



The Sextant



Following the Lord's Direction

Volume 4, Issue 4 | April 2018

From the Desk of Tom Cook

I shared with a colleague of mine in the Presbyterian ministry how stunned I was when you gave me a full set of custom fit golf clubs in appreciation for my Interim Ministry. As a golfer, he was envious when I described the clubs and the sneaky way Mike Husby got my measurements so he could order them. I confessed that I was a newbie at the game and how much I was looking forward to using them in my days of retirement.

At the end of our conversation he shared a piece of theological wisdom about the game of golf. He said, *"Tom, you need to remember that golf is a game invented by Scots for the purpose of teaching lessons in humility. It is a game that always reminds you that if by chance you hit the ball straight and it lands in the fairway, life can be very good. However the reality is that, as much as you may try, you often end up in rough places. If things go really bad you end up in deep doo-doo. There is nothing like a three and a half hour game that reminds you of your total depravity and utter reliance on grace. You must accept the reality is that you will never beat the golf course."*

"I want to say thank you to all for this incredibly thoughtful gift of golf clubs."

I want to say thank you to all for this incredibly thoughtful gift of golf clubs. They will be a continued reminder to me of the generosity of this congregation, which I have had the privilege to serve as an Interim Minister. Martha and I have made some great friends in this congregation in this time I have been privileged to serve as your pastor for two years and eight months. This was my first interim ministry after retirement from Called/Installed ministry. You provided me with a wonderful opportunity to have my hand on the helm as we navigated seas that once seemed treacherous but which eventually took us to new ways to do ministry together in Elk Rapids.

Now that our journey is ending we have arrived at an exciting time in the life of this church. On April 15 you will have the opportunity to hear preach, at a single worship service, a minister the Pastoral Nominating Committee believes God is calling to this church. His name is Jim Porter. Immediately following that single service you will have the privilege of casting your vote for him. Jim brings with him a wealth of good, stable experience. Jim and his wife Jaime also bring a strong desire to live in Northern Michigan. Jim and Jaime will be hosted at a meet and greet on Saturday, April 14 in the afternoon so you can introduce yourself to them.

When they came to preach in a neutral pulpit, and for an on sight interview, I had the opportunity to spend four hours with Jim and Jaime. Both are ordained in the Presbyterian Church USA. Both are graduates of Louisville Theological Seminary, where Roger (and soon Erin) is enrolled in a Master of Divinity Program. Jim and Jaime served as a ministry couple in their current church for 20 years. This is a testament to their marriage and their commitment to serving a congregation over the long haul. Jaime wants to continue ministry however she wants to do something different, possibly serve as an Interim Minister, or a Stated Supply Pastor. Jim brings successful experience in areas where the Elk Rapids Church wants to grow, including small group ministries, stewardship and in mission.

Jim will inherit a great staff of folks to work with. Ellen Merillat and I started on the exact same day in August of 2015 and we have grown together in this job. She is a great Administrative Assistant. Wayne Potter, Cheryl Knight, Liz Atkinson and Melanie Stoll have been a joy to work with, and have provided steady and inspired leadership. They are a great team. Jim will discover that this church has an excellent Session that really wants the church to succeed and that it knows how to work collegially to make things happen.

Many folks have asked "What's next?" for the Cooks. "Is it really going to be retirement?" What I have learned in my time with you is that I enjoy Interim Ministry. It presents multiple opportunities to use my skill sets in a short amount of time and in ways that can really bring change in a church's life. I think I have at least one more in me. Where? I can't answer that yet but I know that God is up to something with me. I am not quite sure what it is yet. So I wait.

In the meantime Martha and I will spend this month in Florida, where I will swing away with my new clubs and take my lessons in humility. We have a new granddaughter coming to us in Charlottesville, VA in the midst of May. So our plan is enjoy each other and our family in the coming months.

Grace and peace to you all,

Congregational Meeting Sunday, April 15

Session has called a congregational meeting for Sunday, April 15 for the purpose of acting on the Pastoral Nominating Committee's recommendation to call Rev. James R. Porter to serve as the installed pastor of Elk Rapids First Presbyterian Church.

Read more from your Pastoral Nominating Committee in an Introduction to Rev. Porter on Page 2.



"But my God shall supply all your needs..."
Philippians 4:19

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Introduction to Rev. Jim Porter

Your Pastoral Nominating Committee is pleased to introduce you to Rev. Jim Porter; the person to whom God has led us as our next Called Pastor at First Presbyterian Church. Following our prayerful discernment we enthusiastically recommend Jim for your election at our congregational meeting on April 15, 2018.

For the past 20 years Jim has been at St. Thomas Community Presbyterian Church in Shelby Township, Michigan. A full bio will be furnished prior to the congregational meeting.

We are hosting a "meet and greet" on April 14, 4 - 6 p.m. in our Fellowship Hall. Please join us in this opportunity to meet Jim and his wife, Jaime, and to share our excitement for our church and our community in the coming months and years. We are certain that you will join us in welcoming Rev. Jim Porter and his family to First Presbyterian Church of Elk Rapids. Blessings!

Your PNC Team: Gary Burns, Cathy Farmer, Gail Halliday, Jim Nothoff, Betty Tezak, Pete Van Den Berge, and Diane Wagner.

Highlights from Session

After opening with a meditation on Ephesians and prayer and certifying quorum, Session conducted regular business. Our Pastoral Nominating Committee has concluded its work with a recommendation that we call Rev. James Porter to our pulpit. On April 15 we will have a single service and he will preach. Session has called a congregational meeting immediately after this service for the purpose of acting on the terms of call. Arrangements have been made for a moderator. Please join Session in thanking the tireless and selfless efforts of PNC.

Session will not meet in April. Session meets next on Wednesday, May 23, at 7:00 p.m.

Update from Roger Veliquette

I would like to keep everyone up to date in gratitude for the wonderful support that we continue to receive from our home church!

My updates from Louisville are also prayers of thanksgiving. I passed the first of my ordination exams. It was the Bible Content Exam, which some people affectionately call the "Bible Trivia Exam." It is a difficult exam that often requires multiple attempts, and I was happy and relieved with my result. Later this Spring, at the end of April, I will take two more ordination exams including Polity and Theology. Also, for my ordination process, I completed my psychological evaluation through Midwest Ministries in Columbus, OH this past week. I am under the impression that they will be sending a favorable report to the Committee for Preparation on Ministry. I am grateful for the way that the process is moving along.

In case you have not heard, Erin has applied for, has since been selected, and has accepted a seat as a seminarian at Louisville Seminary for the Fall of 2018! She audited a class last Fall as part of her low-key discernment process, and she has been working with a spiritual advisor to further assist her. We are excited about this new development for Erin and for our family, and I know that you will be eager to hear from her about her thoughts and experiences as she looks forward to her theological education!

My church placement at Central Presbyterian Church on 4th and Kentucky Streets is getting close to wrapping up. I have six more weeks, and in those six weeks I will be preaching two times. If you happen to be driving through Louisville on the mornings of either April 8 or May 6, you are more than welcome to join us for worship. Of course, Central would welcome you anytime!

Abigail is still outrunning all the boys on her soccer team, and she has lately taken to reading easy-reader books. Julien competed in the finals of a state competition for Student Technology and Leadership Program yesterday. Oliver and Julien are both still enjoying club soccer. Oliver added lacrosse as a school sport this spring, and he seems to be having a blast with that.

Thank you all for your continued support and incredible financial generosity toward supporting our family through our seminary experience. We give thanks to God, who is good and whose steadfast love endures forever!

The God of Generosity helps us, gives us strength, and gives us song. God is salvation; God is valiant, celebrated, praised, and adored. God opens the gates of generosity to all of God's creation and enables us to work for equitable sharing of God's bounty.

Grace and peace,
Roger

Free Community Dinner Update

We are excited to see how our free community dinners are growing. Approximately 107 people were served in March, and that number only included about 15 volunteers. While we saw a few returning faces, many were new. Word is getting out. And no wonder. The Fellowship Hall is decorated beautifully, Chef Jeremy Burns prepares scrumptious meals, and our volunteers make everyone feel right at home.

We have our third and last meal of the year on Tuesday, April 10. If you haven't yet attended, you won't want to miss this one. Spring will be in bloom in the Fellowship Hall as the decorations will celebrate the season. Chef Jeremy plans to serve pulled pork sandwiches, macaroni and cheese, coleslaw, and a green vegetable. We'll keep dessert a surprise...but you can be sure it will be a delicious surprise!

Here's your invitation: Join us on Tuesday, April 10 for dinner from 5:30-6:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Bring your family, friends and neighbors. Let's make this dinner the best yet!



Christian Education & Youth Update

The Children's Education Ministry Team is working hard on our largest community outreach of the year; Vacation Bible School (VBS). June is just around the corner and it takes the



entire church working together to make it happen. Please keep an eye out for the signup sheets that will be out soon, or contact me if you can help with VBS. The dates for this year's VBS are June 25-29. At the beginning of Holy Week, Palm Sunday, we hosted a family breakfast at the Lighthouse. This included parents, youth, and children. It was a great success, and we plan on doing it again next year. The annual "Spring Break on Front Street" youth group event continues to grow. This year we had 18 participate.

Looking ahead we will have a busy month.

After a short holiday for spring break, Breakfast Club returns on April 11. This is an excellent opportunity to provide kids with a great meal before school and pray with them as they start their day. If you can help, even one time, please let me know. There is no skill required, just a willingness to help. Our next community movie night will be held April 20. These movie nights continue to draw new students, introducing them to our youth program. They also provide a safe place for students in our community to gather on a Friday night. Lastly, the youth group Puerto Rico mission team will be hosting their final brunch fundraiser on April 29. Please mark your calendar and make plans to support our team. This is going to be a life changing opportunity for everyone involved.

April 2018 Christian Education & Youth Calendar of Events

Sundays

Youth Group

Wednesdays

Breakfast Club

Thursdays, April 5, 19 & 26

Guitar Lessons

Friday, April 20

Youth Movie Night at the Lighthouse

Sunday, April 29

Youth Brunch Fundraiser



Vacation Bible School 2018 - Volunteers Needed

We are gearing up for another exciting Vacation Bible School this summer, June 25-29. This is always a tremendously successful event, drawing around 100 children to our church every year. The success of this event is dependent on all of us, as a church family working together. Please know that we need you, and contact Sara Bogard, Tracy Fosdick, or Wayne Potter if you can help that week, even for one day.



Calling All Presbyterian Women

April Meeting - Thursday, April 12
12 noon at T.J. Charlie's

All women are welcome to attend our April meeting. We will process our annual bakeless bake sale letter and make plans for the Spring Gathering.

Since we are hosting the Spring Gathering, we are forming a women's chorus to present special music at the communion service. Please let me know if you would like to sing. We'll have one rehearsal only.

Hope to see you at the meeting! ~ Cheryl Knight 231-409-3316

Spring Gathering - Saturday, April 28
9:00AM - 2:30PM

Make plans now to attend Spring Gathering at our church on Saturday, April 28. The program will feature both participants in the Churchwide Global Exchange to Indonesia - Erin Focke, Elder, from Cincinnati, Ohio, and Desiree Youngblood, pastor from Columbus, Ohio.

Also included will be communion, lunch (\$5 at the door), introduction of the 2018-19 *Horizons* Bible Study, and fellowship with other women.

You won't want to miss this special day!

FREE BRUNCH BY DONATION

Join us for a brunch by donation with **100% of the funds** going to our Youth Mission Trip to Puerto Rico. Please come out and support a group of high school students from Elk Rapids who will be spending a week in June helping with hurricane recovery efforts.

Sunday, April 29
10:00 - 11:00AM





First Presbyterian Church
of Elk Rapids

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FREE

Community Dinner

at First Presbyterian Church of Elk Rapids

Tuesday | 5:30-6:30PM Fellowship Hall

April 10



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Everyone is Welcome!