



# The First Pres Release

The Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church of Ithaca, Michigan



## APRIL 2020

### From Pastor Christina's Desk

What an emotional roller coaster our church family has been on these past three weeks. When Bob texted me on March 9 that he had suffered a heart attack and that he was being transferred from Carson City to Lansing, I don't think either of us imagined that three weeks later, I'd be writing this letter to go in our April newsletter. I know for certain that, in my last conversation with Bob on Sunday, March 15, he was surprised that we'd had to cancel church services for that day. He said, "I never imagined a virus would be so bad that it would cancel church services." What a testament to where his heart really wanted to be - amen?



If things were "normal," we would be able to come together, to grieve together, and to comfort one another. Unfortunately, the virus has other ideas, and the grieving together and comforting hugs will have to wait.

I know it isn't easy, and I know that when we do get to come back together in our sanctuary, our joy will be muted because of those who are not with us. While we don't know when that will be, I can promise you that we will have a service of thanksgiving and remembrance on that first Sunday back together. Just keep holding on - we will make it through this time.

A few things to remember in this season.

- **THIS** (both our grieving the loss of Bob and the response to COVID-19) **IS A MARATHON, NOT A SPRINT.** Pace yourselves. Be gracious to yourselves and other. This season is going to take time to make it through.
- **YOU ARE NOT ALONE.** I cannot stress this enough. Physically, you may be by yourself, and right now, that is best practice. But that doesn't mean your phone doesn't work. Call each other!
- **THIS WILL NOT LAST FOREVER.** We pass through these shadowy times. We don't live in them. We are Easter people - and we know that joy comes in the morning.

Hang on to the truth we know, friends. We belong to God, and we are deeply loved.

With all of my love, and God's love too, *Pastor Christina*

## Church During a Pandemic - Things You Need to Know

None of us has ever done this before, nor have we been trained for it - so we are all on a learning curve together to figure out how to “do church” when we can’t be together. Here are a few things that Ithaca First Presbyterian Church is doing while we are physically distanced from one another. Just remember - we are all in this together, and we will come through this valley of darkness stronger on the other side.

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### Church Checking In - Wednesdays at 7pm

Join us for a virtual get-together on Wednesday nights at 7:00pm. Using Zoom, we have a chance to see and hear each other in a time when we cannot be together. Look for a weekly email from Pastor Christina with the link for the meeting. If you haven’t joined us before, when you click on that link, if you are on your computer, smart phone, or tablet, the website will want you to install the Zoom app - you **want** to do that, and “follow the bouncing ball.”

If you don’t have a computer, smart phone, or otherwise, you can call in to the meeting with your telephone. At 7:00pm on Wednesday, call **1-929-205-6099**, when prompted, enter meeting ID number **514 258 0670** and the password, **4437**.

If you are having trouble with getting the app started up or figuring out how to make it work, **call Pastor Christina at 248-217-7178**. She’s no expert, but maybe she can help walk you through whatever the problem might be.

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### Please Send In Your Weekly Offering!

Just because we can’t meet in person doesn’t mean the business of the church stops - and that includes paying the bills! If you are able - please continue to send in your regular offering. You can mail it to the church. The address is:

**First Presbyterian Church  
PO Box 48  
Ithaca, MI 48847**

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### We Have A YouTube Channel!

The church has a YouTube channel, where you can find the videos “Thoughts With Pastor Christina” - the meditations/sermons for this season of Physical Distancing. If you search for “First Presbyterian Church of Ithaca Michigan” you should be able to find us. If you “subscribe” to the channel, you’ll be able to get notifications when a new video is posted.

Videos are also posted to the church website ([www.ithacapres.org](http://www.ithacapres.org)) and the church’s Facebook page.

**If you would like the videos on a DVD, please let Pastor Christina know.** This option is truly for those who have no way to get online to see the videos. In an effort to conserve resources, we won’t burn DVDs until we can make a full disc, but rest assured, DVDs can happen.

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### The Website is the Place to Be!

There are a number of resources available on the church’s website ([www.ithacapres.org](http://www.ithacapres.org)) - these can be very valuable to you as we continue in this season of physical distancing. Some of the available resources include:

- The church directory
- The link for the week’s Church Checking In Zoom meeting
- Prayer Request form (Pastor Christina gets these)
- Sermons (all the way from 2018 to now)

## Prayer List

*Loving God, we lift the following in prayer to You. Hold these people and situations in Your hands, and in them, may Your will be done. Amen.*

### **Newest Requests:**

- The family and friends of Bob Crist, who died Monday, March 16
- Roger Klein and family, on the loss of his grandson Adam on March 22
- John Allen
- Those fighting COVID-19, especially a good friend of Val and Gary
- Those on the front lines - nurses, doctors, and other caregivers
- Those “essential employees” who have to continue to go to work
- Those who are staying home, especially those who are already fighting depression and feelings of isolation
- For Pastor Christina, and our Session, and all pastors and church leaders navigating this time

### **Concerns:**

Coleen Trexler; Ralph Brillhart; Children in the middle of situations not of their making; Denise Smith; Joe & Tracy; The family of Cindy Watson; Dale Nester; Mike Zimmerman; Bree Melow; Kristen Winn; Cheryl; Those fighting the “creepy crud;” Heath Meyers; Garret Miniard; The Rev. George Gillette; Soulemayne Galadi, serving in the Congo; Travelling mercies; Those who do not know God’s love; Those who have difficult decisions to make; Those who make decisions that affect others; Those living with mental illness; Our military and veterans; Our police, fire, and other emergency responders; Our country

### **Thanksgivings:**

Our church’s 150th birthday celebration; Miracles and healing mercies granted; Our church family; The church office volunteers; New jobs and the opportunities that come with them; For birthdays and anniversaries; For those who help others in crisis; For the angels in our church family

### **Continuing Prayers:**

John & Nancy Allen; Penny Arnold; Marian Bouchey; Christina Latoski & family; Mick Lott; Karen Moore; Sally Nester; Barb Pharr; Rick & Mary Rimmel; Karen Rozen; Shelly & Jamie Sanders; Bonnie Smith & Ken Yordy; Randy Smith; Shelley Zamarron & family



# What About Holy Week and Easter?

Friends, we are almost to the holiest season of the church year, and unfortunately, this year we cannot physically be together for services and fellowship. BUT! That doesn't mean Holy Week and Easter don't happen - it just means that we have to do them differently.

Pastor Christina is working to put together resources for Holy Week worship at home. It will be emailed out and posted to the website as soon as she has it ready.

For the local (in Ithaca) folks, Pastor Christina will be dropping off packets of Holy Week worship materials to your homes later this week (before April 3). This will be done "drop and dash" style - as much as she would love to visit with you, we have to maintain social distancing for the safety of our community. If you are not in Ithaca, and would like a packet, please let Pastor Christina know - she will figure out how to get it to you.



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## From the Mail Bag

Thank you for all of the wonderful birthday greetings - I received over 100 cards and well-wishes to celebrate my 90th birthday. Thank you! -Marian Bouchey

### April Birthdays & Anniversaries

#### BIRTHDAYS

- 1 - Terrie Randolph
- 5 - Tim Hull
- 10 - Clare Bare
- 12 - Bonnie Smith
- 16 - Nolan Woodman
- 17 - Chuck Emery
- 23 - Hazen Nester

### May Birthdays & Anniversaries

#### BIRTHDAYS

- 1 - Jean Bare
- 11 - Roger Klein
- 11 - Jeff Arnold
- 12 - Dave Justin
- 13 - Nancy Vernon
- 15 - Penny Arnold
- 16 - Mary Anne Evans-Justin
- 21 - Tom Strong
- 23 - Marion Nester
- 26 - Joy Heinlein

#### ANNIVERSARIES

- 1 - Jamie & Shelly Sanders
- 6 - Doug & Sandy Parr
- 23 - Tom & Virginia Strong
- 24 - Dale & Marion Nester (45)

