

Holly Presbyterian Church Connections

September 2021 Newsletter

Volume 21 Issue 8



Rev. Brooke Pickrell, Minister

COVID-19 Update from Session

What do we need to do because of COVID-19? This topic has been discussed at nearly every session meeting, and in conversations among session members in between session meetings, since the decision was made to close the church nearly a year and a half ago. Session has also asked the congregation for input, which is always welcome. At the August meeting, the discussion centered around what should be done because of the Delta variant and rising cases in the area. In order to protect our employees and worshippers, the following changes were made:

1. The office is officially closed again, until further notice.
2. The first three rows of pews in front of the minister, and the center half of the first row on the other side of the sanctuary, will again be roped off. Only the family of the minister will be allowed in these pews.
3. There will be no singing during the worship service.

Much of the discussion was about wearing masks. It was decided, with the changes above, that we would continue our current policy:

4. Masks are optional for those who have been completely vaccinated.
5. Masks are required for those who are not completely vaccinated.

6. The last four rows of pews on the left side of the sanctuary are available for those who wish to maintain social distancing. Masks are required in this area. The side of the pew you should use is taped on the back of the pew you will sit in.

We also remind you that the CDC is strongly encouraging even those of us who are fully vaccinated to wear masks indoors. And finally, if you are not feeling well, please do not attend church that day. Our service is live streamed on YouTube if you wish to watch while the rest of us are at church or can be watched at a later time.

Session Highlights from August 17, 2021 by Jan Bradshaw

Property Team -

- The gutters on the Sanctuary roof were repaired.
- The back concrete steps and front porch will be repaired by MI Remodelers in mid- to late September. They will also replace the rear exterior wooden staircase with concrete steps and metal railings.
- The flat roof will be patched and re-coated by Sep. 2.

COVID-19 Delta Variant-

- The office will be closed until further notice.
- For the Aug. 28 wedding, masks will be required.
- The Congregation will be encouraged to wear masks even if they are vaccinated (though those who are vaccinated are not required to wear masks)
- It was agreed that for worship services the first three rows on the east side of the Sanctuary would be roped off, as well as the first row on the west side of the Sanctuary.
- It was decided there will be no singing at all during Worship.

Worship Service Time Change -

The time of worship service will be changed to 11 a.m. all year, effective the Sunday after Labor Day in 2021.



From the Lion's Den August 11, 2021

*** Important Advice from the Presbytery Council and the Executive Presbyter ***

Yogi Berra is reported to have quipped, "It's like déjà vu all over again."

Just as the summer is winding down and church programs are ramping up for fall, we are facing a resurgence of the coronavirus. We've been here before.

As predicted, the Delta variant of the coronavirus has proved to be more virulent, more transmissible, and more dangerous than the previous strains. Currently, 93% of all new cases of Covid-19 are due to the Delta variant. It is not "just the flu." It is as transmissible as chicken pox. Hospitalizations and deaths are spiking again, especially in areas with low vaccination rates.

What's more, the Delta variant can, in a low percentage of cases, be carried and transmitted by asymptomatic persons who have been vaccinated. These so-called "breakthrough infections" are a game changer.

Accordingly, the CDC has revised its guidance on masking and social distancing to advise requiring masks, even among persons who have been vaccinated, at all indoor gatherings in communities with a substantial or high risk of transmission. Currently EVERY county in our presbytery, save one (Roscommon), is at substantial or high risk. Infection rates in Michigan have increased 1480% in the last month (July 8 – August 9), and numbers of available hospital beds in Covid wards are shrinking.

The best protection against Covid infection and transmission continues to be vaccination. Yet in the counties that comprise our presbytery, only 37%-50% of adults have received even a single dose of Covid vaccines.

What does this mean for churches? Our Presbyterian Covid guru, Dr. Lisa Allgood of Cincinnati Presbytery, has posted that churches are among the five most dangerous environments for Covid transmission. According to her source, Delta spreads quickly and these places [of worship] provide the perfect situation for it to spread. Usually poorly ventilated, the danger is increased because folks speak, sing, and sometimes shout. If they are carriers of the Delta coronavirus, you are likely going to catch it. If you catch it, you will bring the virus home with you. These gatherings are also less likely to have adequate physical separation and inadequate ventilation.

The Covid danger is real, especially for the unvaccinated. And while we are still well below the extreme transmission levels of December and April, we are heading in the wrong direction.

Our Presbytery Council joins me in urging those congregations that decide to resume or continue in-person gatherings, to please mask, distance, and disinfect. Limit singing and spoken congregational responses. Meet outdoors if possible. Keep services short, and avoid potlucks, buffets, and long fellowship events.

Our September Presbytery meeting at Mt. Pleasant is currently planned to be a hybrid in-person and Zoom. Check our Website, Facebook page, and the Bi-weekly Brief for updates.

We knew that decisions regarding returning to worship were not “one and done” matters. It’s like déjà vu all over again. So let us once again – in our worship, in our fellowship, in our mission – love God and love one another, especially the most vulnerable among us.

Faithfully,

Dan Saperstein, Executive Presbyter

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May God Bless you all year long!

Carlee Ramirez	Sept 8 th
Bob Killewald	Sept 8 th
Anderson Muenzer	Sept 12 th
Allison Muenzer	Sept 12 th
Loretta Weiss	Sept 20 th
Bronwyn Cook	Sept 25 th
Lori Goldsmith	Sept 25 th

Sept 15 th	Jim & Vicki Lyles	42 years
Sept 25 th	Josh & Mandie Banks	11 years
Sept 28 th	Tim & Sherry McLaughlin	36 years



Finance Team

Income

Income	July	\$7,851.74	YTD	\$55,262.22
Expense	July	\$5,714.20	YTD	\$43,694.57



Your Finance Team,

Vicki Lyles, Carrie Duncanson & Bob Killewald

From the Care Team

Prayers of Joy ...

- For Nicole Howe, who is pregnant with twins.
- For Jan and Gordie Bradshaw, who have a new granddaughter, Rebel Rose Bradshaw Ferguson, born on August 3

Prayers of Comfort ...

- For the family and friends of Michael Retka (Lori Goldsmith's brother).
- For Charlene Clement, and her brother Norm, as Char prepares to join her Lord.
- For the family and friends of Margaret House, a longtime church member, who passed away Sunday, August 8.

Prayers of Concern ...

- For all those sickened and threatened by the COVID-19 virus here in the United States and around the world.
 - For healing, strength, comfort, and peace for: John Hull (Julia Belyayava-Hull's husband) fell in the bathtub; Julie Schram's mother-in-law who is hospitalized with covid; Andrew Reichert age 13 (friend of Carlee & Jessie Ramirez) who is at U of M Mott in the PICU on ECMO. He was born with a heart defect and went in to repair a valve. He has had many complications, but the doctors feel he can recover and have also discussed transplant; George Dzahristos (a friend of Randy Cook's) who has suffered an aneurysm in his brain; Betty Striggow (Penny Schettling's mother) as she adjusts to living in assisted living and is also having health issues; Mary Renico who has been experiencing quite a bit of pain and discomfort from a wound on her leg, most likely caused by the treatment she had been receiving for skin cancer; Melinda (Elizabeth Kici's daughter), who was diagnosed with breast cancer and is undergoing treatment; Jim Pelton, who has Lewy Body Dementia and in decline; Diana (friend of Cathie Killewald) who is facing health issues and medical tests including a lung biopsy; Jimmie Pernel (friend of Gerry Jackson) who is fighting cancer; Debbie Mikolowski (Penny Schettling's sister), who is battling cancer and undergoing chemo treatments, Mandie Bank's mom, Laura, who is waiting on medical test results; Jim Killewald (Bob & Cathie's son) who has a lot of pain; Baby Ryan Washer (friends of Jan & Gordie) who has a compromised health condition and is in the hospital with RSV, ongoing prayers for Hadleigh Banks, Keaton Banks, Fran Olson and Terry & Julie Parish.
 - 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.
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Prayers from the Presbytery –

The family of loved ones of the Rev. Dr. David Castrodale, who passed to the larger life August 18th. He served at Bay City-Westminster from 1962-1975.

The Rev. Linda Graham, Temporary Supply of Davison-St. Andrews, who is recouping from surgery she had last week to remove a kidney.

The Rev. Peter Russell, Honorably Retired, who is residing at Abbey Park in Grand Blanc. His health has declined recently.

The Rev. George Gillette, who is under Hospice care at Candlestone Assisted Living in Midland.

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.

Recycling

We are looking for your used ink cartridges. Bring in your ink cartridges and any batteries you have. Thank you!



Directory-

Updated directories are in the narthex.





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