

First Presbyterian Church
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October 2023

Uptown Westerville Inc. Installs Historic Marker

[Uptown Westerville Inc.](#), (UWI) an economic development organization, has installed an historic marker in front of First Presbyterian.

The 37-plaque project was jointly sponsored by Uptown Westerville Inc. and the Westerville Historical Society and funded through a grant from the Columbus Foundation. Thirty-six of the plaques currently are installed. The 37th will be placed on the former Corbin's Saloon on West Main (across from Westerville Cleaners) whenever a plan for its repurposing comes to fruition.

The First Pres marker was in the second round of signs in the project. Round 2 began last fall, when UWI consulted us for input on the text, written by local historian Don Foster. The Uptown Westerville Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2019, largely for the role of The Anti-Saloon League in Prohibition. First Pres is one of five historic churches in the mix.

The text of our sign reads: **First Presbyterian Church**
The first sermon preached for Presbyterians in this area was held in 1812 in a log cabin where City Hall stands today. Eventually a building to serve the village of Westerville was desired, and the edifice pictured above was constructed here in 1864. It was razed and replaced by the present-day structure in 1913. The bell was saved, and the design of the tower housing it was carried over to the new church.

Historically, church members have taken active roles in local and national movements. Hannah Mayne, president of the Women's Christian Temperance Union local chapter, led an effort to ban the State Theatre from showing movies on Sunday. She was the first woman elected as an elder in the Columbus Presbytery. Named in her honor are a city park and a residence hall at Otterbein University. Agnes Meyer Driscoll joined the U.S. Navy in 1918 and was assigned the highest position allowed for women, Chief Yeoman. A leading cryptanalyst, she was instrumental in breaking complex Japanese navy codes during World War II.



Session Accepts Step Forward Final Report



The Step Forward Task Force presented its final report to Session on Sept. 11. The task force has spent the last year obtaining input from the congregation regarding all changes made in our operations as a result of the pandemic. Which changes should be kept and which should be left by the wayside?

Following its acceptance by Session, the report was emailed to all church members and friends on *The Advocate* distribution list. Hard copies are available in the Gauen Gathering Area. The task force used three methods to take the pulse of the

congregation. Beginning with interviews of the Board of Deacons and all Session standing committees, the task force then staged two congregational meetings in the Step Forward Together event. The first was an in-person potluck immediately following the service on June 11. It was followed by a virtual meeting later that week. Both Step Forward Together events included small breakout group discussions. The data collection concluded with an online survey.

The results of the fact finding will be a topic of discussion at the Session-Deacons joint retreat on Oct. 8. Potential paths forward will be considered by the appropriate Session committees. In summary, the recommendations/observations are as follows:

- We should continue streaming services and offering hybrid meeting options.
- Our sustainability as a congregation is threatened by a dwindling number of young families.
- Communication issues are clouding the organization of committees and volunteer opportunities, making it difficult for members to understand how to participate.
- Committee organizations and jurisdictions need to be clarified.
- We need to memorialize those jurisdictions and organization in a written set of responsibilities and job descriptions for every function in the church, including everything from one-person jobs to the Session's standing committees.
- Our outreach efforts need to return to more hands-on mission activities than simply sending money to various efforts. Those efforts should include a focus on local projects (but not be limited as such.)
- Our music program needs to return to the more robust mode of musical worship we had in the past.
- We are thirsty for more social interaction within our faith family and need to return to potlucks and other fun activities on a regular basis.
- We need to look for additional ways to engage each other in substantive Christian activities.

Step Forward Task Force members are Dorothy Driskell, Peg Duffy, Jen Henson, Gary Hinzman, Mary Lee Jones, Elizabeth Moes, and Sherri Monteith. The team is planning a quick question and answer session for anybody who wants to discuss the report. Although not currently scheduled, it will follow a Sunday morning service in October.

Our New Church Directory!

We are thrilled to announce the upcoming launch of our new online church directory, a powerful tool that will help us stay connected and informed as a congregation. In our ever-evolving world, we understand that technology can be intimidating, especially for those who may not be familiar with it. Therefore, we want to provide you with all the information you need to confidently navigate our new system.



Introducing Wild Apricot We have carefully chosen Wild Apricot (<https://wildapricot.org>) as the cloud software provider for our church's new communication, website, and member management platform. This platform will serve as an invaluable resource for our community, and we are excited to begin this journey with you.

What to Expect The initial phase of this rollout will introduce our long-awaited church directory, which will be hosted by Wild Apricot. This directory will be accessible to all members via the web or a dedicated mobile application. It will serve as the official record for your member data, allowing you to update your information and designate certain details as private if you choose.

Getting Started As we approach our target launch date of October 1, here's what you can expect:

- **Access Instructions:** When the directory is live, you will receive an email with clear instructions on how to log in and access the directory online.
- **Mobile Application:** You will also receive a separate email with step-by-step instructions on how to download and use the mobile application for easy access on your smartphones or tablets.

Technology Assistance We understand that not everyone is tech-savvy, and that's perfectly okay! To ensure everyone can take full advantage of this valuable tool, our dedicated Deacons will be hosting technology assistance sessions after church services during October. These sessions will be a fantastic opportunity for you to learn, ask questions, and get comfortable with the new system. We encourage you to participate, and please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any concerns or questions in the meantime.

For any immediate questions or concerns regarding the directory or technology assistance, please feel free to contact Chris Henson or Anne Bates. They will be more than happy to assist you.

We are excited about the possibilities our new church directory offers, and the enhanced communication and connection it will provide within our church family. As we embrace this technology together, we look forward to growing stronger as a community and supporting one another on this journey. Thank you for your patience and enthusiasm as we introduce this exciting addition to our church. Stay tuned for more information in the coming weeks.

Seed Money: Donating to Crop Walk

The symbolic walk happens on October 1, but the important walk happens when someone comes up to you and asks, “Will you sponsor me?” Did you know that a \$10 donation to Crop Walk provides 100 meals? How is that possible? That money helps buy seeds that someone plants, harvests the food, and then cooks and serves it. God working in our community is great theology. Think about how Jesus blessed and broke the two fishes and gave them to others to distribute. The miracle occurs, then and now, when people discover they have more to give than they thought. They have more than enough. For the last two years, our church has raised over \$3000. That was twice our goal. Let’s keep our record going. Sponsor someone who inspires you.

Beginners Handbell Class: Oct. 10-Nov. 14

Our Music Director, Earl Linhart, will soon be offering Beginners Handbell Classes. The classes will begin on **Tuesday, October 10, at 1:30 PM in the sanctuary and run for 6 weeks through Tuesday, November 14.** This non-performing class is designed to give people hands-on learning about the mechanics of playing handbells. Since this is not a class on how to read music, ringers need to have some background in playing the piano or another instrument, or singing in a group that involves understanding note values and counting. We need to have 7-8 people to have a class, and perfect attendance is ideal. Please sign up for the classes in the white binder in the Gathering Area or see Earl.



Music Department Schedule for October

Wednesday, October 4: Spirit Ringers Handbells 6:30

Men’s Chorus rehearsal 7:15

Sanctuary Choir 7:30

Wednesday, October 11: Spirit Ringers Handbells 6:30

Wednesday, October 18: Spirit Ringers Handbells 6:30

Sanctuary Choir 7:15

Wednesday, October 25: nothing and amen!

Plus, every Sunday morning, the sanctuary choir rehearses from 9:15-10:00 am.

Notice of a Congregational Meeting

The Session has called for a Meeting of the Congregation to elect officers to fill vacancies on the Session and Board of Deacons. The meeting will be held on Sunday, October 8, at the end of the worship service (~11:15 a.m.). Members are asked to attend; visitors are welcome to attend.

A Message from Rev. Nice **(Originally in the Presbytery's weekly newsletter)**

Dear Friends,

What does it mean to "DO CHURCH"? In my humble opinion, doing church means showing up somewhere (even sitting on your couch watching a livestream). Doing church takes up around an hour or so (depending on where you go) per week.

What does it mean to "BE CHURCH"? I think that is what Jesus was trying to teach to people. To be the neighbor, to build upon what was given to you as an investment, to go into the world and teach others what you have learned about Jesus in your own life.



Unfortunately, we have gotten a bit off track. We often think of doing church instead of being the church. In our world we gauge success by how many cars are in the parking lot (similar to butts in seats) and how many young people are seen entering the building. We measure our success against what the world sees as important, rather than what God has told us is important.

Do you remember Moses telling the Israelites that they were to share what they had learned with the future generations? Do you recall seeing the Jewish community passing along the words of their ancestors in their Passover liturgy? What are we passing along?

If your answer is "the right way to behave in church" or "the way the worship service is put together" or even "my favorite hymns"...I hate to tell you...but those things are killing our future congregations.

The young who we long to see in our churches are looking for authentic ways to live out our faith. They want to hear your testimony about where you have seen God at work, where you learned to trust God, how you have changed your life to follow a living God.

Being the church is being the neighbor, offering a generous hospitality to strangers and friends, acknowledging the God-image in every person, not just those you like. Being the church is how we show we are in the world but set apart from the world. How are you doing at BEING?

In Christ's service,

The Rev. Kathy Nice, Transitional General Presbyter Presbytery of Scioto Valley

Following the retirement of Jeannie Harsh, Rev. Nice has agreed to lead the Presbytery of Scioto Valley (PSV) as we prepare the Presbytery for and search for a new General Presbyter. Rev. Nice is from Pennsylvania, where she served as Stated Clerk of Kiskiminetas (Kiski) Presbytery and as a pastor to several churches. She is a second-career Minister of Word and Sacrament, after 25 years in government service. She earned her MDiv at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary and her MBA at Seton Hill University, where she was also adjunct faculty in the MBA program. As Transitional General Presbyter, she will help implement changes to the Presbytery structure to better meet the needs of the 21st century churches. She and her husband live in Clintonville. (We were fortunate to have Rev. Nice as our guest preacher on September 24.)

The Church's August Financial Report

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

	August Actual	Year-to-date Actual	Year-to-date Budget	Annual Budget
Income				
01, Contributions	19,340.00	196,030.39	198,236.08	297,354.00
02, Administrative Services	-500.00	640.00	666.64	1,000.00
03, Christian Education	0.00	20.00	1,200.00	1,300.00
05, Membership and Evangelism	0.00	300.00	1,008.36	1,075.00
08, Worship	35.00	1,268.00	1,733.36	2,600.00
Total Income	\$ 18,875.00	\$ 198,258.39	\$ 202,844.44	\$ 303,329.00
Expense				
01, Personnel	17,371.95	146,932.74	149,796.64	227,408.00
02, Administrative Services	2,360.08	44,803.41	41,833.28	60,100.00
03, Christian Education	133.26	3,810.61	4,000.00	6,000.00
05, Membership, Evangelism, Events	46.98	947.33	2,874.92	3,800.00
06, Stewardship	0.00	8,552.00	15,783.36	21,250.00
07, Outreach	0.00	3,062.07	5,016.72	8,800.00
08, Worship	779.96	3,913.43	4,333.36	6,100.00
09, Deacons	0.00	0.00	166.64	250.00
10, Step Forward	0.00	287.73	666.64	1,000.00
Total Expense	\$ 20,692.23	\$ 212,309.32	\$ 224,471.56	\$ 334,708.00
Income Less Expense	\$ (1,817.23)	\$ (14,050.93)	\$ (21,627.12)	\$ (31,379.00)
Dedicated Funds Committed to 2023*		\$ 14,050.93		\$ 31,379.00
Income Over Expense plus Dedicated used		<u>0.00</u>		<u>0.00</u>
* Property Maintenance \$2929 Scholarships \$3000 Youth Camps \$1065 2019 Blessings \$7057				

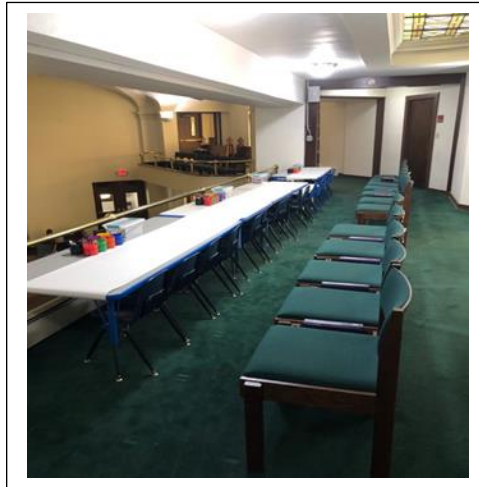
September Session Actions

The following votes were taken at the Session meeting on Monday, Sept. 11:

- The August financial report was approved.
- The final report of the Step Forward Task Force was accepted and, by consensus, was approved to be distributed to the congregation via email on Sept. 12.
- Two vacation absences were approved for Rev. Gauen:
 - Oct. 28-29. (Mary Jane Hitt will preach.)
 - Dec. 26-31 (A guest preacher will need to be scheduled.)

Youth Services

New Worship Space for Kids



We have opened our new worship space for KIDS! Kids will now take part in our worship service in a whole new way. We will meet before the service upstairs in the central balcony area. Tables with quiet art supplies, sensory bins, puzzles, toys, etc., will be available for all children who come into our sanctuary. If your kids don't want to leave mom and dad, we have seats up there for parents, too. We also continue to have our worship bags with fun activities for kids who want to stay downstairs with their families. We invite you and your children to explore and enjoy this space so we can make it even better. We look forward to seeing you there. We will be changing things around once a month to keep this fresh throughout the year, so we welcome any donations that be used quietly during our worship service, such as crafts, puzzles, fidgets, etc. If you would like to donate any supplies to this ministry, please see Rev. Heather A. Hicks.

Discovery Zone

Discovery Zone will meet from 11:30pm-1pm on Sundays after church. Children from kindergarten through high school are welcome to attend. We will provide pizza, salad, and drinks for all attendees and their parents. Our Halloween celebration will be on **October 29**. Please dress up as your favorite character and join in the celebration.



Saturday Morning Farmers' Market



The Farmers' Market is over now, but we send a special thank you to all who helped us this summer. The children's eyes light up when they see us and our bubbles. Sometimes they do not want to leave. This ministry is a great way for us to show just how much we support our community and the little lives that surround us. Thank you for all your hard work to greet and play with these young individuals and share God's love.

Author's Visit on Monday, October 23! *Call Me American* by Abdi Nor Iftin

Join us as we visit Otterbein to listen to the author of the university's common book for 2023-2024, *Call Me American*. In this memoir, Abdi Nor Iftin shares his story of being born to nomadic parents in Somalia, learning English by listening to pop music and watching action films starring Arnold Schwarzenegger, escaping war-torn Somalia to Kenya, and eventually realizing his dream of coming to America. Iftin now lives in Maine and is studying political science at the University of Southern Maine, where he is on a path to gain citizenship. He will speak at Otterbein on Monday, October 23, 7:30 pm, at the Courtright Memorial Library.

Our Blessing Box



The church's Blessing Box (beside the outside stairs leading to the parking lot) is visited more frequently now that students are back in school. Bottles of water and snacks are in good supply. We are also providing pet food in small storage bags. Donations are always needed in these categories: laundry soap, shampoo, shaving cream, toothpaste, and razors. Thanks for helping the church support our community!

Event Update

Dine Out: Friday, October 13, 6:30 pm

Please join us on Friday, October 13, at 6:30 for an evening of food and fun conversation. We will be dining at Wendell's near Meijer's in north Westerville. It is located at 925 North State St. (614-818-0400). The restaurant has a range of moderately priced standard menu items and can take any number of people, so come along. Check out their website for a complete menu of offerings. Please contact Jim Hines or Bob Place or ask questions. Thanks and hope to see you there!

Jim and Bob

Ladies' Night Out: Tuesday, October 17, 6:30 pm

We hope you'll join us on the 17th. Restaurant TBD. Suggestions? Contact Diana Westfall.

Fabrics of Faith: Monday, October 23, 1-3:00 pm

Everyone is welcome to our next Fabrics of Faith gathering on October 23 at 1:00 in Fellowship Hall. When we meet, people do needlework, share completed projects, or watch others work. We chat and laugh and enjoy fellowship, whether working or not. It's fun!

You don't have to have a project in hand; you don't have to know how to do one. We have materials; bring yourself and a smile. Mark your calendar and plan to join us: October 23 at 1:00 PM. Please contact Beckey Stamm for more information.

Men's Breakfast: Saturday, October 21, 10:00 am

The men of the church are welcome to come and enjoy a delicious breakfast on October 21. For more information or to volunteer to help, contact Jack Anderson or John McElhaney. You can sign up in the white binder in the Gathering Area.



Mermaid Bookmarks: Thursday, October 19, 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

Make WATERCOLOR MERMAID BOOKMARKS at the Westerville Public Library with local artist **Olivia Hodorowski**. Let your mermaid save the page on your next favorite read! All supplies provided. Olivia's presentation is part of the library's Wizards & Wands Festival and is geared to ages 18 and older. Registration opens October 5 at 9:00am.

Getting to Know You: Liz Gauen

Hi, everyone! You may know me as Pastor Gauen's kid, but outside of church, I work as a Rehabilitation Engineer at the Ohio State Wexner Medical Center Assistive Technology Center. As a Rehabilitation Engineer, I work alongside physical, occupational, and speech therapists to create and adapt technologies for people with disabilities.



While my first exposure to wheelchairs was actually racing my grandfather's wheelchair down the hallways of their apartment complex, my interest in Rehab Engineering was piqued in college. During my senior year, I worked as a student manager for the University of Illinois wheelchair basketball team, where I learned a lot about disability culture and developed a passion for Rehab Engineering.

When I moved back to Columbus, I had no idea that the Ohio State Wexner Medical Center actually has one of the largest Assistive Technology Centers in the country! Our clinic is unique because we have multiple services under one roof, including a wheelchair clinic, a driver rehabilitation program, an augmentative and alternative communication clinic, and a 'smart clinic,' where we help with phone, computer, and smart home access. We see around 50 patients per day--folks of all ages and all diagnoses.

My role is also unique - I'm one of only a few full time clinical rehabilitation engineers in the country. My days are always different; one day I might be programming a power wheelchair for someone to control with their eyes, another day I might be setting up a minivan for someone to drive with joysticks, and another day I might be helping someone use everything on their computer with just their voice. We even started an adaptive gaming program, where kids and adults play video games with adaptive controllers!



My favorite part of my job is helping people be more independent in doing the things that are important to them. My patients all have interesting stories to tell, and I like to be a piece of helping them get out and be able to tell those stories.

You can learn more about our clinic here: <https://health.osu.edu/health/general-health/mobility-and-assistive-technologies>

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 - Interested? Contact Tom Jonard.	The Monday CE Seminar is reading and discussing <i>When God Interrupts</i> by M. Craig Barnes. Our lives are constantly changing. It's hard to keep up, to keep our balance. <i>When God Interrupts</i> is for men and women who are not living the lives they had planned.
Weekly Bible Studies	Tuesdays, 9:30-10:30 am Wednesdays, 7:00-8:00 p.m.	Tuesday: Hybrid Wednesday: Zoom -If interested email pastor Gauen at pastormark@fpcw.us	<i>So You May Have Life: The Gospel of John</i> The Weekly Bible Studies will begin the fall with a look at the Gospel of John. Join us in person on Tuesday mornings or via zoom on either Tuesday mornings or Wednesday evenings.
4th Monday Discussion Group	4th Mondays, 7:30 pm	Zoom Meetings -If interested, email Pastor Gauen at pastormark@fpcw.us	The 4 th Monday group has been looking at the issue of homelessness from a Christian perspective. We will next meet on Monday, October 23. Be sure to join us then.
Circle 4 Women	3rd Thursdays, 11:00 am	Zoom Meetings -If interested, call Elaine Foley.	Our Presbyterian women's group will meet on Thursday, October 26, on Zoom. Led by Elaine Foley.



Pastor's Page

This is a copy of the letter I sent to the congregation in September. I am reprinting it now for anyone who did not receive the letter earlier.

Pastor Mark

September 13, 2023

Dear Members and Friends of First Presbyterian:

I tried to think of some clever way to say this, even some philosophical way, but I can't. So instead, I'll come right out and say it: I am announcing my retirement from ministry at First Presbyterian Church. My last Sunday will be June 2, 2024.

As many of you know, Kathy is retiring from teaching at the end of this school year, so it seems fitting that I retire at the same time. We will explore the wonders of retirement together.

I am announcing my retirement now on the recommendation of our Presbytery Executive, Rev. Kathleen Nice, who told me normally retirement is announced six to nine months prior to the date. I chose the longer end of that window to allow this church to include my retirement in the plans for 2024. This lead time will also give the Session time to find a transitional, or interim, pastor to come and help this church move from my pastorate to new pastoral leadership.

It was 26 years ago this week that I came here to preach a sermon and to be voted on as the new pastor of First Presbyterian Church. It has been quite a ride since then. I have shared many special moments with you in this congregation, some joyful, some sad, some successful, some not so. But I have felt God's loving presence in all of them.

It has been a long time since this church has had to find a new pastor. During my remaining months here, I will try to educate the church on the Presbyterian process of transition. To that end, I have asked Rev. Nice to preach on Sunday, September 24. She will help us understand what needs to happen in these last months of my ministry here and in the months after I leave.

For the near term, Kathy and I plan to stay in our present house in Westerville—two grandsons make that an easy choice. So, you may see one or both of us in town. However, I will not be worshipping with you on Sunday mornings or attending any church functions after I retire. I also will not conduct any weddings or funerals. This is a rule of the Presbytery--and just good practice. This will allow a new pastor to establish himself or herself as your shepherd and guide.

When I came here, this church welcomed me as a pastor and I never felt like I was living with the ghost of my predecessor, Rev. Jane Mykrantz. I was helped by Jane in that she also adhered to this Presbytery policy. I want to give my successor the same gift that Jane gave me.

I hope that in these last months that we have together as pastor and congregation, we can enjoy each other's company, share fond memories, talk about what the future might bring, and continue to minister to each other and the community. And through it all, I hope that we can praise God for all the wonderful blessings we have. I know I will.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Mark L. Lauer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "M" and "L".