

MAY 2021

THE MESSENGER

Session News for the Pews

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY

OVERVIEW

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From the Interim Pastor Team: Word-Share-Prayer

After our many aggregate years of experience in ministry, we realize that the church which is growing spiritually is most likely growing numerically. Why is that the case? Well, we know that all successful organizations have learned to focus on what they do best. The church is no exception. What we do best—when we're at our best—is constantly strive for a closer and more meaningful relationship with Jesus Christ, so that our spiritual lives begin to intersect with and influence our actions outside the church. In other words, we live as if our church actually makes a difference to us.

With this in mind, the IPT has initiated Word-Share-Prayer at the beginning of Session meetings. It's a simple spiritual exercise which leads to people sharing their spiritual lives with one another. It goes like this....

WORD:

Read a given scripture passage silently and underline the words or phrases that grab you.

SHARE:

Jot down your insights from the text. How does this passage apply to your life?

PRAYER:

Write down your prayer requests and participate in group prayers.

Can you do this at home? In your families? By yourself? Sure. We also will be introducing this for Deacons and other committees. Word-Share-Prayer can become leaven in the church—a spiritual lifestyle that grows with time!

Blessings and grace,

Bill, Budge, & Judy

Session Meeting Notes, April 2021

Since Clerk of Session Janyce Durnell was away, Debra Manchester was elected Clerk Pro Tem.

Rev. Shipman led the Session in WORD-SHARE-PRAYER. The pattern of this form of a devotional is the leader of the devotional time, clergy, or laity, first reads a passage of Scripture (WORD) to the group. Members of the group then silently spend 5-7 minutes reading the passage to themselves, circling/underlining/jotting down the specific words or phrases that speak most meaningfully to them. Next, group members spend time sharing insights and feelings with each other (SHARE) from the perspective of how the passage spoke to them. Finally, the devotional time ends with the group offering short (often one sentence) prayers (PRAYER). All church groups are encouraged to begin meetings using this pattern of a devotional.

During the Session's time of Officer Training, Rev. Shipman led the Session through the "Marks of Membership" followed by her highlighting the "Ministry of Members" as defined in The Book of Order. Together, these sections point out that church membership is an agreement to live in relationship with God and other church members with expectations of benefiting from being part of a community and contributing to the welfare of the community. Rev. Shipman explained that maintaining the church rolls is a pastoral responsibility of the Session that gives it the opportunity to nurture and clarify the relationship of those on the current membership roll. To that end Session will begin a two-step process. First, the current membership rolls will be reviewed. Next, Session will begin reaching out to those who have not been active in the life of the church for a period of time to ascertain their commitment to First Presbyterian.

The co-chairs of the Mission and Vision Team, Nancy Ryan and Shannon Janeczek, reported that the team has begun its work and will share the team's work and progress in reports in the church newsletter.

Treasurer's Report: YTD Income \$57K, YTD expenses \$48K, YTD positive balance \$9K.

Administration and Personnel: A & P is currently updating documentation pertaining to the work of Session committees, looking at policies and procedures and committee responsibilities.

Session Meeting Notes, April 2021 Continued

Christian Education: Committee members are currently contacting families to ascertain current and future C. E. needs.

Property: In response to aging HVAC equipment and pandemic-influenced future air purification guidelines, a new heating/cooling unit has been installed, ready for use when activities resume in the church building.

The Nominating Committee, after a period of training and discernment regarding the meaning of ordained leadership in a Presbyterian church, has begun contacting potential elders and deacons to serve on the Session and the Board of Deacons.

The Communication Task Force has instituted a monthly newsletter from the Session. Its name and tagline: The Messenger—"Session News for the Pews."

The Pandemic Health Team reported that given the high rates of infection Washtenaw County is experiencing, it cannot currently recommend a broad opening of the building. At the same time, discussion continues concerning safety requirements that need to be in place when opening occurs.

Session received a letter from the Pickett family saying they are leaving First Presbyterian and that Trisha is resigning from the Session. The Session, collectively and individually, is thankful for Trisha's unstinting efforts on behalf of the Session and the church and wishes the Pickett family all the best.

May's Session Meeting is Tuesday May 18, 2021



2 Mission and Vision Task Force

The past year of listening---through surveys, listening circles and workshops--indicate that our congregation has a desire to go somewhere, and to do it together. Our first step is to craft both vision and mission statements.

We've used these tools before and they were transformational, growing our church into a healthy and vital congregation. The process of discernment is spiritual, listening to one another and to God's call.



To this purpose, we have begun asking questions within our task force:

- Where and in what ways is God at work in my life and in the life and ministry of this congregation?
- What stories of faithfulness can be told about our ministries, in the lives of the congregation, the community and in the world?
- If we listen carefully to the Holy Spirit, what do we hear, and in what ways do we ask to be equipped to grow and serve?

We ask the congregation to pray about these questions as well (Word-Share-Prayer) and listen for what answers may come. In the coming months, the MVTF will invite you to share what is being made known to you through prayer.

When we do this work together, with open hearts and minds, and grounded in faith and trust of God's living presence among us, our church will be renewed, strengthened, and equipped for what may come on our journey of faith.

Be Connected! First Presbyterian Church of Saline

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*All issues of The Messenger will be archived on salinepres.org.
Look for the NEWSLETTER(S) menu item on the front page.*

From the Nominating Committee

Then I heard the
voice of the Lord
saying, "Whom shall
I send? And who will
go for us?" And I
said "Here am I.
Send me!"
Isaiah 6:8

Good news! your Nominating Committee is one step closer to offering a full slate of candidates for elders and deacons. More candidates were needed this year because we did not elect elders or deacons last year. After prayerful consideration, letters were mailed to nine candidates for elder and six for deacon in late April.

If you received one of the letters, we sincerely hope you will prayerfully consider the call. Your congregation needs your leadership during this challenging and exciting time in the life of First Presbyterian Church of Saline.

Peace,
The Nominating Committee

Deacons and Care Groups

The IPT has brought the idea of Care Groups to Deacons, who approved using this tool at First Presbyterian. Each member will be assigned a Care Group which carries a biblical name. Deacons are then tasked with a particular Care Group. The directory lists the Groups and each family's entry has it mentioned as well.

John (Pellerin)
Joseph (Feight, B)
Lydia (Heywood)
Martha (Buse)
Mary (Little)

Matthew (Leutheuser)
Moses (Janeczek)
Miriam (Feight, ML)
Ruth (Barnich)



Sanctuary HVAC Install

An important step in returning to in-person worship was completed on April 19th: The installation of a Trane 12.5 ton cooling/gas heating unit for the sanctuary. The final hookup was finished just in time for the April snowfall! The church building now has seven units for in-duct air purification when the HVAC units are running. This purification uses REME-HALO-LED technology that greatly reduces airborne contaminants. Thanks to ALTECH Mechanical and Doug Frey Mechanical Heating & Cooling for working with us.

Keith Brown, Property Elder



Session wants to hear from you! The church office will forward messages to the group or you may use the new "Ask Session" form on the church website.