

January
2025



First
Presbyterian
Church of Alma



A Note from Rev. Katrina

2024 was the beginning of a discernment for First Presbyterian Church, and we continue that discernment into 2025. Discerning the future of the church is something that takes time, and prayer.

Part of the process of that is remembering what we are called to do. I think it's helpful to remember the song we teach our children and grandchildren:

The church is not a building,
The church is not a steeple,
The church is not a resting place,
The church is the people!

YOU are the church. You have much more investment in the future of the church than anyone else, and power to make those changes!

I'm including below what it means to be a deacon, a ruling elder, and a church member.

Periodically throughout this process of discernment, we will be reminded of these responsibilities.

And, if you see something that needs to be done that doesn't need session approval - consider if you have the gifts to do that! (Such as, turning off a light to save energy, or calling up a person who hasn't been in worship in a while, or volunteering for something).

Ruling Elders:

exercise leadership, government, spiritual discernment, and discipline, and have responsibilities for the life of a congregation as well as the whole church, including ecumenical relationships.

Deacons:

one of compassion, witness, service, sharing in the redeeming love of Jesus Christ for the poor, hungry, sick, lost, friendless, oppressed, those burdened by unjust policies or structures, or anyone in distress.

Active Members

proclaiming the good news in word and deed,
taking part in the common life and worship of a congregation,
lifting one another up in prayer, mutual concern, and active support,
studying Scripture and the issues of Christian faith and life,
supporting the ministry of the church through the giving of money, time, and talents,
demonstrating a new quality of life within and through the church,
responding to God's activity in the world through service to others,
living responsibly in the personal, family, vocational, political, cultural, and social relationships of life,
working in the world for peace, justice, freedom, and human fulfillment, caring for God's creation,
participating in the governing responsibilities of the church,
reviewing and evaluating regularly the integrity of one's membership, and considering ways in which one's participation in the worship and service of the church may be increased and made more meaningful.

495 Charles Ave., Alma, MI 48801 | www.firstpres.net

Hello WINTER



We will no longer be having
Matthew 25 Sundays.
Worship will be in the
sanctuary.

Annual Reports are due to Matthew
(matthew@firstpres.net) by Friday,
January 10th.

The Annual Meeting will be February 2
after worship.



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

Jessie Store 01/20

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



List of Church Scenarios for Discussion

After the town hall, all information was gathered by the session and prayerfully discussed. These are potential options moving forward, and we welcome your prayerful consideration. We will gather again as a congregation in the future to discuss each further.

A) Waiting for Guidance.

While the church recognizes that decreasing membership numbers will eventually lead to its closure, the congregation does not see a clear path forward. We decide that the best course of action is to wait prayerfully for more direction.

Questions for discussion:

- What can the congregation do to help identify a path forward?
- What information do we need to know about such a path?

B) Planning for Closure.

The church recognizes that while decreasing membership numbers will lead to its closure, current finances will allow it to continue for another 5-10 years. The congregation decides that the best course of action is use this time to plan for our church's closure.

Questions for discussion:

- What criteria should we use as it decides how to reallocate the church's assets?
- What steps should we take to ensure that the church can continue to minister to our existing congregation's spiritual needs?
- How should we set the timeline for closure?

C) Course Correction.

The congregation decides that we wish to restore our church's vitality, and commits to making the changes necessary to do so.

Questions for discussion:

- What steps should the church take to create a realistic plan for recruiting new members? Who will be responsible for carrying out these steps?
- What steps should the church take to create a realistic plan for improving its revenue? Who will be responsible for carrying out these steps?
- What changes does the church need to make to its core mission? How should we allocate our energy among worship, service, outreach, and other Christian imperatives?

D) Seeking a Merger.

The congregation decides that the best course of action is to merge with another church who is interested in a partnership.

Questions for discussion:

- What attributes would make the other church a desirable partner?
- What attributes would raise concerns about a potential partnership?
- What other issues should we think about before entering into such a partnership?

E) Starting Anew.

The congregation decides that the best course of action is to create a new church that better serves the spiritual needs of the broader Alma community, and commits to establishing a "start-up" church that will answer these needs.

Questions for discussion:

- How could we determine if such a start-up church is feasible?
- How could we determine the spiritual needs of the broader Alma community?
- If we go this path, how should we to reallocate our assets? What steps should we take during this transition to minister to our existing congregation's spiritual needs?



**Thank you, Bennet,
for helping with
our new store room
for Cafe!**

In November, a Boy Scout did his Eagle Scout project at the church, which was moving shelves from the behind the stage in fellowship hall to the newly organized pantry for Cafe.

**Thank you to
everyone who helped
organize food
baskets to give away!**



coffee hour

January 5 - Topher Goggin,
Tincy Goggin, Denise and Chris
Murray

January 12 - Chuck and Julie
Fortino and Jean Kimball

January 19 - Chili Luncheon -
Deacons for Fellowship and
Congregational Life

January 26 - Sue Malone and
Mary Hurley

liturgists

January 5 -
Episcopalians

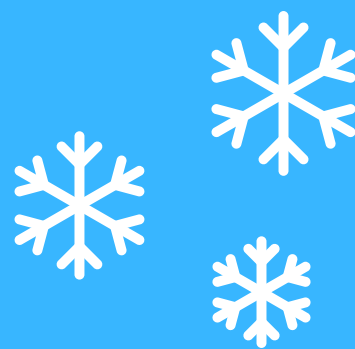
January 12 - Sheryle
Dixon

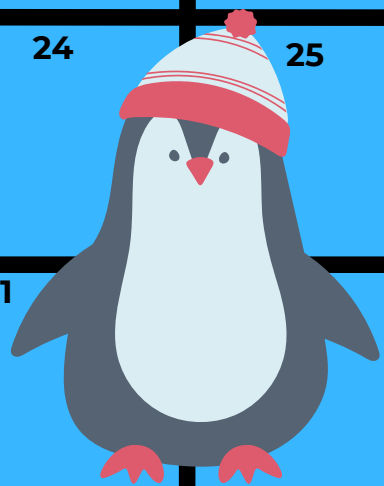
January 19 - Chuck
Fortino

January 26 - Students
from Montreat trip



January



| | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|----|--|---|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---|
| | | Happy New Years! Office Closed | 1 6:30pm Choir Practice | 5:30 2 Community Café | 3  | 4 |
| 5 | 6 9:30-12pm Linus Ladies 6:30pm Pine River Arts | 1:30pm 7 Food Pantry 3pm Sabbath Group 5:30pm Child Advocacy | 8 6:30pm Choir Practice | 9 5:30 Community Café | 10 | 11 |
| 12 | 13 9:30-12pm Linus Ladies | 14 1:30pm Food Pantry 3pm Sabbath Group | 15 6:30pm Choir Practice | 16 5:30 Community Café | 17 | 18 |
| 19 | 20 9:30-12pm Linus Ladies 6:30pm Session | 21 1:30pm Food Pantry 3pm Sabbath Group | 22 6:30pm Choir Practice | 23 5:30 Community Café | 24 | 25  |
| 26 | 27 9:30-12pm Linus Ladies | 28 Food Pantry Closed 3pm Sabbath Group | 29 6:30pm Choir Practice | 30 | 31 | |