



# The Presbyterletter

First Presbyterian Church 125 East Main Street Ionia, Michigan 48846 May 2024

## Words From Pastor Chris

### Mental Illness in the Church

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. That we need to designate a month to raise greater awareness of this issue certainly seems justifiable. Today we face a serious mental health crisis that is spreading across our nation, as well as around the world. In recent years, we have witnessed a staggering increase in the numbers of those who are afflicted with anxiety, depressive, and substance use disorders. Levels of persistent sadness, hopelessness, and suicidal tendencies have risen sharply, especially among young people. The National Institute of Mental Health has estimated that nearly 58 million people in the United States suffer from mental illness, almost a quarter of whom struggle with what can be classified as a severe case. The problem is compounded by the social stigma that still attaches to the disease. Many people are too overcome by embarrassment, shame, or guilt to reach out for the help they need.

Mental illness is no respecter of persons, including those within the church. But we in the church are in a position to respond constructively to it. Tom Karel, counselor and author of *A Christian's Guide to Mental Illness*, urges us to be attentive to those in our congregations who may be struggling with mental illness. How can we help the one who struggles? Karel suggests five ways. First, we show up and be present to him. We listen carefully to him in our conversations, asking thoughtful questions that draw him out. Second, we remember that the one before us is a person. She is not her diagnosis, her past, or what family and friends say about her. She especially is not a label that popular psychology pastes on people like her. She is a person made in the image of God, by God and for God. All other distinctions pale into insignificance. Third, we socially connect that person with others who can help him feel less alone in his pain. Fourth, we encourage her to get involved in activities in the church. Of course, this way applies especially to those in larger congregations, where more opportunities for involvement exist. Finally, we encourage him to read the Bible. In the Bible he will find words of comfort, assuring him that God is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit (Psalm 34:18).

Mental health, like all aspects of health and well-being, matters to us in the church. Let us be sure that we play our part in providing help and hope to those who struggle with mental illness.

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**  
May 21, 2024  
2:00 p.m.

Women's Bible Study  
Wednesdays  
7:00 P.M.

Prayer Shawl Group  
Thursdays  
2:00 - 4:00 P.M.

## Session Highlights

### Session Highlights, March 2024 Meeting

- Pastor Chris and Elder Norma served in-home communion to three members in March.
- Pastor Chris provided elder training by reading a selection from the Book of Confessions.
- Maundy Thursday our church will host a joint service with Zion Methodist and the First Christian Church.
- Presbytery is mandating that ruling elders participate in boundary training. Sessions will be offered via zoom.
- A group will meet to consider recommendations related to our church being a gun free zone.
- Session approved a re-design of the church website.

## Announcements



We are doing some landscaping which involves removing the rose bushes on the east side of the church in the area closest to the parking lot. Some of these roses are from Lucy Hughes' yard from years past. If you would like to have a bush, please contact Marilyn McKay for more information.

### Grocery Ministry

We continue to assist two of our church families with their grocery needs. Our pantry is getting lean. We are asking for assistance to replenish it. Some of the items needed are cereal, juice, soup, peanut butter, jelly, pancake mix and syrup. We could also use some personal hygiene products.

Thank you for helping us with this project.

Knit together  
**IN LOVE.**  
COLOSSIANS 2:2, ESV



### Prayer Shawl Group

The Prayer Shawl Group has resumed knitting! Our group creates blankets, lap robes and shawls with the intention of giving them to others as a gesture of comfort and caring from our church.

We welcome anyone who enjoys knitting or crocheting to join us on Thursdays in the church conference room. Meeting time is 2:00 to 4:00 PM. Supplies of yarn, needles, and crochet hooks are available for use.



IM Kids 3<sup>rd</sup> Meal recognizes food insecure children in Ionia and Montcalm County schools. Volunteers prepare 840 meals daily to ensure these children have a sack meal to take home at the end of each school day.

During the month of May, Mission Committee is challenging our congregation to fill a pew for the IM Kids 3<sup>rd</sup> Meal program. We are requesting granola bars and/or fruit cups to fulfill this mission. Your help to reach this goal will be much appreciated.



Soaring Above Teen Center needs our help. They are having a yard sale and need gently used items. The sale is June 20-22 from 9 AM – 6 PM at the Merchants Building at the Ionia Fair Grounds. Items are to be dropped off at the Merchants Building June 17-19 from 10 AM - 2 PM and 4 PM – 8 PM. Any contributions would be appreciated.

## Coming During May

### Special Dates

- National Day of Prayer, *May 2, 2024*
- Ascension Day, *May 9, 2024*
- Mother's Day, *May 12, 2024*
- **Pentecost, *May 19, 2024***
- Trinity Sunday, *May 26, 2024*
- Memorial Day, *May 27, 2024*

### Prepare To Be Empowered



Contrary to common perception, Jesus' disciples weren't frightened and hiding during the 10 days between Ascension and Pentecost. Instead, they were actively preparing for the promised gift of the Holy Spirit. They "all joined together constantly in prayer" (Acts 1:14, NIV) and took steps to replace Judas.

After that inward focus, the disciples were ready to boldly burst forth on Pentecost, empowered and "enabled" (Acts 2:4) by the Spirit. They proclaimed Christ's death and resurrection, leading 3,000 people to faith that day, now known as the church's birthday.

"A great wave of faith and love swept through this newborn community," writes Suzanne de Dietrich in *Free Men*. "These Christians could not keep silent. Their joyful liberty had broken down all the walls behind which people would like to keep them; no prison could silence them."

3	Ami Cox
6	Jeremiah Helsius
6	Harlem Renucci
16	Marsha Kohloff
18	Evelyn Ransom
19	Kathy VanSyckle
21	David Kohloff
21	Rebecca Speer
24	Wade Arnold
24	Marilyn McKay
25	Marcia Brown
25	Robert Sykes, Jr.
28	Laela Agostini



### HAPPY BIRTHDAY

*A Pentecost Carol*

Pentecost is Happy Birthday,  
Happy Birthday to the church  
When every single doubting Thomas  
Comes alive with Jesus' promise  
That he wouldn't leave us in the lurch.

Everybody caught on fire,  
Heard the wind and saw the dove,  
And everybody heard old Peter  
Preach about a life much sweeter.  
They were going to change the world with love.

Happy Birthday, everybody,  
Everybody young and old,  
Now if it's hot or if it's cold out  
Don't let anybody blow out  
What we call your holy flaming tongue.

Happy Birthday! Happy Birthday!  
Many happy returns to the church.

Richard Avery and Donald Marsh



**March 2024  
Income and Expenses**

Month		YTD
Income	\$11,169	\$26,582
Expenses	7,214	\$26,900
Summary	\$3,953	\$ (318)

After more than enough technical problems with our Pastor's cordless microphone purchase, a Shure BLX14R/MX53 Wireless Head Worn Microphone System \-H11 Band was purchased from Sweetwater Sound Inc. in Ft. Wayne, IN. The total cost was \$500. Maxine Bosley offered to use Jim's memorial fund to cover this purchase. We are all grateful to you Maxine for this wise memorial fund purchase.

*Worship Volunteers*

Liturgist

May 5, 2024	Steve Zeoli
May 12, 2024	Carol Campbell
May 19, 2024	Kathy VanSyckle
May 26, 2024	Lee Hunsberger
May 5, 2024	Communion Preparer/Servers

Usher/Greeters

Lew and Carol Campbell
Rick and Linda Steele
Cindy Rozich and Jen Furman
Judy Emlinger and Linda Hood
Kathy VanSyckle/Cindy Rozich and Kathy VanSyckle



Plan Ahead!

**June 30<sup>th</sup>** – A **Strawberry Festival** is being planned following the church worship service.

The menu will include Norma's homemade ice cream, shortcake, and Michigan strawberries.  
Yum!

**August 25<sup>th</sup>** there will be a **Salad Luncheon and Auction** following church services.

Please join us for a fun array of salads and desserts as well as an always interesting group of silent auction items.



## **First Presbyterian Ruling Elders**

**Class of 2024** Jen Furman, Norma Kilpatrick, Linda Steele  
**Class of 2025** Marilyn McKay, Cindy Rozich, Dr. Warren Thompson  
**Class of 2026** Carol Campbell, Barb Klenk, Pam Rogers  
**Clerk of Session** Margaret Gregory

## **First Presbyterian Staff**

**Rev. Dr. Chris Dorn** Pastor Tel. 616-610-5982  
**Steve Slaughter** Custodian  
**Sara Hyland** Administrative Assistant

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

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Church Office Hours by Appointment

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