



First Press Magazine

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From Pastor Laurie

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.

Worship the Lord with gladness; come into his presence with singing. --Psalm 100:1-2



Ten newly ordained or returning Elders and Deacons, six newly confirmed teens, two new video cameras, one new birth, and one step toward a new native prairie: What does this sum add up to? Newness all around and within. New life, a new chapter, and fresh joy are in the air this summer of 2021. Best of all, we are fully reopened! On May 25, the session determined that Sunday, May 30, was the Sunday we had all been waiting for. At last, it was safe to no longer restrict the number of worshippers in our sanctuary, or to be socially distanced in the pews. And masks would be required only of unvaccinated people. Thanks be to God for the creation and distribution of the new and extremely effective vaccinations against the COVID-19 virus and its variants.

Of all the things we missed about church during the pandemic, I have a hunch that maybe adding back congregational singing was the most immediate joy for many. For me, as your pastor, to hear your voices lifted in song was heavenly; and to see your faces, gathered together again after all these months, is a joy beyond description. So familiar and new, all at the same time. Take your time with this issue: listen to our six confirmands share where they are on their faith journeys, as well as two among our newest class of Deacons and Elders. Looking ahead to these summer months: I look forward to seeing you in person as God reveals to us the new thing and things we can grow to become. As the prophet Isaiah has written, "I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? (Isaiah 43:19a).

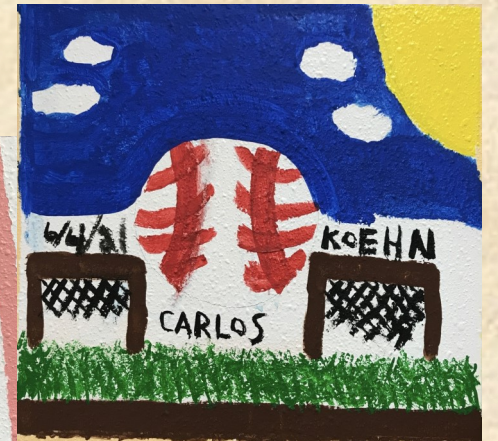
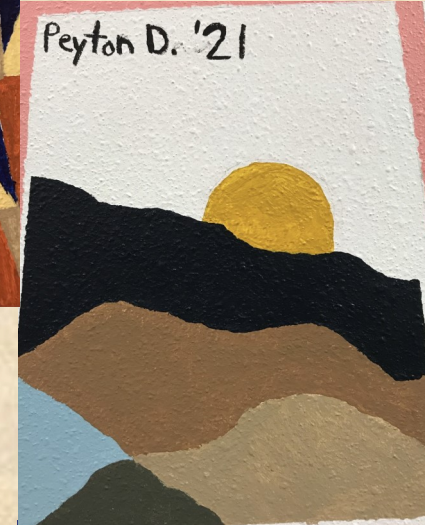
First



Press

The Magazine of First Presbyterian Church — Marshfield

Summer 2021



Confirmation class of 2021

Beginnings

John and Sarah Lenten are celebrating the birth of their son, **Damian Johnathan Lenten**, born on April 14th, 2021. Big brothers: Samuel and Nathan.

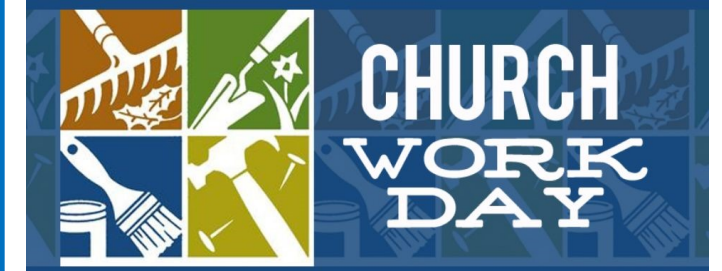


PENTECOST
SPECIAL OFFERINGS
CHILDREN AT RISK • YOUTH • YOUNG ADULTS

The Outreach Committee voted unanimously to designate 40% of the Pentecost Offering to support our youth attending the 2022 PCUSA Triennium, July 24-27, so that all who wish to attend will be able to do so.



FPC's entry in Marshfield Area United Way's United We Can 2021 sculpture contest, titled, "CANon in D"



On April 24th, Building and Grounds held a Spring work party to spruce up the outdoor public areas. Lots of hands of all ages showed up to do the work, and the results are beautiful!



We welcomed Easter 2021 with an outdoor sunrise service. **Elma Luchterhand** and **Kristine Johaneck** provided music. The service was broadcast to cars in the parking lot. Our first live physical gathering in over a year!



SAY HELLO TO OUR NEWEST CLASS OF SESSION ELDERS



Lisa Carroll
Newly ordained
Elder



Jorge Ramirez
Newly ordained
Elder



Nicole Johnson
Newly ordained
Elder



Patty Faber
Elder
(& Stated Session Clerk)



Chris and Sharon Schneider
Newly Ordained
Deacons



Jennifer Lurvey
Deacon



Tracy Olson
Deacon



Kathy Phillips
Deacon



Jimmy Thomas
Deacon



Danielle Redding
Deacon

Dates to Save:

Long-Awaited Upcoming Services of Witness to the Resurrection

Margaret Lorraine Fornefelt ~ January 6, 1919 – July 3, 2020

Friday, June 18, 11:00 AM, Hansen & Schilling Funeral Home

Mary Ann Dupee Ousley (Mrs. Joseph L.) ~ October 6, 1924 – March 8, 2021

Friday, August 13, 11:00 AM, First Presbyterian Church

Ruth Lynne Voss ~ June 17, 1943 – August 1, 2020

Saturday, September 18, 2:00 PM, First Presbyterian Church

At long last it is safe to gather for these memorial services.

Their families invite you to attend these services for their loved ones.

Faith Stories



Lisa was born in Appleton and raised in the Lutheran church by life-long Lutheran parents. Her journey of faith began with memorizing Luther's catechism in confirmation. One entry in particular that she can still recite as easily as breathing has taken root and continues to shape her faith. "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in my Lord Jesus Christ or come to him, but he has called me through the gospels and enlightened me with his gifts, and sanctified and kept me in the one true faith." Christ's gift to Lisa, in spite of not deserving it, is unconditional acceptance, forgiveness and tolerance. Throughout her career as a public school teacher, Lisa sought to be the conduit of Christ's acceptance she herself received to whoever needed it.

In the fall of 2018, Lisa and her husband Dave began visiting FPC. On January 13, 2019, life changed forever. Lisa was in a terrible auto accident that could have killed her if not for the seat belt she was

Lisa Carroll

wearing. Both legs were broken badly and two vertebrae were broken. She was confined to a hospital bed for three weeks and faced 11 surgeries to restore the use of her legs. In spite of terrific circumstances, God's assurance came with the message, "Life begins now." God's assurance coming through daily visits from Pastor Laurie and the support from FPC members affirmed their decision made before the accident to join FPC, and brought to life the expression, "I love the face of Christ I see in you."

Lisa now finds herself on a path of healing that will last the rest of her life. It is a path of realization that she survived the crash for a reason. Having retired early from teaching, she believes "Mrs. Carroll" died in that crash so that "Lisa" could go on to discover and then offer gifts she never knew she had. It is a path of discovery, service and gratitude. We look forward to her ordination as a ruling elder this summer.

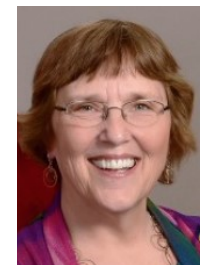
Carlos Koehn

God communicates with me by telling me what's right and what's wrong and how I should move towards living in the right way. He speaks to me through my conscience. An example would be making friends. Sometimes I learn what a person is like by the words they use and I'm guided to steer away from that kind of friendship. I'm pulled towards some friends by God's showing me how similar we are to each other.

The Ten Commandments teach me how to focus on the way I should live. Forgiveness is a gift from God which helps us to live like Christ lived. He died on the cross to give us a second chance and relive our life to try to make it better. He was kind to everyone and helped others and I try to follow his example and to do that too.

One of the reasons I'm joining First Presbyterian Church is because of the way we help people in our community. SOS provides food and clothing to people in our area who need it. We help one another with needs and supplies like Jesus did. FPC has a community garden that allows people to grow their own food and gives them food security. Some of the gardeners get their beds for free because they don't have enough money to pay the fee. Our church supports and participates in CROP Walk and I joined in. We raised money for people who are sick or have lost their homes because of a disaster. The church talks about helping people but at FPC we act and actually do it.

When I was younger the stories that I was told seemed real and I thought they actually happened. Once I got older, I realized that some of them might have been stories written to teach us a lesson. As I get still older, I will probably think differently about what I'm learning from the Bible. That's okay. I'm on a long journey not at the end of it. There is much to learn.



Close-up

Jennifer Lurvey

Jennifer moved to Marshfield with her young family in 1979 to continue her career in healthcare at St. Joseph's Hospital. Her husband, Ernie, whose expertise lay in construction, found ample opportunities here as well. When their two children reached a certain age, Jennifer and Ernie began to look for a church home to provide a Christian background for them. Since good friends were members of FPC and the church was well-known to have a robust youth program, they decided to visit. The open welcome they received sealed the deal.

The kids grew up and were confirmed in the church. Jennifer taught Sunday School for a few years but realized the task was better left to those gifted with greater patience working with kids. Once the kids moved away, Jennifer became active in service as a deacon for church members, and in various volunteer opportunities around Marshfield. She has volunteered in many and various positions around

Jake Schilling

I try to believe in God. My confirmation experience is more of a starting point than anything. Before confirmation, I didn't know much of what to think about religion. It was mostly just going to church on Sunday. But now, after confirmation I can think on what I actually do believe. I don't have all of my belief set in stone, but I will start to think about what I really do think of religion. Questions about God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit will help me forge my beliefs in God.

For me at least, God is more of a feeling that an actual person. Feelings like happiness, joy, and forgiveness all relate me to God. Feelings like these help me stay connected to God, and that I know God is always looking over me. I think that the reason God created me is to act upon these feelings that he makes me feel, like forgiveness and joy.

The church offers a place for me to explore what God means to me and better understand what I believe. Church helps me become closer and connect with God. Church helps me grow my relationship with God further than what it is now. It helps to feel happiness when I volunteer and give back.

I think that Jesus is a real-life component to God. He carries out God's will on our Earth, and is a real component in history. He represents what God wants on this earth. Jesus also has been resurrected. The meaning of this resurrection to me is that there is always forgiveness. Even if you feel alone or depressed, there always is a way to turn your life around.

I try to form my beliefs over what has happened in this class. I still do not know fully what to believe in, but this confirmation class has shown me a direction to go in. Overall God, Jesus, and even the church itself will help me through this journey on creating and forming my beliefs as a Presbyterian.

Marshfield and at the clinic, but serving the familiar faces of her church family is more personal and satisfying because of the sustained relationships with people she knows. The appreciation and gratitude she receives for her efforts makes the enterprise a tireless one.

She hopes FPC will continue to advocate for those in need with support for Soup or Socks and the clothes closet. Jennifer is grateful for the pastor's participation in other community committees to keep in touch with other local needs as well. She also appreciates how PCUSA assists in many places around the world that lack necessary resources.

Jennifer enjoys learning from Pastor Laurie's sermons. Learning how the church has changed over its history shows the need to adapt scriptures to current times to make them relevant to today. It all comes down to love, says Jennifer, loving yourself and your neighbor in daily living. "The grass roots of love continue to change me," she says.

Confirmation class of 2021

The confirmation class of 2020-2021 faced challenges unimaginable before the pandemic. Physically gathering was impossible, so all classes were held on Zoom. In fact, the class was never in the same physical space until Confirmation Sunday on April 18th. It is a testament to CE Coordinator Carmen Lawler's imagination and commitment, Pastor Laurie's vision, and the kids' own capacity to show up on a medium that was already exhausted by the rigors of online schooling that this class even happened. We are featuring the exquisite faith statements of our confirmands as proof positive of the success of all involved, and as our expressed gratitude for their hard work.



Our confirmands (from left to right): Henry Johnson, Keller Bredemann, Samantha Halle, Peyton Daul, Carlos Koehn, and Jake Schilling

Henry Johnson

The reason that I would like to be a Christian is because it teaches me to be a better person and become part of the church. Jesus teaches us to be kind and love our neighbors. He died to forgive our sins, and rose to the right side of the Father. He walked on water and multiplied food to feed 5,000. He teaches us to help people in need. He shows us how to live our lives to glorify God.

A lot of the morals that I have learned are from growing up and learning from the Bible. I remember having a children's Bible from a young age that had some of the more popular stories in it. Joseph and his robe taught me to not be jealous of people who seemed better than me in one aspect or another and to forgive people who I believe have wronged me. The story of Moses and the Ten Commandments taught me to worship God above all else and to not lie or steal.

I feel closer to God when I am at church. My favorite part of the church is the community of people. One of my favorite times during church is Joys and Concerns. During the times where the congregation is praying, I feel the spirit of God in our prayers, as we are all thinking of the same thing, for God to help the person in need. It feels like something that is bigger than just myself, that my prayers are amplified as they are built upon by the whole church, and it helps me to feel like God is really there, and that everything will be alright.

In addition, our church has many ways that it impacts the community. Whether it's Soup or Socks, the Outreach Committee, the Green Team, or Urban Immersion, First Presbyterian Church is always looking to support, educate, and activate our community to issues that matter. One of my biggest experiences so far was the Urban Immersion Service Retreat. Getting to learn about and see firsthand the difficulty and issues of poverty helped me to discover what God might be telling me to do. I look forward to what happens after my journey of Confirmation, and I hope that God guides me in what I do next.

Keller Bredemann

I believe that God's relationship is loving and caring. It is a very powerful relationship. It can be very hard to understand and learn. But we do have people to help us understand.

As Christians, we are taught to love and serve our Lord. When I think about being a Christian, Jesus comes to mind because he is the perfect Christian. The Holy Spirit helps us to

be that perfect Christian like Jesus. What helps me understand the Holy Spirit is to read Matthew 3:13-17.

Jesus is very important in many ways, like he's the Son of God. He loved us so much that he suffered and died on the cross just for our sins. That's why we should try our hardest to grow our relationship with him. My relationship with him is very close.

Samantha Halle

I often times find it easy to get lost in the thought of faith. Seeing judgment and sin in the world I find myself questioning if God is really there.

But my faith has taught me that I have to see past that, like God does for me. God believes in me and loves me even when I sin. He loves me even though I have imperfections and flaws, even though I let him down.

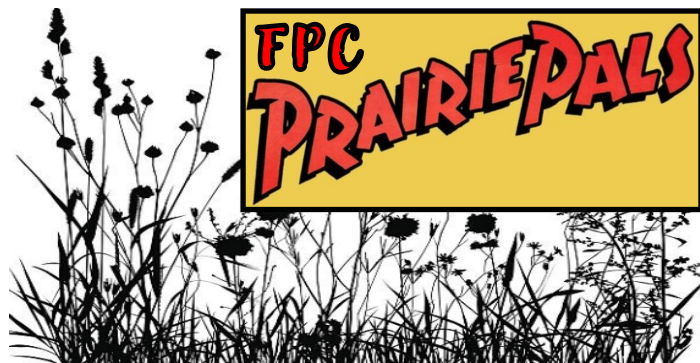
God's love is unconditional. He never lets me down. Finding the love of the Lord has helped me through the ups and the downs. And as a Christian I believe that I must help others as the Lord has helped me. I believe God will be with me as I walk through life and battle challenges ahead of me.

Peyton Daul

Faith is something I never gave a lot of thought to prior to my faith journey this year; it's always just something I thought I had. During my time in confirmation, focusing on my thoughts about faith, it helped me realize how individualized and personal that word is for each person.

When I was younger, I always enjoyed going to Sunday school and learning about the stories of Jesus. I questioned things every once in a while, but never really thought about any of it too deeply. I always wondered why God did certain things, but until confirmation class I never questioned if he was all powerful. I do not believe that God is almighty or all powerful. I believe that he has the power to grant people mercy and guidance. If he was both willing and able to prevent all of the bad things, I do not think he would let all of these terrible things happen. I believe that people have free will and things happen in life because of the choices we make, not because God causes them to happen. I believe that God is a spiritual support to guide us through the hard times, teaches us to do the right thing, and provides us with comfort of the knowledge of heaven when our time here on Earth is done.

(Faith Statements continue on page 6)



On Saturday, May 15th, the first stage of a multi-year prairie installation was completed on the west side of our church property by an energetic group known as the **FPC Prairie Pals**.

Ground was broken for this adventure using one of the original golden shovels from the church ground-breaking in 2003!

A rented sod-cutter and 29 volunteers of all ages worked together to cut the sod, flip it upside down (easier said than done), and then cover and staple down thick black plastic sheeting to suppress grass and weed growth for the 2021 growing season. Summer temperatures will work to insure that the old vegetation decomposes leaving a layer of rich soil into which the prairie seeds and plants will be scattered during stage two later this fall and next spring.



You may be asking, “Why did you shrink the lawn?” The Green Team has been studying the benefits of reducing grass on church property and restoring Wisconsin’s native prairie for over a year now. Our members have toured local prairies and attended virtual seminars on faith-based climate justice resilience efforts. We enrolled in a virtual lecture by Doug Tallamy, professor



in the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware, and we’re now reading two of his books, which will be circulated in our church library soon.

We held lengthy Zoom meetings with fellow enthusiastic Prairie Pals from three Midwest congregations which have already installed prairies on their church sites and have learned much from their experiences.

The 202nd General Assembly (1990) of PCUSA affirmed, “Restoring Creation as a central concern of the church to be incorporated into its life and mission at every level.”

Prairie benefits:

- Carbon is captured and held from the atmosphere to the soil
- Habitat for birds, insects and pollinators is provided
- Biodiversity reduces agricultural/gardening insect pests
- Mowing is reduced to once every three years, eventually, saving gas and labor
- Year-round visual interest is provided with constant seasonal changes in blooms, textures and height

The Green Team communicated with Buildings and Grounds and with Session as our detail-rich, initial proposal was tweaked. We heard and incorporated input from lots of concerned individuals. Once approved by Session, we scheduled our first work date to actualize our dream and take steps toward fulfilling our mission statement, which was revised in 2020 committing to *inspire members to respond as humble stewards of God’s gift of Creation, protecting and restoring it for its own sake and for the future use and enjoyment of all creatures.*



We sincerely thank everyone who was able to help during our first work day and look forward to welcoming others to join us as Prairie Pals at FPC. There will be numerous opportunities for supporting this exciting endeavor for both individuals and families in the months and years to come. Check out

our *Prairie in Progress* on the church’s west side and watch us grow.

Greg Walsh, tech wizard



We sent our intrepid reporter, Bob “Scoop” Davis, on assignment again this issue to find out about the tech wizard behind the excellent video ministry we have enjoyed throughout the pandemic, and to learn what the future holds for this important ministry.



Here’s a classic Presbyterian joke. *Question:* how many Presbyterians does it take to change a lightbulb? *Answer:* CHANGE??!! It’s the joke that fits our time during the pandemic that has changed nearly everything. When in-person worship was suspended in March 15, 2020, our Sundays didn’t look the same: no hugs, handshakes, communion, choir practice, congregational singing, Sunday School, or coffee hour. What was left was a cantor, a lector, a pastor, a pianist, and Greg Walsh with his tripod camera.

“The Lord moves in mysterious ways,” Greg told me, when I asked him about the challenges he’s faced broadcasting church services on Facebook and YouTube. Lucky for us, Greg has been interested in cinematography for most of his life. He took a television class in high school and remembers a family trip to Arizona in 1971, where he watched a production crew film an episode of the TV Western, *Bearcats!* It wasn’t the plot that interested Greg as much as the process. “The film crew spent an hour setting up for a 30-second shot,” he remembers, “which became a 2-second flash-cut in the final broadcast. I was fascinated by that, all the thought and planning that went on behind the scenes.”

Greg’s work behind the scenes has helped us worship in a new way. Working with the Worship Committee and especially his wife, Beth, Greg has learned to incorporate visual images and video clips into our services. He has helped church members record and upload musical performances. He produced the online Christmas Play, the outdoor Discov-

ery Times, the Youth Ash Wednesday Service, a performance of the Living Last Supper, and two baptisms. Every week brought something new. “Greg figured out a hundred editing and technological problems, one after another,” Pastor Laurie said. “And he did it *fast*, developing creative solutions to each new challenge in a matter of days, sometimes hours.”

Greg has read manuals, watched videos, met with consultants, and joined an online chat group to learn how other churches film worship. On May 25th, Session adopted his proposal for installing two wall-mounted video cameras in the back of the sanctuary to broadcast live-stream services in the future, a ministry for which he has felt the call for years.

When I asked Greg what he enjoyed most about his video work, he said, “Creating the transitions. When it works, the service flows. It’s graceful, all parts working together—and drawing *us* together at the same time.” Which sounds like a new version of the old joke. *Question:* how many Presbyterians does it take to change a worship service? *Answer:* all of us (with Greg and Beth working the cameras in the back).



Save the Date

The **First Presbyterian Rummage Sale** returns this year! The date of the sale is set for **Friday, July 23rd** with donations being accepted starting Monday, July 19th. Watch the weekly eblast for updates, and plan to volunteer. Many hands make light work!