



First Press Magazine

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From Pastor Laurie

“What’s up with all those pitchers on the Communion Table?” This is a question you may have asked yourself when you attended our Ash Wednesday service or on a Sunday morning in Lent. The pitchers are there to help us visualize our Lenten theme: “Full to the Brim: An Expansive Lent.” This may sound different to you, but we need a different kind of Lent in 2022. It is an invitation into a full life where we learn to be more authentically who we are, to counter scarcity and injustice at every turn, and to pour out even more grace wherever it is needed. When we allow ourselves to be filled to the brim with God’s lavish love, that love spills over. As we finally appear to be emerging from the COVID pandemic, we are now faced with the horrors of war in Ukraine. In these trying times, we are need to increase our capacity to receive and give grace. Let this issue fill you to the brim with stories of God’s love pouring into and through our FPC family: from Jamie Krohn, just born on Christmas day, to Bonnie Babler, who lived 102 years before she joined the church triumphant.



Forty of you have poured out your hearts with your original contributions to our FPC “Full to the Brim” Lenten Daily Meditation booklet. We thank you for this bountiful sharing which continues through to Easter. Pick up a copy in the Narthex, read the pdf version on your device, or we can mail it to you upon request.

¹ A Sanctified Art | sanctifiedart.org created this theme.



Holy Week Schedule

- 4/10 Palm/Passion Sunday**
9:30 AM with Palm Procession, Handbell Choir
- 4/14 Maundy Thursday**
7:00 PM with Holy Communion & stripping of the chancel
- 4/15 Good Friday**
12 Noon with Handbells, and Mark Nelson, Soloist
- 4/17 EASTER SUNDAY**
9:30 A.M. with Procession of Christ candle from the courtyard, Brass Quartet, Choir, Communion, Children’s Bells will Ring & “Muffin’ but Love” Reception

First



Press

The Magazine of First Presbyterian Church — Marshfield

Spring 2022



“Christmas Magic And Mystery”

Beginnings

Lots of *Beginnings* this quarter!
Don't miss "*More Beginnings*" on page 4.



Quilla Sora Lang-Sutterer, daughter of **David and Siena Sutterer**, was baptized on Dec. 24, 2021.



Titan Mark Kamszik, son of **Ryan Kamszik and Tessa Lang-Kamszik**, was baptized on Dec. 24, 2021.



Damian Johnathan Lenten, son of **John and Sarah Lenten**, was baptized on Feb. 20, 2022.



James Theodore Krohn, son of **Kelsey and Ted Krohn**, was born on Christmas Day, Dec 25, 2021.



Jade Marie Luchterhand, daughter of **Jeremy and Nicole Luchterhand**, was baptized on Feb. 6, 2022.

An End and the beginning of retirement for our Custodian, Skip Beers

After seven years of faithful service as our FPC Custodian, Skip has decided he is ready to retire. His last day on the job will be **March 30**. Thank you, Skip, for the good work and the always ready smile. We will miss you. We hope, as you begin your retirement, that it is restful and rewarding. And we are quite sure it will involve a lot of fishing with three generations of your offspring.

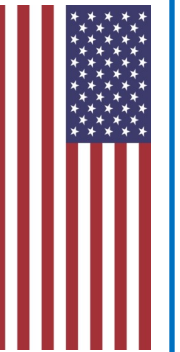
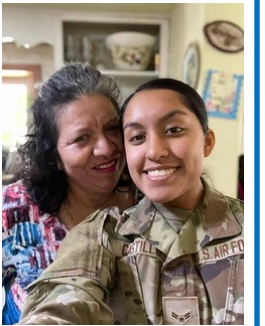
Everybody's Birthday!



For many years, we have celebrated **Everybody's Birthday** with a delicious potluck meal, beautifully decorated tables, and cake and ice cream courtesy of the hard work and dedication of **our Deacons**. For the third and, hopefully, final year, the pandemic made this impossible. Fortunately for us, the ingenuity and playfulness of our Deacons knows no bounds. On Sunday February 20, each church member was greeted with a colorful gift bag filled with goodies. **Thank you Deacons** for allowing us to celebrate each one of us in such a special way!

We share in the pride

of **Jorge and Carmen Ramirez**, as their niece and nephew, **Libny and Efer Castillo**, enter into service in the U.S. Armed Services. **Libny**, after a long effort following her dreams, is serving in the U.S. Air Force, and **Efer** is in Japan with the US Navy. Carmen says, "The whole family is very proud of Libny and Efer, because they are serving this Country with pride. And seeing that everything we have suffered and gone through in this Country has been worth it." *May God protect these our children in harm's way, and bless their service to the good of all.*



Faith Stories Dan Burk



Faith has been important to Dan's family since well before he was born. His family moved from MN to TX when he was very young. Texas didn't do kindergarten, but there was a Lutheran church that did, so his parents enrolled him. All were required to memorize John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son...", and then recite it during Sunday worship. The words in his young mind began to make sense when his parents pointed to the baby Jesus in their nativity scene, planting the seed question, who is Jesus, and what must I do to live a life worthy of him?

Dan learned about God's grace in confirmation. "God will forgive us, if we ask, and really mean it." The a-ha moment struck, "If Christ will forgive me for what I've done, I must work out a way so that I will not hold wrongs against others." Around this time, when Dan's church in Merrill, WI, was seeking a new pastor, Dan's family hosted a candidate a mere

ten years older than he, and Dan was asked to share his bedroom. They talked late into the night. It was the beginning of a mentorship that lasted until Ted's early passing 15 years ago.

His parents taught him to "walk the talk," by packing boxes of food during holidays and distributing them to elderly people who lived alone. Giving and forgiving has since become one-in-the-same effort as Dan tries to forgive incrementally and meet needs as he is able so that those hurts and needs do not grow beyond his ability to address them. Keeping the slate as clean as he can helps him to discern God's path when multiple options and their consequences confront him.

But the "talk" matters, too. God's grace makes it all possible. Faith is an umbrella, a warm blanket that grants so much comfort when things are beyond Dan's control that he has to share it with others. Dan gives aid to those in need, but it is this faith he hopes they receive.

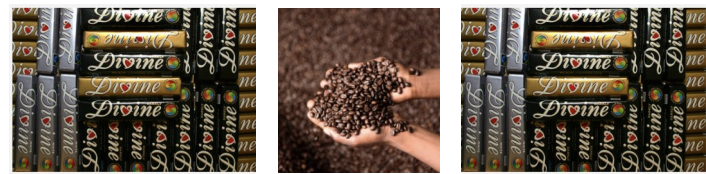
Green Team Faith in Action



Since the deacons have decided to let go of ordering fair trade products from Equal Exchange, the Green Team will take on the project. Soon, we will have a list of available products and prices. You can order from the list. They come with more than one in a box, we will have the remainder for sale in the kiosk in the narthex. If you wish to explore what is available, you can check on the website:

www.shopequalexchange.coop.

In addition to coffee and chocolate bars, there is also tea, olive oil, nuts, cocoa, and other products. We hope you will return to using fair trade products. Their price has gone up a little, but we will not be selling the products for profit. For more information, contact Janet Wolfe, revjanet@tzn.com.



Close-up

Gil attended parochial school and church at St. Henry's Catholic Church in Watertown, WI. As an altar boy who had successfully learned the Latin mass, the Second Ecumenical Council hit him hard. All the work learning Latin was lost in the translation to common English. The changes got him thinking about how exclusive the church was. Why would friends attending other churches be deserving of hell? It all seemed hypocritical. By eighth grade, the church had lost all importance for him. He realized it was up to him to believe what he believed.

He met his wife, Kathy, while attending school in Madison. They married at the Presbyterian church in La Crosse, WI. Gil eventually made Kathy's Presbyterian faith his own and it became the basis of their new family's church life. Upon retiring, he and Kathy decided to choose their next hometown by "following kids." Their daughter Melissa and her husband Travis granted their "permission" to move here,

The Offertory

"Ya-hoo!"



Janet Singer has been blessing our offertory time with a "ya-hoo!" for many years. Here is why:

The back story is that a pastor of a church was having a difficult time getting the congregation to give during offertory. After her retirement she was invited back to the church for a special event.

During that offertory the congregation cheered and clapped. She was astonished and surprised she asked what was happening? And was told that the congregation now embraced the idea that giving should bring joy and should be celebrated. That is why I yahoo during offertory each Sunday that I am in attendance, it is a joy to be celebrated.

Gil Nimm

and FPC was a natural fit because of its inclusiveness.

Work and life have led to a lot of time for introspection. The more give and take between Gil and himself, the healthier he feels. Big questions like "Is there a God?" stay open, but church can provide a kind of awakening, a sense of connection to something that makes Gil feel more whole. The questions are open, but "There are very sound rules for living in a way that you can add the world around you." Those rules involve kindness, understanding, and being as helpful as possible.

Gil once held the responsibility for the well-being of 120 fellow employees at a major manufacturing plant. In between muskie fishing and making things work, he now maintains one of the apartment complexes in town. He celebrates the ability to answer service calls because it connects people in need to something that is going to make their life better. Though it may look like regular building maintenance, Gil is maintaining something much bigger.

Hearts, Hands, Wallets, and the Good Samaritan

Outreach is a prominent part of FPC, so in this issue we catch up with Outreach Committee chair, Mark T. Nelson to ask a few questions.



What is Outreach at FPC, and why is it so important?

FPC Outreach is how we put faith into action beyond the four walls of our building. It is heeding the call of Christ to love our neighbor.

Who is our neighbor?

Jesus was clear in the parable of the Good Samaritan. Of three people encountering the victim in the road, the true neighbor was "The one who had mercy on him." Martin Luther King once said the real difference between the Samaritan and the Priest or



Levite is the question each must have asked. The Priest and Levite likely asked, "If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?" The Samaritan likely articulated a very different question — "If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?" The Samaritan was the only one who overcame fear of harm to himself and simply did the right thing. That's an interesting concept to me. Despite the risk, he opened his heart, hands and wallet to do the right thing.

How have ideas about outreach changed over the years?

When I was growing up in the 1950's, many congregations had mission committees. They seemed to want to address poverty, hunger and disease in far-away places, but rarely where they lived. There was talk of "helping children in Africa", "addressing poverty in Appalachia" or "solving inner-city problems". We just didn't admit problems in our own town or our own family. But now, I think we must overcome our fear and admit we're surrounded by problems — even ones of our own making. We can help ... if we have the

courage to do so.

What does it mean when you say Outreach requires "hearts, hands and wallets"?

Let's face it. FPC is full of busy people. No one has unlimited time to volunteer or money to give. But, if Outreach Committee can help us understand the needs of neighbors — here and around the world — then open hearts, hands and wallets will follow. These are the tools to help us become the neighbor Christ intends us to be.

We've heard you have teams for special focus ministries.

Yes, this is an exciting part of FPC Outreach. Teams let members of the congregation jump into one specific area without getting bogged down with the entire set of Outreach Committee duties. Right now we have three teams:

Immigration Action Team works on immigration and refugee needs. They have a strong record of accomplishment with LatinX needs in Central Wisconsin and have aided Afghan refugees at Ft. McCoy.

Rainbow Team is newly formed, having recognized the importance of creating greater understanding and acceptance of LGBTQIA+ individuals, particularly those who feel the pain of being bullied and outcast.

ARM (Afghan Resettlement Marshfield) is a local interfaith collaboration, spearheaded by FPC, seeking to welcome recent refugees to live in Marshfield. It is thrilling to see Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterians, Mormons, Unitarians and Muslims working together!

What is Outreach Committee doing locally?

Locally, we address food and clothing needs, homelessness, child hunger, domestic abuse, and dementia respite care. Through Blessing Box, we help local people with urgent needs due to loss of job, domestic violence, health problems or similar life challenges.

How about national and world needs?

Yes, we do that through our regular budget and Special Offerings. Most of these efforts take place through programs of our national denomination, the

PCUSA. A few examples are:

- Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA)
- Advocacy and Social Justice
- Self-Development of People (SDOP)
- Presbyterian Peacemaking Program
- World Mission Partnerships.

Read more about these remarkable programs at presbyterianmission.org.

What's next for Outreach?

As a Matthew 25 church, we continually ask, "What are we called to do?" Input from FPC members is our source of inspiration. We want to learn what people are passionate about. One goal for 2022 is to find church members passionate about dismantling structural racism and eradicating systemic poverty and build teams in those areas.

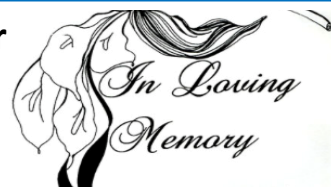


Any last thoughts?

Christ has no hands on Earth but ours. Please let us know what you'd like to accomplish for him.

A Service of Witness to the Resurrection for Bonnie M. Babler

will be held on **Friday, April 29th at 11:00 am** at First Presbyterian Church, with visitation one hour prior, and a funeral luncheon following in the Fellowship Hall.



More Beginnings!

Please give a big FPC Welcome to our newest members!



Sara Huettl was born in Bay View and moved to Marshfield when she was young. She is a nurse in the Recovery Room at the hospital. Sara's passions include taking care of the environment, meeting new people, and being good to others. She and husband, Chris, have three adult children: Mattie, Isaac, and Sam. She would like to learn more about the Green Team, SOS, and filling in for the nursery.



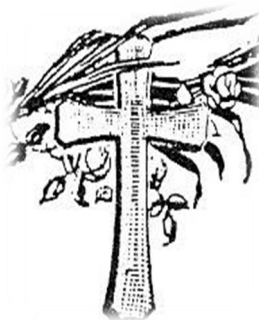
Roxie Wetterau was born in Unity, WI, and now lives in Spencer. She has worked in Marshfield since 1989 in radio, newspaper, and mortgage industries. Roxie is the Foundation Director of UWSP-Marshfield and a part-time instructor at MSTC in Psychology & Communications. She is a passionate LGBTQ+ ally. Roxie is married to Paul, and has a young adult son Arthur "AJ".



Judy Bentley was born and raised in Nekoosa. She works at the Marshfield Clinic as a Nurse Practitioner. Judy is interested in teaching Sunday School, assisting with the Rummage Sale, and helping with youth trips. She would like to help Building & Grounds, the Worship Committee, and the Deacons with serving food at funeral lunches.

Did you Know?

The **Palm Sunday Chorus** was founded in 1950 with a generous endowment by **Dr. G. Stanley Custer**. The endowment has covered the expense of the annual Palm Sunday concert for nearly seventy years. Sadly, owing to various circumstances, that long run has come to an end. The endowment totaling \$45,224.00 was directed by Dr. Custer to be distributed to FPC at a 4% rate of disbursement per year (approximately **\$1800**) in the event the Chorus would meet such a fate. We are grateful for this unexpected this windfall. May it continue to be as fruitful in gathering us all together as it has been in the past.



"Christmas Magic and Mystery"

Our kids always do a terrific job with their drama productions, but this year's Christmas play, **Christmas Magic and Mystery**, was very special. The play was written in 2000 by **Mo Nichols**, the now adult child of Pastor



Laurie's sister, Lynn Brubaker, when Mo was 12 years old! Pastor Laurie found it in her play file, a little concerned that suggesting the work of a family member would smell of partiality. Our Co-Director of the Christmas play, Darlene Berry, however, was immediately "impressed by this clever young author's ability to convey a beautiful Christian message using a Christmas Eve Dickensian trip."

Mo, who identifies as gender non-binary, grew up with their sister, Daphne, on the rugged coast of



Daphne and Mo

rural Maine not far from Canada. Mo and Daphne grew up without a television so they shared a rich creative inner world between them. A particularly special Christmas tree, one year, granted the power, if they lay underneath and looked up through the branches, to close their eyes and open them onto

different times and places, very much like a stage actor would bow their head and suddenly become the role they were about to play.

The footlights called Mo very early. Their first role came in a community production of the musical, **Annie**, at the ripe old age of six. Many other parts were to follow throughout high school, college, and young adulthood. By the time **Christmas Magic and Mystery** was written, Mo had developed some serious theatrical "chops" having performed in several Shakespeare productions including **The Tempest**, and **Macbeth**.



Modeling most of the dress up box

Mo was writing constantly back then, so when asked to write a Christmas play, the words flowed.

Using Luke 2:19, "But Mary treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart," as inspiration, Mo wondered, what if you could go back in time and somehow record the inner life of Mary, details that never would make it into any canon? The magic and mystery, for Mo, was not in the so-called "magic of Christmas," but in those secret truths that we all have, that we cannot fully perceive or share, but that connect us as humans, nevertheless.



Now an adult striving to living in an adult world, Mo misses the creative freedom of childhood to ponder "all these things," to pour every ounce of their self into a creative endeavor without a care for being "good enough," or for financial realities, or even for the limitations of time and energy. The magic and mystery of life is so often lost in the shadow of agendas that society imposes upon us all.

Mo is currently pursuing a degree in American Sign Language interpretation at the University of Southern Maine. They say, "Interpreting between ASL and English allows for so much personal perspective.

The thoughts and feelings you have absolutely influence the interpretation." A facial expression while signing could require hundreds of words to describe and still not carry its full meaning. Perhaps Mo has once again found a language that can bring hearts together. If so, the gap between the hearing and the deaf isn't a gap, but a channel. Those who have hearts, let them listen.



Mo as Brad in Rocky Horror Picture Show

Christmas Magic and Mystery has been staged only two times. The first took place in 2000 in a tiny Episcopal church in Machias, ME. Mo played the role of Jesus' mother, Mary. The second time was in our church last December. It may make its international debut at Daphne's church in Switzerland next Christmas season. Be there, or be square!