

# ADVOCATE

First Presbyterian Church  
41 West College Avenue  
Westerville, Ohio 43081-2103  
614-882-3155 Phone 614-882-2421 Fax  
[www.westervillefirstpresbyterian.org](http://www.westervillefirstpresbyterian.org)

**November 2020**



## Church Reopening Update

In considering when to reopen the church, the Session continues to be led by the Presbytery guidelines and by the desire to be faithful stewards of our church and our church members. With these guidelines and goals in mind, at its October meeting, the Session voted not to hold in-person worship at least through the end of 2020. This decision is essential because Franklin County is again coded red, based on an increase in COVID-19 infections. You may recall that the Presbytery guidelines recommend waiting to hold in-person services until the county where the church is located is coded yellow.

This decision also means that we will not be in our sanctuary for Christmas Eve. Again, safety was foremost in the minds of the elders when considering this issue. However, even if we were to hold a Christmas Eve worship service in our sanctuary, it would not be anything like we are used to on this special night. Right now, our Worship Committee is looking at ways we can make this Christmas season special in spite of the challenges we face. And Rev. Hicks is planning a virtual Christmas pageant. Not to be missed!

While we are not reopening our church for group worship activities, people are welcome to come to the sanctuary during the week for individual meditation. The sanctuary will be open from 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Mondays through Wednesdays. All we ask is that you call ahead of time and schedule your visit with our church's administrative assistant, Olivia Hodorowski (614-882-3155).

Below is an excerpt from an article by Rev. Alex Shanks that speaks to what makes churches different than other organizations when it comes to resuming in-person worship.

### **“Why Reopening a Church is Different”**

By Rev. Alex A. Shanks

“Everywhere we turn, people are talking about reopening. Should churches simply follow the same guidelines regarding reopening as other institutions? I believe there are practical principles and theological reasons why reopening our church campuses requires a different kind of thinking. The church shouldn’t be looking to sidestep the guidelines. The church shouldn’t be simply reacting to what others are doing. The church should be leading the way by modeling a method of safety for others to follow.

**“Churches need to open their campuses faithfully, not just safely.** Churches will need to consider how the changes required to reopen safely could adversely impact the nature and integrity of worship and ministry. Our expressions of church need to reflect the values and essence of who God has called the church to be. Churches should ask: What are the essential worship elements that express who we are and who we believe God to be, and how can we ensure those are done authentically in this new model? Figuring out how to faithfully do ministry in a world of social distancing while maintaining virtual church options for those who can’t attend in person, will require a new wave of ingenuity and adaptation. Some churches may choose to reopen their church campuses much later in order to open faithfully.

**“Churches are built primarily on trust.** People don’t regularly attend a church where they don’t trust their leaders to make healthy and informed decisions. If you lose the trust of your congregation during a reopening of your campus, you lose an essential glue that holds the organizational life together. One can only imagine the impact of losing the trust of the general public by being the next tragic headline. You may be concerned about people going to the church next door who is opening sooner than you are. In the long run, people will attend churches based on trust and a feeling of safety, rather than when they reopened.”

*Rev. Alex A. Shanks serves as the Assistant Bishop of The Florida Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church.*

**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](http://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. (Note: It might be necessary to refresh the page by clicking at the top left corner of the screen.) You can also access recordings of previous services on this page. 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.



# Communion Sunday

November 1 is a Communion Sunday at First Presbyterian, and we will be doing a virtual communion service during our worship service. Rev. Gauert will lead the communion liturgy in the Livestream, and you are invited to follow along with your own piece of bread and cup of juice. Or you can spend that time in prayer as you watch the communion online.

## Join the Zoom Coffee Hour

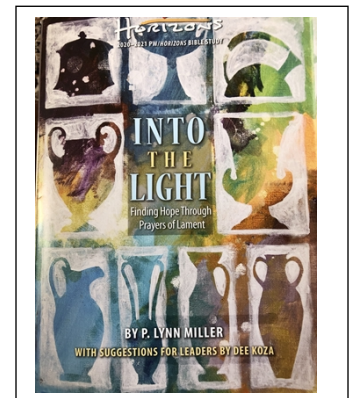


We will continue our Zoom Coffee Hour in November.

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!

## Circle 4 Women

In January, we will be starting a new Horizon Bible study called *Into the Light, Finding Hope Through the Prayers of Lament*. If you would like to join us, the study guide costs \$10. The large print costs \$15. We meet at 11:00 am on the third Thursday of the month, which is Nov. 19 this month. We will continue to meet by Zoom at present for study and fellowship. Interested? Please contact Elaine Foley.



**Please send your input for upcoming services:**



## **November 8, Veterans Day**

One of our November traditions at First Presbyterian is to recognize our veterans on Veteran's Day, which this year is November 8. We usually do this by having our veterans introduce themselves during the worship service. We would like to do that again this year, but we need your help. If you are a veteran, please send your name and branch of service to [pastormark@fpcw.us](mailto:pastormark@fpcw.us) by noon on Thursday, Nov. 5. Pastor Mark will then read all the names in worship on Nov. 8. Thanks for your help as we seek to honor all of you who have served or are serving our country in this way.

## **November 22, Thanksgiving Sunday**

This year, Thanksgiving will be challenging for all of us. Still, we have much to be thankful for, so we would like to celebrate the holiday by giving thanks to God. We are inviting you to write down what you are thankful for this year and send it by noon on Monday, November 16, to [pastormark@fpcw.us](mailto:pastormark@fpcw.us). These notes will then be shared in worship on November 22. We plan to include the names of the submitters along with their words of thanks, but if you would like to give your thanks anonymously, just put that in your submission. We hope everyone, including the children, will send us something for which they are thankful.

*"Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise"- Psalm 100:4*



# Administrative Services Has Been Busy!

The Administrative Services Committee has been using this “downtime” to improve and beautify our church facilities. We’re looking forward to the time when we’re all back in the building together, but until then, we wanted to share the following projects with you.

## First Presbyterian Is Going “Green”

We (FPC) are participating in an energy incentive program offered by Westerville’s Electric Division. During our renovations in 2017/18, we earned an incentive rebate of approximately \$1,300 from the city for the energy upgrades that were incorporated into the new addition. We’ve now entered into a new phase of the energy incentive program and are upgrading our interior lighting from incandescent and fluorescent to LED.

Roger Pulley has been spearheading this effort and recently completed the LED upgrades in the sanctuary. Before being retrofitted, each of the four hanging chandeliers had 12 100-watt light bulbs for a total of 1,200 watts per fixture or 4,800 watts for just the four fixtures. These lights have been replaced with 48 15-watt LED bulbs – a reduction from 4,800 watts to 720 watts for a reduction of 85% in electrical usage.

In addition to the hanging light fixtures, Roger has also replaced 4 100-watt bulbs above the choir loft and 6 100-watt bulbs around the skylight (aka the “ring” lights”). In the process, Roger has standardized the type of LED bulb being used so that we don’t need to inventory a variety of bulbs.



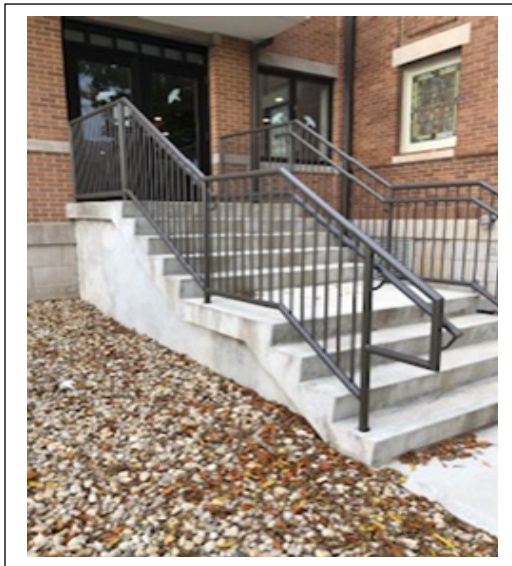


## Our Front Sign

Roger has also rewired the FPC sign out front, and it is now equipped with LED bulbs. The new bulbs provide an even, glare-free illumination.



## Painting



A team recently painted the galvanized-steel railings for the new steps at the east entrance to the church. Prep work (including a vinegar bath to treat the galvanized steel) was done by Jim Hines, the primer coat was completed by Roger Pulley and Brad Gamble, and the final coat was done by Brad and Debbie Gamble. Check it out when you come back to church.

## Opportunities

As previously reported, Tom Eshelman recently coordinated the removal of our main entry doors, which were taken off-site and completely refinished. The doors had been showing a lot of wear and now look like new.

If anyone is looking for something to do – we have several small projects that can be done before winter. For example, we'd like to get a coat of paint on two sets of railings – one for the front steps and the other for the College Ave ramp leading down to Fellowship Hall. If anyone is interested, we have the paint and brushes – all we need is a painter(s). Please contact Jim Hines or anyone else on the AS Committee.

## Event Update

### Still on hold:

Reaching out to Refugees  
Backpack Bounty  
Manna Café  
Vegetarian Dining Group



### Dine In with Nine: Friday, November 13

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

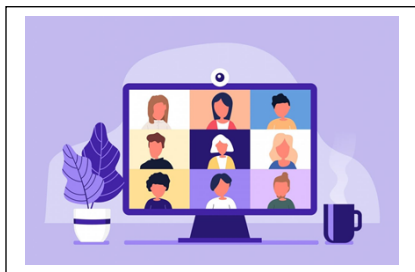
On Friday, November 13, we will do the same. On that day, we will each order from our favorite restaurant and pick up our meal or have it delivered (or prepare it at home). Then we will have a Zoom gathering to discuss our choices and catch up with our church friends.

Zooming is easy – at 7:00 pm on November 13, 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 one. You can also attend a Zoom meeting using a smart phone. Contact Jim Hines to get help or to say you’re in!



### Ladies Night/Afternoon on Zoom:

**Monday, November 2, 2:30 pm, and Tuesday, November 17, 7:00 pm**



We have combined Rev. Hick’s Ladies Night with the original Ladies Night Out on the third Tuesdays. And we are adding a “Ladies Afternoon” on the first Monday to allow more ladies to participate. 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.

# **Cereal Drive for Pike County**

## **Sunday, November 22, 1-3pm**

“Fill the Trunk with Flakes”

“Pack the Van with Corn Puffs”

“Stuff the Sedan with Cereal”

“Overflow the Auto with Oatmeal”

“Bulge the Bus with the Bran”

We couldn't agree on the name, but what we want to do is load up John and Sharon Davis' car with cereal for Pike County! There is a critical need for breakfast cereal among the clients of the Pike County Food Pantry, and we aim to meet that need. So, on Sunday, November 22, from 1:00 -3:00 p.m., we will have a drive-through drop-off of cereal. You are invited to load up your trunk with boxes of cereal—any kind, any brand—and drive through the church parking lot, where John and Sharon and their helpers will take your donation and put it in their car. We'll see if we can load it up from top to bottom! If we have extra cereal, we'll store it at the church, and John and Sharon will make a second trip...or even a third!

John & Sharon Davis

## **Youth Activities**

### **Kids' Sunday School on YouTube**

#### **Sunday evenings, starting Nov. 1**

The Sunday School program will return to Discovery Den on YouTube as a video that families can access at your leisure. New videos will be available Sunday evenings starting November 1. Please join us for some fun!



### **A Virtual Christmas Pageant!**



In November, we invite families to participate in a virtual Christmas pageant. Each child will have a part that we ask the parents to record and send to Rev. Heather Hicks. She will edit the videos together to create our pageant. If you and your family would like to be part of our pageant, please contact Heather no later than **November 8**. Scripts and costumes will be brought to your home. Recordings should be handed in no later than **November 30**. Please contact Heather for more information.





## **“Especially for Children” Advent: Advent Wreaths for the Home**

This year, Advent begins on Sunday, November 29, and on that date, we will be making a change to our worship order. Beginning that day, we will be incorporating the “Especially for Children” into the regular worship service; so we will no longer be offering a separate service for the children after worship. We are doing this because we will be lighting the Advent Candles at the beginning of worship each Sunday during Advent as our “Especially for Children” time. We hope that families of all ages will participate in this activity at home, lighting your own Advent Candles each Sunday as you watch the worship service online. And if you don’t want to light real candles in your home, Heather has some suggestions for alternatives

Dear families,

Advent is right around the corner (at the end of this month in fact), and we will not be able to light the candles in church. If you would like to celebrate Advent at home and light your own candles that is great. However, for those who do not have an Advent wreath at home and/or are nervous about having lighted candles around kids, here are some alternatives.

<https://premeditatedleftovers.com/naturally-frugal-mom/dollar-store-diy-advent-wreath-craft-kids/>

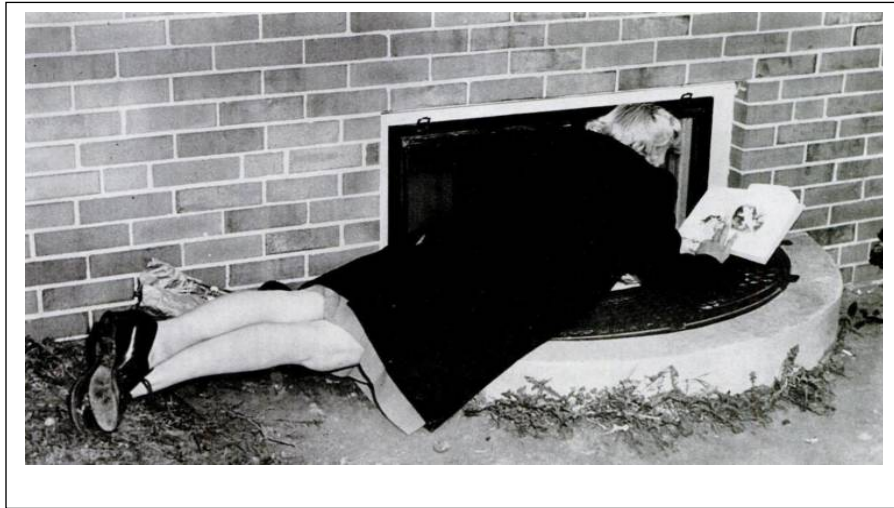
<http://www.drawn2bcreative.com/3-d-printable-advent-wreath/>

<https://meaningfulexplorations.com/advent-wreath-craft-for-kids/>

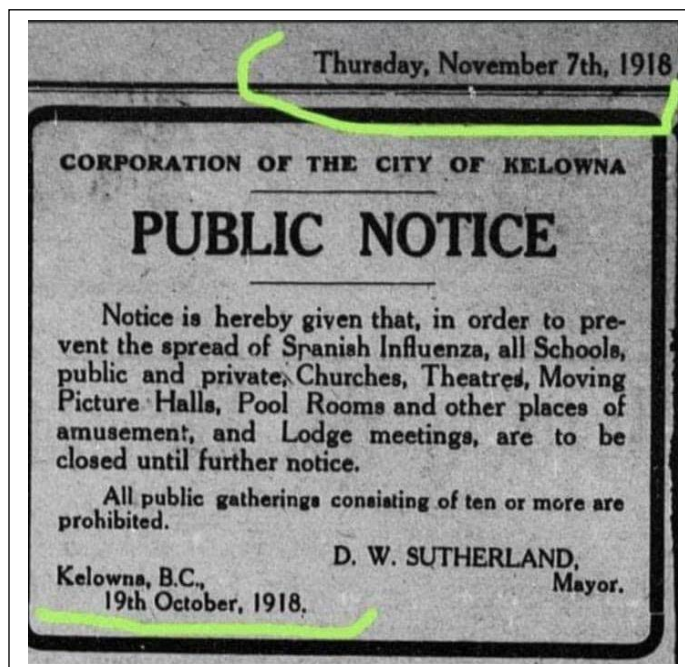
Heather Hicks

## Old photos, courtesy of Olivia Hodorowski:

"A Mother Reads to Her 6 Year Old Child through a Basement Window during a 1949 Polio Epidemic Quarantine, LIFE Magazine, Oct 3, 1949"



"The way we were ... and are again."



# Adult Growth and Development

ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN			
Activity	When	Where	What
<b>The Sunday Adult Class</b>	<b>Mondays</b> 4:00-5:00 p.m.	<b>Zoom Meetings</b> -If interested contact Tom Jonard	The Sunday Adult Class, now meeting on Monday afternoons, 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.
<b>Shelter-in-place Bible Studies</b>	<b>Tuesdays,</b> 9:30-10:30 am <b>Wednesdays,</b> 7:00-8:00 p.m.	<b>Zoom Meetings</b> -If interested email Pastor Gauen at <a href="mailto:pastormark@fpcw.us">pastormark@fpcw.us</a>	We are continuing our study on the Book of Jeremiah. He 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.
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Monday Discussion Group</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> Mondays, 7:30 – 9:00 pm	<b>Zoom Meeting</b> -If interested, email Pastor Gauen at <a href="mailto:pastormark@fpcw.us">pastormark@fpcw.us</a>	This group meets monthly to discuss matters of faith and life. Due to the Thanksgiving holiday, our next gathering will be the fifth Monday, <b>November 30</b> .
<b>Circle 4 Women</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursdays, 11:00 am	<b>Zoom Meeting</b> -If interested, email Pastor Gauen at <a href="mailto:pastormark@fpcw.us">pastormark@fpcw.us</a> 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, November 19.



## Pastor's Page

*"And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn."— Luke 2:7*

Dear Members and Friends of First Presbyterian Church:

We all recognize this passage from the Gospel of Luke—because we hear it every Christmas Eve. When I hear this verse, I think of every Christmas pageant that I have ever seen, where Mary and Joseph, dressed in bathrobes, go up to a similarly dressed innkeeper only to be turned away with a vigorous shake of the head. I've always wondered what the real Mary and the real Joseph must have felt when they were turned away at the inn those many centuries ago.

I find this aspect of the story particularly poignant now because this year there is, figuratively, no room at the inn. Or in our case, no room in the sanctuary. With COVID numbers spiking across the state and the nation and with the colder weather coming, the elders of the church realized that there was no way that we could safely resume our in-person worship in our sanctuary anytime soon. As much as we'd like to gather for worship services, have a potluck, or hear a concert, we can't safely do those things yet.

So, we are looking for ways to make this Advent and Christmas season (which begins on Nov. 29 this year) special, meaningful, and spirit-filled. We cannot have our regular kids' Christmas Pageant—but Heather and the CE team are putting together a Virtual Pageant. Similarly, we can't have the Habitat Progressive Concert this year, but the planners of that event are looking at having a virtual option as well. Lynn Meyer will also add to our music offerings for Advent by recording several pieces of Advent music, which we will post on our website. In addition, we are still planning to have our special holiday mission projects this year, including the Christmas Joy Offering and the Hats, Mittens and Socks Basket, where we collect those items for the Pike County clothing pantry.

We are also looking for new ideas for the holiday season. Perhaps you have an idea for a program, a mission, or a ministry that we could do despite, or maybe because of, the pandemic. If you have such an idea, send it on to me or to one of our elders. It just might become part of a new holiday tradition at our church! And even if we can't make it happen this year, your new idea might spark something for a future ministry of our church.

The Gospel of Luke goes on to tell us that even though Jesus was born in a stable, he was still the Savior, the Messiah. In fact, the manger would be the sign that this child was indeed special. What was bad news for Mary and Joseph, was the sign of good news for the world. Perhaps we can turn the bad news of this pandemic season into good news as well. Certainly, we still have the message of Good News—that "unto us is born a Savior." That is a message to ponder in our hearts—and to shout from the mountaintops.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mark L. Hansen". The script is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "M" and "H".

Mark