



First Press Magazine

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From Pastor Laurie

The church is not a building; the church is not a steeple; the church is not a resting place; the church is a people. I am the church! You are the church! We are the church together!

Remember this Sunday School song? We never imagined we'd have to put this truth into practice by shutting down all in-building activities starting on March 16. For twelve Sundays and counting, in order to do our part to prevent the spread of COVID-19, we have been learning how to be "the church together" *without* using our building in the ways we have cherished since 1878. How we do miss what we have taken for granted all these years! Leading worship with the help of four amazing, faithful co-worship leaders each Sunday in our empty sanctuary has put us all to the test. And yet, as this Summer issue of our First Press Magazine bears witness: our FPC Church body is resilient and steadfast in its love for Christ and one another and for the mission to which we are called. We have learned the potential and the limitations of Zoom. Many of us have been stretched to learn new technologies and new terms such as "social distancing," "flattening the curve," "gallery view," "Facebook Live." The images and stories in this issue speak to the unique challenges we are facing faithfully, together. Truly we know now first hand, and are living into this truth:



*The church of Christ cannot be bound by walls of wood or stone.
Where charity and love are found, there can the church be known.*

LOOKING AHEAD WITH ANTICIPATION

As soon as we reach Phase One of the Badger Bounce Back Plan, plans are in the works to begin Outdoor Courtyard Fellowship events, Open Sanctuary Hours for meditation and prayer, and more. Our twice weekly e-blasts (and mailings) will keep you up-to-date with these exciting developments

First



Press

The Magazine of First Presbyterian Church — Marshfield

Summer 2020



FPC Marshfield Virtual Worship for May 31, 2020

63 views • May 30, 2020

1 0 SHARE SAVE

Beginnings



Say **Hello**
to our new church secretary!
Meranda Lelonek

Meranda is from Northern Minnesota where they say things like Uffda and You Betcha, and make pies and casseroles a plenty! A wife and mother to seven, it's no surprise that her kids' favorite meal is Tater-tot Casserole!

She holds a B.S. in Applied Studies with an Emphasis in Communications and in Business Management. She owes much of her success to the mentors and friends (of all ages) she has met along the way. Her faith has carried her through some dark days. "God didn't intend for us to build fences but to share in community . . . it takes a community to raise strong, healthy kids . . . we all need to lean on one another and it's good to have support."

Meranda enjoys reading, cooking, baking, spending time with friends and family, sewing, and quilting. She hopes to meet more people in Marshfield in the coming year and become more active in the community here.



Dottie Rose Krohn, daughter of Ted and Kelsey, was baptized on Easter Sunday, April 12, 2020.

FPC member, **Dan Crump**, will attend PC(USA)'s national General Assembly as a commissioner for Winnebago Presbytery. Please pray for this assembly facing its first ever online convention.



Session met on behalf of the congregation to ordain and install the newest class of Deacons and Elders. The new Deacons are **Jennifer Anderson, Sarah Beighley, Adele Heller, Kathy Nimm, Patricia Silva** and **Janet Singer**. New Elders are **Clay Bernick, Dan Burk, Jan Clouse, Dan Crump**, and **Gerri Toyama**.

Green Team - Faith in Action

Since COVID-19 Social Distancing measures will be happening into the summer months, the FPC Green Team invites our congregation to walk, bike, or drive to our Little Free Library to see what is new. Located on the North West entrance to the church off of Adler we think you'll be pleasantly surprised. We've recently refreshed the book supply with overflow donations from the Canasta Basica Gratuita event, and we feel there are many titles for all reading levels and ages. This is a free service; take a book or donate a book with no obligation to return it.



Our newest addition to the garden is a Mason bee house which was installed last summer to support critical pollinators. While you are there, feel free to relax on the reading bench and take in the breezes, the fragrances, the sunshine (or rain if that's your thing) and enjoy the butterfly garden's colors. If you're

still enough and blessed, perhaps a butterfly or two will grace the carefully selected perennials planted and nurtured by the FPC children and our team for the past three summers. As you read and rest, notice the blazing star, salvia, milkweed, spiderwort, false indigo, larkspur, lobelia, and native grasses. Each has its own beauty and attraction for a variety of butterflies and other pollinators.



Our small tribute to Kristy Huebschen stands quietly among the plants she so dearly loved in life. May a visit to our site provide you with respite during these anxious times.



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Faith Stories Carolyn Opitz

Carolyn was born and raised in Hayes Center, NE, pop. 350. She used to walk the two blocks to the Congregational church by herself to go to Sunday school. Grandmother who lived twelve miles out of town on a farm with no running water or electricity was a big influence. Spending a lot of her childhood on that farm, Carolyn often went to her grandmother's church. The women wore long dresses "like the Mennonites," and dropped to their knees when they prayed. Her deeper connection with her grandmother's generation than her parents' made easy the communication with the home-bound and elderly people she served during her nursing career and as our Parish nurse.

She married her husband, Jim, a lifelong Presbyterian, and moved around constantly during his six years of service in the Air Force. Moving to Marshfield in 1969, they discovered a college friend, Virgil Taylor, pastored the local Presbyterian church, and its members included fellow alumni, Bill and Lois

Meyers. The connections made Marshfield and FPC feel like home very quickly.

Carolyn is quick with a smile and a positive perspective. It's not always that way, she says, but she tries to return to happiness as soon as possible. "We have a choice to live a happy life. It is dependent upon all of us being good, respectful, and civil to each other." When times get tough, it not our religious beliefs or political ideas that get us through. It is the relationships we have dutifully maintained, not our creeds and religious beliefs, that allow us to get beyond our troubles together, to deal with current troubles as if they are already in the rearview mirror.

In these dark, divisive times, Carolyn wonders, "Who will lead us back together? How is this going to get turned around?" One thing is sure. We should be grateful for Carolyn's lived example of respect and civility, her refusal to allow sadness to linger one moment beyond what is necessary, and her desire for connection and a vision we all can share. We will do well to follow that example.

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The line ended with 120 bags of children's books and hygiene items

Hispanic groceries who graciously offered to distribute them for free to their customers. All food found a needy home by the end of the day.

Having seen the turnout in Abbotsford, the turnout at our event was a little disappointing, leading to questions about what could have caused the

a lot of food left over. The left-over food went directly to Abbotsford, Athens, and Wausau to serve families known to be in need without the ability to come to our event. Five parcels each went back to the

lower numbers. Perhaps it came down to issues of trust and communication which underlie the need in the first place. Maybe we should have done it on a Sunday. In any case, a lot of people got food that day and we can count that a success.

We are looking into how to build on this success to get the message to our Hispanic neighbors that they are valued members of our community and have a well-earned share in all a good life requires.



The smiles on these faces tell the story better than words.

Did you know?

- The Pentecost Offering so far is at \$925, but online giving site still has a button to give to this important ministry. Remember 40% will stay here to provide "Community Care" hygiene kits for N.O.W. boxes.
- Outreach sent two names to PDC Orenda Center to name our room. First choice was "Sanctuary of Hope," the second "Lakes and Prairies." We will learn which they choose once they open again.



Close-up Mark Borchardt

Mark was raised in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, a denomination known for its conservative doctrine. Growing up in 1960's Appleton, WI, Mark had a significant eye-opening when he left for college. The Newman Center provided a spiritual context for this wider world, laying the foundation for a lifelong faith.

The Borchardt family joined FPC in 1993. Mark and his wife, Dr. Gwen Stone, are very grateful to have raised their three boys, Jackson, Spencer, and Nate, with the help of the Sunday School and Youth programs here. FPC benefitted from his leadership in Session and on various committees. Mark was a vital part of the process that resulted in our new building. His family donated the golden cross on top of the steeple to honor his father.

However, in serving this community, Mark found himself at the center of virtually every strug-

gle and growing pain that created the uniquely open and welcoming community we now cherish. Far from being a space of quiet out of which to hear God's voice, the demands of church administration came to resemble his work-week job with the notable absence of a paycheck. Church worship failed to provide for him the day of rest and re-set he counted on to order his life and work the rest of the week. Until recently, Mark was left to find that in quiet space of home and family.

Mark has a vital lesson for us. "Humans need a space without tasks-at-hand, without a "To-Do" list, where there is time for reflection, a full stop to gain perspective and clearly see what is important." Yet humans resist this need to-the-death. Perhaps, this forced reset gifted to us by the coronavirus will allow us reclaim the treasure of one day of the week to ask what really matters. And live the rest of the week according to the answer.

FPC Marshfield Virtual Worship

It seems like lifetimes ago, but our last in-person Sunday morning worship was March 15th. The last Lenten Supper of our abbreviated season was the following Wednesday. The following Sunday, March 22nd, marked our first foray into online worship. Pulpit duty fell to Dan Crump that week as Greg Walsh scrambled to navigate all sorts of technological challenges from lighting to sound to video to internet. It was a steep learning curve for everyone. Thanks to everyone for offering ways to make the experience better.



Lesson one: don't stand in front of the window.



Beautiful home altars to bring church home.

Initially, the goal was to offer a live-streamed service that would bring everyone together at the same time, if not the same place. After several weeks of unsuccessfully trying to coax a spotty wifi and a heavily overloaded system to cooperate, the decision was made to record the service on the Saturday before and upload it for viewing on Sunday morning.



Home worship at the Cooper's. Shoes optional!

Our intrepid technical director, Greg Walsh, has made the most of that decision to improve each service from week to week, incorporating recorded testimonies, special music, and other church proceedings. We even celebrated our first ever online baptism with Dottie Rose Krohn and her parents. If

you have watched this steady improvement, you know that our virtual worship services have become something to celebrate, almost rivaling the in-person worship to which we hope one day to return.



Dottie Rose Krohn was our first ever online baptism on Easter Sunday, April 12.

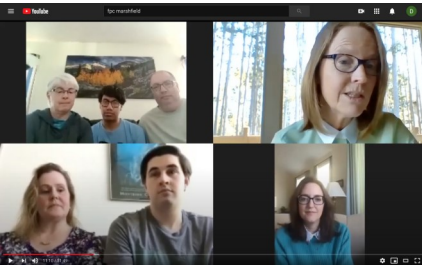


First Outreach Committee meeting by Zoom. The work goes on!

Church business has gone on with committee meetings by Zoom with the added benefit that our snow birds who leave the area during winter for warmer climes, and special guests can join in without the exigencies of travel. In some ways, "social distancing" has allowed us to come together in unimagined ways.

Perhaps one of the biggest challenges of this time is that the concerns for health and safety have become polarized. It is harder now that the state Supreme Court has struck down the state's "Safer-at-Home" orders leaving individual businesses and churches with no common sense of what these times require. Many churches are struggling with how and when to resume in-person worship.

Winnebago Presbytery has adopted the Wisconsin Department of Health Services' Badger Bounce Back program which allows phased reopenings dependent upon a 14-day period of decline.



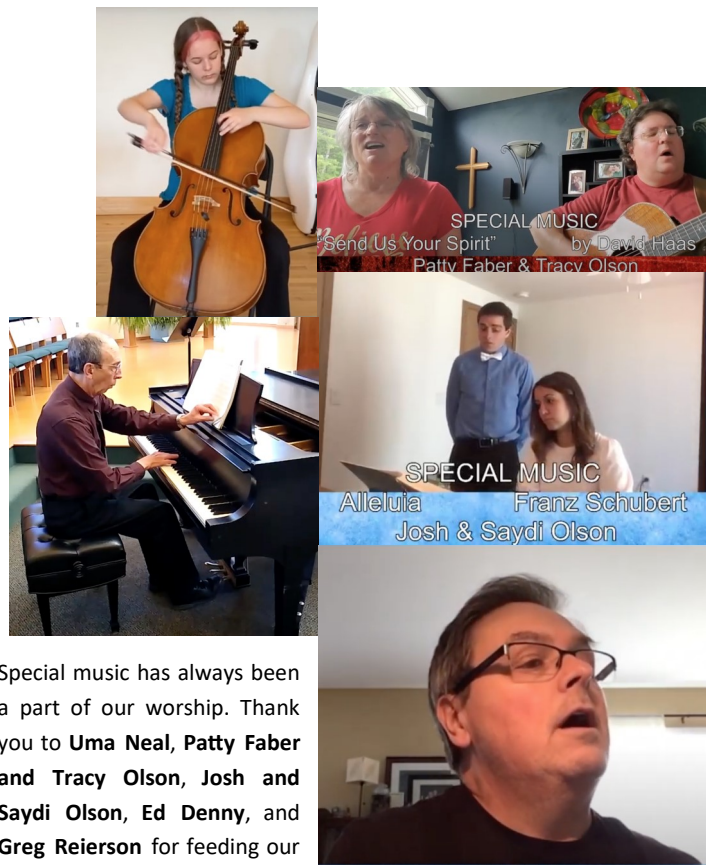
Celebrating our High School Grads: Isaac Eberl and Lucas Paulman

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ing COVID-19 infections. Faith-based activities have tougher guidelines. Sarah Moore-Nokes, our executive presbyter, offers two reasons: “1) Churches skew toward a higher risk age group, and 2) The activities at church are both high risk (singing, communion, fellowship) and happen over a prolonged period of time. ”

While it is tempting to call for opening the doors to in-person worship sooner, we must ask what path is most life-affirming both of others and of our own? Most of all, let us pray that whatever path is taken, may we seek unity and a common vision according to the Spirit’s guidance.



Special music has always been a part of our worship. Thank you to **Uma Neal, Patty Faber and Tracy Olson, Josh and Saydi Olson, Ed Denny, and Greg Reiersen** for feeding our souls with music.

Did You Know?

We can all learn from the travesty of George Floyd’s murder. Plans are afoot for a Zoom Forum for All addressing the sin of systemic racism. Watch the church calendar and the weekly eblast for developments on this exciting opportunity.



Could VBS happen this summer?

The Christian Education Committee remains hopeful! We recognize that it must fall within CDC recommendations, state guidelines, and what our own FPC Session pandemic task force is comfortable with. We could make this decision as late as mid July and still have time to plan and provide a modified VBS program in August.

We would like to offer a program similar in approach to what Luther Park provided for us in 2019, but without Luther Park’s help, we will need to abbreviate and simplify a bit. Factors to consider are our numbers of children and our VBS leaders' abilities and strengths. We are staying in touch with both Faith Lutheran Church and Good Shepherd Church in the event that planning a larger event is deemed safe. There may not be much time to publicize or advertise, but hopefully families are available and perhaps ready to take advantage of such a last minute opportunity.

Our priority is keeping our children, volunteers, and families safe, and we will prayerfully consider this first and foremost. It is uplifting and inspiring, though, to now consider the possibility of offering a modified VBS program if we can safely do so. There is so much uncertainty in this situation. We will adjust our plans as needed, but right now we are hoping to offer our children and families a VBS program in August.



Canasta Basica Gratuita

(free basic basket)

Through a series of fortunate events, we learned of a one-time food distribution event in Abbotsford to benefit the Hispanic folks living there, most of whom would not be receiving government stimulus checks to help amid the economic shut-down. The event was named “**Canasta Basica Gratuita** (free basic basket).



Bagging potatoes in Abbotsford

The plan was simple. No names were taken. No questions were asked. Everyone who came received a bag of food staples along with some Hispanic specialties. The event was held at the Police and Fire Station in Abbotsford. The line of patiently waiting cars never dropped below twenty even after the food had been exhausted. After it was over, we were asked to do a similar event here in Marshfield.



Bagging bulk rice into 1lb bags

The date was set for Saturday, May 16th and received Session approval. Marshfield Area Community Foundation, Inc. provided a \$2000 grant and an additional \$4600 was donated by 30 compassionate members of our church and larger community. Soup or Socks donated nearly 500 cans of variety beans. Food was purchased from Sysco, Festival Foods and the two local Hispanic groceries in town, Supermarket La Central and La Queretana. La Central allowed us to purchase food at cost. La Queretana packed bulk dry beans for us for free and donated many food items. PLEASE support these businesses to show our



120 bags of groceries!

gratitude for their assistance!

Barb Gillespie organized a children’s book collection and assembled 120 bags, each containing five books of various reading levels, to give to each car. Jackie Pickett and Karen Mitchell collected and packed various hygiene items. Info about Covid-19, domestic abuse support, literacy tutoring, and free community garden beds were included.



Jimmy Thomas manned the corner of Adler and Lincoln

was a beautiful sunny Spring day. Plenty of volunteers came to help direct traffic and pass out food, including a Hispanic family from Abbotsford and a Hispanic advocate from Athens. Canopies and tables were set up.



A traffic pattern was set up to hold at least twenty cars in queue. We were equipped to service at least 120 cars and they started lining up before the noon kickoff time. By the time we shut it down at two p.m., over sixty cars had come to receive food, leaving us with quite



Bridget Eberl at the driveway entrance

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