

ADVOCATE

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January 2019

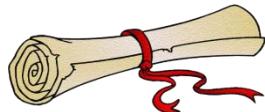
Youth Sunday Sunday, January 27

Each year, the youth of our church deliver the Good News of Jesus Christ in their own special way, and they will be doing it again on the last Sunday in January. Be sure to be there to hear this message and to support our young people in their walk of faith. Youth participating in the service will need to arrive at the church at 8:30 a.m. on that morning. Thanks to everyone who is involved in this presentation.

VISITORS? We have a gift for you!

Our M.E.E. Committee is trying something new to help welcome guests. You may have noticed some small ‘scrolls’ placed near the sanctuary at the front door and in the gathering space by the secretary’s desk. These are small ‘Welcome Gifts’ for visitors. They contain some current information about our church, a visitor information card, a copy of our *Advocate*, and a promotional pen as a small token by which visitors can remember us.

Even though our ushers may identify visitors, we would like to count on all of you to help identify them as well. If you see someone you don’t recognize, please pick up one of the small ‘scrolls’ and offer it to the visitors. Hopefully, even if the ushers miss welcoming newcomers, you will help that process with a handshake, a warm smile, and a ‘gift.’



Annual Meeting Sunday, February 24 11:15 a.m. – Following the Worship Service

The Annual Meeting is the time when our congregation gathers to review the year past and to look forward to the year to come. This year, we will also have an update on the status of the 29 West property. In addition, we will receive the 2019 operating budget and vote on the terms of call for our pastor.

Members are asked to come to this meeting; visitors and guests are welcome to attend as well.

Copies of the 2018 Annual Report will be available at the church beginning on Sunday, Feb. 10.

Presbyterian Educational Event Saturday, Jan. 12, 9:30 am-3:00 pm



The Presbytery of Scioto Valley will hold its annual “Partners in Education” (PIE) event on Saturday, Jan. 12, from 9:30 to 3:00 p.m. at the Hilliard Presbyterian Church. This event includes several workshops for elders, deacons, clerks, and other church leaders and members. Many of our members have gone in the past and have found the event to be both educational and interesting. The cost for this event is only \$10.00, and that includes lunch. For more information, you may visit the presbytery website: www.psvonline.org or talk to Rev. Gauen.

Mailbox System to be Changed



As of February 1, the wooden box of mail slots in the Knox Meeting Room will be removed and replaced with a file folder mail system. Each person and organization needing a mail reception place at the church will have a hanging folder in the file cabinet. The current wooden box of mail slots now sits on this file cabinet. Recipients can get their mail by opening the top drawer of the file cabinet, finding their folder, and removing their mail. Those wishing to deliver mail or other items can do the same thing: open the top drawer of the file cabinet, find the appropriate folder or folders, and deposit any mail items there.

The reasons for this change are two-fold: First, more mail recipients can be accommodated with the folder system than with the mail slots. Second, the file cabinet will allow for a “cleaner” look for our Knox Meeting Room.

The 2018 Christmas Pageant

December 9

A special thank you to all who helped to make this year's Christmas pageant a huge success. The kids all did a wonderful job telling the story of Christmas through a video game lens. Thank you also to everyone who turned out in support of our young friends this holiday season. The love you have for the youth of our church is evident when you show up and congratulate them on a performance well done.

A very big thank you to all the adult and youth helpers during the Advent workshop and the performance. The pageant would not have gone as well without you. Have a merry and blessed Christmas one and all.

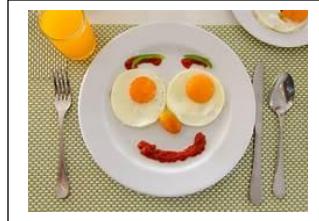
Heather Hicks



Men's Breakfast

February 16, 9:30 am

Men, mark your calendars! The next Men's Breakfast will be on Saturday, February 16, beginning at 9:30. Our program will present Church Google, a directory of goods and services offered by our congregation. A sign-up sheet will be in the book in the Gathering Place.



Recap of the Westerville Habitat Partnership 8th Annual Progressive Christmas Concert and Empty Bowl Dinner

Friday, December 14

The combined event was a great success again this year! On this walking tour, about 600 people from the community enjoyed short concerts at 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 also participated. In addition, a resident of a Habitat house explained what her new home meant to her family. In all, about \$12,000, the most ever raised by these two events, will go to Habitat building projects. Many, many thanks to Sue Ann Norton for being the organizer-in-chief!



People enjoying the Empty Bowl Dinner were invited to

choose a bowl made by students at the Columbus Academy.

Health Ministry Message

On December 21, prior to the Longest Night Service, the Health Ministry hosted a light meal with church member and psychologist Mary Bricker, who discussed "Grief and How to Deal with Loss During the Holidays." With many people reporting increased depression during winter, we encourage all to protect their physical and mental health through healthy habits such as:

- A. Exercise regularly. (e.g. 20 - 30 minute walk daily.)
- B. Choose healthy foods for the brain! (turkey, salmon, nuts and seeds)
- C. Seek natural light. (When the weather permits, dress warmly and walk outdoors.)
- D. Avoid "isolation" during winter. (Call friends, join a Bible study, meet with the dine-out group, join the choir, volunteer to help prepare food for Manna Cafe.)
- E. Get healthy sleep. (Avoid "blue light" such as TV, computer, or cell phone screens two hours before bedtime.)
- F. Avoid alcohol. (Alcohol may increase depression and decrease "healthy" sleep!)



For more information, check out the resources and literature in the rack in the "gathering room."

Wishing each of you a Healthy, Happy New Year from the Health Ministry Team!

Introducing Deacon Penny Epley

My family began attending First Presbyterian Church in the mid 1990's and joined a few years later. This is my first time serving as a deacon. Jim and I celebrated our 50th anniversary on December 27, 2018. Our two daughters and sons-in-law live in Columbus, and our 7-year-old granddaughter, Madelyn, is the center of our family. Three years ago, I retired from Nationwide Children's Hospital after 38 years as the operating room surgery scheduler. I enjoy reading mysteries and working crossword puzzles. My favorite vacations are sitting at the ocean reading a good book.

Annual Reports Due Sunday, Jan. 13

A reminder to all committee chairs, group leaders, and organization coordinators: Articles for the Annual Report are due on Sunday, January 13, 2019. They may be sent to pastormark@fpcw.us or put in Rev. Gauen's mailbox. This year, we are encouraging fellowship and service groups to put an article in the Annual Report describing your ministry over the past year. If you would like to include your group in the Annual Report, just submit an article to the church office by the Jan. 13 deadline.



CROP Walk Financial Report

The CROP walk was held on Sunday, September 30. Our church had 10 walkers out of the 85 people who participated. First Presbyterian raised \$3235 for the CROP walk, while the total Westerville Walk raised \$6894. This means that our church gave \$809 to Westerville Area Resource Ministry (WARM) through CROP and \$2426 to Church World Service for worldwide food and farming assistance (seed, wells, farming education, land). The total for all churches in the walk was \$1723.50 for WARM and \$5170.50 for CWS.

Our congregation again helped a lot of marginalized people in the world and again won the "Golden Sneaker" award for being the church that generated the most money. Many thanks to the walkers and their supporters!

Plan to walk and donate again next fall if you can.

Bob Place

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. It can be 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 enjoy. 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 Wednesday evenings for a fun-filled time. We can't wait to see you there!

Youth Fellowship and Confirmation

Youth Fellowship in January

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| Sunday, January 13 | 11:30-1:30 | Youth Lunch and Winter Games |
| Sunday, January 27 | 9:30 a.m. | Youth Sunday—youth will go out for lunch after the service. |

Confirmation in January

| | | |
|--------------------|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sunday, January 6 | 11:30-12:30 | Regular Class |
| Sunday, January 20 | 11:30-12:30 | Regular Class |
| Sunday, January 27 | 9:30 a.m. | — The confirmation class will participate in Youth Sunday. |

Fabrics of Faith

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

Happy New Year, Everyone! “New year, new project!” That’s a good motto for Fabrics of Faith. Also, New Year, new people! We’ve had some additions to the congregation, and Fabrics of Faith invites anyone with even a hint of curiosity about us to come on **Monday, January 21, 1:00 – 2:30**. Bring a project if you have one; come see what others are doing—if you have a project or not.

Come ready for laughter, conversation, hearing what we’ve done and planning what we might do for the church, and cookies. Contact Beckey Stamm for information.

Ladies Night Out



Tuesday, January 15, 6:30 pm

In January, we’re meeting at the Wine Bistro, near the intersection of State Street and Polaris Parkway, by Meijers. All women of the church—and their friends--are welcome. Please contact Diana Westfall to tell her you are coming. We do have fun!

Here we are in December at the Rusty Bucket, all 21 of us. Good times! Plan to join us in January!



Saturday Dine-Out Group

SATURDAY, January 12, 6:30 pm

On Saturday, January 12, the Dine-Out group will meet at **Time and Change** Restaurant (1186 County Line Road, 614-895-1329) in north Westerville at Sunbury Road. All members and friends of the church are invited to come, so invite friends to join you. We have a great time getting to know each other better while enjoying good food. Contact Jim Hines with questions or to say you will be able to come. In case of bad weather on 1/12, contact Jim Hines.

Vegetarian Dining Group

Saturday, February 2, 6:00 p.m.

Looking for new food ideas? Tired of pizza? 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.

Twelve to sixteen people participate, and it's always a good time. Since we meet in 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 bring to each dinner.

Our next dinner is Saturday, February 2, at 6:00, in Fellowship Hall.

Please join us! For more information, contact Beckey Stamm. You'll be in for a treat. (Did I say that the people are great, too?)



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 | "Just What does the Lord Require? A Study of the Book of Micah" This winter we will take a look at this fabulous Old Testament Book, beginning January 8. |
| 4th Monday Discussion | 4 th Mondays, 7:30 – 9:00 p.m. | Knox Meeting Room | We will take a look at the cultural divide in our country through the book, <i>Strangers in Their Own Land</i> by Allie Hochschild. |
| 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. Join us for our next gathering on January 17, 2019. |



Pastor's Page

Dear Friends:

I have a story to share. It's called, "The Parable of the Fireplace."

The two men, Ben and Charles, sat in front of the fireplace on a cold, blustery January Saturday. No words were spoken after the initial greetings and Ben's offer of coffee. They sat in Ben's family room, neither man saying a word. They didn't have to.

They had been friends ever since they met as young fathers in their church, years and years ago. They were still fathers, but no longer young. They had become friends while coaching their kids in sports and by joining the men's group at their church. They had gone on retreats together, and their families had gone on vacations together. They had volunteered together at the homeless shelter. Each Sunday morning was their time to reconnect with God and each other. They had shared their hopes and dreams and their faith in God. But this day all they shared was silence.

They both knew why Charles was there visiting Ben. Charles was worried about him. Ben had quit coming to the men's group. He had quit helping at the homeless shelter. He had stopped coming to worship on Sunday mornings. That is why Charles had come to visit his friend. This wasn't a social call; this was a salvation call.

Ben knew that his absences had been noticed. But he had been busy, too busy to make it to the Men's Breakfast. Too busy to volunteer at the shelter. And on Sundays, he was too exhausted to make it to church. Charles had called him to remind him of the meetings. Charles had called him to tell him he missed him at church. But Ben just laughed it off. He didn't see what the fuss was all about. Now Charles had come to visit, so Ben waited to hear what Charles would say.

Only Charles didn't say anything. He just sat there and stared at the fire. Slowly watching it burn down. And Ben watched with him. Neither man looking at each other. Neither man speaking. And yet both men knowing.

They had been sitting there for about twenty minutes, sipping their coffee and staring at the fire, when Charles stood up and went to the fireplace. He carefully opened the screen, took the tongs from the rack beside the fireplace, and thrust them into the flames, pulling out a glowing ember. He faced Ben and held the ember between them, still not saying a word. They watched as the bright red ember slowly turned from red to orange to black, from hot to warm to cold. When there was no flame, no glow, no heat left in that ember, Charles took it with his hand and held it up so Ben could see. And then, using the tongs, he carefully placed it at the edge of the other embers in the fireplace. It quickly burst back into flames and was soon glowing bright red again.

Then Charles got up, put on his coat, and said, "I'll see you in church tomorrow."

And Ben was there.

Yours in Christ,

Mark