

**Thoughts from the Interim**



*When you put your  
cares in God's  
hands He puts His  
peace in your  
heart.*



Where do we see the hand of God at work in this congregation? Many of us seem to think we need a major miracle...like an influx of young children or 300 at worship to believe God is working here. The problem is when we define God's work by the big stuff we can miss God's hand in the every day.

For example, did you listen to the Postlude Sunday? It was beautiful, but the organ console "died" on the very last note, no power. Would the organ repair people even be able to come on the eve of Christmas Eve? The first small miracle is that the organ folk were able to come. They are here as I write this. Now there is hope the organ will play on Christmas Eve. This is not the kind of miracle that will get written up in a magazine, but we can choose to see God's hand at work.

But there is more to God's work with us in this organ breakdown. We have a talented musician who can make the piano sound just as beautiful as the organ on Christmas Eve. We also have a congregation that comes to worship God not the musical instruments so if the organ doesn't work, Christ still comes. We also have been blessed with an Endowment Fund that, if needed, can fund an emergency repair so we don't have to worry about how to pay to keep the organ working. These are just a few suggestions how God works in just one little incident in the life of this church. I suspect you can name many more obvious ways God is working among us.

Are we able to bring the same expectation of God's guiding hand to the search for a new pastor? God has called seven people to the responsibility of presenting a candidate for pastor. As they take on the task of searching God will guide them to the right person. We are not hiring a pastor but calling one so this must involve what God wants. God will also be leading the pastor to us. Again this is not just a job for a pastor, but a calling from God. The whole process needs a lot of constant prayer and attentiveness to God's agenda, not our own.

In closing Dean and I have been granted an extra three months by the Session and the denomination to continue our interim position here. Instead of leaving mid-February, we can stay until May 15, if needed. By continuing as your interim pastors until May we are not slowing down the process of finding a pastor. We will leave if a new pastor can be here before May 15. We feel staying through Lent and Easter helps provide continuity until the new pastor is called.

In 2020 make a resolution to see how God is working here at church and in your life. If you look, you might be surprised by how busy God is.

See You in Church,  
Ellen

**Contact  
Information:**

108 Washington St.  
Monroe, MI 48161  
Phone: 734.242.1545  
Fax: 734-243-6120

[www.monroefirst.org](http://www.monroefirst.org)

**Office Hours:**  
**Monday-Thursday**  
**9:00am - 3:00pm**  
**Friday**  
**9:00am - 1:00pm**

# Note of Thanks

Dear Friends,

My daughter and I are thankful for the time we were able to live in the manse. It is a beautiful home which has provided us with wonderful memories and an opportunity to live in a Victorian home.

We have moved to a different residence and are excited about the possibilities related to that move.

Thank you for being great landlords!

Peace,

Diane and Samantha Adams



## Socialites

Please join us at the Schroeder residence on Saturday, **January 18** at 5:30 p.m. which is open to all widows, widowers, and singles for a special time of fellowship and good food!

## 2 Cents a Meal Offering

Our next 2 Cents a Meal Offering will be on Sunday, **January 26** during Worship. This offering will benefit the MCOP Food Bank this month. In our December 29 offering we collected \$183.82. Please pick up our “unique” collection can from the table in the Narthex next to our Welcome Center.



## Birthday List in January

**Happy Birthday to those who have January Birthdays! May God’s blessings shine upon you this year!**



Jennifer Hueston	January 6
Shannon DeSloover	January 8
Dale DeSloover	January 8
Shannon Costello	January 9
Dallas Dieckmann	January 23
David Vensel	January 23
Susan Martinez	January 25
Rusty Shorter	January 26
Colleen C. Kirtland	January 28

# Congregational Life

## Adult Sunday School

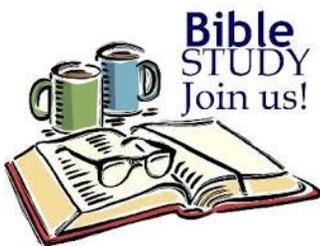
Adult Sunday School continues to meet Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. Ann Lux will lead the first study, **Older Adult Spirituality**. On January 12<sup>th</sup> will be on **Making End of Life Decisions**, led by Diane Adams. The following week will be about **Helping Seniors Live Well**, led by Judy Chesman. The subject for January 26<sup>th</sup> will be **Where is God When Disaster Strikes?** The leader is Kathy Lee. February will be **The Bible Beginning to End** in a 3 week series by Rev. Dean McGormley. On February 23<sup>rd</sup> we will begin preparation for our Lenten Study. We will use **Because of This I Rejoice**. This is a Lenten study book by Max O. Vincent that explores what Paul teaches in Philippians about joyfully practicing spiritual discipline. The intent of these disciplines is to focus less on ourselves and more on God. The eight lessons will be led by Rev. Ellen McGormley. ~Judy Chesman, Congregational Life



## Boxed Offering Envelopes

There are boxed offering envelopes available on the table in the Narthex next to our Welcome Center.

## Thursday Morning Bible Study



Our Thursday morning Bible Study group meets at 10:00 a.m. with Cynthia Morgan leading us in the Cairl Room. Please join us as we prepare room in our hearts as we grow in our faith!

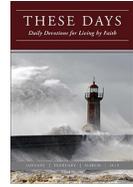
## Deacons

The Deacons will be taking down the Christmas decorations on Saturday, **January 4**, at 9:30 a.m. We would appreciate your help if you are available. Thank you.



## “These Days”

Copies of the “These Days” devotional books are available in the Narthex, C.E. Lobby, and Church Office. These books have a brief devotion, prayer for each day, and adult coloring pages. Please feel free to pick up a copy or take one to a shut-in member.



## Men’s Prayer Breakfast



The next Men’s Prayer Breakfast will be **Saturday, January 11** at 8:30 a.m. at the Fifth Wheel Restaurant located at 8500 N. Telegraph Road, Monroe, MI. Please sign up on the sheet in the C.E. Lobby.

## Flower Calendar

If you would like to give flowers for any given Sunday in honor or memory of a loved one, please mark your name on the flower calendar in the Narthex and contact the church office for details by calling 734-242-1545. You may take the flowers home after worship or leave them to be taken to one of our shut-in members.

## Wee Believers

Amy Morgan and Sue Bondie have begun the Wee Believer curriculum after the Children’s Sermon in Worship. Infant Care is available before and during the Worship service. All children third grade and younger are welcome to join us for a bible story and craft time with other children.

Next Newsletter Deadline:  
**January 24**

### Staff

**Rev. Dr. Ellen McGormley, Co-Interim Pastor**  
ellenmcgormley@monroefirst.org  
**Rev. Dean McGormley, Co-Interim Pastor**  
deanmcgormley@monroefirst.org  
**Robert Edwards, Director of Music Ministries**  
redwards@monroefirst.org  
**Sara Jones, Administrative Assistant**  
sjones@monroefirst.org  
**Suzanne Bondie, Financial Secretary**  
sbondie@monroefirst.org  
**Gary Bogedain, Sexton**  
**Sean Farris, Custodian**  
**Suzanne Bondie, Childcare**  
**Amy Morgan, Childcare**

## Chair Yoga

Chair Yoga with Chantelle will be held every Tuesday at 10:00 a.m. The cost is \$8.00 per class and is open to women and men.

## Year End Reports for Annual Meeting

Please submit your Committee’s Year End Report to the Church Office by email on **January 20** for our Annual Meeting which will be held on Sunday, **February 2, 2020**. Thank you!

## Session Notes



The Session met on December 17. Because of the wonderful funding of the Two Cents a Meal fund which supports the Thursday meal (which doesn't need additional monies for a while), the Mission and Outreach Committee wants future 2 Cents a Meal donations to be given to the MCOP food bank. This will begin with the January offering. The food bank provides an amazing amount of food for a small amount of money for feeding programs around Monroe County. We purchase from the food bank for our Thursday meals.

The Worship Committee presented the communion schedule for 2020. Terry Dushane was received as a member and the baptism of their son, Myles, approved. Property said the railings for the front steps should be completed soon. Finance presented and the Session approved a bid for new computers for the office. Because the pledges met the goal, the budget for 2020 was approved as presented.

A congregational meeting was called for January 5 after worship to elect the Pastoral Nominating Committee. A retreat for Elders was set for Saturday, January 11 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. The annual congregational meeting will be held on February 2. Annual reports are due in the office by January 20. Ordination and Installation of new officers and renewal of baptism will be held on January 12 as part of the 200<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration worship.

## Congregational Meeting

A call for a congregational meeting to receive the report of the nominating committee and to elect a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC). The meeting will be Sunday, **January 5**, 2020 following worship.

## New Year's Church Office Hours

The Church Office will be open until 12:00 p.m. (noon) on New Year's Eve (**December 31**) and closed on New Year's Day (**January 1**) and on January 2. The office will reopen on Friday, **January 3** at 9:00 a.m. Happy New Year!

## Elder Retreat



A retreat for the Elders is scheduled on Saturday, **January 11** from 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Please mark this date on your calendars so you can attend this important meeting!

# A thought...

## 12 Things a Church Pastor Cannot Do By Chuck Lawless

There are 12 things a church pastor cannot do—even though pastors are, in my judgment, amazing people. They faithfully serve Sunday after Sunday, often with no desire for recognition or fame.

In faith, they can do a lot—

But here are 12 things a church pastor cannot do...

**Read minds.** Everybody knows that, but many church members hold pastors accountable for unstated expectations.

**Be everywhere.** No human being can be every place at once, yet some members still get angry when pastors have to say “No.”

**Change hearts.** Only God can do that.

**Know everything.** Most pastors study hard, but nobody can answer every question somebody asks.

**Please everybody.** Even Jesus couldn't do that.

**Live sinlessly.** Nobody can. Including you. And me. We're all sinners.

**Grow churches.** If the church does grow, it's because God does it.

**Multiply dollars.** That's too bad, too, since some churches don't pay their pastors well.

**Escape mistakes.** All of us will mess up sometime, often unintentionally and even unknowingly.

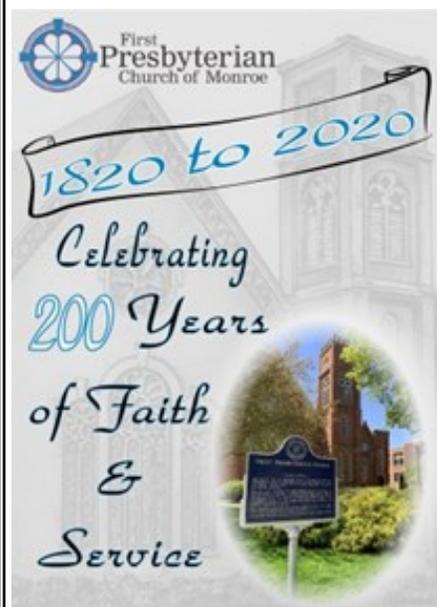
**Avoid favoritism.** Pastors minister to everybody, but having better (and best) friends is natural.

**Reveal everything.** No matter how much you may want to know the details, pastors may not be in a position to tell you.

**Ignore sin.** Pastors must address this issue, even when it's not popular.

Say a prayer for your pastors today. They have a tough job.

~Submitted by John Chesman



## 200th Birthday Celebration!

On Sunday, **January 12** please join us for our 200<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration! After worship, we will have lunch, historical presentations, and receive a proclamation from the City of Monroe! Please join us on this historical day as we celebrate our 200 years of faith and service to our community! Please sign up for the luncheon on the sign-up sheet in the C.E. Lobby!

## Memorial Gift for Street Banners

A memorial gift has been received providing for the 200th Anniversary Street Banners, displayed on Monroe Street and Washington Street. The gift has been given by James McIntyre in memory of his family: Charles and Marion McIntyre, Charles McIntyre II, David and Harriet McIntyre, and Joseph McIntyre. The banners are displayed to announce our celebration and history in Monroe.



## Martha Mary Circle

The Martha Mary Circle will be having a meeting on Monday, **January 13** at 1:00 p.m. in the Cairl Room. This is open to all ladies of the church and please join us as we begin a new year of projects and have fellowship with one another!

## Installation/Ordination of Officers

Please join us on Sunday, **January 12** as we have our installation and ordination of Elders and Deacons during Worship at 11:00 a.m.

# Finance Committee Report

As 2019 nears an end, we at First Presbyterian Church of Monroe have every reason to be both grateful and hope-filled! As the year began, we grieved for the Church we once knew—for how things “used to be”. Under the guidance of our beloved interim pastors, we have had the opportunity to unburden ourselves of past hurts, and to begin the healing process. Now we can look forward together to a positive future for our church family!



In 2020, we will celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our church! How blessed we all are to call First Presbyterian our home, to be able to worship together, and to enjoy the warm fellowship. Because every active member has so generously pledged prayer and money, we are optimistic about our 2020 budget. This support is vital to the mission of our church. Most importantly, we are now in the position to move forward, and to seek a new full-time pastor, with the blessings of the Presbytery!

We are excited about our future! We are gaining new members, and we continue to touch people in our community, through our outreach programs. As we say goodbye to 2019, let's keep our eyes on the future, let us be thankful for our many blessings, and let us be hope-filled and prayerful as we begin our search for a new pastor for our First Presbyterian Church of Monroe.

Christmas blessings to each one of you!  
Mary DeSloover and Helyn Schroeder

## Pastoral Search Timeline

Where are we in the process of finding a new pastor? An informational meeting was held in November for those who might consider being on the Pastoral Nominating Committee (PNC). Individuals still interested in serving after hearing the responsibilities and time commitment gave their names to the Church Nominating Committee. Several other people who could not attend the meeting also submitted their names. Fourteen people are willing to serve. The Church Nominating Committee has been meeting to prayerfully select seven people. Age diversity, gender, understanding and participation in our present congregation, representation of a variety gifts and interests (e.g. mission, music, worship, and etc.) are being considered. The seven nominees are being determined at this time.



The congregation will vote on the seven individuals during the congregational meeting after worship on January 5. The elected PNC will meet as soon as possible with Carole Burnworth, our representative of the Committee on Ministry (COM) of the Presbytery. She will lay out the process for the

PNC. This will include writing a Mission Information Form (MIF). The information for this document will be taken from the leadership retreats held last summer and the listening sessions held in the fall. The MIF will be approved by the Session and COM and then submitted to the national church. After that our PNC will receive Personal Information Forms (PIF) from pastors that match the characteristics our congregation wants in a pastor. They can also receive self-submitted PIFs. Interviews and reference checks will follow if our PNC discerns that God is calling a particular individual to be pastor here. The last step is for the candidate to come and preach in our pulpit and for the congregation to vote to call that person as pastor.

# January 2020

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 <b>New Year's Day-Office closed</b> 5:30-Worship Committee 6:30-No Bells 7:30-No Choir 7:30-S-Anon	2 <b>Office Closed</b> 10-No Bible Study 6-Community Meal 6-TOPS	3 9-TOPS 7-S-Anon	4 9:30-Deacons taking down Christmas decorations and setting up for communion (Fellowship Hall)
5 <b>Communion</b> 9:30-Sunday School 11- <b>Worship</b> 12-Congregational Meeting 12:15-Fellowship	6 <b>Epiphany of the Lord</b> 6-Chair Yoga 6:30-Bicent Mtg. 7-AA Mtg.	7 10-Chair Yoga 11-Staff	8 6:30-Bells 7:30-Choir 7:30-S-Anon	9 10-Bible Study 5:30-Personnel 6-Community Meal 6-TOPS	10 9-TOPS 7-S-Anon	11 8:30-Men's Prayer Breakfast  9-12 Elder Retreat
12 <b>200th Birthday Celebration</b> 9:30-Sunday School 11- <b>Worship-Ordination and Installation of Officers</b> 12:15-Lunch, historical presentations, City Proclamation	13 1-Martha Mary Circle 6-Chair Yoga 7-AA 7-Property	14 10-Chair Yoga 11-Staff 5:30-Cong. Life 6-Finance 7-Mission/Outreach	15 6:30-Bells 7:30-Choir 7:30-S-Anon	16 10-Bible Study 1-Friends in Council (Cairl Room) 6-Community Meal 6-TOPS	17 9-TOPS 7-S-Anon	18  5:30-Socialites
19 9:30-Sunday School 11- <b>Worship</b> 12:15-Fellowship	20 <b>Committee Year End Reports due today</b> 6-Chair Yoga 6:30-Bicent. Mtg. 7-AA Mtg.	21 10-Chair Yoga 11-Staff	22 6:30-Bells 7:30-Choir 7:30-S-Anon	23 10-Bible Study 6-Community Meal 6-TOPS	24 Newsletter Deadline 9-TOPS 7-S-Anon	25
26 9:30-Sunday School 11- <b>Worship-2 Cents a Meal Offering</b> 12:15-Fellowship	27 6-Chair Yoga 7-AA	28 10-Chair Yoga 11-Staff 7-Session	29 6:30-Bells 7:30-Choir 7:30-S-Anon	30 10-Bible Study 6-Community Meal 6-TOPS	31 9-TOPS 7-S-Anon	

## January Worship Leadership

DATE	LITURGIST	USHERS
1/5	Rev. McGormley	Carol Rabun, Gary and Jo-Ann Follbaum
1/12	Janet Spence	Kim Hooper, Marilyn Marshall, George Kostoff
1/19	Charlotte Frary	Jim Crammond, Helyn Schroeder, David Nielsen
1/26	Helyn Schroeder	Jim & Sue Heisler, Randy Stiffler

# Leadership of First Presbyterian Church of Monroe

## Session

### Class of 2020

Cheryl Eder  
Jennifer Hueston  
Alan Schroeder

### Class of 2021

Diane Adams  
Jim Crammond  
Dale DeSloover

### Class of 2022

Mark Baker  
Elizabeth Cunningham  
Ann Lux

Building & Property Committee: Dale DeSloover (Elder) Chair

Congregational Life Committee: Cheryl Eder (Elder) Chair

Finance Committee: Alan Schroeder (Elder) Chair

Mission & Outreach Committee: Jim Crammond (Elder)

Personnel & Policy Committee: Dallas and Donna Dieckmann, Co-Chairs; Cheryl Eder and Jennifer Hueston (Elders)

Worship Committee: Diane Adams (Elder) Chair

Endowment/Memorial Committee: Charlotte Frary (Chair); Alan Schroeder; Jennifer Hueston; Jim Crammond; Alice Kostoff

## Board of Deacons

**Moderators: Ann Lux**

**Vice Moderators: Mary DeSloover and Gwen Peters**

### Class of 2020

Liz Cunningham  
Ann Orwin  
David Nielsen

### Class of 2021

Lynn Geiman  
Gwen Peters

### Class of 2022

Isabel Benedicto  
Mary DeSloover  
Jeffrey Haman  
Marilyn Marshall  
George Pomerville  
Yoshie Pomerville  
Karen Sobieralski