

Fenton First Presbyterian Church
December 2023 Newsletter

All Things Made New





HELLO & WELCOME

The Church is not a building. It is a gathering of people brought together to experience God's love and purpose.

God designed the church for YOU – you belong here. Are you ready to experience a community of people doing life together? To find out, come worship with us on Sunday mornings.

Our Mission: To be a loving community of faith dedicated to helping people know Jesus Christ and grow, share, and serve as his disciples.

Our Vision: To provide an inviting and welcoming church home that attracts people of all ages and encourages positive growth, while creating an exciting and dynamic approach as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Thank you for worshipping with us! We are happy to welcome you into this household of God.

GROWING IN GOD

We commit to knowing Jesus through worship, Bible study, and prayer, encouraging continued spiritual growth as His disciples.

PASTOR'S LETTER

Christmas Movie Review

Pastor Robbie Carnes

Happy Advent and Merry Christmas! I hope and pray that you are able to rest amongst the hustle and bustle of the holidays. One good way to do that is to watch a movie that is about Christmas and Advent themes but isn't really a Christmas movie.

I would suggest to you the film, 'McFarland, USA'. "It is based on the true story of a town in rural California that had nothing going for it except fields to pick and a prison that reminded its youth that their options were limited. Enter disgraced high-school coach Jim White (Kevin Costner), who in 1987 moves his wife (Maria Bello) and two daughters to McFarland to teach gym. One day, White follows one of his students, Thomas (Carlos Pratts), who can run an almost five-minute mile. The next day, Jim asks the principal whether he can start a cross-country team and puts together a motley crew of runners that range from the reluctant Thomas, who only participates in exchange for not getting suspended, to wise-cracking Johnny (Hector Duran), vain Victor (Sergio Avelar), and the three Diaz brothers, one of whom (Danny) is considerably bigger than the average distance runner. As Jim learns to coach runners and the guys learn to compete as a team, they set their sights on California's first statewide cross-country championship."

There are powerful character arcs focusing on the redemption of Jim White who's disgrace involved striking a student and subsequently being fired from his previous job. Jim faces his own renitence toward moving to a rural community and mistrust from the Hispanic and farm worker population. "There are themes regarding class and privilege, as well as a couple of instances of fist fights, a possible suicide attempt, a knife fight that lands a couple of kids in the hospital, and a father who's aggressive toward his family, there are also tons of positive messages about teamwork, cooperation, and community."

There are two scenes that reveal good insight into the nature of incarnation. Incarnation is a theological term we use to describe the 'putting on of flesh'. Jesus was incarnated as a human baby and this is a lot of what we celebrate at Christmas. Sometimes we talk about someone incarnating a virtue or vice. 'He is kindness incarnate' or 'She is anger incarnate'. We say this to mean that our actions and/or character is revealing that virtue or vice.

In the movie, Coach White is trying to convince athletically talented students to join a cross country team. This is made difficult because there has never been a cross country team at

their school and Coach White is seen as a 'short timer' not invested in anything other than his own success. He is also an educated white man in a community of Hispanic farm workers. The parents of his students do not consider a running program essential and say, "Each hour that my boys train with you is an hour that they don't work with me. That's food off our table. I don't expect a man like you to understand." Early the next Saturday, Coach White is found in the back of the pickup truck headed to the fields with the family of his students. He taught how to pick cabbage and ends the day almost unable to move from the strain of bending knees for hours.

Coach White only spent a day in the fields, but he learned firsthand what the work was like. He learned that the workers didn't get paid by the hour, but by the field. He learned how a blurry morning could turn to a scorching midday and then a sore and exhausted evening. It was because of this day that the families came to trust him and grew to believe in the higher purposes of team sports and education. If Coach White refused to be with his student's families in this way, they would have never accepted him.

This is a powerful image of what Jesus has done by being born as a human child. While there is much to wonder at, the basic theme is that Jesus came into our world and knows what it is to be human. It is because of this that we can trust in who Jesus says he is.

Toward the beginning of the movie, Coach White is gardening in his bare front yard and is offered a live chicken as an offering of welcome by his neighbor. Unprepared for this gift he shops for chicken feed and asks the store owner for advice about plants for his front yard. The store owner suggests that

instead of plants he should consider a tree. "In five years, Senor, your gonna have a nice yard with some nice shade." Coach White shakes his head in disgust and replies, "Five years? I don't think so."

Coach White doesn't want to be in the community of McFarland for five years. He wants to move on to larger schools and bigger programs as soon as he can. He isn't willing to lay down roots and watch a tree grow in his front yard. Throughout the movie he finds that he becomes invested in the community, the students and their families. A powerful scene, toward the end of the movie, is of the White family home with multiple trees and abundant plants. It truly is a nice yard with nice shade. Clearly Coach White has chosen to stick around for the long haul.

This is the Christmas promise that we celebrate. Not only is the God in Heaven willing to be among us, through the power of the Holy Spirit, God is with us. Planting trees and watching them grow from bare gardens, Jesus will not leave nor abandon us. As you celebrate this year, consider how the manger scene is not only God amongst us, it is also God who stays with us.

John 1:14 from the Message
*The Word became flesh and blood,
 and moved into the neighborhood.
 We saw the glory with our own eyes,
 the one-of-a-kind glory,
 like Father, like Son,
 Generous inside and out,
 true from start to finish.*

All quotes are from
www.CommonSenseMedia.com

WORSHIP

HOW TO WORSHIP WITH US

Join us online as well as in person Sunday's at 10am

Masks are optional. Paper masks will remain available for those who might need one, and hand sanitizer stations are available throughout the building.

Here is how to join us Online

Facebook Live: <https://www.facebook.com/fentonfpc>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCkBa-DrcqSECxjAyeaiC4bg>

Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8309142301?pwd=RHJ4dDBPdEhMN25yKzFzSzZNeUVPQT09>

Use the Zoom app and use this Meeting ID

Meeting ID: 830 914 2301 **Meeting Password:** 5013

Use your telephone line to listen in:

Call +19292056099 and dial 8309142301# at the prompt US (New York)

Or Call +13126266799 and dial 8309142301# at the prompt US (Chicago)

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

December 3rd, 1st Sunday in Advent, Communion - "The World Made New"

December 10th, 2nd Sunday of Advent - "The Promise of Being Made New"

December 17th, 3rd Sunday of Advent, Christmas Joy Offering - "New Life
(Conceived by the Holy Spirit)"

December 24th, 4th Sunday of Advent, Christmas Eve - 10am Christmas Eve Morning
Service, "New Identity (Baptized by the Holy Spirit)"
11:00pm Candle and Carol Service

December 31st, 1st Sunday of Christmas

Join Us For
Christmas Eve

Sunday 24 December

Christmas Eve Morning Worship

10:00 a.m.

(In Person & Live Stream)

A Candle & Carol Celebration

11:00 p.m.

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

Class begins at 10AM. Children return to worship after the sermon where they are welcome to either sit with their parents or with Miss Tina. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Kate Kirkey or Tina Ritchie.

December Teacher

Elementary/Preschool
Tina Ritchie & Kate Kirkey



“The Mission Begins” topics:

Unit 28 - The Holy Spirit Empowers (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John)

After Jesus returned to heaven, the Holy Spirit - whom He had promised to send - was given to the disciples. Filled with the Holy Spirit's power, the small group of disciples shared the gospel and the early church grew rapidly.

- 11/26 The Holy Spirit Came
- 12/3 Peter Healed a Man
- 12/10 Faithful in Hard Times
- 12/17 Living Like Jesus
- 12/24 Jesus Was Born!

Big Picture Question: How does the Holy Spirit help Christians? The Holy Spirit comforts us, shows us our sin, and guides us as we live for God's glory.

Unit Key Verse: *His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. ~ 2 Peter 1:3*

Unit 29 – The Early Church (Acts, Romans, James)

The church is God's plan to bring praise and glory to Jesus. Through the church, the gospel goes beyond Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria to the end of the earth.

- 12/31 Ananias and Sapphira
- 1/7 Stephen's Sermon
- 1/14 The Good News
- 1/21 Doers of the Word

Big Picture Question: What is the church? The church is all Christians everywhere, who gather together in their communities to worship and serve God.

Unit Key Verse: *So in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ~ Romans 12:5*



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



NEW YEAR STUDIES

Newcomers are welcome at every class - invite your friends too :-)

Sunday Evening Bible Study - Sundays from 5 - 6:30PM

Led by Larry Zimble, this class meets in the conference room at 4square Tax & Accounting. Beginning Sunday, January 14, this group will be discussing the book "Flood and Fury: Old Testament Violence and Shalom of God" by Matthew J. Lynch. This book discusses how the destruction and killing in the Old Testament (Joshua and the Flood) can cause us to question whether God is true and just. It is recommended that those wishing to take part in the study, read the book prior to the first class.

January 2024 Women's Study - Register Now!

Twelve MORE Women of the Bible: Life-Changing Stories for Women Today

Monday evenings, January 8 - March 25 from 6:30 - 8PM
via ZOOM facilitated by Dee Dee Ainsworth

OR

Wednesday mornings, January 3 - March 20 from 10AM - 12PM
in Fellowship Hall facilitated by Tina Ritchie

We'll look at the lives of the **Proverbs 31 Woman**: How Not to Do It All, **Deborah**: Fight Like a Girl, **Shulamite Woman**: We Had God at Hello, **Ruth**: Staying Focused in a World of Distractions, **Puah and Shiphrah**: How to Fight Your Fears, **Esther**: Letting God Be in Control, **Priscilla**: Living a Life of Blessed Ordinary, **Mary and Martha**: Finding Life in Death, **Bent Woman**: We've Got God's Complete Attention, **Woman with the Issue of Blood**: When Persistence Pays Off, **Elizabeth**: How to Win the Waiting Game, and **Anna**: How to Live a Life Devoted to God.

Participant guide - \$11

Register in Fellowship Hall or to tina@ffpc.org by December 15

GROWING IN LOVE

We model Christian love towards each other, providing an inviting and welcoming spiritual home that attracts people of all ages to share their faith.

Youth Group Events for 6 - 12 graders and friends,
Meetings are generally Sundays unless noted. Sign up for events on the youth bulletin board or email tina@ffpc.org. Friends welcome with a current parental consent form on file.
*Events subject to change



Youth Group Events

Children, with their parents, are invited to participate once a month with Youth Group for fun activities or community mission projects. Please see Kelly Sunman-Davis or Tina Ritchie with any questions.

Upcoming Sunday Events:

December

Sun. 3: Triple "C" - cookies, cards, and crafts for Deacons' care receivers, 11:00am-2:00pm
lunch provided

Sun 17: Youth Christmas Party, time: TBD

January

Sat 6: 9am - 11am Sun 7: Confirmation/Youth Lock-in

Sun 21: Youth Group 2-4pm

Ways to support Youth scholarships and activities:

Bottle returns - Drop off your rinsed returnable bottles and cans to the youth room.

Kroger Rewards - Linking your Kroger Rewards card to FFPC is easy and earns us quarterly benefits. Contact the office if you need info on how to do this!



WE WANT YOU TO JOIN THE CHOIR

PRACTICE WITH US
WEDNESDAY EVENINGS
7:30pm - 8:45pm
IN THE SANTUARY




Yarn Rappers

Do you knitor
crochet, or
would you like to
learn?

Join the YARN Wrappers
Tuesdays at 1:00pm
in the Adult Library



Communion Table Flowers

ARE A PERFECT WAY TO
HONOR A PERSON, COUPLE OR
SPECIAL OCCASION

CONTACT HEIDI ROBERTS AT
HROBERTS6862@GMAIL.COM
FOR MORE INFORMATION

How Can We Pray For You?

Prayer requests and updates
can be sent to Nancy Parkin
by phone at 810-241-6497

or by email at
prayerchain@ffpc.org



Scan for Newsletter Sign-up
Visit ffpc.org

Save the date of December 10 for a walk-through open house to view the Christmas Village at Marilee Smiley's. She has over 30 feet of village pieces on display. The event will be from 6-8 pm.



Fenton Community Orchestra
Free Winter Concert

Friday, Dec. 8 and Saturday, Dec. 9
7PM Fenton High School

There is a sign-up sheet for reserved seating for the Friday show.



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Jerry & Bev Welch

December 7

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

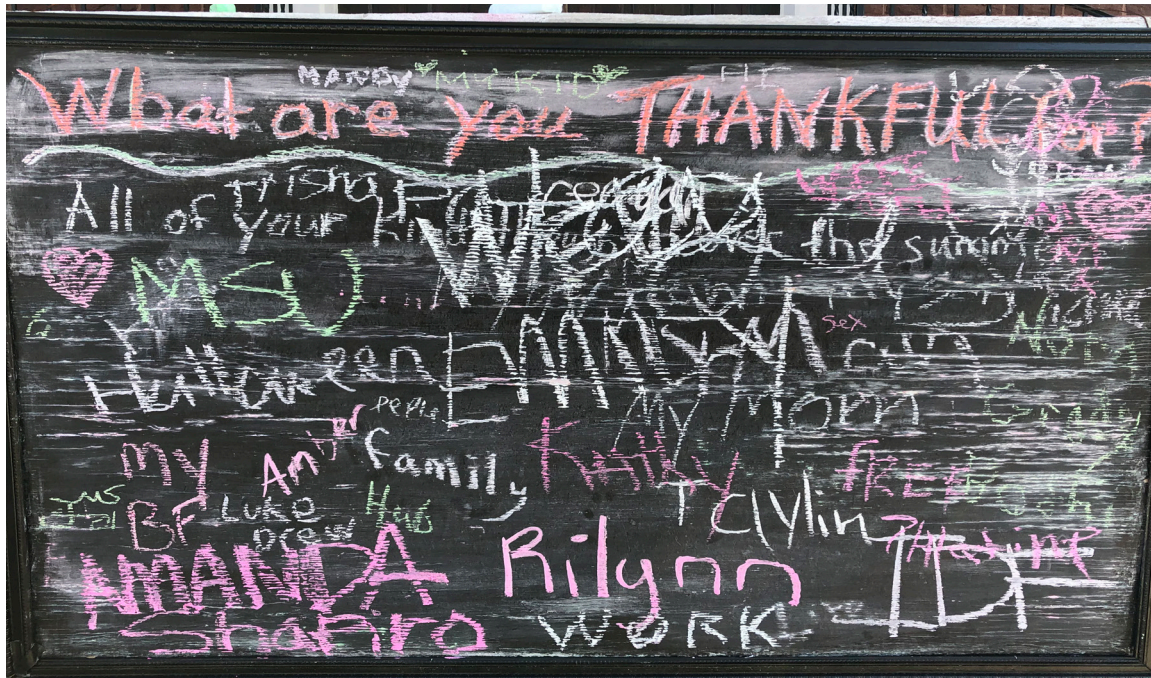
Michael Vanderlip	Dec 1	Dennis Beardslee	Dec 25
Carey Muntin	Dec 2	Brandon McLive	Dec 27
Doug Jacobs	Dec 8	Meghan Smith	Dec 29
Karen Wensel	Dec 8	John Foguth	Dec 31
Larry Zimblar	Dec 10	Don Kutchey	Dec 31
Jim Murray	Dec 13		
Nancy Berger	Dec 19		
Barbara Hungerford	Dec 19		
Mike Hussar	Dec 19		
Mary Zimblar	Dec 19		
Jill Hiscock	Dec 20		
Melissa Browne	Dec 21		
Amber Danules	Dec 21		

If your birthday is not listed, please contact the office so that we may update your information.

GROWING IN COMMUNITY

We engage with our wider community, seeking to be a Christian influence and encouraging others to follow Jesus through service in mission and outreach endeavors.

Community Chalkboard -November's theme "What Are You Grateful For?"



Mission & Outreach Opportunities

Check your calendars!!!! We are looking for volunteers on Saturday, December 9, 2023, at the Walmart in Fenton. For many years we have rung bells for the Salvation Army. We have the opportunity to again support their mission to feed others during the Holidays Feel good about putting a meal on someone's table, meet your neighbors, wish them a Merry Christmas. A sign up sheet is available in Fellowship Hall. If you have any questions, please contact Nancy Berger at 810-701-6556 or n.berger1943@gmail.com

Look for the "Giving Tree" located in the New Narthex. This tree is sponsored by the Book Binders. Suggested items are mittens, gloves, hats, scarves, underwear, socks, pajamas. All items are children's sizes up to size 16-18. Thank you for your KINDNESS.

We have updated our Samaritas Amazon Registry to reflect the needs of our current matches. Items purchased can be similar, not exact, and can be purchased at locations other than Amazon. Anyone who wishes to donate from another source can just let the church office or Sarah Martin-Fanone know, so that the item may be removed or marked as purchased. <https://www.amazon.com/registries/gl/guest-view/2DEQ4NSYO42CL>



Thanksgiving Service Service - Joining Hands to Lend a Hand

On November 19th, members and friends of all ages from several local churches, gathered in unison and packaged 10,438 meals for those in need, \$1820.00 in monetary donations was also collected for rise against Hunger.

Follow Christ's Lead This Advent Season

With Christ at the center this holiday season, we can follow in his example of servant leadership by serving our brothers and sisters in faith. Through the Christmas Joy Offering, we are able to support those in our community and give them the gift of hope.

Gifts to the Christmas Joy Offering help the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions provide critical financial assistance to eligible church workers and retired pastors and their families in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The Christmas Joy Offering also supports the education and development of our future leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. These schools are dedicated to creating opportunities and environments for students built on a foundation of Christian values. The Offering benefits Menaul School and Presbyterian Pan American School, two secondary schools that ready students for a path of higher learning, as well as Stillman College, where graduates are prepared for lives of leadership and service.

By supporting the Christmas Joy Offering, you share in the hope of Christ and celebrate his leadership by providing support to our church workers, racial ethnic young people, and their families.



STEWARDSHIP

Financial Review

Profit/ Loss	<u>October</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Jan-Oct.</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>	<u>Annual Budget</u>
Income:	\$21, 829.07	\$21,331.90	\$225,180.82	\$213,319.00	\$255,982.80
Expense:	<u>\$16,948.44</u>	<u>\$22776.82</u>	<u>\$210,266.79</u>	<u>\$242,158.00</u>	<u>\$288,511.64</u>
	\$3,190.13	(\$2,244.92)*	\$10,013.70	(\$27,394.08)	(\$32,528.84)

*This does not include additional obligations such as restricted funds or other payments such as: Board of Deacons, Organ Fund, HVAC Fund, etc.

Statement of Cash Flows	September	YTD
Cash at Beginning of period:	\$40,052.79	\$39,183.66
Cash at End of Period:	<u>\$45,640.32</u>	<u>\$45,640.32</u>
Net Cash Decrease:	(\$5,587.53)	(\$6,456.66)

Balance in the Building Repair & Improvement account as of October 2023, \$3,628.72

Respectfully Submitted October 5th, 2023
 Marilee Smily
 Treasurer

*Do Nothing Out of Selfish Ambition
 Or Vein Conceit*

RATHER IN HUMILITY

value others

ABOVE YOURSELVES

not Looking To Your Own Interests
but **EACH OF YOU**

To The INTERESTS Of The OTHERS

Philippians 2:3-4

LOOKING FOR GOD'S LEADING

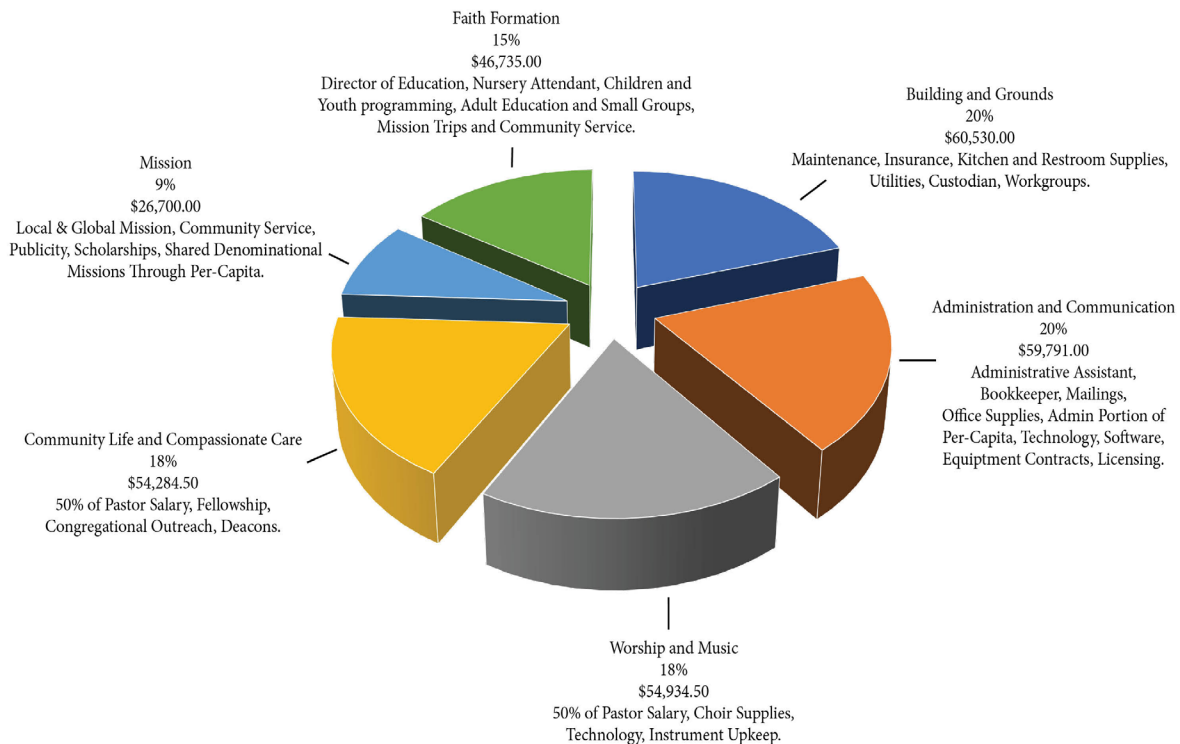
2024 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

AS OF NOVEMBER 21ST, 2023

42 HOUSEHOLDS

\$148,930.00

2024 ESTIMATED BUDGET \$302,975.00



WAYS TO GIVE

There are many different ways that you can give back to the Fenton First Presbyterian Church. **Together we can make a difference!!**



Online Giving: An easy and convenient way to give. Just visit the Presbyterian Mission Exchange link in the Giving section of FFPC.org website. A fast and SECURE way to give back.



Church Giving: You can give during one of our services by placing your check or cash in the Sunday offering plates. When giving cash, please complete a giving envelope so we can properly record your gift.



Automatic Bank Pay: You can set up payments through your financial institution by utilizing the bill pay feature. Simply use First Presbyterian Church as the payee and your name for your account information. Saves on postage!!



Non-Cash Giving: Assets or Planned Gifts



Mail offering to Church:
Fenton First Presbyterian Church
503 S. Leroy
Fenton, MI 48430

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT OF OUR MISSION!

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