

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
OF HIGHLAND



THE LARGER VIEW

February
2023

Volume 16 Issue 2

Inside this issue:

Note from Rev. Tyler	2
Matthew 25 In the Spotlight	3
Session Shorts	3-4
Treasurer's Report	4
Faith Development	6-9
Worship & Music	10
Ministry of Mission	10
News From the Pews	11

Dear All,

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

It seems that wintry weather has finally come. As I write this letter, I feel like I am inside of a snow globe. It is stunningly beautiful, but I am glad that I am inside! Let us take a moment to lift up in prayer those who are stuck outside this month and however long winter persists. Since February is the month of Love, let us share Love with those who need it most in our society!

Happy
Valentine's
Day

As you read through this edition of the Larger View, you will find a lot about how active FPCH already is and will continue to be in living Love—with each other, with the community, with the world, and with God! Speaking of Love, let me once again express my Love for all of you. You are amazing! While I took much needed time off, you kept things up and running beautifully. While several in our congregation have been going through really hard times, you have been supporting and caring for each other. While the people of the community have been struggling with high prices and low incomes, you have been constant in reaching out and welcoming in. While the world has been suffering under more and more violence, you have been persistent in your prayers for peace. Thank you for being such amazing disciples, called upon the waters of your baptisms! I Love you!

Soup Sale

SOUPER BOWL

Blue T-Shirt Sunday

Star Word Reminder

Spiritual M&Ms

Exploring the Scriptures

Prayer Shawl Ministry

*First Presbyterian Church
of Highland
8727 Delaware Street
Highland, IN 46322*



*The Mission of First Presbyterian Church of Highland
is to be
the HEART, HANDS, and FEET of Jesus Christ*

With Love in mind, February is when we will start our journey to the cross to remember the greatest embodiment of Love that ever has been. Lent starts on February 22 with Ash Wednesday. This is our annual act of recognition, repentance, and contrition to remember just how significant was Jesus's sacrifice for us. Thus will commence our forty days of fasting—of releasing what needs to be released and picking up what needs to be picked up. As you consider the type of fast that you will choose, I encourage you to keep Isaiah's words in your heart:

*Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of injustice,
to undo the straps of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?*

*Is it not to share your bread with the hungry
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover them
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?—Isaiah 58*

As we observe this season, and as we move forward in our life together, I urge us to keep our eyes upon the cross. Let us keep in our hearts and minds the truth that throughout all that we do and all that we go through, Jesus loves us so much that he led a life leading to that cross. I close with these words from our Lenten Psalm.

*Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy,
blot out my transgressions.
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.—Psalm 51*

In Christ and with Love,

Rev. Tyler





As our country grapples with the death of Tyre Nichols, with the loss of the life of yet another Black man to structural racism, I shine this month's spotlight on the following definition of terms from the PC(USA)'s website. My hope is that opening our eyes and hearts and bodies to antiracism will be part of our Lenten fast!

Race is a socially constructed concept that purports to use characteristics such as skin color, facial features, and body structure as a basis for classifying people. It has no scientific or biological basis. It was introduced during the period of European colonial expansion.

Prejudice is pre-judgment in the absence of evidence and held even when evidence contradicts it.

Social power is the capacity of individuals and groups to determine what happens in society. Their decisions and actions then shape society's values, beliefs, institutions, and systems.

Racism = Racial hierarchy + Prejudice + Social power

Racism is the combination of social power and racial prejudice to create systems that treat people differently, based on their defined racial group. Privileges are provided for some while dehumanizing, excluding or oppressing others.

What is structural racism? Structural racism is the normalizing of racism within institutions and structures. Once racism is structural and institutional (as it is in the United States), it creates ongoing, persistent inequality. Inequality occurs in accessing money, land, housing, education, health, information, and social power. Because inequality is a part of the structures and institutions that we interact with every day, it often goes unquestioned and unchallenged by most of society or the dominant culture. In the United States, structural racism particularly advantages white people while producing negative impacts for people of color.

Important notes:

- Racism is measured not by intent, but by its impact on those who are oppressed.
- Racism can be overt or covert, individual or systemic, intentional or unintentional.
- Racism grants privilege to some and sustains the dominant group.
- Racism exists everywhere in our society, and in all institutions, including our church.

SESSION SHORTS

- Prayers and concerns were raised for those in our congregation who are experiencing illness and hospitalizations at this time.
- The following was celebrated: New young adult member Oliver Keilman joining our church family, the ordination of Deacon Kelsey Helmer and the installation of officers, the dedication and participation of our youth and young adults, new people participating on ministries and visitors attending services.
 - As this was our first meeting for 2023, we focused on organizational work.
 - Elder Jean Smith was appointed as Clerk of Session.
 - Pam Porter was appointed as Treasurer.
 - The communion schedule of the first Sunday of each month and the additional Maundy Thursday date was approved.

SESSION SHORTS

- New and returning members of Session were welcomed and thanked for their saying “yes” when asked to serve.
- Soup sales will return in February.
- The website needs some updating. If you have any suggestions, corrections, or additions, please contact Jean Smith.
- Rev. Tyler presented the idea of doing some restructuring and revisioning in 2023. This will be a focus this year so that the work we do can be more effective with less overlap and more interconnectedness.



Treasurer's Report

For the Month of
December 31, 2022

	Month of December	Monthly Budget	Year to Date
Operating Revenue	\$8,798.65	\$9,226.93	\$151,377.87
Operating Expenses	14,668.27	13,873.77	155,224.96
Excess (Deficit)	(\$5,869.62)		(\$3,847.09)



Gifts were given in the month of January to the Endowment Fund:

In Memory of: Helen Vargo, Elizabeth Vargo, Mary Toth, Erma Nagy and
Lee & Linda Mann

These gifts were given by the following donor:

Janet Vargo

Donation to Feed the Hungry:

Mary Spott



This month's article was taken from the op/ed page of the Chicago Tribune on 7/17/2021. It is entitled "A Stranger's Kindness."

I am direction challenged, even my GPS confuses me! But unlike many, I don't hesitate to ask for directions. While I was driving to a friend's home, GPS directed me to a street that was closed for repair. After driving around in circles, I stopped at a home where a man was landscaping. I expressed my frustration and asked for help. Knowing this neighborhood, he said, "follow me." He mounted his motorcycle and began the hunt for my destination with me close behind. He led me through a maze I could not have accomplished on my own, and we reached my destination. Gratefully, yet sheepishly, I pulled a \$20 bill from my wallet. I knew he would refuse money, so I said, "Please donate it to charity." He responded, "No, you donate it. I just sold my company for \$15 million. I'm a simple man, and you just made my day." I was flabbergasted. Did I dream this experience? Did he say I made his day when he was the generous angel who led me to my friend? I continue to be grateful for this encounter and have shared this story with family and friends. I pay it forward now by sharing it with the community.

-Barbara Silvestri, Riverside IL

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.—1 Peter 4:10



YOUTH CONNECTIONS

Youth Connections will meet twice in February:

- Feb. 12 – SOUPER BOWL collection of donations before and after the worship service; make-your-own nachos lunch, and FPCH’s version of “Supermarket Sweep.”
- Feb. 26 – delicious lunch together (menu pending), explore spiritual practices for our mental and spiritual health during Lent.

Youth Connections generally meets the 2nd and 4th Sundays each month after worship, with an occasional service project or local field trip at other times. Youth Connections is open to all youth in 6th – 12th grades, and young adults post-high school through mid-20s. If you would like to be involved with Youth Connections, please contact Heather Casiano or Pastor Tyler.



ADULT CONNECTIONS

There are 2 Adult Connections offerings to choose from – or participate in both!

- “The Bible in Today’s World” class meets each Sunday morning at 9 am, in the upstairs meeting room. They are finishing up the “Animate: Faith” curriculum, which includes short videos and lively group conversation, and then choosing a new curriculum for the rest of this winter and spring. Contact John Toren or Bonnie Perryman with any questions.
- The online “BYOB” (Bring Your Own Bible) discussion group meets each Wednesday evening from 7-8 pm online on Zoom. We are exploring the hymns we sing – the history and the Scriptures behind each song. **There will be NO BYOB on Feb. 22, as that is Ash Wednesday.** BYOB in March and April (through Holy Week) will be a Lenten Study led by Pastor Tyler. The link to log on to Zoom is emailed out weekly. Contact Heather Casiano with any questions.

If you have an idea for a new small group or class, please let us know. We would love to help get a new group formed as there is interest. Groups can meet any day of the week, at the church, in your home, or elsewhere. Share your ideas and we’ll help make them happen!



SOUPER BOWL

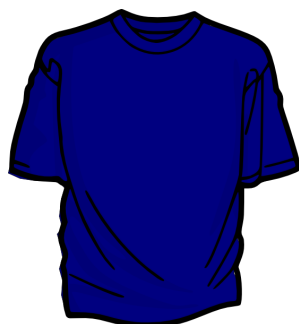
The annual Souper Bowl of Caring will take place on Sunday, Feb. 12, the same day as the NFL's Super Bowl football game. Once again our Youth Connections participants are tackling hunger so no one needs to go without. Everyone is invited to participate in the SOUPER BOWL by:

- Donating cans of soup or other non-perishable food items
- Making a monetary donation
- Wearing your favorite team's colors to worship – in person and online



Youth Connections will collect donations before and after the worship service on Feb. 12 in the narthex. Donations can also be dropped off at the church office the week before, or you can contact Heather Casiano to arrange to pick up your donation from you. Let's make this a great Souper Bowl for the hungry in our local communities!

LET'S HAVE A "BLUE-OUT"!



The first Sunday of Lent each year is designated by the PCUSA as "Blue T-Shirt Sunday," in recognition of the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) and the impact its efforts have on people going through tough times. The PDA is one of three programs supported by the One Great Hour of Sharing special offering that is usually received near Easter Sunday.

On Sunday, Feb. 26, we're encouraging everyone to wear a blue shirt to worship – both online and in person – to create a "Blue-out" in our congregation and show our support for Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. More information about One Great Hour of Sharing, the 3 programs it supports, and ways you can be involved will come out throughout Lent.



STAR WORD REMINDER



On Epiphany Sunday in January, those in worship were encouraged to select a Star Word. This word is to help you with your prayers and meditations throughout the year, and to focus on a particular way God might be working in your life. Have you seen any connections with your Star Word yet? Any new epiphanies God is revealing to you? If not, that's ok. Star Words are a journey, not a race.

If you did not get a Star Word and would like one, it's not too late! Contact Heather Casiano at hcasiano@fpchighland.org or call the church office and leave a message for her that you would like a Star Word, and she will get you one. All ages are encouraged to participate.



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

We will have a new faith development opportunity, "Spiritual M&Ms," later this winter and spring. Due to an illness, the start date has been postponed. Watch the bulletin announcements and email for updated information on this class once we set a start date.

"Spiritual M&Ms" - a weekly meditation and mindfulness class led by Jay Smith. Jay will use contemplative prayer, meditation, and other mindfulness techniques to help us enhance our own faith journeys. These classes are open to all ages and to the community. "Spiritual M&Ms" will be a hybrid class, so you will also be able to participate in person or online on Zoom.





EXPLORING THE SCRIPTURES IN 2023

Last month we talked about commentaries as a tool to help you with your Bible reading and study. This month's suggested tool may seem like a no-brainer, but read on. As part of your reading and study of Bible passages, and to help you glean a better understanding, you should read the Bible – not just in one Bible, but in several. In the English language alone, there are many, many translations and styles of God's Word. How the original Hebrew and Greek languages of the Bible are translated and arranged can make a difference in how we understand what we're reading.

There is no one "official" Bible translation. Many of us tend to lean toward a particular version because either we grew up with it, or it was gifted to us, or it's the one used in our communal worship. To grow in your understanding of a scripture passage, or to see it in a new light, try reading whatever Bible verses you're studying in a different version. Bible translations typically fall into one of three categories: word for word, thought for thought, and paraphrase.. If you're used to reading from the King James Version (word for word translation), try reading the same passage from the New International Version (thought for thought translation) and from The Message (paraphrase). Reading from each of these types of translation styles can be enriching and contribute to a fuller understanding of the original text.

For example: Psalm 27:13-14

- KJV – “¹³ I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.
¹⁴ Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.”
- NIV – “¹³ I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.
¹⁴ Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.”
- The Message – “¹³⁻¹⁴ I'm sure now I'll see God's goodness in the exuberant earth. Stay with GOD! Take heart. Don't quit. I'll say it again: Stay with GOD.”

Our church library has several different translations of the Bible that you can look at, and many public libraries will have various translations of the Bible for reading and study as well. If you prefer to use online resources, Bible Gateway (website or app) and the YouVersion Bible App are two great places to read from several translations and compare right on your screen. Whatever translation you choose, may your time spent in God's Word be rewarding!

Worship & Music

Worship Leaders

February Liturgists:

2/5: Karen Lounsbury
 2/12: Jean Smith
 2/19: Robbie Casiano
 2/22: John Toren
 2/26: Tracy Oprea



February LiveStreaming

2/5: Jamie Ham
 2/12: Tristan Casiano
 2/19: Jean Smith
 2/22: Tracy Oprea (Ash Wednesday)
 2/26: Robbie Casiano

Ministry of Mission



January Shelter Report

We had a very busy group helping with the January shelter cooking. A big thank you to Nancy and Jerry for joining us. Jamie and Cheri were at their usual stations, joined in by Marie. Unfortunately, Judy was under the weather and we missed her smiling face!!

We again had the good fortune to receive chicken and sweet potatoes from St. Tim's. Thank you to them for sharing their bounty and helping to ease our budget demands.



There will be a Soup Sale on Sunday, February 12th. If you are able, we would love to have you help with this activity. The proceeds go toward the General Fund. You can contact Cheryl for more details.

News from the Pews



Please continue to place items in the Blessing Box and take items if you are a person in need! Items most commonly donated: canned goods with pull tabs, socks, toilet paper, non-perishable foods, small snacks, toiletries, baby wipes and diapers.

Please do not donate homemade or perishable items.



The Prayer Shawl Ministry meets on the fourth Tuesday of every month at 1:00 PM. This month they will be meeting on February 28th.



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

5	Jay Smith
8	Don Zuke
11	Brian Scott
16	Tracy Oprea
17	Kelsey Helmer
20	Philip Parker
29	Janet Terpstra



Prayers & CONCERNS



Pray For...



Anthony
George Nelson
Brady Vanes
George Griner
Guy Hendricks
Bill and Anettia Holmes
Daniel Litwicki
David Markley
David Kingen
Carmelo
Diana and Ray Mendoza
Janet Orem
John Mullen
Jeanne Nestor
Cindy Waltz and Sister
Andrew Bobalik
Gale Snyder
Yvonne Suroviak
U. Chong
Wendy
Georgette Sknerski
Jakob Holden
Denise Matthys
Steve & Melinda
Gary Studer
Jan Oprea
Tracy Oprea
Janet Vargo
Robbie
Kate Abernethy
Betty Strauser
Peter Churitch
Piper

Laura Buono Domsic
The Windstrups
Ruth Dekker
Rick Parker
Barbara Morton
Caroline Studer
Cary and Jennifer Pearson
Carol Finley
Huilin
Holly Letnich
Lily Renfro
Marla and Jerry Renfro
Jaden Mendez
Frank Falzone
Loved ones of Myrna Grove
Doug and Sue Matthews
Kiki Ho
Janet Terpstra and Family
Robert Urich
Richard Simmons
Glen Nahler
Claudia Szymaszek
Tammy
Loved ones of Tony B
Tom
Renee Williams
Jana Tolley
John Tolbert
Kathy Elroy
Shirley McKnight
Jay Smith
Mary Keilman
The Family of John Lestina
Larry & Bonnie Perryman

- We pray for victims and survivors of gun violence.
- We pray for peace and peacemakers!
- We pray for those undergoing treatment for cancer, the mentally ill and their families, those recuperating, those undergoing treatments and those waiting for transplants.
- We pray for first responders and front-line medical workers who are risking their lives for our health
- We pray for the health and safety of our service men and women as we pray for an end to the wars that put them at risk
- We pray for the unemployed, the under employed and the homeless.
- We pray for all children in the world.
- We pray for the work of the Holy Spirit within the life of FPCH and within each of us, that we may indeed be and make disciples each new day.
- We pray for our home-bound loved ones.

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In order to keep the prayer list current, we need your input. If there are people you would like to have added or if there is someone who can be taken off the list, please call the Church Office (219-838-6850).