



Holly Presbyterian Church Connections

October Newsletter | Volume 20, Issue 10

From the Lion's Den (9-23-20)

In a classic episode of *The Simpsons*, the Sunday School is on Hell, where the tormented suffer in the lake of fire burning with sulfur day and night for ever and ever. "Ooh! Miss Allbright!" an enthralled Bart Simpson interrupts, hand raised. "Yes, Bart?" she answers. Bart asks, "But wouldn't you eventually get used to it, like in a hot tub?"

That might be the perfect summary of the year 2020. This week, the nation marked the 200,000th death from Covid-19—and yet it barely makes news. There have been 7,700 wildfires in California alone this year, and meteorologists have already exhausted hurricane names from A to Z, but we are unmoved by climate change. We might remember George Floyd and Brionna Taylor, but do we have the mental or emotional capacity for Jacob Blake or Daniel Prude? Accordingly, protests in Portland, Kenosha, and elsewhere continue but without media coverage. If 2020 is Hell – and it sure seems that way – then maybe it is like a hot tub, and we've grown accustomed to the heat.

Such inurement carries a big risk – that the urgency born of crisis will abate, our vigilance subside, our empathy for victims and those at risk run out. Some might call it "compassion fatigue," others simply "the new normal."

This is especially worrisome when it comes to our practices as worshiping communities. In some churches, it might appear as a loss of diligence in protecting our neighbors from possible exposure to the coronavirus and mounting pressure to go back to the way things were before. In other churches, it might lead to complacency about ever returning to in-person worship, resigning our members to isolation and spiritual atrophy.

As difficult as times are, we are not yet experiencing the crises that faced early Christians, who were persecuted, arrested, and killed for their faith. Yet even in those circumstances, the apostles encouraged them not to lose heart or give up hope, but to persevere in faithfulness. That is sound wisdom in our own situation too. The coronavirus is not going away; vaccines will not be available for most of us anytime soon. Even then, however, we won't be able to return fully to "the way things were before."

We can expect that it will take even more energy to maintain our level of vigilance as we move into Fall and Winter, as outdoor worship is less viable, and we have the Hobson's choice of either retreating to our homes or risking contact in enclosed spaces. I urge our pastors and sessions not to lose heart, but to continue to find safe and creative ways of nurturing faith in worship, pastoral care, and faith formation.

To help, the Presbytery is offering special grants of up to \$2500 to boost technological capacity to maintain congregational vitality, and ongoing grants of up to \$2500 for congregational transformation initiatives. Our synod also has "New Covenant" grants



for Congregational Development and Transformation, Multicultural and Justice Ministries, and Ministries in Higher Education.

For churches and pastors seeking relief, the Synod is also preparing online Advent and Christmas services for the weeks from November 29 through December 27. More information on those will be forthcoming.

Faithfully,

Dan Saperstein, Executive Presbyter

dsaperstein@presbylh.org

From the Lion's Den (9-2-20)

"Jesus Christ, as he is attested for us in Holy Scripture, is the one Word of God which we have to hear and which we have to trust and obey in life and in death." – *Theological Declaration of Barmen (Book of Confessions 8.11)*

One of the rich resources of our Presbyterian tradition is our history of proclaiming our faith publicly through confessions of faith. There are many such confessions in our history, but the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has identified twelve that we recognize as having special significance for the church.

These twelve form our [*Book of Confessions*](#), which is part of our church Constitution. They range from the Nicene and Apostles Creeds of the early church to modern confessions such as the Confession of 1967, A Brief Statement of Faith (1991), and the most recently adopted, the Confession of Belhar.

As our *Book of Order* states, "In these statements the church declares to its members and to the world who and what it is, what it believes, and what it resolves to do. [They] identify the church as a community of people known by its convictions as well as by its actions. They guide the church in its study and interpretation of the Scriptures; they summarize the essence of Reformed Christian tradition; they direct the church in maintaining sound doctrines; they equip the church for its work of proclamation. They serve to strengthen personal commitment and the life and witness of the community of believers." (F-2.01)

These confessions are both historical and contemporary – that is, though they were written in particular circumstances and for particular reasons, they trace a trajectory of faith that has present-day relevance. One such confession is the Theological Declaration of Barmen.

Written in Barmen, Germany in May 1934 – only 15 months after Hitler's rise to power – the declaration was a call to resistance against the theological claims of the Nazi state. As Robert McAfee Brown explains, "Almost immediately after Hitler's seizure of power in 1933, Protestant Christians faced pressure to 'aryanize' the Church, expel

Jewish Christians from the ordained ministry and adopt the Nazi 'Führer Principle' as the organizing principle of church government. In general, the churches succumbed to these pressures, and some Christians embraced them willingly. The pro-Nazi 'German Christian' movement became a force in the church. They glorified Adolf Hitler as a 'German prophet' and preached that racial consciousness was a source of revelation alongside the Bible. But many Christians in Germany—including Lutheran and Reformed, liberal and neo-orthodox—opposed the encroachment of Nazi ideology on the Church's proclamation. At Barmen, this emerging 'Confessing Church' adopted a declaration... which expressly repudiated the claim that other powers apart from Christ could be sources of God's revelation. Not all Christians courageously resisted the regime, but many who did... were arrested and executed in concentration camps." (*Kairos: Three Prophetic Challenges to the Church*, 1990, Wm. B. Eerdmans)

Barmen is a biblical judgment against our tendencies to identify the gospel with secular ideologies, nationalism, or "civil religion"; to subordinate the church's witness to the state or to political figures or movements; and to privatize or compartmentalize faith so as to permit social injustice to flourish. It professes our rejection of tyranny and authoritarianism and affirms the church's responsibility to speak truth to power.

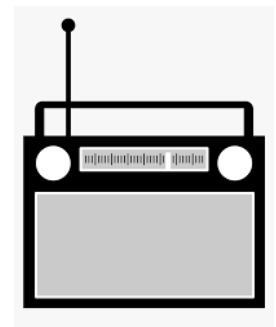
These are important lessons in every age, including our own. To confess Christ as Lord is to reject the claims of all lesser powers and figures to our allegiance in any way that is contrary to the one Word of God.

Faithfully,

Dan Saperstein, Executive Presbyter

dsaperstein@presbylh.org

Session is working on ways we can worship. Stay tuned.



Birthdays for October

- Oct 1st Charlee Litten
- Oct 8th Carrie Duncanson
- Oct 17th Andy Schram
- Oct 18th Todd Duncanson
- Oct 19th Rebecca Cook
- Oct 29th Julie Parish
- Oct 31st Kevin Magnuson



May God Bless you throughout the year ahead!

Happy Anniversary

- Oct 25th Terry & Julie Parish 6 years
- Oct 25th Todd & Carrie Duncanson 35 years



May God continue to bless you!

Don't forget!!

When you go to bed on October 31st, turn your clocks back an hour. You get to sleep another hour



shutterstock.com • 1416786476

Finance Team

Income August \$7,225.00 YTD \$62,943.55

Expense August \$3,732.28 YTD \$45,499.45

Thanks,

Carrie Duncanson, Vicki Lyles, and Bob Killewald.





Iobst family



Keefer family

Our Missionaries - The Iobst family (now in France), The Keefer family (Athletes in Action-U of M Ann Arbor).

Prayers from the Presbytery –

Prayers and Comfort for the family and loved ones of the Rev. Neil Berry . He served as the Pastor of the former Flint-Christ The Liberator congregation.

Elder Don Wixson, Commissioned Ruling Elder of Vassar-First, who is being treated for cancer.

Our churches currently in pastoral transition.

Our Mission Co-Workers:

Lucy Der-Garabedian serving in Lebanon.

Cathy Chang and family serving in the Philippines.

Michael and Rachel Ludwig serving in Niger.

Joys and Concerns

- For all those sickened and threatened by the corona virus here in the United States and around the world;
- Prayers and comfort for the families of Denny Owens (Rev. Sharlyn's brother in law), and Kathy Palmero (Dale Huffman's friend).
- For healing, strength, and peace for: Lisa Martin's mother as well as Emily and Lisa. Her mother was diagnosed with inoperable lung cancer. John Schettling (Tom Schettling's cousin), Kathleen Conover, Principal of Lake Fenton Schools (Carlee Ramirez's colleague and friend) whose home burned to the ground, three of Karen Haneline's co-workers who are battling cancer, Carolyn Watkins Laura Parkers step mom), Charlotte Tinker-Bryant (friend of Sherry McLaughlin) who is battling cancer, Kay VanderKuy, Norm and Char Clement, Sue Polack (Sherry McLaughlin's sister-in-law), Kim Watkins (Laura Parker's sister in law) who is recovering from partial amputation of the thumb and is now waiting for some healing before they address the damage to her shoulder and the vertebrae damaged by the electrocution, Fran Olson, Jim Killewald (Bob & Cathie's son), Hadleigh Banks, Jim Pelton, Linda Burns, Jan Owen (Rev. Sharlyn's sister) and William Woodard (Rev. Fred Gates' grandson);
- For our members who are home bound, or in care facilities;
- For those who are suffering from natural and man-made disasters;
- For those serving, or who have served, in our military;
- For our country, its leaders and for world peace in a troubled time;
- For all the churches in our Presbytery that are in transition;
- And for our church, and our future pastor who is coming to lead us.



Outreach

Comfort Circle has given 39 beanie babies and 7 women's chemo caps to Ascension Hospital.

Outreach Team will not be doing Trick or Treat or Truck or Treat this year.

Thank You,
Donna



2020 Session Contacts

2020 Session Term Ending

**Jan Bradshaw
Care**

6912 Frushour
Holly, MI 48442
248-459-1181 (cell)
jlbradshawjr@comcast.net

**Walt Brown
Information Technology**

12222 Overlook Drive
Fenton, MI 48430
810-629-1618 (home)
810-938-9949 (cell)
bewjbbrown@me.com

**Carrie Duncanson
Finance**

2469 Academy Road
Holly, MI 48442
248-459-3426
carriedunk@yahoo.com

**Donna DeNise
Outreach**

1857 E. Rose Center Rd
Holly, MI 48442
248-634-3760 (home)
248-534-3552 (cell)
muffs1857@hotmail.com

**Ellen Paulson
Property**

4103 Stonebridge
Holly, MI 48442
248-320-0375 (cell)
empaulson0@gmail.com

**Charlee Litten
Personnel**

8360 Rondale Dr.
Grand Blanc, MI 48439
810-694-0095 (home)
810-730-3350 (cell)
cml45@att.net

**Cathie Killewald
Fellowship**

3474 Grange Hall Road
Holly, MI 48442
248-310-2411 (cell)
bob_killewald@comcast.net

**Tom Schettling
Worship**

16352 Tucker Road
Holly, MI 48442
248-245-8810
tpschettiing42@gmail.com

Christian Education

Jim Lyles Clerk

6015 Lahring Road Holly, MI 48442
248-634-4610 (home)
248-396-4695 (cell)
jamesmartinlyles@gmail.com

Rev. Dawn Russell Moderator

119 West Broad Street
Linden, MI 49451
919-428-0443

pastor_dawn@lpcmi.org

Vicki Lyles, Treasurer

6015 Lahring Road
248-634-4610 (home)
vickilyles@comcast.net