

January  
2024



First  
Presbyterian  
Church of Alma



## A Note from Rev. Katrina

When a few of us went to the Ziibiwing Center in Mount Pleasant we were greeted by a man at the front desk. He ushered us in, telling us we could pay when we left, because the cashier would be there before we left. I don't know that I've ever taken my time through a museum like I did at the Ziibiwing Center. I read as much as I could, absorbing all the information my tired mind would hold. I know there is plenty I already forgot or didn't understand fully.

When we left, we waited by the cash register, but no one appeared. The same man came up to us and said thank you in Ojibwe, thanking us for learning about his culture and saying that we did not owe any money. I didn't know how to respond. Shouldn't I be saying thank you? This felt like an immense gift, and I don't accept gifts well, because I have this deep need to thank someone back appropriately.

As we left, Rob suggested I go on their website and donate money. And I might still, but it didn't feel like that would have the same impact. So, I thought some more about ways I could use what I had learned at the Ziibiwing Center to give my thanks back in the world. Their deep connection and understanding of the earth made me wonder about ways I could strengthen my own relationship with the earth, which would not only benefit the earth and myself, but all people.

Later that night I hesitantly started listening to the audiobook *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer. I say hesitantly, because I had nearly picked up the book many times, but always felt like I wouldn't enjoy it. Someone recently suggested it, so I gave it a go. I immediately felt connected to it, and have cried my way through many stories. What struck me that night was how she opened her book with the story of Skywoman and the turtle. I won't tell it here, but it was a creation story I heard earlier that day at the Ziibiwing Center. Not a huge coincidence, but I think if I had picked that book up on any other day, I might not have gone any further.

Kimmerer has also taught me that in her native language there is no word for "please." She explains that the earth is meant to be shared, so the extra politeness is not expected in their culture. "Thank you" is a word. I was not expecting the generosity, the sharing of resources from the man at the Ziibiwing Center, but it has stayed with me.

One way I know I can connect with the earth is by paying closer attention to my consumer habits - what I buy, what I don't buy, what I reuse. Obviously the biggest impacts on the environment come from large companies, but I can't give up doing a small part to try and reduce my carbon footprint. So, this year, I'm taking inventory, and I invite you to, as well.

I'll be preaching more on this in January, but throughout this year, let's look at what we have, individually, collectively, and as a church. This is multi-faceted - looking at it from an environmental standpoint, but also looking at the gifts we have in the church. There is much we wish for, dream for, and seek. We also have many resources and gifts right at our finger tips. So, I invite you to take inventory. Reduce and reuse, and connect not only with the earth, with God, but also with one another. Here's to a new year, full of gratitude.

Peace,  
Rev. Katrina

495 Charles Ave., Alma, MI 48801 | [www.firstpres.net](http://www.firstpres.net)

# Session Notes

# Hello WINTER



Session met 12-18-23

Session approved communion dates for 2024.

Annual Reports are due to Matthew Midgett  
(office@firstpres.net) by January 14.

The Annual Meeting will be on Sunday, February 4.

Accepted one resignation from a deacon board.

The next meeting will be January 15 at 6:30pm.



**Rhys Pekich-Bundy 01/01**

**Lisa Godfrey 01/02**

**Owain Pekich-Bundy 01/06**

**Bob Fraker 01/16**

**Deanna Timmins 01/16**

**Bob Marble 01/17**

**Millie Barclay 01/19**

**Jessie Store 01/20**

**Crystal Parsons 01/22**

**Millie Meger 01/25**

**Sherry Orihel 01/28**

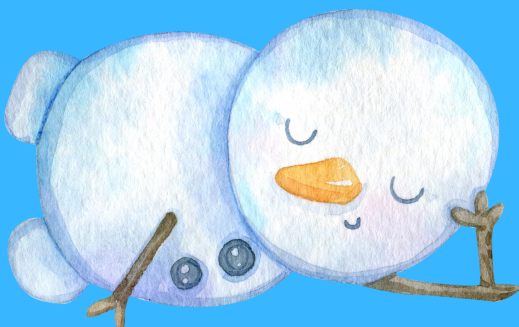
*Happy Anniversary*



**Tim & Anne Lambrecht 01/02**

**Mark & Deb Jewell 01/10**

**Sylvia & Jordan Kinoshita 01/21**



# JANUARY SPECIAL OFFERING

The special offering for January will go to landscaping. You might have noticed that the bushes were removed around the church. In the coming spring, you can expect to see more changes! Please consider giving to this fund!



# DIVERSITY RESOURCES

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

January is National Poverty in America Awareness month.

Did you know the percentage of people in poverty in Michigan in 2022 was 13.4%? In Gratiot County it was 17.3%. These numbers have decreased over 10 years, but it is also important to look at those who are considered “ALICE” or Asset Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed. People who are in ALICE were once referred to as “the working poor” or are people who work multiple jobs but are underpaid. In Michigan, 26% are ALICE, meaning above poverty level, but still struggling financially.

Learn More with These Resources:

ALICE: United Way: <https://www.unitedforalice.org/state-overview/Michigan>

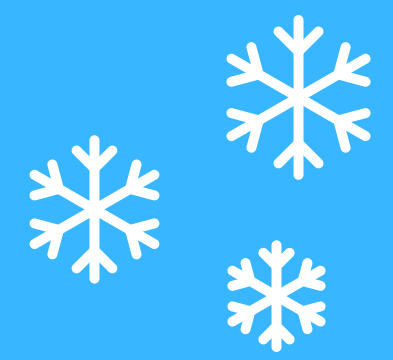
Poverty State-By-State:

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/andrewdepietro/2023/11/09/2023-poverty-rate-by-state-per-the-latest-census-data/?sh=235c3c893845>

<https://kevinmnye.com/> Kevin Nye writes about theology and homelessness and best practices.



# January



	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 Happy New Years! Office Closed	2 1:30pm Food Pantry 3pm Sabbath Group <i>Rev. Katrina at Montreat 2-5</i>	3 6:30pm Choir Practice	4 5:30 Community Café	5 	6
7	8 9:30-12pm Linus Ladies 5pm Spiritual Growth 6:30pm Pine River Arts	9 1:30pm Food Pantry 3pm Sabbath Group 5:30pm Child Advocacy	10 3:30 Outreach 6:30pm Choir Practice	11 5:30 Community Café	12	13
14 Chili lunch after Church	15 9:30-12pm Linus Ladies MLK Events at AC 6:30pm Session	16 1:30pm Food Pantry 3pm Sabbath Group	17 6:30pm Choir Practice	18 5:30 Community Café	19	20
21	22 9:30-12pm Linus Ladies	23 1:30pm Food Pantry 3pm Sabbath Group	24 6:30pm Choir Practice	25 5:30 Community Café	26 	27
28	29 9:30-12pm Linus Ladies	30 Food Pantry Closed 3pm Sabbath Group	31 6:30pm Choir Practice			