



# The Presbyletter

First Presbyterian Church 125 W. Main Street Ionia, Michigan 48846 January 2024

## *Words From Pastor Chris*

### Making the Resolution to Rest

Now that the bustle of activities that invariably accompanies the Christmas holidays has ended, have you made your New Year's resolutions? Fitness centers and athletic clubs see an influx of new memberships at this time of year. The reason is obvious: exercising more, losing weight, and eating healthier consistently rank among the top resolutions each year. These are admirable, and if any among you has adopted one or all of them this year, I certainly hope they achieve success! But let us pause to consider them for a moment. Note that what they share in common is activity. No doubt that which they prescribe is sometimes needed, especially if our daily routines have become too sedentary. And yet our schedules may already be crowded, and adding one more task to accomplish, regardless of how worthwhile, serves only to elevate our cortisol levels. In this connection, critics have called attention to the paradox of gym membership. Crowding into an already busy schedule a visit to the club three afternoons a week contributes to toxic stress that is not necessarily offset by the workouts.

Perhaps we ought to consider another resolution that seldom appears on anyone's list. I refer here to the resolution to rest. I do not mean here taking afternoon naps more frequently or going to bed an hour earlier each night, although these may be for many of us good practices to follow. I mean rather the rest that God provides. The author of the Letter to the Hebrews invites us to enter into this rest. "Whoever enters into God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his" (4:10). The rest that both God and God's people enjoy together follows from the work of salvation that God's Son accomplished for us. After he had provided purification for sins by the offering of himself once for all, he sat down at the right hand of the divine majesty on high (1:3; 10:12). In God alone is our soul at rest; from him comes our salvation (Psalms 62:1). Entrusting ourselves to his care, we find in him a Shepherd who makes us lie down in green pastures, leads us beside still waters, and restores our souls (Psalms 23:2,3). Let us then resolve to abide in God's rest, from which comes our strength and vitality, not only for this upcoming year, but for all the years that remain to us.

Blessings to you,

Pastor Chris

## *Events At A Glance*

**Sunday Worship**  
**10:00 A.M.**

**in the sanctuary**

**or**

On Facebook at  
First Presbyterian Church  
Ionia 10:00 A.M.

**Fellowship Time**  
immediately following  
worship  
in the Memorial Room

**Holy Communion**  
First Sunday  
of the month

**Session Meeting**  
January 16, 2023  
2:00 p.m.

**Annual Meeting**  
January 28, 2024  
Immediately following  
the Worship Service



Annual Meeting-January 28, 2024

At their December 19, 2023, meeting, Session scheduled the Annual Meeting for January 28th immediately following the worship service. The deadline for committee reports is January 18th. Committee chairs can email their committee reports as an attachment to the church office or provide a written copy to the church office.

### *Per Capita Dues*

With the beginning of a new year, it is time to once again pay our per capita dues to the Presbytery of Lake Michigan. For 2024, the per capita for each active member is \$40.25 (General Assembly \$9.80, Synod of the Covenant \$3.25, Presbytery of Lake Michigan \$27.00). Our total is \$2,162.70, which is based on 54 active members as of 12/31/22. It is due to the presbytery office January 20, 2024.

As in the past, the Budget and Finance Committee is always very appreciative of members paying their own per capita. If you are able to do so, please indicate that your \$40.25 is designated for the Presbytery of Lake Michigan on the memo line of your check. Thank you very much.

### *Budget and Finance News*

This report covers income and expenses for November and Year-to-date (YTD) for eleven months of 2023. Assets, liabilities and fund balances reflect figures as of December 12..

#### **Cash Flow**

Cash flow was positive in November because contributions exceeded expenses thanks to a large, unexpected donation.

#### **Income and Expenses**

In November, total income from all sources was \$8,010; expenses were \$7,362; for a surplus of \$648. Year-to-date (YTD) income from all sources is \$82,306: YTD expenses total \$94,088. Our YTD deficit is \$11,782.

#### **Assets**

As of December 12, the church had the following cash assets:

Edward Jones	256,615
Independent Bank	16,332
Kosbar Account	101,229
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$374,177</b>

#### **Liabilities**

Current liabilities for payroll taxes are about \$511

#### **Fund Balances**

As of December 12, the fund balances were:

General Fund	195,637
Kosbar Fund	101,932
Memorial and Dedicated Funds	76,097
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$373,666</b>

## Grocery Ministry



### Food For Families

We delivered hams to three of our church families for Christmas. Also included was a \$50 gift card to Aldi. It was felt they might want to buy grocery items that are a favorite or tradition to their family for this holiday.

Thank you to all who contributed grocery items throughout this past year. Your contribution helped a lot and was greatly appreciated.

## Women's Bible Study

### Study on Gratitude

Women's Bible Study will begin again on Wednesday, January 17, at 7 PM. A four-week study about gratitude has been chosen by the group. We will use the book, "Grateful – Giving Thanks to God in All Things" by Lifeway Women, available on Amazon or from Barnes and Noble.

We invite all women from the church as well as friends who might be interested in joining with us. Since this is only a four-week study, you might want to give it a try! If you have questions, check with Carol Campbell, 419-937-5754 by text or phone call. Thanks!



## JANUARY



2	<i>Jen Furman</i>
6	<i>Jan Arnold</i>
7	<i>Bill Robinson</i>
12	<i>Tyler VanSyckle</i>
26	<i>Emily Sykes</i>
29	<i>Norma Kilpatrick</i>

### Special Dates

- New Year's Day, *January 1, 2024*
- Epiphany, *January 6, 2024*
- Baptism of the Lord, *January 7, 2024*
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day, *January 15, 2024*
- Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

January 18-25, 202

## Worship Volunteers

### Liturgist

January 7, 2024	Cindy Rozich
January 14, 2024	Marilyn McKay
January 21, 2024	Lee Hunsberger
January 28, 2024	Barb Klenk

### Communion Preparer/Servers

Kathy VanSyckle, Carol Campbell

### Usher/Greeter

January 7, 2024	Margaret Gregory and Jen Furman
January 14, 2024	Barb Klenk and Lee Hunsberger
January 21, 2024	Duane and Judi Emlinger
January 28, 2024	Lew and Carol Campbell

## Session Highlights

### Here are highlights from the November 2023 session meeting:

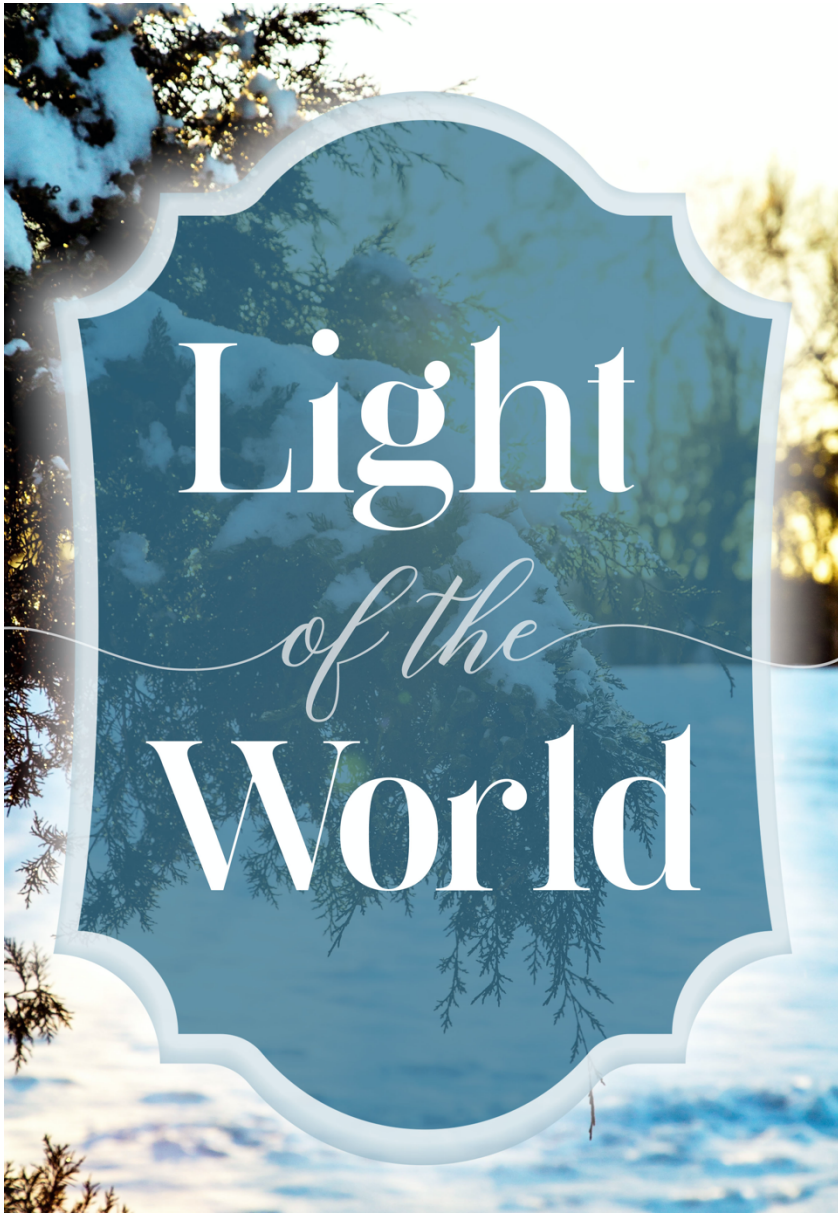
- Pastor Chris and Elder Norma served in-home communion to two members in November.
- Presbytery sent a lettering detailing per capita. \$2,162 is due by January 20.
- Session approved contributing \$20 to the City of Ionia for a lamppost garland.
- Pastor Chris said two churches (First Christian and Zion Methodist) will be joining us for Christmas Eve services.
- Pastor Chris gave an update on problems with our sound system.
- Session discussed declining church attendance and the need to be proactive rather than hoping the problem will resolve itself.
- Membership and Care reported they will send birthday cards to children and to older members unable to attend church.
- Mission committee will provide food for three families at Thanksgiving.
- The nominating committee is searching for session candidates to replace three members. The Book of Order limits terms of service to six consecutive years.

### Snow Policy for the Church:

When the Ionia Public School District has closed due to inclement weather, the church office may be closed. This decision will be made by the pastor and administrative assistant. The Clerk of Session, Worship Chair, and the Pastor will consider such factors as Ionia area police advisories against travel, and snow clearances from the parking lot and sidewalks before deciding to close the office.

### Sunday Service:

The Pastor, Clerk of Session and Worship Chair will make the decision when to cancel worship and other activities due to inclement weather. In the event of cancellation, the Clerk of Session will notify WOOD-TV 8 and facilitate an all-church email notifying the congregation. The Worship Chair will also post a notice on Facebook.



## Our Source of Light

January 6 marks the day of Epiphany, when the wise men (who were Gentiles) came to worship Jesus and bring him gifts. During the church-year season of Epiphany, we remember that God's Son is the Light of the whole world.

Ponder the gifts of Epiphany with these two reflections, written centuries apart:

Your light, dear God, surpasses all other light, because all light comes from you. Your fire surpasses all fire, because your fire alone burns without destroying. The flames of your fire reach into the soul, consuming the sin and selfishness that lie there. But far from damaging the soul, your fire sets it ablaze with love. What moved you to enlighten me with your truth? The fire of your love was the reason. You loved me so much that you could not bear to see me confused and perplexed. Can I ever repay the burning love which you have given me? No, because I have nothing of my own to give. Yet you assure me that the love which you put into my soul is repayment enough. You desire only the joy of seeing me receiving your gift. What more perfect Father could there be!

—Catherine of Siena (c. 1347-1380)

Epiphany beckons us to come to the light of Jesus Christ. Epiphany calls us to stare into that light until our inner darkness is fully expunged. Epiphany then sends us out into a dark and weary world as women and men with shining faces, until we say with the apostle Paul, "It is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" [see 2 Corinthians 4:6].

—Jason Gaboury, campus minister in New York City

**Session Members / Ministry Team Chairperson / Committee Member**

Judi Emlinger*	Christian Education, Nominating	Marilyn McKay*	Mission
Jen Furman*	Membership and Care	Linda Steele*	Memorial/Investment
Perry Gregory	Building/Grounds	Cindy Rozich*	Worship
Lee Hunsberger*	Stewardship/Budget and Finance	Warren Thompson*	Building/Grounds
Norma Kilpatrick*	Treasurer/Budget and Finance	Mary Williams*	Christian Education
Norma Kilpatrick*	Memorials and Investments	Margaret Gregory	Clerk of Session
Barb Klenk	Treasurer	Keith Sterner	Personnel
Session Members*			

**Rev. Dr. Chris Dorn**  
**Steve Slaughter**  
**Sara Hyland**

**First Presbyterian Staff**  
**Pastor Tel. 616-610-5982**  
**Custodian**  
**Administrative Assistant**

Newsletter, Calendar and more at [1stpreschurchionia.com](http://1stpreschurchionia.com)  
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