

FPC Messenger

November | Volume 82 Issue 11



***Then the king will reply to them,
'I assure you that when you have done it
for one of the least of these
brothers and sisters of mine,
you have done it for me.'***
(Matthew 25:40)

Dear Friends,

Here's a very special ministry opportunity:

At First Presbyterian Church, we pride ourselves on being welcoming and gracious to each person who calls, rings our doorbell, or drops by, regardless of who they are. To make sure we are practicing the best hospitality we can, we need to build a strong team of office volunteers. We need two helpers every day: one in the morning, from 9:00 AM to noon, and one in the afternoon, from 1 PM to 4 PM.

I'd like to thank Jerry Foster, Marguerite Underhill, and Melanie McQuere, who already provide this vital ministry of hospitality each week. Jerry serves on Monday morning, Marguerite helps on Tuesday (often for the whole day), and Melanie assists us on Thursday mornings. They answer the phone, buzz in visitors, and receive the mail. Depending on their interests, they help with a variety of other tasks, too (for example, Melanie is our "proofreader extraordinaire"). Some days are quieter than others, with ample time to read, knit, or work a crossword puzzle: other days, there's more activity. But always, answering the phone is a TREMENDOUS

GIFT to our paid staff. It allows them the time and space to accomplish the many tasks involved in supporting this congregation in "loving God, loving neighbors and living with purpose."

Perks of this job include access to all the staff treats (there's always something delicious), a comfortable working environment, and the heartfelt appreciation of all of us who serve on the staff of First Presbyterian Church. We also host a lunch once a year for all of our wonderful helpers.

Can you give us the gift of three hours of your time each week? We need helpers on: Monday afternoon, Wednesday morning, Wednesday afternoon, Thursday afternoon, Friday morning, and Friday afternoon. If one of these time slots works for you, please let me know! If you can't do every week, but could serve as a substitute helper, I'd like to know that as well.

Grace and Peace,



September Session Highlights

The Session met on October 19, 2020, via Zoom. The Session approved the observation of Communion during the Blue Christmas worship service December 9, 2020. The service will be moved to the sanctuary to allow for distancing and will use individual Communion packets.

Planning is underway for Advent worship opportunities and activities.

The Session approved a motion from the Neighborhood Ministries Team to register First Presbyterian as a Matthew 25 congregation. This affirms the many activities already underway in our church to live the principle of serving Jesus as we serve "one of the least" (Matt 25:40) and unites us in denomination-wide activities.



On Tuesday, October 20th, the Fellowship Ministry Team prepared and delivered more than 50 homecooked meals to our Silver Wings members.

Men's Bible Study— 24 Years and Counting...

The FPC Men's Bible Study that meets at 6:30 AM every Wednesday morning is in its 24th year. When coronavirus hit, the group's approximately 20 members switched from meeting in person to meeting online via Zoom. They average about 15 attendees each week, including four or five men who are members of other area churches. The 6:30 AM meeting time was put into place because many of the founding members were physicians and that was the only time of day that worked for them.

Members take turns leading the group each week, and they explore all aspects of their Christian faith. A long-time member described the group as, "a great group of guys that I can count on, and who are very much a part of my life. We have a lot of respect for each other and listen to and support each other."

Here's to many more years of this group exploring and living out their faith!



Operation Food Secure—Serving Neighbors

In October, FPC joined [Operation Food Secure](#) to distribute boxes of fresh food from the USDA Farmer to Families Food Box Program (see cover photo). Each Wednesday, from 4:30 to 6:30 PM in the north parking lot of the church, the Neighborhood Ministry Team (NMT) and other church volunteers distribute food boxes free to anyone in the community who has a need. The boxes include meat, dairy, and produce items, and a gallon of milk. No ID is needed to receive the food, and boxes are distributed on a first-come, first-served basis. In the first two weeks of the program, 50 boxes were distributed to serve 154 individuals. Volunteers are also delivering boxes directly to families in need who cannot pick up their boxes at the church.

Leah Marshall, chair of the NMT said, "I've seen so many projects at church over the years, and this one has a real and meaningful impact on those involved—both those receiving the boxes, and those distributing them. Helping people is what we are called to do. I think we all knew there are people in our church neighborhood in need, but until we started seeing them and meeting them through this program we really had no idea. The recipients are so appreciative and it feels good to be doing this work. This is an amazing program and not only is it serving a real need in the community, it has brought a lot of joy to our church members who are helping with the distribution."

A special thank you to **Ellen Townsend** for getting this new ministry up and running, and to **Steve Crouch, Rick Friedstrom and his friend Karen, Jeff & Chris Gustin, Carlene Jones, Julie Lady, Leah Marshall, Leslie Mondesir & Landon, and Kent & Ellen Townsend** for volunteering on the first two Wednesday afternoons. If you would like to volunteer to help with food distribution at the church on Wednesday afternoons, or would just like to learn more about this program, please contact Ellen at townsendke@aol.com or (785) 633-7274, or Leah by cell phone or text at (785) 221-8424.



Pictured: (l to r) Steve Crouch, Rick Friedstrom, Leah Marshall, Ellen Townsend, Landon Mondesir, Julie Lady, and Leslie Mondesir.

Hello everyone,

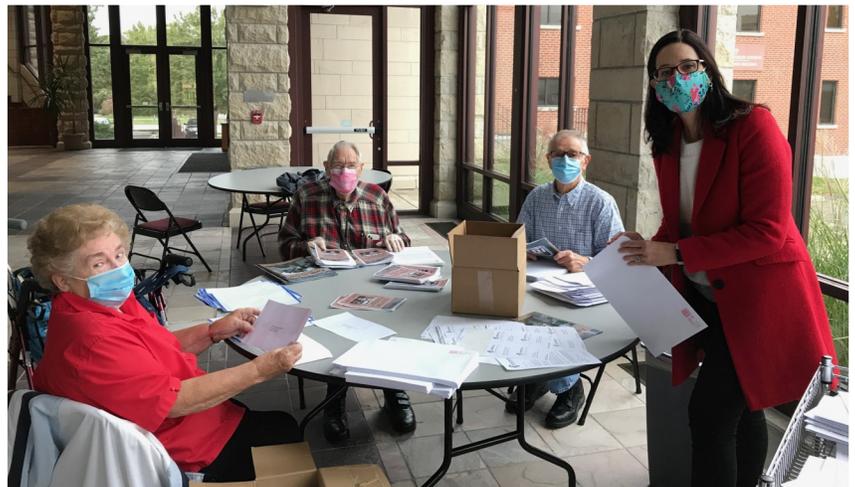
I wanted to tell you what the children and their families have been doing recently. In September we began our new curriculum, "Growing in God's Love." Our first unit was the creation. We learned how God made everything, how we were all farmers once, and about when the world started over. We made pictures of the creation, and drew rainbows to show God keeps promises. And, we even planted pumpkin seeds. We then moved on to learning about Abraham and Sarah's big family. We have talked about moving to a new place, how families sometimes have disagreements, how God made Sarah laugh, and how families can change their shapes.

In October the children had guest storytellers, and this will continue in November. Herman Jones, Patty Foster, Claudia Perney, Sandra Brown, and Pat Yancey join the children to read/tell the stories being learned in Sunday School. Kathy Pauls continues to lead our music and Roger Basinger does a fantastic job organizing the lessons and developing crafts for the children each week. Every two weeks, Susan Rowell, Marty Snyder, and I put together Sunday School packets and deliver them to the children at their homes. All of the activities, supplies, and events would not be possible without this wonderful congregation and their willingness to contribute their time, talents, and financial donations. We thank you!

Giving 2021 – Faith to Go!

"Commitment Sunday" is November 1st and due to ongoing public health and safety concerns, we're trying something new. Instead of having folks bring their pledge cards to worship to turn them in, this year we are having a "Drive-By Pledge Parade."

From 11:30 AM to noon on Sunday, November 1st, you can drive to the church and we'll be waiting in our parking lot on 8th and Harrison with a special container where you can safely place your pledge card.



Members of the Stewardship Team stuffed and mailed the 2021 giving packets on October 21st. Pictured: (l to r) Norma Pettijohn, Walter Menninger, Bruce Cooper, and Sandra Brown.

Sandra Brown, Pat Yancey and members of the Stewardship Team will be there to greet you. As a thank-you for your pledge, we'll be handing out First Presbyterian Church face masks for everyone in your household! You are also welcome to return your pledge card by mail using the self-addressed envelope that was included in the stewardship packet that was mailed to you.



Growing in God's Love

Tips for videos and Zoom calls

We're living in a video world these days! Here are tips to ensure your at-home videos and Zoom calls are successful. When filming videos, position your phone in landscape mode. If your phone is vertical your video may have black bars on the top and bottom and will not be usable. Be sure to frame the entire subject in the video—placing the subject in the center of the screen is a good idea.

Try to not use any zooming camera features. Digital zoom makes the video more pixelated and lower quality. Make sure the camera is close to you with you in the entire screen. Sitting too far away from the camera can also result in lower sound quality.

Make sure you have plenty of light when using your smartphone or camera, but don't sit in front of a window or other light source—your face will be dark and hard to see. If you're filming video or participating in a Zoom call outside, make sure there is no glare present. Move around until you have a glare-free shot and then start your video. This process can also be used inside.

News from Doorstep

"We appreciate everyone who has continued to bring in food to stock our pantry, and sent monetary donations to keep our doors open to help people in need during this time of COVID-19. Our focus now is Christmas. This year we're working with the Christmas Bureau, United Way, TRM and the community to streamline our approach to adoptions. We will still adopt 260 households and 800+ individuals, but how we provide food and gifts will change. In 2020, families will receive a \$15 gift card for each family member, our regular Christmas food order, a health kit, and a blanket or quilt. What we need for Christmas this year is: towel sets (bath, hand, washcloth), shampoo/conditioner, combs, bar soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, full/queen and king blankets only, and money to purchase the gift cards, food, and any of the above items not donated. You can send a check or go to www.doorsteptopeka.org to donate by credit card. Thank you for your generosity!"

Spotlight on Service

John Dorsey – Session, Class of 2021

Some of the groups at First Presbyterian John currently participates in are the Fellowship Committee and the Men's Bible Study. He reports that the Bible study is "most enjoyable, as I always learn something new each time I attend. Although ... at 6:30 a.m. each Wednesday, it IS a bit early!"

During the pandemic health challenges that include physical distancing, John hopes that we stay connected with all those in our church family. He is concerned that we might miss someone who could use our support.



While everyone knows John is an active Stephen Ministry leader, some may not know that he is also an Assistant Funeral Director. "Both use the same skills of listening and caring for others," he explained.

As far as non-church activities go, John enjoys golfing as often as he can. He concluded by expressing appreciation for the examples of service he is observing in other members of First Presbyterian.

Marty Snyder – Session, Class of 2021

When Beth Johnston became the staff member overseeing Family Ministries, Marty was elected to fill the last two years in her term on Session. Currently Marty is the elder serving on the Family Ministry Team and enjoys helping prepare and deliver lesson and craft packets for the children's Zoom Sunday School.

She enjoys the Needlework Ministry led by Kathy Pauls but has switched over to making fabric masks for the foreseeable future. "My family and friends humor me by accepting more masks than any one person could possibly use. It keeps me busy and feeling like I'm contributing something during these strange times," she said.



While she misses the full choir and seeing as many members at sanctuary services, Marty is pleased that First Pres has been able to offer four different ways to participate in worship services. "Under Sandra's and Pat's leadership with Session support, our church's technology outreach has quickly expanded to help us remain connected with one another while staying safe."

Until church activities return to "more normal," Marty looks forward to participating in small groups such as Baking, Crafts and Book Group.

November 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:30 AM Children's Sunday School Zoom Mtg 10:30 AM Worship Service, Sanctuary	2 Patrick Yancey's Day Off 3:30 PM Menninger Bible Study Group, Library & Zoom	3 12:00 PM Fellowship Mtg at Church	4 6:30 AM Men's Bible Study - Zoom Video Mtg 10:00 AM Staff Meeting 4:00 PM Worship Team Zoom Meeting 4:30 PM Operation Food Secure Neighborhood Food Distribution 6:30 PM Property Committee Mtg	5 6:45 PM Middle School Youth	6 Sandra Brown's Day Off	7
8 9:30 AM Children's Sunday School Zoom Mtg 10:30 AM Worship Service, Sanctuary	9 Patrick Yancey's Day Off Sandra on vacation 3:30 PM Menninger Bible Study Group, Library & Zoom 5:30 PM Deacons Mtg, Conference Room	10 Sandra on vacation 9:00 AM Presbytery Zoom Meeting 10:00 AM Staff Meeting 6:00 PM AELC CPR/First Aid Class, Willard Hall	11 Sandra on vacation 6:30 AM Men's Bible Study - Zoom Video Mtg 4:30 PM Operation Food Secure Neighborhood Food Distribution	12 Sandra on vacation 12:00 PM Finance Team Mtg 6:45 PM Middle School Youth	13 Sandra on vacation	14 Sandra on vacation
15 Sandra on vacation 9:30 AM Children's Sunday School Zoom Mtg 10:30 AM Worship Service, Sanctuary	16 FPC Messenger Deadline Patrick Yancey's Day Off Sandra on vacation 3:30 PM Menninger Bible Study Group, Library & Zoom 6:00 PM Session Zoom Mtg	17 10:00 AM Staff Meeting	18 6:30 AM Men's Bible Study - Zoom Video Mtg 4:30 PM Operation Food Secure Neighborhood Food Distribution	19 5:00 PM Stressed Nest Zoom Mtg 6:45 PM Middle School Youth	20 Sandra Brown's Day Off	21
22 9:30 AM Children's Sunday School Zoom Mtg 10:30 AM Worship Service, Sanctuary	23 Mark on vacation Patrick Yancey's Day Off 3:30 PM Menninger Bible Study Group, Library & Zoom 6:00 PM Family Ministry Team Zoom Mtg	24 Mark on vacation 10:00 AM Staff Meeting	25 Church Office closes at noon Mark on vacation 6:30 AM Men's Bible Study - Zoom Video Mtg 4:30 PM Operation Food Secure Neighborhood Food Distribution 5:30 PM Neighborhood Ministry Team Zoom Mtg	26 Church Office is closed 6:45 PM Middle School Youth	27 Church Office is closed	28
29 9:30 AM Children's Sunday School Zoom Mtg 10:30 AM Worship Service, Sanctuary	30 Patrick Yancey's Day Off 3:30 PM Menninger Bible Study Group, Library & Zoom 6:00 PM Family Ministry Zoom Mtg	1 12:00 PM Fellowship Mtg at Church	2 6:30 AM Men's Bible Study - Zoom Video Mtg 10:00 AM Staff Meeting 4:00 PM Worship Team Zoom Meeting 4:30 PM Operation Food Secure Neighborhood Food Distribution 6:30 PM Property Committee Mtg	3 6:45 PM Middle School Youth	4 Sandra Brown's Day Off	5 7:00 AM TDC Learning Centers - Breakfast w/Santa

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FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF TOPEKA
Loving God, loving neighbors and living with purpose

PERIODICALS
POSTAGE

Ministers

All the Members of the Congregation

Pastors

Sandra Brown, *Pastor*
Pat Yancey, *Commissioned Associate Pastor*
Neil Weatherhogg, *Pastor Emeritus*

Program Staff

Beth Johnston, *Director of Family Ministries*
Carrie Riordan, *Director of Communications*
Sean Zears, *Videographer*

Music Staff

Kevin Kellim, *Director of Music*
Cynthia Neufeld Smith, *Organist*
Norma Pettijohn, *Organist Emeritus*

Support Staff

Lori Hennessey, *Office Manager*
Mark Ingle, *Maintenance Supervisor*
Steve Johnson, *Part-time Custodian*

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The deadline to submit articles for the December Messenger is November 16.

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

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| Connie English—17 | |
| Rickman Burton—23 | |
| JoAnn Pfuetze—25 | |
| Dan Pauls—25 | |



In October, the Neighborhood Ministry Team delivered pizzas to the hospitals to show appreciation for their service and to let them know that we are praying for them as they take care of their patients and their own families. #LovingNeighbors