

ADVOCATE

First Presbyterian Church
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March 2023

Celebrating Pastor Mark's 25th Years at Our Church



On Sunday, February 26, we celebrated the blessing of 25 years of support, care, and guidance from Pastor Mark Gauen. Installed as our pastor in February 1998, Pastor Mark is the second-longest serving pastor in our church's history. The longest-serving was our first pastor, arriving at First Presbyterian in 1829. And he served only 28 years!

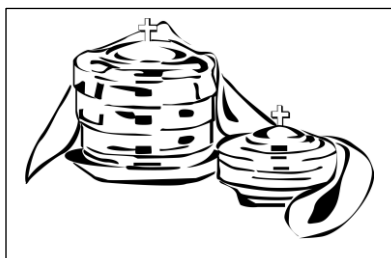
As Elder Rob Rankin reminded us during the celebration, Pastor Mark has served in many important leadership roles in both our church and the Presbytery during those 25 years, not the least of which was his term as Moderator of our Presbytery. He also oversaw the major renovation of our church several years ago. That renovation continues today in areas such as kitchen remodeling, technology upgrades, and landscaping projects. And Pastor Mark has guided the church through the murky waters of the coronavirus pandemic, keeping the church as the center of our faith. His leadership has not gone unnoticed by the community. In fact, he was named Pastor of Uptown by the Westerville Neighbor to Neighbor organization. In the photo on the left, Elder Debbie Nealer-Bice has presented Pastor Mark with a plaque, officially renaming our lounge the Gauen Gathering Area. Well done, Pastor Mark, well done.

In the photo on the right, our amazing choir now looks as good as they sing. They are wearing handsome new robes—for the first time in 30 years. The robes were purchased with the Haning Memorial Fund. Bob Haning sang in the choir and would be proud of the new robes.

HOLY WEEK AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

Sunday, Apr. 2	10:15 a.m.	Palm Sunday Worship
Thursday, Apr. 6	7:00 p.m.	Maundy Thursday Worship
Friday, Apr. 7	Noon	Community Good Friday Worship at Church of the Messiah
Sunday, Apr. 9	6:00 a.m.	Easter Sunrise Service
	10:15 a.m.	Easter Worship with Communion
	11:15 a.m.	Kids' Easter Egg Hunt

Communion Will Change on March 5



Among the many changes caused by the pandemic was the way we serve communion here at First Presbyterian. Since we resumed in-person worship, we have used “communion kits,” prepackaged containers that hold both a wafer and a small cup of juice. Now that we are adjusting to the impact of Covid, the Session has decided to return to serving communion as we did in the pre-Covid days.

Beginning March 5, we will again serve communion by passing plates of bread cubes and trays of juice-filled cups along the pews. For those who prefer to use the communion kits, they will still be available as you enter the sanctuary. As before, we will serve communion on the first Sunday of each month, with occasional exceptions, such as in April of this year, when we will serve communion on the second Sunday, which is Easter. Those who worship with us from home are still encouraged to prepare elements of juice and bread for their own use during the communion liturgy.

We do need people to help serve communion. In the Presbyterian Church, a person must be an ordained elder or deacon to serve communion. If that describes you, the Worship Committee invites you to offer to serve communion by contacting Diana Westfall or Marilyn Linkous.

Note from the Deacons: With the return of regular communion comes the need for help preparing it, as well as serving it. You don't need to be an elder or a deacon to prepare the elements. A sign-up sheet has been placed in the Gauen Gathering Area notebook for anyone willing to help with the preparation. Or you can contact Anne Bates. The deacons have also been serving home communion. If you would like to have communion served in your residence, please call Anne or the church office.

Confirmation in March

Mar. 5	4:15-5:00 p.m.	Confirmation Class – Rev. Gauen’s Office
Mar. 12	4:15-5:00 p.m.	Confirmation Class – Rev. Gauen’s Office
Mar. 19	4:15-5:00 p.m.	Confirmation Class – Rev. Gauen’s Office
Mar. 26	No Class – Westerville Spring Break	

Daily Lenten Devotionals Available

The Worship Committee invites you to pause for self-reflection during Lent by signing up for daily online Lenten Devotionals. They are provided by the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, a Presbyterian school. The devotionals are offered free of charge. You can sign up at <https://www.pts.edu/email>; once you have filled out the form, you can register to receive devotionals for both Lent and Advent. Please consider signing up for these devotionals and taking time each day of Lent for reflection.



Have You Been Visiting First Presbyterian?

And would you like to learn more about who we are and what we do?
Then you are invited to our next

Visitor Orientation
Sunday, March 19
11:30-Noon

This is a chance to meet Rev. Gauen, learn a little about the programs and plans of the church, get a tour of the building, and find out what it means to join with First Presbyterian in service to Christ. If interested, call Rev. Gauen at 614-882-3155 or just meet with us at the back of the Sanctuary following the worship service.

Easter Flowers Order Form

Deadline: March 29



Easter is April 9. A wonderful way to help beautify the sanctuary and to commemorate or honor family and friends is to donate a plant for the service on Easter morning. This year, we are ordering a **variety of spring flowers** in addition to the traditional Easter lilies. If you wish to donate a plant to decorate the sanctuary, please leave the completed order form (below) and a check made out to First Presbyterian Church on the secretary's desk in the Gathering Place or put them in the offering plate.

Deadline to order is March 29. Easter plants are \$12.00 each.

Additional order forms will be printed in the Sunday morning bulletins. You are welcome to take your plant(s) home after the Easter service.

I/We will donate _____ plant(s) @ \$12 each Total donation \$_____

Name _____

Phone _____

Dedication (Name of person/s you wish to remember/honor):

In memory of _____

In memory of _____

In honor of _____

In honor of _____

Elders and Deacons—What Do They Do?

In March, the Nominating Committee of our church begins its work of recruiting people to serve as Elders and Deacons—the servant leaders of our church. If someone from the Nominating Committee asks you to serve in one of these positions, please give it prayerful consideration, and if you feel so called, respond in the affirmative.

To help everyone understand the work of our officers, below is a summary of the responsibilities for both Ruling Elders and Deacons at First Presbyterian. (Ruling Elders are those Elders who are currently sitting on the Session. Once you are ordained as an Elder or a Deacon, you will always be one.)

Basic Duties of Ruling Elders at First Presbyterian Church

The primary responsibility of Ruling Elders at First Presbyterian Church is to provide spiritual and temporal leadership for the congregation through the work of the Session. The Session is responsible for the general welfare of the church: the ordering of worship, educating the congregation, managing our finances and property, supervising the staff, promoting mission and outreach, welcoming new members, providing for the care and nurture of the members, and participating in the work of the Presbytery, our governing body.

The following are duties required of Ruling Elders:

- Session Meetings: The Session meets once a month (not in July) and at other times as needed. Regular meetings are held on the second Monday of the month.
- Committee Assignments: Each Ruling Elder is assigned to chair or co-chair one or more committees of the church. Occasionally, an Elder is given a special assignment not attached to a standing committee of the church. Most committees meet on the first Monday of the month, but committees can and do set their own meeting times. Elders recruit members for their committees and lead them in their work on behalf of the church.
- Ruling Elders help develop how the church carries out the ministry of Jesus Christ through programs and policies and efficient use of the resources of money, time, and personnel.
- Ruling Elders are expected to cultivate their own relationship with Christ and use this relationship to help the Session discern God's will for the church.
- Ruling Elders contribute to the work of the Session through open and honest discussion of the issues facing the church.

Basic Duties of Deacons at First Presbyterian Church

The primary duty of Deacons is to care for the members of our church. Each Deacon has a list of 15 to 20 households that they watch over. The Deacon stays in touch with each of these households during the year and gives physical and spiritual support as needed. Most of a Deacon's work is done individually, in ways that suit the personality and the time constraints of each Deacon.

The Deacons also carry out some ministries as a group. Among the Deacons' corporate ministries are:

- Taking Communion to Shut-ins. Each time we serve communion, two of our Deacons take the elements of bread and juice to our members who cannot make it to the worship service. Many find this to be one of the most significant ministries of the Deacons.
- Helping Hands. The Deacons recruit members who are willing to help other members by giving them a ride, making a repair, or just keeping them company. The Deacons coordinate the compassion of our members with the needs of others.
- Funeral Support. When we have a funeral at our church, the Deacons help with greeting, ushering, and providing a reception after the event.
- Special Educational Events. From time to time, the Deacons sponsor special educational events for the congregation related to their ministry of caring.
- Blessing Box. The Deacons ensure that our Blessing Box is filled with appropriate items donated by church members.
- Picture Directory. Every few years, the Deacons organize the production of a photo directory of the church members.
- Deacon of the Month. Each month, a Deacon is assigned to be the Deacon of the Month. This Deacon handles the distribution of the sanctuary flowers after the service, gives the devotion at the Deacon meeting, and attends the Session meeting that month.



February Session Actions

Speaking of the Session, the following votes were taken during its February 13 meeting:

- Feb. 26 baptism was approved for James Walter Kaste, son of Dan and Kate Kaste, both members of this congregation.
- Member Bev Etling was approved to use the building for a solo choral concert on June 3.
- The Finance and Stewardship Committee report for the month of January was approved.
- The Kitchen Task Force project was approved to move forward with an amendment to include funding sources.
 - Frank G. and Juanita L. Smith Fund: \$96,553
 - Haning Memorial Fund: \$99,856
- Rev. Gauen's housing allowance, tax resolution, and terms of call were approved for presentation at the congregational annual meeting on Feb. 26.
- Member Lori Lampel was approved to serve as a member on the board of Resource Opportunities.

Our Church's Blessing Box



Recently, a member of a community church inquired about our Blessing Box. Also, someone on the website Nextdoor expressed an interest in it. It is becoming known in our community!

The needs of the people served by this box vary. We have found that anything that requires cooking is not appropriate. Even canned fruit and vegetables are not removed. Quite possibly, we are serving needy students and some homeless people.

Currently, we are well supplied, but as interest grows and the Farmers' Market returns, we will see more use. To donate to the Blessing Box, please bring canned protein – tuna, chicken, pasta with meat. Also popular are breakfast bars, bottled water, and all toiletries (razors, shaving cream, shampoo, deodorant, toothbrushes, etc.). Nothing is wasted, as we donate any items not picked up to our Pike County ministry.

Our motto: "Take what you need; leave what you can."

Kirkmont Center Presbyterian Camp News

The Kirkmont Center Presbyterian Camp, located in Zanesfield (northwest of Columbus), is now seeking people to staff its summer program. Details and application instructions are available at its website: www.kirkmontcenter.org. Also, summer camp registration for students is now open! The Kirkmont link for summer camp offerings and registration is <https://www.kirkmontcenter.org/summer-camps/>.

Random Thoughts

Life always offers a second chance. It's called tomorrow.

Don't put the key to your happiness in someone else's pocket.

"I heard your prayer. Trust my timing." God

Sometimes you are delayed where you are because God knows there is a storm where you are headed. Be grateful.

I thank God my name was on the wake-up list this morning.

The Church's January Financial Report

First Presbyterian Church of Westerville Statement of Income and Expense January, Fiscal Year 2023

	January Actual	Year-to-date Actual	Year-to-date Budget	Annual Budget
Income				
01, Contributions	33,944.39	33,944.39	24,779.51	297,354.00
02, Administrative Services	140.00	140.00	83.33	1,000.00
03, Christian Education	0.00	0.00	25.00	1,300.00
05, Membership and Evangelism	0.00	0.00	16.67	1,075.00
08, Worship	105.00	105.00	216.67	2,600.00
Total Income	\$ 34,189.39	\$ 34,189.39	\$ 25,121.18	\$ 303,329.00
Expense				
01, Personnel	17,914.52	17,914.52	19,327.08	227,408.00
02, Administrative Services	5,033.32	5,033.32	4,854.16	60,100.00
03, Christian Education	0.00	0.00	500.00	6,000.00
05, Membership, Evangelism, Events	0.00	0.00	268.74	3,800.00
06, Stewardship	0.00	0.00	54.17	21,250.00
07, Outreach	0.00	0.00	83.34	8,800.00
08, Worship	314.41	314.41	316.67	6,100.00
09, Deacons	0.00	0.00	20.83	250.00
10, Step Forward	0.00	0.00	83.33	1,000.00
Total Expense	\$ 23,262.25	\$ 23,262.25	\$ 25,508.32	\$ 334,708.00
Income Less Expense	\$ 10,927.14	\$ 10,927.14	\$ (387.14)	\$ (31,379.00)
Dedicated Funds Committed to 2023				\$ 31,379.00
Income Over Expense plus Dedicated used		\$ 10,927.14		0.00

Presbytery News

The Presbytery of Scioto Valley has formed a Discernment and Design team that has been at work learning how our Presbytery functions. Many of us at First Presbyterian participated in that process through filling out surveys and joining focus groups. The Discernment and Design team is now moving into the next phase, and they are asking us to continue to support their work through our prayers. Please include the members of the team, which includes Rev. Mary Jane Hitt as co-chair, and their work in your prayers as they now distill what they have learned and put together recommendations for the future of the presbytery.

Youth Services



Sunday School is in full swing! All children from birth to 5th grade are welcome to join us after the children's focus part of worship. We'll have a Bible study and fun activities.



Discovery Zone

Our children are our most precious gifts from God. They are growing and learning. They are building relationships and learning coping mechanisms. Discovery Zone is a safe space for our children and youth to feel welcomed, loved, and appreciated by the community and by God. Here, we help children and teens find greater understanding of the scriptures and how they speak to us today. We also help them build deeper relationships with God through prayer, community fellowship, and mental health disciplines, as well as inspiring them through play, singing, good food, and excellent role models. All children and youth, kindergarten through high school, are invited to join us Sunday evenings from 4:30pm to 6pm. We cannot wait to see you there!



Easter Egg Hunt

Is your family coming to visit this Easter morning? Invite them to join you at church! We are excited to announce our annual Easter egg hunt and family photo booth. Please join us on the most exciting day in our faith life, the day Jesus defied death and the Roman authorities by rising from the grave. Please have your child bring an Easter basket for the hunt (if you do not have one, we will provide one).



Nursery Attendant

We are so excited to welcome back Lisa Tennant as our nursery attendant--and to welcome the youngest among us to the nursery. As part of our efforts to protect our children and our staff, we also need volunteers to help in the nursery. If you would like to help in our church-wide efforts to make a difference in the lives of our children, please contact Rev. Heather A. Hicks to sign up for a Sunday. Heather can also answer any questions you may have about what is expected.

Congratulations to the Newly Baptized!

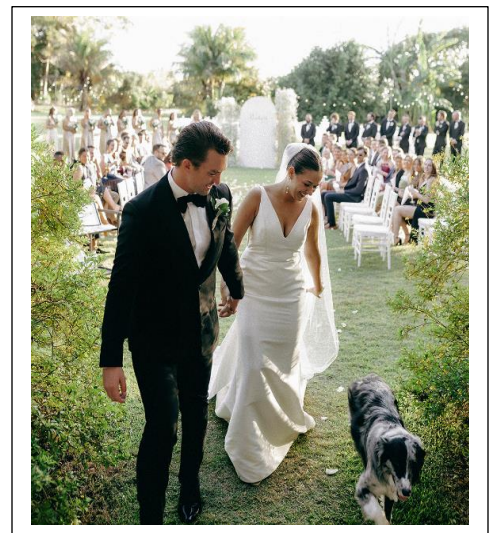


On Sunday, February 26, James Walter Kaste was baptized by his proud grandfather, Pastor Mark Gauen. He is the son of Dan and Katie Kaste, brother of Andrew Kaste, and grandson of (also proud) Kathy Gauen.

And the Newly Wed!

Tim Bates, son of Anne and Tim, married his college sweetheart, Kylie Ponn, on December 31, 2022, in Homestead, Florida. Tim and Kylie are now happily living in Upper Arlington with their dog Louie.

If you look closely at the photo, you may see some other church members, such as Joe Dils, Jack and Julia Bates, and Dexter McNabb (Sue Ann and Denny Norton's grandson).



Event Update



Genealogy Club: Thursday, March 16, 7:00 pm

At our February meeting, we got all the technology for a hybrid meeting to work properly. Members could attend in person in the Knox Room or use Zoom. Ken Bonvallet showed how to use two popular genealogy websites: [ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) and [findagrave.com](https://www.findagrave.com).

We are now meeting on the third Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm. The next meeting will be March 16. Jim Hines will present a line of his family.

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

Dine Out with Nine: Friday, March 10, 6:00 pm

We will be dining at the Nazareth Restaurant at 6:00 pm on Friday, March 10. They close at 8:00 so we are starting a little early. Come and bring your friends. The location is 5239 North Hamilton on the west side across from Home Depot. The phone number is 614-899-1177. Their Mediterranean/Greek cuisine offers a unique experience of culture, community, and flavor. All the dishes are made fresh daily from scratch, and they have complimentary soft pita bread at the table. Additionally, they have a full line of vegetarian dishes. About 85-90% of their ratings are quite positive or mostly very positive. Check their website for menu and reviews. Call Jim Hines or Bob Place to say that you'll be there.

Ladies' Night Out: Tuesday, March 21, 6:30 pm

We had a great time together at Molly Woo's in February and hope you will join us in March. The restaurant for this month will be announced in the Sunday morning bulletin and in Pastor Mark's daily emails. Restaurant suggestions? Contact Diana Westfall.

Fabrics of Faith: Tuesday, March 28, 1-3:00 pm

The Fabrics of Faith group will meet on March 28 on the lower level of the church at 1:00 pm. We'll make items to pass on to people in need. You are welcome to come and visit the group anytime. Please call the church office if you have questions.

Presbyterian 9 Patchers: Tuesday, March 21, 12 – 3:00 pm

The P9P (Presbyterian 9 Patchers) create quilts to be donated to others. We are still working on a group of unfinished quilts that were given to us. We're going to complete as many quilt tops as possible and hopefully raise money for Habitat. If you would like to come and help or have questions, please contact Karen Hoggarth.

Getting to Know You: Elaine Foley



I became a member of WFPC in 2014 when I married my husband Michael, who lives here in Westerville in the Sherbrook subdivision. This was the 4th church I visited, and after one visit, I knew I had found a new home.

I grew up in Dundee, Scotland, and attended the Church of Scotland. My family has deep roots in the Presbyterian Church. I originally came to the USA as a travel nurse. My father was born in Riverside, California, and I wanted to see the sights here. I worked in Georgia and North Carolina, retiring after 40 years as an RN in acute-care hospitals.

My hobbies are bird watching, reading, genealogy, and gardening. Michael and I spend a lot of time at Lake Erie in May watching birds during migration.

We love to go to Magee Marsh, Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, and Howard Marsh Metro Park. Around home, we bird watch around Hoover, Inniswood, and Blendon Woods.

Here at First Presbyterian, I lead the Women's Circle Horizon Bible Study Discussion on the third Thursdays of the month at 11am. We love to welcome new members. This year, our study is about the Sabbath. If you are interested, please contact me or see me on Sunday mornings after the service.

I also sing in the choir, where I'm the one wearing a mask. In addition, I participate in the Tuesday morning bible study and the 4th Monday book discussion. I serve on the church's Continuing Education Committee and have previously served as a Deacon. Before Covid, I participated in the Ladies Dine Out Group, and Michael and I also attended the Dine Out with Nine Group. As I am immune-suppressed due to medication for Systemic Sclerosis, now we try to limit exposure to indoor large groups and busy restaurants. I also spend time volunteering with the National Scleroderma Foundation.

Adult Growth and Development

ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN			
Activity	When	Where	What
Monday Seminar	Mondays 4:00-5:00 p.m.	Zoom Meetings -If interested, contact Tom Jonard.	The Monday Seminar has begun reading <i>Do I Stay Christian?: A Guide for the Doubters, the Disappointed, and the Disillusioned</i> , by Brian D. McLaren. The author is a former college English teacher and was a pastor for twenty-four years. Now he's an author, activist, public theologian, and lecturer.
Weekly 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	"Dine out with Jesus" This special Lenten study will focus on the meals Jesus ate and why they were recorded in the Bible. Class topics will coordinate with Pastor Gauen's sermons during Lent.
4th Monday Discussion Group	4th Mondays, 7:30 – 9:00 pm	Zoom Meetings -If interested, email Pastor Gauen at pastormark@fpcw.us	We are looking at a Christian approach to addressing homelessness with the book <i>Grace Will Lead Us Home</i> by Kevin Nye. Contact Rev. Gauen for more information. Due to Spring Break, the class will meet on the third Monday of March—3/20.
Circle 4 Women	3rd Thursdays, 11:00 am	In-person meeting in the Knox Room -If interested, call Elaine Foley.	Our Presbyterian women's group meets monthly for fellowship and Bible study. Our next meeting is on Thursday, March 16, in person. Led by Elaine Foley.



Pastor's Page

Dear Friends:

When I was in middle school, my parents brought me to church almost every week, and every week I would go to the Middle School Sunday School Class where we would learn about the Bible, God, and faith. Or at least I think that is what we did. I don't really remember. What I do remember is that the Middle School Sunday School Class met in the church kitchen. We all sat around a center work station on stools. It was the coolest place to have a class, and I loved it. Maybe I loved it because on many Sundays, when we were finishing up, men and women of the church would charge into the kitchen carrying armloads of food for a church luncheon or a church dinner that day. On some days when I arrived at class, a pot would be simmering on the stove, filling the kitchen with the best aroma. Is it any wonder that I was often trying to convince my parents to stay for the luncheon or to come back for the dinner! I'm not sure how much I learned in those classes, but what I did learn is that the church kitchen is where God is.

I think God can be found in most Presbyterian church kitchens. We all know that Presbyterians thrive on meals—food and fellowship are what bind Presbyterians together. And it is in the church kitchen where the glue that does that binding is formed. Whether it is used to keep potluck dishes warm or to prepare a five-course meal, the kitchen is where it all starts. The Bible tells us that whenever two are three are gathered, there God will be also, and I have found that to be true, especially in the church kitchen.

On February 27, work started on our kitchen remodeling project. It is a comprehensive project that will replace all the appliances, sinks, shelves, and cabinets—all will be upgraded so that we can better prepare meals and clean up after them. I want to thank our Kitchen Task Force, led by John McElhaney, for their work in making this happen. I also want to express my appreciation for the gifts of the Smith Family and Bob Haning that have provided the funds for this project. The remodeling project is expected to be finished in May, or maybe even sooner. When it is done, we'll celebrate the occasion with...a meal, of course!

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Mark L. Lauer". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Pastor Mark

P.S. – Keeping on the theme of food, my preaching series for Lent is titled “Dine Out with Jesus” and will focus on the meals that Jesus shared with his disciples or the ones he used to illustrate his teachings.