

ADVOCATE

First Presbyterian Church
41 West College Avenue
Westerville, Ohio 43081-2103
614-882-3155 Phone 614-882-2421 Fax
www.westervillefirstpresbyterian.org

December 2018

Worship in December

Sunday, Dec. 2 “What to Give this Christmas: The Gift of Encouragement” – Rev. Gauen preaching

Sunday, Dec. 9 “What to Give this Christmas: The Gift of Listening” – Rev. Gauen preaching

Sunday, Dec. 16 “What to Give this Christmas: The Gift of Forgiveness” – Rev. Gauen preaching



Friday, Dec. 21, 7:00 p.m. “Longest Night Service” – Rev. Mary Jane Hitt preaching

Sunday, Dec. 23 “What to Give This Christmas: The Gift of Our Story” – Rev. Gauen preaching

Monday, Dec. 24, 7:00 p.m. “Christmas Eve Candlelight/Communion Service” – Rev. Gauen preaching

Sunday, Dec. 30 - “Our Father’s House, Our Father’s World”--Rev. Kristin Schutte preaching

Longest Night Service Friday, December 21, 7:00-7:30 p.m.



For many, the holiday season is not filled with happiness and celebration, but rather it is a time of sorrow and grief. This is a time of year when the loss of a loved one can be particularly painful.

To help those who find December to be a difficult time of year, First Presbyterian Church will host a Longest Night Service. This service will focus on the message of hope, healing, and wholeness that Christ brings into the world.

Rev. Mary Jane Hitt and Rev. Mark Gauen will lead this service. You are also invited to come at 6 p.m. for the Grief Support Program (see below).

Grief Support Program

Friday, December 21, 6:00-7:00 p.m.

With the holidays upon us, this can be a difficult time for some who have experienced a loss or are grieving for other reasons. The Health Ministry Team invites you to join us on Friday, December 21, from 6:00-7:00pm for a light meal and a short talk by our member Psychologist Mary Bricker. Mary will give some ideas on how to deal with the anxiety of getting through the holidays, lead a short discussion, and respond to any questions. Our team will also have some resources available for grief support and grief programs in our area. Please RSVP by signing up in the binder near the secretary's desk.

Plan to attend the Longest Night Program immediately following the program for a wonderful and meaningful service.
--Health Ministry Team



Westerville Habitat Partnership 8th Annual Progressive Christmas Concert

Friday, December 14, 7pm-9:15pm

This walking event stops for a short concert in each of the three Uptown Westerville churches - Church of the Master, Church of the Messiah, and First Presbyterian Church. Choirs from Central College Presbyterian Church and Grace Lutheran Church will also participate. All proceeds go to the building projects of Habitat for Humanity.

Tickets are sold at each member church, at the door before the first concert, at the Westerville Visitors Bureau, or online at westervillehabitat.org. Cost of ticket - \$10/adult (kids are free). Tickets are printed with the starting location.

A shuttle will be provided if you need assistance getting to each location. If you'd like to take the shuttle, please be sure your starting location is Church of the Messiah.

Before the Concerts

Soup for Shelter - 5pm to 7pm

Before the concerts, grab a bite to eat at this event just down the street at the Otterbein Campus Center. It's hosted by the Columbus Academy and Otterbein University. Like the concerts, this event benefits the Westerville Habitat Partnership. Cost is \$15 and includes a bowl of soup, bread, cookie, beverage, and a handcrafted bowl made by Columbus Academy students.



Update on the 29 West College Building

As most of you know, the Church acquired the house next door, 29 West College, in 2009 – paying \$300,000 for the property. (The purchase was funded by an anonymous gift.) We used the basement for a few years as part of our youth programming, but we have never used the 1st or 2nd floors – except for storage. Over the past few years, we have wrestled with the decisions of how to use the house and what to do with the house.

In 2015, we developed plans to renovate the house for use as church offices and meeting space. In 2016, volunteers (members and some non-members) invested over 2,500 hours completing the interior demolition of the house. Over four months, we removed over 22 tons of debris (20+ construction dumpster loads) from the house. Sadly, when we put the planned renovations out to bid, the bids came back significantly higher than what we could afford. Instead, the Session decided to concentrate on the new church addition and renovations to the existing building.

Since then, the house has essentially been “in mothballs” – so to speak. The water and gas service to the building has been disconnected, and all of the electrical wiring has been removed. The only electrical service in the building is temporary construction lighting.

This summer, we were approached by an art studio that was interested in possibly buying the house and converting it into an art studio/gallery. We worked with them for several months as they developed their renovation plans. However, based on their estimated cost of renovations, they offered us only \$150,000 for the property, so we declined their offer.

Recently, we were approached by the Westerville Convention and Visitor’s Bureau about the possibility of leasing the 1st floor of the house. After determining the amount of work required (electrical, plumbing, and HVAC) just to make the building habitable again, the Church and the WCVB jointly decided the project was not financially viable.

So after years of uncertainty, two congregational meetings, and several months of intense deliberation, **the Session, at its November meeting, voted to KEEP THE PROPERTY and RAZE THE HOUSE and GARAGE.** Razing the buildings will give us an opportunity to create additional green space and/or parking. We have a lot of details to work out (first and foremost will be getting City approval of a demolition permit), but razing the buildings will eliminate the liability associated with the property and enable us to consider future possibilities.

Jim Hines



An Unexpected Blessing

The Session recently learned that Bob Haning, a long-time, faithful member of this congregation, named First Presbyterian Church as the beneficiary of his estate. Although details are not yet final, we expect this gift will be approximately \$400,000. Over the next few months, the Session will be soliciting ideas and thoughts about how to best use this generous gift.

Veterans Day Remembered

Our church paid special tribute to our veterans this past November 11, the centennial observance of Armistice Day, now known as Veterans Day. The worship service was moving, especially with the slide presentation setting the tone for the day. Several of our veterans had their photos taken, and a group photo was also taken of those who were able to stay after worship. We thank all of our veterans for offering their service and defending our country so that we all might be able to enjoy the freedoms we have, especially the freedom to worship as we choose.

If anyone would like a copy of the group photo (or any of the individual photos taken on Veterans Day), contact Bev Etling, and she will email that to you.

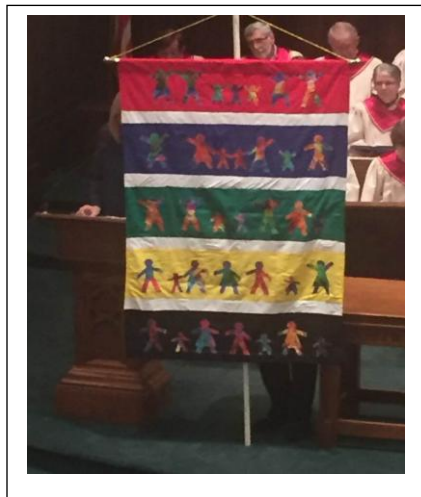
Church Members Present on Veterans Day – November 11, 2018

Row 1: Wayne Springer - Jim Epley - Jim Hines - Gary Harvey - Roger Pulley
Row 2: Mike Etling - Bill Deskins - John Robbins - Marty Moon - Norm Brown - John Cameron Paul Bouza - John McElhaney - David Wright (Missing: David Demuth, Gary Hinzman, & Dave Beeman)



The Festival of Banners and Creeds

In honor of Reformation Sunday, October 28 this year, the Worship Committee organized and presented an amazing Festival of Banners and Creeds. A literal parade of banners, shown altogether below, traced the history and symbolism of the Presbyterian Church over the centuries. Beckey Stamm and Karen Nussdorfer took turns explaining the creeds illustrated by each banner, beginning with the Nicene Creed in the Fourth Century and continuing to the Belhar Confession in 2016. Specially chosen hymns and other music, including an anthem by Kim and Todd Wise, reinforced the messages in the banners.



Most of the banners have belonged to our church for many years, but the newest one, on the left, was created for this service by Linda Backus and Ann McElhaney. Based on the Belhar Confession, which was written in South Africa, the banner speaks to the abolition of Apartheid and the unification of people by God. The banner shows rows of people in various sizes. In the bottom rows, they appear grouped in twos and threes, but by the top row, the people raise their joined hands in joyful unity.

Banner carriers included Lizzie Gauen, Kathy Gauen, Jake Nussdorfer, Bob Doherty, Drew Wright, Gabe Hauff, Mike Krotz, Kathy Krotz, Brad Gamble, and Deb Gamble.

With all of the banners displayed, Beckey concluded this memorable service with these words:

Look at this history: the church, reformed and ever forming! 2,000 years of faith, 2,000 years of reflecting, revisioning, looking back, looking ahead. We represent a brief moment in that history, but however brief our moment or small our role, we are a living bridge between the recorded past and the unknown future.

We have spent about an hour celebrating our church's rich history. The hymn we just sang represents the message of this entire service: "Come sing, O Church, in joy! Come join, O Church, in song! For Christ the Lord has led us through the ages long! Long years have come and gone, and still God reigns supreme, Empowering us to catch the vision, dream the dream!"

As we leave this sanctuary today, let us reflect on our history and the symbols that surround us. Let us live our faith, the faith in God that those represented here lived and sometimes died for. Let *us* be empowered to catch the vision; let *us* dream the dream.

Our Members at Work: Helping to Provide Low-cost Children's Dental Care



Member Bill Hitt is working with Ocean Dental on E Main Street in Whitehall. Dr. Chad Hoecker started the Medicaid-model office in 2009 after the U.S. Surgeon General reported that lower income children suffer more than twice the cavities of their peers. Today, Ocean Dental has 28 clinics in seven states.

If children are not eligible for Medicaid insurance, they are still given the Medicaid rate so they pay about half of the private fee. The Kidsmiles clinic is free and currently has no waiting list. The brightly colored fish and ocean beach theme is fun and relaxing, helping to provide a good experience for the whole family.

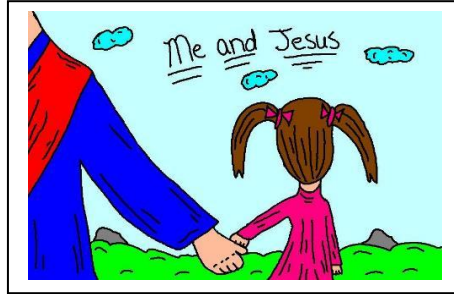
Introducing Deacon Marcy Eves

Hi! My name is Marcy Eves. I am starting a new term as Deacon, having previously served. I joined First Presbyterian in 2000. As a lifelong Presbyterian, I have experienced several churches, and I really appreciate this one for its warm and strong community.

My husband Bill and I were married fifty years ago in, of course, a Presbyterian church. We are parents of two adult children and grandparents of two adult grandsons. We have a new grandchild due in December, which is very exciting! Bill and I enjoy traveling and attending the symphony and opera. I love to read and to garden both inside and outside.

Since I am frequently away, I often contact my parishioners via e-mail and snail mail. Wishing all a wonderful holiday season!

Youth Groups



J.A.M: Jesus and Me During the Sunday Service

J.A.M is a great opportunity for the children of our church to learn more about God. Sometimes it is difficult to get to church activities during the week, but attending during our Sunday worship service is sometimes easier as it comes on the weekend.

Please join us for worship at 10:15 am. There are fun bags for the children to engage in until the Children's Focus. After this time in the service, the children will be taken up to our play room for a lesson. You may pick your child(ren) up after the service.

This year, we are learning stories from the beginning to the end of the Bible in their written order. The kids have already enjoyed the well-known stories of Adam and Eve and Noah. Please bring your child(ren) to share in this fun time together



Discovery Zone Wednesdays, starting at 4:45 pm

Discovery Zone is a wonderful place for the children of our church to learn about team-work and have some fun while we learn about God and all God's amazing works. This year we are learning about what it means to be part of a team, whether it's a sports team or a family team. We all have to work together.

We start our program at 5 pm by practicing for our spring musical. Then we slow down by practicing simple meditation exercises with Qigong at 5:30pm. Bible Study begins at 6pm and we serve a hearty, healthy meal at 6:30pm which parents and guests are welcome to attend. As we get into the colder months, please remember that we will not meet if Westerville schools are closed due to weather.

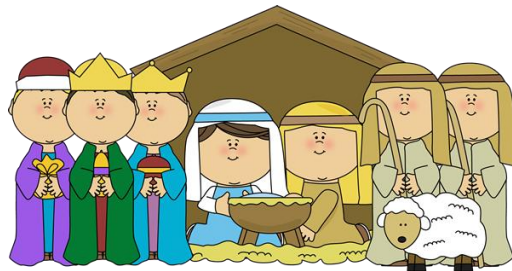
Please join us Nov. 28, Dec. 5 and Dec. 12 for three fun-filled Wednesdays!

Advent Workshop and Pageant Practice

Saturday, December 8, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

It's that time of year again. Time to get ready for our Christmas pageant. We will be having a special rehearsal and workshop for the kids to get ready for the Christmas pageant and the Christmas season on December 8. Please bring your kids for pageant practice at 10am. Scripts will be given out ahead of time so if you are planning to have your child(ren) in the pageant, please contact pastor Mark, Kim Wise, or Heather Hicks.

Immediately following the practice (11:30 am), we will have lunch and a fun workshop with games, crafts, and a visit from Santa. We will conclude the day's festivities at 2pm. Please feel free to come to the workshop around 1:30pm for pictures with Santa. We look forward to seeing you and the kids!



Christmas Potluck and Pageant

Sunday, December 9, 5 p.m.

You have NEVER seen the Christmas story put forth in this way before! This year, the kids requested that the Christmas pageant have a video game theme. Come see how we've worked this out and live the Christmas story in a manner never before seen ANYWHERE!

Please join us on Sunday, December 9, at 5 pm. We will start with a potluck meal downstairs in the fellowship hall, and we will commence the pageant in the sanctuary at 7pm.

Please come and support our children and youth as they bring us the Christmas story!

Youth & Confirmation for November

Sunday, December 2, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Sunday, December 16, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

The 2019 Confirmation class will meet twice in December: Dec. 2 and Dec. 16. The class meets from 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. in Pastor Mark's office. Confirmands should be sure to bring the Confirmation folder and a Bible to each class. We will have a make-up class on Sunday, Dec. 9, 11:30 am-12:30 pm in Pastor Mark's office.



The Youth Fellowship activities for December will be helping with the Christmas Pageant Rehearsal and Advent Workshop on Sat., Dec. 8, 10:00-2:00; and helping with the Pageant performance on Sun., Dec. 9, 5:00-7:00 p.m. Your help with the younger kids will be greatly appreciated.

Fabrics of Faith

Monday, January 21, 1-2:30 p.m.

As always, Fabrics of Faith has been moving along in our quiet way—but something's always happening behind the scenes. Our new item is a beautiful quilt made by Joan Hyde for our nursery. A scene from Noah's Ark, it will hang on a wall for the children (and adults) to love.

Also, if you want to participate in our group, we'll meet on January 21, 1:00-2:30, in Fellowship Hall. Among items on the agenda is the quilt class. (If you did that class, please bring your work.) Also, we'll laugh, show off what we've made since our last gathering, and chat.

If it's your first visit, we're eager to get to know you and hear of your projects—or if you have none, about you! Hope you'll join us!

Contact Beckey Stamm.

Ladies Night Out

Tuesday, December 18, 6:30 pm

In December, we're meeting at the Rusty Bucket, 400 Polaris Parkway! All women of the church—and their friends--are welcome. Please contact Diana Westfall to tell her you are coming. We do have fun!



Friday Dine-Out Group

Friday, December 7, 6:30 pm

The Dine-Out Group will be going to Lucky House at 6:30 on Friday, December 7. Lucky House is located at 56 E. Schrock Rd, Westerville (in front of Walmart). This is a week earlier than usual so you can attend the Habitat Progressive Concert on December 14. All members and friends are invited to attend Dine Out. We have a great time getting to know each other better while enjoying good food. Contact Jim Hines or Bob Place to say whether you are able to come.

Vegetarian Dining Group

Saturday, December 8, 6:00 p.m.

Looking for something different to eat? Tired of chicken? Come join our Vegetarian Dining Group. We have a couple of true vegetarians—but the rest of us just like to see what tasty treats people eat when they don't eat meat.

We have 12-16 people who come, not always at the same time. And because we've been meeting in the Fellowship Hall, we can grow by many more! YOU could be one!

Please note: we're not weird (or *too* weird); we don't expect people to forego meat for always. But we enjoy the delicious and nutritious meals that result from the variety of dishes we each bring to each dinner.

Our next dinner is Saturday, December 8, at 6:00, in the Fellowship Hall.

Please join us! For more information, contact Beckey Stamm. (Did I say that the people are great, too?)



A Note from Mary Bricker:

Sarah would love to hear from our members while she is away at college. Please ask Mary for her address.

Contributed by Janet Withers:

Our culture consistently drives us to a life focused on serving ourselves. Jesus calls us to serve others. You could call this "spoon thinking" vs. "ladle thinking." Spoons are for serving oneself, while ladles are used to serve others. May this be what differentiates this congregation. May we focus on serving others in our community and around the world. May we be a "ladle church."

(from Fairview Presbyterian Church)

Adult Growth and Development

ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN			
Activity	When	Where	What
Tuesday Morning Bible Study	Tuesdays, 9:30-11:00 a.m.	Knox Meeting Room	“The Advent of the Savior” will be our special study for the season of Advent. We will look at the key Bible passages of the season and unpack their deeper meaning.
4th Monday Discussion	4 th Mondays, 7:30 – 9:00 p.m.	Knox Meeting Room	We will not meet in December due to the holidays. Be sure to join us when we resume on the fourth Monday in January (1/28/19).
Sunday Seminar (formerly called the Library Class)	Sunday Mornings 9:00-10:00 a.m.	Knox Meeting Room	The Sunday Adult Class is beginning a new study: we are examining Bart Ehrman's book, <i>Misquoting Jesus</i> , an overview of textual criticism of the Bible.
Circle 4 Women	3 rd Thursdays, 11:00 a.m.	Knox Meeting Room	Our Presbyterian Women’s Group meets monthly for fellowship and Bible study. We will not meet in December, but join us for our next gathering on January 17, 2019.

MEMORIAL FLOWERS are a special way to remember loved ones, acknowledge special occasions, and provide chancel flowers for the worship service each Sunday. Please sign up for a specific Sunday in the Sign-up Book that is located in the Gathering Area. The cost of the flowers is \$33.00, which you can pay on the Sunday you donate the flowers.



Pastor's Page

*“For when two or three are gathered in my name,
I am there among them.”*

-Matthew 18:20

Dear Friends:

When I first arrived at Westerville First Presbyterian Church, I came with a lot of books—boxes and boxes of books. As I moved in, I filled up the bookcases in my office, but many books remained in their boxes because I didn't have the shelf space for them. With plenty of other things to worry about, I left the boxed-up books in a stack in my office. And there they remained for many weeks.

Then one day, Bob Haning came into my office and asked me about those boxes. I explained that those were books without bookshelf space. Bob quickly said, “I'll take care of that.” And he did. He took some measurements and disappeared. Weeks later, I came into my office to find several new bookshelves, custom made to fit into my unusually shaped office. I quickly thanked Bob for getting those bookshelves, and he responded, “A pastor has to be able to get to his books.”

That was the sort of man Bob was, helping out in any way he could, solving problems that needed to be solved. I often found him in some corner of the church fixing a broken light or unclogging a blocked drain. He generously gave of his time and his money to help out around the church, usually in ways that few people noticed.

We said “goodbye” to Bob last summer, but Bob did not say goodbye to us. As you will read elsewhere in this newsletter, Bob included the church in his will, and we have now received another of Bob's amazing gifts. His bequest is a precious treasure that is now our responsibility to be good stewards of that treasure.

We are already considering ways that the money can be used to further the ministry of this church and the Kingdom of God throughout the world. But before we get ahead of ourselves, I think we should take a moment and remember the man who generously gave this gift and the Spirit that inspired him to do so. Bob was full of ideas for the church, but he was very respectful of the Presbyterian process. If the Session decided to do something different than what he wanted, he always deferred to the wisdom of that group. He understood that the Spirit works best through the group process and that when a group of committed Christians work together to solve a problem, the result was usually better than any one individual idea.

Thank you, Bob Haning, for giving us one more problem (or is that one more opportunity?) to work together for the good of Christ's kingdom.

Yours in Christ,