



# First Press Magazine

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## From Pastor Laurie

Just this week, we received a hand-penned note from Ruth Luber who is now 91 years old. I want to share part of it here for many reasons. One of which, is how vital her dear husband Roy was to our music ministry at FPC for many years. We even saw a video of him playing the piano at the old church, in one of our recorded services during the pandemic shutdown. You will see inside this issue the good news that our piano refurbish campaign far exceeded its goal! Thanks be to God for your overflowing generosity.



*Warmest Greetings from Oregon! It's been wonderful to hear from such faithful friends over the last three and a half years. Don't even think that because I'm not in a position to respond to your gifts of prayers, cards, friends and pure enjoyment, they are unappreciated. There are a life-line. I give thanks to the Lord—the Holy Spirit is alive and well in this congregation. I say this not only for the remembering of me, but also for the work FPC is doing in his name. It's remarkable!... My prayers this Christmas are for this poor world, its leaders including ours, the many people who live under terrible conditions, and particularly you good people at FPC. May we celebrate the birth of the Christ child with joy and humility. Merry Christmas! In Christian love and gratitude, Ruth Luber.*

(The full note will be available in the Narthex for you to read.)

**WE ARE HAVING ONE CANDLELIGHT CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE OF LESSONS & CAROLS WITH HOLY COMMUNION AT 7:00 P.M. COME EARLY! Prelude Concert begins at 6:45 P.M.** including children's choir ringing handbells. Glowsticks provided for young children, candles for the adults.

Like our Sunday morning Services, our worship Livestream will be available directly on our Facebook page and YouTube channel.



# First



# Press

The Magazine of First Presbyterian Church — Marshfield

Winter 2021



# Beginnings



Walker Jacob Neumann, son of Christian and Courtney Neumann, grandson of Rob and Jill Schulz, and great-grandson of Kitty Scidmore, was baptized on December 5, 2021.



## Prairie Update:

Mark Borchardt, and Barb and Terry Gillespie, worked all day Saturday, October 10, planting the bulk of the space. On the following Sunday morning, the Sunday School classes and some adult prairie pals joined in to complete the job.

We purchased \$465 worth of Grand Diversity Prairie Seed Mix from Prairie Moon Nursery in MN. Some of the seeds were put into thank you envelopes for each of the prairie pals who helped us on planting day. Perlite was carefully mixed with the seed so those distributing the seed could see where it had landed. Straw mats from Bauer's Country Store were laid down to prevent seed erosion in rain and wind. Proceeds from the Rummage Sale in 2021 covered our expenses, and then some.

Installing a prairie is a LONG process, and patience will be required. Hopefully this spring, we'll see the emergence of some of our natives but also of weeds and much maintenance will be needed. By 2024, the prairie will be in full bloom and pollinators will be in their glory. All good things take time and most especially a prairie. Thanks for your help making the prairie a reality!



Say HELLO to Pam Gotto, our new Executive Assistant,

Pam joined FPC as Executive Assistant in October of 2021. She grew up in Neillsville and graduated from Chippewa Valley Technical College in 1986. She worked at Marshfield Clinic for over 30 years before retiring in 2018. She and her husband, Dan, have 4 children: Cami who lives in Milwaukee, Alex and Nick who both live in Stevens Point, and Emily who lives in Marshfield. Pam enjoys walking, reading and watching the Brewers.



# Legacy Gift of Love and Hope



We cherish the legacy of every one who has worshiped in this space, but sometimes the loving remembrance and the financial means come together in the form of a legacy gift. **Mary Ousley** was called home to be with her husband **Joe** on March 8th of this year. A service of remembrance was conducted at FPC on

Friday, August 13th.

In gratitude for the place this church held in Mary's life, her children bestowed a legacy gift which will be used in accord with the wishes expressed in this letter from Mary's daughter, **Susan Ousley**:

*Dear Church Family,*

*Describing the Ousley family's gratitude for your gift of presence in our lives, and especially the life of our Mother, is truly daunting. She loved this community fiercely and she cherished the faithful who continued to quietly find new ways to offer love and hope to those who found it sorely lacking. I know she would wish you to use this gift for those very purposes. My brothers and sisters and I thank you for all that you did to fill her service and luncheon with happy recollections.*

*With much Thanks, Susan Ousley*



## Faith Stories Karna Sandok

Karna had two sets of Lutheran grandparents. One of those grandmas used to make a popcorn Jesus cake which Karna was never sure she was supposed to take seriously. A third set of grandparents was Catholic. She even has Mennonite roots in her family's past. Woven into this tapestry of religious influences was a thick thread of acceptance and commitment to caring for people. Family always trumped faith.

When she married her husband, Evan, who was raised Jewish, their union was celebrated by both families without reservation. It was years into their marriage before anybody questioned why they should gather on Dec. 24th. The kids are out of school. Work is closed. Why not gather together for a good meal and a gift exchange?

Karna has noticed that churches usually put up the most resistance. The pastor was not so excited about her marrying outside of her faith. The kids

could not be baptized because they were planning a move to another city. A pastor withheld communion from the kids, substituting a sign of the cross on their heads for the cup and the bread. Her oldest, Connor, reached up and surprised the pastor by returning the gesture. Her youngest, Gracia, just got mad.

So when FPC offered to host the Jewish service of remembrance for Dan Jacobsen whose office was adjacent to her husband Evan's, Karna was impressed by such a gracious and expansive gesture. Support of Soup or Socks, the care of the earth, the embrace of LGBTIA+ people, and the Interfaith Thanksgiving service of 2019 continue to reinforce her decision to join this church.

As a Session member during the pandemic, Karna has cherished the respectful discernment of that body. "If you hold to what is right in your heart, in the company of others doing the same, it works out." She appreciates this church for encouraging people to be true to themselves and to God.

# Green Team — Faith in Action



## Green Team Recycling Updates

The rules for recycling change regularly, so please make note of this current information.

### Light bulbs

- Incandescent bulbs may not be recycled. They should be wrapped in paper and gently placed in the garbage to prevent breakage.
- CFL's and LED's may be recycled for free. Those left in our Recycling Kiosk will be taken to Lowes or Home Depot. If members of the congregation are heading to either of those stores, the Green Team would be most appreciative if you'd take a bag from the kiosk with you.
- Fluorescent bulbs may be taken to Hillers for a fee or left in the kiosk if you kindly feed the pig. \$1.42 for bulbs < 4 feet in length and \$1.65 for > 4 feet in length.

### Batteries

- Rechargeable batteries are accepted at Home

Depot and Lowes for free. Again, if church family members are making a trip to one of these home improvement stores, the Green Team would be grateful to any volunteer who would pick up batteries from our kiosk and save us a trip.

- Alkaline batteries are no longer recyclable and should be disposed of in the garbage. Terminals should be taped if you are concerned about possible fire hazards.

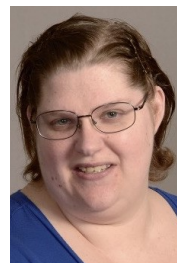
### Holiday Lights

- Strings of lights which no longer work may be taken to ODC directly or left in the recycling kiosk.

### Needed for the FPC Community Gardens Compost System

- Shredded paper (no plastic or glossy)
- Coffee grounds with filters

Thank you for helping us to protect God's Creation in these simple ways.



## Close-up Danielle Redding

Danielle was born in Antioch, IL, but her dad moved the family to Abbotsford for a job. Religion had no place in her family until high school when a teacher invited Danielle and her sister to a youth group. They enjoyed the fellowship of canoe trips, capture-the-flag, ultimate frisbee, ice skating, and Bible study.

It was "Nightmare," though, a huge, theatrical haunted house involving hundreds of young people from as far away as Minneapolis that really excited her. As a "hellion" foaming at the mouth (thanks to alka-seltzer and Mountain Dew), or "The Gatekeeper of Hell," she was able to become her polar opposite every October weekend. Her tortured scream was one of the best! The work was serious, but fun, and many young people came to a relationship with Christ in the process.

After a difficult weekend, the pastor of the church had the hellions and gatekeepers clear the chairs

from the worship space. They spread out on the floor and had a "living room" worship with music, small group prayer, and Bible study. During that hour and a half, Danielle came to feel the presence of Christ. Her faith became a relationship with Christ, rather than with the "church." Being Christ-like required you to know Christ to become like him. She felt Christ had forgiven her so that she could just be herself . . . with Jesus.

In the following years, other churches imposed rules and made judgments that left her feeling that no church could be home again. Beth Walsh, whom Danielle had met through Beth's daughter-in-law at "Nightmare," invited her to FPC, saying all churches are not the same. It took a long time to build trust, but she once again has a church home. Health issues have taught her that sometimes you have to wait for the clarity of an answer. It is hard to put others first, but it draws her to Christ. She now really cares for each one here at FPC.

# Afghan Refugee Assistance

Our Immigration Action Team (IAT) has historically focused on issues around immigration at the southern US border. It's mission expanded however when Fort McCoy was designated as a destination for Afghan Refugees. IAT quickly responded by organizing a cash and clothing collection which ran through the end of November. The cash donations totaled \$2100, all of which went to Team Rubicon, one of the non-profit organizations assisting with the management of donated goods. Clothing donations totaled over 900 items with an estimated cash value of \$5500.



A stroke of luck brought help in the form of



Tim Van Eyck and Gisele Berninghaus and a truckload of donated clothing items destined for Fort McCoy.

Tim Van Eyck, and his wife, Gisele Berninghaus, the recently retired pastor of Faith Lutheran in Marshfield and a dear friend of our congregation. Tim, a national guard member stationed at Fort McCoy, had just delivered excess items from Fort McCoy to Soup or Socks and happened to see the full storage tubs crowding the narthex. He offered to take them to Fort McCoy, and he has been a valuable connection and resource since then.

The population at Fort McCoy has shrunk to around 7000, nearly half of its peak, marking a shift to Phase Two, the transition of Afghan families off

the base and into Wisconsin communities. IAT is working with Marshfield's Interfaith Network of Care to determine whether our community can sponsor some of these people here in Marshfield. Some of the questions are:

- What are their needs?
- What are our resources?
- Do we have Afghan language speakers here?
- Can we support enough people to sustain their own community within ours?

Information is still being collected. The hope is that an actionable decision will happen some time in January.

In the meantime, the people at Fort McCoy have their physical needs met. They struggle with the absence of meaningful activity, but they are safe and they are hopeful. Recently, a warehouse of sewing machines was found, and aid workers are trying to get them to the women. Watch the weekly Eblast for ways you might join in choosing welcome to these, our neighbors in need.

### More IAT Action:



The Immigration Action Team was recently contacted by UW Extension to see if our church would be willing to host a **Juntos** program here in Marshfield. **Juntos**, a program developed by the University of North Carolina, is designed to help families of school-aged children navigate the educational system in order to make the most of what it has to offer. All expenses are covered by UW Extension, though IAT has offered to help get the word out to those who might benefit.

Up to now, all of IAT programs have been self-generated. This is the first program that has come to us, and they found us through the advertising for the Know Your Rights workshops of several years ago. Our first Juntos program begins January 13, for middle school students and their families. Thanks to God for continuing to bless that important work!

# 2021 Piano Refurbishment Campaign

During regular tuning and servicing, we discovered that our Steinway piano, one of the finest instruments of its kind in this area, was in need of repairs to extend its life and high quality well into the future. New Steinway pianos carry a very high price tag, so it made sense to invest in the future of our existing piano rather than try to shop for a new one. The bill for the repairs was not small, either, coming in at around 18,000 dollars.

The **Zais** family graciously decided to put up half of this amount as a matching gift to honor **Lyn Zais'** love, commitment, and unflinching support of our various music programs from choir to handbells, but her love of the children's music program topped them all. She coordinated all the accompaniment, assembling the "orchestra," faithfully attending every rehearsal, even meeting with the guitarist for as long as needed to render his arch-nemesis, sheet music, into simple guitar chords.

The matching gift bore more fruit than anyone could have hoped for. The total, including the matching funds, came to well over \$29,000, covering the cost of repairs without the Zais family's faithful and loving gift. The extra funds will go for anything music and worship related, such as a new cover for the Steinway piano, new choir robes, and an updated and upgraded sound system. There is talk of replacing the piano bench or updating the humidifier, but the choir and handbells may benefit, as well.

We will endure without our cherished Steinway piano for a bit longer, but when it returns, let us



Lyn Zais, posing for a photo with the "orchestra" following a rave performance of "100% Chance of Rain"

remember, not just the contributions that made the refurbishment possible, but the contributions of time and talent like Lyn's that have made our musical worship so special!

tabulated and our Deacons noticed that lots of people had signed up to be bakers. After a few phone calls, they had all the cookies they required to fill 101 bags. Ninety-eight people attended and everyone enjoyed the cookie treats thanks to the leadership of Deacon chair, Sue Ferguson, and the good work of all the Deacons and bakers who made this event possible.

## You're a Good Cookie!

In past years, the fall Stewardship campaign was always celebrated with a pancake breakfast after Sunday worship. Alas, the pandemic made that impossible, but the Deacons came up with a sweet alternative!

The Time and Talents survey was just being



# PUMPKIN PARTY

This year's Pumpkin Party, on October 20th, went intergenerational! There was food and fun, pumpkin carving and games, including the infamous pumpkin guts throwing. Check out the fun in these photos and plan to join us next year!



## Did You Know?

CROP Walk 2021 happened on September 26th. More than 20 people (and two dogs) walked for donations to support Church World Service efforts to end hunger. Donations totaled \$3665.00! Way to walk!



So far, we have hosted two COVID-19 vaccine clinics put on by the Wood County Health Department. Over 30 people who may have struggled with the existing medical system were able to simply walk in and get vaxxed!