

FAIRPLAIN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SEPTEMBER 2020 NEWSLETTER

“Wherever two or more are gathered together in my name, I am there.”

Romans 18:20

Dear Fairplain Family and Friends,

Summer is ending. How did that happen? It seems as if it was just March, and we were looking forward to summer. I hope you have had a good summer in spite of all the strangeness in the world right now. I've enjoyed the beauty in my back yard – flowers, birds, butterflies, squirrels. I relish the sunsets over the lake and all the delicious fruits and vegetables that bless us here.

But I do grieve the people I haven't been able to see, the plans that had to be canceled. I think we all do, and that's only normal.

I have had the privilege of leading worship several times while Pastor David is home with Kristen, Ryan and our new baby, Micah, but it does seem strange in an almost-empty sanctuary. And although Virtual Coffee Hour has brought a few of us together, I miss seeing and worshiping in person with all of you.

Session is looking at worship possibilities and carefully considering the health and safety of all our members. Meanwhile, the church continues to serve in ways it can. We're distributing food from Food Pantry in the parking lot, and we have been providing about 140 sack lunches a month to Soup Kitchen.

For now, we're continuing to worship online. I would like to thank all the folks who have worked to make worship happen every week, especially since Pastor David has been on family leave. He will return to the pulpit on September 13.

Usually this time of year we have Rally Day or a picnic. So we're having a “coffee hour” on the front lawn. We'll have walkers available for those who need them, as well as assistance from the parking lot to the front yard. We will be masked and socially distanced. Join us to catch up on how we spent our summer.

Blessings, Leslie Gilreath

Conversation on the Lawn

September 6, 11:30 am

Front Lawn under the trees

Bring your own lawn chair, mask and beverage.

(A few extra chairs will be available)

OUR CHURCH FAMILY FAMILY

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

11: Jenna McAllister 26: Rosemary Holloway
12: Dorothy Trachte 28: Eloise Gundersen
20: Debbie Fragas



Prayers for the Rob & Sally Barker family, recent death of Rob's daughter.

Prayers for the Thelma Smith family, recent death of Thelma on August 2, 2020. A memorial service will be scheduled at a future date. Cards may be sent to: Wendy Minor, 45862 Winchester Circle, Mattawan, MI 49072.

SECRETARY SUPPLY



Linda will be out of the office from Tuesday, Sept. 15 through Monday, Sept. 21. The church office will be open from 9 am-noon on the following days and closed in the afternoon.

MUSIC NEWS

Greetings to all from Psalm 149:1-3

“Praise the Lord. Sing to the Lord a new song, His praise in the assembly of the saints. Let Israel rejoice in their Maker; let the people of Zion be glad in their King. Let them praise His name with dancing and make music to Him with tambourine and harp.”

There were 5 Sundays during the month of August. The following participants shared their music talent with us:

- August 02 – Illiya and Ameer Urakapyev
August 09 – Liliana & Angelica Pena with Lilijana Vajdic
August 16 – Stephens & Mark-Andrew Boursiquot
August 23 – Seiji Jacobson and Vladimir Slavujevic
August 30 – The Praise Band “Wherever Two ...”

You can see unfamiliar names on this list. These are volunteer quests – my music students who performed music in August. I am glad they accepted my invitation to come and embellish our church services with music. We heard guitars, voices and piano sound.

Here is an interesting article about a well-known and loved song “Jesus Loves Me” (#304 in our blue church hymnal) adopted from Randy Petersen’s book “Be Still My Soul.”

According to one common story, when famous theologian Karl Barth was asked to sum up the essentials of the Christian faith, he replied, “Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.”

Those words, now well known by millions of children and adults, had a strange journey. Two sisters, Anna and Susan Warner, were just teenagers when their affluent father lost a fortune in the financial crash of 1837. They had to move from the glamorous life of New York City upriver to an old house on an island in the middle of the Hudson. To help pay the bills, the Warner girls wrote poems and song lyrics, but also some popular novels (often under the pseudonyms Amy Lothrop and Elizabeth Wetherell).



MUSIC NEWS CONTINUED ...

The words to "Jesus Loves Me" first appeared in one of these novels, Say and Seal (1860), on which both sisters put their names (but Anna contributed these lyrics). A deeply religious and heart-wrenching story, it describes a boy named Johnny who is dying. On his deathbed, he asks one of his comforters to sing. The man takes the boy in his arms and walks around the room as the woman (aptly named Faith) looks on. And then the man begins to sing, and though his tone was almost as low as his footsteps, Faith heard every word.

"Jesus loves me – this I know

For the Bible tells me so;

Little ones to Him belong,-

They are weak, but He is strong."

William Bradbury was already famous for writing children's songs for the church. A gifted composer, he had written many hymns for general use, but he was especially interested in music education and the development of good songs for Sunday schools. When he saw the Warners' text, he knew he had to put it to music.

The Warner sisters continued to write, but they soon developed another ministry. The family house on the island in the middle of the Hudson River was directly across from the United States Military Academy at West Point. With an uncle who had served as chaplain for the academy, the Warners were well known to the school. In 1875, they began to teach Bible classes to cadets. Every Sunday afternoon young men would be ferried across the river to the old house to hear about Jesus' love. For 40 years Anna continued this tradition and was greatly appreciated for it.

The Warner sisters are the only civilians buried at West Point.

May God richly bless and protect all of us and our loved ones throughout this month. May we experience joy in serving God and others wherever we will be.

Vladimir Slavujevic,
Music Director



CLERK REPORT

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I am amazed at how different our lives are, yet the same, in so many ways. I miss the interaction with all of you on Sunday at coffee hour, or during church. Session discussed some kind of in-house worship and has decided to follow the direction of Presbytery, which is to suspend in-sanctuary worship until after the year 2020, or whenever a vaccine for Covid 19 become available. I want to take this opportunity to remind each of you to get your flu shot early this year.

We need to be able to conduct church business, like electing a slate of officers for Elder and Deacon, and to have congregational meetings when necessary. In order to do that we need to have an **in-person** congregational meeting to vote on a change in the By-laws, which will allow us to conduct electronic meetings.

Our congregational meeting will be on **Sept. 20, at 11:30 a.m.** on the front lawn of Fairplain Presbyterian Church. We chose the front lawn instead of the parking lot, because we have beautiful shade in the front. We will have lawn chairs available and will have walkers available for those who need help walking on the uneven ground. We need to have a quorum in order to pass the Bylaw. The parking spaces by the choir room should be saved for those who need assistance walking on uneven ground.

This is the language of the By-law change that will be presented is as follows;

MOTION: “The congregation, session, commissions or committees may meet by electronic meeting technology if all members have reasonable notice of the electronic meeting and the ability to discuss and vote on all items of business”.

- a. The quorum for an electronic meeting of the congregation is 16 members.
- b. The quorum for an electronic meeting of the session is 3 members.
- c. The quorum for an electronic meeting of a committee or commission is members.

I hope to see many of you at the congregational meeting. Yes, I have thought about inclement weather. In that case, we would park in the parking lot by the courtyard, and would remain in our cars. I'll leave it to J. Michael Hall to figure out how we can amplify sound to your cars. If any of you have an FM transmitter we could borrow, we could find a radio channel that we can broadcast to your cars. If not, a microphone and amplifier might have to suffice.



CLERK REPORT CONTINUED ...

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If you have questions about this Motion, please call Marlene at 269-465-4343.

On another topic of importance, are pledges. I'm wondering if perhaps some of us are forgetting to send in our pledges since we no longer come to church each Sunday. We were down significantly in July, so that is a big concern. The church services are virtual, but the expenses are real.

In our household, Robert wrote our check and put it in his briefcase, thinking he would drop it off at church on a day that he decided to go into the office. Since he works from home most days, he completely forgot where he put it. It was missing for two months. Don't know if that's happened to any of you, but you might want to check your purse or briefcase for church checks.

Our membership stands at 81 members as of August 25. On August 1, Thelma Smith, joined the Church Triumphant. She will be missed from our membership, and from our choir. Thelma was the only alto who could also sing soprano. That, along with her joyful enthusiasm, are critical losses to the choir.

On June 6, Session removed Bob Reed from our membership as he has moved and we are unable to contact him. Also Keith and Kathy Royal asked to be removed from our rolls as they have joined another church.

Communion for the month of September will be moved to September 13, when Rev. David Schell returns to lead our worship services.

Marlene Smith,
Clerk of Session



A total of 120 bagged lunches were prepared and packed for Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen delivery on Thursday, August 13th, by volunteers: Leslie Gilreath, Marlene Smith, Jenna McAllister, Amy Reutlinger, Deb Morris and Julie Nash.

Bags included a tuna salad sandwich, one bag each of pretzels and popcorn, a box of raisins, a fruit cup, two small candy bars and bottled water.

Thanks to John Kauffman for providing the lunch contents from the Food Pantry and for dividing it all up for the volunteers, to Jill Wendel for shopping before leaving for Iowa, and to Marlene Smith for handling all the details and keeping volunteers informed via emails.

Most likely, September will be the same - more bagged lunches!!!!!!

- Julie Nash

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 worshipping 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

Linda Cogswell, Church Secretary – church email: office@fairplainpc.com

Vladimir Slavujevic, Director of Music – email: vladimirslavujevic5@gmail.com

Muyu Zou, Pianist – email: raining1@gmail.com

Jody Pauley, Nursery Attendant – email: jodypauley1@gmail.com

Jenna McAllister, Treasurer – email: jennabetz@comcast.net

Jill Wendel, Financial Secretary – email: jillannwendel@yahoo.com

Bud Cornelius, Custodian

MISSION STATEMENT

We, the members of Fairplain Presbyterian Church, rejoice in God's grace and redeeming love through Jesus Christ. We believe we have been called as God's children to create an open and welcoming community, to worship and praise God, and to nurture and support each other.

We are called to develop our God-given gifts and to equip ourselves to reach out to the world in love and compassion. Thus prepared, we will share our faith, preach the gospel, feed the hungry, and be peacemakers according to God's will.