

Holly Presbyterian Church Connections

December 2022 Newsletter

Volume 22-Issue 01



From the desk of Pastor Brooke Pickrell

Dear Holly Presbyterian Church community,

On the Sunday after Christmas, Dec. 26- a Sunday that, as I write these words has still not arrived- the lectionary gives us scripture from Colossians 3:15: "And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts." These are helpful words to dwell on as we end a year and begin a new one. Some questions that we might ponder as we contemplate this scripture, and remember the year past and consider the year ahead are: 1) Where and when has the peace of Christ been most present in my heart over the past year, and how did this affect the situations and relationships involved, and 2) How can I allow the peace of Christ to enter into my life more fully in the upcoming year? I encourage you to keep simplicity at the heart of your contemplation; in other words the times when Christ's peace was most present during the past year or how Christ's peace might become more present in your life over the upcoming year do not need to be grand moments. Think on a much smaller scale. Here is an example. For me, when I have taken the time to really listen to whomever is before me, and truly be present with the conversation at hand- not jumping in my mind to to-do lists or worries- I find that a peace descends upon the conversation that would not be there otherwise. In 2022, I would like to continue to become more cognizant of how my mind can jump in conversation, and to practice being more fully present with the person before me. I pray for each one of us that during 2022 we will know more fully the peace of Christ.

Happy New Year!
Pastor Brooke

Highlights from the December 15, 2021 Session Meeting

Pastor Brooke - The church adapted well to the two weeks during which Brooke preached remotely (via recorded readings and sermons) while her family battled COVID-19.

Clerk - Jan Bradshaw will take over as the Clerk of Session next year.

Care - The Care and Fellowship Teams are merging into a single *Congregational Care Team* next year. Cathie Killewald will be leading this team. Blood pressure checks will be postponed until we can gather safely.

Christian Education - Charlee Litten will lead the Christian Education Team next year. She is looking for any ideas that you might have for this important team.

Finance - Giving envelopes are being distributed. The team is still awaiting some pledges. A preliminary budget for next year has been prepared.

Information Technology - We are looking into options to replace our office printer when the current contract expires in March or April. We will also be looking into how we can upgrade our Sanctuary audio/visual system to allow live participation by an offsite speaker. Walt Brown is stepping down and will turn leadership of this team over to Brian Parker.

Outreach - Fenton Presbyterian Church is collecting baby clothes, to donate to our Baby Pantry. We are looking for ways to better advertise the Baby Pantry, including social media and flyers in area stores, churches, the library, etc. If you have any ideas for getting the word out to families who with infants and toddlers who need help, please contact Donna DeNise or Cathie Killewald.

Personnel - We have found a custodial service for the church. They will clean the church every two weeks, beginning in January. The

Personnel Team will be eliminated starting next year; all the functions of that team will be handled by Session as a whole.

Property - There is an installation problem with the railing on the new exterior staircase going down to the office door. This should be corrected before the end of the year. We are also looking into the best way to fix or replace the backup sump pump, which malfunctioned recently and wasted a lot of water. Jim Lyles will officially take over as leader of this team next year.

Miscellaneous - Allison Muenzer has been attending seminary to become a Presbyterian minister. She will be undergoing a psychological evaluation (required for all ministerial candidates) in the near future. Both our church and the Lake Huron Presbytery will be helping with the expense for this evaluation.

Jim Lyles

Finance Team

Income November \$6,043.00 YTD \$81,777.37

Expenses November \$7,349.54 YTD \$75,998.41

Your Finance Team,
Carrie Duncanson, Vicki Lyles and Bob Killewald



Thank you to all of you who purchased Poinsettias that we on display in the sanctuary. They were beautiful and added a lot of color and meaning to this season.

Worship Team

From the Lion's Den- December 15th Final installment

This is the last installment of "From the Lions' Den" I will write for the Bi-weekly Brief. Last Tuesday, the Presbytery voted 46-5 to approve a covenant of closure that will dissolve my ministry relationship as Executive Presbyter on December 31. I willingly negotiated the covenant and accept its terms for my resignation.



The reason for the dissolution is "irreconcilable differences" stemming from a loss of confidence among Presbytery leaders in my continued service. They attribute this loss of confidence to circumstances that are the subject of a disciplinary accusation that is under investigation. I have denied any wrongdoing, but my insistence that my rights as an accused party be honored have led some to complain that I "lack repentance and humility."

I can say with a clear conscience that I believe I have acted responsibly, respectfully, and faithfully within our policies and polity. Both the Personnel Committee and the Presbytery Council had affirmed that I did not violate our policies or polity. Nevertheless, the filing of a disciplinary accusation created a situation in which rumors, misinformation, and what I believe to be baseless allegations were allowed to proliferate while the required confidential investigation was being conducted.

I fully expect that when the disciplinary process has run its course I will be cleared of any wrongdoing. That cannot, however, undo the damage to relationships within the Presbytery and its staff that has already occurred. Nor will it necessarily change the minds of those who have already judged me based on partial information and their own assumptions. I grieve the relationships that have been ruptured and the trust that has been lost.

But it is clear to me that my ability to lead this presbytery effectively has been irreparably damaged. I accept that my behavior, however benign or well-intended, nevertheless contributed to this breakdown of trust and loss of confidence in my leadership.

Most of all I grieve the loss of all that remained to be accomplished in ministry together. The COVID-19 pandemic has presented unprecedented challenges to ministers and congregations alike. But it has also created a great opportunity for congregations that have vision and are willing to change to become more vital, connected, and impactful in their ministry

and mission. I would have liked to help guide our Presbytery and its congregations in this time of adaptive change.

Although I will continue to remain a member of Lake Huron Presbytery, in keeping with our separation ethics policy I will be unable to participate in Presbytery events or perform ministerial functions within the bounds of the Presbytery for 12 months, without the prior authorization of the Commission on Ministry and Ministry Preparation. I will miss you and continue to pray for you during this time. I thank God for all the good work we have been able to accomplish together, for the relationships that will endure, and for the privilege of serving you.

At this time, I do not know what the future will hold for me or my ministry. I am unable to move on to a new ministry in our denomination while the disciplinary process is still unresolved. Personal commitments will keep me in the area. So please pray for me as I will pray for you.

Acts 15 tells how even Paul and Barnabas – two faithful and effective apostles of Christ – came to a separation of their ways over what were to them irreconcilable differences. Nevertheless, God used that separation to lead Barnabas to bring the gospel to Cyprus (where it continues to this day), and Paul to strengthen the church's witness even in Rome. However irreconcilable our differences, I trust God will use both me and the Presbytery of Lake Huron for faithful service wherever and however the Spirit leads.

The seasons of Advent and Christmas are about the hope of new beginnings. I pray that this time of new beginnings for me and the Presbytery will bring healing and hope. May the peace and blessings of Christ be yours in abundance now and always.

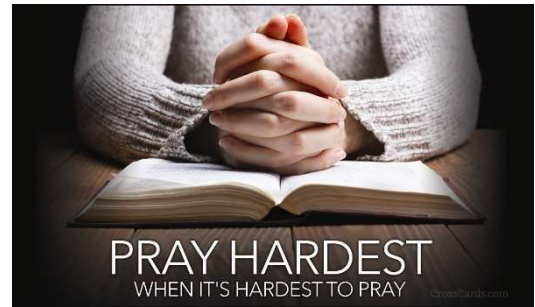
Faithfully,

Dan Saperstein
Executive Presbyter

From the Care Team

Prayers of Comfort ...

- For the family and friends of **Mark Hubbard** (a very good friend of the Banks family) who has passed to the Greater Life.
- For **all of those who lost loved ones, were injured, or had their homes and businesses destroyed** in the massive tornado outbreak that struck Friday, December 10, in Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Missouri, Mississippi and Tennessee.
- For **all those who have been deeply affected by the tragic Oxford High School shooting**, especially the families and friends of the four students who were killed, the students and the teacher who were injured, and for the 15-year-old sophomore and his parents who are currently in custody.



Prayers of Concern ...

- **For those who are suffering from natural and man-made disasters.**
- 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: **Wally Horton** (friend of Cathie Killewald), who has been admitted to U of M Hospital for COVID and pneumonia; **Sherry McLaughlin** who is recovering from hand surgery; **Mandie Bank's mom**, who is still having back pain and constant bladder issues since her surgery; **Frank Kasperek** (Jan Bradshaw's brother in law) who is still dealing with a cough after contracting COVID in October; **Steve in Florida** (Friend of Cathy & Bob Killewald) who has stage 4 bladder cancer; **Debbie Mikolowski** (Penny Schettling's sister), who is battling cancer and having a difficult time; **George Dzahristos** (a friend of Randy Cook's) who has suffered an aneurysm in his brain and has a long recovery; **Mary Renico** who continues with wound treatment; **Loretta Weiss** who is still having quite a bit of knee pain even after having surgery in

June; **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 with her lungs and continues with medical tests; **Jim Killewald** (Bob & Cathie's son) who has a lot of pain; ongoing prayers for **Hadleigh Banks, Keaton Banks; Fran Olson; and Terry & Julie Parish.**

- 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 during these difficult times.**



We lift up those in prayer from the Presbytery

The **Rev. Peter Russell**, Honorably Retired, who is residing at Abbey Park in Grand Blanc.

Jeanette Gillette, whose husband, the Rev. George Gillette, passed to eternal life last week.

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.

Happy Anniversary to you both. God bless you.

January 2nd Jeff & Helen McNamara 46 years

January 5th Bill & Loretta Weiss 59 years

January 16th Donald & Donna DeNise 29 years



May God bless you all year long!

Jan 15th Donna Miller

Jan 17th Rick Perry

Jan 30th Doris Colegrove



Session Members

Clerk.....Jan Bradshaw.....2023

Christian Education.....Charlee Litten.....2022

Congregational Care.....Cathie Killewald...2023

Finance.....Bob Killewald.....2022

Information Technology..Brian Parker.....2024

Outreach.....Donna DeNise.....2023

Property.....Jim Lyles.....2023

Worship.....Tom Schettling...2024