



# First Presbyterian

CHURCH OF PORTLAND

# Spire

OCTOBER 2020

## Stewardship

**I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith. 2 Timothy 4:7**

Our lives have changed in extraordinary ways this year. Social distancing and shelter at home orders have changed how and where we work, gather, and worship. At First Presbyterian Church we have worked diligently to insure that the work of our ministries continues and we remain “A Heart for the City”.

The focus of this year’s stewardship campaign is “Live Our Faith” and will kick off October 11th, with the **dedication of our pledges on November 15th**. Although our stewardship pledges are always essential to the work of our church and how we live our faith, this year we are faced with unplanned events, including the loss of revenue associated with the parking garage. Please help us to meet these new challenges and prayerfully consider your stewardship pledges. Questions? Please contact the FPC office by email at [office@firstpresportland.org](mailto:office@firstpresportland.org) or call (503) 228-7331.



### Stewardship Team:

- |                         |                  |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| Cam Birnie              | Linda Killen     |
| Midge Birnie            | Tim Killen       |
| Doug Blomgren           | Steve Primack    |
| Alice Estes             | George Webb      |
| Kelly Farrell-Oliverson | Audrey Schindler |

## FPC Annual Meeting via Zoom

On **Commitment Sunday, November 15th**, you’re virtually invited to the church’s annual meeting via Zoom after worship; elect new Elders to join the Session as well as Deacons and Trustees, and members of next year’s Congregational Nominating Committee, approve terms of call for installed ministers. We’ll celebrate Dedication Sunday for the Stewardship Campaign as we “Live Our Faith.” Plan for a special time of virtual fellowship!

## Church Financial Update

As we await the financial results for the church fiscal year (ending August 31), we can report on the eleven month results and trends as we head toward closing the previous fiscal year and begin the new year. The generosity of members and friends has produced contributions to the church from all sources exceeding our budgeted targets. Additionally, church expenses have been managed well below the budget. This combination has helped offset the shortcomings of the parking garage financial results for the last several months due to its closure (to all except a small number of monthly customers). Overall the church’s downtown operations have produced a small (\$20,000) deficit, better than expected heading into the close of the fiscal year. Menucha has not been able to resume full operations since March. Its operational deficit for the year is \$303,000. Until it can resume operations, Menucha has been able to meet its obligations through a combination of government loan, capital campaign donations, use of reserves, and expectation of proceeds from the sale of a residential property near its grounds later in the year. All FPC operations have benefited from a federal government Paycheck Protection Plan (PPP) loan meant to support covid impacted employers efforts to retain their staff. We hope to qualify for loan forgiveness for a significant part of the loan amount. Again, we are thankful for your continued faithful support through this season. For more information, contact Marc Lavender, Church Business Administrator, ([cba@firstpresportland.org](mailto:cba@firstpresportland.org)), Bill Nelson, or Rick Lee.

# Pastor's Pen



This October finds us in the midst of a fall that is so unlike any that we have known. We are more than six months into this season of the pandemic, with all the changes it has brought to daily life, and to our life together as church. Our city has struggled to see its striving for a more just society begin to bear hoped-for fruit. We're also recovering in the wake of the terrible fires that ravaged our state and region just last month, and the smoke that affected so many.

With so many troubles having come at once, we turn to the ancient Psalms for the comfort and assurance they offer, reminding us of people of faith through the generations as they have looked for God's hope and presence in times that try the soul. Psalm 57 is ascribed to King David, in a time when he was fleeing for his life, finding refuge in a cave. He wrote,

*Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me,  
for in you my soul takes refuge;  
in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge,  
until the destroying storms pass by.*



Rev. Audrey Schindler

As life begins again to settle, we are all the more mindful that while life has taken from us much of what a usual fall season would hold, there are also the bittersweet blessings of an autumn we will not soon forget...

- the leaves, despite it all, flaring red and orange and crimson
- the smile in a friend's eyes, glimpsed above their mask
- the good efforts of our church friends bringing backpacks for children, preparing food boxes, reaching out with a card or call in the midst of long days

You will find in these pages some of the usual markers and milestones of the church's life in the fall, creatively transformed as we seek to adapt the church's life to the needs of the day. I invite you to take part in our streaming worship, and to each week find a way to connect with a church class, a discussion, a friend. For it is a time when our mutual encouragement can help us take heart.

A poet pens a prayer, fitting for this season...

*God of righteousness - spread your wings  
Over the earth, enfold the suffering  
in clouds of mercy.  
Reach into the tragedies of this earth,  
Especially the chaos and despair  
in the wake of terrible fires in our region.*

*May our hands be yours,  
bringing comfort and care.  
Precious is your love, O God  
May we take refuge  
in the shadow of your wings.*

May God's grace keep you as we weather this present season,

— Audrey

# **“Q&A on Reconvening In-Person Worship”**

## **by the Re-Opening Task Group of Session**

As we continue through this uncertain season, we all have questions regarding what services will look like when we reconvene in person. The staff and a Session committee of members have been discussing these issues for several months, and here are their responses to some of those questions.

**Question: I’m glad we’re to have a few outdoor services, but when are we re-starting services in the sanctuary?**

Answer: The rule of thumb we are using right now is that we should be 99% certain that we will not have an infected person in a service. This is equivalent to 82 active cases of COVID-19 in Multnomah County.

**Question: When we do reconvene in person, will we have to wear masks and socially distance?**

Answer: Yes. Depending on attendance numbers, we will spread out in the sanctuary. We will assign seating, again to ensure distancing. Health authorities have found that one of the most significant sources of infection has been people talking and singing without masks, so we won’t have a full choir.

**Question: What else will be different?**

Answer: We will probably have only the doors open on the 12th Street side of the church. We won’t pass an offering plate. We will have precautions in place for communion. The ushers will help us depart by rows, in order to avoid congestion. If there’s a fellowship time, it will be outside.

**Question: Will other parts of the church be accessible?**

Answer: There will be access to bathrooms. The rest of the church is limited to staff only.

**Question: Will it be safe to attend?**

Answer: We are making every effort to ensure no one comes into contact with the virus in our sanctuary, but nowhere is completely safe. We recommend if you are at particularly high risk that you continue to worship with us through streaming the services on the church website.

**Question: Will the parking garage be open?**

Answer: The garage is currently closed, but we would ensure it’s open once in-person services start again. The garage elevator will be operational, but to maintain social distancing, only two people will be able to ride it at a time, and those who are able are encouraged to walk up the ramp.

**Question: What can I do?**

Answer: Pray. Help a neighbor. Help at a food bank, if your situation allows you to take that risk. Contribute to the church and to local food banks. Attend our Sunday services, Wednesday Vespers, and various classes and meetings online.

**Question: I’ve still got questions. Whom do I contact for more information?**

Answer: Our staff would be glad to talk with you by phone or email.

**Through these uncertain times, we’re glad of the ways the church is still glorifying God, proclaiming Christ, and serving others!**

## Congregational Nominations!

The annual election of Church officers will occur at the Annual Congregational Meeting, which will be held on Sunday, November 15, 2020, by Zoom, following the worship service. After consideration of all the suggestions received from the congregation and all names on our membership rolls, the Congregational Nominating Committee (CNC) has prepared a slate of nominees who have agreed to serve as Elder, Deacon, Trustee or member of the 2021 Congregational Nominating Committee. During our deliberations, we have considered a number of factors, including involvement in the life of the church, past leadership activities and participation in worship. We also considered each person's spiritual gifts, the responsibilities, and the positions to which they are being nominated.

Those nominated include:

### Trustees

Peter van Bever                      Mary Kay West

### Elders

Natasha Brown                      Sarah Schwab  
Estelle Brunner                      Peter Vanden Bosch  
Vince Carpenter                      Amy Wood

Olivia Coles (Youth Elder)

### Deacons

James Brunner                      Gordon Lindbloom  
Dustin Coles                          Jim Patterson  
Jess Dallas                              Bill Resley  
Jeane Iles                                Lurna Shively

### CNC

Sandy Castles                      Deborah Resley  
Lauren Deming                      Jean Smith  
Alice Estes                              Mike Starosciak  
Shelly Garg                              Phyllis Whittington  
Joey Razzano

## Tuesday Women's Book Group

You are invited to join us on Zoom, **Tuesday, October 6th at 11 am.** Please contact Jan Mittelstaedt at [janmitt@gmail.com](mailto:janmitt@gmail.com) to receive a Zoom invitation. Myra Rounsavell will present "Where the Crawdads Sing" by Delia Owens. The novel is about a reclusive young girl who lives along the marsh of the North Carolina Coast. Questions, contact Marilyn Weber: [schatzimlw@gmail.com](mailto:schatzimlw@gmail.com)

## Drive-In Worship Report

This year our congregation's tradition of worshipping at Menucha over Labor Day continued, although with a pandemic twist. On Sunday, September 6th about 70 people gathered in Menucha's parking lot for the first-ever FPC drive-in worship service. Pastor Audrey Schindler and several volunteers greeted each car upon arrival, handing out bulletins and directing cars toward the gravel lot. There, "parking ushers" gave drivers a choice of a space on the sunny front row or a shady back row. Clergy for the day (Audrey was joined by Spencer Parks and Lori Nance, Menucha's program director) stood on a hillside beneath a white awning so they were easy to see. Their voices were broadcast on FM 87.9 so they were easy to hear as well. The service was memorable for several reasons including the interruption of the communion by the sound of gunfire! After staff called 911 and a sheriff investigated, we learned that it was just people enjoying target practice at a nearby camp. Finally, it was time to get out of cars and have some real, in-person, socially distanced fellowship time!



Socially distanced fellowship time!

Some folks just enjoyed talking with everyone before departing; others lingered to picnic and walk around Menucha's grounds. Over and over people said, "It's just so good to see everyone!" After more than five months of online worship, being in one another's presence was a real pleasure.

## Open Circle Support for the Rose Haven Shelter

For twenty-three years, Rose Haven Day Shelter for Women and Children has been offering a safe place for women to go during the day, where they could take their children and access resources. Staff and volunteers form a compassionate and supportive team for women traumatized by homelessness, abuse and other disruptive life challenges. Located at 627 NW 19th Ave. they serve 80-110 people daily, over 3,500 annually, over 21,000 visits per year. Seventy-five percent are women, twenty-five percent children, so the spread of needs is considerable. The women of Open Circle continue to support Rose Haven, check the bulletin each week for updated information or visit <http://www.rosehaven.org> If you have questions, please contact Cindy Finch [cindylooufinch@yahoo.com](mailto:cindylooufinch@yahoo.com)



## MISSION

### School Supplies Success!

Thank you to everyone who donated to our school supplies drive! The FPC Mission Committee collected over 20 bags of supplies that went to Rose Haven, who works with women and children in our community, and New Avenues for Youth, who work with at-risk youth. This has been a hard year for all students but it is even harder for children and youth who are unhoused or in unstable homes. Thank you for blessing them with the tools to succeed!

### Lift UP Portland & The Adoption of Alder House

Through a generous grant from the Capital Campaign Mission Giving Grant, and partnering with our mission partner Lift UP Portland, FPC has adopted the Alder House Building. FPC has a rich history with Alder House which is located one block from our church. The adoption allows Lift UP to provide extra services for the residents of that community, such as culinary education classes focusing on healthy cooking called the Supper Club. It also provides an emergency food pantry for the residents. Due to COVID regulations, some of these services will be limited but during this in-between time, our adoption of the building assures that more food will be available to the residents while we explore creative ways to serve and build community with our neighbors.

### Braver Angels: Depolarizing Through Respectful Conversation

Braver Angels is a grassroots organization whose mission is to depolarize America by bringing people from a variety of perspectives together for respectful conversations. Reverend Cynthia O'Brien, Presbyterian pastor at Woodbury and Aurora's churches is a national debate chair for Braver Angels. These debates help bring understanding of differences and commonalities between red and blue voters through dialogue. Topics of debates scheduled include: "Mandating masks, cancel culture, universal mail-in voting, applying morality, and bridging the divide." See their website [braverangels.org](http://braverangels.org) for more information.

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

### Downtown Youth Collective Halloween Movie Night

October 25th from 6 pm-8:30 pm, youth in grades 6th-12th are invited to virtually join our Downtown Youth Collective monthly zoom youth group. This month we will be streaming an age-appropriate Halloween themed movie. Keep your eyes peeled for an e-mail later in the month with the zoom link. If you have questions, please e-mail Brenna at [bdykman@firstpresportland.org](mailto:bdykman@firstpresportland.org)

### One Church, One Book

The Session approved the use of Ibram X Kendi's book How to be an Antiracist for FPC's 'One Church One Book' event. The church was then asked to spend the months of August and September reading the book. This month kicks off our 6 weeks of discussion groups. These groups have will be meeting at different times and days thorough out the week to dive into different sections of the book. If you have any questions or want to participate and forgot to sign up, please contact Brenna at [bdykman@firstpresportland.org](mailto:bdykman@firstpresportland.org)

### Peace & Global Witness Offering Dedicated October 4th

What do we mean when we say, "The Peace of Christ be with you"? Extending the peace of Christ is part of an active, engaged faith—we are building the household of God. The annual Peace & Global Witness Offering of the Presbyterian Church (USA) focuses on providing ministries of reconciliation, compassion, and justice in Jesus' name happens on **World Communion Sunday, October 4th**. One-quarter of the amount received remains with our congregation for ministries in our community. Gifts to the Offering can be made online through the church website or mail your donation to the church. Please give generously to support those working to share the dream of peace and reconciliation, as proclaimed by the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ.

### Whitman Memorabilia for Sale: Benefit for Calvin Library

Contact Mary Priedeman [mgpriedeman@comcast.net](mailto:mgpriedeman@comcast.net) to purchase and arrange for delivery —notebooks \$12, hot pad holders \$12, set of 6 note cards with envelopes \$12, silk scarves \$40



## I'm Back!

—Greg Homza, Director of Music Ministries

I am glad to be back after five weeks of renewal leave. Thanks to the Personnel Committee and the Session for granting me the leave as I look toward beginning my eighth year at FPC this December. Thanks also to Joseph Pettit for leading the music for worship, and to Leah Papay and Maddy Ross for the gift of their singing. Maddy also planned and hosted the weekly choir Zoom gatherings in my absence, in addition to all of her work on the Celebration Works 2020-2021 “virtual” season.

And thanks to member Chris Nilson, who coordinated and edited the weekly Virtual Vespers videos while I was on leave. The time really flew



by. In addition to a four-day retreat near Scio, OR, a five-day vacation to Seaside, and 11 “holy hikes” in Forest Park covering 107 miles, I participated in several virtual workshops and webinars, which were helpful and encouraging (mostly). On September 6th, we began having a quartet of singers in worship each week (properly distanced, and wearing specially-designed masks for singing), and I am exploring ways to have musical involvement from members of the chancel and handbell choirs, safely. Of course I look forward to the day when we are all able to gather together in person for worship and fellowship. Though the days and weeks sometimes feel endless, six months have already passed. The good Lord willing and the quake don't hit, we're more than half-way there!

I hope you will take comfort in the words of this old hymn (1897) by Rev. Johnson Oatman, Jr.

*When upon life's billows you are tempest-tossed,  
when you are discouraged thinking all is lost,  
count your many blessings, name them one by one,  
and it will surprise you what the Lord has done.*

Grace and peace and health - greg

## Celebration Works Update

Unfortunately, we had to postpone our first virtual concert, “If I Were a Bird” with Lisa Neher and Stephanie Thompson due to illness caused by the smoke in our area. The concert will take place on **Saturday, December 5th at 2 pm!**

**Next Up: Lluvias de Guitarra: Rain Strings**

with guitarist Maria Olaya

**Saturday, October 24th at 2 pm and Sunday, October 25th at 2 pm (rebroadcast)**

Maria will be sharing a concert of original works and arrangements of pieces inspired by the poetry of water throughout the ages on acoustic guitar. I'll be joining her to sing a few tunes as well! We are partnering with the Oregon Environmental Council for this virtual concert to spread the word about the wonderful work OEC is doing in our community to keep our water clean. Their water program states: “Through public policy advocacy, education, and collaborative projects, we work to reduce urban and agricultural runoff, use water efficiently, and prevent pollution.” They'll be sharing some more information about that program with you all at the concert and I hope you'll take a look at their website to see how we can get involved.

Stream the Concert here: [www.firstpresportland.org/arts-music/celebration-works](http://www.firstpresportland.org/arts-music/celebration-works)

Learn more about OEC here: [oeconline.org/cleanwater/](http://oeconline.org/cleanwater/)

—Maddy Ross, *Celebration Works* Administrator

## WOW, The impact of NEFP

Since 2/20 and the start of Covid, NEFP has fed over 250,000 and delivered over 6 million pounds of food! And FPC volunteers have been part of that success. Now NEFP needs additional volunteers to help with preparing boxes and food distribution. Please prayerfully consider joining other FPC-ers at this food pantry. Most FPC volunteers come for ‘shifts’ of about 2 to 4 hours, one or two days a week. The new volunteer sign up is here: [www.signupgenius.com/go/9040a44aeac2ea2ff2-soyouwant](http://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040a44aeac2ea2ff2-soyouwant) Begin by joining the day or evening group. After you are part of one or the other group, you will get an email with a link to sign up for specific tasks/times/days. Questions? Please contact Bill Resley [kayak500@gmail.com](mailto:kayak500@gmail.com) NEFP is located at 4800 NE 72nd Ave, Portland, OR 97218.



## Julia West Project Update:

A task group from our church has been working toward redevelopment of the church's Julia West site, seeking funding to build low-income housing with supportive services on site. We have recently had news that the State of Oregon's Oregon Housing and Community Services agency (OHCS) will be issuing a funding round in the **Spring of 2021**, and Portland Housing Bureau (PHB) will be issuing a bond funding round by the end of this year. The developer with whom our church is working, Community Development Partners, have let us know that both look promising for the Julia West project. Thanks for your continuing interest and prayers for the next chapter of Julia West's life!

## Menucha Still Serving Others

Menucha is continuing to fulfill FPC's mission to serve others here.

Menucha hosted several Oregon and California families fleeing wildfires. We are working with presbytery leaders to continue helping where we can. We continue to host personal retreats for individuals, families, and friend/family "bubbles." Cost is \$110 per room of up to 4 people per night. Daily meals are \$45 for adults and \$23.75 for kids 7-12. Younger ones eat free. Would it do your heart good to get out of your house and spend some time here? If being with others feeds your soul, then ask friends to book simultaneously. You'll have separate rooms but can enjoy socially distanced time together. Call (503) 695-2243.

## Menucha Programs Changing with the Times

We're continuing to adjust our programs in faith, art, and music so we can offer them safely...and we're creating entirely new programs, too. (See the November Spire.) Several of this fall's events will be 100% online via Zoom.

In contrast, our October watercolor workshops and our Scrap & Sew craft retreat in November will allow in-person guests, but a reduced number of them per the county Level 1 re-opening regulations (maximum of 10).

Scrap & Sew is almost full for November 6-8 but we would be willing to schedule an additional one if there is interest.

Please keep the Menucha staff in your prayers as we do our best, in trying times, to keep serving people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love.

## FPC Chapel Art Gallery Virtual Exhibit: "Hope in Every Step: The Immigrant Experience"

Juror Mark Tindle, who recently served as the Supervisor at Portland Art Museum's Rental Sales Gallery, considered over 50 submissions from an international group of artists. After much careful deliberation, we are delighted to announce the prize winning pieces for Hope In Every Step.

The exhibition was originally scheduled for September 2020 and it was decided that the judging of the entrant's work would proceed at this time, with the in-person show postponed until September 2021. Here are the award-winning artists, their selected works of art and an excerpt from their shared impressions on the Immigrant experience.

### First Prize "Where Can We Go?" Artist Sidonie Caron

**shares:**  
"Hope in Every Step must truly be felt by every immigrant. Lest we forget most US residents are immigrants or their descendants. The indigenous population in the US is now small. Immigrants are either pushed here by tragic experience or pulled by hope of a better life. I have experienced both. The first time I was forced from Germany to England when Hitler came to power in 1933 and started his war against the Jews. The second was from England to the USA in search of a better life." To view the full virtual exhibit, please visit: [www.firstpresportland.org/music-arts/visual-arts/](http://www.firstpresportland.org/music-arts/visual-arts/)



"Where Can We Go?" Artist Sidonie Caron





**First  
Presbyterian**  
CHURCH OF PORTLAND

## **Join a Virtual Menucha Update Sunday, October 4th 11:30 am**



On **Sunday, October 4th at 11:30 am**, please virtually join Pastor Spencer Parks and Rick Lee, Menucha Commission Chair, for an informative look at

[1] how Menucha is doing/what Menucha is doing during the pandemic;

[2] the proposed McCall House sale; and

[3] the continued work by the Menucha/Downtown Workgroup on separating Menucha and FPC into two distinct non-profit corporations. Questions welcome.

This meeting will be in place of our usual Sunday morning coffee hour. **Join this “Zoom Meeting” by using this link:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88436962691>

Spencer reports that Menucha has had very limited operations for most of the year, with revenue during the pandemic almost nonexistent. Despite robust fundraising, he writes, our fixed expenses continue to outpace our income. Because of this, the Menucha Commission has made the difficult decision to sell the McCall House. This is a small, non-contiguous property that we purchased in 2002. It was purchased for the purpose of staff housing (Spencer and Sarah lived there for their first six years at Menucha). The value of the property has increased significantly over the last 18 years. We feel that the combination of our fundraising and the sale of the house will allow us to safely weather our current economic crisis. At this point, we don't expect to fully recover until the end of 2022 or the beginning of 2023. Please know that we do expect to recover fully. We know that it will take time, hard work, and the help of all our friends.