



OUTLOOK

First Presbyterian Church, Buchanan, Michigan

*Enlightening our faith. Energizing Christ's Church.
Engaging God's love in Buchanan and beyond.*

FEBRUARY 2023

CONTACT:

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JOIN US IN PERSON:

Sunday worship at 10:00

OR ONLINE:

FACEBOOK 

www.firstpresbuchanan.org



Grace and Peace,
Pastor David

On the death of Jonathan Edwards, his wife wrote to their daughter, Esther:

"My very dear child, What shall I say? A holy and good God has covered us with a dark cloud. The Lord has done it. He has made me adore his goodness, that we had him so long. But my God lives; and he has my heart. O what a legacy my husband, and your father, has left us! We are all given to God; and there I am, and love to be.

Your ever affectionate mother, Sarah Edwards."

I found myself in a similar place on Saturday, January 7th. On that morning, I was preparing to address a community grieving after Amy Seager passed to the Church Triumphant. I knew Amy for a long time. I remember her as a little girl, fun-loving and cheerful. I remember her as a teenager, enthusiastic and energetic. I remember her as a professional woman, wife, and mother, competent and compassionate. So how then are we to live, now that (as Sarah Edwards wrote) "God has covered us with a dark cloud?" I offer you the same advice that I gave myself the morning of Amy's memorial.

Remember that it's appropriate to mourn. Jesus tells us, *"come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest"* (Matt. 11:28). He doesn't chastise us for feeling burdened. He invites us to carry our sad hearts to him.

Remember that God's providence is mysterious. While God's providence is unsearchable, it's always unmistakably and irrevocably good for God's people. All things that come into our lives pass through the hands of our loving God—even the hard things.

Remember to whom we belong. As Paul wrote to the church at Rome, "I'm convinced that nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus our Lord: not death or life, not angels or rulers, not present things or future things, not powers or height or depth, or any other thing that is created."

Remember that God still has work for us to do. Amy was a person of deep faith. We can honor her memory by living out our faith in ministry, serving the church and community that she so loved.

New Year, New Challenges, Renewed Mission

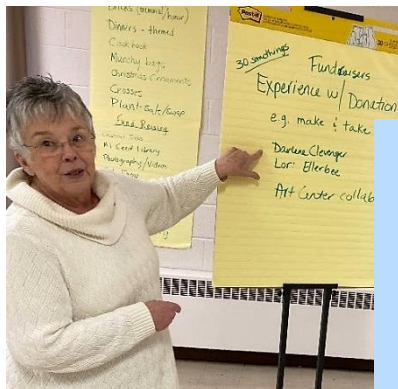
January 17, 2023, 6 pm. Cold. Rainy. Dark. Gloomy – an unlikely venue for 20-plus Presbyterian Pioneers to gather in Fellowship Hall and explore possible directions for the new year. Nevertheless, the group shared a lively discussion and produced a list of potential activities targeting relationship-building and empowerment to meet God’s unique challenges and missions ahead. Suggestions included:

- Educational lectures.
- Art enrichment classes, events.
- Fundraising concerts for the community.
- Rental of building to (vetted) groups.
- Movie nights.
- Takeout dinner “drive-thru’s.”
- Madagascar and other international dinners.
- And many more.



“ALMOST” NO MEETINGS? ARE YOU KIDDING?

Many of us recall the “good ole days” when organizing church events meant endless meetings, preparations, committees, more meetings, paperwork. Even before Covid arrived, finding people to volunteer was nearly impossible and burnout was common. But meeting moderator, Pat Johnson offered a kinder, gentler alternative. This process redefines volunteer chairpersons as “coaches” who would then choose their own “team” to oversee one monthly event during 2023.



Everyone’s ideas are valued and welcome. Share yours with us. Join an event team! Contact Pat Johnson today!

GOD’S CELEBRATION TEAM

Watch for details re: how you can become involved with the Celebration Team and its role in our exciting future. Discover how to energize our growth and missions with:

- Activities that interest, engage, and motivate coaches and teams.
- A co-operative, creative environment with fewer obligations, less stress, and *more fun*.
- Opportunities to serve and share God’s love with church friends, family, and the broader community.

Upcoming details will include how to use an online calendar worksheet for reserving activities and dates, plus tips for simplifying planning and execution.

MEN'S COFFEE HOUR

In the early 1940s, some area businessmen formed a group to “resolve world problems over morning coffee on their way to work.” They originally met at local Renardo’s Restaurant. When the eatery closed, they temporarily met at Swem Funeral Home. In 2000, they relocated to FPC’s Gathering Room. Church member Dick Swem, whose father, Lowell, was a group originator, reports, “When we moved here, the guys could get a cup of coffee for 25 cents. At today’s prices, we’ve raised it to a buck.” Profits have been donated to our Deacons Fund for church missions. According to Swem (Barista and treasurer), the amount donated to date is \$23,490.70.



Circa 2012.

Buchanan’s Downtown Church – Hosting Community Interests



CARDIO DRUMMING

Each Monday and Wednesday, 6:30-7:30 pm, FPC welcomes a group of area cardio enthusiasts’ intent on sharing a casual evening of fellowship, fun, and fitness. Meeting in Fellowship Hall since 2017, participants faithfully fetch their equipment from “The Ball Room.” Ruth Prenkert, cardio leader, cranks up the boom box and the Hall rocks to the sounds of music, drumsticks, and laughter. All enjoy a host of cardio benefits for the budget-friendly fee of two dollars per session, which more than covers church utility and maintenance costs. (Total collected in 2022 was nearly \$1500.) Classes are open to the public.

LI’L STRUCTURE, MIGHTY MISSION

Member Tia Lee’s original idea for our own little library was to offer Christian children’s books that might not be found in the local library. It has evolved to include a variety of kids’ and adults’ books and magazines. Marie Remington had the library built and painted it, and Tom Wrasse helped with installation. Tia keeps the inventory fresh with help from some people on the Church Libraries Committee. Thanks to all involved in this valuable service to Buchanan on behalf of FPC.



For nearly two centuries, FPC has been serving Christ in the community. Since moving to Front Street our facilities have been a hub for several area groups and their activities. In return for using the building, many contribute to our charitable missions. The 2023 newsletters will feature the reciprocal benefits we share with these groups. We pray the articles will help clarify our Capital Campaign goals and how their fulfillment will enhance our ability to better serve God’s purpose for us.

HELPING RAM WARM UP WINTERS

Mission Chair, Jan Ivkovich, reports that the 2022 RAM Mitten Tree, sponsored by the Education Department's teachers and kids, rendered 37 pairs of gloves/mittens, five scarves, 17 warm hats, and three pairs of knee-high warm socks. Items were collected throughout Advent and were donated by the congregation.



At left is RAM's new QR Code for those who wish to make a financial donation. Simply take a cellphone photo or use your scan app.

COAT SQUAD

Since 2018, the official FPC Coat Squad, headed by Cheryl Warner makes the most of post-holiday retail sales by purchasing winter coats for RAM kids and adults. This year, Cheryl, along with Pat Johnson, began the traditional shopping spree with monies donated for the project. To date 40+ coats have been purchased. At the the next winter season, the coats will be delivered to RAM for distribution. With more shopping ahead for 2023, contributions are welcome. Contact Cheryl Warner.



Starting a Great New Year with New Good Hope



This year, the holiday-week calendar (along with an epic Artic storm) created scheduling challenges for most area churches, including FPC and sister-church, New Good Hope Baptist. Both holidays fell on Sundays, but fortunately for our congregants, FPC Pastor, David Habicht and Pastor Brian Watkins of New Good Hope had mutually agreed to conduct a combined New Year's Eve Service at FPC on Saturday afternoon, January 31st. The well-attended service left participants looking forward to a new tradition, and possibly exchanging venues each year! Thank you, Pastor Habicht, Pastor Brian Watkins, New Good Hope, and all who attended. What blessings and joys were shared!

"Clap your hands, all people! Shout to God with loud songs of joy!"

- Psalms 47:1

Phase I – Elevator

Attending FCP activities, has become increasingly challenging, even impossible for many of our members and potential guests. But as we strive to improve, God continues to guide us every step of the way! Against all odds, He has led our campaign collection to a total of \$195,000 dollars and growing.



*Join the Team!
We Can Do This!*

2022 was a year for giant leaps of faith at FPCB. As we celebrated our 175th anniversary, we launched a three-stage initiative that will meet accessibility requirements of the ***Americans With Disabilities Act*** and create new opportunities for groups and organizations to worship and meet in our building.



During the latter days of the pandemic, our parking lot wall collapsed, creating seemingly insurmountable fiscal challenges outside the campaign's scope. But the new wall has been constructed and paid for as a stand-alone project. Plans for ***construction and installation of the elevator*** are targeted for some time in 2023.

It goes without saying that we are all passionate about serving Christ through His love for us, as evidenced by a 175-year legacy and our responses to meeting the challenges ahead.

We thank all who have donated time, money, and resources to help move ***Phase I*** from blueprint toward reality. With ***Phases II and III (restrooms and entrance compliances)*** on the horizon, we gratefully continue to receive campaign money. Equally important, we seek the continued passion, talents, gifts, enthusiasm, and prayers of our congregation, families, and friends.

"The body is not supported by one person, but by all of us. We are one. We are strongest working together in unity.

- 1 Corinthians 12:14



FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
BUCHANAN



111 Days Avenue, Buchanan, MI 49107

*“And I will
establish my
covenant
between me and
thee and thy seed
after thee in their
generations
for an
everlasting
covenant, to be a
God unto thee,
and to thy seed
after thee.”*

Genesis 17:7

Opening More Doors to Buchanan’s Downtown Church

For over 175 years, the First Presbyterian Church of Buchanan has sought to be a safe and inclusive place to gather and worship.

To better serve the community, we have launched an initiative to meet the accessibility requirements of the ***Americans With Disabilities Act***. The planned improvements will create new opportunities for groups and organizations to worship and meet in our building.

To provide you with ways to invest in the future of our church and community we are also partnering with the ***Michigan Gateway Community Foundation***.

Ways to Give

First Presbyterian Church Buchanan will continue to accept cash or checks (made out to FPCB) directly through:

- Regular Sunday donations.
- Mail – 115 West Front Street, Buchanan, MI 49107.
- Phone – 269-695-6151
- Email – firstpreschurch115@gmail.com.

Michigan Gateway Community Foundation will assist with safe, transparent, and convenient:

- Direct transfers of securities.
- Qualifying charitable distributions.
- Legacy giving.
- Credit card contribution.
- Checks (made payable to MGCF).

To contact Michigan Gateway Community Foundation, visit the link below or scan the QR code.

https://mgcf.org/become-a-donor/#_giveaways





Join us for our first *Celebration Team* event (see page 2) as we ready our hearts, minds, and souls for Ash Wednesday, Lent, and Easter. Jan Ivkovich will coach her team as we share in this pre-Lenten Christian tradition. Several other events are in the making for 2023, but a few months eagerly await coaches who will joyfully lead us on the Christian journey ahead. Call Pat Johnson for more info.

GET READY, GET SET...

This year's *Congregational Meeting* is set for Sunday, March 12 immediately after Worship. Plans are being considered for a supper or potluck following the meeting. Contact Pat Johnson if you're interested in coaching or serving on a team of your choice to organize a celebration meal.

...SPRING INTO ACTION!

Another opportunity for all of us: Re-designing our mission-vision statements to collectively define who we are as the FPC family and where we believe God is asking us to go. The last gathering for this purpose was when Marilyn Schlimgen was our pastor. So much has happened since then, we are truly in need of renewing our love of God, community, and each other. As God's children, we are invited to bring our creative gifts and ideas to the table. Anyone wishing to help Dru Wrasse host this workshop, please contact her. Date: TBD.

GREAT COURSES

Beginning Thursday, February 2, 6-7 pm, and continuing throughout Lent, join leader Tom Wrasse for the academic lecture series, "The Triumph of Christianity" by Dr. Bart D. Ehrman. The series will include ½ hour video, followed by discussion. For more information, go to: [The Triumph of Christianity \(thegreatcourses.com\)](http://TheTriumphofChristianity.thegreatcourses.com)

LENTEN SOUP SUPPERS

February 9 after Worship and following Sundays throughout Lent, join us in Fellowship Hall for the return of our Lenten Soup Suppers. Thanks to Cheryl Warner and the deacons for providing soups.

Dear FPC Buchanan Family and Friends,

With a different theme for each week of Lent, you are invited to explore the connection between internal contemplation and outward action. Themes include:

- Fear to live with faith.
- Pain to live with healing.
- Dishonesty to live with truth.
- Joy to live with gratitude.
- Love to live with heart.
- Burdens to live with blessing.

**"INWARD
WORK
FOR
OUTWARD
LIVING"**

Each daily reflection will combine personal reflection with meditation, visualization, and short prayers. The prayers can be used as mantras or breath prayers: breathe in praying the first phrase, breathe out praying the last. We will meet briefly after church in the Gathering Room to share our reflections on the week's theme. May God bless you and keep you on your Lenten journey.

*Grace and Peace,
Pastor David*

February 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5 Communion Liturgist: Dave Coulston Assistant Treasures: Johanna Money & Dru Wrasse Snow Lottery: Tom Gordon	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 Liturgist: Marie Remington Assistant Treasures: Tia Lee & Jan Ivkovich Snow Lottery: Tom Gordon	13	14 <i>Valentine's Day</i>	15	16	17	18
19 Liturgist: Dan Stenberg Assistant Treasures: Dru Wrasse & Tia Lee Snow Lottery: Mike & Mary Aalfs	20	21	22 <i>Ash Wednesday</i>	23	24	25
26 Liturgist: Boyd Nutting Assistant Treasures: Jan Ivkovich & Johanna Money Snow Lottery: Dave Coulston First Day of Lent	27	28				