

# FAIRPLAIN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER 2024

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

*-Romans 15:13*

Dear friends,

We find ourselves in that awkward time between Christmas and Epiphany and Lent. It's called "Ordinary Time" on the church calendar, which has more to do with counting ("ordinal") than with commonness. It's a time in between times. It's a time when we cross dates off our calendars, not the date that's circled.

It is that time of year C.S. Lewis described as "Always winter, and never Christmas." All our neighbors have taken down their Christmas lights, but February looms long, and I saw a post updating the "Thirty Days Hath September" poem with a joke that January has six thousand, one hundred and eighty-four days.

Even Valentine's Day this year is on Ash Wednesday, of all days, which seems appropriate somehow. One of my college friends used to call Valentine's "Singles Awareness Day," and dress in black on it in protest.

For some of us, this is also an awkward in-between time in our lives - after something beautiful, but before whatever spring we're looking forward to, or whatever next challenge we're anticipating.

I am not Joel Osteen enough to say that "a good attitude can change everything;" sometimes one's attitude is exactly that which cannot be changed, and as one disability rights activist observed, "a positive attitude is not going to change that set of stairs into a ramp," but at the same time, I think there are still things we can do to make the in-between time more bearable. Maybe even beautiful.

Kristen and I have left up our Christmas decorations. We usually take them down on Epiphany, but this year, we doubled down on leaving bright, colorful lights up: 5 days after Epiphany, I hung up two more strings of lights over our living room and dining room, and I felt very good about it. It brings me joy every time I think about it. I intend to keep them up at least until Daylight Saving Time begins.

Friends, it still gets dark so early this time of year, even as the days begin to get longer, and so many of our days are cloudy and dark that we need to take our joy where we can get it. Don't let people tell you that you need to put away what makes you happy because it's not in season, or not popular, or whatever excuse they want to use to steal your joy.

Blessings,

Rev. David Schell

## BIRTHDAYS



20: Pat Smith

27: Candi Kebchll

## PRAYER REQUESTS

If you have a prayer request 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.

## SOUP KITCHEN

Soup Kitchen was January 11, 2024. We served barilla noodles with little sausages from the Food Pantry. Greens, applesauce, juice, crackers and dip. With desserts donated to the soup kitchen.

## EUCHRE TOURNAMENT

The 5<sup>th</sup> annual Euchre Tournament benefiting the Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen will be held on Sunday, February 4, at 1 pm at the Livery Brewery in Benton Harbor. There is a \$40 donation per player. There are monetary prizes for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place and three door prizes including gift certificates from local restaurants. As usual, free Livery Pizza for all. Questions: contact [m@soupk.org](mailto:m@soupk.org) or call 269.925.8204. Register online now! <https://igfn.us/form/xDoGrw>



## CLERK'S CORNER – FEBRUARY 2024

I'm feeling like maybe there is a light at the end of this cold and ice tunnel that we have been experiencing. It's a balmy 33 degrees this morning! The good news is that I have been able to completely construct two quilt tops and cut out the pieces and plan for two more quilts. I feel quite productive. Turns out I enjoyed being shut in for a few weeks.

More good news. Due to the generosity of you folks, we have been able to meet two of our overseas mission goals which were not a part of the general church budget this year! We were able to send our missionaries in the Middle East, \$2000, and the Rach's in Mexico, \$1,500. Thank you so much for helping to support the important work that these folks do in far-off places. Check in our Annual Report and read the mission report for more specifics.

Speaking of Annual report. Our Annual Congregational meeting will be held February 11, 2024, in the Courtyard Room, immediately following the worship service. We will vote on the Terms of Call and elect a Nominating Committee. Please try to be in person that day if possible. We will be streaming the meeting too, so you can join by Google Meet.

Pastor David has proposed a Lenten study called "Practical Prayers" by Sacred Calls. Session voted to have the Lenten study in place of Sunday School to be held on:

Jan. 28 - Feb.11 - Feb. 25 - Mar. 10 - Mar. 17. - Mar. 24

This will take place in the Courtyard after worship on those Sundays. The study will also be on Google Meet so those who cannot be present in person can join us on line.

Again, we need to thank our Mishkan Daviyd friends for their help in fixing the spigots on the old bathroom sinks. They have replaced parts in most of the sinks, and two faucets will have to be completely replaced. It appears that old internal parts of our spigots were able to turn themselves on with water pressure, and let water run unabated. Thank you from all of us as we are able to experience lower water and gas bills thanks to hot water not running.

Currently we have 42 active members. Communion was served to 19 in worship and to 4 at home. Average attendance for December was 54 with both in-person and streaming.

Blessing to each of you,

Marlene Smith, Clerk



## MUSIC NOTES - FEBRUARY

Greetings to all from Revelation 5:13.

***"Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power for ever and ever!"***

The following music groups enriched our Sunday Worship experience in January:

January 07 – Chancel Choir (Introit and 2 songs)

January 14 – No Church Service – Snow day

January 21 – Chancel Choir and Family Slavujevic Chimes, Bells and Voices

January 28 – The Praise Team "Wherever Two ..." (2 songs)

Rarely do we have to cancel our church service due to inclement weather. This happened on Sunday, January 14. A new volunteer lady guest musician was scheduled to perform two songs. Hopefully the weather will cooperate on February 25 when she will share her vocal talent with us.

Even though our choir has regular rehearsals every other Sunday before and after the church service, we met on Saturday afternoon, January 27 for a two-hour extra practice. Our goal is to meet every 2 months in order to learn new songs.

On weekends Michael Hall and I continue to record tenor and bass sections for all our choir songs. I am grateful that we have modern technology that he and Pastor David know how to use for the benefit of our choir sound. We use pre-recorded music done by our previous church pianists, by myself as well as some commercial soundtracks.

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Here is an interesting article about a well-known hymn **"Fairest Lord Jesus"** (# 306 in our church hymnal) adopted from Randy Petersen's quality book "Be Still My Soul."

In the year 1095, Pope Urban II rallied the Christians of Europe to take up arms and free Jerusalem from its Muslim captors. "God wills it!" he declared, and that became the rallying cry for this first Crusade. Over the next 2 centuries there were 8 Crusades, each one headed toward the Holy Land to take or re-take sacred sites, to punish the "infidels," or to stroke the egos of certain leaders. There is much to criticize about these efforts. We can legitimately question whether the Crusaders were interpreting God's will correctly. And yet, according to one tradition, this gorgeous song was first sung by a group of Germans marching off to join these wars. Even now, it is often called "The Crusader's Hymn."

Article Continued on Page 5 ...



# CHURCH SUPPLY

## WISH LIST

Last Spring we published a Church Supply Wish List and so many of you have donated items for church use to offset the 2023 budget and we thank you for that. This list is ongoing so if you'd like to donate again, or for the first time, we welcome your donations.

Please see the list below and contact Linda in the church office to confirm your donation. Thanks in advance for your continued support.

	<u>Packaging type</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Size</u>
Office	by the package (ream)	8.5 x 11 copy paper	20 lb. letter size
	by the package (ream)	8.5 x 11 color copy paper	20 lb. letter size
	by the package (ream)	8.5 x 14 copy paper	20 lb. legal size
	loose	3 <sup>rd</sup> cut manila folders	letter size
	by the package	5160 Avery labels	letter
	5 x 7	padded mailing envelopes	
	by the box	Pentel Oh! Gel black pens	
	by the roll	Clear mailing tape	
<b>Paper &amp; Coffee</b>	loose	coffee cups	8 oz.
<b>Supplies</b>	loose	clear plastic punch cups	9 oz.
	by the package	paper napkins	cocktail or dinner
	by the roll	paper towels	
	by the package	paper plates	luncheon or dinner
<b>Custodial Supplies</b>	Individual	bathroom spray/deodorizer	
	individual	glass cleaner	paper towels
	large	hand soap	

## DEACONS

**THESE DAYS DEVOTIONALS:** These Days devotionals, large print copies, are available on the cart in the narthex.

### **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 homebound (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  
Robert Smith, Treasurer – email: robertlynsmith@gmail.com  
Jody Pauley, Nursery Attendant – email: jodypauley1@gmail.com  
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