

ADVOCATE

February 2020

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

Reaching out to Refugees Next Meeting: Sunday, February 2

On January 19, 25-30 of us met with Tyler Reeve from the Community Refugees and Immigration Services (CRIS) to learn how our church might help a refugee family resettle in Columbus or Westerville. Whether or not you were able to attend this meeting, you are welcome to come to an organizational meeting on **Sunday, February 2**, after the service. We will explore specific roles our church might take and perhaps identify questions we still need answered.



At the February 2 meeting, we will choose a date when many of us will go to the CRIS offices at 1925 E. Dublin-Granville Road, Suite 102, to attend a two-hour training session. This is the first step in being assigned to a refugee family at some point in the future. With so many challenges facing refugee families, our church, with the guidance of CRIS professionals, can help these families settle in, secure basic needs, connect to support services in the community, and learn many of the skills they will need for their new life in the United States. Don't forget: Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus were also a refugee family!

The Ash Wednesday Worship Wednesday, February 26 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary

Lent is the six-week period before Easter and traditionally has been a time of spiritual renewal and dedication within the life of the church. Lent begins on February 26, on what is known as Ash Wednesday. In ancient times, Christians would begin the season of Lent by having ashes placed on them as a sign of their repentance from sin and as a sign of their forgiveness by God. Many churches, including ours, continue this tradition, which helps Christians focus on their relationship with Christ during the season of Lent. You are invited to participate in the First Presbyterian Ash Wednesday Service at 7:00 p.m. on February 26. You will find it to be a meaningful way to begin the season of Lent.

Annual Meeting

Sunday, February 23

11:15 a.m. – Following the Worship Service

The Annual Meeting is the time our congregation gathers to review the year past and to look forward to the year to come. We will also receive the 2020 operating budget and vote on the terms of call for our pastor. Members are asked to come to this meeting, and visitors and guests are welcome to attend as well.

**Copies of the 2019 Annual Report
will be available at the church beginning on Sunday, Feb. 9.**



Sunday, February 23

Join us following the Annual Meeting for the Youth Spaghetti Dinner. Our menu will consist of spaghetti with red sauce, homemade meatballs, salad, bread, and Tiramisu.

Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$4 for kids age 12 and under. *Tickets can be purchased on Sundays and the morning of the event by contacting any C.E. committee member or Youth Leader.* Please get your tickets early so we can plan for food. If you can't stay for dinner, take-outs will be available. Just go to Fellowship Hall following church to pick up your take-out.

Thank you for your support of our Christian Education activities. Proceeds from this event will help send our youth to summer camps.

Secret Prayer Partners!

The Worship Committee is trying something new for Lent this year--Secret Prayer Partners. If you want to participate, the committee will give you a slip of paper where you will write your name and list any special prayer requests. You will then deposit the paper in a basket in the Gathering Place. On the first Sunday in Lent (February 23), you will pick a name out of the basket and have someone special to pray for until Easter. The person you pick may have a special request or just need you to ask that God watch over him or her. Our "snow birds" can also become Secret Prayer Partners by emailing Diana Westfall. She will add your name to the basket and later pick a name for you and send it to you. We hope this will provide a wonderful opportunity for all of us to spend some time praying for a member of our congregation.

Congratulations Are in Order! **Sunday, February 9 after the service**

Please join the Worship Committee on February 9 for a reception to honor Rev. Gauen on his election as Moderator of the Presbytery. Rev Gauen began his term on January 1, 2020, and will serve for one year. During 2019, he served as Vice-Moderator of the Presbytery. Please take this opportunity after worship to enjoy refreshments and congratulate Rev. Gauen on this honor.



Walk to Jerusalem by Easter

Last week, we kicked off this year's Walk to Jerusalem. So far, more than 40 people have signed up to track their walking and other activities in order to accumulate enough miles to get us to Jerusalem by Easter. It's not too late to sign up. Each week, we will send you a devotion for the week as well as a geography lesson for stops we make each weekend: Philadelphia, then Boston, then across the Atlantic Ocean, and so on.

Keep track of the distance or time you walk, run, swim, or exercise from January 12 until Easter. Weekly mileage can be logged on the chart that will be posted on Sundays, or you can email this information to Linda Backus. We will add all our miles together as we make the imaginary journey to Jerusalem. Each week, we will track how far we have gone and get information about the places through which we pass. Let's get moving and have fun.

Beloved Community Network Upcoming Event: February 27

"Having 'THE' Conversation," presented by MLK Legacy Project. February 27, 7:00-8:30 p.m. The location to be determined. For additional information, contact Mary Lee Jones.

Lenten Calendar from Habitat for Humanity



An important element of the Lenten season is becoming aware of not only the suffering of Christ but also the suffering of others. Westerville Habitat Partnership (WHP) has a wonderful Lenten idea for you: a special calendar that will be available in the Gathering Place to pick up before Lent. On each of the 40 days of Lent, the calendar will offer a “giving” opportunity. This calendar will remind us of how truly rich and blessed we are. After Lent, please give your calendar in its envelope to Bernie Simpkins or Diana Westfall on Easter Sunday or the Sunday after. Please make checks payable to WHP.

Blanket Sunday January 12

On January 12, the Fabrics of Faith Committee displayed just a few of the hundreds of blankets it has created for our members and others. These blankets are given to those who are ill, recovering from an injury, grieving, or experiencing other kinds of stress in their lives. Special blankets are also presented to families with new babies, students graduating from high school, and those in the military. A beautiful poem accompanies each blanket, reminding the recipient that the blanket helps wrap them in God’s love. On January 12, Rev. Gauen blessed the blankets below, along with those already presented and those yet to be created as part of this meaningful ministry.



The Kindness Project

Mary Bricker

This time of year is hard for many people. We have had lots to look forward to in the fall and early winter: Buckeye football, Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and the New Year. This year, we were blessed with milder-than-usual weather, so we scurried about in that mild weather completing our tasks and attending celebrations. And now the period of “endless winter” is here. We have no great holidays to anticipate, no trips or visits from friends, no parties or presents, and not much sunshine. It is easy to get discouraged.



It may seem hard to muster kindness right now. Other people seem to be in our way; we are irritable and impatient. The paradox is that the cure is to reach deep under our down jackets and sweaters and into our hearts and give something to someone else. The gift can be small; a smile to a stranger is a wonderful gift. As you give, you will find that you have more energy to give. Giving helps us to understand that we have something that others need or enjoy. We feel better about

ourselves. When our smile to a stranger encourages a smile in return, WOW, we can see those results. Rabbi Harold Kushner has said, “Do things for people not because of who they are or what they do in return, but because of who you are.”

Let me share some of the stories of kindness done or witnessed by our congregation. One person reported that they helped organize the cart return at the grocery when the weather was bad, to help others collect the carts. Another observed a woman at the library who brought a Starbucks drink to the “first librarian I saw.”

The witness had been talking to the librarian, who had disclosed that she was having a difficult morning. Another story shared was about friends visiting a patient in the hospital who was dying of cancer. The patient was proudly wearing a shirt celebrating the military. When the visitors asked about it, the patient

told them that another friend had worn the shirt in to visit him, and when the patient had admired it, the visitor had literally given him the shirt off his back.

A handwritten quote in cursive script: "kindness is a language that the deaf can hear and the blind can see". Below the quote is the signature "- Mark Twain". The text is enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

There is a fun story from our congregation. The dine-out group had gone to dinner before the holidays, a large group filling several tables. The group enjoyed eating and talking, and after the meal, they were waiting for their bills. Bills in these groups are usually done individually, so they take a little time. People noticed that the waiter was initially preoccupied but did not seem to be



running the bills. When they called him over to ask, he told them that a “Santa” had paid the whole bill. What a lovely surprise! The group decided that they would not try to figure out who it was but would preserve his or her anonymity and enjoy the gift!

Now, we can’t all afford to do that large of an act of kindness. But we can afford a smile, a compliment, an encouraging word. So this winter, dig deep. Pull out that goodness in your soul and share it with the world. And please, LET ME KNOW ABOUT IT! I haven’t had many new reports and really want to share these, so please write them on a slip and put them in the pocket on the bulletin board.

DID YOU KNOW?
AN ACT OF KINDNESS CAN:

- ✓ DECREASE STRESS
- ✓ BOOST HAPPINESS
- ✓ LOWER BLOOD PRESSURE
- ✓ RELEASE FEEL-GOOD CHEMICALS (serotonin & oxytocin)
- ✓ INSPIRE MORE KINDNESS!

randomactsofkindness.org

The infographic features a white dove with its wings spread, perched on the bottom right corner of a dark grey rectangular box with a white border. The box contains a list of five benefits of kindness, each preceded by a white checkmark. The text is in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The entire graphic is set against a solid orange background.

Youth Activities



Discovery Zone Wednesdays at 5:00 pm

Come join us for Discovery Zone as we engage in Bible Study, fun, and a meal. The program is for children ages preschool through 5th grade. Adults are welcome to join us for dinner at 6:30pm. This year, our program will feature the “Growing in Grace and Gratitude” lesson plan from the Presbyterian curriculum. We hope to see you and your kids as we learn about God and enjoy time in God’s presence.



Jesus and Me (J.A.M) Sundays during the service

Our Sunday School program for children ages kindergarten through 5th grade has begun. On the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Sundays of each month, we meet during worship time after the children’s message. Please bring your child with you into the service, and we will move upstairs following the children’s message. This year, we are engaging in the *Deep Blue* Curriculum in which we will learn how to be good neighbors and community members according to God’s word. We also invite you to bring your children on the 1st (and 5th) Sundays of the month so that they can experience a full worship service. We have bags for the children to stay engaged with what is going on in the service, and we encourage you to quietly explain the parts of the service and the importance of worship in our lives (this is a part of them learning also). We look forward to seeing you and your children this year!



Sunday School for Adults and Youth

9:15 am

Sunday school for adults and youth is also available starting at 9:15 on Sunday mornings. We have Adult Sunday School in our library (2nd floor by the elevator) and a class for adults with special needs in the Heart Room (childcare is provided in our nursery). Our middle and high school youth are invited to meet in their recently renovated classroom for Sunday School at this time also. Please join us and learn more about what it means to live as Christ calls us.



Kids, Youth, and Family Sign-up Sheet

Dear families, as a church we recognize that although our children will grow into the church of tomorrow, they are also part of the church today. We want to make sure they feel that way by participating in several options for community participation and service.

For our young families, we are asking that two children sign up to greet other children each week during worship. We will need a child (and parent) at each entrance to our sanctuary to pass out the activity bags and welcome children and their families into our worship space.

Older children (3rd through 5th grades) will be called upon to be acolytes (lighting our worship candles) for the opening of worship.

Our middle and high school youth can sign up to lead the children's focus or read for our service opening once a month.

Our youth have so much to offer our church, and we want them to know that they are just as much a part of our community as our liturgists, elders, and ushers. Please see the sign-up book in the Gathering Place (main lobby of the church) to reserve your child's spot (Look under the acolytes tab). Thank you so much for being a part of our church family.



Family Fun

Sunday, February 9 -6pm-7:30pm Valentine's Party for ages preschool through 5th grade. Come join us as we make Valentine cards to send to our shut-ins, and as we celebrate the holiday with games, crafts, and more. Parents are welcome to stay or drop their kids off. We are also inviting our middle and high school students to serve as helpers.

Sunday, March 1 – 4pm-8pm Dinner and a movie for all ages! We will be dividing the group for a movie. Adults will watch a film on Mr. Rogers, and the kids will watch the live action “Aladdin.” After the films and a brief discussion time, we will all meet again for dinner. Please come and join us for fun and fellowship.

Sunday, April 12 -Easter morning Egg hunt and family picture. We will host an egg hunt for children birth-5th grade after the Easter service on Sunday morning, about 11:30am. Please bring your children for this fun time. We will also have a booth set up for taking family pictures.

Sunday, May 17 -Graduation and teacher recognition during the service. We have much to celebrate this year. Please join us Sunday morning for worship at 10:15am as we recognize our graduates and our teachers. We will also have a celebration downstairs following the worship service to continue the festivities.



Summer Camp Application Deadline: May 1

Yes, it is that time of year again. Summer camp is right around the corner, and the deadline is May 1, so if your child would like to go, please make sure you get the necessary information in on time. We have camps for young people in 2nd through 12th grades. Scholarships are available. For more information, please see Rev. Heather Hicks, director of youth and family ministries.

A letter of thanks to the congregation—

Dear friends,

Many of you know that my nephew, jet pilot Maj. Jonathan Brown, has been in Iraq since last summer, working with the Iraq Air Force. No matter your politics, we all are glad that there were no casualties among our military personnel after the bombing of at least a couple of Air Force Bases in Iraq recently. One of the bases was where my nephew had been stationed. He had to cut all communications that weekend after New Year's since they knew something was coming their way. He and comrades were 'sleeping' in bunkers, waiting to leave. A plane landed for 35 minutes, engines running, and took a plane-load of military personnel and their gear out of there, very close to the time of the bombings. Because of early warnings, they all escaped unharmed. His wife and family knew nothing about him during this time, not until days later. He and his comrades were taken to Kuwait, and, thankfully, Jon will be coming back home to his family at their Florida base very soon.

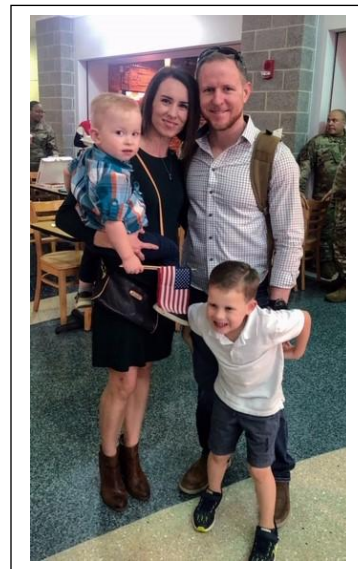
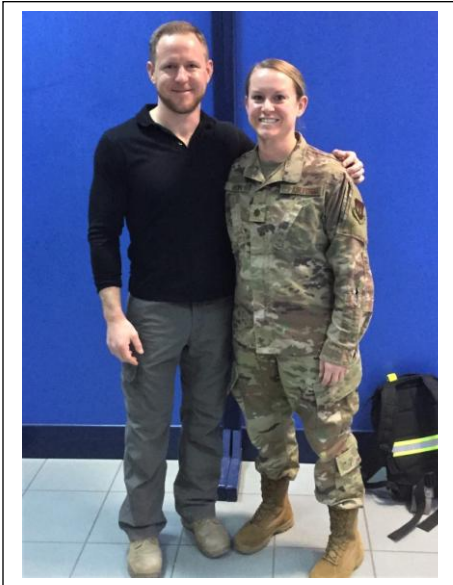
I want to thank all of you who pray for our military personnel, especially those serving in less friendly areas of the world. They are in danger every day. Prayers are felt, and prayers are answered. Please continue to offer prayers of safety for all who serve.

In Christ,
Bev Etling

PS: On his way home, Jon had to pass through Turkey and was at his sister's AFB. Attached is a picture of the two of them together today! With a little luck, he should be home by this weekend! PRAISE GOD! --Bev

Major Jonathan Brown and Captain Jennifer Brown, both USAF, nephew and niece of Bev Etling

Below, Jon and his family, happy to be together, at least for a while





Monthly Dine-Out Group

Saturday, February 8, 6:30 pm

The Monthly Dine-Out Group is for ALL church members and friends. On **SATURDAY**, February 8, we will be going to **Time & Change** at 6:30 pm at 1186 County Line Road (old Big Bear Shopping Center; 614-895-1329). This restaurant has sandwiches, subs, and salads, modestly priced. Take County Line Rd. almost to Hoover Reservoir and turn into the small shopping center just before Sunbury Road, or take Sunbury Road north and go left on County Line. Contact Jim Hines for questions or to say whether you can attend.

Ladies' Night Out

Tuesday, February 18, 6:30 pm

The February Ladies Night Out will be at Chuy's Tex-Mex restaurant, 1481 Polaris Parkway, on the south side of Polaris, near O'Charley's (614-826-7676). Chuy's is new to Westerville, but part of a nationwide chain. All women of the church and their friends are welcome. Please contact Diana Westfall to tell her you are coming. Ladies of all ages, don't miss a good time!

Vegetarian Dining Group

Saturday, March 14, 6:00 pm



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 share and eat tasty treats that don't happen to include meat.

We usually have 12-16 people for these potluck dinners, but not always the same people. Because we meet in Fellowship Hall, we can grow by many more! YOU could be one!

Our next dinner is Saturday, March 14, at 6:00, in Fellowship Hall. Please join us! For more information, contact Beckey Stamm. You'll be in for a treat.

Quotes collected by Olivia Hodorowski:

From Facebook:

If you see me talking to myself, just move along.
I'm self-employed and we're having a staff meeting.

From Ram Dass

When you know how to listen, everybody is the guru.

The quieter you become, the more you hear.

Dying is absolutely safe.

We're all just walking each other home.

From Paula Poundstone

Adults are always asking little kids what they want to be when they grow up
'cause they're looking for ideas.

From Sam Levenson:

You must learn from the mistakes of others. You can't possibly live long enough to make all of them yourself.

Lead us not into temptation. Just tell us where it is; we'll find it.

Reflections on Winter



As I look out the window from where I sit, I see deep snow covering the ground. Everything is white and beautiful, and the whole of nature seems to be in deep peace. But I know what the garden looked like a few weeks ago, and I know that the white flakes have covered fallen brown leaves, withered grass and plants. It's all there, but it won't be seen now as long as winter lasts.

The winter may seem unpleasant to many, but frost and snow in our country are an indispensable part of life. Without winter, spring and summer wouldn't be what they are.

There are seasons in our lives, too. And we often have difficulties in understanding why they are there. Why do we have to pass through winters with barren branches and frozen ground, times without flowers and fruit, without singing and joy? Why?

It's good to learn from the way nature works, because He who created us also created nature, and through His works, we can better understand Him and His ways.

Winter may seem a time of death, but in reality, it's a time of rest. When harvest is over, trees aren't ready to bear new fruit immediately. They need a rest, and winter gives them time to do that. Many of us get so easily caught up in a treadmill of producing all the time. "God can't be satisfied with me if I don't produce anything for Him, can he?" is the way we think. But in His grace, God allows a winter season in our lives, to give us rest. He doesn't expect us to bear fruit when it's winter, and we would do well if we could learn not to expect fruit when we should be having a rest.

At the same time, winter is preparation for new flowers and new fruit. Under the snow, in the unseen depths, something is going on. It's only on the surface that it looks like death. Under the surface, life is active and stirring! Roots are filling up with nourishment, and buds are bracing themselves for spring. In late winter, it takes only a sunny day, and you see how the buds begin to break forth! They were ready for it.

When you inwardly go through a time of winter, you may well withdraw from many expressions of life, but that doesn't mean your spirit is dying. It only means that for a time you are resting and preparing for a new season, a season of flowers and growth. God takes you aside to prepare you for what is to come, and without that thorough preparation, you won't be ready for a new season!

So, if you're in a winter season in your life right now, it's not the end! After winter comes spring. It's all part of God's plans for His children. Be prepared: one day you'll suddenly become aware of an irresistible pull on your spirit that tells you winter is past, and the time for singing is upon you again. (Song of Songs 2:11-12)

Coran Anderson, West Berlin Presbyterian Church (PCUSA)

Readers: please do share other poems or short articles that will help inform or uplift us! Send them to linda barr.

ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN			
Activity	When	Where	What
Tuesday Morning Bible Study	Tuesdays, 9:30-11:00 a.m.	Knox Meeting Room	<u>The Book of Matthew</u> . Join us as we explore the first book of the New Testament, where we find the Beatitudes and the Great Commission. Led by Rev. Gauen.
4th Monday Discussion Group	4 th Mondays, 7:30 – 9:00 p.m.	Knox Meeting Room	We are looking at the formation of the Bible through the book <i>Inspired</i> , by Rachel Held Evans. Our next class will be held on Monday, February 24.
Sunday Seminar (formerly called the Library Class)	Sunday Mornings 9:15-10:00 a.m.	Library	The Sunday Adult Class is studying the book <i>The Universal Christ</i> , by Richard Rohr.
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. Please join us on Thursday, February 20. Led by Elaine Foley.

Adult Growth and Development



Pastor's Page

"Whenever two or more are gathered in my name, I am there among them."

– Matthew 18:20

This quote of Jesus reminds us that we find Christ when we gather together. Does the same quote apply to churches? When two or three churches gather together, is Jesus there among them as well? Presbyterians think so. It is part of our foundational principles that we are a connected church. No Presbyterian church is an island to itself, but rather is connected to each and every other Presbyterian church through the work of Christ.

We reflect this understanding of connectedness by forming ourselves into regional gatherings of churches called Presbyteries. Our church is a member of the Presbytery of Scioto Valley, which covers the center of the state all the way down to the Ohio River. Mt. Vernon marks our northern boundary, and Portsmouth is at our southern tip. We go as far west as London, Ohio, and as far east as Athens. We join with 97 other churches to do the work of Christ together. Our Presbytery organizes our joint mission efforts, provides educational opportunities for church members, ordains and installs pastors, handles disputes within churches and between churches, provides guidance to churches in financial and property matters, and works to build up the body of Christ in our part of the world. Commissioners from each church, consisting of the pastors and at least one elder, meet four times a year to conduct the legislative work of the Presbytery, setting priorities, approving budgets, determining policies and procedures, and the like. In addition, committees of elders and pastors do the hard day-to-day, month-to-month work of the Presbytery. Currently, elders Jim Hines and Rob Rankin serve on Presbytery committees.

This month I will serve for the first time as Moderator of this meeting on February 18 at the Second Presbyterian Church of Newark. My job will be to lead that meeting in a fair and efficient manner. I will also moderate meetings in May, September, and November of this year before my term as moderator is over. I will also attend the national gathering of Presbyterians, the General Assembly, which will be held in June in Baltimore, Maryland. I will only be a delegate there, but I will be part of the connection that makes the Presbyterian Church so special.

I want to thank all of you for your prayers on my behalf as I perform these and other duties as moderator this year. I know I will perform these well because I know I have your support behind me. And I know that when we are gathered together—for a worship service, or a committee meeting, or a fellowship event, or a Presbytery meeting—Christ is there with us as well.

Yours in Christ, Mark

Presbytery duties for February:

February 18 – Moderating the regular meeting of the Presbytery

February 19 – Attending a meeting of the Care Task team to examine a candidate for ministry