

First Presbyterian Church
221 East Sixth Street at Lincoln
Bloomington, IN 47408
(812) 332-1514



First Press

Celebrating Christ and Serving Community

February 2022 Volume 64, No.2

Inside this Issue

Rev. Kelley Jepsen	2
Session Meeting notes	3
Report of the Treassurer	3
Adult Education	4
Racial Justice Task Force	5
Pastor Nominating Committee	6
FPC Christmas Project (Posoltega)	7
FPC Coffee Cart	8
Outreach	9
Presbyterian Women	10
Earth Stewards	11
February Birthdays	12
Calendar	13



Dear Church,

A recent issue¹ of *Presbyterians Today* magazine shared the story the Presbyterian Church of Deep Run in Perkasio, PA. Their Session wrote a concerned letter to their local school board about the disbanding of a diversity, equity, and inclusion committee. The conviction to write came from their commitment to being a Matthew 25 church – one focused on dismantling structural racism. The Rev. Dr. Kristopher Schondelmeyer shared that the goal was to invite the school board to a “compassionate conversation” about the decision. They followed up with an adult education discussion on race, which drew in community members and created a space where people could share their concerns together.

At first, I read the story in this way: One letter. One church. One school board. Sometimes it feels like we cannot make a dent on our own. That the problems are too big and any small action we might take will be, well, small. But then I thought about that community and what a difference one letter could make for the students and teachers of color in that school district. Imagine if each church wrote one letter to one school board. It is stories like these that remind me of the powerful, connective nature of the church. We are not alone on this Matthew 25 journey!

And, indeed, especially at FPC we are not alone. I wanted to share with you about a new partnership that is being created: the Myrtle Cohort. The Myrtle Cohort has its roots in a coffeeshop meeting that I had with The Rev. Dr. Felipe Martinez from First Presbyterian in Columbus, IN. After sharing our notes on becoming Matthew 25 congregations, suddenly, it became very clear that we should be working alongside one another. We invited a handful of other churches into the conversation as well, and now there are four in partnership: FPC Bloomington, FPC Columbus, Fairlawn Presbyterian, and North Christian (Disciples of Christ). We hope to encourage, inspire and cheer on one another in individual and group work as we all live out our Matthew 25 callings. This fall we received a grant from the Myrtle Collaboration (at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary) for \$75,000 to bolster and support our combined work. A lot of exciting things on the horizon!

As you well know, February is also Black History Month and I invite each of you into prayerful consideration and discernment about where God might be calling you to learn more about our Black neighbors and their experience of the world. I am planning on consuming a variety of media created by (and about) Black artists. Podcasts. Movies. Books. Poetry. Music. Do you have any recommendations? I'd love to hear them! Want to join in on the conversation? Let me know!

Committing to be a Matthew 25 congregation has been a great first step for this congregation on what might feel like a long road, as we learn how to live that out in practice. But we are surrounded by such a cloud of witnesses, both locally, in Pennsylvania, and across the world.

I encourage you to read stories like the ones of our friends at The Church of Deep Run – they are often highlighted on the Presbyterian Missions website. And then dream with us about what that could look like right here at FPC.

With care,
Pastor Kelley

¹ <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/story/pt-0122-matthew25/?fbclid=IwAR22jZYxSYdM3wj6s5CO-3JGfGTaJZAqDrWCvrPPazGtYc6y9dnChisvjjhl>

SESSION MEETING NOTES - January 9, 2022

Session Actions:

Elected officers for 2022

- Karen Hahn – Commissioner to the Presbytery of Ohio Valley
- Mary McClellan – Treasurer
- David Schwandt – Financial Secretary
- Thomas Gardner – Clerk of Session

Approved the harvest of timber on the Larry Crowe property. (Only selected trees will be harvested.)

Approved the pay off of the loan used to finance the Celebrating Our Future (COF) capital campaign.

Approved the appointment of a task force to identify and resolve conflicts between the Book of Order and FPC By-Laws.

Approved the Outreach committee request to develop a plan to assist Exodus Refugee Immigration, Inc. with the resettlement of an Afghan family and to raise funding of \$5,000 for the project.

Informational Items:

Rev. Kenefake announced the committee assignments for the new Elders

- Don Hanna – Chair of the Outreach Committee
- Mike Riggle – Co-Chair of the Property Committee (Bill Jones, not on Session, is a Co-Chair)
- Megan Becker - Member of Youth Sub-committee of Christian Education
- Paul Rothrock – Chair of the Small Groups Committee and member of the Racial Justice Task Force
- Sherry Knighton-Schwandt – Chair of the Nominating Committee and Chair of the Racial Justice Task Force

Rev. Jepson announced the officers for the Deacons

- Julie Stryker – Moderator
- Kimberly Gray – Vice Moderator
- Meghan Williams – Secretary

Report of the Treasurer

Final information for 2021 will be found in the Annual Report.

We begin the new year with a significant achievement. Earlier this month one of our two mortgages was paid in full. This leaves us with one mortgage in the amount of \$187,965.01 (interest rate: 2.75%). We currently have a balance of \$52,023.14 in the fund that services this mortgage.

Our per capita for 2022 is \$15,226. To date \$4,586 or 30% of this amount has been contributed. If you have not yet done so, please remit the amount of \$46/active member to the church. If you have already paid your per capita, please consider covering the expense for someone else.

If you need help submitting a pledge for 2022, please let me know.

Upcoming Adult Education

In spite of COVID, your own faith development deserves to be enriched. Check out these upcoming adult education opportunities for February and March. Specific details regarding how to participate can be found in Friday announcements.

Implicit Bias: Workshop with “Brother William.”

William Morris will lead us in a mini-workshop on Implicit Bias. Our presenter is a Bloomington attorney, whose private practice includes civil rights, housing, and employment law. “Brother William” is known throughout the community as the DJ host of the Soul Kitchen on Fridays and Saturdays on WFIU. He is an ordained deacon serving at St. David’s Episcopal Church in Bean Blossom.

Faith in Public Life: “Who Stole My Bible”—Jennifer Butler

Faith in Public Life (FPL) is a Washington, DC based advocacy organization that has played an important role in changing the narrative about the role of faith in politics, winning major progressive policy victories, and empowering new religious leaders to fight for social justice and the common good. Jennifer Butler is the CEO of Faith in Public Life and the author of Who Stole My Bible, available in our church library.

Afghan Refugee Family Sponsorship—Ann Schechter

Our FPC Session recently granted approval to move forward on the Afghan Refugee family sponsorship. Ann Schechter will lead a discussion on the nature, requirements, and funding for this exciting outreach. You can also find out how to become involved.

Lenten Bible Study

Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. – starting March 8 – April 5

As we embark on the Matthew 25 journey, we rejoice in knowing that we are not alone! Recently, a collaboration has been created between FPC Bloomington, FPC Columbus, Fairlawn Presbyterian and North Christian (Disciples of Christ) churches. During Lent, these four congregations, together will be studying Matthew 25 on Tuesday evenings via zoom. We hope you’ll join us!

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83939714267?pwd=eE9OalUyMWxWUFA5NkdsQUJmdnpuQT09>

Meeting ID: 839 3971 4267 Passcode: 522470

Presbyterians Outdoors

Among the many wonders of God’s creation is the migration of birds. Goose Pond (about 45 miles to our west near Linton, Indiana) has a well justified reputation as a place to see overwintering birds such as sand-hill cranes, snow geese, and raptors. Join the Presbyterian Outdoors outing on February 12 (bad weather date Feb. 19) from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Masks need to be worn in cars with mixed families. If interested, please contact prothrocks73@gmail.com so that travel details and updates can be communicated.

Racial Justice Task Force

Book Review by Allan Edmonds, Task Force member

The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together, by Heather McGhee, 2021.

Who loses? Who wins?

White liberals tend to think that racism mainly affects people of color; conservatives tend to think that opening opportunities to people of color will leave fewer opportunities for white people.

In this new book, author Heather McGhee argues that change will be limited until white people come to realize that racism hurts them as well and understand that race relations is not a zero-sum game.

McGhee, a descendant of slaves, specializes in economic and social policy, and now chairs the board of *Color of Change*, an online racial justice organization. The failure of policy initiatives alone to take hold and bring about needed change led her to a deeper exploration of the entrenched ideas that prevent people from embracing those policy proposals.

In *The Sum of Us* she takes the reader with her on a journey across the country, talking to people from many different backgrounds as she explores the consequences of racism and approaches to changing it.

A telling example of the social consequences of racism is the widespread closing of large public swimming pools across the country, especially in the South, in the face of desegregation orders, and the parallel rise in private clubs and swimming pools. Think about it!

The Sum of Us is being promoted as a community-wide read by the Bloomington Multifaith Alliance. The book is available locally at Morgenstern's. There is a plan to have a capstone discussion meeting hosted by the BMA in the spring.

The Racial Justice Task Force encourages the reading of this book as part of our ongoing effort to educate ourselves about the seen and unseen effects of racism in our country.

From the Pastor Nominating Committee

Your Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) remains hard at work and actively engaged in the continuing discernment process of seeking a candidate for call to FPC's Head of Staff position. Of course, much of that process is confidential; however, we always want the congregation to be well-informed of our progress through outlets like First Press.

The PNC recently completed work on our draft of the Ministry Information Form (MIF). This document is meant to describe FPC – our present strengths and opportunities, our future vision for ministry – as well as the characteristics and skills most desired in a Head of Staff. The MIF has been reviewed by Session, and their excellent feedback and suggestions have been taken into account. In addition, the MIF was recently reviewed by the Committee on Ministry (COM) from Ohio Valley Presbytery. In like fashion, their feedback has been appreciated and very positive. We believe there is general agreement among these groups that FPC Bloomington represents a very attractive call and that we should be optimistic.

Next steps will involve formally submitting the completed MIF to PCUSA, where it will be used to match potential candidates for our search. Importantly, the PNC will not limit our search only to candidates suggested by this matching process; we are also developing strategies to supplement the candidate pool by targeted and proactive recruiting. The interview process that follows is sure to be an engaging and careful one.

As always, your PNC appreciates and needs thoughtful feedback. You may address questions or suggestions to any PNC member: Gary Crow (gcrow@indiana.edu), Nancy Voskuil(nvoskuil@mccsc.edu), Karen Hahn (kehahn@gmail.com), Dan Conkle (conkle@indiana.edu), Addie Schmucker (sadiedogrocks@gmail.com), or Jeff Main (jmain@rwbaird.com).

Lastly we simply ask that the congregation keep the PNC and this process in your prayers, so that we may continue to discern the will of the Lord and prepare FPC to serve as Christ's heart, hands and voice in our community and world.

FPC Christmas Project (and More) Continues in Posoltega, Nicaragua!

Thanks to Koinonia's Christmas Store, we once again were able to share the joy of Christmas with the children of our sister church in Posoltega



This year, the Jesus of Nazareth Parish organized fiestas and purchased small gifts not only for children in the central Posoltega congregation but also for those in outlying "comarcas," which are even more impoverished than the village itself. Padre José Antonio Jácamo said that he and his congregation send their love, affection, and prayers, asking the Lord "to multiply our blessings abundantly." He said that he could not find words to fully express his congregation's gratitude.



A woman in one of the comarcas did find words. She speaks in Spanish, but there really is no language barrier when watching this short video! [Click here](#)

In further celebration of Christmas, our FPC-sponsored music school presented a special program in the Jesus of Nazareth church.

Many of the instruments that the children are playing were donated by FPC members and friends.



Even as the pandemic continues, FPC continues to support the Posoltega parish, the music school, and other important mission efforts, including a college scholarship program that helps more than 20 Posoltegens attend college. It truly is a joy and a blessing that we can join hands from a distance, celebrating Christ and serving community alongside our Nicaraguan brothers and sisters. Please keep them in your prayers, as they keep us in theirs.

To learn more about our Posoltega mission, including support or participation opportunities, please contact Dan Conkle, conkle@indiana.edu.



FPC Equal Exchange Coffee Cart



Chocolate for Valentine's Day! What could be better? Buy some very delicious dark organic chocolate bars for that special someone – or yourself. You will be helping support Equal Exchange farmers and our church's ongoing projects in Posoltega, Nicaragua.

Not knowing what Sunday February 6, 2022, will bring, the FPC Coffee Cart will not be open, but the trunk of Debbi Conkle's car will be!

Please let her know your order via email or a phone call.

Contact Debbi Conkle at debbiconkle@gmail.com or 812-333-1712.

On Sunday, February 6, your order will be ready for pick-up in the FPC parking lot, 12:00-12:30pm (after the worship service). If you are unable to come at that time, feel free to arrange for free delivery to your front porch any time.

Coffee \$10: Breakfast Blend Drip, Hazelnut Crème Drip, Organic Decaf Drip, Café Nica BEAN, Organic Decaf BEAN

Coffee \$12: Sisters' Blend Drip (1 lb.)

Tea \$4: English Breakfast, Earl Grey, Chai, Green, Jasmine Green, Decaf English Breakfast, Ginger Caffeine free, Peppermint Caffeine free, Rooibos Caffeine free

Chocolate \$4: Panama Extra Dark (80%), Very Dark Chocolate (71%), Dark Chocolate w/ mint crunch (67%), Dark Chocolate Whole Almond w/ sea salt (55%), Dark Chocolate Caramel Crunch w/ sea salt (55%)

Cocoa \$6.50: Organic Baking Cocoa Mix (8 oz.), Organic Hot Cocoa Mix (12 oz.)

Checks may be written to First Presbyterian Church, with COFFEE on the memo line.



Wonderful Outreach Opportunity

The Outreach Committee is thrilled to announce that the Session has given permission for the church to co-sponsor an Afghan refugee family in cooperation with Exodus Refugee International, an organization based in Indianapolis that works with the federal government to settle refugees in our state.

Afghan refugees began arriving at Camp Atterbury in Johnson County last September. They have now been thoroughly vetted and are being settled in their new home communities as rapidly as possible.

Bloomington is one of the locations that is welcoming refugees. Several local churches have already committed to help with this effort. In order to co-sponsor a family, we must raise \$5000 and have a ten-person group to receive online training and make a three-month commitment to help with the resettlement process.

If you would like to support this effort financially, please send a check to the church with “Exodus refugee project” on the subject line.

If you would like to learn more about being part of our **“welcome committee,”** please contact Ann Schechter (812-339-0306).

Outreach cannot imagine a better way to extend the love of Christ than this project, which will be the fourth time in our church’s history that we have welcomed a refugee family to our community.



Presbyterian Women

Presbyterian Women is a group at FPC that includes all women in the FPC community. Although it is most obvious through the activities of the Circles, the organization hopes to plan some all-church gatherings later this year as COVID restrictions become less stringent.

New officers were elected for 2022 as follows:

Co-Moderators: Ginny Coppedge and Karen Watts

Vice-Moderator: Ann Schechter

Recording Secretary: Judy Dillion

Corresponding Secretary: Ruth Holman

Treasurer: Gail Dunning

Church Women United representative: Carol Peterman

Circle leaders:

Circle Mary: Kathy Hollinger

Luncheon / Fellowship Circle: Carole Allen

Koinonia Circle: Gail Dunning

Installation of officers occurred prior to the January meeting of the PW Coordinating Team.

Although Circles have traditionally not met during the winter months, the ability to meet virtually on Zoom has allowed for Koinonia and Circle Mary to continue to meet throughout the winter. Those interested in joining a Circle can contact the Circle leaders as indicated below.

- Circle Mary is a Bible study group that meets the 1st Thursday of the month at 1:00 PM throughout the school year. The moderator is **Kathy Hollinger (812-336-0756)**.
- Koinonia is a service/support group that meets the 2nd Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. The moderator is **Gail Dunning (812-336-1967)**.
- The Luncheon Fellowship Circle will resume its meetings contingent upon the opening of Bell Trace to outside groups. The moderator is **Carole Allen (812-332-5093)**.

Anyone who wishes to support the mission activities of PW for the coming year can send a check made out to FPC, with **"PW pledge"** noted on the memo line.

It was hot out there: new heat records in 2021

By Allan Edmonds and Norm Holy

The weather was pretty weird last year, with unprecedented heat, cold, floods, wildfires and tornadoes. Climate change is becoming all too real.

The temperature information for last year is only now being fully analyzed, but the year will be in the top six, continuing the unrelenting rise in temperature. The previous six years have been the six hottest on record.

More than 400 weather stations around the globe recorded their all-time highest temperatures last year. Ten countries, including the United States, broke or tied their national highest record. Last year the highest temperature ever reliably measured on Earth was recorded: In July it was 130°F in Death Valley.

Indeed, over the whole world, combined land and ocean-surface temperature for July was the hottest July since records began 142 years ago.

Of course we just expect Death Valley to be hot. But last year in the normally temperate Seattle/Puget Sound area of northwest Washington State, temperatures swung from an unbearable 108° at the end of June to a frigid 17° in December — the largest temperature span ever recorded there. And that was only part of a year of erratic weather in the area.

It's time to act! Last year, the vast majority of the bills introduced in our state legislature protecting Indiana's environment failed to get even a hearing in committee. On this, and many other issues, our legislators need to hear our voices.

To read more, just search for "heat records broken", "earth's hottest month", or "seattle record snow heat 2021".



2/2 - Julia Strycker; Nicholas Swank
2/5 - Emily Bobo
2/7 - James Pfister; Steve Creech
2/8 - Grant Prenkert; Jill Shimek; Betsy Gray;
Becky Rusie; NancyRuff
2/10 - Ava Schneider
2/11 - Ken Bickers; Anne Fuson; Jean Kory
2/12 - Sylvia Jefferies; John Stackhouse

2/14 - Bill Barrett
2/15 - Michelle Talbot; Kelsey Potter;
Maxwell Riggle
2/17 - Dea Schneider
2/18 - Judy Crow; Bob Baird; Carol Peterman
2/21 - Peter Voskuil
2/22 - Owen Johnson
2/23 - Mike Riggle
2/25 - Rachel Boeyink
2/27 - Samantha Nickel
2/28 - Tim Fuson



FEBRUARY 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 pm 1 C.S. Lewis's "Mere Christianity" 7:30 pm Deacons Meeting	5 pm 2 Stewardship Ctte 5:45 pm Outreach Ctte 6:30 pm Christian Ed Groundhog Day	12 pm 3 Prayer Gathering 1 pm Circle Mary 5 pm Property Ctte 7pm Choir Practice	4	5
10 am 6 Sunday School 11 am Worship Service (Communion) 12 pm PNC Meeting	7	1 pm 8 C.S. Lewis's "Mere Christianity" 7 pm Koinonia	9	10	11	12 Lincoln's Birthday
10 am 13 Sunday School 11 am Worship Service 12 pm PNC Meeting 6 pm FPC Session	11:30 am 14 Emmaus Group 5:30 pm Racial Justice TF Valentine's Day	1 pm 15 C.S. Lewis's "Mere Christianity" 6 pm Membership Ctte	2pm 16 Blood Drive	12 pm 17 Congregational Prayer Gathering 7pm Choir Practice	18	19
10 am 20 Sunday School 11 am Worship Service 12 pm PNC Meeting	21	1 pm 22 C.S. Lewis's "Mere Christianity" Washington's Birthday	Area 10 Grocery 23 Bagging Delivery	Area 10 Grocery 24 Bagging Delivery 7pm Choir Practice	25	26
10 am 27 Sunday School 11 am Worship Service 12 pm PNC Meeting	11:30 am 28 Emmaus Group 5:30 pm Racial Justice TF					