

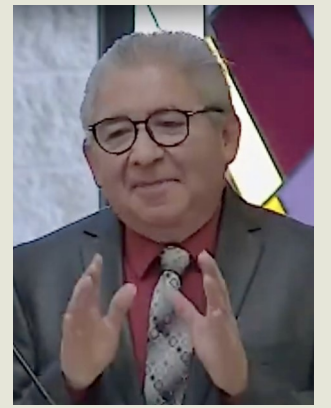
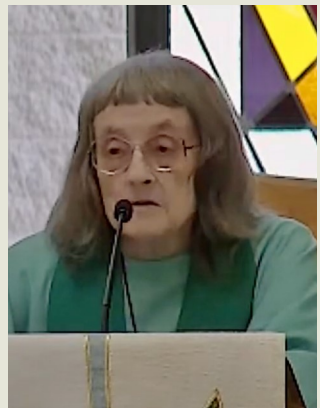
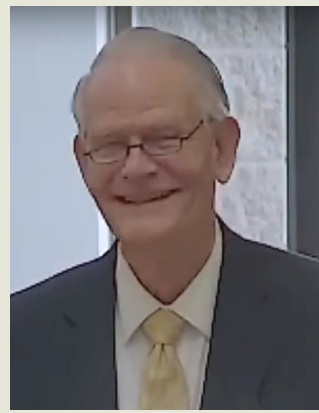
# First



# Press

The Magazine of First Presbyterian Church — Marshfield

Fall 2023



## *Sabbatical Preachers*

# Beginnings



**Aaron and Morgan Schmidtkofer** were united in marriage on June 17, 2023. Congratulations!



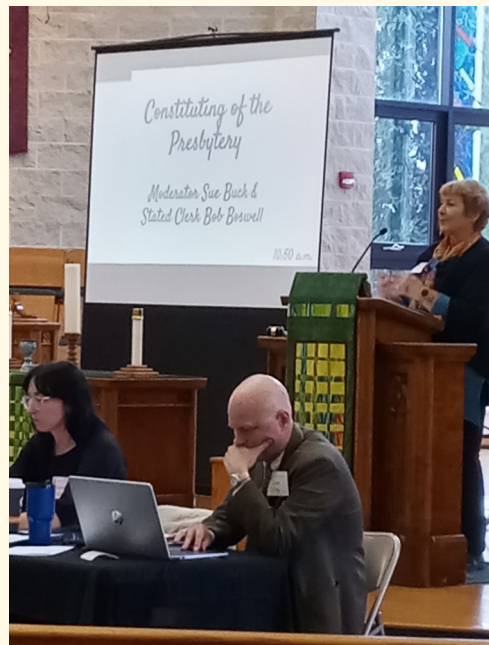
**Mason Lee Luchterhand** was born to **Nici and Jeremy Luchterhand** on June 7, 2023.



**Kathy Phillips** never fails to impress with her design and sewing prowess. Check out the new paraments for the liturgical Ordinary Time. Kathy says, "Ordinary Time is just so much longer that the other seasons. We need more than one parament."

## Did You Know?

We hosted Winnebago Presbytery's fall meeting, welcoming fellow Presbyterians from all over to worship and take care of business. Thanks to **Greg Walsh** for the technical expertise, and to **Kristine Johaneck** and **Lisa Carroll** for leading the planning efforts!



# What we did last summer...

Last November, 2022, marked five years in our walk with Pastor Laurie and that meant, per the pastoral terms of call dictated by Winnebago Presbytery, a three month sabbatical to allow her to rest and refresh her call and vision. We have welcomed Pastor Laurie and husband, Bob, back home and have heard of wonderful experiences and insights.

But pastoral sabbaticals go both ways, and we had our own without leaving town. We did much more than just keeping the lights on. Our pulpit was graced with an amazing array of visiting speakers, including some real stars who traveled great distance to be with us. Each one is available and worth watching from the archive if you missed it.

We had several outstanding Forums for All. Rosangela Berbert of Samaritan Counseling showed us the intersection of faith and mental wellness, Rev. Dave Colby of Winnebago Presbytery shared the view from the presbytery, and Rev, Kerri Parker of Wisconsin Council of Churches shared a bit of what it takes to build unity out of the diversity of Wisconsin faith communities.

The annual church rummage sale went off without a hitch. There was a game night potluck, a Saturday morning walking retreat at the Labyrinth, a Youth Group pizza party, and the kick-off meeting to look into converting the church to solar energy.

Though it certainly took the whole village, Carmen Lawler, more than anyone else, helped hold the place together. This rewarding learning experience, she says, began with learning to choose a non-anxious presence as a key part of the job. In addition to Rev. Janet Wolfe, Rev. Colin Webster, and Rev. Gisele Berninghaus, she learned that Someone (with a capital "S") always had her back. "Faith becomes evident," she says, "it all works out as its supposed to." She marvels that she didn't know the weight of the responsibility until it lifted. Thanks, Carmen. We are grateful for your faithfulness!



Like this picture of Bob and me on top of Arthur's Seat, the gorgeous bluff that overlooks the city of Edinburgh in Scotland, my three-month sabbatical was truly a mountaintop experience. Stepping away from the weekly rhythm of preaching, pastoring, administering, and leading FPC for three months gave me a chance to experience an entirely different rhythm.

Spending time in God's First Book, nature, and the wonders of God's natural creation, I let the trees, the rock formations, and the land speak to me and teach me: from the shores on the Firth of Forth, out to the Inner Hebrides, and to the Little Bighorn Battlefield and the Crazy Horse Monument in Montana and South Dakota.

Our travels and my studies opened up my senses to consider the reformation going on right now in our time. To think more deeply how God is calling us to take deliberate actions toward our Matthew 25 bold vision, for a time such as this. It also gave me a fresh perspective on the passionate commitment and unique gifts embodied in our growing FPC community. Fracturing my right wrist four days before my return helped me to remember the lessons of pacing, pause, and vulnerability. It is wonderful to be back! I am deeply grateful for the privilege of being your pastor, eager to see what God can do with us, together again. —Pastor Laurie

## Test your memory with this key to the cover photos

<b>Mark Borchardt</b> FPC member	<b>Rosangela Berbert</b> Samaritan Center Executive Director	<b>Rev. Mary Pol</b> past FPC pastor	<b>Rev. Dave Colby</b> Winnebago Presbytery General Presbyter
<b>Kristina Kaiser</b> FPC member	<b>Roger Keller</b> Friend of FPC	<b>David Lautenschlager</b> former FPC member	<b>Carmen Lawler</b> FPC CE coordinator
<b>Rev. Janet Wolfe</b> Retired pastor	<b>Dan Crump</b> FPC member	<b>Rev. Kerri Parker</b> Wisconsin Council of Churches	<b>Jorge Ramirez</b> FPC member

# “...And the Youth Shall Lead Them.”

## Isaiah 11:6 (sort of)

Nothing expresses the faithfulness of this Sabbatical Summer than the three part epic lived by our FPC youth.

### Part I Confirmation

The Christian Education committee kicked off a three year trial of a new confirmation curriculum this year. The new program was developed by Mark Hinds and the Presbyterian Outlook to address the concern that confirmation, once completed, often implies that the kids are “done” with something rather than just beginning their life of discipleship. **Changing the World: Confirmation for the Missional Church** guides teenagers to claim their own missional identity and encourages them to develop a mission project aligned with that identity.



Josette and Cassidy painting their squares in the Youth Room

This year’s class, Cassidy Christopher, Josette Kaiser, and Mackenzie Wroblewski, with sustained help from Kristine Johaneck, were moved to create a resource guide listing emergency numbers hotlines and support groups ready to assist a range of mental health crises. Outreach dedicated the local portion of the Pentecost Offering to cover the cost of printing.

Does the new curriculum keep the kids on the discipleship path? Since the class has ended, they have attended city council to get permission to hang the posters in government offices. They have visited local businesses, and they will soon start a campaign to seek help from us to get this vital service where it is most needed! Lead on, confirmation class of 2023!

**NEED HELP? Check out these resources**

You are not alone. Support is always available.

**call 988** 800.985.5884  
If you are in a mental health crisis and feel like you might hurt yourself.

**call 911** 800.685.4350  
If you need for your physical safety or are in danger from others.

**THE SAMARITANS** 24/7 hotline 715.676.3000

**THE TRUSSARDI PROJECT** LGBTQ+ people under 26 800.685.7246

**WOOD COUNTY** 715.384.9555  
**MARATHON CITY** 715.845.4326  
**CLARK COUNTY** 715.743.3400

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### Part II

#### “Go and Do” mission trip

Emma Halle, Carly Schilling, Addison Wray, and Mackenzie Wroblewski along with Carmen Lawler, joined a group of adults and teens from Faith Lutheran for a mission trip to Nashville. Pastor Roger Keller commissioned our group during the prior Sunday service to go and serve the Lord, and serve they did!



#### “People Loving Nashville”



has grown to feed 200 people every Monday night from a Thanksgiving dinner 15 years ago for 4 struggling neighbors. “Soles for Souls” packs donated shoes to provide product to help women starting businesses. And they sorted donations for a **thrift store**.

Our kids learned a lot of lessons from how important it is to provide help without having to prove someone is truly needy to why the long term volunteers seemed so demanding and a little grumpy. It is because they care so much, day in and day out.



Emma set the tone for the trip, saying, “We have to be really good so they will invite us back.” And they were! Plans are coming together for a repeat next year. Adults are needed next year, but as participant/leaders, models and mentors, not as chaperones. Contact Carmen to join next time.



Emma Halle Carly Schilling Addison Wray Mackenzie Wroblewski

(Continued on page 5)

## “...And the Youth Shall Lead Them.”

(Continued from page 4)

### Part III Vacation Bible School

FPC, Faith Lutheran, and Good Shepherd Lutheran agreed once again to collaborate on their VBS programs. In recent years, Camp Luther was engaged to run the VBS programming, however, this year they ended that service. Carmen decided it might be worth calling Daycholah Center (formerly Pilgrim Center) to see if they offered a summer camp-flavored VBS program for local churches. They initially said no, but Carmen offered a few selling points: additional revenue source, outreach to attract future campers, generate future counselors among the older helpers, and finally, convincing them that they could do it! And they did.

The theme was “Fruits of the Spirit” led by our own Charlotte Johnson who is a camp counselor along with Cesar from Colombia. Two paid staffers were here for the first two days, but then they left the program in the very capable hands of Charlotte

and Cesar.

The combined VBS attracts kids from the other churches and from the larger community. Attendance is not yet what it was pre-Covid, but it is improving. As an added benefit, our Sunday School program gained a new teacher from among the junior counselors. Carmen has approached the pastor at Wesley Methodist who did express interest in joining the collaboration.

My kids have attended VBS at FPC since 2012. It was great to see my teens again in leadership roles with Charlotte being the lead counselor from Daycholah, and Henry and Oliver volunteering as Junior counselors. My kids might not be here every Sunday, but I love that they have found enjoyment bringing VBS to more kids. It also helps that they have relationships with Daycholah staff since camping there is a highlight of their summers.

—Nicole Johnson



# Thank You for Being a Friend

The Green Team would like to thank all who have stepped up to be official “**Friends of the Green Team**” and open this opportunity to anyone in our church family who may be willing to join in the fun. We recently identified some of the tasks handled by the green team that do NOT have to be done on a particular schedule. Friends may offer to help with one or more of these tasks at their convenience and on their own schedule.

In addition to **FRIENDS**, the Green Team is most excited to welcome **new members**. We have fun working together to do important work for our congregation, community and God’s creation, and would be thrilled to add any interested church family members to our team. We meet in person or via Zoom on the second Thursday of the month at 9 am. If you are interested in being a **FRIEND** or a **GREEN TEAM MEMBER**, please contact one of the co-chairs.

Darlene Berry 715.207.4287

Sue Nelson 715.389.2227

Barb Gillespie 715.650.7829

## Friend Opportunities

- Weed the small butterfly garden after rainfalls (spring, summer, fall)
- Set up seating in the parlor for Forums for All (2-3X per year)
- Pick up pre-ordered food items for Green Team events (2-3X per year)
- Run about a dozen juice cups through home dishwasher after Sunday service (any convenient Sunday morning)
- Water the flagged plants in the prairie during drought times (just this summer)
- Fill rain barrels at community garden when no rain falls (we’ll show you how)
- Take items collected in recycling kiosk to their destinations (when you’re already running errands)
- Keep the butterfly dish filled with water in the butterfly garden
- Organize the Little Free Library so it continues to draw readers



## Close-up

Raised Catholic, Bridget’s first church in St Paul was wonderful. She was surrounded by her parish classmates, teachers, and neighbors. It was a small but loving community. She also had dear friends in the larger community that were Jewish. One day, David, an older Jewish friend found her crying and asked why. Bridget’s mom had given up trying to teach her to tie her shoes. “I can’t tie my shoes,” she cried. David just said, “I’ll show you how to tie your shoes.” And he did, with patience and kindness.

When she was eight, her family moved across town to a larger house and a much larger parish with several priests, several services, and none of the connection and warmth she felt in the old neighborhood. Bridget had been introduced to a God who loved everyone by teachers who tried to do the same, but the nuns at the new place seemed to teach a different religion than she had known, one that focused on sin and punishment, and guilt and

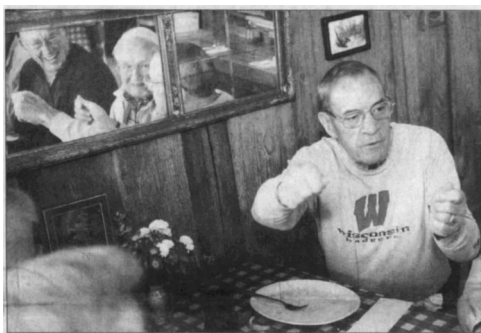
## Bridget O’Brien

fear. It might have stuck if they had not said that everyone not baptized into the Catholic Church would go to hell. Her lived experience with her Jewish friends in the old neighborhood told her in no uncertain terms that this was ridiculous. These adults were wrong. She knew she would not be Catholic forever.

Bridget and her husband Mark would join the UU church in the cities, but moving here the Presbyterian church was Mark’s church home. Bridget realized FPC was very much like the wonderful church where the story started. Singing in the choir has always been close to her heart, but the part of our service that continues to surprise her is the “Unison Prayer of Confession.” The shared public confession of being judgmental or neglectful gives no one the right to blame another, and the promise of forgiveness carries a promised commitment to one another that we will let go of grudges and seek to be better people ourselves.

# O Romeo, wherefore art thou?

Well, if it is Thursday at 8 am, you would best try looking at the Kitchen Table for the answer to that question. Started by Bruce Brink and Irv Johnson some 28 years ago, the **ROMEOS** (Retired Old Men Eating Out) still meet, rain or shine, hot or cold, to



A photo from Marshfield News-Herald circa 2004 with Irv Johnson, Earl Nelson, and Bob Heck

grapple with the really big questions of life, like why does Ken Z have to tell those old math jokes again?

A question that needs no asking is what to order. Star wait-



Clockwise from the left: Colin Webster, Bruce Lautenschlager, Dave Hirsh, Ken Zittleman, Don Zais, Kurt Hanson, Clay Bernick, Jim Opitz, and Denny Suckow.

person and current owner, Stacey, has a personalized food order card she reuses every week for each ROMEO because the guys know what they like and they always get the same thing. Imagine how many trees have been saved over the years!

Started as a Presbyterian fellowship group, the men have found the bonds of friendship exceed the bonds of church membership. If you are free on Thursdays at 8 am, check out the group. There is always an empty seat at the table, and Stacey has a card with your name on it!



## Faith Stories

Darlene's uncle, a young Catholic priest, would come to visit, announcing that "church" was going to happen in grandma's backyard. The lawn chairs would come out and church would happen just as announced, complete with Holy Communion. Darlene had not yet received her first communion and so was left to wonder what Jesus' body tasted like. Well, true to scripture, "ask and it shall be given," at least when the priest's your uncle, Donny. She was given a host to eat that did not have Jesus in it, introducing a new wonder, if Jesus was not in that host, where was he?

For Darlene's first communion, Sister Leonore tentatively entrusted Jesus' body to the grubby hands of her second grade class with the careful instructions not to chew it, or let Jesus stick to the roof of your mouth. This host tasted exactly like the other one, reinforcing Darlene's growing sense that Jesus was not in the forms, rules and rituals of church. But where?

## Darlene Berry

Darlene's father helped her to look for God elsewhere. When Darlene asked him if there is a God, he strongly answered, "Look at that tree. How do you think that happened?" He stopped the car once to show the kids a baby deer, so well hidden in stillness that no one else could see it. He got the fawn to turn its head toward them. Once revealed, Darlene could see it, and could not "not" see it.

Now she senses Jesus in the tiny daily changes in her own backyard. She has seen her students changed in the class room and in school theater productions, opened to new possibilities and capacities that she cannot claim credit for. She wishes her father had some place like FPC, where God is not bound to a building, but bound to the people who come together, not for show or out of duty, but because they want to be there together. A heart in the right place means continually learning to how to live together.



# First Press Magazine

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## From Pastor Laurie

Even as these warm October days prolong the turn from short sleeves and sandals to cozy sweaters and socks, you may still wonder, “Where *did* this summer go?” Take a moment from raking leaves or other activities in your current daily round, to sit down and settle in with this wonderful Fall issue of First Press. You will see images of faces and places near and far that tell the story of our summer of 2023. It was a summer of firsts: first sabbatical for you and me, first youth mission trip in a long time, first year of our new confirmation curriculum, and many more. You will also enjoy the age spectrum this issue encompasses, from Vacation Bible School to the Romeos (Retired Old Men Eating Out). God is on the move among the young and old and the in between; as we play, eat, serve, and learn together. Being back together after three months apart, this favorite family blessing comes to mind:



*We thank thee Lord, for happy hearts, for rain and sunny weather.*

*We thank thee Lord, for this our food, and that we are together. Again! Amen.*

## LOOKING AHEAD:

Sunday, Oct. 29	6:00 – 7:00 P.M. <i>Open Church Drop-in Hour for Quiet Meditation &amp; Prayer</i>
Sunday, Nov. 19	<i>Stewardship Dedication Day with Fall Festival Deacon Potluck</i> after worship
Sunday, Dec. 3	<i>First Sunday of Advent</i>