



KALAMAZOO  
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
A Sanctuary in the City: Living Faith



“I WILL HONOUR CHRISTMAS IN MY HEART,  
and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present,  
and the Future. The Spirits of all three shall strive within me.  
I will not shut out the lessons that they teach.”

*A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens

DECEMBER 31, 2023 — FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

# THE GATHERING

*Wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here—with whatever joys, questions,  
or tears you bring today—as we worship God, who welcomes us all!  
You are invited to listen for God's Spirit speaking to you through the music of the Prelude  
as we prepare our hearts for worship.*

## CALL TO WORSHIP

God's steadfast love endures forever, and God's faithfulness to all generations.  
Let us worship God.

## PRELUDE

*mvt. 2 from Sonata in D minor*

Florence Price

## \* DOXOLOGY (tune #607)

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Christ, all creatures here below;  
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;  
Praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.**

## \* OPENING RESPONSES

Isaiah 61:10-11

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord,  
**my whole being shall exult in my God;**  
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,  
**he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,**  
For as the earth brings forth its shoots,  
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,  
**so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise  
to spring up before all the nations.**

## \* HYMN #134

*Joy to the World*

Isaac Watts

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

*From Feasting on the Word*

**Merciful God, we confess that we have not lived as your faithful children.  
We have kept silent in the midst of prejudice and hatred. We have been idle in the  
face of violence and injustice. We have not been a light to the nations, and our lives  
have not revealed your glory. Forgive us, gracious God. Repair the ugliness of our  
sin and restore in us your beautiful grace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## KYRIE #437

*You are the Lord, Giver of Mercy*

Traditional Liturgical text

**You are the Lord, giver of mercy!  
You are the Christ, giver of mercy!  
You are the Lord, giver of mercy!**

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS AND PEACE

2 Corinthians 5:16-18

From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we no longer know him | in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation:

**everything old has passed away; look, new things have come into being!**

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation. May the peace of Christ be with you!

**And also with you!**

*Please stand and take a moment to share Christ's peace with others*

\* GLORIA

“Glory to God”

Gloria

**Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo!**

**Gloria, gloria, alleluia, alleluia!**

## THE WORD

### MOMENT WITH YOUNG WORSHIPERS AND CHILDREN'S BLESSING

Children: You are loved!

Congregation: **You are loved!**

*(Infants and children up to age 4 are invited to our nursery, Room 208)*

### PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

**Lord, open our hearts and minds by the power of your Holy Spirit, that as the Scriptures are read and your Word is proclaimed, we may hear with joy what you say to us today. Amen.**

### FIRST READING

Galatians 4:4-7

New Testament, p. 189

The Word of God for the people of God.

**Thanks be to God.**

### ANTHEM

*Memories*

Frances Maya

### SECOND READING

Luke 2:22-40

New Testament, p. 59

For the word of God in scripture, for the word of God among us,  
for the word of God within us,

**Thanks be to God.**

### SERMON

“For My Eyes Have Seen Your Salvation”

Luke 2:22-40

\* HYMN #127

*Hark the Herald Angels Sing (Jesus, the Light of the World)*

Charles Wesley

# THE THANKSGIVING

## TIDINGS OF THE CHURCH

We give thanks to God and live faith, offering ourselves through worship, work, service, and love in all its forms.

## OFFERTORY MUSIC

*Yearnings of the Wind*

Yasunori Mitsuda

## \* OFFERTORY RESPONSE “As with Gladness Men of Old” #150

**As with gladness men of old did the guiding star behold;  
as with joy they hailed its light, leading onward, beaming bright;  
So, most gracious Lord, may we evermore be led to thee.**

**As they offered gifts most rare at thy manger, rude and bare,  
so may we with holy joy, pure and free from sin’s alloy,  
all our costliest treasures bring, Christ, to thee, our heavenly king.**

## \* OFFERTORY PRAYER *(continuing to pray in unison)*

**Holy God, as you are now about to dismiss us with your peace,  
may our eyes see and our wills seek the salvation you desire and prepare for all people.  
Guide our service to be a revelation of your light and grace that all may find their way  
to the glory of abundant life flourishing as you intend, in the name of Christ. Amen.**

## PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us pray....

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.**

**Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread,**

**And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors,**

**And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, now and forever. Amen.**

# THE SENDING

## \* HYMN #546

*Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing*

John Fawcett

## \* BENEDICTION *(Our congregational response is “Alleluia! Amen!”)*

## POSTLUDE

*Carillon de Westminster*

Louis Vierne

## WORSHIP PARTICIPANTS

### WORSHIP LEADERS

Meredith Alspach  
The Rev. Annamarie Groenenboom  
The Rev. Dr. Seth Weeldreyer

### ACOLYTE

Joseph Sablan

### READER

Richard Aldrich

### MUSIC

Autumn, Organist

### GREETERS

### SOUND TEAM



## DEACON'S PRAYERS



One of the great gifts of a community of faith is that we take time and intention to pray for one another. This week, we pray especially for **SANNY NUTTER** and the parish group listed below, that they may feel God's presence and power in their lives. Next week, we will pray for another Deacon and parish group.

Jean Appel	Jerre James	Patricia Mullen
Deb Bender	Ralph Jarl	Clery Ortiz
Kim Cummings	Joan Keep	Susanne Rose
Gail Fitzpatrick-Fox	Marilyn Lindbeck	David Scarrow
Nancy Harwood	Sue Madden	Carol Schreiner
Cass Hough	Chuck Madden	Carol Payne Smith
	Jim Mitchell	

---

“THERE MAY BE TIMES WHEN WE'RE POWERLESS TO  
PREVENT INJUSTICE, BUT THERE MUST NEVER BE A TIME  
WHEN WE FAIL TO PROTEST.”

IBRAM X KENDI

---

**CHURCH GREETER SIGN-UP:** Thank you to everyone who has been serving as a Church Greeter on Sunday morning. We are now signing up for the months of January through March. If you are willing to serve in this ministry of hospitality, please sign the Sign-Up Sheet in the Gathering Place with the date(s) that you are available, or email [pat.stromsta@gmail.com](mailto:pat.stromsta@gmail.com). You are Appreciated (and Loved)!

**POINSETTIA PLANTS** will be passed out after the service this morning (12-31-23). Those who made a contribution for the flowers in remembrance or honor of someone may take a plant and bring it home or give it to someone who would appreciate their Christmas Season beauty.

# CLERGY AVAILABILITY & RESPONSIBILITIES

We are pleased to welcome the Rev. Annamarie Groenenboom to our staff beginning in January, joining our present clergy staff including Pastor Amber, Pastor Chrissy, and Pastor Seth. As she begins and we coordinate clergy availability and responsibilities in our life together, we are blessed to share the varying gifts and voices and witness of each clergyperson. It is truly a privilege, by the grace of God, which few congregations steward. And we recognize it may be helpful to clarify how each person will serve and be available. Of course, we cannot possibly list everything everyone does. Here is an attempt to offer some idea ... ever open to more questions from anyone at anytime!

All clergy can be reached by either calling the church phone number 344.0119 or by email. Our new phone system at church enables a call to be forwarded to and messages received on individual cell phones. You can find email addresses and extensions below and in the bulletin every week. Please, note that all pastors want to connect with parishioners and neighbors as much as possible, while respecting parameters and expectations of employment. Sometimes there may be an immediate answer / reply. And gauging import with personal balance, sometimes a reply may not be immediate ... as we all navigate increasing pressures of communication in our culture.

All pastors will share in pastoral visitation and worship leadership, attend Session meetings, and meet with anyone by special arrangement.

Pastor Annamarie Groenenboom (*Annamarieg@fpckzoo.org, ext. 219*) is contracted as Associate Pastor for twelve hours per week. She will be in the church office Tuesday morning and Wednesday after 2:00 pm. Pastor Annamarie will resource and support the ministry of our Congregational Life Committee with all the activities that entails, including hospitality and new members orientation. And she will share worship leadership at least two Sundays per month.

Pastor Amber Nettleton (*Ambern@fpckzoo.org, ext. 212*) is contracted as Associate Pastor for twelve hours per week. She will be in the church office Tuesday morning and Wednesday morning. Pastor Amber will resource and support the ministry of our Board of Deacons with all the activities that entails, including a little more concentration on care needs of members in independent / assisted living facilities. And she will share worship leadership at least two Sundays per month. **Continued on next page**

.....

## ITEMS FOR OUR CALENDAR

We appreciate your support in keeping our calendar vibrant and up to date. If you have any items you'd like listed in our weekly calendar and bulletin, please send them to Kelly. He will process and forward them, making any necessary adjustments to the calendar. **Our bulletin submission deadline is Tuesday at noon to ensure timely inclusion.** This includes contributions from groups meeting regularly, worship, and music. Your help in informing us about any changes is crucial for maintaining an accurate calendar. Your proactive contributions are vital in keeping our community well-informed and engaged. Thank you for your ongoing support and collaboration! *kellys@fpckzoo.org*

# CLERGY AVAILABILITY & RESPONSIBILITIES

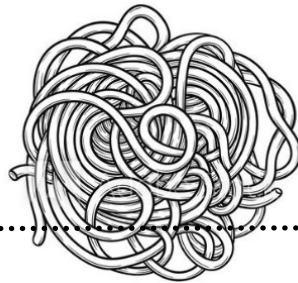
## Continued

Pastor Chrissy Westbury ([Chrissyw@fpckzoo.org](mailto:Chrissyw@fpckzoo.org), ext. 204) is contracted as Associate Pastor for twenty hours per week. She will be in the church office Tuesday morning, Wednesday all-day, and Thursday mornings. Pastor Chrissy will resource and support the ministry of our Faith Formation, Outreach, and Stewardship Committees with all the activities that entails. And she will share worship leadership at least two Sundays per month.

Pastor Seth Weeldreyer ([Sethw@fpckzoo.org](mailto:Sethw@fpckzoo.org), ext. 203) is contracted full-time as Pastor / Head of Staff. He will be in the church office most of the week, when not at other meetings and visitation. Pastor Seth will resource and support the ministry of our Finance, Personnel, Worship and Music, and Nominating Committees, along with Session and other special initiatives like the Pine Island Chapel construction. He will share worship leadership every Sunday (when not on vacation or study leave).

Pastor Liz Hakken Candido is also connected with our congregation as a Parish Associate, beyond her full-time employment at Kalamazoo College. Pastor Liz is invited to share in as much as life together as she deems possible, including sharing in worship leadership along with emergency pastoral care, as needed. She is not expected to fulfill more regular responsibilities among us.

OTHER OFFICE STAFF CAN BE REACHED AS USUAL BY EMAIL,  
OR BY PHONE DURING CHURCH BUSINESS HOURS – MONDAY  
THROUGH THURSDAY, 9 A.M. TO 3 P.M.



## NOODLING @ NOON

Noodling at Noon will resume on Tuesday, January 9 with the book *A Lens of Love*, by Jonathan Walton. Dr. Walton serves as the President of Princeton Seminary and will also be our McShane Colloquium guest later in March. On January 9, we will begin with discussing chapters 1 and 2. Some future chapters may be paired with other brief material provided. Contact Pastor Seth with any questions.

[sethw@fpckzoo.org](mailto:sethw@fpckzoo.org)

# LISTENING POST

## TALK WITH A SESSION MEMBER

There will be a Session Member in the Gathering Space after church Sunday, Jan. 7, to chat with congregation members at the Listening Post. This is your chance to tell the Session what you think is going well and what could be improved at First Presbyterian Church. We look forward to speaking with you.

# BUILD A FAMILY LEGACY

## Honor or remember your loved one with a BRICK!

Wondering where the bricks will be located at the Pine Island Chapel? They will be prominently placed at the entrance of the chapel and the labyrinth, serves as a lasting tribute to your loved ones. Proceeds will be used to finish the interior of the new Pine Island Chapel. Purchase your brick online, visit:

<https://www.thatsmybrick.com/fpckzoo>

Or complete a paper order form at the  
Lovell Street Greeters Desk.  
Payment by check only, payable to  
Kalamazoo First Presbyterian Church

Return your check to:  
Kalamazoo First Presbyterian Church  
321 W. South St.  
Kalamazoo, MI 49007.



*\*Include "Brick" in the memo section of your check.*

Together, the Pine Island Campus will be  
built, brick by brick, with love.

**Kelly Short: 269-344-0119 x205: [kellys@fpckzoo.org](mailto:kellys@fpckzoo.org)**

**Deb Weurding: 269-330-5859: [dnweurding@yahoo.com](mailto:dnweurding@yahoo.com)**



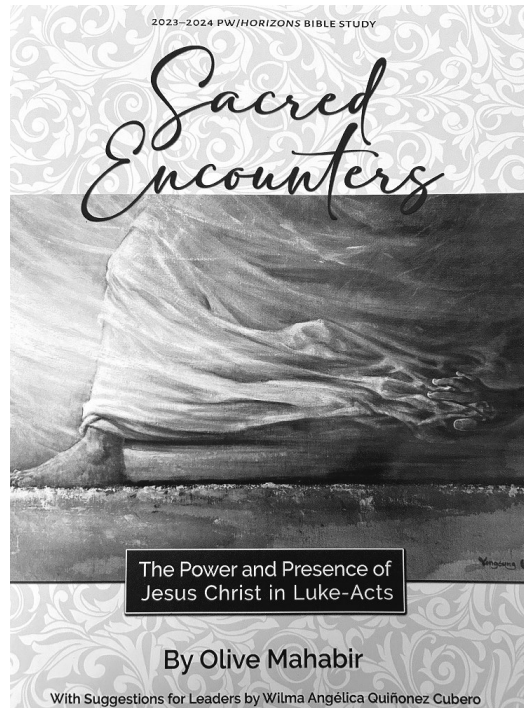
# SACRED ENCOUNTERS

If you have been thinking about trying Martha Circle, please join us on Wednesday, January 10 at 3:00 p.m. in the Gathering Place.

We meet on the second Wednesday of each month for fellowship and study. This month we are beginning the Presbyterian Women's Bible study above. We share joys and concerns as we support one another in our journey as Christian women in today's world. You are invited and will be warmly welcomed!

For more information contact Elaine Johns at 269-808-7109 or

*emjohns513@aol.com.*



## THANK YOU NOTES FROM EDISON

These are two of the many thank you notes we received from the Edison staff. Our Women's Bible study group provided a salad luncheon for them the last week of school. At that time, we gave the teachers a bag of books so they could give each of their children a new book from our church for Christmas. Each book had a "You are Loved" sticker on it:

"Thank you for such a wonderful, healthy and delicious lunch today! It put a smile on our faces and gave us the much needed energy to do our best with our students. You are so kind and thoughtful to bring the students books as well. Wishing you and your families a wonderful Christmas!"

"Thank you so much to First Pres. for the delicious lunch and the wonderful books for our students. It's all definitely much appreciated. Thanks for everything you all do for us at Edison! From the awesome tutors, to the delicious food and birthday treats for our classes, and to the love you all share with our staff and students, we truly feel blessed! Wishing you and the rest of the First Pres. Family a safe and joyous holiday break!"



# YOUTH & FAMILIES NURSERY


The Nursery is open each Sunday morning for children age 4 and under.


---



## 2024 Book Discussion Group

# JUSTICE and PEACE

-  DISCUSS THE BOOKS WITH OTHERS VIA ZOOM  
• The J&P Book Discussion Group is open to all!
-  DISCUSSION GROUP MEETS EVERY OTHER MONTH  
• Read and discuss any or all books that appeal to you. Registration will be needed to join the discussion on Zoom.
-  RECEIVE STUDY GUIDES TO INFORM YOUR READING  
• Questions for discussion or reflection will be sent with your registration confirmation.



To register, scan the QR code with your smart phone or go to [presbyterianwomen.org/justice](https://presbyterianwomen.org/justice).

### Reading Selections (6:30 PM – 8:30 PM Eastern Time)

DATE	BOOK TITLE	AUTHOR
JANUARY 8	THE IMMORTAL LIFE OF HENRIETTA LACKS	REBECCA SKLOOT
JULY 8	A PLACE CALLED HOME	DAVID AMBROZ
MARCH 11	Our Missing Hearts	Celeste Ng
SEPTEMBER 9	POVERTY BY AMERICA	MATTHEW DESMOND
MAY 13	transforming	Austen Hartke
NOVEMBER 11	SEARCHING FOR SAVANNA	MONA GABLE

Selections are recommended by the Justice & Peace Committee of PW's Board of Directors.

# WEEKLY CALENDAR 2023

## SUNDAY DECEMBER 31

9:30 a.m. **Child Care:** Nursery  
10:00 a.m. **Worship:** Sanctuary

## MONDAY JANUARY 1

**Building Closed** for New Years Day

## TUESDAY JANUARY 2

7:00 a.m. **Men's Fellowship:** Archives  
11:00 a.m. **Staff Meeting:** Archives  
12:00 p.m. **Seth's Noodling** Coming soon!  
5:30 p.m. **Earthcare Meeting:** Library

## WEDNESDAY JANUARY 2

10:00 a.m. **Work in Archives:** Archives  
12:00 p.m. **Prayer Service:** Sanctuary  
5:00 p.m. **CTV- Celebrate the Vision:**  
Dining Room  
7:00 p.m. **Worship & Music Meeting:**

## THURSDAY JANUARY 4

9:00 a.m. **Library Work Time:** Library  
9:30 a.m. **Thursday Bible Studies:**  
Rooms 314/315  
12:00 p.m. **AA:** Rooms 314/315  
4:00 p.m. **Food Addicts:** Rooms 314/315  
5:30 p.m. **Stewardship Meeting:** Archives

## SUNDAY JANUARY 7

9:00 a.m. **Adult Choir Rehearsal:**  
Choir Room  
9:00 a.m. **Congregational Life:** Archives  
9:30 a.m. **Child Care:** Nursery  
10:00 a.m. **Worship:** Sanctuary

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:  
MONDAY THRU THURSDAY:  
9:00 A.M. TO 3:00 P.M.  
CLOSED ON NEW YEAR'S DAY

## GOOD NEWS!

### CHRISTMAS EVE OFFERING: \$5,900.00!

Every day, neighbors come to our door looking for a little help, a little hope. Some are working with social agencies such as Ministry with Community, ISK, or Urban Alliance. These organizations are limited in resources. We meet needs, as much as we can, with our Pastor's Discretionary Fund which is entirely funded by Christmas Eve offerings.

Need is great this year, and our fund is depleted. We have helped pay security deposits on apartments, avoid eviction, pay fines that prevent folks from receiving services they desperately need, prevented utility shut-offs, and so much more.

**Please, help us help our neighbors; give generously to the Christmas Eve offering this year!**

KALAMAZOO FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
321 W. SOUTH STREET, KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN 49007  
FPCKZOO.ORG FACEBOOK.COM/ASANCTUARYINTHECITY  
PHONE: 269.344.0119/FAX

KALAMAZOO FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH STAFF  
(IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER)

<b>Meredith Alspach</b> , Director of Youth, Families & Outreach, x208	<b>mereditha@fpckzoo.org</b>
<b>Autumn</b> , Organist, x214	<b>autumn@fpckzoo.org</b>
<b>The Reverend Dr. Liz Hakken Candido</b> , Parish Associate	<b>elizabeth.candido@kzoo.edu</b>
<b>The Reverend Annamarie Groenenboom</b>	<b>annamariieg@fpckzoo.org</b>
<b>The Reverend Amber Nettleton</b> , Associate Pastor, x212	<b>ambern@fpckzoo.org</b>
<b>Shelly Parkhurst</b> , Communications x209	<b>shellyp@fpckzoo.org</b>
<b>Kelly Short</b> , Operations Coordinator, x205	<b>kellys@fpckzoo.org</b>
<b>Shawn Smith</b> , Building Superintendent, x213	<b>shawns@fpckzoo.org</b>
<b>Louise Taylor</b> , Financial Coordinator, x206	<b>louiset@fpckzoo.org</b>
<b>The Reverend Dr. Seth Weeldreyer</b> , Pastor, x203	<b>sethw@fpckzoo.org</b>
<b>The Reverend Chrissy Westbury</b> , Associate Pastor, x204	<b>chrissyw@fpckzoo.org</b>

**South Lobby Receptionists, x221:** Bruce Birkel, Bob Brush, Bensan Howard, Sandy Sinotte, Deb Weurding  
**Custodians:** Logan McCafferty, Randy Randt **Library:** library@fpckzoo.org

## UPCOMING WORSHIP

JANUARY 7  
Epiphany/Baptism of the Lord  
**The Rev. Chrissy Westbury**  
Isaiah 60:1-6; Matthew 2:10

JANUARY 14  
Second Sunday after Epiphany  
**The Rev. Dr. Seth Weeldreyer**  
1 Samuel 3:1-10; Mark 1:14-20

JANUARY 21  
Third Sunday after Epiphany  
**The Rev. Dr. Seth Weeldreyer**  
Jonah 3:1-5; John 14:3-5

JANUARY 28  
Fourth Sunday after Epiphany  
**The Rev. Amber Nettleton**  
1 Corinthians 8:1-13; Mark 1:21-28

*Grounded in living faith, receiving diversity as a gift, we seek to reflect  
Christ's light in God's world. Continually discerning God's vision of grace and peace,  
we share inspirational worship, spiritual nurture, compassionate service  
to others, and the pursuit of justice...all to the glory of God.*