

FAIRPLAIN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

JUNE 2021 NEWSLETTER

Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil. -1 Thessalonians 5:20-22



Dear friends,

Last year I got two pieces of mail on the same day:

1. A postcard vilifying someone I liked running for political office in a way I thought was horrific and offensive, and
2. An advertisement for Rent-A-Center showing exorbitant prices to rent to own items for roughly double what it would cost to simply buy them outright.

So naturally, when I threw the rest of the junk mail away, I held on to both of those.

Isn't that what we do? Maybe it's just me, but when someone has harsh words for me, I memorize them and burn every syllable into my soul verbatim and hold onto them for decades, but when I hear kindness, I assume "Oh, they're just being nice."

But what if instead we took a tip from 1 Thessalonians and instead of holding fast to things that hurt us, lies, and unkind words, we "[held] fast to what is good"? I have actually started a file for kind words to help me with that.

As I said on Pentecost, it is important to hear holy challenges to our actions and ideas. But it is also important to hold on to our sense of belovedness as God's dear children. And part of that involves not holding fast to evil, or lies, or cruel and hurtful words that try to crush our hearts.

I finally tossed that junk mail out. I hope you're able to do the same with yours.

Blessings,
Rev. David Schell

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

PRAYER REQUESTS

If you have prayer requests that you would like to leave as a voicemail to be played on Sunday morning, you can call 269-332-1118 to leave a message, and we will play it on Sunday morning.

Prayers for the family of Mike & Michael Hall & family on the recent passing of Gail Hall. A Memorial Service has taken place on Monday, May 24, at 11 am at Fairplain Presbyterian Church.



We are going to have coffee hour following worship in the picnic area, weather permitting. Bring your lawn chairs and sit and have a treat and a glass of lemonade while enjoying each other's company.

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

- 15: Sally Durr
- 17: Chris Paine
- 24: Jane Nettleton

NURSERY

The church nursery has reopened during worship time with Jody Pauley as our nursery attendant.



MUSIC NEWS

Greetings to all from 2 Chronicles 20: 21.22

After consulting the people, Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the Lord and to praise Him for the splendor of His holiness as they went out at the head of the army, saying: "Give thanks to the Lord, for His love endures forever." As they began to sing and praise, the Lord set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated.

There were 5 Sundays in May. The following music groups embellished our Worship services.

- May 02 – Family Slavujevic Chimes & Bells and Vocal Ensemble
- May 09 – The Praise Band “Wherever Two ...”
- May 16 – Adrianna, Isabelle and Ava Urbina
- May 23 – Sarai & Amy Galan with Lisette Benitez
- May 30 – Family Von Maur

Since April 18 (after more than one year) we musicians have had members of the church present in the sanctuary during our Sunday services. This is more natural than performing for just a few church service participants for “live streaming.” Hope we will continue this practice also in the future.

Here is an interesting article about a great hymnwriter Isaac Watts (1674-1748). He wrote the lyrics for the following songs found in our church hymnal: # 40, 78, 100, 101, 126, 172, 210, 229, 230, 253, 288, 362, 423. This article is adopted from Randy Petersen’s book “Be Still My Soul”. (Part One was featured a month ago in our May 2021 edition of the Newsletter).

PART TWO

Shut out from the Anglican power grid, Watts studied at Nonconformist schools and became pastor of an independent church. A brilliant scholar, he wrote about 60 books on subjects not related to hymns, but of course his most important publications were his hymn collections. In 1707 he put out *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*. As we look back on it, this seems like a “Greatest Hits” album – “Joy to the World!,” “O God, Our Help in Ages Past,” “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross,” “Jesus Shall Reign.” Some of these were loose paraphrases of certain psalms, and some were *very* loose. Watts freely expressed his aim: “to make David speak like a Christian”; that is, to bring a sense of New Testament fulfillment to the psalms’ promises. This aim was even stronger in his 1719 collection, *The Psalms of David Imitated in the Language of the New Testament*.

In 1712, poor health forced him to retire from his pastorate. He went to visit some friends for a week, and his stay lasted 30 years. The Abney family of Hertfordshire graciously took in this bachelor-scholar. Watts served as chaplain and tutor for the family and continued his studies and hymn writing.

MUSIC NEWS CONTINUED ...

Critics scoffed at what they called “Watts’s Whims.” Some churches divided over whether or not to use his songs. In some congregations, people walked out when the Watts hymns were sung. Of course, he found his greatest approval among his fellow Nonconformists, but even they weren’t unanimous in their support. Anglican acceptance came slowly. Watts died peacefully in 1748, but he lived long enough to see Charles Wesley take up the baton. Humbly, Watts once commented that one of Wesley’s hymns was worth all his own.

It's amazing the mayhem a brush teenager can cause. In church music, Isaac Watts simply changed everything. Perhaps his impact was described best by his brother, Enoch, before it even happened. Trying to convince Isaac to publish the hymns he had been writing for his church, Enoch said, “There is great need of a pen, vigorous and lively as yours, to quicken and revive the dying devotion of the age.” That’s what Isaac was, and that’s what he did.

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

Vladimir Slavujevic
Director of Music



A total of 100 lunches were prepared and packed for the Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen on Thursday, May 13, by the following volunteers: Marlene Smith, Jill Wendel, Amy Reutlinger, Deb Morris and Julie Nash. Lunches included a chicken salad sandwich, one bag each of Frito Lay munchies, chips, French toast grahams, a box of raisins, a cup of applesauce, two small candy bars and a bottled water. A good lunch for sure!

Thank you to John and Jill for their efforts to provide from the food pantry. Thank you to all volunteers for preparation and delivery. We still have no idea when the Soup Kitchen will reopen. I, for one, will be so happy to work preparing meals “on site” once again.

Julie Nash

PARISH LIFE COMMITTEE

If you would be interested in joining the Parish Life Committee with Kristen Schell and Linda Cogswell, please contact the church office.

CLERK'S CORNER

The new roof is on and looks very nice! I am looking forward to several years of “no leaks.” Future Roofing completed the work in one week. When I came to check on the progress, it was unreal how many workers they had on the roof. There were nine men on the Food Pantry roof.

YouthWorks staff has moved into our building and are moving furniture around to accommodate youth who will be coming in each week to work in our community. We will be using every room in the church through August 2.

Membership as of May 18, 2021 was 78 active members. Average attendance since we have gone to in-person worship is 8 per Sunday via screens, and in-person was 32 per Sunday. Session decided that we are not quite ready for sharing of Communion. We'll take one step at a time. The Book of Order requires that we have Communion at least four times a year and we have accomplished that in January through April of 2021. So we are covered for the year if need be. Nevertheless, we certainly hope to return to normal observations of this sacrament.

As of May 23, Pentecost Sunday, Session decided to go with no mask requirement as well as no social distancing and singing allowed -- **IF you are fully vaccinated**. Those who are not vaccinated will still be required to mask and social distance in the building. We will still be taking temperatures and making a list of who attends each Sunday so we can monitor any changes.

We are also going to have coffee hour, in the picnic area, weather permitting. Bring your lawn chairs and sit and have a treat and a glass of lemonade while enjoying each other's company.

We hope that our steps to “normal” are encouraging and well-accepted. If you are not comfortable being without a mask, then feel free to wear your mask. We will continue our streaming for those who feel most comfortable in their own homes.

Peace and love,
Marlene Smith, Clerk

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.

DEACONS

These Days Request: If you would like a copy of the current January – March These Days devotionals, please contact the church office and speak to Linda.

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.

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: ranking1zou@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

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Linda Cogswell, Church Secretary, is in the church office during the following days/hours:

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

Wednesday: Church Office closed

Friday: 9:00 am-11:30 am