

NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER 2022

PASTOR'S PEN

For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

-Psalm 138:13, NRSV

Dear friends,

Last week I received two emails asking me to provide “education” intended to persuade Fairplain members to vote against Ballot Proposal 3, the state constitutional amendment proposal regarding abortion.

I declined both offers. I did so in part because, though PC(USA) Presbyterians long ago agreed abortion ought to be an option of last resort, we believe in freedom of conscience. We have repeatedly said,

“When an individual woman faces the decision whether to terminate a pregnancy, the issue is **intensely personal**, and may manifest itself in ways that **do not reflect public rhetoric**, or **do not fit neatly into medical, legal, or policy guidelines**. Humans are **empowered by the spirit** prayerfully to **make significant moral choices, including the choice to continue or end a pregnancy**. Human choices **should not be made in a moral vacuum**, but must be based on **Scripture, faith, and Christian ethics**. For any choice, we are accountable to God; however, even when we err, God offers to forgive us” (General Assemblies of 2002, 2003, and 2006, emphasis mine).

In 1970, three years before *Roe*, the 82nd General Assembly said that abortion “should not be restricted by law.” In 1992, the 204th GA said, “...the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) encourages an atmosphere of **open debate** and **mutual respect** for a variety of opinions concerning the issues related to problem pregnancies and abortion.” (Emphasis mine).

In 2006, the 217th GA added, “the lives of viable unborn babies—those well-developed enough to survive outside the womb if delivered—ought to be preserved and cared for and not aborted,” affirmed adoption, and said “In cases where problems of life or health of the mother arise in a pregnancy, the church supports efforts to protect the life and health of both the mother and the baby.”

I should note that the Presbyterian insistence on freedom of conscience and an atmosphere of open debate and mutual respect can – and often does - include respectfully agreeing or disagreeing with the general assembly of one’s denomination.

I have included the full text of the General Assembly’s 2006 declaration on the following pages.



Rev. David M. Schell, pastor

Item 10-01, approved as amended (amended version appears below)
Minutes of the 217th General Assembly, 2006

The church has a responsibility to provide public witness and to offer guidance, counsel, and support to those who make or interpret laws and public policies about abortion and problem pregnancies. Pastors have a duty to counsel with and pray for those who face decisions about problem pregnancies. Congregations have a duty to pray for and support those who face these choices, to offer support for women and families to help make unwanted pregnancies less likely to occur, and to provide practical support for those facing the birth of a child with medical anomalies, birth after rape or incest, or those who face health, economic, or other stresses.

The church also affirms the value of children and the importance of nurturing, protecting, and advocating their well-being. The church, therefore, appreciates the challenge each woman and family face when issues of personal wellbeing arise in the later stages of a pregnancy.

“In life and death, we belong to God.” Life is a gift from God. We may not know exactly when human life begins, and have but an imperfect understanding of God as the giver of life and of our own human existence, yet we recognize that life is precious to God, and we should preserve and protect it. We derive our understanding of human life from Scripture and the Reformed Tradition in light of science, human experience, and reason guided by the Holy Spirit. Because we are made in the image of God, human beings are moral agents, endowed by the Creator with the capacity to make choices. Our Reformed Tradition recognizes that people do not always make moral choices, and forgiveness is central to our faith. In the Reformed Tradition, we affirm that God is the only Lord of conscience—not the state or the church. As a community, the church challenges the faithful to exercise their moral agency responsibly.

When an individual woman faces the decision whether to terminate a pregnancy, the issue is intensely personal, and may manifest itself in ways that do not reflect public rhetoric, or do not fit neatly into medical, legal, or policy guidelines. Humans are empowered by the spirit prayerfully to make significant moral choices, including the choice to continue or end a pregnancy. Human choices should not be made in a moral vacuum, but must be based on Scripture, faith, and Christian ethics. For any choice, we are accountable to God; however, even when we err, God offers to forgive us.

We affirm that the lives of viable unborn babies—those well-developed enough to survive outside the womb if delivered—ought to be preserved and cared for and not aborted. In cases where problems of life or health of the mother arise in a pregnancy, the church supports efforts to protect the life and health of both the mother and the baby. When late-term pregnancies must be terminated, we urge decisions intended to deliver the baby alive. We look to our churches to provide pastoral and tangible support to women in problem pregnancies and to surround these families with a community of care.



We affirm adoption as a provision for women who deliver children they are not able to care for, and ask our churches to assist in seeking loving, Christian, adoptive families. This General Assembly holds this statement as its position on a Christian response to problems that arise late in pregnancies. We find it to be consistent with current General Assembly policy on Problem Pregnancies and Abortion (1992), and supersedes General Assembly statements of 2002 and 2003 on late-term pregnancies and abortion.

https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/publications/journal2006.pdf

For more information, visit presbyterianmission.org/blog/2016/02/23/abortion-issues-2/

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

There will be a Congregational Meeting on Sunday, November 6, immediately following the worship service for the purpose of election officers.

PRAYER REQUESTS

If you have a prayer request that you would like to leave, please text Pastor David at 269 332-1118.

BIRTHDAYS

5: Sally Barker
12: Ted Pietruszka
13: Ron Jacobs
30: Chris Corbitt



SECRETARY SUPPLY

While Linda is on vacation from November 20-26, the following ladies will be in the church office from 9 am-noon. The church office will be closed in the afternoon, as well as Wednesday, November 23, and Thursday, November 24 and Friday, November 25 for the Thanksgiving holiday.

Monday, November 21: Linda Zitta

Tuesday, November 22: Sonja Stormo

MUSIC NEWS

Greetings to all from Judges 5:3

“Hear this, you kings! Listen, you rulers! I will sing to the Lord, I will sing. I will make music to the Lord, the God of Israel.”

There were 5 Sundays during the month of October. The following musicians performed:

October 02 – Chancel Choir / Family Slavujevic Chimes & Bells

October 09 – The Praise Team “Wherever Two ...”

October 16 – Chancel Choir / Family Slavujevic Chimes & Bells

October 23 – Families Rogien & Slavujevic / Andrew Rogien

October 30 – Zayda & Chad Steinke

INVITATION! All are welcome to attend The Concerto Night on Saturday, November 05 at 8 pm at the Howard Performing Arts Center on the campus of Andrews University in Berrien Springs. Ana Slavujevic (Vladimir and Branka’s daughter) will be performing a 3rd movement from Mozart’s Flute Concerto Nr. 1 with Andrews Academy String Orchestra. She will be among 5 featured soloists from Andrews Academy. For them this will be their most important music performance ever. This event is free and open to the public.

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Here is an interesting article about Ira Sankey (1840-1908) – a singer, song leader and popularizer. This article is adopted from Randy Petersen’s quality book *“Be Still My Soul”*.

PART ONE

“I am afraid that boy will never amount to anything,” his father said. “All he does is run about the country with a hymnbook under his arm.” His mother replied, “Better that than a whiskey bottle in his pocket.”

“That boy,” Ira David Sankey, was actually about 20 years old and had just come home from a music convention led by William B. Bradbury. Growing up in western Pennsylvania, Ira had always loved singing, learning to read music before he was 8. (And despite his father’s teasing, the whole family often sang together.) As a teenager Ira had joined a Methodist church, where he was quickly involved as Sunday school superintendent and choir director.

After a stint in the Union Army, where he often led the singing in chapel services, he returned to his hometown to work for the government’s tax agency. He also got involved in leadership at the YMCA. This was a rather new organization at the time, and in 1870 Sankey attended the international YMCA convention in Indianapolis, hoping to catch a glimpse of the organization’s chairman, Chicago preacher Dwight L. Moody.

He caught more than a glimpse. He was introduced to Moody, who had already heard Sankey sing in one of the meetings. The preacher offered him a job on the spot. “I have been looking for you for the last 8 years,” Moody said, asking the musician to pray about his offer.

The next day, Moody asked Sankey to meet him at a certain corner in town at 6:00 pm. When Sankey got there, Moody placed a box in the street and told him to step up on it and sing something. Sankey sang, "As I a Soldier of the Cross." In rush-hour foot traffic, this drew a crowd. Then Moody stepped up and preached.

This became the pattern for the next 30 years. More than most other preachers, Moody understood the power of song. He had been frustrated working with song leaders who did not understand that power. He saw a unique talent in Ira Sankey – who took the job, by the way.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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

Vladimir Slavujevic
Director of Music

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.

COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY

Yes, we have been hit by inflation, too. A few years ago, we saved paying about \$33.00 for a bundle of 500 paper bags. Just recently I had to pay approximately \$82.00 for the 500 bags. It would help the pantry if you had your grocery store put groceries in paper bags when checking out. Then, when convenient, you can drop your accumulated bags off at the church. Thanks for your help.

John Kauffman



CLERK'S CORNER

Please try to attend church in person, if you can, on November 6, 2022. We will be having our election of officers for the 2023 year and beyond.

Fairplain Presbyterian has 54 active members with Judy Kuhlman requesting to transfer her membership to Stevensville United Methodist Church on October 16, 2022. We will miss Judy and wish her well in her new church family. Average attendance in the month of September was 31 in person and streaming. I encourage you, if you are able, to visit any of our 19 home-bound members. They relish visits.

You might want to put December 21, on your calendar. We are planning to have a Blue Christmas service, possibly at First Presbyterian Church. There is always much to be happy about, but unfortunately this past year has left our world with much to be prayed about and mourned over.

I have had several questions lately concerning the surveys we did earlier this year. Pete Wendel is going to analyze them for us, and we hope to come up with a plan based on your responses. We didn't really do much over the summer as most of us were traveling or busy with family during that time.

Dates in November to think about are November 6, Communion and election of officers. Nov. 13, Chris Corbitt is putting together a video honoring our veteran members of Fairplain.

George Pica had some signs made for our church yard that advertise about us streaming on You-Tube. Thank you, George.

I hope all of you are enjoying the beautiful fall colors we are experiencing this year. Robert and I were blessed to be able to travel to northern lower Michigan a few weeks ago. The maples are glorious this year. Experts think it was because of our dry summer that the leaves are such bright colors this fall. Whatever caused it, it's been beautiful to behold!

Blessings,
Marlene Smith-Clerk



October Soup Kitchen served sausages in scalloped potatoes, fruit salad, mixed greens, cookies and juice. They ran out of food and used potato puffs to cover the people who came after we ran out of food. A big thanks to our workers who included: JoAnn Hartzell, George Pica, David Schell, Judy Eckroth, Jill Wendel and John Kauffman.

Marlene Smith covering for Julie Nash

POINSETTIAS

The Deacons offer the opportunity to order poinsettias this Advent season. Please complete the order form below and place in the offering plate or drop off at the church office. Each poinsettia costs \$10, and a portion of the proceeds will go toward the Deacons Fund. Color options are listed below as well, and the deadline to place your order is no later than Sunday, November 13. Please make your check payable to Board of Deacons.

You may designate your poinsettias in memory and/or honor of an individual(s). Please indicate on the order form if you will be taking your poinsettia home, and would like to leave it in the sanctuary for Christmas Eve.

POINSETTIA ORDER FORM 2022

Color options: _____ Red _____ White _____ Pink

Total number ordered: _____

Amount enclosed: _____ Check # _____ Cash _____

Yes, I will leave my poinsettia in the sanctuary for Christmas: _____

Yes, I will be taking my poinsettia home after Christmas: _____

I would like my poinsettia given to a homebound friend: _____

I wish to designate my poinsettia in memory of: _____

I wish to designate my poinsettia in honor of: _____

Order placed by:



DEACONS

GUIDEPOST DEVOTIONALS: The Deacons have ordered 10 copies of These Days Devotionals for 2023, 5 regular print and 5 large-print. As soon as they are received in the mail Linda will notify the congregation that they will be available.

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.

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

Diane Cronk, Co-Treasurer – email: dcronk@comcast.net

Jenna McAllister, Co-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

