

ADVOCATE

First Presbyterian Church
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January 2022

Children's 2021 Christmas Pageant



Again this year, despite all odds. Rev. Heather Hicks and our parents helped our kids present their annual Christmas Pageant, virtually. You can still watch it on YouTube by going to our church's Facebook page. It's only 12 minutes long, but our children tell the Christmas story as only they can.

The boys pictured above are Lincoln Korodi, Brayden LaGasse, and Caleb Korodi. Also appearing in the pageant are Jackson and Lyla Koppitch, Malorie and Austin Tener, Liam Meyers, Andrew Kaste, and Stuart and Josh Hicks. Many thanks to the participants, their parents, and Rev. Hicks!

Our Livestream Continues

You can access our livestreamed worship service at 10:15 on Sunday mornings by going to the church's website (www.westervillefirstpresbyterian.org). Click on "Worship Options" in the left column. On the next screen, click on the word "HERE" at the end of the second paragraph. That will take you to our Facebook page. 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.

From the Session of First Presbyterian

As we enter the New Year we are still dealing with the pandemic, but with some new wrinkles. Because the pandemic and its effects are constantly changing, the Session of our church has been constantly monitoring the situation and adapting our policies and procedures so that we can best serve the physical, mental and spiritual needs of our congregation and our community.

We hope that we can continue with our in-person worship as long as we can do so safely. In order to keep our sanctuary worship safe for everyone, we are asking all of us to consider the well-being of our fellow in-person worshippers. We can do this several ways. First, if you are feeling even slightly unwell, worship at home. Whatever you might have, staying home will keep you from spreading it to others. Second, if you have been in a situation where you might have been exposed to Covid, worship from home. Consider this your gift to the church.

The third way to show kindness to your fellow worshippers is if you have not been vaccinated, worship from home. This, too, is your gift—not only to your friends at church, but to yourself. According to the CDC, it is people who are unvaccinated who make up 80% of those who are in our hospitals with Covid. If you are unvaccinated, share our worship from your living room. Or better yet, go get vaccinated!

While we are talking about the ways we can care for each other, we can demonstrate Christian love by continuing to wear masks, and by maintaining proper social distance. These simple steps are expressions of our love and concern for our friends at church. And if we avoid passing the virus to each other, we also avoid passing it to others in our families and our community. We do all these things because we are all part of the network of love and care that we weave for each other as the community of faith.

As the pandemic runs its course, the Session continues to seek guidance from the CDC, state health officials and the Presbytery and will do so into the coming year. If the pandemic situation warrants, the Session may require that we return to fully virtual worship and this decision may take effect with less than a week's notice. If the Session so decides, the congregation will be informed via our daily emails and via robocalls. Similarly, when it is acceptable to return to in-person worship, we will inform the congregation.

While we may need to suspend the in-person portion of our worship, we will not suspend our worship. We have learned over the past 20+ months that we can worship through a virtual mode as well as we can through an in-person mode. We have upgraded our equipment and we now have a trained team of videographers who can use that equipment so that all of us can have a meaningful worship experience at home as well as here in the sanctuary. If we do have to go to virtual only worship, it will not be the hardship that it used to be.

Eventually this pandemic will end, but until it does, we are learning what it means to bear one another's burdens, as Jesus showed us how to do.

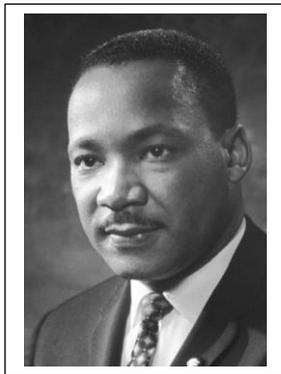
Presbyterian Educational Event

Saturday, January 8, 9:30 am – 3:00 pm

The Presbytery of Scioto Valley offers leadership training every January called the PIE Event (Partners in Education). This year's PIE Event will be held both in-person and virtually. The in-person event will be on Saturday, January 8, from 9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. at the Worthington Presbyterian Church. There will also be a virtual PIE Event on Tuesday, January 11, from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. via Zoom. The event is free and open to all church members, but you do need to register at www.psvonline.org.

Martin Luther King Celebration

Monday, January 17, 7:30 am



Registration for the 17th Annual Westerville Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration is now open! The 2022 celebration will be a hybrid event with both an in-person and a virtual option. The event is **Monday, January 17**, beginning at 7:30 a.m. The program will feature an esteemed panel including Christie Angel, YWCA Columbus President & CEO; Judge Jaiza N. Page; and Alex Shanks, Director of Community Prevention Initiatives for Equitas Health. The panel will be joined and moderated by Angela An, 10TV News Anchor. A COVID-19 vaccination or negative test within 72 hours of the event is required to attend. Vaccination cards/test results will be checked at the door. This event is subject to change due to COVID-19 guidelines and restrictions.

Register here: <https://bit.ly/WestervilleMLK2022>

Ticket prices:

- \$30 for an individual adult
- \$20 for an individual student (18 years or younger)
- \$20 for virtual viewing

Annual Reports Due Jan. 16

A reminder to all committee chairs, group leaders, and organization coordinators: Articles for the Annual Report are due on Sunday, January 16. They may be sent to pastormark@fpcw.us or put in Rev. Gauen's mail folder. 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 by the Jan. 16 deadline.

Annual Meeting

Sunday, February 27

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 2022 operating budget and vote on the terms of call for our pastor. Members are asked to attend this meeting. Visitors and guests are welcome to attend as well.

Copies of the 2021 Annual Report will be available at the church beginning on Sunday, Feb. 13.



Do You Feel Like Singing?

Choir Rehearsals, Sundays at 9:15 am



We are joyful to have our choir singing during some of our Sunday worship services! Earl Linhart, our Music Director, invites you to join them. Although the choir will sing about every other Sunday, they will have rehearsals every Sunday morning at 9:15 am.

Even if you've never sung in a choir, you are welcome to become a member of our choir, which is a blessing to our church!

Reaching out to Refugees

Our Welcome Team continues to support our refugee family, including taking them to appointments, helping them experience their first Thanksgiving feast, bringing them food orders from WARM, taking them shopping, and helping them cope with problems, such as a non-working cell phone. We also just sit and visit with them, helping them become familiar with American ways of life. Recently, the team was interviewed by a *Dispatch* reporter concerning our experiences—and challenges—in working with a refugee family. You are very welcome to join our team. If you'd like to meet the family, one of us would be glad to go with you. Contact Linda Barr if you're interested!



Genealogy Club News

At our last meeting, we learned how to get free access to Cleveland newspapers, sampled RootsMagic software, saw how an obituary can have significant errors, looked at notetaking software, learned about Random Acts of Genealogical Kindness, and learned about how to sign up for RootsTech.

The next meeting will be **Thursday, January 6**, at 7:00 pm via Zoom.

If you are interested, or just curious, and have not contacted us before, email Bill Hitt or Ken Bonvallet.

Flowers for the Sanctuary

Would you like to provide flowers to grace the sanctuary during the Sunday service? You might donate them to celebrate an anniversary or another occasion or to honor a loved one who has died. After the service, you can take the flowers home, or you can donate them to bring cheer to a church member who is facing challenges. That person's deacon will deliver the flowers to him or her.

We have openings for flower donations in January, February, March, and April. You can sign up in the book located in the Gathering Area, call Olivia at the church office (614-882-3155), or email her (administrativasst@fpcw.us) to place your order. The cost is now **\$35.00**. Thank you!

Dine Out with Nine: Friday, January 14, 6:30 pm

In January, we'll meet at Carfagna's (4140 Gemini Place, next to Hobby Lobby, 614-848-4488). This is a new location, as the restaurant has moved from Polaris Parkway. It offers a standard variety of American dishes. Check the menu online. Contact Jim Hines or Bob Place for information or to say you are coming. We will be eating in the main dining room. We hope to see you there!

Ladies' Night Out

Ladies' Night Out is taking a slightly longer break and will resume in February! Stay well!

Fabrics of Faith: Tuesday, January 25, 2:00 pm

We are happy to announce that we will begin the new year by starting monthly meetings of Fabrics of Faith, a group that has been active at our church for 11 years now. This group is open to anyone who is interested. We are knitters, quilters, and crocheters who make blankets, prayer shawls, and throws for people who would be comforted by them. If you know of someone who is facing challenges, you are welcome to take a blanket or quilt for them from where they are stored downstairs. Just be sure to sign it out. You don't have to name the person who will receive it, but you can, of course.



In the photo, Elaine Foley's grandkids loved the quilts they received several years ago.

Our meetings will be on the 4th Tuesday of the month at 2:00 pm, starting January 25. We will meet in the Youth Room downstairs. Please contact Sharyl Weinberg or Beckey Stamm if you have questions. Or you can sign up to attend the meetings in the book in the Gathering Place.

We have fun together while doing good for many people!

The Presbyterian Nine Patchers: Wednesday, January 19, 1-3 pm

This group is an offshoot of Fabrics of Faith and was formerly known as the Quilting Group. It started a few years ago with a five-session class on quilt making, led by Karen Hoggarth and Ann McElhaney. The group is contemplating offering a second set of classes. Its next meeting is January 19 from 1-3 PM in the meeting room off the Gathering Place. They will be finishing up their last project and start planning a new one. All are welcome to join.

Some humor from Jim Hines:

Someone said there are four kinds of "BONES" in every organization:

- There are the WISHBONES, who spend their time wishing someone would do the work.
- There are the JAWBONES, who do all the talking but very little else.
- There are the KNUCKLE-BONES, who knock everything anyone else tries to do.
- And, finally, there are the BACK-BONES, who get to work and get it done.

ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

Activity	When	Where	What
The Sunday/Monday Adult Class	Mondays 4:00-5:00 p.m.	Zoom Meetings -If interested contact Tom Jonard	<i>The Sermon on the Mount</i> by Amy-Jill Levine. "In <i>Sermon on the Mount: A Beginner's Guide to the Kingdom of Heaven</i> , Dr. Amy-Jill Levine introduces the major topics in the Sermon on the Mount, explains historical and theological contexts, and shows how the words of Jesus echo his Jewish tradition and speak forward to reach hearts and minds today." (description taken from Amazon)
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	The Weekly Bible Study group will be studying the Gospel of Mark. Join us as we explore the teachings of Jesus and what they mean for us today. We have two sections, Tuesday morning and Wednesday evening. Both sections will cover the same material.
4th Monday Discussion Group	4 th Mondays, 7:30 – 9:00 pm	Zoom Meeting -If interested, email Pastor Gauen at pastormark@fpcw.us	We are studying the book <i>Be the Bridge: Pursuing God's Heart for Racial Reconciliation</i> . This book addresses what a church can do about racial issues. Next meeting is Jan. 24.
Circle 4 Women	3 rd Thursdays, 11:00 am	Zoom Meeting -If interested, call Elaine Foley.	Our women's group meets monthly for fellowship and Bible study. Led by Elaine Foley. Our next class will be January 20 at 11:00 a.m.



Pastor's Page

Dear Friends:

*"Whoever pursues righteousness and kindness will find life and honor."
– Proverbs 21:21*

I received an award in December. The "Neighbor to Neighbor" program in Westerville gives out awards that they call "Kindness Hero" awards, and I was selected to receive one! I even got my picture taken and posted on the "Neighbor to Neighbor" Facebook page.

Awards are interesting, aren't they? When I was in high school, our yearbook staff gave out the traditional "Senior Superlative" awards. You know the ones: "Best Athlete," "Best Dressed," "Most Artistic," and a host of others, including the ever-popular "Most Likely to Succeed." I remember congratulating the guy who won the "Most Likely to Succeed" award, and he said to me, "I wish I hadn't gotten this award. It's a lot of pressure. Now I actually have to succeed."

That is how I feel about my "Kindness Hero" award. It's a lot of pressure. Now I actually have to be kind. Not that I am not already kind, but getting an award sort of forces one to live up to it. I guess I'll have to up my game in the kindness department so that I will feel worthy of the award.

Fortunately, I have great role models for kindness all around me. The people of First Presbyterian have been my "Kindness Heroes" for a long time. I look around here and see people who go out of their way to be nice to others; who do an extra task without even being asked; who make sure that everyone is included in an activity; who reach out to a new person and make him or her feel welcome; who give a little extra even when they don't have to. I know that I will continue to get my kindness cues from the people of this church, and I will do my best to emulate the kindness I see all around me.

Happy New Year to everyone, and may we all work to make 2022 the kindest year ever.

Yours in Christ,

Mark Gauwen