



**First
Presbyterian**
CHURCH OF PORTLAND

Spire
MAY 2021

May Moments for Mission!

May is our month for Mission. In Sunday services we will be hearing from local mission partners about their programs and how members might get involved. Then on **May 22nd, you are invited to join your church family in our annual day of service.** This will look a little different than it has in the



Volunteers clean-up at Menucha

past. Church members will be invited to help out at Menucha as they host a cleanup day, come downtown to help clean up the neighborhood with SOLVE, or join Pastor Brenna in getting your hands dirty as we give some TLC to the interior of our church. Please watch the bulletin and e-blast for registration information.

Pentecost Offering: Nurturing Lifelong Faith Connections

“O God, from my youth you have taught me, and I still proclaim your wondrous deeds.” Psalm 71:17

Our annual Presbyterian Pentecost Offering is a gift to the future-- furthering the faith development and welfare of children and youth. FPC keeps 40% of members' donations to fund projects in our own community. The remaining 60% supports ministries of the Presbyterian Mission Agency: Young Adult Volunteers (YAV), Ministries for Youth, and Children-at-Risk. Please make a [contribution](#) at Pentecost on Sunday, May 23, to nurture the faith of those who are the church to come.

Plans for Gradual Re-Opening - A New Date please see page 3 for details!

Momentous Menucha Decisions— Congregational Meeting on Menucha: Sunday, May 2

It is a momentous time for the congregation and Menucha, our retreat and conference center in the Gorge, as the congregation will be meeting by Zoom on **Sunday, May 2nd at 11:30 am** to consider the proposed separation of Menucha from the downtown church. You'll find details of the congregational meeting and a link to a background paper below.

For the past 28 months, a Session-appointed workgroup has been considering a new corporate structure and other changes for Menucha. **You can read details in the April Spire:** <https://www.firstpresportland.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/April-2021WV.pdf>

The Session has called a **Meeting of the Congregation by Zoom at 11:30 am on Sunday, May 2**, to ask the congregation to approve the disposition of the Menucha Retreat and Conference Center property, on terms acceptable to the Session of First Presbyterian Church, to the new Menucha Retreat and Conference Center Corporation, to facilitate the incorporation of Menucha as its own 501c3 [non-profit] corporation. **Follow this Zoom link to join the meeting:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82192151367> | Meeting ID: 821 9215 1367

First Presbyterian Church
Sunday Worship at 10:30 am
1200 SW Alder St. Portland, Oregon 97205
(503) 228-7331 | www.firstpresportland.org

Pastor's Pen

As the glories of Spring in Oregon continue to unfold, hearts are lifting as the lengthening days are lending light. After what has been a long season of sheltering at home, people are getting vaccinated and beginning to venture out, taking heart in seeing those whom they've missed.

At the church, we have a new reason to rejoice, **as we look ahead to a time this month when we can begin to gather back for worship in person!** We echo the joy of the Psalmist, who wrote, **"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord."** (Psalm 122:1)

In the early months of our gathering back, **you will need to make a reservation to attend worship in person.** This is so that we can keep the numbers of those attending within safe limits. Initially, those who are fully vaccinated may wish to attend in the early weeks. This will begin on May 16, with reservations taken from Tuesday May 11. You'll find more details on what worship will look like in the coming months in an article on Re-Gathering in the Spire. We'll continue to stream services for those who prefer to worship with us online.



Rev. Audrey Schindler

Earlier in the month, on **Sunday, May 2**, following worship, we will have a [congregational meeting by Zoom on the proposed separation of Menucha](#) from the church. You'll find details and a link to a background paper later in the Spire.

I've been so heartened by the creativity and adaptability that our members, church leaders, and staff have shown in tailoring the church's life to the pandemic season. Just before the pandemic hit, our Session had gathered for a retreat around the theme of "adaptive change." Little could we have imagined that we would soon be living into a season of such wide-ranging changes and adaptations! Given the creativity that has emerged, I'm looking forward to seeing how this new chapter of life for our church will unfold as we begin to gather back. Please give yourself grace if it takes a while for a new pattern and direction to emerge, and share that grace with one another as we live into this new season.

There is much for us to do as a church to witness to the hope that is ours in Christ, to reach out with his love to help rebuild the city for which we are called to care. Our Jewish brothers and sisters in faith have a concept called *tikkun olam*, often understood as "repairing the world." We will be taking up our part in restoring the city, serving the needs of those most impacted by the virus season, and helping to reweave the social fabric that has become so frayed. The prophet Jeremiah wrote to the people in a time of exile with this commission and call, one that we take to heart as we emerge from this shadowed season:

But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you,
and pray to the Lord on its behalf,
for in its welfare you will find your welfare...
in its peace, you will find your peace.

Wishing you God's strength and Spirit for the living of these days,



Plans for a Gradual Re-Opening - A New Date!

After a long year of worshipping together online, we are hopeful to be able to celebrate what was promised at Pentecost, “they were gathered together in one place.”

After the virus statistics delayed our earlier hoped-for date, we are now tentatively planning for May 23 for reopening the church for in-person worship, within the parameters outlined below. While it's not possible to be completely certain there would be no one in worship who might be infectious, given the effectiveness of vaccinations, masks, social distancing and good ventilation, the risk of contracting the virus appears low enough to re-open for those comfortable with these considerations. Others may wish to continue to worship via the streaming connection.



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 23, likely with 50 attending in total. Reservations for that Sunday will open on Tuesday, May 18 from 10 am. 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 the door near the parking garage elevator, and will be greeted by an usher. You will check in at a desk in the narthex, have your temperature taken, and be asked questions about any exposure to the COVID virus. **The ushers will escort you to an assigned seating space, so as to maintain social distance. These seats will be on alternate aisles.**

Initially, to curtail the possibility of transmitting the virus, **we will not be singing or saying the prayers aloud.** You may wish to hum the hymns, and whisper the prayers. We will not have coffee hour after worship for the first month or more, to allow the virus numbers to decline further. As the virus season eases, these restrictions will be reviewed and lifted when possible. Please put the re-opening date in pencil in your calendars, look for more information in the online news letters, and be in touch with the church office with any questions.

While the early days of gathering back for worship will not look like a usual Sunday, 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!

Call for Greeters

Are you as excited as I am about the prospect of returning to in-person worship in our sanctuary? One way to express that enthusiasm is to be a Sunday morning greeter, welcoming congregants to worship. Smiling eyes (above your mask) and a few kind words can help those attending feel welcome and appreciated. We will likely need to hold off on handshakes and hugs for a little while longer.

Sign up for a few Sundays now and then, sign up for a month at a time, or whatever fits into your schedule. Are you interested in serving our congregation in this way? Please be in touch with Kathryn Hill by email hillka@teleport.com While dates as to when we will have in-person services and request greeters return are still being decided, Kathryn is organizing a list of those interested so we are prepared and ready to go when the time comes, hopefully later this Spring. Thank you in advance for your service to the church! - Kathryn Hill



Church member Bette greets a visitor to the church

Alleluia Is Our Song

— Greg Homza, Director of Music Ministries

Happy Easter! Yes, Easter Sunday was nearly a month ago, but as with Christmas, Easter refers not only to a single day, but to a whole season of celebration!



Greg Homza

One of my favorite aspects of the Easter season is the abundance of alleluias in the prayers and music. Alleluia is the Greek and Latin form of the Hebrew word hallelujah, a joyful shout meaning, “praise the Lord.” This word is found in the psalms of the Hebrew Bible and is used in Christian churches of both East and West to express the highest level of praise, and ultimate joy in the rising of Christ from the dead.

In an Easter homily, Augustine of Hippo (354-430) preached, “**we are Easter people and alleluia is our song ...** let us sing here and now in this life, even though we are oppressed by various worries, so that we may sing it one day in the world to come, when we are set free from all anxiety.” (Let that sink in...) Though it may be a while before we are able to safely sing together, we can still sing in our homes, in our cars, maybe even on our evening walks! Choose your favorite Easter hymn, or the Doxology setting we’re currently using – which is chock-full of alleluias – to “praise the Lord.”

[to the tune of “All Creatures of Our God and King”]

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.

Praise God, all creatures high and low.

Alleluia, alleluia!

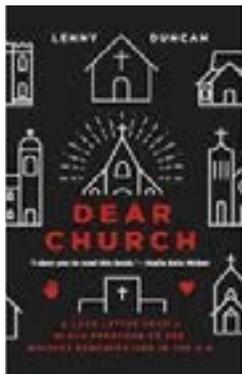
Praise God, in Jesus fully known: Creator, Word,
and Spirit one.

Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

May the steadfast love of the Lord be yours, this day
and forever. Alleluia!

Racial Justice Book Discussion

This past year the world has become more aware of the discrepancies and disparities that communities and individuals of color face including in communities of faith. FPC is continuing its commitment to learn and grow together about the pervasive injustices of our world. In May, we will be coming together as a church to read *Dear Church: A Love Letter from a Black Preacher to the Whitest Denomination in the US* by Rev. Lenny Duncan. Discussion groups will meet for three weeks on Tuesdays May, 11, 18, 26 from 9-10 am and 5:30-6:30 pm. Space is limited, so please contact Brenna at bdykman@firstpresportland.org to register!



Stephen Ministers are the After People

How does it feel after the phone call you hoped you'd never get, after the doctor says there's nothing more that can be done, after you get a pink slip with your paycheck, after your relationship falls apart, and after your friends have resumed their own lives? Stephen Ministers are lay volunteers who are trained to provide confidential, empathetic, Christ-centered care to individuals who are experiencing grief and loss. If you would like to find out more about how Stephen Ministry can support you through tough times, contact Pastor Brenna or Pastor Audrey at the church.



The Tuesday Book Club

The Tuesday Women's Book Club will meet on May 4 at 11 am. The book discussion will be led by Jean Meihoff, *The Lost Girls of Paris* by Pam Jenoff. This is a historical novel about the young British women who were trained to spy on the Germans and relay their information back to London prior to D-Day. Jan Mittelstaedt will be our Zoom hostess and Marilyn Weber our Chair. After the meeting there will be time for a Zoom chat with your book friends.

FPC Higher Education Award

Applications Due May 21, 2021

Eligible Applicants: high school seniors or those who are or have been tied to FPC and have been accepted into an accredited 2-yr, trade, license or certification program or full college but have not received this award in the past; not a need based award



Applications: download from FPC's website Applications: download from FPC's website <https://www.firstpresportland.org/2021/fpc-higher-education-award/> or contact Pastor Brenna bdykman@firstpresportland.org

Time to Wake Up!

April 22 was worldwide Earth Day and the US hosted a summit of world leaders to outline goals for the reduction of carbon emissions by 2030. We hope to educate ourselves to the threat of climate change for what it is - a pressing global security issue that endangers the world.

This is a clarion call to respond by personal choices and actions to:

- 1) Reduce the intake of animal products
- 2) Support local food producers/farmers markets
- 3) Reduce food waste by serving smaller portions
- 4) Start composting food waste
- 5) Support the rights and resources of indigenous people

The Earth Care Team of First Presbyterian, with support and guidelines from the greater PCUSA, will undertake the exercise of Green Congregation certification.

While altering our individual behavior is certainly important, our focus also needs to be one of community. Where government agencies and political action groups may find it difficult to create an environment for change, our collective behavior as a church can set an example. We must learn to share the world that was created for us. We must do this together, leading by both action and faith

"The earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world and all who live in it. For He founded it on the seas and established it upon the water." Psalm 24:1-2

Capital Campaign Mission Giving Update:

Northeast Emergency Food Program “Feed My Sheep”

Are you aware of the transformative effect that FPC’s Capital Campaign Mission Giving gifts have had on our Mission partner Northeast Emergency Food Program (NEFP)? Two years ago, at the urging



Food Pantry as renovations began

of the discipleship group that started our partnership, NEFP submitted a capital improvement request of \$17,500 to renovate/upgrade their pantry. After the request was granted, work was immediately started in August 2019 to install high efficiency, maintenance-free LED lighting fixtures;

retile and seal the pantry floor; remove walls to provide clear lines of sight; repaint; purchase heavy duty shelving; and purchase commercial grade equipment for the Oregon Food Bank’s Food Demonstration Pilot Program. The Lower Pantry renovations were completed ahead of schedule and made a huge difference. Wide open aisles allowed for more clients to shop and allowed for the offering of more food variety.

The new shelving and stainless steel made the sorting, packing and cleaning much easier.

The new floors and lighting— with no walls blocking



Food Pantry after renovations

the lines of sight made their waiting area much brighter. Best of all, pre-COVID, NEFP was able to use the Lower Pantry as a multi-use space to host luncheons and Oregon Food Bank workshops.

NEFP’s Program Manager A’Jay Scipio, says “the critical difference this Capital Campaign Mission Giving Gift has made happened when COVID came in



Food Pantry in use during 2020

2020. NEFP was able to make a massive shift in how they distribute their food boxes to families.”

When FPC provided an emergency grant of \$5,000 in the summer of 2020, they were able to upgrade to plastic boxes with plastic trash compactor bags inside to meet cost effectiveness, and re-usability requirements. They moved the production lines and pallet jacks inside the building because two major walls were removed during their capital improvements upgrade. Now, they can easily maneuver their equipment in and out of the building.

NEFP has shifted from having the ability to feed a maximum of 130 families in one day to 950 families in one day! NEFP is now the largest food pantry in the State of Oregon and served over 91,400 families in 2020. FPC’s Capital Campaign Mission Giving gifts and faithful volunteers have made an impactful difference in Christ’s charge to “feed my sheep” right here in our local community.

NEFP’s Program Manager A’Jay Scipio, continues “without the renovations, NEFP would never have been able to see and know what it could do as a program. The impact of FPC- Portland is still being realized and will continue to be seen, heard, and felt across the state. We didn’t know what challenges were ahead of us— yet **YOUR GENEROSITY** was the foundation for our being able to PIVOT and continue to grow. **We cannot express our thanks enough.** #WeAreNEFP

If you are inspired to volunteer at NEFP, they are located at Luther Memorial Church, 4800 NE 72nd Ave., Portland. To learn more, visit their website <https://emoregon.org/nefp/> or contact Bill Resley kayak500@gmail.com

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

Thirst

It had been
a normal day
until I found
you in want at
the well.

As usual,
I had
traversed
the familiar,
rugged ground carrying both my vessel and
my heavy shame...

never had I amounted to much
often had I fallen short
always had I left a trail of tears.

Startled by your willingness to speak to me at all,
much less with
unsullied tenderness, I found myself hiding
nothing.

For the first time ever I felt seen, really seen.

Your words, though true, *so true*, fell with
a kindness unfamiliar and
knowledge utterly jarring...
my buried secrets, no longer my own.

Unlike all the others, you saw me, all of me, and
did not recoil in judgment.

You spoke of my truth with unnerving acceptance.

Somehow I felt known, fully known for the first
time ever...

my dreams, though missed, were still of
importance
my life, though shattered, yet had worth
my past, though heretical, would not define
my future.

Utterly moved by our chance encounter, however
brief, remains my greatest gift.

Thirst unabashedly quenched.

— poem by Lisa Snodderly

Biblical reference is John 4:1-30



image: Christ and the Woman of Samaria, c. 1619-20, Guercino (Giovanni Francesco Barbieri)

Rose Haven Expansion

Rose Haven's community is expanding its services for women, children, and gender non-conforming folks. It is securing new space at 1740 NW Glisan St. to bring dignified services indoors, to a safe space, share community and build empowerment. This project will be an expansion beyond their current location at 627 NW 18th Avenue. **Open Circle continues** to share this story of our downtown neighbors, and to **offer help in securing needed supplies.**



Women served graphic from Rose Haven's 2020 Annual Report

In 2020, Rose Haven provided services for 1,775 women and 702 children.

Members and friends of FPC generously provided emergency clothing and outdoor supplies to assist so many.

Rose Haven's 2020 Annual Report (follow this link: <https://rosehaven.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Rose-Haven-Annual-Report-2020-1.pdf>) provides more details of their mission. Each week, the current needs are listed at <https://rosehaven.org/helping/donate-supplies/>. If you have donations but are unable to deliver them, please contact cindyloufinch@yahoo.com for assistance. Thank you for your support!



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Earth Care Team Video Commemorates Earth Day 2021



In celebration of Earth Day 2021, the Earth Care Committee of First Presbyterian released this video compilation of inspiring words, music and photography from church members and staff capturing the sheer awe, wonder, and blessing of God's Creation.

Thank you to all who participated!

Follow this link to view the video:

<https://youtu.be/ZRKNABK0ylc>