



Holly Presbyterian Church Connections

December Newsletter Volume 20 Issue 12

From the Lion's Den (November 5, 2020)

For years I listened to the NPR program Car Talk, which aired every Saturday morning from 1987-2012. The show featured two brothers, Tom and Ray Magliozzi who would respond to listener's questions about cars and car repair with brotherly jabs and a sharp wit. They would occasionally promote items culled from the "shameless commerce department" of the show.

This is from the "shameless commerce department" of the Presbytery.

October 16 marked the fifth anniversary of my service among you as Executive Presbyter. In my time here we have seen significant changes in our Presbytery mission which have made us more responsive and relational in our service to congregations. We have reimagined Presbytery Assemblies so that they are "value-added" experiences, with worship, equipping, and efficiently run governance components. We have streamlined our structure, consolidating committees, and added a mission coordination function. We have adopted the Matthew 25 mission commitment to combat structural racism, address systemic poverty, and enhance congregational vitality. We have encouraged congregations to engage in mission that is "inside-out, upside-down, and sticky." We have nurtured mission relationships with mission co-workers in West Africa and the Philippines. When the COVID-19 crisis hit, we were ready to respond with scientifically-informed advice and tens of thousands of dollars of grants and loans to assist financially strapped congregations pay their bills and upgrade their technology to adapt to "virtual church."

We have also been faithful in the management of your per capita and mission dollars. Did you know that only about 35% of the costs of presbytery mission and operations comes from per capita assessments? About 37% comes from voluntary mission gifts from congregations and individuals; and about 28% from carefully managed endowment and foundation disbursements. We have been diligent in finding ways to be more faithful in reducing costs and supporting our employees. Due to several cost-saving measures our 2021 per capita rate will actually be \$.24 lower than the 2020 rate.

While there is still much room for improvement, we have become a model for other presbyteries, who are amazed at the faithful support of our congregations and the quality of our staff.

Our December Presbytery Assembly illustrates the positive changes in our Presbytery. It will be the first Assembly held entirely by Zoom, which saves money while saving lives in a time of pandemic. We will welcome Diane Givens Moffett, executive director of the Presbytery Mission Agency and a riveting preacher to lead us in worship and share how congregations – especially smaller congregations – can live into the Matthew 25 vision. The Presbytery will vote on a 2021 budget that is \$10,000 less than 2020 and \$20,000 less than 2019. We will vote on a full slate of nominations to fill vacancies on presbytery committees. We will welcome the Rev. Dr. Do Hyung Kim into our presbytery to lead a soon-to-be reunited Korean congregation in Saginaw to be known as the Michigan Nanum ("fellowship") Presbyterian Church. And if the way be



clear, we hope to welcome two new Inquirers in the process of ordination for the ministry of the Word and Sacrament (**Alli Muenzer of Holly** and Nicholas Asperger of Fairgrove). Look for registration information in the next Bi-weekly Brief.

In a time when many presbyteries are being downsized in staff and mission, we are adapting to changing times with nimbleness and creativity. This is a team effort of which the whole presbytery can take pride. Over these five years I have been blessed with a gifted staff and faithful congregations. There will be more challenges in the years to come. As we remain open to the voice of the Spirit we will continue to be effective witnesses for Christ in mid-Michigan.

Faithfully,

Dan Saperstein, Executive Presbyter

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From the Lion's Den (November 19, 2020)

In C.S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, four British schoolchildren stumble into the land of Narnia – a world of fairy-tale creatures living in fear under the reign of the White Witch. Though it is summertime in England, Narnia is cold and frozen – cursed under a spell by which it is “always winter but never Christmas.”

As we head into the season of Advent in 2020, we might be forgiven for thinking this might be a winter without a Christmas. COVID-19 surges in our nation, and most of our churches are (wisely) suspending in-person gatherings in keeping with the advice of our state public health officials and our Presbytery Council. We will miss so many of the seasonal rituals that bring us such joy: hanging greens in the sanctuary; singing carols and hymns; holiday gatherings, parties, and bazaars; and even candlelight services on Christmas Eve.

To borrow from another classic children's story, it is as if the coronavirus is the Grinch that stole Christmas. You recall that famous tale by Dr. Seuss, of the green Grinch who lived atop Mount Crumpet and hated everything to do with Christmas and its celebration by the residents of Whoville far below. Dressed as Santa Claus, the Grinch sneaked into Whoville Christmas Eve and stole all the Christmas toys, gifts, trees, lights, garlands, and goodies.

Then, as Christmas Day dawned over Mount Crumpet, he waited in triumphant anticipation of the sobs and wails of grief arising from Whoville. And he did hear a sound – but it wasn't sad, it was merry – VERY! “He HADN'T stopped Christmas from coming! IT CAME! / Somehow or other, it came just the same!”

Christmas will come in 2020 too! It will come because God in Christ has taken on mortal flesh and been born among us. Just as the Grinch learned that Christmas doesn't come from a store, so we have the opportunity to learn that Christmas doesn't come from a church building. It comes to us in Jesus Christ, who brings God's reign of peace and goodwill to the earth.

What we are experiencing in 2020 is simply that which the world experiences every year, only this year it is made so universally plain and personal. The world “mourns in lowly exile here” – in darkness, depression, death, and despair – “until the Son of God appear.” Our Advent world is one, in the words of the author Wendell Berry, in which

"it gets darker and darker and darker; and then Jesus is born."

But we can live in an Advent world with Christmas joy because Christ is born. And that is the unchangeable, invincible truth. Jesus is the light that shines in our dark, COVID world, which the darkness cannot overcome.

"And what happened then? Well...in Whoville they say, / That the Grinch's small heart Grew three sizes that day!"

All the seasonal festivities and celebrations that we enjoy in the company of other Christians are merely the brightly colored wrappings around the one gift that truly matters – the gift of Jesus Christ. This year we may not have the wrappings, but we most certainly can receive the gift with a new heart and a new gratitude for the blessings we enjoy in Christ.

Faithfully,

Dan Saperstein, Executive Presbyter

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Birthdays for December

Dec 2nd	Emily Martin	Dec 22nd	Emery Howe (2)
Dec 3rd	Walt Brown	Dec 23rd	Margaret House
Dec 5th	Max Muenzer	Dec 28th	Vicki Lyles
Dec 6th	Joseph Weiss	Dec 29th	Abby Hardimon (8)
Dec 11th	Gordie Bradshaw		
Dec 17th	Sierra Sink		



May God Bless you throughout the year ahead!



Please remember to include someone in your prayers daily from the list that was mailed to you.

We will list a second prayer each week as well. Keep your heart open as we dredge through this pandemic.

December Anniversaries

Dec 4th Gerry & Debbie Jackson 38 years

Dec 26th Matt & Cassie Todd 11 years

Dec 30th Larry & Pam Remillard 53 years



May God continue to bless you on your anniversary.



We have decided to continue holding parking lot worship services through Christmas. Our Services during Advent will be:

Sun Nov 29th at 2 pm

Sun Dec 6th at 2 pm with Communion

Sun Dec 13th at 2 pm

Sun Dec 20th at 2 pm

Christmas Eve Service

Christmas Eve parking lot service will be at 5 pm on December 24th. Rev. Dawn Russell will be preaching. We will not have Communion on Christmas Eve.



Adopt-a-Family



Adopt a Family will look different this year. This year we are donating money to Holly Area Youth Assistance (which help Holly Area) for our Adopt-A-Family. This is the best way to do it with Covid-19. Therefore, you won't need to go out, which will keep you safe too.

Please make check payable to HPC and put in the memo section that it is to go to Adopt a Family. Your check needs to be here by **Sunday, December 5th**. Bring your donations to the November parking lot service, or mail to HPC, 207 E. Maple St., Holly, MI 48442.

As we are not having the Ambassadors Concert this year, Vicki Lyles came up with the ideal of giving money this season to the Discretionary Fund. This fund helps families who have shut off notices, evictions, etc.



Please make your check payable to HPC and in the memo section write Discretionary Fund. Bring your donations to a parking lot service, or mail to HPC, 207 E. Maple St., Holly, MI 48442.

Finance Team

Income October \$7,965.44 YTD \$77,458.42

Expense October \$4,713.16 YTD \$54,179.13

Building fund pledges for 2020 totaled \$3950. To date, we have Received \$2215. We have spent \$13,082.18 from the building fund (a special, designated account) this year. This was used to help replace the roof over the narthex and part of the fellowship hall this summer (a few people made donations specifically for the roof replacement). None of these figures are included in the above summary, as it is for budgeted items only. Your contributions to the building fund help us to perform these more expensive repairs without having to ask everyone for funds at the time of the expense. Please help us "build the building fund" back up with your pledges. If the remaining \$1735 is all received, we will still be sitting with only \$5500 in this very important fund.



Thanks,

Carrie Duncanson, Vicki Lyles, and Bob Killewald

OUR MISSIONARIES



Iobst family (now in France)



Keefer Family (Athletes in Action U of M Ann Arbor).

Prayers from the Presbytery

Elder Don Wixson, Commissioned Ruling Elder of Vassar-First, who passed away after being treated for cancer (Nov 5th). Please pray for comfort for the family.

Our churches currently in pastoral transition.

Our Mission Co-Workers:

Lucy Der-Garabedian serving in Lebanon, Cathy Chang and family serving in the Philippines.

Prayers of Thanks

- We lift prayers of thanks for the safe arrival of Parker Michael Davis, born November 8 to parents Katie and Eric Davis. He weighed 9 lbs 4 oz, 22" long. Katie and baby are doing fine. Laura and Brian Parker are the proud grandparents. Congratulations to the entire Parker family!
- Donna Miller is happy to be home recovering after contracting pneumonia and COVID-19 several weeks ago.



Prayers of Comfort: For the family of Shirley Jo Book (mother of Tony Book, our custodian) who passed away November 16th.

Prayers of Concern ...

- For all those sickened and threatened by the coronavirus here in the United States and around the world;
- For healing, strength, comfort and peace for: Bob and Cathie Killewald, who were both diagnosed with COVID-19; Burt Brown (friend of Karen Haneline), has finally received a heart transplant; Fran Olson, has been discharged to Carlee and Jesse's home to recover and receive therapy in the coming weeks; Terry Parish as he is facing some struggles as well as his wife Julie, Josh Banks, who was injured at work; Sherry McLaughlin's in-laws, (George McLaughlin and Cheryl and Darryl Poole) who are still recovering from COVID-19; Lisa Martin's mother who continues treatment for lung cancer (and for Lisa and Emily as they help care for her); Karen Haneline's friend who is battling breast cancer; Charlotte Tinker-Bryant (friend of Sherry McLaughlin) is continuing chemo treatments but getting stronger each day; Norm and Char Clement; Sue Polack (Sherry McLaughlin's sister-in-law) is battling pneumonia as well as lung cancer; Kim Watkins (Laura Parker's sister in law) who is recovering from injuries caused by an electrical accident; Jim Killewald (Bob & Cathie's son); Hadleigh Banks; Jim Pelton; Linda Burns; Jan Owens (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;
- For our church, the PNC, and for our future pastor whom God is preparing.



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