



First Presbyterian

CHURCH OF PORTLAND

Spire

APRIL 2021

Stewardship Thanks!

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

Striving to “Live Our Faith”, we began our stewardship campaign at First Presbyterian Church last fall. While our pledges are always essential to the work of our church, we face the challenges brought about by COVID and the need to find new ways to strengthen the work of our church.

We set our goal for 2021 knowing that the significant decline in revenue from our parking garage would require us to rely even more fully on the contributions of our members.

Our congregation has responded with exceptional generosity and commitment.

For the 2021 pledge year, we have received approximately 160 pledges for a total of \$ 792,650! A heartfelt thank you goes out to those who were able to make financial pledges and to all who continue to prayerfully support the ministries of our church! Whatever lies ahead, we will continue to work faithfully to ensure that First Presbyterian Church thrives and that we remain “A Heart for the City”.

Questions? Please contact Marc Lavender in the FPC office by email at cba@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



Livestreamed Holy Week!

Maundy Thursday 7 pm
Good Friday 7 pm
Easter Sunday 10:30 am
Menucha Sunrise 6:30 am
Drive-in Service

follow this link to view the services:

<https://www.firstpresportland.org/2021/holy-week-easter/>

Plans for Gradual Re-Opening of In-Person Worship with Safety Measures: see page 3 for details!

Menucha Directions and Decisions

Please see an article on Menucha beginning on **page 4** for information on planning for Menucha’s future!

Menucha, our retreat and conference center in the Columbia Gorge, will be asking our governing board, the Session, to call a meeting of the congregation on **Sunday, April 18 at 12:30 pm** online by Zoom (not in person) for the purpose of voting on a proposed sale of the McCall House, a non-contiguous property that is presently part of Menucha. The congregation’s (and Presbytery’s) approval is needed for any sale of property.

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82570103515> | **Meeting ID: 825 7010 3515**

Pastor's Pen

As April begins in the midst of Holy Week, we have found ourselves over the past year walking a kind of *via dolorosa*, the way of sorrows, as we've made our way through the long season of the pandemic, with all the disruption, isolation and grief that it has at times held.

Yet with the dawning of spring, we remember the words of Ecclesiastes, that light is sweet, and it is good for eyes to see the sun. We are starting to see a lightening of the virus season, and the increasing reach of vaccines is making more connection possible.

In a Good Friday world, we've seen our share of darkness. Yet we rejoice that Easter breaks in with a new song of joy and hope, to say that love is stronger than death.

To sustain our spirits through these days, you are invited to join in worship by streaming on **April 1st**, [Maundy Thursday at 7 pm](#), for a service that will include communion. Then on [Good Friday, April 2nd](#), we will have a **7 pm** service by streaming of Tenebrae, of haunting music and extinguishing the lights, all the more poignant this year as we remember all that has been lost.

Then may we lift our hearts on [Easter Day](#), to celebrate that when all seemed dark, God raised Christ from death to life that we might have life anew. While our worship on Easter will be by streaming rather than in person, we are delighted that the numbers for the virus season are making it possible for us to begin plans to gather back for a time when we worship in person.

Be watching the email newsletter updates for more information, and please be assured that we plan to continue streaming worship as well, as we know that this is allowing members and friends to join us even where being physically present isn't possible.

A old Easter hymn sings of the lightening of life that Christ has brought us:

Tis the spring of souls today: Christ has burst his prison.
And from three day's sleep in death, as a sun has risen;
all the winter of our sins, long and dark, is flying
from his light, to whom we give laud and praise undying.

May the light of Christ's love shine bright for you this Easter,



Rev. Audrey Schindler

Beginning Plans for a Gradual Re-Opening!

After a long year of worshipping together only online, we give thanks to God that we may soon be able to sing again, “We Gather Together to Ask the Lord’s Blessing!”

We’re grateful that the virus statistics in the community are at last declining into a range that our Session’s Re-Opening Task Group has set for as safe as possible a re-opening. We’re thankful for the widening impact of the vaccines, and the continued research into vaccines and treatment.

Our Administrative Commission of Session met to confirm the recommendation of the Re-Opening group, that we have a Sunday to have some ushers and others attend to prepare for a service that congregants could attend.



When we begin to gather back, worship will be initially quite different than usual. Because of restricted numbers who can gather safely, we will need to ask that you make a reservation to attend worship. You’ll be able to make a reservation in either of two ways. We will have an online system where you can enter your name and details, and if you’re more comfortable not doing this online, you will be able to call the church office Tuesday to Friday to ask to reserve a place in worship.

We will continue to stream our worship services as we have throughout the year (and before the pandemic) for those who prefer or need to worship from home.

The first Sunday that we anticipate having a limited number of congregants in worship is May 16th, likely with 50 attending in total with reservations beginning on the previous Tuesday. Initially, so that more people can attend, we ask that you wait a week after attending before reserving again.

When you arrive at worship, you will need to wear a mask that covers the nose and mouth. You will enter through one of two doors near the parking garage elevator, and will be greeted by an usher. You will check in at a desk in the narthex, be asked questions about any exposure to the COVID virus, and your temperature will be taken. The ushers will escort you to an assigned seating space, so as to maintain social distance.

Initially, to curtail the possibility of transmitting the virus, we will not be singing or saying corporate prayers. As some of the churches are doing, you may wish to hum the hymns, and whisper the prayers. As the virus season eases, these restrictions will be reviewed and lifted when possible.

All this to say that the early days of gathering back for worship will not look like a usual Sunday. But we hope the chance to be together with others in the beauty of the sanctuary and to hear the beautiful music will lift your heart!

A New Chapter in Menucha's 71-Year History



2019 Labor Day Retreat at Menucha

In last month's Spire <https://www.firstpresportland.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/March-2021WV.pdf> Spencer brought everyone up to date on a Menucha project that began 27 months ago. In January 2019, Session appointed a workgroup to study whether it would be in the best interests of the church and Menucha for Menucha to become its own corporation. The workgroup — after regular meetings with representatives from Session and Menucha and after consulting with a corporate attorney — has concluded that the answer to that question is “yes.”

Workgroup members: Jon Bates, Joyce Evans, Rick Lee, Spencer Parks, Brenda Peterson, Audrey Schindler, Tim Sercombe, and Marc Lavender (ex-officio member)

RECOMMENDATION:

MENUCHA SHOULD BECOME ITS OWN NONPROFIT CORPORATION

What does this recommendation mean for Menucha? For FPC? Right now, the church and Menucha are part of the same non-profit corporation — the First Presbyterian Church of Portland (FPC). This proposal would mean that Menucha would become its own nonprofit corporation — the Menucha Retreat and Conference Center. FPC would continue to operate the church operations just as it does now. FPC would be the sole member of the new Menucha corporation, meaning that FPC — acting through Session — would retain the power to approve some things regarding the new Menucha corporation. For example, Menucha would not be able to sell or otherwise dispose of the Menucha property without the consent of Session. Session would also approve the nomination of FPC Directors to the Menucha Board of Directors. FPC would get back all of Menucha's assets if Menucha were to stop operating or go out of business. Menucha would be run by its own board of directors. Currently, Menucha's operations are overseen by the Menucha Commission, which reports to Session. Once Menucha is independent, Session would continue to be informed but would not oversee Menucha's operations or financing.

What are the benefits of making Menucha its own corporation? The workgroup believes taking this action will benefit both the church & Menucha in four key ways:

[1] As the operations of Menucha and the downtown church have evolved over the years, there is an increased need to limit the church's and Menucha's liability risk. Having distinct legal entities allows both the church and Menucha to better protect their separate assets from any liability that might arise from the actions of the retreat and conference center or the actions of the church.

[2] This change will allow Menucha to expand its ability to secure additional funding from grants and new donors – a benefit both to Menucha and the church.

[3] The church and Menucha have different operational needs. The business processes that are designed to run a church are not designed to run a retreat/conference center. Creating a new corporation would allow Menucha to develop the business systems that it needs to run a retreat center whose yearly budget now exceeds \$1.3 million.

[4] Having separate organizations will allow Menucha and the church to focus on their distinct missions, goals, and opportunities, while still supporting each other and continuing to find partnership opportunities.

Have other church camp and conference centers done this? Yes. The national trend for a number of years has been to treat camp/conference centers as legal entities that are separate from a church, synod, or presbytery. As part of our work on this project, we consulted with Brian Frick and Paul Fogg. Brian is the Associate for Camp and Conference Ministries with the Presbyterian Church (USA). Paul is the executive director of Ghost Ranch in New Mexico. Before that, he was the executive director and CEO of the Calvin Center in Atlanta when it went through the process of becoming a corporation separate from the Presbytery. Both Brian and Paul strongly recommend that Menucha should become its own corporation based on their involvement with similar church camp and conference centers. The workgroup also interviewed Run River Enterprises – consultants hired in 2019 to review Menucha's operations. Run River recommended:

“The consultants strongly support the move toward [incorporating Menucha as its own 501(c)(3) corporation]. This is not in any way to be seen as a ‘separation’ or pulling away from First Presbyterian Church or its ministry. It [simply] creates a legal framework for Menucha to be as strong as possible in its organizational life so that it is better able to fulfill its [distinct] mission.”

What work has been done so far? The Session-appointed workgroup began meeting in January 2019. After a short break, the workgroup has continued to meet several times a month and has regularly briefed Session and the Menucha Commission on its work. As noted above, the workgroup has met with a number of church camp/conference center experts. The group also has consulted with an attorney who is an expert in nonprofit corporations to make sure we are following all state and federal laws. Recently, at its March meeting, Session approved the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws that were drafted by the workgroup and approved by the attorney working on this project.



Front cover of 1952 Menucha brochure

What do the Articles of Incorporation do? This is the legal document that would create the new Menucha corporation. It provides that FPC would be the sole member of the Menucha corporation. It also includes the names of the initial board of directors for the new corporation. You can view the complete document in the church CCB directory under https://firstpresportland.ccbchurch.com/group_detail.php?group_id=1

Who will be on the initial board of directors? Session has approved the initial board of directors for Menucha. Eight of the 15 members would be members of FPC; many of the directors have previously served as Menucha Commission members; and several directors are members of the Friends of Menucha Foundation. The complete list includes:

- **Session-Approved Elder Director:** Jon Bates
- **Session-Approved FPC Directors:** Kendra Hilty, Erich Merrill, Tim Sercombe, Steve Snodderly
- **Other Directors from FPC:** Jeff Foley, Rick Lee, Joey Razzano
- **Non-FPC Directors:** Rev. Doug Edwards, Rev. Chris Grewe, Derek Foote, Susan Hedlund, Gordon Kennedy, Keren McCord, Kelly White
- **FPC Ex-Officio Member:** Audrey Schindler

If you want to learn more about the backgrounds of these directors, check out the Biographical Summaries in the church CCB directory under https://firstpresportland.ccbchurch.com/group_detail.php?group_id=1

Would FPC members continue to be on the Menucha Board of Directors? How would they be selected? The Bylaws for the new Menucha corporation spell out how board members would be nominated and elected. The Bylaws also provide that some of the board member positions must be occupied by church members who are approved by Session. For the first five years — until 2025 — a total of five members of the board, including a current Session member, must be church members. For the next five years — until 2030 — a total of three members of the board, including a current Session member, must be FPC members. In addition, the FPC Head of Staff, or the Head of Staff's designee, will be an ex-officio member of the Menucha board. You can view the complete Bylaws document in the church CCB directory under https://firstpresportland.ccbchurch.com/group_detail.php?group_id=1

What would this new corporation mean for the relationship that has existed between the church and Menucha for 71 years? Menucha and the church will continue to interact with each other in much the same way as they interact now. The difference will be that Menucha will now be run by its own board of directors instead of being under the control of the Session. The church and Menucha will enter into a covenant agreement, which has been approved by Session and the Menucha Commission, to help ensure the relationship continues.

What is a covenant agreement and what's in it? A covenant agreement is a promise by two parties to do or not do something. The agreement between the church and Menucha contains promises from Menucha to the church and from the church to Menucha. Some highlights:



Rev. Dr. Paul Wright standing next to a 1960 Chevy panel truck with Elmer and Ruth Goertz, who ran Menucha from 1954-1965

Menucha promises:

- To provide resources for all events that FPC holds at Menucha, including the Labor Day Retreat, the Women's Retreat, the Men's Retreat, the Palm Sunday Brunch, Senior Adult Luncheons, and the Easter Sunrise Worship.
- To continue to maintain the property, fixtures, equipment, and assets of Menucha in good working order and repair.
- To cooperate and collaborate with FPC, the Presbytery of the Cascades, and other PC(USA) entities in the provision of training, educational, and religious programs for their staff and members.
- To maintain the ecumenical and interfaith nature of its mission to enrich lives through hospitality, learning, reflection, and renewal.

Menucha & the church promise:

- To continue their missional relationship.
- As Menucha and the church separate, Rev. Dr. Spencer Parks will continue as the Executive Director of Menucha Retreat and Conference Center and as a paid, part-time pastor at FPC.

The church promises to continue:

- To celebrate Camp and Conference Sunday on an annual basis on a date agreed upon by FPC and Menucha, including holding a special offering as part of Camp and Conference Sunday.
- To give Menucha first consideration as a site for its programs annually.
- To allow Menucha to publish its events in church publications and to sell tickets at church events.

Want to read the complete Covenant Agreement? It can be found in the church CCB directory under https://firstpresportland.ccbchurch.com/group_detail.php?group_id=1

What happens to the Menucha property? FPC, through the Presbytery of the Cascades, has owned the Menucha property since it was acquired in 1950. If approved by the congregation and the Presbytery, FPC would transfer the Menucha property to the new Menucha corporation after Menucha is officially approved by the IRS as a tax-exempt organization. Menucha will need to file an application with the IRS. Once the application is filed, it will take several months for approval. In the meantime, the workgroup is proposing that FPC lease the property to Menucha for a nominal sum. In the future, should Menucha cease operating for any reason, the property would be returned to FPC under the terms spelled out in the Articles of Incorporation.

What about the Menucha employees? Everyone who now works at Menucha is an FPC employee. The employees would become employees of the new Menucha corporation when operational control of Menucha has been transferred to the new Menucha corporation.

Will FPC be responsible for Menucha's debts? The short answer is no. Menucha currently has a loan with the Synod, and Menucha would continue to be responsible for the payment of that loan, which will be transferred to the new 501(c)(3) corporation. Menucha will be responsible for any unemployment costs or prepaid refunds that may arise.

Is there still a plan to sell the McCall House? If you participated in the Menucha briefing last fall, you learned that there are plans to sell the McCall House — a property purchased in 2003 that is separate from the retreat and conference center grounds — as a way to help Menucha financially. The congregation will soon be asked to approve the sale of the McCall House.

Still have questions? Want to learn more? Join us via Zoom for a conversation about this proposal on Sunday, April 18 at 12:30 pm. You will hear a short presentation from members of the workgroup and then we will open it up for questions from the congregation.

What are the next steps in the process? After we get input from the congregation on April 18, there will be a congregational meeting — probably in early May — during which the congregation will be asked to authorize the transfer of the Menucha property to the new Menucha corporation, once the corporation is approved as its own 501(c)(3) corporation by the IRS.



Spencer welcomes a group in Wright Hall

**JOIN US VIA ZOOM ON SUNDAY, APRIL 18
FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
12:30 PM**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82570103515>

Meeting ID: 825 7010 3515

Capital Campaign Mission

Giving

Last month we shared a summary of the allocation of the mission dollars from our 3- year Forward in Faith Capitol Campaign program. We are very grateful for the generosity of our congregation which enabled us to support so many worthwhile projects!



In the coming months, we plan to highlight the various CCMG funded projects so you can have a better understanding for how the contributions were actually used in Mission Ministry. We are looking forward to our congregation's involvement in many of these mission projects on an ongoing basis, so we can thrive as "A Heart for the City" in the hopeful times ahead.

~ Capital Campaign Mission Giving Committee - Greg Aldrich, Rev. Brenna Dykman, Kathryn Hill, Linda Killen and Steve Primack

Correction: In the March Spire, the Camp Attitude piece on Page 6 was shortened, here is the full piece: \$10,000 to Camp Attitude in central Oregon for building a new cabin at the camp. This camp provides a faith-based camping experience for youth and families in the special needs' community. A youth mission trip to Camp Attitude is hoped for in the future.



Monthly Tuesday Book Club

Join in via Zoom on Tuesday, April 6th at 11 am. Cindy Finch presents *The Yellow Raft in Blue Water* by Michael Dorris. This novel is a saga of three generations of Native American women - their hardships, haunting secrets and the betrayals that bond them together. Three stories are told by the 15-year-old daughter, her mother and grandmother. Jan Mittelstaedt will be our Zoom host and Marilyn Weber is our Chair. Please await your Zoom invite from Jan and sign in at 10:45 am on the day of the meeting. After the meeting, there will be time for a Zoom chat with your book club friends.

Earth Day/Earth Care Course

The Earth Care committee invites you to a series of three lessons/discussions on the scriptural call which Christians have to steward the world we live in. The series will begin on **Earth Day, Thursday, April 22.**



These sessions will be via Zoom from **6 to 7 pm on April 22, 29 and May 6.** Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82013633831>

Renewable Electricity in Your Home! Ideas from the Earth Care Team of the Mission Committee

Changing to 100% renewable electricity is one of the most powerful actions to lowering carbon emissions your household can take. Surprisingly, the 'base fuel mix' in Oregon is 25% or more coal. And changing to the 100% renewable option with PGE (Green Source) or Pacific Power (Blue Sky) is very easy and affordable, (likely to cost about \$6 per month extra says PGE). Visit your electric utility's website to switch today!

Call for Digital Photography Earth Care Team Video to Commemorate Earth Day 2021

Call for digital photography submissions! The Earth Care Team is launching an annual video to commemorate Earth Day 2021 - and we need your help. Please share your favorite digital images of photography or artwork that you believe captures all the beauty of the earth. These can include own original images - or the work of others that you admire. Your digital photography images will be gathered together with audio excerpts of sermon and Scripture at FPC, all set to beautiful & inspiring music. Earth Day this year will be on Thursday, April 22nd. Please have your submissions in no later than April 8th. Follow this link to share your images: <https://www.dropbox.com/request/PKnIhN4lIHdwRpvso9Lv> Questions? Please contact Chris Nilson at cnilson@verizon.net

Emergency Food Closet Update

Alder House and FPC's Mission Committee began a new chapter in our relationship in late spring of 2020, with the first deliveries of extra food supplies from the Northeast Emergency Food Pantry.

Lift Urban Portland's (LiftUP) grant proposal to the Capitol Campaign Mission team was also approved near that time which began an official relationship with Alder House through LiftUP <https://www.lifturbanportland.org/>

LiftUP provides non-perishable goods for the food closet, which with supplemental donations from church members and additional support from a Capitol

Campaign Mission Giving Team grant. **Housed in the Julia West House, the Alder House Emergency Food**

Closet (EFC) has been in operation since late December, 2020. Volunteers are serving there two days each week and the numbers of residents accessing services is increasing; 28 residents during February. One weekly FPC volunteer observed: "the residents are very polite, a little nervous at first, but some really want to talk. One lady, with her little companion dog is so appreciative of dog food. And everybody likes socks." Alder House food donations are provided by LiftUP, while toiletries, pet food, and socks are donated by FPC members and friends – often times, these are items that Alder House residents cannot use SNAP benefits to buy.

With increased use, the EFC stock is down and is currently seeking donations of liquid hand soap, dish washing liquid and small bottles of liquid laundry detergent.

Open Circle's grant from the Presbyterian Women of First Presbyterian Church helped to supply Christmas gift bags to 93 Alder House residents, which included special donations from Open Circle, FPC's Giving Tree, and other FPC members. Each bag contained soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant, shampoo, conditioner, disposable razors, body lotion, menstrual supplies and socks. Additional monies from the Presbyterian Women's fund will supplement future donations to the EFC, which Open Circle members plan to coordinate with Pastoral staff and volunteers.



Would you like to know more about what's happening at the Emergency Food Closet? Come serve with us!! We always welcome new volunteers at the EFC. First time volunteers will be paired with one of our regular volunteers who will show you the ropes. **To sign up for a shift, please follow this link:** <https://www.signupgenius.com/index.cfm?go=s.signup&urlid=60b0a4ca4a92ca2ff2-alder&view=calendar&mo=1614556800>

Or contact Brenna for donation or volunteer information: bdykman@firstpresportland.org
Contributors: Amy Wood, Bill Resley, Marilyn Howe, Cindy Finch and Pastor Brenna.

One Great Hour of Sharing

Each year through the One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) offering, we are given the opportunity to live out the call to become the beloved community of Jesus Christ. You can join believers around the world at this sacred time by remembering our sisters and brothers who are in need through gifts to the annual One Great Hour of Sharing special offering. This past year has been particularly challenging. OGHS reaches out with projects that share God's love by providing relief from natural disasters, food for the hungry, and support for the poor and oppressed. Many programs have a long-term focus, partnering with communities to address root causes as well. To make gifts online, please follow this link and select One Great Hour of Sharing - Easter <https://firstpresportland.ccbchurch.com/goto/giving> Thank you for your donations to these needs in challenging times!

Rose Haven Shelter

The Rose Haven Day Shelter for Women and Children thanks FPC members for their recent donations of so many urgently needed items! Rose Haven direct donation hours are from 1-3 pm, Monday through Thursday and are located at 627 NW 18th Ave.

Please visit their website at <https://rosehaven.org/helping/donate-supplies/> for top needed items which are updated weekly. Questions? Please contact Cindy Finch cindyloufinch@yahoo.com



Resurrection Eggs

The Children and Family Ministry team here at the church put together Easter baskets for the kids 5th grade and younger. Included in the gift bag were “Resurrection Eggs”, which help children learn the story of Jesus’ last days on earth and the amazing story of his resurrection. We are thankful for the many generous hands who helped put these baskets together and delivered them with love.





**First
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FPC Virtual Exhibit Available on our Website!



FPC has a virtual exhibit available on our website. The works of art & poems were chosen by a representative from each of the 7 x 7 galleries and shared to encourage creative responses to the challenges of the Covid 19 pandemic. The galleries represented included our FPC Chapel Gallery, Art Wall Gallery of First Unitarian Church, Artreach Gallery of First Congregational UCC, Cloisters Gallery of Westminster Presbyterian Church, Kempton Gallery of Trinity Episcopal Church, Creative Spirits Gallery of First Methodist Church and the Pioneer Chapel Gallery of St. James Lutheran Church.

Please follow this link to view the virtual exhibit: <https://www.firstpresportland.org/music-arts/visual-arts/>