



# First Press Magazine

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First Presbyterian Church  
200 S Lincoln Ave  
Marshfield, WI 54449

Phone: 715-384-2484  
E-mail: [fpcm@frontier.com](mailto:fpcm@frontier.com)  
Website: [fpcmarshfield.org](http://fpcmarshfield.org)

## From Pastor Laurie

*“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, plans to give you a future with hope.” (Jer. 29:11)*

In this season of hope we call Advent, my heart overflows with gratitude and hope. Add to that, a dash of amazement. For surely I *did not know* that God would call us to FPC nor did I have any glimmer of what deep joy and fulfillment I would discover here in my first year of becoming your pastor. Thank you for opening your hearts to Bob and me, and for your readiness to let God lead us forward in our journey together. “Discovery Time” with the children each Sunday has been a highlight for me. Yet hasn’t this whole year been a “Discovery Time” for all of us? Enjoy a few moments to look back with gratitude and forward with hope, as you read this issue filled with voices and stories of Christ coming into our lives, for surely we know, “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.” Hallelujah!



**Dec. 23** — Children’s Christmas Play: “The Transfiguration of the Gifts”

### Dec. 24 Christmas Eve

**4:30-5:15 pm** Christmas in the Stable

Early service for children and families of all sizes and configurations.

**9:00-10:00 pm** Candlelight Service

Late service of lessons and carols, Holy Communion, Chancel Choir.

# First



# Press

The Magazine of First Presbyterian Church — Marshfield

Winter 2018



# Beginnings



**Rodette Mess** is the new FPC Administrative Secretary. Rodette lives in Marshfield, with her husband, Randy. They have been married for 22 years. Together they have 4 daughters, 3 son in laws and 8 grandchildren.

Rodette has over 20 years' experience with computer applications, IT project management, and back office operations. She enjoys reading, doing puzzles, and spending time with her family. Her favorite past time is playing with her grandchildren.



Introducing Mr. and Mrs. Matthew and Nancy (Krohn) Walsh, married here in our sanctuary on December 8, 2018.



We celebrated the baptism of Judith Watters Jackan, daughter of Ted and Andrea Jackan, on October 28, 2018.



And we celebrated the baptism of Jonathon Thomas Beighley, son of Sarah Beighley, on September 30, 2019.



Thanks to the effort and diligence of Greg Walsh, videos of Pastor Laurie's sermons are now available on the church website. Check out Greg's excellent work at: [www.fpcmarshfield.org/sermons/](http://www.fpcmarshfield.org/sermons/)

# Silent Auction/Pancake Breakfast



Karen Mitchell ups her silent auction bid. The auction netted \$4925 for church programs.



We were thrilled to have the confirmation class from Faith Lutheran join us for the morning service and the pancakes that followed.



Kitchen clean up was in the capable hands of these fine fellows.

## Save the Date

**February 3 Everybody's Birthday/Souper Bowl of Caring**

**February 10 Annual Church Meeting**

**March 6-8 Urban Immersion Service Retreat—** You've heard all about it. Don't miss this fun and informative trip to Minneapolis to learn about poverty.

**March 26 Madison Action Day —** NAOMI and WISDOM will descend on the State Capitol for informative breakout sessions, then move to the Capitol to talk to our lawmakers about the issues concerning people of faith. Transportation provided. Details coming soon.



## Faith Stories Travis Cooper

Travis Cooper was baptized Presbyterian as an infant, but he has no memory of attending church before age 5 when he and his family moved to Stevens Point. Travis' parents joined the Evangelical Free Church which has since become the expansive Woodlands Church in Plover, WI. He attended church every Sunday growing up. The well-known Bible verse, John 3:16, was an important part of the teaching as well as cultivating a trust in Jesus Christ as one's personal Savior. That personal relationship with God established in his youth still lies at the core of Travis' life of faith.

Travis attended college at UW-Stevens Point where he met his future wife, Melissa. He also participated in Campus Crusade for Christ there. One spring break was spent in Florida trying to share the gospel with the college kids who flock there for more worldly pursuits. Although it was

perhaps less than successful evangelically, he appreciates having had the opportunity to share a faith that is very important to him.

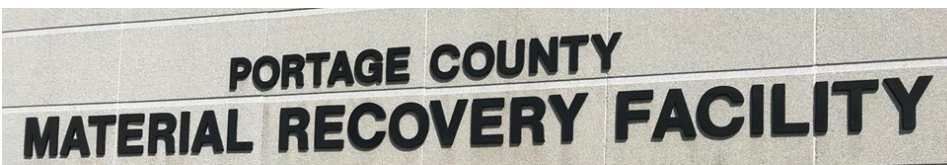
A private person, Travis finds it takes a great deal of personal energy to share his faith, but it is very important to him that everyone knows that Jesus loves them. Large crowds of unfamiliar people can make him uncomfortable, but being in worship with a group most of whom he knows on some level is very meaningful. Sermons that draw connections between scripture and effective self-help methods give him something he can apply to his life to ease his worries.

Travis likes how FPC is inclusive and welcomes everyone no matter where they are on their path. His hope for First Presbyterian Church is that, through its ministry, more people can know that Jesus loves them and that the church cares for them.

## Faith in Action: Green Team

On August 23<sup>rd</sup> a group of “greens” from FPC headed to Portage to learn what happens to items which are picked up curbside in our recycling bins. All who attended were very impressed with the process and learned much. A repeat field trip open to all is being considered and updates to our recycling kiosks will be coming later this fall. Here’s what we learned.

The Plover site is the recovery facility for all of Central Wisconsin. We watched various sort lines, equipment sorting with magnets and screens and human sorters wearing Kevlar gloves and sleeves. They had fans blowing on them to attempt to control temperature. One staggering statistic was that 21,000 milk jugs are baled and 40 bales are shipped out each month.



Each month, 15 tons of scrap metal are removed from the collection and taken to scrap metal collection sites. Consumers can take it there directly and receive cash money for it.

Used paper is taken to the paper mills. Previously, the recovery center received \$50 a ton for used paper. Now, it is worth \$5 a ton. Counties which bring recycling to the facility can share in the revenue if there is a market for the material. If not, they pay a fee to recycle. Although care for the earth is important, recycling is ultimately driven by markets and profit margins.



## Close-up

### Greg Walsh

Greg Walsh was born in Marshfield. His life of faith began at Sacred Heart Catholic Church. Greg’s mom who sang in the choir insisted that he attend church every Sunday, so, rather than sitting in the pew by himself, he decided to join her in the choir.

Greg married Beth, his high school sweetheart and now wife of 38 years. He served the U.S. Coast Guard in Coos Bay, Oregon, where he and Beth found a spiritual home with the Jehovah’s Witnesses. Unlike their experience with Catholicism, the whole family was encouraged to worship together. It was hard to tell his mother that they were leaving her church to join the Witnesses, but she never let it come between them.

After Greg moved his family back to Marshfield in 1999, his son Matthew fell out of favor with the Witness elders and was shunned by the community. Greg’s mother firmly stated that if Greg shunned his son according to the elders’ dictate, she would never speak to Greg again. With the

promise of worshiping as a whole family broken, Greg and Beth left the Jehovah’s Witnesses.

Beth knew she found something special visiting FPC for the first time when Gerri Toyama greeted her before she had even entered the building. Seated at an Easter Morning breakfast in 2008 while Greg and Beth were still only friends of the church, Greg received a call that his mother had passed away. Pastor Scott offered a prayer regarding them fully in that moment as members of our church family.

Greg credits a sermon by Pastor Cyndi Little for cementing his commitment to this church. Thomas, Pastor Cyndi noted, was not rejected by the early church for doubting Jesus’ resurrection, but, rather, given place within the community until he found his own basis for belief. In a way, Greg has come full circle, singing in our choir now in memory of the one who showed him the meaning of a mother’s love.

## Celebrating Our First Year: *Pastor Laurie Brubaker Davis*

On November 1st, one year ago, Dr. Laurie Brubaker Davis joined us. Her energy, creativity, and passion for seeking God’s guidance have opened a new chapter in our church story. We are challenged anew with exciting changes in worship and liturgy, young families are joining us, and new paths for service continue to open. Discerning God’s will as we continue to face new challenges has never been more vital.

Perhaps now is a good time, before memories fade much further, to ask some of the people who served on the Pastor Nominating Committee to share what it was like to hold the responsibility for discerning God’s will for our congregation.

### What was it like at the beginning?

**Melissa:** “I felt a special call to bring the concerns of young parents to the committee. In the beginning, I was wary of the others, but we grew together as a group.”

**Therese:** “I don’t usually feel very involved since I work in the nursery, so it was out of the ordinary for me to play such a key role.”

**Gail:** “Being a newer member at the time, I was not sure I was qualified.”

**Don:** “I went in with the idea that we were looking for a young family with kids who could benefit from our excellent school system, but there was no one like that.”

### How was the journey together?

**Dolores:** “There was a steep learning curve. I can’t describe what happened. In the end, the choice was hard, but clear.”

**Jamie:** “There were many ups and downs, but the process revealed the joy that can be found in sharing a journey of faith with others.”

**Melissa:** “There was sense of trust built on seeing the path reveal itself as we went.”

**Therese:** “I am proud of the work we did, working together.”



**Gail:** “The process was set up with rules and guidelines, and prayer.”

**Don:** “We were close to burn out when Laurie came to us.”

### How were you changed by the process?

**Melissa:** “I always believed things happen for a reason, but now I trust that belief even more.”

**Therese:** “I learned how hard it is to find a pastor.”

**Gail:** “I was amazed by the unity of the group.”

**Dolores:** “I pray more honestly now. The feeling just comes over me that I know which path to take.”

**Jamie:** “I was strengthened by the support I discovered in my fellow committee members.”

**Don:** “By facing the same obstacles and dead ends, our discernment developed collectively as we overcame our individual biases.”

Thanks to Dolores Aue, Therese Brooks, Melissa Cooper, Gail LaFontaine, Jamie Siorek, and Don Zais for these reflections.

### **But there is *another* side of this story**

**Dr. Bob Davis,** Laurie’s husband, was an integral part of the process. He tells his story:

“When I finished my Ph.D. in 1992, jobs in 19th-century American literature were as rare as dragons’ teeth. I eventually found a tenure-track teaching job at Wittenberg University, in Ohio. Laurie (being Laurie) said that she’d put her own

# Presbytery Update

The Presbytery meeting on October 20, 2019 featured a Mission Celebration in which each church in the Presbytery was invited to create a presentation of all the mission activities that church engages in. These are the mission activities of FPC — Marshfield.



career on hold for a while and follow me to wherever, but, she said, “I’d like you to do the same thing for me some day.”

Well, I forgot about that second part — until Laurie brought it up in 2017, just after she’d finished her doctorate at Columbia Seminary. So, we turned her job search into a date night: drinking wine at a tiny bar in Yellow Springs, OH, and scanning the job list for Presbyterian pastors.

Of course, I thought we were just two sixty-somethings spinning tales on a Friday night, running out the clock in Ohio. Wrong again.

About ten minutes into the first Skype interview with the Marshfield PNC, I heard an audible *click* — the sound of Laurie connecting deeply and immediately with the members of that PNC. What started as a job search had become a spiritual communion, a deep meeting of hearts and minds with other Christians, first in the Skype conversations and then face-to-face in Wisconsin.

And I felt it, too, in the laughter we all enjoyed during that interview weekend, first, in Carolyn Opitz’s kitchen (where I had my first taste of cheese curds) and later at the Blue Heron where Don helped me order the fish fry and a beer. Don has been helping me get my ‘Wisconsin’ on ever since. “

## First Presbyterian—Marshfield Mission Programs

**Green Team Committee** — A team of volunteers that keep the congregation informed about eco-justice concerns. The Green Team exercises passion and creativity to inspire the church in such ways that care for creation becomes a part of our worship. This committee is responsible for FPC Marshfield’s Earth Care Congregation certification for seven years running.

**Soup or Socks (S.O.S)** — A food pantry housed in our church which we further support with our time and money. S.O.S. sends needy families home with enough food to feed a family of four for a month. In addition, S.O.S. collects clothing donations to provide good clothing to families who would otherwise have to wear worn out clothing which limits opportunities for parents who work and kids who attend school.

**Immigration Action Team** — A team to explore how we can serve the concerns of the undocumented population in our area and take action when we find ways to offer help. We have offered a series of “Know Your Rights” workshops to immigrants free of charge. An immigration lawyer is provided to help them prepare for the worst should ICE come knocking.

**Urban Immersion Service Retreats (UISR)** — We have sponsored three youth and adult trips to UISR center in Minneapolis, MN, to experience poverty up close in direct service as well as fun teaching opportunities. The goal is to inspire our participants to learn about poverty and give them some tools to bring help and comfort to our neighbors who struggle to make ends meet.

**Parish Nurse Loan Closet** — One of our newest ministries. Over time, we have accumulated gently used medical support equipment such as walkers, wheelchairs, commodes, and crutches. God has led us into a position where we can offer this equipment to our neighbors who struggle with access to essential ambulatory equipment. Local medical supply businesses now only sell new equipment, so not only do we provide equipment for free, we keep discarded equipment out of the landfill.

**Nutrition On Weekends** — N.O.W was started by local public school teachers who noticed that students dependent upon free or reduced-price school lunches were going hungry on the weekends. We help load backpacks with enough easy-to-prepare food to feed these kids until they return to school. Last summer, the program was expanded to feed kids during the summer break and to ease the added demand that the loss of school lunches placed on the food pantry.

**Keep Kids Warm** — We support this program that distributes hats, gloves, and warm winter coats to kids who would otherwise face our Wisconsin winter weather without adequate protection from the cold.

**PDC Orenda Center Domestic Abuse Shelter** — PDC a local program founded to protect families from domestic abuse, provide case management, advocacy, and prevention education, opened the Orenda Center to provide housing to families in crisis while long-term options are explored. We joined a long list of individuals and institutions by fully sponsoring one of the rooms. In addition, our youth group has volunteered to wash windows and weed the grounds.

### Did You Know?



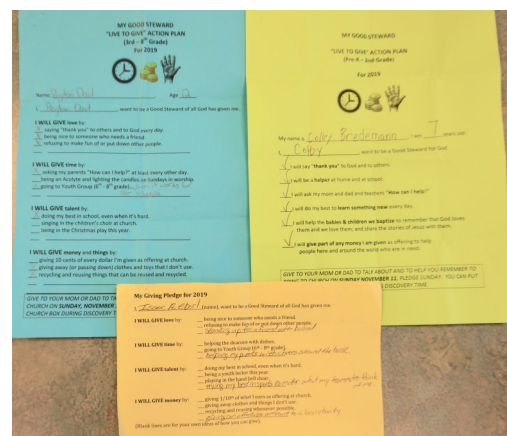
We now begin every service with our Acolyte Ministry. Here are Jonathon Beighley and Zachary Kayhart carrying the Light of Christ into our midst.



These two pictures tell the story better than words can. This year, the “Naked Turkey” campaign supports SOS, NOW, and PDC.



Rehearsal for the Children’s Christmas Play “The Transformation of the Gifts” has been going on since before Thanksgiving, but rehearsal ends Sunday morning, Dec. 23rd, when the show must go on!



The My Good Steward “Live to Give” campaign gave the children and youth a chance to offer their time, talent, love and money to help at home, at school and at church. Twenty-four of our young people responded.