

Our mission is to create disciples for Jesus Christ and to practice His teachings by loving and serving God and one another.

JULY 2021



THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

TIMES

Letter from the Pastor

Friends,

July 1 marks one year since beginning service as pastor here at First Presbyterian Church of Manhattan. And what a year it has been: moving during a pandemic and starting a new season in life as a family during a time with no (or very few) opportunities to be in the fullness of community, as a church or society. I began, with most of the current office staff, fresh to life in Manhattan, and wondering what "normal" looks like here. No in-person worship, very limited in-person gatherings, having to pre-record services in an empty sanctuary, and meeting people through car windows at a drive-through ice cream social, were all (for me and my family) unique experiences. There have been countless ZOOM meetings and emails, phone calls, porch visits, outside conversations, and mask-to-mask conversations. And still, I haven't met so many of you face-to-face! But vaccinations continue to happen, things continue to open up around us, and slowly but surely, things are changing for the better. For this I am very grateful. Let's remain steadfast in practices that are contributing to the end of the pandemic in our area, and a turn to something more "ordinary" in our life as a community of faith!

This past year we've worked through many struggles here administratively: trying to rebuild databases and files, and recover records that were discarded or lost before any of us in the main office began ministry here. This may not seem like that big of a deal in "churchy" matters. But one example is our directory information. It has been a great frustration to "stay connected" during a global pandemic without much reliable contact information. We so desperately want to connect with you, and build relationship! So, as we did last summer, be on the lookout for more "Getting Reacquainted" mailings as we work to keep our directory with members' and friends' information up to date. Another example is accountability. As many pastors do when they first begin a new call, I went to the permanent record of Session minutes to see what ministry here, and the "conversation" that has occurred in the past, looks like. The last minutes in our permanent record were from May 23, 2017. Three years before I began! So we've been working hard as a Session and Board of Deacons to "get our house in order," to keep a proper accounting of our work as disciples of Jesus Christ, and leaders in this particular congregation, to reaffirm our mission, and to faithfully discern the way forward as God's people at First Presbyterian Church. *Continued on page 2...*

Since last year, we've upgraded our audio/visual technology and capabilities so we can livestream worship services, we have begun regular outdoor services, and have enjoyed more ordinary worship, albeit still with masks; and I still struggle with latex gloves at communion as many of you have remarked over the months—often with a smile. With the vaccinated, I've been able to see faces "from the eyes down," and even share a real live meal with others. Church leadership has begun meeting face-to-face once more. And plans for the fall are in full swing. I am hopeful for the future of things at First Presbyterian Church. But we must remain diligent in our work and worship as a community so we do not fall back into patterns that can contribute to being disconnected or disordered. A favorite scripture of many Presbyterians is from I Corinthians 14:40—"let all things be done decently and in order." May it be so.

This past year, with all its hardships and sorrows, has also given us opportunity to re-imagine who (and whose) we are as a community of faith, and focus on the things that really define the core of who we are. A common refrain has been "FPC 2.0!", coupled with some reference to the Great Ends of the Church. And for those of you unfamiliar with these "Great Ends," there are six: (1) the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind, (2) the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God, (3) the maintenance of divine worship, (4) the preservation of the truth, (5) the promotion of social righteousness, and (6) the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world.

These six "Great Ends" guide us in our mission, and sharpen our resolve to live and move as disciples of Jesus Christ. They have been part of the Presbyterian tradition's "core" for more than a century. And as one year gives way to another, and then another, I pray that our journey together is one that leads to a deep, fruitful, life-giving way that strives toward these Great Ends with joy and gladness.

Thank you for this first year of your steadfastness, grace, love, welcome, and dedication to being Christ's people in and for this world. May God bless and keep you all as we continue to walk together.

Peace,
Pastor Jason

THE DEACONS FUND | THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

Do you wonder what happens to the money you donate to the Deacons Fund? The Board of Deacons' activities are funded through your donations to the Deacons Offering that is collected the first Sunday of the month and additional donations made throughout the year. The following activities are funded through your donations.

COMMUNITY MINISTRY

Food Pantry
Blessing Box
Backpack Program
Winter Warmth Clothing Drive
Community Dinners and Breakfasts
Mission Committee Donations

MEMBER CARE

Bridge Builders
Funeral Meals
Hospital Visits
Christmas Cookie Plates
Prayer Shawls/Baby Blankets
Bereavement Support
Courtesy and Remembrance

FELLOWSHIP

Friday Fellowship (will restart in the fall)
Annual Ice Cream Social
Deacons Dinner or Social for the Congregation

These activities are supported by the Deacons, however the work is done by our talented volunteers who give their time and treasure to these activities. Several of our larger efforts such as the Community Dinners and the Food Pantry are also supported through grants and additional community resources. We are blessed to be able to serve our community and congregation. We would not be able to fulfill so many needs without your support! **THANK YOU!**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Children & Youth Ministries



Heartland Camp

Heartland Camp Traveling Day Camp 2021 will be held July 19-23. Register today by emailing Shiloh Vick at shiloh@firstpresmanhattan.com!



Summer VBS/Sunday School

Summer VBS/Sunday school is off and running! Come on out and "camp" with the Israelites at 9:30 on Sunday mornings!



Host Families Needed!

Breakfast meals are still needed at FPC for our Heartland TDC counselors this July 18-23. To sign-up please contact Shiloh Vick at (785) 317-8286 or email at shiloh@firstpresmanhattan.com.

Volunteer Opportunities

Become a Faith Formation Leader!

One big way that we can create disciples for Jesus Christ, is by volunteering as a classroom faith formation leader on Sunday mornings! Faith formation leaders (once called Sunday school teachers) are needed for the following age levels:

- Preschool
- Kindergarten & Elementary Grades
- Middle & High School Youth
- Young Adult (college-20's)
- Adults

Classroom faith formation leaders facilitate learning of the scriptures using both traditional and innovative tools provided by our Faith Formation Staff and Committee. We will provide all that is needed in the way of training, materials, support, and more (no experience needed)!

It is because of faithful and committed volunteers that our vital church ministries at FPC thrive! Please prayerfully consider committing your time each week to this very important ministry! If you're interested but unsure if it is for you, contact Shiloh Vick or Pastor Jason for more information!

Mustard Seeds Nursery Volunteers Needed

Miss rocking babies, little giggles, and honest conversation? FPC can help with all of the above! Our Mustard Seeds Nursery is open for the summer and is in need of nurturing individuals to assist our staff on Sunday mornings in caring for our tiniest of church members! If you love engaging with little ones through singing, reading Bible stories, playing, then we've got you covered! Please contact Shiloh Vick for more information!



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BE ON THE LOOK OUT!

Let's Get Reacquainted Cards

We are mailing out our annual information cards for each member to complete and return to the church. Be sure to fill yours out and return to the church by August 1st with your information.