

FAIRPLAIN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

APRIL NEWSLETTER 2024

Then God said, "Let us make humans[c] in our image, according to our likeness... God saw everything that [God] had made, and indeed, it was very good..." -Genesis 1:26a, 26a

Dear friends,

"Are we good guys or bad guys?" Little John asks in Disney's 1973 animated *Robin Hood*. Philosophers and theologians have debated the question he (didn't exactly) ask for centuries: Are human beings inherently good, or bad?

I heard a sermon years ago in which the preacher said that the point of the cross "is to show how bad I am, and how good Jesus is." This preacher was once the head of a multi-campus megachurch, but ultimately left in disgrace in part because he was causing harm to members and leaders of the church and refused to acknowledge it or take steps to change.

It's ironic: someone who so deeply believed in total depravity, including his own guiltiness of sins so awful as to require Christ's death to redeem him, refused to admit that he had sinned in a way that caused real, serious harm and trauma to members of his own church. He moved on and now pastors a different church in another state.

But this is common enough. I saw a post somewhere a while ago that said it's ironic how Christians can easily believe we live in a world filled with the consequences of sin that happened millennia ago in Eden, but not the consequences of sin that happened only decades and less than two centuries ago in America, namely, the sins of slavery and racism.

One might think based on this that the answer is that we're inherently bad and evil, but that's not what the Bible says. Genesis 1 says we are made in the image of God and "very good." There are passages, particularly in Romans, that some might use to argue that we are all **really** wicked and sinful at our core, but I don't believe that conclusion is right. I don't believe original human sin is powerful enough to ever completely overcome original divine goodness.

I asked a college professor once about the doctrine of Total Depravity, which G.K. Chesterton wrote "is the only part of Christian theology which can really be proved." He suggested reading it this way: Imagine a book damaged by black ink having been spilled on it. "Total depravity" does not mean that every page is completely ruined, completely covered in black ink and illegible, only that every page has **some** marking on it. The goodness is still there.

I think this is the right answer. We are inherently good, made in the image of God, but also all inherently a little bit screwed up. We all do things now and then that hurt ourselves, others, and God's creation, and we live in a world where those harms have been systematized - probably by people who thought they were doing something good by it.

There are many ways Christians have come up with to explain how Christ's death on the cross deals with sin, deals with that marring of all the pages, and on some of the Sundays following Easter, I plan to talk more about some of those ways. I hope you'll join us.

Blessings,

Rev. David Schell

BIRTHDAYS

4: Ann Cundiff
6: Melissa Cobb
12: Charles Duncan

14: Bill Cundiff
21: Marlene Smith
24: George Pica

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.

SECRETARY SUPPLY

While Linda Cogswell is taking vacation on Monday, April 1 and Tuesday, April 2, the following ladies will be in the church office:

Monday, April 1: Linda Zitta

Tuesday, April 2: Sonja Storm

YOU'RE INVITED TO A SPRING POTLUCK!

When: Sunday, April 21 @ 11:30 am

Where: Courtyard

Turkey Salad sandwiches and beverages will be provided.

Please bring a dish to pass!

R.S.V.P. by April 15 to Linda in the church office @ 925-0041



Soup Kitchen was March 14, 2024. We served thick, tasty baked beans with thick hot dogs cut in slices from the Food Pantry freezer. We served mixed greens, applesauce, juice, with desserts donated to the soup kitchen. Helpers were Judy Machalleck, Sonja Stormo, George Pica, Marlene Smith and John Kauffman brought us the food from the Food Pantry.

CLERK'S CORNER – APRIL 2024

Welcome to Spring. So far, I've been freezing when I go out five times a day to walk the dog, and take our usual hike of a mile and a half. I am hoping that by the time you are reading this the weather has settled into the 50's without the 20 mph winds.

I think you will receive this in time to note that Session has moved **communion to Easter Sunday** so that home communion can take place prior to Pastor David leaving for "study leave" the 7th of April.

I want to remind you that our Per-Capita this year is \$40.05. Just make a check to Fairplain Presbyterian and either put in the offering plate in the narthex, or send in the mail to the church. Thank you.

The Parish Life Committee is planning a Spring potluck on April 21. We had a nice turnout for the fall potluck and are hoping for the same type of excitement this spring. Rosemary Holloway is going to fix a turkey salad that will feed everyone, so any side-dish or dessert would be a nice addition.

The water in the sink in the upstairs handicapped bathroom has been turned on. The faucets have been repaired, thanks to our Mishkan Daviyd renters. The other faucets, in the other bathrooms, will be replaced soon.

For February we had an average of 34 attending worship with both in person and streaming. Twenty-four received communion in worship in February and six at home. We currently list 40 in our membership, but keep in mind that we have 18 people who are not members that are quite active in our church.

Blessing to all of you,

Marlene Smith, Clerk





MUSIC NOTES - APRIL

Greetings to all from James 5:13

“Are any among you in trouble? They should pray. Are any among you happy? They should sing praises.”

There were 5 Sundays in March. The following music groups and soloists embellished our Sunday Worship experience in March:

- March 03 – Chancel Choir and Family Slavujevic Chimes, Bells and Voices
- March 10 – Nikol Rezepina & Vladimir Slavujevic, guitars and voice (2 songs)
- March 17 – Chancel Choir and Ladies' Chorus
- March 24 – The Praise Team “Wherever Two ...” (2 songs)
- March 31 – Chancel Choir and Melissa Gilreath Cobb

It has been our privilege to welcome two new volunteer musicians who performed in 2024. In February it was Truedean Scott-Elliott, an adult with her rich and powerful voice. In March it was Nikol Rezepina, a teenage girl who came from Russia just a few months ago and played guitar. My goal for this spring is to involve 2 new young brothers playing piano and one college student playing harp. On Sundays our guest musicians perform two songs each.

This article I completed on March 22 – 9 days before Easter. Therefore, I will inform you about this spring's musical highlight in our May Newsletter.

Here is an interesting article about a well-known hymn we sing every Sunday ***“Gloria Patri”*** – ***“Glory Be to the Father”*** (# 579 in our church hymnal) adopted from Randy Petersen's quality book “Be Still My Soul.”

One of the great things about church is that we often get to *do* history. This doesn't just mean that we're hearing or speaking or singing *about* history. We can do that anytime. But when we sing an ancient creed like *Gloria Patri*, we are actually participating in the history of the church. We are singing the staff that made the church what it is today.

When we worship, we are glorifying God, right? But who is God? Well, you know, the Trinity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Not so fast! At certain times in the church's early history, the concept of the Trinity was a point of contention. Various leaders were teaching that Jesus was not really God, only “like” God, or that the three members of the Trinity lacked equal status. Once the early church stopped being persecuted by the Roman Empire, Christians had to figure out what they really believed and what they didn't. And so, the 4th and 5th centuries were times of bitter controversy.

Article Continued on Page 5 ...

Somewhere during this time, the phrases of the *Gloria Patri* were cobbled together from various parts of Scripture. You can find the basic Trinitarian formula used in the great commission (Matthew 28:19-20) and elsewhere. The “was, is, is to come” phrasing can be seen in Jesus’ introduction in Revelation 1:8. “World without end” is found in the King James Version of Paul’s benediction in Ephesians 3:21, but the Latin phrase from the original creed means literally “unto ages of ages,” commonly translated “forever.”

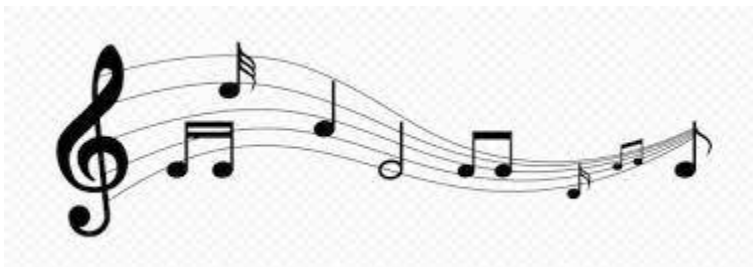
Some forms of this creed play with the “little” words: Glory be to the Father *through* the Son and *in* the Spirit.” That might have been a compromising draft – nothing really wrong with it – but church leaders ultimately felt that the Scriptures taught that all three persons of the Trinity have equal status. The words - *and to* - became crucial.

The *Gloria Patri* is sometimes called the “Lesser Doxology,” to distinguish it from the angels’ Nativity anthem: *Gloria in excelsis Deo*. Another doxology “Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow,” is used in many Protestant churches, having been written in 1674 by Anglican bishop Thomas Ken.

There are several tunes available for the *Gloria Patri*. The one we use in our church is one of the most popular, first published in 1851 by Henry Greatorex, a British-American organist and church music director in the New York area.

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

Vladimir Slavujevic
Director of Music



LIFE LINE SCREENING

Life Line Screening will be at Fairplain Presbyterian Church on Thursday, April 4 from 8 am-5 pm.

April Designated to Raise Awareness of the Importance of Public Health

According to the American Public Health Association's website, "... every year chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer and diabetes are responsible for millions of premature deaths...Catching and preventing these illnesses and incidents before they develop is the key to improving our nation's health.

At Fairplain Presbyterian Church, we agree. This is why we are hosting Life Line Screening, the nation's leading provider of preventive health screenings on Thursday, April 4, 2024.

Screenings are fast, painless and affordable. Three key tests check for blocked carotid arteries, an irregular heart rhythm called atrial fibrillation, and high blood pressure, which are the three leading risk factors for stroke. Strokes are the fifth leading cause of death in the U.S., yet, with preventive strategies, 80% of strokes can be prevented.

Other tests check for abdominal aortic aneurysms and hardening of the arteries in the legs. A bone density screening to assess osteoporosis risk is also offered and is appropriate for both men and women. Many events also offer blood tests, including cholesterol, glucose and c-reactive protein screenings, as well as take-home colon cancer early detection tests.

For more information regarding the screenings or to schedule an appointment, call **1-844-591-7160** or go to <https://llsa.social/HC> or **text** the word **circle** to **216-279-1607**. Pre-registration is required.

In addition, Linda has two free screening forms provided by Life Line Screen that is available to register for. Please contact her in the church office if you wish to have one.



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 rd 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	
Paper & Coffee	loose	coffee cups	8 oz.
Supplies	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
Custodial Supplies	Individual	bathroom spray/deodorizer	large hand soap
	individual	glass cleaner	paper towels

DEACONS

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

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: robertlysmith@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