

February
2024

A Note from Rev. Katrina

*"Hear, O women, the word of the Lord,
and let your ears receive the word of his mouth;
teach to your daughters a dirge
and each to her neighbor a lament." - Jeremiah 9.20*



First
Presbyterian
Church of Alma

Author Cole Arthur Riley used this scripture passage to talk about how humans must be taught the art of lament. As she spoke at the Necessary Risks conference at Montreat in January she told us about the importance of developing emotional expression. Churches can be really good at telling people to smile and praise God for all the blessings we have (and we should!) but we aren't so good at lamenting. We don't show our anger or frustration or sadness well, perhaps partially because society teaches us to keep that inside. But, as bell hooks wrote, "Rarely, if ever, are any of us healed in isolation." The church should be a place in which we can share our joys and sorrows in community. It is a place where we can be ourselves and support one another.

Or, it should be.

Riley told us that we have to learn how to lament, because it isn't something that comes naturally to us. We have to know that we can cry. We can scream into the void. She told of a sacred practice she and her friends do once a year, going to a barn in the middle of the woods and just screaming their laments into the world. Sometimes we even just have to name it.

Lent is an excellent time to practice lament. Ash Wednesday begins on February 14. Some people find Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday at odds with each other, but I believe it makes sense. When we have a deep love for ourselves and other humans and for God, we acknowledge it not only through joy, but through grief, for we grieve that which we have deeply been attached. Cole Arthur Riley said, "True lament is a deep conviction the world can be better." We lament because we love the world, and right now the world is a mess.

So, this Lent, let's practice lament. Maybe that looks like writing down your sorrows, journaling it, and turning those laments on their head. I think when we look at the other side of laments, we can find a deep love and joy that is connected to the lament. Maybe you create a small group in which you can share one joy and one lament every time you gather. Maybe you pick up a book about lament, and you learn what it means to throw your hands in the air and ask "why?"

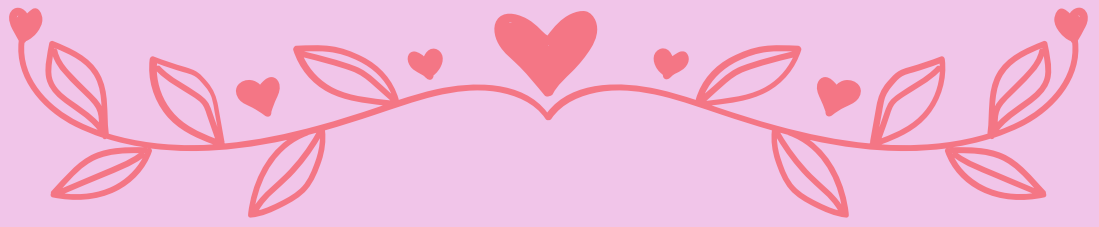
Join me as we lament this month. This year our goal as a congregation is to focus on the resources and gifts we have - something we looked at during the month of January. As we find new ways to use our gifts and resources, there might be times we remember or miss something or someone - a program we used to do, a mission, a person who has died or has gone to another church - and we can lament those events and those people, because we value them. The sacred experience of lament is always at our fingertips. But we might need practice.

Peace,
Rev. Katrina



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Session Notes



Session met 01-15-24

Session discussed a plan to hire an interim Cafe coordinator to fill Roger Allman's position as we continue to search for someone.

Session approved a waiver of building use fees, suggesting a discounted amount to a non-profit.

Approved 2024 Budget with exception of the Pastor's Terms of Call.

Approved welcoming new member in worship January 28th.

The next meeting will be a training and stated meeting on Saturday, March 16th at 1pm.



2-6 Jean Kimball

2-9 Ron Turner

2-11 Eleanor Timmins

2-12 Catharine Horn

2-15 Sue Deel

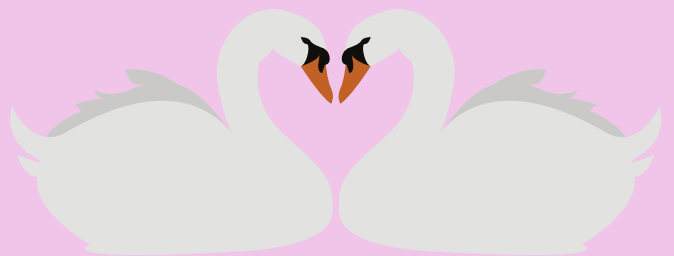
2-16 Carol Rosan

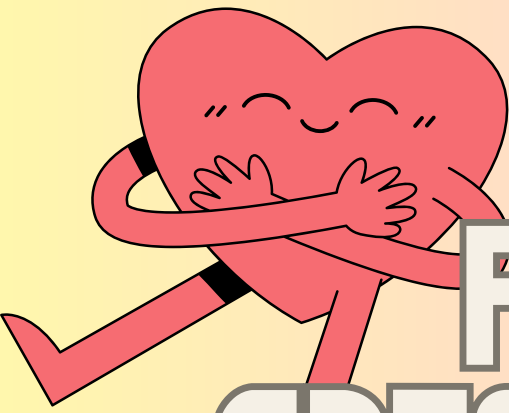
2-17 Renu Maslovich



Happy Anniversary

2-15 Brian & Deb Rockafellow





FEBRUARY SPECIAL OFFERING

The special offering for February will go to the Per Capita fund. PER CAPITA has been part of our funding history for over 150 years. When presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly meet, they are conducting the legislative and judicial business of the church and incur necessary expenses. There are also some necessary administrative expenses involved which enable these ecclesiastical, legislative, and judicial functions to be performed. Historically, per capita has been used to fund these. Importantly, per capita funding enables governing councils to make decisions regarding distribution of mission dollars without itself being funded by those same dollars.

Please consider giving to this fund!



The 2024
Per Capita Apportionment
General Assembly \$ 9.80
Synod of the Covenant \$ 3.25
Presbytery \$16.45
Total \$29.50

DIVERSITY RESOURCES

The diversity library is expanding to digital resources! Look here in the newsletter each month for a new topic and resources.

February is Black History Month. Below are some resources to learn about and celebrate Black History. This is a great opportunity to read a book by a Black author and to learn more about anti-racism. I hope you'll check out a book from our library in the narthex. Ask Rev. Katrina for suggestions!

Learn More with These Resources:

Ta-Nehisi Coates: The Case for Reparations:

<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>

Matthew 25 and Decolonization:

<https://www.pcusa.org/news/2021/10/19/matthew-25-and-decolonization/>

Participate in these activities and events:

Black History Month Speech: Ann Hagedorn: Trust and Teamwork on the Underground Railroad

February 14, 2024

Time

7:00 pm

Location

DOW L4

<https://www.alma.edu/calendar/black-history-month-speech-ann-hagedorn-trust-and-teamwork-on-the-underground-railroad/>



February



	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				5:30 1 Community Café	2	3
4 Congregational Meeting	9:30-12pm 5 Linus Ladies 5pm Spiritual Growth 6:30pm Pine River Arts	1:30pm 6 Food Pantry 3pm Sabbath Group	7 3:30 Outreach 6:30pm Choir Practice	5:30 8 Community Café	9	10
11	9:30-12pm 12 Linus Ladies	1:30pm 13 Food Pantry 3pm Sabbath Group 5:30pm Child Advocacy	14 7pm Ash Wednesday	5:30 15 Community Café	16	17
18	9:30-12pm 19 Linus Ladies	1:30pm 20 Food Pantry 12-5:45pm Blood Drive 3pm Sabbath Group	6:30pm 21 Choir Practice	5:30 22 Community Café	23	24
25	9:30-12pm 26 Linus Ladies	1:30pm 27 Food Pantry 3pm Sabbath Group	6:30pm 28 Choir Practice	5:30 29 Community Café		



Donna Howe Obituary

Donna Louise (Richardson) Howe, age 96, lifelong resident of Alma passed away peacefully Wednesday, December 27, 2023, at Arbor Grove Assisted Living. She was born in Alma on April 13, 1927, to Charles and Pauline (Stiller) Richardson. She was a graduate of Alma High School and went on to earn her Teaching Degree from Central Michigan University in 1949. She later received her master's degree from Michigan State University. Donna shared her passion of teaching at Alma Public Schools in elementary education for over 30 years before her retirement. Donna married Richard Howe on August 13, 1949, at the Alma College Chapel, a blessed union of 62 years until his passing in 2011. They were blessed with four children and eight grandchildren, whom she cherished above all else. Donna and Dick being as social as they were, enjoyed hosting gatherings at her home and especially loved having all her family together to share in good conversations and laughs. One of her favorite places to have guests was the family cottage on Rock Lake in Vestaburg, where she spent her summers. She also had many fond memories of the family farm on Adams Road in Coe Township. Donna was a devoted member of the First Presbyterian Church in Alma. She was active in her community with the Alma Women's Club, Bridge Club, Dance Club, Supper Club and the Pine River County Club. Donna and Dick traveled to Scotland and met many lifelong friends they visited several times and welcomed into their home as well. Donna also had a special love for dogs, especially boxers, and was an avid reader. Being with family and friends and sharing positive conversations brought her joy. Donna is survived by her children, Rick (Connie) Howe, Darcy (Phil Hansen) Hodges, Dan (Gina) Howe, Kellee Garcia; and eight grandchildren, Jordan Hodges, Jocelyn (Dan) Ragone, Oliver (Olivia) Howe, Eliot Howe, Victoria (Chris) Dorsano, Annika (Andy) Kay, Jace Garcia, Jade Garcia. She was preceded in death by her husband Dr. Richard Howe, her parents and a special sister-in-law, Dorothy Swanson. A Celebration of Donna's life will be held at a later date. Those desiring may make memorial contributions to Gratiot County Commission on Aging or the Gratiot County Animal Shelter. Arrangements have been made entrusted to the care of Lux-Moody-Wolfel Funeral Home, Alma. To view Donna's obituary online or to leave a condolence for the family please visit www.luxfuneralhomes.com

John Kushion Obituary

Passed away peacefully at home with his family by his side on his 97th birthday, Friday, December 22, 2023. John was born December 22, 1926, in St. Charles to John and Mary Kushion. He graduated from St. Charles High School and entered the Army Air Force in 1948. John served in Germany during WWII. After the war he served in the Michigan State Police for 25 years. In 1950, John married Bonnie Jean Royal until her death in 1994. In 1997 he married Donna Hinderleider. John is survived by his children Keith (Diana), Mary and Lisa (Kevin). His wife Donna and stepchildren Alan (Lori) and Robert (Sue) as well as 11 grandchildren and 19 great grandchildren. Preceding him in death are his parents, brothers Frank, Edward, Alex, Walter and sister Stella. His first wife Bonnie Jean and daughter Sue Ann Gay. Funeral services will be held Wednesday, December 27, 2023, at 11 am at the Masonic Pathways Doig Chapel in Alma, with Pastor Steve Swem officiating. Interment will follow at Riverside Cemetery, Alma. Visitation will be held Wednesday at 9 am until time of service at the Doig Chapel. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the Michigan Masonic Charitable Foundation. Arrangements have been entrusted to the care of the Lux-Moody-Wolfel Funeral Home, Alma. To view John's obituary or to leave a condolence for the family please visit www.luxfuneralhomes.com.

**James Harold Seals
September 20, 1932 — January 10, 2024
Ashley**

James Harold "Jim" Seals, age 91, of Ashley, MI, passed away Wednesday, January 10, 2024, at The Laurels of Carson City.

Funeral Services will be held at Smith Family Funeral Homes Ithaca, MI at 1:00 P.M. on Saturday, January 13, 2024, with Pastor Phil Maxwell officiating. Burial will take place at North Star Cemetery, North Star, MI. Visitation will be held on Friday, January 12, 2024 from 6-8 P.M. at Smith Family Funeral Homes Ithaca, MI with a Masonic Service held at 7:30 P.M. Visitation will also be held on Saturday from 12:00 P.M. until the time of the service.

Jim was born in Sylvania, Tennessee on September 20, 1932, the son of Howard and Helen (Mathis) Seals. Jim attended Dickson High School in Tennessee. He graduated from Michigan State Normal College (Eastern Michigan University) and obtained his master's degree from Michigan State University. Jim married Ruth Shirley on December 28, 1955, in Sault Ste. Marie, MI. They were blessed with 61 years of marriage, prior to her passing on April 21, 2017.

Jim started out as a teacher and guidance counselor at Cass City High School from 1954 until 1966, he went on to become principal at Union City High School from 1966 until 1972. Jim was the Ashley Public Schools Superintendent for 19 years and retired in 1991. Jim was an avid fisherman and hunter. He spent many years as a little league coach, wrestling, basketball and football official. He loved supporting his grandchildren in sports and school activities.

He was a member of the Van Leer Tennessee Masonic Lodge and a 32nd Degree Mason. He was also a member of the Ashley Lions Club, a past board member of the Gratiot County Parks and Rec. and the Gratiot County Community Foundation. Jim was also a former member of the Cass City Gavel Club and the Branch County Selective Service Board. He was a member of Alma Presbyterian Church Alma, MI.

He is survived by his children: Dr. James and Sandy Seals of Grayling, MI; Dr. Robert and Nancy Seals of Carson City, MI; Susan and Wes DeJong of Hessel, MI; his sister Barbara and Randal Lemastus of Dickson, TN; grandchildren: Wade and Krista Seals, Jay and Alice Seals, Sarah and Patrick Doherty, Ashley Seals, Adam Seals, Allison Seals, and great-grandchildren: Evan, Maggie and Declan Doherty and Vivian and Lincoln Seals. He was preceded in death by his parents, wife Ruth, grandson Wesley DeJong, great-grandson Liam Doherty.

Memorials may be made to the James & Ruth Seals Scholarship fund at Alma College. Online condolences can be sent to www.smithfamilyfuneralhomes.com. The family is being served by Smith Family Funeral Homes, Ithaca, Michigan.