, June 11th by volunteers Leslie Gilreath, Marlene Smith, Vicki Born, Ann Welch Williams, Jill Wendel and Julie Nash. Bags included peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, sun chips, fruit cups, small candy bars and bottled water.

Thanks to John Kaufman for providing the lunch contents from the Food Pantry and to Jill Wendel for pre-packing boxes for the volunteers.

Not yet sure what July will bring as far as lunch prep is concerned at the Soup Kitchen, but I do know we will all be ready and willing to serve.

- Julie Nash

### MIDLAND FLOODING

Volunteers with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance “have been on board from the start,” says the Rev. Dr. Dan Saperstein, executive presbyter of the Presbytery of Lake Huron. He says that the Rev. Cully Culpepper (a PLM) is part of the PDA national deployment team assigned to the crisis.

Rev. Saperstein says he has not yet learned about requests for any work crews or other teams to help support the recovery effort.

But he does suggest three ways to provide support right now:

- Donate funds via PDA using the “Midwest Flood” Account # 000191. Go to <https://pda.pcusa.org/> to do this online.
- Donate funds directly through the Presbytery of Lake Huron. Go to <http://www.presbylh.org/> and then click the “Donate to Flood Relief” flag.
- Donate to the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan, and designate the funds be directed to the flood-affected areas. (A major problem with both the flooding and the coronavirus crisis is food insecurity.) Go to <https://www.fbem.org/> to make a donation.

### JUNE CLERK REPORT

Our membership changed in June to 83 active members, based on the request by Kathy and Keith Royal to have their membership removed from our rolls as they have been attending another church. Bob Reed was also removed from the rolls as he has left the area and we don't know how to contact him. Our average number of unique contacts via streaming is 39 for the month of June.

I have been asked by several people what the church is planning to do about a baby gift for Baby Schell who is due on July 13. I contacted Kristen and she sent the following note and a link you can access to find things that they need.

**Marlene,**

**Good morning! Thanks for checking in! I worked on going through baby's clothes and stuff from storage yesterday. I updated the registry to show stuff that we'll still need. We have a ton of stuff already and I don't want to get A LOT more because storage space is limited in our house.**

**I also included a "cash fund" in the registry that will go towards a new car seat. People can contribute as much or as little as they want.**

**Here's the registry: <https://www.babylist.com/schell-baby>**

**Thanks,  
Kristen**

Session has been calling members during the lock-down and now we are asking members if, given permission by the Governor, they would be willing to attend church in person, wearing a mask, and sitting in apart from one another in church. So far, everyone I have asked has responded with a “yes”. If enough people are willing to be in the Sanctuary, and the Governor gives the ok, we will be notifying you about the plans.

Marlene Smith-Clerk

## MUSIC NEWS

Greetings to all from Psalm 33:3

***“Sing to Him a new song; play skillfully with a shout of joy.”***

At the time of typing this article, our church is open only to participants with the “live” streaming. All others can watch our Sunday programs online. Hope we will return to normal in-person worships during this summer.

Here is a list of participants in late May and June who contributed with the special music:

- May 24 – Muyu Zou
- May 31 – Family Slavujevic Chimes & Bells and vocal
- June 07 – The Praise Team “Wherever Two ...”
- June 14 – Family Slavujevic Chimes & Bells and vocal
- June 21 – Charlene Jones
- June 28 – (no “live” streaming from our church)

In order to have a greater variety of participants this summer, I have started inviting some guest volunteer musicians for July and August. Hope we will see some new faces and hear good music from them.

GREAT FAMILY NEWS! My wife Branka just completed her online Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing! She did it in just over 2 years while working 80% as a Registered Nurse. Here GPA (Grade Point Average) in nursing courses was 4.0. Branka learned a lot and became skillful in writing about issues in nursing as well as in verbal and Power Point presentations. It was a win-win situation. Now she feels more knowledgeable and confident as a nurse. She will now be able to have much more free time and be active in other personal and family projects.

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Here is an interesting article about a well-known hymn **“Crown Him with Many Crowns”** (# 151 in our church hymnal) adopted from Randy Petersen’s book “Be Still My Soul.”

There were times in British history when Catholics and Protestants were killing one another. The Anglican (or English) Reformation of the 1500s stirred some vicious rivalries, which continued to explode in the 1600s. By 1800s, most of the violence had blown over, but Anglican writer Matthew Bridges carried on a war of words. At age 28 he published an anti-Catholic book intended to expose “the real origin of certain papal superstitions.”

Bridges also put out other, less volatile, collections of poetry and hymns, but 20 years later a strange thing happened: he converted to Catholicism. And shortly after that, he wrote 6 stanzas of this hymn, which he originally called “The Song of the Seraphs.”

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The text was based on Revelation 19:12, with its apocalyptic vision of Jesus as ‘Faithful and True,’ the rider of the white horse, on whose head ‘were many crowns.’ A few verses earlier, he is called the Lamb, and a few verses before that is the biblical version of the Hallelujah Chorus. This is the “heavenly anthem” that inspired Matthew Bridges.

In 1874 another writer entered the picture. Godfrey Thring, an Anglican, had some problems with what he saw as too much Catholicism in this hymn. One of the original verses hailed Jesus as “the virgin’s son” and “fruit of the mystic rose” – tame language by modern standards, but enough to inspire Thring to write his own 6 stanzas. He also wanted to add more emphasis on Jesus’ resurrection – supplying the verse about “the Lord of life, who triumphed o’er the grave.” (That stanza ends in one of the great lines of hymnody – “who died eternal life to bring, and lives that death may die.”)

In the ensuing years, churches and publishers sifted the 12 stanzas down to 6 or 4, using some from each writer. Thrings’ “Lord of life” verse is generally included. The “Lord of years” and “Lord of love” stanzas, as well as the first, come from Bridges.

Fast-forward another 30 years or so to the early 1900s. The hymn, in various forms, is now well-known. The British and Foreign Bible Society is celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. At the gala occasion in London’s Royal Albert Hall, congratulations are received from princes and presidents worldwide. But the moderator knows who holds the true authority. “Now that we have read these addresses from earthly rulers,” he says, “let us turn our mind to the King of kings. We will sing -”Crown Him with Many Crowns.”  
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May God richly bless and protect all of us and our loved ones during this summer. May we experience joy in serving God and others wherever we will be.

Vladimir Slavujevic, Music Director



## DEACONS

### YELLOW PEW ENVELOPES

The yellow envelopes have been reprinted for your donations toward Deacons General/Funeral Fund and Food Pantry/Soup Kitchen and are in the pews. Since we're not worshiping in the church building until the stay-home-stay-safe order is lifted, you can just make a note in the memo line of a check mailed to the church.

### 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.

**Checks for donations to the Deacons General Fund and/or Funeral Fund should be made payable to Fairplain Presbyterian Church. Include "Deacons" in the memo line.**

## 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)

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