

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



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2023 Annual Report

Annual Congregational Meeting Agenda

Sunday, March 10, 2024

Opening Prayer	Rev. Stan Jenkins, Moderator
Call to Order	
Quorum	Carol Wallace, Clerk of Session
Receiving of the Annual Report	Rev. Stan Jenkins
Session Committees and other actions	
Adult Education	Shirley Herrick
Building and Grounds	Steve Campbell
Emergency Preparedness Sub Committee	Mike Bryan
Communications/ History	Brian Jackson
Audio/Video	Bill Collins
Finance	Bev Bockes and Don Heck
Endowment	Jim Donaldson
Membership	Pam Blair
Mission Interpretation and Social Justice	Willye Bryan & Carol Wallace
Personnel	Brian Jackson
Review the Pastor's Terms of Call	Darla Jackson
Nominating	Bill Collins
Worship	George Bennett/Gwen Botting
Youth Education	Ann Harvey
Deacons	Alyse Collins
Pastors Terms of Call	
Necrology	Rev. Stan Jenkins

IN MEMORIAM

Evgeny Epshtein, January 4, 2023
Emma Lou Knight, February 26, 2023
Jack Fuller March, 18, 2023
Dorothy Foster, April 19, 2023
Joyce Oberg, April 30, 2023
Shaun McClurken, Sept. 30, 2023
Laura Wilkinson, Nov. 9, 2023

Closing Prayer	Rev. Stan Jenkins
Adjournment	

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Vision Statement

We continue our spiritual growth as a Reformed, Confessional, Connectional, Presbyterian Congregation that proclaims God’s glory through traditional worship; biblically based education; a vibrant music program in a warm, welcoming, an affirmative and intentionally inclusive Christian community. We will maintain our facility and staff to accomplish this vision. We will accomplish this vision as a “*More Light*”, “*Matthew 25*” and “Earth Care” congregation by following the tenets of; **Building Congregational Vitality and Congregational Care; Dismantling Structural Racism while Empowering Marginalized and Minoritized Populations;** as well as working towards **Eradicating Systemic Poverty.**

Mission Statement

Worship (Worship committee and Staff)

Worship should reflect our belief in Jesus Christ, who gives us faith, life, unity, and mission to the World. Our worship will be inclusive, diverse, reflective, and respectful of a variety of cultures. It will represent the Reformed tradition in adherence with PCUSA as follows:

- Communion open to all regardless of race, gender expression, sexual diversity, economic, religious, national identity, and age
- Pastor (or designee) administered
- Intentionally inclusive of all regardless of race, gender expression, sexual diversity, economic, religious, national identity, and age
- Time conscious
- Available via multiple platforms, using technology as available
- Provide services of marriage, funerals, and the sacraments of baptism and communion regardless of race, gender expression, sexual diversity, economic, national identity, and age

Education (Youth Education, Adult Education committees, and Staff)

We will approach education as an implicit element for all ages, in everything we do as a faith community. This learning may occur in worship, fellowship, mission work, small group meetings, and other opportunities inclusive of:

- *Children's Moment*
- *Sunday School*
- *Youth Fellowship*
- *Confirmation Class*
- *Camp Greenwood*

- *Music/Art Education*
- *Support of higher education opportunities (Alma, PCUSA programs...)*
- *Library and Little Free Library*
- *All Church Read*
- *Book Group*
- *Bible Study*
- *Adult Ed*
- *Adult Forum*
- *Leadership Training*

Music/Art (Worship, Youth Education and the Adult Education committees and Staff)

We are a people of God that gives voice to our worship through the spoken word, through congregational singing, and through the performing arts as follows:

- *Chancel Choir*
- *Handbell Choir*
- *Chancel Committee*
- *Section Leader Scholarships*
- *Community Concerts*
- *Community Sings*
- *Children's Christmas Pageant*
- *Candlelight Christmas Eve*
- *Holy Week*
- *Art Collection and Displays*

Building Congregational Vitality and Congregational Care (Membership, Communication, Church Mission & Social Justice, Nominating, and the History Committees, Deacons, and Staff)

We are a church that carries on a mission of teaching and service to those who worship with us and to our community, and care of those who form the body of Christ. We will create opportunities to build relationships within the Church and community inclusive of:

- *Pastoral Care Team*
- *Holiday Food Baskets (Deacons)*
- *Angel Tree (Deacons)*
- *Angel Team (Deacons)*
- *Bingo (Deacons)*
- *Homebound/Home Visits (Deacons)*
- *UKIRK*
- *Lansing Children's Choir*
- *Glen Erin Pipe Band*
- *Capital City Chordsmen*
- *Lansing Symphony Orchestra*
- *Music.Art.Drama.Dance (MADD) Camp*

- *Silver Bells Warming Station*
- *LINK Groups*
- *Small group fellowship (Boomers, Bridge in the Parlor, Men's Group, etc.)*
- *All Church Fellowship Opportunities*
- *Support of Downtown and Westside Neighborhood Associations*
- *Yoga Classes*
- *AARP income tax prep*
- *Maintain Church and Community History*
- *Support Mental Health programs*
- *Support programs that reduce violence in the community*
- *Encourage growth in participation and membership in the church*

Dismantling Structural Racism while Empowering Marginalized and Minoritized Populations (Church Mission & Social Justice Committee, Deacons, and Staff)

We are a community that includes and respects all, in which all who enter the church space are welcomed and belong. We will support groups and activities that dismantle structural racism and empower marginalized populations as follows:

- *Justice League of Greater Lansing Michigan (JLGLM)*
- *Global Institute of Lansing (GIL)*
- *Northwest Initiative*
- *Lansing Pride*
- *Support of the LGBTQIA+ community*
- *Reparations Royalties*
- *Odawa Tribe of Native American*

Eradicating (Alleviating) Systemic Poverty (Church Mission & Social Justice committee Deacons and Staff)

We are a community that recognizes the existence of systemic poverty and will put our resources to reduce the economic exploitation of the poor. We will provide resources and support programs, services, and opportunities that provide basic needs such as food, shelter, physical and mental health inclusive of:

- *Advent House Ministries (Deacons)*
- *Food Pantry*
- *Food Bank*
- *Agape Community Transformation (ACT) Uganda*
- *Cameroon Water Project*
- *Council of Protestant Churches of Nicaragua (CEPAD)*
- *Community Garden*
- *Mental Health Matters (Botswana)*

Maintenance of Facility and Staff (Building and Grounds, Personnel, Endowment and Finance & Stewardship, and the Financial Audit Review committees and Staff)

We will have a facility that actively engages the Lansing region through its welcoming and inviting nature and its safe and well-maintained condition that is optimized and maximized to serve our Christian mission. We will appropriately staff our church to fulfill our mission as follows:

- *Regular repair and maintenance of our current facility for internal as well as external groups*
- *Updates Emergency Plans and Annual Practices*
- *Update the facility for a safe and secure environment*
- *Maintain Memorial Garden*
- *Environmentally conscious practices*
- *Updating technology*
- *Maintain and encourage both long term and short-term space usage from the community*
- *Maintain adequate staff levels for maintenance and outsourcing*
- *Maintain an appropriate staff to enable the church to care for the physical building, grounds and office management*
- *Staff Training*
- *Professional Development*
- *Maintain a level of financial integrity*
- *Maintain professional and supportive communication with staff*
- *Maintain professional and supportive communication with the congregation*
- *Encourage open and timely communication with the congregation across as wide a variety of platforms as reasonable*

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OFFICERS

THE SESSION

The Rev. Stanley Jenkins, Moderator
Carol Wallace, Clerk of Session
Beverley Bockes, Treasurer
Don Heck, President

Class of 2024

Mike Carey
Darla Jackson
Ron O'Connor
Karen Viele
Steve Warnaar

Class of 2025

George Bennett
Steve Campbell
Don Heck

Class of 2026

Ceci Anderson
Carol Wallace
Pam Blair
Elliot Ryser

THE BOARD OF DEACONS

Richard Blankenship, Moderator
Bethanne Jenks, Secretary
Barb Amundsen, Treasurer

Class of 2024

Walid Mackoul
Linda Snyder
Judy Whitman

Class of 2025

Kathy Banghart
Rich Blankenship
Nan Carter
Kurt Civilette
Sue Reames
Bessie Roper

Class of 2026

Barb Amundsen
Bethanne Jenks
Chrisann Lowe
Jean Jones
Mike Bryan
Sue Carey

Pastors Preface

In this annual report you will see, once again, a record of God's faithfulness. We began the year with a substantial deficit of around \$80,000 and ended the year with about a \$9,500 deficit. Now, a deficit is a deficit, and that's always a challenge, but it's important to recognize how God is working through us to find ways to continue to serve our community despite our challenges.

The deficit was reduced through a number of means, including you all continuing to give very generously, but from my perspective the takeaway is that God keeps opening doors for us, and we keep walking through those doors. God is good—and keeps equipping us for ministry. Indeed, in our 176 years we have faced budget deficits many times, and God has always provided. This is something we need to remember, celebrate and live by. As the Apostle Paul teaches, “We walk by faith and not by sight.”

The coming year we will be exploring more options to expand our ministry through the use of our building in ways that can also provide us additional streams of revenue. We abide in our faith in God's providence—but experience teaches us that part of our faithfulness is the discipline of paying attention—opening our eyes to the movement of the Spirit in our midst. In the power of the Holy spirit, we will continue to cultivate eyes to see and ears to hear.

On the whole, 2023 has seemed to me to be a year of taking stock. Seeds planted in the past have come to fruition. Of the \$100,000 pledged to the Justice League for reparations to the AfricanAmerican community in Lansing about \$80,000 has been pledged by individuals and families. This puts things in perspective.

God has chosen ordinary people like you and me to do extraordinary things. In Matthew's gospel, Jesus points out that “For mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible.” In John's gospel he says, “Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these...”

We are constantly being asked to broaden our vision, to dream big, trust bigger, and to rejoice in the movement of the Holy Spirit in our midst. I am grateful to have had the chance in 2023 to spend some time in prayer and contemplation during my sabbatical. I came away refreshed and with a renewed sense of vision and perspective. The First Presbyterian Church of Lansing is a truly remarkable place. I know that I am a little biased, but I am just in awe of what God is doing in us—and what God keeps empowering us to do.

In Christ,

Stan

REPORT OF THE PASTORAL CARE ASSISTANT

Providing care and support to members of our church family during times of illness, stress and grief is a priority for our congregation. I am thankful to be able to serve in the role of assistant to our pastor as we coordinate calls, visits and follow-up care to people who need a little extra care and attention. This year Stan took a three-month sabbatical. We formed a pastoral care team to cover the need during the time of his absence. We are very grateful for the dedication and loving care provided by the team members: Charlie Herrick, Deb Donaldson, Bev Phillips and Bessie Roper. Prayers continue to go up, blessings continue to come down. Thanks be to God!

Respectfully submitted,
Christine DeYonke
Pastoral Care Assistant

Administrator's Report

It's been a little less than a year since I spent two weeks with Tracy Weldon on the job before her retirement. I still don't know how she did it all. In the past year, I found a payroll service that would cost less than the Quickbooks software the church was using, and do a lot more.

With the help of volunteer Del Rector, I have tried to simplify the monthly financial reporting. It is simpler, but there is still work to do be done.

We're going to try a new elevator maintenance company and a new postage machine this year. Our copier reached its 10th birthday, when they put it out to pasture. We'll get a new copier that is a bit slower, but they may give us color copies for free.

We have a new snow person this year. His name is Ejoh, if you see him out there tossing salt.

The Sunday bulletin is a lot simpler to put out now than it was. I am grateful to a lot of proofreaders for preventing those errors.

My goal is to make parts of the job less complicated, because other parts will always get more complicated.

Thanks to all who have been supportive and encouraging, and also to those who have pointed out errors. It's always inspiring to see so much going on in this old building.

In Peace, Betsy Calvert, Administrator

It is with a grateful heart that I offer the **2023 Director of Christian Education annual report.**

We have been busy this year – reestablishing friendships, reconnecting with families and reinvigorating learning in our congregation.

Highlights from 2024 include:

- Megan Higle was a presenter at the annual APCE Conference
- With the continued dedication of Ceci Anderson, Adult Forum is available either through Zoom or by accessing our website
- Ann Harvey was welcomed as chair of Youth Education
- Creating a calendar of worthwhile presentations for Adult Forum
- A Women’s Fellowship was created and has been growing
- A weekly Children’s Moment has been stitched into our Sunday Worship Service
- We celebrated high school and college graduates in June
- We enlisted a “float” child-care person in Sidney Knapp
- Lower Elementary Faith Formation continues every Sunday after Worship Service, we have a solid core of elementary school -age children who are learning, sharing and crafting every week with much enthusiasm
- A dedicated team of volunteers (Pam, Ann, Deb, Kathy, Alyse and Jean) has been established to teach our elementary learners for their Faith Formation time
- Middle High & Senior High Youth continue their shared fellowship with Holt Presbyterian Church (thank you, Pam Blair!)
- Our younger members presented a Children’s Christmas Pageant
- Advent and Lenten Devotionals were made available, in print and via email
- Working closely with Adult Education and Membership, we were able to find ways for multi-generational events: Talent Show, September Tailgate, World Communion Sunday, Food Basket Packing, Advent Workshop

Looking ahead to 2023:

- Annual APCE Conference in St. Louis, MO (Megan will, again, be a presenter)
- Youth Winter Retreat with Holt Presbyterian
- Lent & Easter Devotionals and Crafts
- All-Church-Talent-Show (February)
- Church-Wide Book Read and Discussion (“Poverty: By America”)
- Christmas Children’s Pageant
- Working closely with the Adult Education Committee on continued pre-planning
- Continue recruiting teachers and aids for Elementary Sunday School – bringing back “Children In Worship” programming
- Exploring topics for Adult Forum to challenge, encourage and enlighten the adults in our congregation

- Continue to find ways to connect the congregation to learning and to each other
- Continued growth of the Women's and Men's Fellowship

Blessings,

Megan Higl

Director of Christian Education

**2023 REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CONGREGATIONAL LIFE AND
COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

Diversity Equity & Inclusion contributions

We Introduced a new donation option labeled Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in late 2021 to enable Lansing First Pres to live out its vision of intentionally welcoming and fully reflecting the diversity of persons, cultures, languages, and lifestyles of the greater Lansing community. In 2023 we used these contributions to expand our relationship with community organizations and local, diverse entrepreneurs. We strategically sought out candidates that were skilled in areas of civic engagement, the arts and DEI initiatives. Thanks to your contributions this congregation put the tenets of a Matthew 25 into practice, as stated in the church mission.

Mandela Washington Fellowship



In 2023 Lansing First Pres opened its doors to 25 fellows visiting from the continent of Africa. The Mandela Washington Fellowship, the flagship program of the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI), empowers young African leaders through academic coursework, leadership training, mentoring, networking, professional opportunities, and local community engagement. The Fellows presented at LFP during adult forum on 3 separate occasions. The presentations were based on the following topics,

- Trauma & Mental Health
- Anti-Violence, Peace & Politics
- Information, misinformation & Youth

Thanks to your support we created new friendships with the Fellows and established a relationship with the Global Studies department at Michigan State University. Over the course of the 3-week period we welcomed more than 80 guests into LFP!

Cameroonian Dinner

Members of Lansing First Pres, Peter and Justine Achuonjei were extremely instrumental in creating a welcoming atmosphere for the Fellows. Considering our Fellows were from Africa I wanted to host a dinner that would make them feel at home. Peter and Justine partnered with the local Cameroonian Community to serve a buffet of delicious, home cooked Cameroonian foods.

Attendance consisted of members of First Pres, MSU faculty, local non-profits, friends from Japan and the Mandela Washington Fellows.

Sandra Sefhako



The Mission and Social Justice Committee of First Presbyterian Church of Lansing supported one Mandela Fellow by donating \$500 to, **Silence Kills Support Group**. Based in Botswana, the organization works with the marginalized and stigmatized People Living with HIV (PLWHIV) to fight for their rights, seek equitable access to public health, and advocate for the protection, promotion, and fulfilment of the rights and banish stigma. We support the Fellow's efforts in working for the betterment of the lives of marginalized peoples of Botswana by empowering them with skills, strategies and life-skills to enable them to independently leverage resources to realize their social, economic and health needs and self-sufficiency for a fulfilling life.

Yahya Ashour



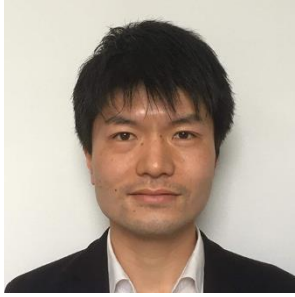
An emerging poet known for his profound and moving reflections on the human experience, particularly the challenges faced by Palestinians of Gaza.

Yahya's unique perspective as a Palestinian poet adds depth and authenticity to the discourse surrounding the complexities of

the Middle East. Yahya arrived in the United States in September 2023 and, unfortunately, to this day is unable to return to his home in Gaza due to current circumstances. I worked with the Mission and Social Justice Committee at LFP and several community partners to enable the poet to share his personal journey through poetry. The event was hosted at the Islamic Center in East Lansing. The following community partners also supported this initiative,

- *Global Studies in the Arts and Humanities, Global DEI, the Muslim*
- *Studies Program, the Honors College, the Creative Writing Program, the Leslie Endowed Chair in American Indian and Indigenous Literature, in partnership with the East Lansing Peace Education Center and the Islamic Center of East Lansing.*

Mr. Yuta Matsubara



Yuta is an assistant section chief at the International Affairs Division, Department of General Policy Planning located in Shiga Prefectural Government.

I invited Yuta to educate our congregation about the Good Will Mission tour during adult forum. He is visiting the U.S with an interest of strengthening the relationship between Otsu, Shiga and Lansing. In October 2023, 37 Good Will Mission delegates from Michigan, including myself, visited Shiga and had a wonderful time through homestay, artwork, hiking and networking. Considering we have adventurous members in our congregation I thought you might appreciate this information.

Mila Lynn



We welcomed visual artist, Mila Lynn, to LFP adult forum to speak about the Slavery to Freedom Art Installation.

This years’ installation is meant to celebrate MSU’s Osteopathic College of Medicine’s 24 years of education, celebration, and healing by way of the Slavery to Freedom Speaker Series. The artwork will consist of 24 different pieces all telling their own story of Black culture, and collectively coming together to showcase how dynamic Black culture remains.

Pieces will be done on various types of “canvas,” including vinyl records, music sheets, and cassette tapes as a way to highlight how much of our history has been told via word of mouth and through music.

Justice League of Greater Lansing

“The Justice League of Greater Lansing Michigan exists to repair the breach caused by the historical damage of slavery and its aftermath. In the spirit of repentance for the sin of racism, we seek to build relationships and facilitate reparations between houses of worship and collaborative partners to increase wealth equity for African Americans in the Greater Lansing Area”

In 2023 the Justice League completed more than 50 community presentations building new relationships with local churches, organizations and community members. Last summer we were invited to present to the National Council of Churches in Washington D.C and to the John C. Smith Seminary Reparations roundtable in Chicago. The Reparations Project has evolved into an intergenerational, cross-racial and cross denominational effort and has garnered genuine support.



Apology

On Saturday, January 28th Lansing First Presbyterian Church and twelve Christian denominations united to offer an Apology for the sins of slavery and its aftermath to the descendants of enslaved African Americans living within the Greater Lansing region. A second apology was presented on Juneteenth at the State Capitol. In addition, the Justice League of Greater Lansing Michigan presented a Faith-Based reparations model aimed at building relationships and facilitating reparations between houses of worship and collaborative partners to increase wealth equity for African Americans in the Greater Lansing Area.

There were roughly 160-180 people present at each event. Members from the following churches participated,

- Lansing First Presbyterian Church
- First Presbyterian Church of Kalamazoo
- Holt First Presbyterian
- Northwest minster Presbyterian Church
- The Presbyterian Church of Okemos
- Delta Presbyterian Church
- St John Catholic Church and Student Center
- Sycamore Creek Church
- Edgewood United Church
- Unitarian Universalist
- University Lutheran Church
- Red Cedar Friends
- Grace Lutheran Church
- Unity Spiritual Center of Lansing



“It was significant to recognize that many Lansing area Christian churches have finally reached the consensus that a public apology was appropriate, necessary, and overdue.”

-Attendee

The Litany of Repentance (Apology) was issued by the 225th PCUSA General Assembly, Committee on Race & Gender Justice. 2022

Justice League Accomplishments

1. An African American Advisory Council Has Been Established from Prominent Sectors of The African American Community to Decide on All Allocations.
2. The JLGLM Began with No Funds In 2022 And To-Date Has Had Contributions from The Faith Community and Individual Donors of Over \$400,000.00.
3. Congressional Record presented by the office of Elissa Slotkin

In 2024, \$50,000 Will Be Awarded to Students for Educational Scholarships!

FPC COMMUNITY GARDEN

The Community Garden continues to evolve as we learn more and generate more interest from the community. Following are highlights from the year.

All garden expenses are funded by contributions and grants. We have a church account to manage our income and expenses, but the garden does not receive any income from the church budget. For the third consecutive year we received a Neighborhood Grant from the City of Lansing, and a grant from Capital Area Master Gardeners.

Garden expenses included adding soil and compost to the raised beds, purchasing plants for the food pantry beds and picking bed, several items for the rain barrel, aphid spray, garden waste bags, gloves for gardeners, and garden signs.

The rain barrel is now working, not leaking, and it has had an upgrade. We installed a solar powered pump so that the water circulates enough that it won't become stagnant below the spigot. We also installed a new liner and (after three years), this one doesn't leak!! For this accomplishment and the end of season winterizing of the barrel we were helped by Scott Schmidt, the garden property owner, who works closely with us.

In September and October, we were used by the City of Lansing Garden Project for a trial run to have Lansing pick up garden waste every two weeks. The Garden Project paid for the waste pick up and we supplied the waste disposal bags. The purpose of this pick up was to keep most of the garden waste out of the trash dumpsters.

We also used a large Garden Project "tote" to hold plant waste during the growing season. The Garden Project provided the tote, delivered it and picked it up with one of their trucks, to add our plant waste (stems, leaves, etc.) to their compost system.

For the second year we have offered a successful "picking bed" with a sign that designates that visitors can pick fresh produce from that bed only.

The garden has an equivalent of 24 3'x8' raised beds. Of these, 20 are single beds and 2 are double long (3'x16' beds). We had 5 returning gardeners from last year; several gardeners leased more than one raised bed for the gardening season.

Five church members were actively involved in the garden.

Three beds were used to provide produce for the Food Pantry.

Northwest Initiative used raised beds to grow produce for their mobile food truck.

We appreciate church members and community members who are involved, by participating on the garden board, leasing seasonal garden spaces, and helping with garden clean-up days. We invite and encourage more participation as we plan ahead.

(with support from Barb Amundsen)

Food Pantry-

In 2023 the Food Pantry continued to open its doors and extend its services to communities living outside of the demographics in which we typically serve. Due to national disasters and other factors we experienced a food shortage this past year which resulted in less variety and supply being provided by the FDA. This hardship was experienced by many food pantries across the country. As a result, the food and monetary contributions from Lansing First Presbyterian church provided stability.

The pantry is experiencing an increase in unscheduled walk-ins. Post pandemic the freight charge for transporting frozen food and can goods have increased. Every month I record the stats on the food Pantry, i.e. the # of people served each month, a breakdown of age demographics and the amount of food delivered by the Food Bank. These statistics are submitted to the City of Lansing in effort to track outreach, impact and apply for grant funding. This

upcoming year I will apply for city grant funding to support the pantry operations. Please take note of the church wide emails that inform you about the current needs of the Pantry.

Sleepwalker-

Following the church's annual caroling at the Michigan State Capital a successful fundraiser for the food pantry was hosted at the Sleepwalker. A special thank you to Brian and Darla Jackson for their initiation.

Podcast



The podcast A Mother's Perspective has earned **two Gold Awards in the national 21st Annual Service Industry Advertising Awards competition!** It won in the categories of Podcasts and DEI — Diversity Equity Inclusion.

Lansing First Presbyterian Church created the limited-episode podcast to engage the Greater Lansing community and advance DEI within its congregation. The SIAA competition recognizes achievements of marketing and advertising in the service sector. Of the more than 1,000 entries, only 177 were recognized, of which 104 earned Gold awards. Entries were reviewed

for execution, creativity, message impact, technology application, content innovation and overall breakthrough marketing content.

The podcast focuses on how mothers' perspectives on faith, culture, class, race and parenting impact adult children's interaction with their community. The lesson it provides is that people are not that different. All mothers use their passions to help their children have fulfilling lives and make a positive impact in their communities.

A Mother's Perspective is available on Spotify at <https://bit.ly/MPP-11>

The first 11 episodes were capped by an in-person roundtable discussion with guests who were featured in the podcasts. They reflected on their interviews and the influences of motherhood.

Guests comprised a diverse group. It was members of Lansing First Presbyterian and nonmembers, persons with traditional and nontraditional families, a mix of ethnicities and of race, as well as a mix of professions — including a retired entomologist who founded a reparation not-for-profit, a poet, social activist, politician, author, retired pastor, marketing entrepreneur and artist.

They are Michigan Sen. Sarah Anthony, Dedria Humphries Barker, Willye Bryan, Siso Dhladhla, Anna Marie Horn and Betty Sanford, of Lansing; Greg Botting and Alexis Rosado, Grand Rapids; Queen Darlene, South Haven; Jean Dietrich, Grand Ledge; and Charlie Herrick, Mason.

For more information about A Mother's Perspective, contact me at psolace@lansingfirstpres.org

Here's a breakdown of our top 3 interviews

Rank #1 Jean Dietrich- "*Wisdom Through the Years*"

Rank #2 Queen Darlene- "*Carrying the Fire*"

Rank #3 Siso Dhladhla- "**Motherly Men**"

To review all episodes on "*A Mother's Perspective*" please click the link below

<https://spotifyanchor-web.app.link/e/iHTwIFv8hwb>

To support Diverse & Inclusive programming at LFP please donate to the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion fund link below. Or issue a check to Lansing First Presbyterian Church and write "DEI" in the memo line.

<https://bit.ly/LansingFirstPresbDEIFund>

Director of Congregational Life and Community
Prince Jerold Solace

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF MUSIC/MUSIC MINISTER

*The aim and final end of all music should be none other than the glory of God
and the refreshment of the soul.*

-Johann Sebastian Bach

Music at First Presbyterian Church continued to find new ways to glorify God as well as healthfully embrace new ways to enhance our worship experiences in 2023.

Director of Music – Megan Higle has finished up her tenth Christmas with us as Director of Music. She continues to work closely with the pastor, Rev. Stanley Jenkins, our organist, Sergei Kvitko, our hand bell director, Darin Showalter, and the Worship Committee to stitch together worship services that uplift the lectionary and scripture readings and appropriately reflect our community.

Megan continues to keep our licensing of hymns, service music and anthems/special music up to date and “legal” through OneLicense and other avenues (this applies for both the printing of words and/or music in our bulletins and for the streaming of our worship services).

Some music highlights in 2023...spring worship service featuring “Songs for the Journey” by Keven Siegfried, and an exciting offering of “Christmas Cantata” (Pinkham) with brass choir, organ, soloists and choir in December.

Special services (outside of Sundays) during the year included the imposition of ashes on Ash Wednesday; Communion Service on Maundy Thursday; Tenebrae service on Good Friday; Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols.

The First Epistle, our webpage, building monitors, the occasional poster, and FaceBook are being utilized to educate & communicate with members and non-members about music events, hymn/anthem selections and ways we can praise God through music.

Organist – Dr. Sergei Kvitko has celebrated 27 years of service at First Presbyterian Church. He is an integral part of our worship life.

Chancel Choir – The Chancel Choir is a mostly volunteer group which typically rehearses weekly (September through May/June) and presents up to two (2) anthems each Sunday, as well as lead hymns and service music. They sing a variety of styles – classical, gospel, renaissance, 20th century, etc. – and strive to highlight the theme presented on Sunday mornings. Collectively, the chancel choir provides over 10,000 hours of volunteer time in rehearsal and services and learns 75+ pieces of music annually. They are an amazing group of people!

Section Leaders & Interns– we are blessed to be able to continue having paid section leaders in our choir. Their leadership and musicianship encourage, inspire and complement our chancel choir. We are happy to continue our relationship with our section leaders, Katie Sundeen (soprano - Bachelor of Arts; Music at MSU), Tori Tyler (alto – Masters Candidate in Musicology at MSU), Ben English (tenor – Assistant Director) and Colin Dewitt (bass – Music Education at MSU). We were also blessed with funding from Plymouth Congregational Church from September – December with Annie Rowbal (soprano – music teacher in Holt).

*If you would like to continue offering this service to our congregation, consider making a donation to the **Section Leader Scholarship Fund!***

Bells of First –This all-volunteer choir rehearses weekly (September – May) and provides music for our worship services monthly. Under the direction of Darin Showalter, the bell choir has continued to be an important part of our musical offerings.

Children & Youth – The challenge continues in engaging our children and youth through music, we are always looking for creative ways to empower our children and youth. The children presented their Christmas Pageant (“The King’s Birthday”) in December and are looking forward to being a part of the musical fabric of our community.

Guest Instrumentalists – We have been able to have a variety of other instruments join us in our worship – vocalists, flute, violin, viola, cello, trumpet, French horn, trombone, bagpipes, oboe, percussion, hand bells– from both inside and outside our faith community. Vocal and instrumental soloists generously provided special music for some of our worship services during the summer months.

Concerts –The Lansing Symphony Chamber Series returned, as did The Boogie Woogie Kid. We were excited to host the Paul Keller Big Band on their “Christmas for Jazz Lovers” concert for the fifth time. We continue to be the home for the Lansing Children’s Choir, the Glen Erin Pipe Band and the Capitol City Chordsmen.

Looking ahead into 2024, it is our sincere hope that we continue to encourage and enrich your worship and give you opportunity to share in fellowship through music.

- Along with the Youth and Membership, the Chancel Choir will host an All Church Talent Show in February
- The Boogie Woogie Kid will hopefully be back this spring!
- Members of the choir and congregation are heading to Italy in April for a choral tour.
- The Chancel Choir will begin rehearsing “Requiem” by Gabriel Faure to present at our Annual Spring Music Sunday – mark your calendars for Sunday, April 21!
- We will also host concerts by the Lansing Children’s Choir and the Lansing Symphony Chamber Music Series.

On behalf of the music staff (Sergei, Darin, Katie, Annie, Tori, Ben, and Colin) I thank the congregation for their continued support of the music program here at First Presbyterian.

Respectfully submitted,

Megan Higle

Mission Interpretation and Social Justice Committee

First Presbyterian Church of Lansing

Members of the Committee were: Mike Bryan, Willye Bryan, Carol Wallace, Elda Keaton, Betsy Sneller. Prince Solace, staff.

The Mission Committee has again been working very diligently in support of Mission giving and social justice for First Presbyterian Church of Lansing in 2023!

The Mission Interpretation and Social Justice Committee oversees the contributions and allocations directed by First Pres. The Committee does this through allocating funds to non-profit organizations in five categories. The organizations that we contribute to are listed below.

Food and Shelter: *Loaves and Fishes, provides short-term emergency and long-term transitional housing, advocacy, and support services for homeless men, women, and children in a caring Christian environment; First Presbyterian Food Pantry, provides food to Lansing residents in need; City Rescue Mission, provides shelter to GLA homeless populations; Haven House, guide and support families who face homelessness on their paths to stable homes; Advent House, provides temporary shelter and daily meals and helps the homeless out of poverty; End Violent Encounters (EVE), Inc., shelter for victims of domestic violence; Shared Pregnancy, support for young mothers and children; Holy Cross (former Volunteers of America). First Presbyterian Lansing Deacon Board, First Pres Deacons provides holiday baskets for local community families. The Deacons also provides support for two families at Christmas time through a program called the Angel Tree.*

Health: *Lansing Area Aids Network, dedicated to meeting the needs of people with HIV/AIDS; Friends of CROP, dedicated to ending hunger in local communities.*

Education: *Global Institute of Lansing (GIL), provides high school diploma program for refugee populations (housed at First Pres); Opportunities Unlimited for the Blind (Gwen Botting, founder, provides summer camps for vision impaired young people); Covenant Network, the Covenant Network of Presbyterians seeks an equity still not fully realized for LGBTQIA+ people in church and society.*

International: *Presbyterian Disaster Relief, supply aid to areas affected by natural disasters and immigration issues; Macheo children's hunger program in Kenya; CEPAD, water filters and direct aid in the event of natural disasters to families in Nicaragua; Agape Community Transformation (ACT) which encourages healthy families and hunger issues in Uganda, Central Africa; Friends of Child Protection of South Africa, ministers to children who have been victims of sexual abuse and trauma; Wum Cameroon West Africa, Water Project, provides infrastructure and water delivery to the Wum community and high school; Syria/Lebanon Disaster Relief, provides support for church and community disasters in those areas; Silence Kills Support Group from Botswana, the group engages the marginalized and stigmatized People Living with HIV (PLWHIV) to fight for their rights, seek equitable access to public health, and advocate for the protection, promotion, and fulfilment of the rights and banish stigma.*

Local Mission and Community Development: ACTION of Greater Lansing, *community organization that seeks to address root causes of marginalized and disadvantaged communities by organizing for systemic change*; **Building Community and Family Initiatives (BCFI)**, *enrichment programs for community youth in marginalized and underserved communities*; **Northwest Initiative (NWI)** *northside neighborhood community development program (housed at First Pres)*; **UKirk @MSU**, *Presbyterian youth support for college students*; **Michigan Interfaith Power**, *offers practical ways to put faith into action by promoting energy efficiency, renewable energy, and other sustainable practices that lead to a cleaner, healthier, and more just world.*

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - These funds are dedicated to our Church’s vision to “strengthen ties with marginalized communities and actively engage communities such as LGBTQ, refugee, Latino, African American, American Indian and other excluded or marginalized communities in Lansing.” This project seeks ways to draw people from the margins of church life to greater involvement in the church. The DEI Team communicates frequently with the congregation regarding the life and mission of the church. The initiative uses the church mission to increase inter-generational relationship-building.

Justice League of Greater Lansing Michigan (JLGLM) – The JLGLM exists to repair the breach caused by the historical damage of slavery and its aftermath. In the spirit of repentance for the sin of racism, the group seeks to build relationships and facilitate reparations between predominately white houses of worship and collaborative partners to increase wealth equity for African Americans in the Greater Lansing Area. The JLGLM seeks to develop a network of religious houses from the Greater Lansing Area to create a Reparations Endowment Fund to make amends for the historic wrongs perpetrated on the African American community. The Reparations Endowment would be used for: grants for African American home buyers; scholarships for African American individuals who are attending accredited colleges or work-training programs; and grants for African American-owned business start-ups. The JLGLM is incorporated as a Michigan non-profit and has been approved for Federal non-profit 501(c)(3) status.

SOCIAL JUSTICE EVENTS

The Justice League of Greater Lansing Michigan (JLGLM) launched several events during 2023. Two apology events were organized and implemented. The first was at Reachout Christian Center Church in January and the second was on Juneteenth on the steps of the Capitol. The JLGLM sponsored a Fall Celebration and Fund-Raising event on November 3, 2023. The JLGLM has had payments from the faith community and individual donors of over \$350,000.00 by the end of 2023.

An announcement was made at the end of the year that \$50,000 has been allocated for awarding educational scholarships to 10 students in 2024!

SOME HIGHLIGHTS FROM ORGANIZATIONS HELPED BY FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

MACHEO

Priscilla's Journey from Struggle to Success in Drought-Stricken Kenya Triumph Over Adversity

In the heart of Gachororo slums, located in Juja, Kiambu County, Kenya, Priscilla, a 29-year-old single mother of three, once faced a reality that seemed insurmountable. Her story, one of resilience, determination, and transformation, showcases the power of community support and empowerment in the face of economic hardship brought on by persistent drought.

Priscilla's hardships began as a series of challenges that threatened the well-being of her family. Struggling to secure a stable source of income, she faced the harsh reality of unemployment and an unforgiving drought that plagued her region. Casual jobs were scarce, making it difficult for her to put food on the table and provide for her children's most basic needs. A sick child added to her burden, amplifying her struggles and deepening her sense of despair.

The tide of Priscilla's life began to change when Macheo's diligent social worker identified her through the headteacher of the primary school her children attended. Macheo, an organization committed to transforming lives through holistic support, recognized the urgent need to uplift Priscilla and her family from their dire circumstances. The first home visit was an eye-opening experience. Witnessing Priscilla's determination in the midst of adversity, Macheo's team resolved to provide her with the tools to overcome her challenges. The economic empowerment intervention proved to be a turning point in Priscilla's life. Equipped with essential entrepreneurial skills and financial management knowledge, she was given seed capital to kickstart her very own small business venture.

As weeks turned into months, Priscilla's transformation became evident. Her business, which dealt in selling various goods, began to flourish. The once dimly-lit path of uncertainty was now illuminated by a ray of hope. Through consistent follow-ups and support from Macheo, Priscilla's dedication and hard work blossomed into tangible success. She was able to provide for her children's most fundamental needs, ensuring they no longer went to bed hungry, were dressed adequately, and could attend school without worry.

Macheo's feeding program further bolstered the family's newfound stability, filling their lives with nourishment and optimism. Priscilla's smile, once hidden behind the weight of her circumstances, now radiated with joy and pride. "This is like a dream," she exclaimed, her voice trembling with emotion. "I can't believe that I'm now self-employed and my children are able to get enough food daily." "Words can't express the gratitude in my heart for the help I've received," Priscilla said, her eyes brimming with tears of joy. "Macheo's support has changed our lives in ways I never thought possible. Thank you for believing in me and giving me the chance to provide for my children. This isn't just a business; it's a symbol of hope and a brighter future for all of us."



The story of Priscilla and her family stands as a testament to the transformative power of compassion and support. Through the concerted efforts of Macheo's social workers, the community, and Priscilla's unwavering determination, the vicious cycle of poverty was broken. Priscilla's journey from struggle to success serves as an inspiring reminder that even in the harshest of circumstances, hope can be rekindled, lives can be uplifted, and dreams can be realized.

AGAPE COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION

In 2023, ACT (Agape Community Transformation) celebrated our 20th Anniversary of work with our Ugandan partners. Two events took place in Michigan, one in Midland and one in Traverse City. Then the Waechters, Sue (our USA Director) and her husband, John traveled in

December to surprise our friends by attending the 20th Celebration in Muko Sub County. Over 600 people attended from the Muko community and our orchestra performed with instrumental music and African dance.

The money given by our church in April 2023 helped 34 children from the Little Angels Orphanage to continue their education at Muko High School. These children often reach the age of 13 and are sent away from the orphanage with nowhere to go. This funding helped pay their room, board, and tuition so they can at least earn the equivalent of a high school education which may serve them in their future.

The MUSIC program was run in part by two highly achieving high school students, Brave and Norbert who have learned violin by zoom. Brave is able to perform on violin, viola, and cello. In November we rehired a former teacher, Howard Biryomuriwe, who conducted the 20th Celebration performances and is currently (in January 2024) running a camp for our students.

Muko High School maintained a high enrollment of 670 students and became financially stable at the end of the year. A Science lab was 80% completed, largely led by scientists from many states in the USA. Muko High School is currently beginning construction on a boys' dormitory, its initial stages funded completely by the Muko Community and the Diocese of Kigezi.

The Head Teacher's home at Muko High school was renovated, basically, to make it livable. Tile floors were installed, a new outdoor latrine replaced one that completely collapsed, ceilings were constructed, painting and shelving added. As we look forward to 2024, we seek funding to install a flush toilet at the Head Teacher's home and to roof the boys dormitory to protect the initial brick walls.

Thanks to our congregation at First Pres for their special donations and for helping our Mission Committee to be responsive to sustainable needs of the Muko Community.

Fair Trade Products: Carol Wallace also continues to offer Fair Trade coffee, tea, chocolate, and olive oil sales for church members. All the items can be purchased from Carol. The Presbyterian Coffee Project helps small-scale farmers in Latin America, Africa, Asia and the U.S. as they build a better future for themselves and their families.

The Mission and Social Justice Committee

Respectfully submitted,

Willye Bryan

Deacons Annual Report 2023
Submitted to Clerk of Session by Alyse Collins (Deacons Moderator for 2022-2023)

The deacons of First Presbyterian have been busy this year serving our church members and community members in God's love. This year, our service included:

- Serving six meals at Advent House Ministries (the fourth Sunday of every odd month). Roughly 100 meals were served each time and all leftovers were donated to Advent House Ministries.
- Sponsoring BINGO once a month (third Tuesday of the month) at the S. Washington Apartments. Prizes include toiletries, food, cleaning supplies, gift cards for groceries, and small kitchen appliances
- Lead the charge on adopting a family for the Angel Tree project. A family of six—a single mother and five children—were given four gifts each from the congregation as well as a \$100 gift card to Meijer, a vacuum, and cleaning supplies to help them move in to their new home. The family was tearful and so appreciative of our love and support for them and mentioned numerous times how much this helped them.
- Church Tailgate: served hotdogs & hamburgers while different church clubs and organizations supplied the side dishes and desserts. People ate, fellowshiped, and learned about the various opportunities available at LFPC—but mostly ate.
- Palm Sunday Donuts & Egg Hunt: the deacons supplied coffee, juice, and donuts while the young and young at heart hunted for Easter eggs around the Memorial Garden and church lawn.
- Earth Day Neighborhood Cleanup & Garden Cleanup: the deacons supplied the food, water, garbage bags, gloves and volunteers and invited church and community members to join and pickup garbage from The corners of Ottawa/Pine to Ottawa/Chestnut, en route to Ferris Park and back to the church as well as clean out the Community Garden beds to prepare them for spring planting
- Thanksgiving Holiday Baskets: we packed and dispersed 100 boxes to community members in need including everything required to make a traditional Thanksgiving meal. Each box cost roughly \$51.60. With the rising cost of inflation, we could not provide the usual toiletries, cleaning supplies or additional food that we have provided in previous years in order to keep the cost down for each basket.
- Christmas Baskets: we packed and dispersed 100 boxes to community members in need (if people received a Thanksgiving basket, they were not eligible to receive a Christmas basket also). Each box included all grocery items needed to make a traditional Christmas meal with ham as well as a few pantry staples to help families stretch their food during the holidays. Not as many ingredients are required for the traditional Christmas meal compared to the traditional Thanksgiving meal so we had room in our budget to still provide some extras. Each box cost roughly \$52.00
- Member Care: currently we officially have 13 homebound members who have been assigned a "deacon buddy" to check on them each month, visit them, send them notes and cards/flowers and bring them meals if needed. Some of these members have established relationships with deacons or Angel Team volunteers who have since rotated off deacons but have kept their connection to their "deacon buddy" and that person still maintains contact with the homebound member and sees to their needs.

- Homebound Communion: occasionally homebound members wish to receive homebound communion. Each Communion Sunday, the deacons have asked for at least two homebound communion kits be prepared in case a member asks for this. The deacons with buddies each ask their homebound member if they wish to receive homebound communion ahead of time each month and if that is desired, they need to communicate to whoever is preparing the homebound kits that (whatever number is needed) kits are prepared for that Sunday. A script is in each kit that gives prompts for serving the elements. If a script is not available, the deacons have been instructed to use the bulletin from worship that Sunday and use that as the script to serve communion. Homebound members often like to see the bulletin any way so they can see what happened in worship.

FOOD PANTRY BOARD REPORT

The food pantry volunteers continue to follow the Greater Lansing Food Bank and church policies as we distribute food four days per week. The food pantry board appreciates the large number of volunteers who schedule appointments, stock food supplies, fill orders and give the food to the clients. There have been as many as 35 people during the week helping operate the food pantry. The board reports through the Board of Deacons to the Session.

In 2023, the GLFB provided food to the pantry at no cost until August 1 when it began charging for certain food items and delivery. Because Federal Covid relief funds ran out, the GLFB began charging all pantries in its service area on August 1. Also according to GLFB policies, our church is required to help all households including ones outside of our service area. In 2023, we served an average of 298 households per month up from an average of 215 households in 2022. There was enough food provided in 2023 to feed 12,287 individuals from 3577 households compared to 8138 individuals served from 2583 households in 2022. A reduction in food stamps per household, inflation and serving an additional 3239 individuals from out of our area meant there was a large increase in demand for food from our pantry.

The Greater Lansing Food Bank is not obtaining adequate amounts of food through Feeding America and donations from major retailers. Therefore our pantry heavily relies on additional food and personal care items donated by the congregation, outside groups and churches to support our work. Cash donations and a grant from the Lopp Fund (a restricted fund managed in the Endowment Fund strictly to purchase food for the pantry) totaled \$36,828 in 2023 compared to \$21,368 in 2022. The City of Lansing once again provided \$5,000 for buying fresh vegetables, eggs, and bread that are not easily purchased in the inner city which is considered a “food desert”. All these funds are used to purchase these items from local food retailers and GLFB food supplies. The pantry is spending on the average \$4,000 per month since August 1 on these items for a total of \$41,802 in 2023. The balance in the pantry fund on December 31 was \$24,782. Our board is seeking financial support from GLFB and other sources to close the anticipated shortfall in funds in late 2024. The board also has reduced the amount of food disbursed to each client and discontinued providing most of the personal care items.

We are grateful that Ruth Brunet established the Lopp fund that continues to provide cash support of the pantry. We also thank Marilyn Mather for her continued purchase and donation of two grocery carts of food and personal care items every two weeks! Many other members and friends of the pantry continue to provide cash donations and purchases of hard to find items for our clients. For example, Rev. Barb Edema purchases baby diapers and feminine sanitary products for our clients. Marna Wilson has obtained grants and other donations as she promotes the good work of the pantry to her many contacts. A new organization called Food Rescuers is providing weekly supplies of “sell by date” items. The West Saginaw Aldi’s also provides weekly donations of “sell by date” items.

Lastly, we thank all of you, our volunteers and church staff that help our pantry’s food mission in Lansing. Praise God!

The Food Pantry Board

Adult Education Report for 2023

The Adult Education Committee is an umbrella committee that includes the Library Committee, Bible Studies, and the Adult Ed committee, which plans Adult Forum programs.

Adult Bible Study

For the first part of 2023, Wednesday Morning Bible Study was led by Pastor Stan Jenkins on zoom. During Pastor Jenkins' sabbatical and continuing afterwards, Rev. Bob Higle agreed to lead. The time of the Bible study has recently been changed to Wednesdays at 4:30 on zoom. Advent and Lenten devotionals were available. An evening Bible study during Advent was offered.

Adult Forum

Adult Ed Committee is responsible for Adult Forum – Sunday morning educational programs that follow worship. In addition to in-person meetings, we provide live zooms which are recorded and are subsequently posted on our web page, thanks to the technological expertise of Chair Ceci Anderson.

We average about 25 participants a session but about 40 different sets of people.

Some of our programs included:

Faith journeys

Prince Solace – Seeking to understand how our mothers impact our community involvement

Salim Makhoul – a Lebanese Christian

Scottish Highlands – Rev. Jenkins on sabbatical

Security in the Church –Emergency and Building Preparedness Committee

Instruction and Drill

Bible study:

Lectionary Bible Study on Wed. mornings

Advent Bible Study pm

Adult Forum Bible Study single units

Church & Social Issues

Exploration of the Matthew 25 Initiative

Justice League 2023 update – Willie Bryan

Dealing with Mental Health Issues – Heather Findley, Holt Schools

What Sense Can We Make of Our Politics Today and Next Year? – Charlie Herrick

Community Outreach

A Mother's Perspective podcast – Prince Solace

Model for Youth Success – Richard Dolinski

Community Gardens - Prince Solace, Barb Amundsen, Jackie Blankenship

Your Solutions Foster Care – Sinclair Franklin

Thanksgiving - Thanks But No Thanks – Elliot Ryser

New FPC website is presented – Ceci Anderson

Arts

Performance Aspects of Gospel Music – Tori Tyler

Influence of music from New Orleans on Gospel Music – Matthew Ball

Advent Workshop

Church History

Who Are We: Christian, Protestant, Presbyterian – Charlie Herrick

Various times for the 175th celebration, as facilitated by Brian Koon.

First Presbyterian Church Vision and Mission Statement presentation

Library Report:

We continue to monitor use of our indoor library as well as the outside Little Free Library (LFL) on Pine Street. Book check-out activity inside is largely the “all-church-read” and Book Club selections.

The LFL outside has had increased activity this year. So much so, that we restock it twice a week with CDs and books for both children and adults. We continue to have books for the LFL that support the “Read in Color” mission which is to provide books written by or about people of color.

We continue to need adult and children’s books in good condition that were published in the last several years. Donated books are placed in the basket on the floor in the library.

Thank you for your support!

Library Committee members: Linda Diepenhorst (chair), Doris Drake, Jana O’Connor, Karen Rude

Respectfully submitted by Linda Diepenhorst

Thanks goes to our faithful Adult Ed Committee members: Sharon Carr, George Bennett, Ann Harvey, Karen Viele, Shirley & Charlie Herrick, Bob Hagle, Sue Carey, Ceci Anderson, chair, staff advisors Prince Solace and Megan Hagle

Youth Education Committee

Annual Report 2023

The Youth Education Committee is responsible for providing opportunities for the children and youth at First Presbyterian Church to know and experience God's love, grow in their knowledge of the Bible, and develop a faith in Jesus Christ and his saving grace. The committee consisted of Ann Harvey (chair), Brian Jackson, and Megan Higle (staff resource)

During 2023 we were happy to continue our weekly Faith Formation on Sunday mornings for elementary age friends. Middle and high school age young adults often attend our combined youth group at Holt Presbyterian, which was facilitated by Pam Blair (FPC) and Rev. Kirk Miller (Holt) on Sunday evenings.

Highlights included:

- We sponsored a couple of High School students for summer camp at Camp Greenwood.
- We were excited to present a Kid's Christmas Pageant (our first one in about four years!) in December.
- Updated "busy bags" and purchased new items for the children's worship space.
- Worked with the childcare staff to ensure weekly coverage for those under the age of five on Sunday mornings.
- Cultivated a volunteer group of approximately five adults to facilitate Faith Formation from September – May.
- Participated in food-basket packing and the Advent workshop.
- Started a weekly "Children's Moment" during the Sunday Worship service every week.
- Volunteer clean-up of the playground area (huge shout-out to Pam Blair!)
- Acquired a mini-fridge for the child care room

As we look forward into 2024, we are:

Planning new laying down playground mulch for the play area outside

Updating some of the walls in the child-care room

Megan is presenting at the annual APCE Conference in St. Louis (for a second time)

Reorganizing the Faith Formation Classroom and the Storage Room

Considering reintroducing "Children In Worship" as part of our Faith Formation Program

Faithfully submitted,

Megan Higle & Ann Harvey

DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

“Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life, marking them by baptism in the threefold name: God, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then instruct them in the practice of all I have commanded you. I’ll be with you as you do this, day after day after day, right up to the end of age.”

- *Matthew 28:19-20 (The Message)*

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

www.lansingfirstpres.com

<https://www.facebook.com/LansingFirstPresbyterian/>

Committee Members: Brian P. Jackson (Chair), Ceci Anderson, Bill Collins, Rachel Showalter
(Staff participants: Megan Higle and Prince Solace).

The Communications Committee is charged by Vision 2020 with implementing “new means of making ourselves and our welcome better known through enhanced use of social media and print media.” Toward that end, the committee members have focused our attention on the First Presbyterian Church website, the church’s Facebook page, and sent media announcements for special community events held at the church.

YouTube and Zoom - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3Oc3CNH9wQiiyxI2wXhi-g>

Thanks to the dedicated work of Bill Collins, Andrew Mackoul and Prince Solace, Sunday worship continues to be stream in an on-line-only format using the Zoom web conferencing platform which all members and friends all over the world to watch our services live or at a later date.

Our "live" online attendance (via Zoom or YouTube concurrent with in-person worship at 10:00am) consistently averages 25-30 viewers each Sunday. Each worship service YouTube video continues to live on with another 40-50 views on average over the next month or so after live streaming. These statistics are fairly level from year to year over 2022 and 2023.

We have 147 regular subscribers to our YouTube channel, where all worship videos since April of 2020 are archived. In addition to regular worship services, our capability to stream special events and services (such as weddings, funerals, or concerts) brings hundreds of additional viewers to our YouTube space each year.

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/LansingFirstPresbyterian/>

Facebook is a cost-effective tool for spreading news about the church and its congregation. Our church has 434 followers at the end of 2023.

To make this investment in time, creativity, and resources be more effective, we need church members to “share” posts and videos.

We encourage church members to photograph and or video record and post the church in action, especially our food pantry. Our goal has been to post something on our page every single week of the year. Because of these efforts, thousands of social media followers have learned about our church in 2023. Facebook distributes church posts to people who “like” the page, as well as to their family and friends.

Facebook History

Year	Number of followers who “liked” the Church Facebook Page
2014	38
2015	281
2016	380
2017	401
2018	418
2019	424
2020	467
2021	491
2022	526
2023	434

Website Activities:

The First Presbyterian Church website (<http://www.lansingfirstpres.com>) is designed as a tool for outreach to the broader Lansing community. The site includes our church mission statement, our Vision 2020 goals, the First Epistle, ministries information, a calendar of events, and church reports.

Last year, Megan created a new website using a more user-friendly platform called WIX. She has transfer over all relevant information and working with Ceci Anderson to provide updated photos.

There is untapped potential on the website that could benefit the church if additional volunteer support was available from any individual(s) willing to learn or having knowledge of WIX. Anyone interested should contact Megan Higle

If you are interested in promoting the great works of First Presbyterian Church of Lansing, please contact Brian Jackson at brianpdjackson@gmail.com or call 517-214-7513. There is so much more that could be done.

Respectfully Submitted by
Brian P Jackson

2023 Membership Annual Report

The year began with a couple new events. We hosted a game day and a Valentine Breakfast. Both events were well received by those who attended. Then we brought back the World communion Sunday Potluck and served lunch for those who helped decorate the church for advent.

Our church hosted the Lake Michigan Presbytery meeting in June. We want to thank everyone who helped make this a huge success. This took a great deal of preparation and many volunteers. The biggest recommendation we have for hosting in the future is this must be on a Saturday due to all that happens at the church during the week.

We celebrated four Thank You Sundays this year. We took time to recognize how people born outside the United States have contributed to the life of our church. We thanked all the gardeners, especially Jackie Blankenship. We thanked the dedication and work of the deacons and elders. Then finally we recognized the work of all the people who take care of us at church, like the Angel Team, the Deacon Buddies, Charlie Herrick, Chris DeYonke, and Stan Jenkins.

With technical help from Darla Jackson, we created a pew flyer for new people to connect to the church.

The card ministry is ongoing. We sent out over 300 Birthday cards and over 220 Christmas cards. We can do this thanks to all who donated cards and stamps and all the people who took the time to sign cards and mail them. Thank you to all who have helped. We know this means the world to some of our members.

Coffee Hour has a new location in the GIL room downstairs and it is working out well. We thank the people who do volunteer to help with this fellowship activity, however we still struggle to find volunteers.

We ended the year with a hard look at how and what we do for our members. After much discussion, we felt we need to reach out to younger members to see what programs would help them connect with the church. Then we also have begun to find out how to connect to members in their daily lives, such as attending concerts, games, and events in which members are involved. We want to publicize these events so people can attend. We also have discovered we need to create a list to show people how they can volunteer. We have new members and visitors, but we need something to hand them to show them how they can help the church. We will start the new year working on these areas.

We always look for help and ideas. Contact Membership if you want to see something we would love to work with you.

Respectively Submitted, Pam Blair chairperson

First Presbyterian Church Men's Group

The First Presbyterian Church Men's Group (FPC Men) was formed in 2014.

The purpose of FPC Men is to: Worship, Serve, Grow in the faith, and have the opportunity for Fellowship.

In 2023 the FPC Men:

- provided transportation for two church members for medical appointments;
- participated in the annual Adopt a River clean-up;
- had a get-together at the home of Jim Donaldson.

Many thanks to Jim for hosting!

If a church member or frequent attender is needing assistance that FPC Men may be able to provide (e.g., transportation), the request for assistance can be made by contacting the church office or Brian Koon.

Men of ALL age groups are invited to participate in FPC Men as their time and schedules permit.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brian Koon

LINK Annual Report - 2023

LINK Leaders as of December 2023:

Northeast Lansing/DeWitt; All Points North - Carole Orth & Pat Eenigenburg
Grand Ledge & West Delta - Howard Powers & Judy Whitman
West Lansing and North Delta - Deb & Jim Donaldson and Chris & Dan DeYonke
Downtown Link - Ann & Mark Harvey
East Lansing/Meridian Twp./Williamston - Kathe & Sam Smith
South Lansing - Bethanne Jenks & Prince Solace
Holt/Mason/Delhi Twp./Eaton Co. Joyce & Gary Schaub

LINK is an organized expression of our love and concern for one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. Our purpose is to assure that all who consider First Presbyterian Church their spiritual home are part of an established small group of caring friends.

History: A Steering Committee was formed and began meeting in October, 09. Along with its workgroups it met monthly through June of '10 and resuming in September, '10, when it began meeting on an as-needed basis. Several organizational documents were produced and 35 group leaders were recruited, oriented, and commissioned by May, '10. All congregation members and friends were assigned to one of 12 groups each with at least 2 assigned leaders. Today those twelve groups have been reduced to seven.

LINK is the acronym for **LInking Neighbors in Koinonia**. *Koinonia* is a New Testament word for "fellowship", which equates to sharing and participating with our brothers and sisters in Christian fellowship.

LINK continues to be a recognized program in the life of the church. Some groups remained extremely active in 2023, while others remained connected on a less active mode. Shirley Herrick continues to take the lead role in vitalizing and breathing life into LINK. As the year progressed, our LINK groups continue to be realigned with some new LINK leaders while some leaders having been involved with LINK from its inception.

As LINK continues to be a part of our church environment, active steps are being taken to promote and bring LINK to the forefront of our church activities. LINK activities are promoted through activities such as Minute for Mission, LINK groups hosting coffee hours, "B-roll" slides for the on-line morning worship", write-ups in the First Epistle on past and upcoming events, and the LINK display board.

The primary goal continues to be the development of an active, stable group available to every congregation member. Objectives include: Ongoing leader support; ongoing communication involving the church office, the web site/bulletin/First Epistle, the Session and Deacons; The maintenance of committed, well oriented group leaders; and an enhanced capacity of each LINK group for member care.

Respectfully Submitted by Shirley Herrick

Worship, Music and The Arts Committee

Annual Report 2023

The members of the 2023 Committee include: Gwen Botting (co-chair), Steve Warnaar, Stan Jenkins – Pastor, Bill Collins (Clerk of Session), Judy Whitman, George Bennett.

During this time of fiscal austerity, the committee utilizes diminished funds from the Chancel Guild line item to accomplish our tasks. Special projects and special events line items have been given to the general fund, and Chancel Guild has been reduced.

The Committee thanks all those who served in church services as liturgists, who presented Prayers for the People, special readings and candle lighting, special music and hanging of paraments.

Special thanks to Judy Whitman for her work arranging flowers is warranted.

The Committee thanks Bill Collins for his work to maintain the church's digital presence. The committee appreciates the Capitol City Chordsmen (through Steve Warnaar) and Bill for moving hymnals.

The Committee thanks Franco and Salima Nashef for their preparation of communion elements and Bill for washing the cups. This writer apologizes for any omission in recognizing those who have contributed.

Respectfully submitted,

George Bennett

Nominating Committee Report
First Presbyterian Church of Lansing, Michigan
12 September 2023

The Nominating Committee completed its search for candidates for 2024 church leadership in August. The following slate of nominees are submitted to Session for approval and for election by the congregation at the October Congregational Meeting.

Session Elders:

(renewing 3-year terms): Ceci Anderson, Carol Wallace
(new 3-year terms): Elliot Ryser, Pam Blair

Deacons:

(renewing 3-year terms): Barb Amundsen, Bethanne Jenks, Chrisann Lowe
(new 3-year terms): Mike Bryan, Sue Carey, Jean Jones
(1-year terms): Linda Snyder, Judy Whitman

Audit Committee(1-year terms):

Ceci Anderson, Bill Collins, Nancy Duncan, Bill Rude, David Viele

Nominating Committee(1-year terms):

Kathy Banghart, Darla Jackson, Linda Snyder, Judy Whitman, Chris Venetis

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Collins, Nominating Committee Chair

Attendance
2023

	in person	online	total per day				
January	42	30	72				
	82	32	114	October	72	24	96
	82	34	116		73	20	93
	77	38	115		70	27	97
	61	38	99		82	27	109
February	82	31	113		69	26	95
	80	34	114	November	107	26	133
	57	30	87		78	23	101
	78	29	107		91	22	113
March	84	29	113		76	25	101
	67	31	98	December	93	24	117
	89	30	119		100	23	123
	78	28	106		92	22	114
April	139	29	168	Christmas eve a.m.	65	24	89
	150	15	165	Christmas eve	96	22	118
	44	28	72	Dec. 31	50	30	80
	76	30	106	Totals	4,059	1,407	5,466
	82	31	113	average	75	26	101
May	99	26	125				
	130	28	158				
	69	28	97				
	62	23	85				
June	90	22	112				
	68	22	90				
	44	25	69				
	52	27	79				
july	51	24	75				
	71	21	92				
	56	24	80				
	52	21	73				
	57	22	79				
August	70	18	88				
	50	20	70				
	69	23	92				
	50	23	73				
September	62	21	83				
	75	20	95				
	58	29	87				
	60	28	88				

BUILDING AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE

2023 Annual Report

As we age, we find (at least I've found) that physically, things not working as well as they used to, or not at all. The same is true of our beautiful building. As it ages, it's also presenting its own aches and pains in need of treatment.

Throughout 2023, your Building and Grounds Committee has dealt primarily with heating, air conditioning, plumbing, and electrical repairs. These are just the obvious concerns. There has been a multitude of other, somewhat lesser concerns that have required our attention. A list could be made but it's too long.

We've attempted to focus our efforts on reducing operating costs. Maintenance, lawn care, snow removal/plowing, and elevator service are but a few examples. Keeping an eye on possible future building maintenance needs is something we try to address before larger problems arise.

Please know that your B&G Committee is dedicated to keeping our church home functioning as well as we are able for the benefit our congregation and community. If you feel the need to serve, we welcome additional members to our committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Campbell – Committee chair

Ron O'Connor

Dick Poland

Mike Carey

Laird Eddie

Karen Rude

Stan Jenkins – Staff

Betsy Calvert – Staff

2023 Emergency Preparedness Committee

The Emergency Preparedness Committee (EPC) is a subcommittee that operates under the umbrella of the First Presbyterian Church Building and Grounds Committee. The EPC is responsible for maintaining an Emergency Preparedness Plan that provides basic measures designed to prevent or assist in any future emergency situations. Emergency situations include medical emergencies; fire safety and evacuation; severe weather/tornadoes; power and water outages; and snow policy. Starting in 2020, at the request of Session, the Emergency Preparedness Committee (EPC) also focused on identifying health and safety practices relating to the Covid-19 pandemic.

During 2023, the EPC met four times. The group addressed previous health and safety topics which had been overshadowed by the pandemic, as follows:

1. Developed a policy regarding building security during evening meetings. The policy was presented to the Session for adoption.
2. Assessed first aid kit supplies inventory.
3. Checked status of Automatic Electronic Defibrillators (AEDs). Recommended replacing the two current aging AEDs and purchasing one additional AED for installation on the second floor where none are currently present.
4. Assessed the status & use of walkie talkies by staff and ushers.
5. Held CPR AED training. A total of nine church members and staff participated in the American Heart Association CPR AED Training on October 29.

EPC members also contributed to three adult forum sessions which included presentations on the following:

1. January 22 – General discussion of threats and how to react.
2. April 30 – Overview of First Presbyterian Church’s Emergency Preparedness Plan. This included information on communications, medical emergencies, resources, and response to fire, tornados and active threats.
3. November 5 - Held a building/emergency procedures drill.

The EPC will continue to monitor local, regional and national developments in consideration of how best to protect the health and safety of the congregation.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Bryan

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

2023 Annual Report

The Personnel Committee is responsible for church staffing, personnel policies, and other administrative issues. By its nature, much of this work is confidential and out of the view of the church body. The committee is very interested to know of the concerns and affirmations of the church body as it relates to the functioning of the church. We continue to interact with members of the congregation. We find this very helpful as we work with staff in their efforts to be effective in their roles.

The major activity of 2023 was hiring a new church administrator and custodian. We are grateful that Betsy Calvert and Kliff Nhengu applied and accepted our offer of employment. With these positions filled, we are fully staffed.

The Personnel Committee has expanded with a number of new members. Currently, Darla Jackson, Ron O'Connor, Elliot Ryser, Willye Bryan, Brian Jackson, George Bennett, and Steve Fitton are members with Pastor Stan Jenkins ex-officio. Please feel free to contact any of the members with affirmations and concerns.

Submitted By Steve Fitton – Chair

2/17/24

ENDOWMENT FUND COMMITTEE

The Endowment Fund Committee met four times in person and via Zoom this year to review performance reports prepared by fund manager, The Windsor Group Ltd. of Indianapolis. The committee is composed of members Ceci Anderson, Mike Carey, Dan DeYonke, Denice Dickinson, Jim Donaldson, Nancy Duncan, Mark Fellows, Kim Ringlever, Carole Orth and Dave Viele. The Windsor Group was purchased in July, 2023 by Corient but the managers of Windsor will continue to work for Corient and manage the church endowment fund.

The combined value of the general and designated Endowment Funds totaled \$2,037,014 as of December 31, 2023. The fund portfolio maintained its target allocation between asset classes of 65 percent equities (stocks), and 35 percent debt securities (bonds), cash and equivalents. The fund grew by \$131,477, net of disbursements to the church and fund manager expenses, in 2023.

Annual disbursements are based on the church's policy of taking 5 percent of the value of each fund, calculated based on the average of the prior 12 quarterly valuations. This method tempers the effects on church funding from any sharp downturn in fund valuations in any quarter or year.

Recommended grants to the church for 2023 were \$103,547 which was almost identical to what was available in 2022. The church's general operating budget received unrestricted funds of \$80,064 which is 17.3% of the revenue used to pay for staff salaries, utilities, maintenance and other routine expenses. The designated restricted funds available in 2023 were \$23,483 which supports scholarships to Alma College, the food pantry, chapel music expenses, building repairs and other purposes.

Here is a breakdown of the unrestricted and restricted funds made available in 2022:

Unrestricted funds for the General Fund:	\$80,064
Harvey Whitman Fund (supports youth ministry)	\$454
Jean Byrd Fund (pays extraordinary church repairs)	\$2,306
Chapel Music Fund (maintain chapel instruments)	\$1,875
Barth Youth Fund (scholarships to Alma)	\$4,046
Lopp Emergency Food Fund (supports the pantry)	\$1,362
Woodhouse Fund (pays for medical expenses)	\$1,544
Audry McGee Fund (supports Christian Education)	\$3,413
Culpepper Fund (supports building and grounds)	\$8,251
Cummings Fund (supports building and grounds)	\$527

Contributions to the Endowment Fund are welcomed at any time! For more information see Stan Jenkins or any of the fund committee members. Thank you for your support.

Submitted by: Jim Donaldson, Chair of the Endowment Committee in 2023

FINANCE COMMITTEE

As one may infer from the name, the Finance Committee is charged with the responsibility of monitoring and advising Session regarding the monetary aspects relating to the operations of the Church. Additionally, we advise the Session regarding expenditures, financial policies, procedures, and practices.

2023 started out with the shock of a substantial deficit prediction but fortunately ended with a significantly smaller deficit than had been anticipated. Why one may ask can a staggering deficit be projected yet not realized? Well, through the grace of God, the answer is that the actual revenues were approximately \$42,000 higher than budgeted, reflected in the line items for Building Use and loose offerings in particular but also in deficit reduction donations and greater pledges, spending was reduced and, with the approval of Session, designated funds were allocated to appropriate, corresponding expenses. In the end, we closed 2023 with a deficit of approximately \$9,500.

This deficit will be carried over into the 2024 budget and, based on pledge amounts and other conservative revenue projections, the 2024 budget is, once again, a deficit budget. But, with fervent faith in the abundant grace of God, we pray that 2024 will end in a similar fashion as did 2023. First Presbyterian Church of Lansing will continue to minister and be a beacon to the neighborhood and Greater Lansing. Side note, did you know that the "Feeding of the 5,000", is the only miracle—aside from the resurrection—recorded in all four gospels (Matthew 14:13–21; Mark 6:31–44; Luke 9:12–17; John 6:1–14)? Remember what was done with five loaves and two fish? Our blessings surely exceed that!

Finally, we would like to thank Mark Fellows and Carol Johnson for their years of service on the Finance Committee. We would not be able to perform the work without the dedication of volunteers like Mark and Carol.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Donald B. Heck, PE
Chair, Finance Committee

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF LANSING
FINANCIAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

DRAFT REPORT TO SESSION 2023

(Reviewing Year 2022)

In accordance with the provisions of the **Book of Order (2019/2021) G-3.0113**, the Session appointed a Financial Review Committee to examine the financial records of First Presbyterian Church of Lansing. Those appointed to the 2021 committee were:

Bill Collins (chair) Nancy Duncan Bill Rude David Viele

The scope of this review covers the period from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022. This review focused particularly on the on the month of March 2022.

The group performed spot checks on all transactions, receipts, financial records, and payroll records for the month in question. Totals were matched between receipts and transaction records and signatures were verified where applicable. Church insurance for workers compensation, automobile, and umbrella insurance policies were all reviewed.

Observations and recommendations for follow-up:

- Printed accounts for the food pantry appear to be totaled by hand (handwritten). Ideally accounts and totals for final recording should be computer-calculated and printed for records.
- The finance report is gathered in loose pages which are not consistently numbered or dated. The bundle includes obsolete worksheet copies of the balance sheet. When finalized, report pages should be numbered and stapled, and ideally each spreadsheet page should include the run date. Balance sheets should be finalized and noted as such. If worksheet copies are to be saved, they should be kept separate from the final report bundle.

These items are noted primarily for easier review of church finances. All accounts were balanced and there were no missing receipts or signatures noted.

The committee is pleased that previous recommendations have been duly adopted and church finances and procedures are well ordered. It was also noted that committee members are well known to the other committees now and have been occasionally consulted for input on policies and procedures outside the regular review process. While financial procedures and record keeping are well maintained in the church, communication to the congregation about budget issues is a constant challenge.

Committee members will observe future meetings of the Finance Committee, the Endowment Committee, and the weekly counting of collections and report to the committee as needed.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Collins

Financial Review Committee Chair