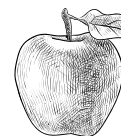


THE MESSENGER

News for the Pews

November 2022

Our Vision:
First Presbyterian Church of
Saline will be a Church that
seeks to make God's story
our story by joyfully growing
in faith and serving in love.



From Pastor Kimberly Secrist Ashby

Dear Friends,

Thanks to all of you who have been so welcoming and have given me background. One of the first things a pastor must do in a new church is learn what the traditions, patterns, and processes are. We may make some changes that we deem necessary, but it's important to me to know the starting foundation before doing anything. Many of you have been extremely helpful as I've sought to learn.

In that process, I've come across a few things I want to address with you. These are things people have mentioned that have risen to the level of needing to communicate with all of you directly. I consider these to be items which affect all of us, so please read this thoroughly.

First, a question about Session meetings, which are the meetings of our Elders. Regular Session meetings are open meetings, at which any member of the church can attend. If a member wishes to speak at the Session meeting, they should approach me as the moderator or the clerk (Janyce Durnell) at least a week ahead of time so that we can put it on the docket, which is finalized about 5-6 days ahead of the meeting. Sometimes it is important that staff members attend Session meetings. There are also moments when the Session will need to do its work confidentially, if it is handling personnel issues, for example, or is responding to a particular member about an issue that has surfaced.

When those happen, if anyone is in attendance, we will close the meeting to guests for those discussions. This is a normal practice of any Session. Through my years in ministry, probably 90-95% of Session meetings are not confidential, but that 5-10% is essential to handle respectfully and properly. The minutes of Session meetings are always available to anyone who asks to see them. *continued on p.2*

Service of Installation

The Presbytery of Detroit
and First Presbyterian Church of Saline
Announce the Installation Service
of



Reverend Kimberly Secrist Ashby
9:30am Saturday November 19, 2022

A summary of the last Session meeting will continue to be put in the next month's newsletter to inform the congregation of what the Session has been doing.

Along with that information about Session, I want to remind us all that when we elect Elders and Deacons, we promise to “pray for them, encourage them, respect their decisions, and follow as they guide us, serving Jesus Christ, who alone is Head of the Church.” You will make this promise again as a congregation on November 13th when we ordain Chip and Debra Manchester as Deacons and install Margaret Barnich as Deacon and Fred Lupton as Elder. You will also make this promise to me as your Pastor on November 19th. It is a communal promise (made by the community on behalf of the whole church), and it is an important one! When our leaders don't feel supported, they find it difficult to serve, and we find it challenging to locate people willing to serve. When our leaders feel supported, even if we don't always agree with them, what an amazing difference it makes! I encourage you to thank Elders and Deacons regularly (and even your Pastor) because it is a small amount of effort that reaps a huge reward! Pray for us always... we need it! We are all seeking to do what is best for the church and this community.

Lastly, who can serve in different roles in our congregation? For someone to be elected as an Elder or Deacon, they must be a member in good standing in the congregation. I prefer them to have been a member at least a year, regularly taking part in the worship life of the congregation and in another area or two as well, whether in a Bible study, serving on a committee, volunteering in music or worship, or something similar. Each of our Elders resources/leads a committee and may serve on another. Who can serve on committees with the Elders? Anyone who is part of the life of this congregation! This includes members, friends of the congregation, and our youth. All voices are welcome and encouraged on committees, because what matters is not membership, but participation in the life of the congregation. All those who are actively part of the congregation are strongly encouraged to be involved in a committee or group so that you have a place to use the gifts God gave you in ministry!

Please also look over the separate article I've put together about what it means to be a member of the congregation (it's also true for faithful friends of the congregation). Coming out of the pandemic, we're trying to determine who is still part of this congregation and ready to get on board with our new direction and vision. You had already begun contacting people before I arrived, and I'm now in the process of doing the same, while issuing invitations for small group meetings with me. We hope to develop a clear picture of who our flock is here, so that we can do an outstanding job of including people whether they're worshipping in person or online, whether they are in the music ministry or on a committee, whether they have a young family or are visiting grandchildren. Getting a strong overall picture and structure for ministry is essential to us being able to grow and thrive as a congregation, and everyone's role is important in that.

What a blessing it is to be serving here among you! **As you look through this newsletter, take note of two things you want to volunteer for and three activities you plan to be part of!** And stay tuned for more growth and development as Session works to move us forward in making God's story our story by joyfully growing in faith and serving in love. In Christ, Pastor Kimberly

The church is incorporating management software that will allow better communication for events and updates. For example, last minute notices such as snow days will be possible now! You soon will receive messages by text and email via Faith Teams.

Your first experience will be during "Advent on the Road." Sending a text with a theme keyword to the church's SMS text number will reply back with a link to play the recording for the home you are visiting.

Be on the lookout for a text message and/or email coming soon to you! It will include instructions on adding the new SMS text number to your contact list.

The Meaning of Membership by Pastor Kimberly

Several of you have asked such thoughtful questions about what membership means in this day and age. I'm very grateful for the questions and the curiosity! We are really in a time of transition, but understanding how our denomination sees membership in the church is important to our church's growth and self-image.

Our Book of Order (governance) says congregations SHALL (in other words, it's mandatory) welcome all persons who trust in God's grace in Jesus Christ and desire to become part of the fellowship and ministry of the church. So the only requirement to be a part of this or any other Presbyterian church is to trust in God and want to be here!

Membership is described as a joy, a privilege, and a commitment. All three mean something important. We find joy in our life as part of the community and in caring for each other, living for Jesus, and so much more. It's a privilege because not every believer around the world has the benefit of a community where they can worship freely, study consistently, and use their gifts for good. It's a commitment because we are called to be active participants in the life of the church, the proclamation of Christ's love and hope, and the work to bring justice and reconciliation in the world.

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Gifts of Service

- Sign up to bring lunch to youth group
- Provide sanctuary flowers for Worship
- Sign up for Coffee and Conversation
- Create a small group for *The Story*
- Volunteer for Presbytery meeting Nov. 18
- Donate hot chocolate mix or cookies to the Dec. 3 hot chocolate stand



Third Thursdays Nov. 17, 2022

Adult Forum Update, by Bill Woehrle

I invite you to join us in Adult Forum, which is held every Thursday evening in Fellowship Hall from 7pm to 8pm. We intend to limit the time slot to 1 hour. If we want to continue with the topic, we'll carry it over to the next week.

As the moderator, I am committed to keeping all discussions respectful and orderly. I will do my best to see that everyone has a chance to participate.

When I attended MSU, one of my favorite classes was called "Great Issues". I remembered we studied the Vietnam War, Civil Rights, and Population Explosion, among other topics. The visiting professor that covered Population Explosion was particularly skilled and energized on the topic, and had published several articles. I've often wondered – if he was alive today – how would he currently feel about the issue. Since then, the U. S. population has nearly doubled, while the city of Detroit (my birthplace) is less than half of what it was back then. Two distinctly separate issues with two distinctly separate causes.

Today, we have an abundance of issues to face. I strongly feel that the church is a wonderfully safe place to discuss these issues – to listen carefully and hear all sides of the story. We may not agree, and we may not convince the holder of the opposite view; but as we listen and possibly debate, we have an opportunity to learn.

Our son, Jim – who grew up in this church – now teaches Journalism and English at Midland HS. A few years ago, he was honored to deliver the Midland HS Commencement Address. His message was built around Homer's Odyssey (yes, he is that literary!). His message was "seek...find." My message to us is seek the truth...find a better society.

Please join us. It will be fun.

Adult Forum Meets Thursdays November 3, 17 and December 1, 8, 15.



Reverend Kimberly hours are Sunday to Thursday. Onsite Sunday, Monday, Wednesday. You are welcome to drop by but please call first to make sure she isn't already booked. *list office phone #*



The Youth will again run the traditional Hot Chocolate Stand during the Holiday Parade on December 3rd, offering treats for a free will donation. **We are looking for donations of hot chocolate mix and cookies.** turn in by 4pm Saturday Dec 3.

The Meaning of Membership, Continued

When I think of members of God's church that I serve, I hope for people who:

1. Are in worship regularly to praise God
2. Express care and love for others in the measure in which they hope to receive it
3. Choose 2-3 other places to be involved in the life of the church
4. Find 1-2 missions where they can give back actively
5. Engage in spiritual growth
6. Give resources, volunteer time, and talent to the work of the church

I love to be able to look around the sanctuary and picture those worshipping online, and know that each one has a safe place to be nurtured, an inspiring way to serve, and an engaging arena for growth in their relationship with God. When I see people growing and active, then I know that we as a church are doing our job.

So you could ask yourself questions that will help you assess and evaluate your relationship with the church:

1. Am I eager to be in worship whenever it's possible? Do I watch online if I can't be present?
2. How do I reach out to people who are in need of the church's care? Do I encourage and support others in our congregation, thanking them for their service?
3. In what ways have I engaged with the life and ministry of the church beyond worship?
4. How am I involved with the church's mission work outside our walls, to share the love and justice of Jesus Christ?
5. In what ways am I growing and being challenged spiritually? How am I positioning myself within the church so that this growth happens?
6. What financial commitment am I making? What time do I give to the church? What talents do I have and how am I sharing them in the ministry of the church?

These are the goals the Session and I have for all of our congregation and its members. We hope to be in dialogue with you about how the church can support you as you answer these questions.

*Save the Date! Christmas Eve 7pm
A Candlelight Service with Communion*

Welcome Visitors!

You may notice new welcome cards in the pews. Pastor Kimberly has designed these for newcomers and visitors, to make people feel welcome without being intrusive. The cards invite visitors to leave their contact information and a bit about their household, and whether Pastor Kimberly should make contact. **How can you help? if you notice a newcomer, please introduce yourself and invite them to fill out a card. Thank you!**



Session Notes

At its October meeting, the Session spent quite a bit of time discussing *The Story* and how it might fit into our programming as a step leading us to know our Bible better and helping us prepare to implement the Follow Me curriculum next fall. After hearing pros and cons from various people, the Session ultimately voted to use *The Story* from January 1 through July 30, 2023. The Session believes it will help us meet our mission and vision by knowing God's story better so that we can make it our story.

Session discussed hosting Presbytery meeting on Saturday, November 19, and the plans for Pastor Kimberly's installation service at 9:30 am during that meeting. Carey Pellerin volunteered to be the voting representative to the Presbytery meeting from our church. Other Elders have signed up to assist in various ways to support the event. We'll make sure the congregation knows they are invited to be present at 9:30 am for the installation service, and there will be a link for those joining from home.

Session had a thoughtful discussion on membership, on contacting members who have not yet responded to the membership survey, and on inviting people to meet with Pastor Kimberly in small groups. Implementation of all of those things is happening on an ongoing basis. Pastor Kimberly encouraged all Elders to invite more people to join their committees. No one must be a member of the church to be on a committee; we are seeking people who are active participants in the worship and work of the church to serve on committees.

Worship will attempt to sell the organ, or send it to Care Village if unable to sell it. We set the Christmas Eve service time for 7 pm and chose to do a prerecorded short service for Christmas Day. New Year's Day worship will happen as usual.

Christian Education and Mission discussed upcoming activities which are all on the church calendar, and C3 reported on recruiting volunteers to once again handle Coffee and Conversation. Finance reported that pledges are down significantly, but thankfully so are expenses. As Pastor Kimberly's moving expenses were much higher than expected due to inflation, the Session allocated an additional stipend for her.

Pastor Kimberly has met with Elders, gotten their feedback on their gifts and desired areas of service, and a few Elders have changed their committee responsibilities. The goal is to have every Elder chair only one committee. Some Elders will serve on a second committee, but our goal is to make the responsibilities more joyful and within each Elder's gifts and strengths.

Looking Ahead to Advent

Presbyterian Outlook Advent Devotions- 11/27 to 12/24

Advent on the Road- 12/1 to 12/23

Christmas Parade Youth Hot Chocolate Stand- 12/3

Mission Gifts to Millpond Manor Residents-- 12/7

Advent Festival- 12/11 3-7pm

Third Thursday Dinner/Blue Christmas Worship Service-12/15

Christmas Joy Offering in Worship, Poinsettias in Sanctuary- 12/18

Christmas Eve Worship 12/24, 7pm ((Take Poinsettias Home)

Recorded Christmas Day Worship online only

"New Year's Eve" Eve Youth Celebration 12/30

