

ADVOCATE

October 2020

First Presbyterian Church
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Church Reopening Guidelines

The Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Westerville is continuing to shepherd this church through the trials caused by this pandemic. It is a challenging task, with many factors to consider. The Session has made its decisions prayerfully and deliberately, seeking always to be faithful to God in the process. The elders have sought to find new and creative ways to do worship, education, fellowship, and mission in a world where a potentially deadly disease can easily spread. The Session is continually seeking guidance from the congregation; from the experts in the field; from national, state, and local authorities; and from our denomination. Below is the latest guidance from the Presbytery:

From the Presbytery of Scioto Valley

September 10, 2020

Dear Friends,

"I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD!" Psalm 122:1 NRSV

We continue to keep you all in our thoughts and prayers as we journey through this pandemic time. As we continue to hear from you requesting guidance about returning to in-person worship, here is our best guidance for you at this time.

Utilize the Public Emergency Color Coded System instituted by the State of Ohio to make decisions about indoor in-person worship.

If your county is under Public Emergency Level 3 (red), the church building should remain closed for all activities, including no in person Sunday services.

If your county is under Public Emergency Level 2 (orange), the church building should remain closed to indoor Sunday services. Essential service will continue. Outside use requests should be approved or denied at the discretion of the Session based on each request's ability to adhere to public health mandates and to mitigate any potential danger to the community. As always, Session reserves the right to withdraw usage permission if local conditions warrant. Additionally, individuals should consider avoiding contact with anyone who is considered high-risk. High-risk individuals should take extra care to follow precautions, and decrease in-person interactions outside their household.

If your county is under Public Emergency Level 1 (yellow), the church building may be reopened for in person Sunday services. Outside use requests should be approved or denied at the discretion of the Session based on each request's ability to adhere to public health mandates and to mitigate any potential danger to the community. For those who have resumed in person worship within their church building, we urge you to use every precaution and to following safety protocols diligently so that no members will become infected with COVID-19.

As your congregation resumes indoor worship, we urge you to use every precaution and to follow safety protocols diligently.

A good starting point would be the previous guidance released by the presbytery from the current stated clerk, Jim Wilson: (a complete listing is in the "Guidance to congregations considering reopening" found on the PSV website.)

- *Masks for all individuals over 10, covering mouths and noses, are mandatory as of 7/22/20. Any person failing to wear a mask must be asked to leave immediately. If the individual refuses, the worship or activity must be terminated immediately. We understand that for some individuals, wearing a mask is a political issue. This will not protect you from liability if someone contracts Covid-19.*
- *Attendance should be taken at all meetings in the church, including worship, and contact information obtained for each person in attendance in the event it is necessary to contact attendees regarding possible exposure to Covid-19.*
- *Physical distancing is mandatory, even with masks. Six feet is a minimum, not a guideline. Like masks, if individuals refuse to comply, the person must leave or the activity must immediately be terminated.*
- *All participants should affirm the following before being permitted to enter worship or a church activity*
 - *The individual has taken his or her temperature shortly before arriving at the church and his or her temperature is below 100.4 F.*
 - *The individual is not experiencing any symptoms associated with COVID-19, such as fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, new loss of smell or taste, diarrhea, or vomiting.*
 - *The individual has not previously been diagnosed with, or suspected to have, COVID-19 and has been completely symptom free for at least 72 hours without any medication.*
 - *The individual has not been exposed within the past 14 days to anyone diagnosed with, or suspected to have, COVID-19.*



- *The individual has not traveled within the past 14 days either internationally or to any domestic location outside of Ohio.*
- *In enforcing these requirements, we urge that niceness not be confused with kindness—kindness is protecting the vulnerable in these circumstances.*
- *Singing is strongly discouraged as a high-risk activity.*
- *Celebration of the Lord's Supper is also a high-risk activity unless means can be devised to maintain physical distancing and to ensure the elements are free from any risk of transmitting the Covid-19 virus.*



Respect each other in our own personal decisions as well as our pastors who might feel uncomfortable due to health issues.

While many insurance companies did not initially have any requirements of churches prior to the return to in-person/in building worship, many have begun to require waivers related to COVID-19. Sessions should check with their insurance companies regularly to make sure the requirements remain the same.

The Coordinating Team strongly suggests the guidelines above, according to the state level system.

Siblings in Christ, we know that the longer the difficult situation with COVID-19 is prolonged, the more anxiety-provoking ministry can become. However, even now, we have renewed opportunities to learn how to faithfully care for one another, recognizing that each of us will approach the weeks and months ahead differently. Though this is new to us, leaning on Christ to lead us through difficult situations is not new to us. Being the Church no matter what comes our way is not new. Please know that we will continue to support you in every way we are able. Thank you for your faithfulness and perseverance.

Many Blessings and Peace,
Your Presbytery Coordinating Team.

With Franklin County currently coded orange, our Session has decided not to consider resuming in-person worship before Nov. 1. At its October meeting, the Session will consider the current coding status of Franklin County and decide our next steps. We ask that you keep our Session and our church in your prayers as we continue on this journey together.

A Reminder: We are continuing to livestream our worship service at 10:15 a.m. every Sunday. An easy way to access this service is to go to the church's website (www.westervillefirstpresbyterian.org). Click on "virtual services" in the left column. On the next screen, click on the word "HERE" at the end of the first paragraph. That will take you to our Facebook page. You can also access recordings of previous services there. An audio recording of the worship service is placed on our website shortly after each service, and Rev. Gauen's sermon is sent in the daily emails on the following Tuesday.

World Communion Sunday

October 4

October 4, the first Sunday in October, is World Communion Sunday. We will be celebrating a virtual communion on that day for those who attend the service virtually and for those who watch it taped later in the week on Facebook or listen to it from our website. I will do the communion liturgy from the sanctuary, and all who want to participate can do so from their homes. At-home participants will need to get their own grape juice or wine and piece of bread or cracker. Obviously, this is different from how we usually experience communion, but in this covid world, the symbolism of Christians around the world joining at Christ's table will be a powerful statement. This form of communion is also in line with guidance from the denomination (see below). I hope you will join in.

Rev. Gauen



Join the Zoom Coffee Hour



We will continue our Zoom Coffee Hour in October.

Each Sunday morning, Diana Westfall will post a link on Facebook for a coffee hour gathering that will start right after the worship service ends. Bring your own cup of coffee and your own cookies and spend 5 minutes or 30 minutes conversing with your fellow worshipers on Sunday morning. Please join us!

Per Capita



The Latin phrase *per capita* means “per person.” Per capita is the donation our church makes annually to help support the Presbytery of Scioto Valley and the Presbyterian Church USA. This year, the per capita donation is \$37.75 per person. Here’s how this essential donation helps:

Per Capita connects Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregations and mid councils with the work of the wider church. As the primary source of funding for the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), it is how Presbyterians mutually and equitably share the costs of moving the church forward in the 21st century. Per Capita giving makes it possible for:

- Presbyterians to discern and live out God’s call in their lives
- Churches to connect with individuals seeking a call to ministry
- OGA to staff and support General Assembly committees and commissions

- OGA to manage and coordinate General Assembly gatherings
- Presbytery and synod leaders to gather for training and discernment
- OGA to provide counsel and support for churches in crisis (misconduct, legal matters)
- Presbyteries to address matters of inclusion, participation and representation at all levels of church leadership and decision making
- The denomination to build connections with ecumenical partners around the world
- Presbyteries and pastors to receive support on immigration issues
- Presbyterian history to be saved and utilized by future generations

All Presbyterians are called to take part in the whole church's ecclesiastical and administrative work through per capita giving. The annual rate is a per-member apportionment that is assessed biennially by the General Assembly. (Book of Order, G-3.0106)

“Per Capita is crucial to the overall health of the PC(USA), because it binds presbyteries, synods, and congregations together in one church.”

– J. Herbert Nelson, II,
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the PC(USA)

Every year, our church counts on each member to pay his or her share of this donation (\$37.75 this year). Otherwise, the money for that person must be taken out of the church budget. If you haven't already done so and can do so, would you please send a check for this amount to Olivia in the church office? Many thanks!

Welcome to Our New Members!

First Presbyterian Church is delighted to welcome nine new members! They are:

- Alvin Lee (Dorothy Driskell's husband)
- Rick & Penny Blatti
- Glen and Sharon Carlton
- Chris & Jenn Henson
- Dan and Katie Kaste (Mark and Kathy's daughter and son-in-law, along with grandson Andrew, age 3)



We are so glad you have joined us, especially during these trying times! We hope you will become involved in our church groups, activities, committees, and missions—as soon as that is possible. Many of you have been attending for several months now, but we look forward to getting to know you better in the coming months.

Sanctuary Flowers

These arrangements grace the sanctuary during the worship service. After the service, donors can have the flowers delivered to themselves, or the flowers can be delivered to a member who is experiencing an illness or another challenge as a way to show the church's support. We thank the Deacons and Rev. Gauen for handling these deliveries.



However, the pandemic has disrupted every aspect of our church life, including this special way to fund the flowers. At this point, we need donors for the new year. A sign-up calendar for 2021 is now available. All are encouraged to call Olivia at the church office to place an order. The cost is \$33.00. If you've already donated flowers, thank you! (Please remember to send Olivia a check.) Questions? Contact Mary Lee Jones.

“Lift Chair” Looking for a Good Home

Diane Clever has a woman-sized ‘lift chair’ that she would love to give to anyone who needs it. Made of a brown, tweed-like material, it is not a recliner but helps someone stand up from a sitting position. If you have an interest in this chair, please call Diane for more information and/or to arrange for pick up.

Event Update

Still on hold:

Reaching out to Refugees
Backpack Bounty
Manna Café
Vegetarian Dining Group



Dine In with Nine: Friday, October 9

On the second Friday of the past four months, we have had a great time, eating at home but still gathering together, thanks to Zoom.

On Friday, October 9, we will do the same. On that day, we will each order from our favorite restaurant and pick up our meal or have it delivered (or prepare it at home). Then we will have a Zoom gathering to discuss our choices and catch up with our church friends.

Zooming is easy – at 7:00 pm on October 9, click on the email link that we will send you. Then click on “Open Zoom.” It helps if you have a camera on your computer, but you do not need to have one. You can also attend a Zoom meeting using a smart phone. Contact Jim Hines or Bob Place to get help or to say you’re in!



Ladies Night/Afternoon on Zoom:

Monday, October 5, 2:30 pm, and Tuesday, October 20, 7:00 pm



We are combining Rev. Hick’s Ladies Night with the original Ladies Night on the third Tuesdays. And we are adding a “Ladies Afternoon” (afternoon tea?) on one Monday a month to allow more ladies to participate, we hope. You are welcome to attend both!

Please let Diana Westfall know that you are interested. On the day of the meeting or before, she will send you a link so you can join in via Zoom. Zoom is easy to use, but if you need some help getting started, call

Heather or Diana.

Pike and Perry County Donations

Dear Friends,

As always, a very big THANKS for all of your donations, be it food or clothing or miscellaneous. We delivered at least 70-80 boxes of cereal...plus canned goods...to the Pike County Food Pantry...and they were soooo very excited to get the cereal!



We are also collecting winter items, as we have in the past..(gloves, hats, scarves, boots, coats, sweaters, etc) We plan to deliver them before Thanksgiving.

All donations may be left at the church, or here at our home. Keep up the good work!
Thanks!

John & Sharon Davis

Crop Walk 2020

Please plan to donate as much as you can to this year's CROP Walk to help address world hunger by promoting the food self-sufficiency of people in food crisis. Our church has given between \$3000 and \$4000 to Crop Walk each year for several years. Our goal for this year is again at least \$3000. World hunger is increasing as population, catastrophes, and dislocations occur with increasing frequency.

You can make a check out to "First Presbyterian Church" and put in the check note to send to CROP. Be sure to designate whom you would like to sponsor. Or you may sponsor all Walkers, if you wish. The people listed below so far have been designated as actual or virtual walkers. If you wish to also be a virtual or actual walker, please contact Bob Place to ask questions or be added to the list.

2020 CROP Walkers (so far): John McElhaney, Brad Gamble, John Robbins, Bill Hitt, Melodi Baltzer, Carol O'Kane, Mark Gauen, Kathy Gauen, Bob Place.



Youth Activities

Kids' Zoom Sunday School **Sunday evenings, 5 pm** **Starting Oct. 11**



Dear families,

The school year has begun, and we are almost ready to have Sunday School lessons for your child. However, there is a correction to our Sunday School program, as described in the daily emails from the church.

Please set aside time on SUNDAY evenings from 5pm-6pm starting Sunday, October 11. We are going to have a trial period of Zoom Sunday School where you will log your child into a zoom chat room, and I will lead them in a Sunday School class. I will provide the zoom ID and password as we get closer to October 11. I cannot wait to see your kiddos! We miss them very much. Blessings to all.

We will continue to bring bags for the children each month, so please keep an eye out for a delivery from our CE team. Enjoy this beautiful fall weather.

Rev. Heather Hicks

Adventures of the Three Amigos

Well, first things first --- as was pointed out last month, the “lamb” is really a llama, albeit a very confused one, who now has a sense of identity thanks to her friends Sassy and Joshua. With this in mind, she decided she would be known as Lambie the Llama. Lambie, Sassy, and Joshua have been judiciously observing all the social distancing protocols, but staying in the house or at least the yard finally became more than they could handle. (Isn't that something we can all relate to at this point?) So with face masks in place, they all ventured to Debbie Kerr's house to join in several spirited rounds of Mahjong.



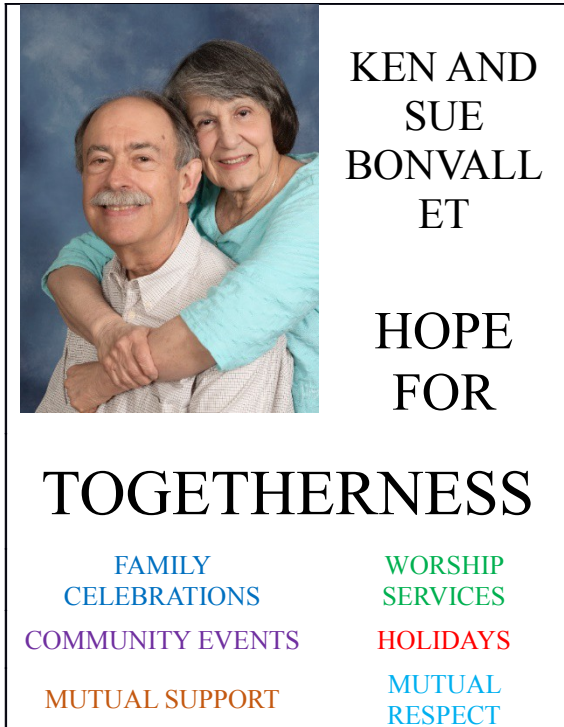
Mahjong wasn't their only outing this month but was much more enjoyable than the necessary visit to get their flu shots. Being young and healthy, they were given the milder version for those not yet senior citizens, while their elders received the stronger dose. Lambie had her picture taken as a reminder to all of us that now is the time to be immunized.

Do you have ideas for future travels for our three amigos? Send them to John McElhaney!



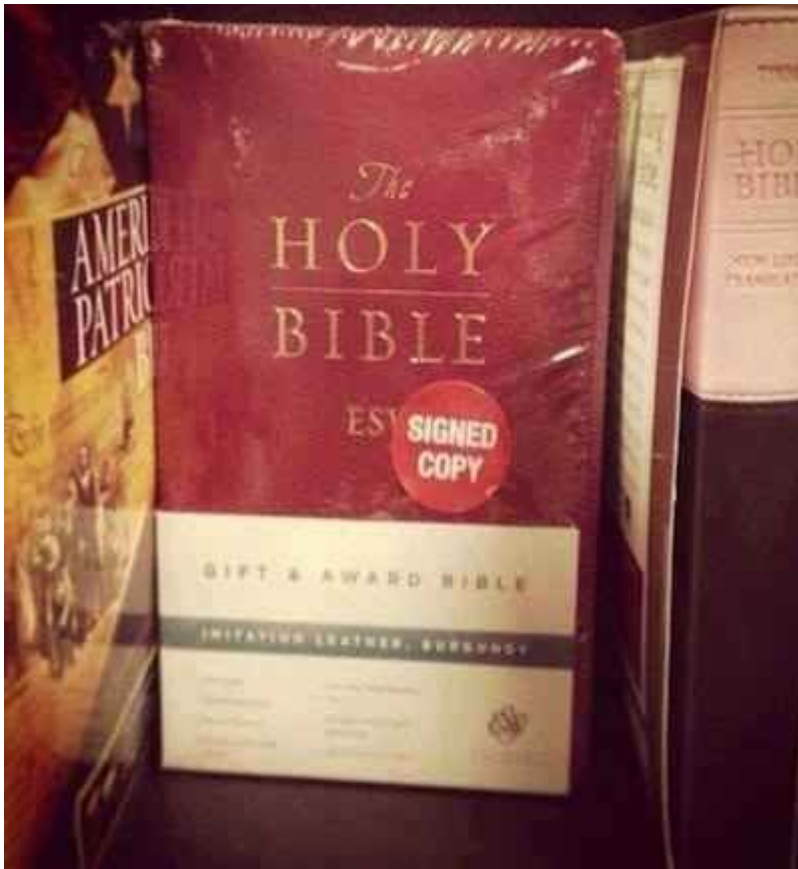
Hoping For...Rally Day 2020

Our theme for Rally Day 2020 was "Hope".
Several FPC members made signs that told what they were hoping for.



To brighten your day, courtesy of Olivia Hodorowski:





Adult Growth and Development

ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN			
Activity	When	Where	What
The Sunday Adult Class	Mondays 4:00-5:00 p.m.	Zoom Meetings -If interested contact Tom Jonard	The Sunday Adult Class, now meeting on Monday, is reading and discussing <i>Mary Magdalene Revealed</i> . This is a readable interpretation of a parallel gospel attributed to Mary Magdalene. It was popular with the Coptic church and seems to have been written about the same time as the Gospel of John. Subtitled "The Christianity We Haven't Tried Yet," it is bound to author Meggan Watterson's personal journey.

Shelter-in-place Bible Studies	Tuesdays, 9:30-10:30 am Wednesdays, 7:00-8:00 p.m.	Zoom Meetings -If interested email Pastor Gauen at pastormark@fpcw.us	We are continuing our study on the Book of Jeremiah. Jeremiah was a prophet during some of the most tumultuous times in the history of Israel, which makes his message particularly important today. Both sections will cover the same passage each week.
4th Monday Discussion Group	4 th Mondays, 7:30 – 9:00 pm	Zoom Meeting -If interested, email Pastor Gauen at pastormark@fpcw.us	This group meets monthly to discuss matters of faith and life. Our next gathering is Monday, October 26.
Circle 4 Women	3 rd Thursdays, 11:00 am	Zoom Meeting -If interested, email Pastor Gauen at pastormark@fpcw.us or call Elaine Foley.	Our Presbyterian Women's group meets monthly for fellowship and Bible study. Led by Elaine Foley. Our next class will be on Thursday, October 15.



Pastor's Page

Dear Friends:

This past summer, the Presbyterian General Assembly, our denomination's national meeting, set aside Sunday, October 25, as a day of prayer focused on the pandemic: *"We call on our whole church to commit to continuous discernment of how to meet the social justice, economic, and spiritual challenges of the pandemic. We set aside Sunday, October 25, 2020, Reformation Sunday, as a day of prayer for responding to those challenges."*

All of us, as Presbyterians, are encouraged to take some time on that day to offer prayers to God, praying for the welfare of those who have the disease, for the comfort of those who have lost someone to the disease, for those who are actively fighting the disease, for those whose jobs continue to put them at higher risk in catching the disease, for those who are isolated by the disease, for those who have suffered from the economic fallout of the disease, for our world's leaders who continue to make decisions regarding the disease, and for all of us who are just plain tired of the disease.

To help you, here is a prayer that you can pray on Reformation Sunday, October 25. It was shared at General Assembly by the outgoing moderators, Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri and the Rev. Cindy Kohlmann.

Eternal God, sustainer, provider, God of all wisdom and knowledge,
Our spirits are weary, our faith quivers, our minds get clouded by news of sickness and death.
You know our thoughts before we express them, even the fears we dismiss, you know them.
We cannot hide our feelings and worries from you.
So, as we are, we come to You, O God, asking for wisdom, for clear minds and open hearts, for calm
and assurance that, through the crisis, You are present.

Knowing that "the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought,
but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words,"
We ask for wisdom and protection...
For medical personnel, scientists, doctors, nurses, and laboratory technicians.
For those around the world considering current and other health crises.
For health care personnel and caregivers.
We lift them up to You. Bendíceles con sabiduría; protégeles de todo mal.

We ask for clear minds and open hearts as people navigate daily lives...
As closures, cancellations, and quarantines are enacted.
As families gather in their homes, some caring for those who are sick.
As we encounter neighbors in our neighborhoods, stores, and pharmacies.
Bendícenos con paciencia y creatividad, amor y entendimiento.

We pray for the sick, those who have lost or are at risk of losing jobs in the midst of this crisis,
for those whose health or social services will be or have been affected, for those suffering the direct
effects of this virus, locally and around the world.
Illumine us, Holy Spirit. Show us in what ways we can be of help as we care for self and others.
Ilumínanos para saber cómo ayudar.

We ask for calm, assurance, and strength.
May we all remember that, in the midst of any crisis,
Your grace reaches us,
Your hope enlightens us,
And Your love surrounds us all.

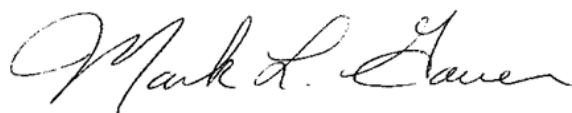
En medio de la crisis,
tu gracia nos alcanza,
tu esperanza nos ilumina,
y tu amor nos rodea.

Amén.

Also, here is a video that can be used as a prayer guide. This was shared at the September 15 meeting of our presbytery.

<https://www.theworkofthepeople.com/praise-song-for-the-pandemic>

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Mark L. Lauer". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid, with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping underline.

Mark