

ADVOCATE

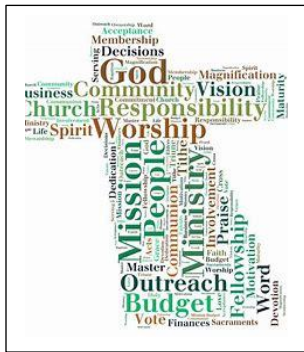
First Presbyterian Church
41 West College Avenue
Westerville, Ohio 43081-2103
614-882-3155 Phone
www.westervillefirstpresbyterian.org

February 2024

Annual Meeting and Spaghetti Luncheon

Sunday, February 25

11:15 a.m. – Following the Worship Service,



At our Annual Meeting, our congregation gathers to review the year past and to look forward to the year to come. We will also receive the 2024 operating budget and vote on the terms of call for our pastor. This year, we will focus on the upcoming pastoral transition.

Members are asked to attend this meeting. Visitors and guests are welcome to attend as well.

Following the Annual Meeting, everyone is invited to a Spaghetti Luncheon, sponsored by the Membership, Events, and Evangelism Committee and the Christian Education Committee.

Copies of the 2023 Annual Report will be available at the church beginning on Sunday, Feb. 11.

Ash Wednesday Worship

Wednesday, February 14

7:00 p.m. in the Church Sanctuary

Lent is the six-week period before Easter and traditionally has been a time of spiritual renewal and dedication within the life of the church. We will observe the beginning of Lent with the Ash Wednesday worship service on Wednesday, February 14, at 7:00 p.m. This service will be held in our church sanctuary. Make this year's Lenten season a time of spiritual renewal for you.

Laity Sunday January 21, 2024



On January 21, our congregation was very fortunate to have Jennifer Henson present the sermon as part of Laity Sunday. She described the journey that she and her husband Chris took to become members of First Presbyterian Church. Jen also shared how the loss of two babies helped form her relationship with God.

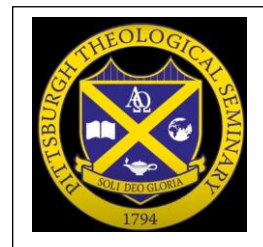
What she learned during her journey enabled Jen to accept the role of Deacon at our church, helping with funerals and comforting people, especially those who are grieving. Jen reminded us that “God does not call the equipped, He equips the called.” She sees God at work in her life as she shares and receives love and support from our church community.

Jen urged us to look for opportunities “to console others, to rejoice and weep with others, to pray for grace and understanding so we can love others.... I hope you go from this place, listening to the nudges of God, reaching out to people and sharing His love, grace, comfort, and sometimes even grief. Even if you don’t feel like you have the right skills or just the right words, because I know, if He places it on your heart, He will guide you. It may even be a kind hand on someone’s shoulder, or a hug hello at church. The more we pray for His guidance, and follow His word to love one another, He will continue to show us His love, even when we least expect it. Amen.”

Thank you, Jen.

Daily Lenten Devotionals Available

Lent begins on February 14, and the Worship Committee invites you to use this time to pause for self-reflection. To help in your study, daily online Lenten Devotionals 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.



News from the Administrative Services Committee

- The Administrative Services Committee (ASC) has completed the hook-up of all the door monitoring security cameras now that the Technology Team has increased the strength of our WiFi. Some of these cameras were initially installed during the lockdown of the COVID pandemic, but we had to wait until adequate WiFi was available to activate all of the monitors.
- "Stewardship of our Earth" announcement: You will find marked baskets and bins at the sanctuary exits so that we can begin recycling bulletins on Sunday morning--unless you are taking your bulletin home. Please use these marked receptacles for bulletins only. Thank you!

An Invitation to Join the Church Sunday, February 18, 11:15am

On Sunday, February 18, First Presbyterian Church will hold a gathering for those interested in formally joining the church. Visitors and friends are invited to join with members of our Session to learn about this church and be received into membership. We will meet in the back of the sanctuary for this gathering. Please contact the church office, 614-882-3155, to indicate your interest in attending.

A Penn Dutch Saying:

As a child of God,

Prayer is like

Calling home everyday.

-- Suzanne Woods Fisher.....who writes about the Amish
(offered by Olivia Hodorowski)



Easter Flowers

Ordering Deadline: Monday, March 18

Easter is March 31. A variety of spring flowers and Easter lilies will color the church again this year. You can help by contributing **\$11.00** to dedicate a plant in honor or memory of a loved one or friend. Please bring or mail your order form to the church office by **Monday, March 18**, with a check made out to our church and marked "Easter flowers." Additional order forms will be printed in the Sunday morning bulletins and available at the church.

If you wish, you are welcome to take your plant(s) home after the Easter service.

I/We will donate _____ plant(s) @ \$11 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 _____

Reprinted from the *Presbyterian Outlook* and suggested by Mary Lee Jones:

Rocking the Lifeboat

Dear *Outlook* readers,

My first boyfriend's name was Jack. Was that because I was 13 and had recently watched "Titanic" for the first time (featuring not one but two VHS tapes)? Perhaps! I did love hearing Leonardo DiCaprio calling my name. While my middle school relationship, sadly, did not stand up to the fictional love of Jack and Rose, other aspects of the movie stuck.



For instance, I pictured the final, devastating images of "Titanic's" lifeboats when reading Sue Krummel's article "[No one wants to rock the lifeboat.](#)" Krummel, a Presbytery leader, thinks about the purpose of a lifeboat as a metaphor for modern churches being conflict-averse. "Are we stuck in our lifeboats, doing everything we can to keep them from rocking? In so doing, are we making them into something they were never intended to be?" she writes.

Perhaps the secret to moving forward to new life and solid land is to ask "Why?" diligently, she writes. Maybe it's time to do things a new way and embrace change as the Holy Spirit's active movement rather than the harbinger of doom.

In Christ,

Rose

Outlook Digital Content Editor

Martin Luther King Day

Monday, January 15

The 19th Annual Westerville Martin Luther King Day Breakfast was held on January 15 at Villa Milano. Last year, our church sponsored two tables of eight. This year, due to growing interest in this event, First Presbyterian filled three tables of eight!

The featured speaker was Nic Stone, an outspoken advocate for racial and social justice and NYT bestselling author of *Dear Martin* and its sequel *Dear Justyce*, among other books. Ms Stone offered insightful reflections on the topic “What would Dr. King say today?”



Our Blessing Box

The Blessing Box is an ongoing mission of the deacons and our church membership. Community members do as the sign says: “Take what you need. Leave what you can.”

To find out the current needs, look in the white binder in the Gathering Area. Always requested are proteins: chicken and tuna tins and pouches, ramen noodles, peanut butter and cheese crackers, etc. Pets are not forgotten. We can divide large bags of cat and dog food into smaller bags.

Think seasonally, too: hand/foot warmers, warm socks, hats, and gloves. Children home more during the bad weather? They would love crayons, coloring and activity books. Hot Wheels and Play Doh are inexpensive and popular. When you go on trips, you might bring back the travel-size toiletries.

Your donations can be placed on the shelves downstairs near the Pike County crates.

Families Flourish Event to be Held at First Presbyterian Saturday, February 17, 11:00 am-1:00 pm



Last May, some of you heard Shiloh Todorov explain the goals of Families Flourish (formerly Move to Prosper). This non-profit helps single-parent families move to safe neighborhoods, improve their life skills, and raise their and their children’s expectations for success in school and life.

Over the past four years, four “classes” of families have benefited from the program with impressive results. Families Flourish now wants to provide an opportunity for the participants to gather for a social event—so that they can form community, share their experiences, and help one another navigate these changes in their lives.

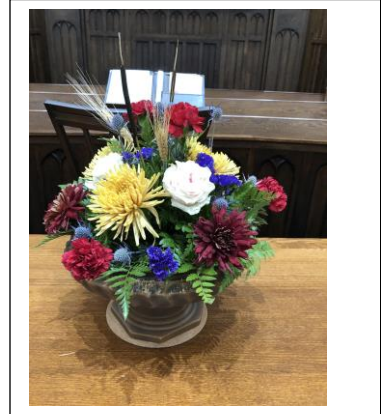
Families Flourish asked First Presbyterian to host this social, and Lori Lampel and Becky Stamm offered to oversee it. So far, about 15 members/friends of First Pres are helping with this—they’ll host in Fellowship Hall, provide activities for adults and children, and offer a brunch. The event will be held on Saturday, February 17, from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM.

If you volunteered for this—and you know who you are—you already have a role. If you don’t have a role yet, call one of us, and we’ll find one for you. If you haven’t volunteered yet, feel free to call Becky or Lori; we’ll find a place for you.

Friends, this is an exciting step for our church. We are reaching out to the community in a novel and meaningful way. If you are unable to help or provide materials or time, please offer a prayer for the success of this project.

Flower Donations for the Sanctuary

We have openings for memorial flower donations in February and March. Donating flowers is an important aspect of our church life, as the arrangements grace the sanctuary during the worship service. Our fellow members who are home-bound or experiencing other challenges appreciate receiving them after the service, and we thank the Deacons for delivering them. Of course, you can take the arrangement home if you wish. The cost is \$35.00.



The arrangement on the right was given by Mary Lee Jones in honor of her daughters, Melinda and Melanie.

The Church's December Financial Report

First Presbyterian Church of Westerville Statement of Income and Expense December, Fiscal Year 2023				
	December Actual	Year-to-date Actual	Year-to-date Budget	Annual Budget
Income				
01, Contributions	24,967.35	303,145.72	297,354.00	297,354.00
02, Administrative Services	180.00	890.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
03, Christian Education	0.00	205.00	1,300.00	1,300.00
05, Membership and Evangelism	0.00	300.00	1,075.00	1,075.00
08, Worship	364.00	2,450.00	2,600.00	2,600.00
Total Income	\$ 25,511.35	\$ 306,990.72	\$ 303,329.00	\$ 303,329.00
Expense				
01, Personnel	17,311.47	219,345.29	227,408.00	227,408.00
02, Administrative Services	3,892.35	65,542.93	60,100.00	60,100.00
03, Christian Education	638.06	5,228.83	6,000.00	6,000.00
05, Membership, Evangelism, Events	315.58	1,691.40	3,800.00	3,800.00
06, Stewardship	2,735.00	14,123.00	21,250.00	21,250.00
07, Outreach	2,580.00	6,362.07	8,800.00	8,800.00
08, Worship	1,477.23	6,196.61	6,100.00	6,100.00
09, Deacons	0.00	17.18	250.00	250.00
10, Step Forward	0.00	287.73	1,000.00	1,000.00
Total Expense	\$ 28,949.69	\$ 318,795.04	\$ 334,706.00	\$ 334,706.00
Income Less Expense	\$ (3,438.34)	\$ (11,804.32)	\$ (31,379.00)	\$ (31,379.00)
Dedicated Funds Committed to 2023*		\$ 12,584.32		\$ 31,379.00
Income Over Expense plus Dedicated used		780.00		0.00
<small>* Property Maintenance \$2929 Scholarships \$3000 Youth Camps \$1065 2019 Blessings \$5528.25 applied of \$14000 budgeted Mobility Assistance \$62.07</small>				

January Session Actions

At its January 15 meeting, Session:

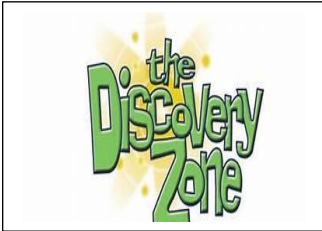
- Unanimously approved a two-hour retreat for Elders on Session following worship on Feb. 4, for the purpose of transition preparation as Rev. Gauen heads to retirement.
- Unanimously approved the 2024 revised budget prepared by Treasurer Barb Klingman, along with the 2023 year-end report and December financial statement.

Youth Ministries

Youth to Help Sponsor Spaghetti Luncheon

The church's Membership, Evangelism, and Events Committee and the Christian Education Committee will host a Spaghetti Luncheon following the Annual Meeting on Sunday, February 25. And the youth and children of the church will help prepare, serve, and clean-up for the event. If you can help out, please call the church office, 614-882-3155, to sign up.

Discovery Zone



Discovery Zone meets from 11:15 am-12:30 pm on Sundays after the church service. Children from kindergarten through high school are welcome to attend. Our teachers, Kaitlin Kaste and Bev Etling, lead the children in games, crafts, and Bible stories. Lunch is included.

Kids' Space

Our Kids' Space worship area is in the center balcony of the church. There, children can participate in worship while having quiet activities to keep them busy. Parents can sit nearby as well. Our Nursery Supervisor, Lisa Tennant, helps with the activities and can take active kids into the Heart Room for more activities.

Thanks!

Thanks to everyone who helped with our January Youth Service Project! We packed sack lunches for the Open Shelter and learned that everyone needs help sometime and everyone has something to give to others—a lesson for all of us to learn.



Event Update

Genealogy Club: Thursday, February 15, 7:00 pm



At our January meeting, Ken Bonvallet demonstrated how to use free features on three websites:

- Wikitree.com family trees and documentation
- MyHeritage.com photo dating
- Sar.org and Dar.org to find descendants of your Revolutionary War ancestors

The program for February will be announced later. If you are interested or just curious, and have not contacted us before, contact Bill Hitt or Ken Bonvallet.

Dine Out: Friday, February 9, 6:30 pm

On February 9, the Dine-Out group will meet at 6:30 pm at Mimi's Cafe on Polaris Parkway. Many of you are familiar with Mimi's as one of our favorite go-to restaurants. The event is open, as always, to church members and their friends and family. Please contact Jim Hines to make reservations or ask questions. Hope to see you there!

Ladies' Night Out: Tuesday, February 20, 6:30 pm

Ladies, we hope you'll join us on February 20 for a fun time. Restaurant TBD. Suggestions? Contact Diana Westfall.

Fabrics of Faith: Monday, February 26, 1-3:00 pm

Each month, Fabrics of Faith meets, and we do needlework, share completed projects, or watch others work. We chat and laugh and enjoy fellowship, whether working on a project or not.

Our next meeting is Monday, February 26, at 1:00 PM in Fellowship Hall. Watch Sunday's bulletins and announcements. You don't have to have a project in hand; you don't even have to know how to do one. We have materials; we'll help you get started. Bring yourself and a smile.

Please contact Beckey Stamm for information.

Presbyterian 9 Patchers: Tuesday, February 20, 12:00 – 3:00 pm

The P9P (Presbyterian 9 Patchers) create quilts to be donated to others. Our next meeting is on Tuesday, February 20, in the basement meeting area. If you wish, bring your machine and any project you're working on. No project? No problem! There are unfinished projects at the church. If you just want to come and visit, that would be great!

Getting to Know Our New Members:

Helen Baker



- Born & raised in Drexel Hill, PA (suburb of Philly). Love hoagies and soft pretzels.

- Graduated from Bates College in Lewiston, ME, with an English degree. Ho hum.

-Met my charming husband Roy at summer jobs in Grand Teton National Park, WY (he pumped gas for Chevron and I worked in the employee cafeteria). Learned to crack eggs one-handed, wield a chef's knife, and core a head of lettuce by whomping it on the counter) Also lots of hiking and general adventuring.

- Married years later after he reluctantly joined the Navy (Air Force office was closed for lunch, and he did not want to go into the Army in Vietnam days). I returned to Maine, vaguely expecting to live on an island, raise sheep, and have a yarn store.

- Sent by the Navy to Norfolk, VA; Colorado Springs, CO (yes!!); San Diego, CA; and eventually Washington, DC, area. Spent 35 years in DC area, to our surprise.

-Held a variety of jobs pre- and post-marriage:

- Legal secretary
- English teacher at a small public/private high school in Maine
- Stay-at-home mom
- Tutor in Colorado
- Preschool teacher and elementary substitute in Virginia
- Features writer for local newspaper in Virginia
- Information desk at local library (PLEASE no computer questions!!)
- Adult Ed teacher and tutor in the GED division
- Volunteer with Girl Scouts, music programs, crew team, more music stuff

-Belonged to Covenant Presbyterian Church in Woodbridge, VA, for 30+ years. Served as deacon, elder, and clerk.

-Two daughters: Heather - elementary school librarian in Austin, TX; Jillian - school social worker at Northland HS in Columbus, OH

- Two grandsons: Gus, 8, in TX; Oscar, 5, in OH

-Love to read, knit, and indulge my inner sloth with or without wine. Also adopt needy pets.

-Like bullet points, outlines, correctly used apostrophes, and even diagramming sentences (back in the day...)!

-Delighted to have landed in Westerville and at First Presbyterian Church, where we have been so warmly welcomed. Additional information available upon request. See you in June!

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 remains on hiatus. Hope to restart soon.
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 is studying 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 begun a new study titled “The Pastor’s Many Hats,” in which we will explore the various roles of a pastor within the life of the church. Next meeting: 2/26/24
Circle 4 Women	3rd Thursdays, 11:00 am	Zoom Meetings -If interested, call Elaine Foley.	Our Presbyterian Women’s group meets monthly for fellowship and Bible study. Join us as we study <i>Sacred Horizons</i> , which focuses on the books of Luke and Acts. Our next gathering is on Thursday, February 15.

New Fourth Monday Topic

In preparation for our pastoral transition, the Fourth Monday Discussion Group will explore various roles of a pastor in a seminar titled “The Pastor’s Many Hats.” Join us on Monday, February 26, via Zoom as we examine two of the “Hats”: “The Administrative Hat” and the “Visionary Hat.” Contact Rev. Gauen for a Zoom link.



Pastor's Page

Dear friends,

*I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.*

– Isaiah 43:19

Lent began as a time of spiritual preparation in the early church, and even today, it is a season in which Christians get their spiritual house in order.

For this church, we are entering a time of getting our own house in order as we approach the transition triggered by my retirement come June. The Session of this church has been hard at work doing just that—getting our church in order so that we might be prepared for the tasks of transition that are already upon us. The Session will be holding a retreat on the afternoon of Sunday, February 4, to discuss the issues of this transition period and what needs to be done and when. Our two Transition Coordinators, Sherri Monteith and Scott Reichley, have been researching the issues involved with pastoral transitions and consulting with the Presbytery on the process and pitfalls of the transition period. At the retreat, they will lead the Session in discerning what should be done, and then at our Annual Meeting on February 25, they will share what will happen with the congregation.

One recommendation of the Step Forward Task Force, which last summer looked at the life of the church, was that church committees put together “job descriptions” for the work they do so that the Session can see where our committees overlap and where things might fall through the cracks. The committees have been working on these job descriptions and plan to have them completed by March. This will be a valuable tool for the church as we move into the future and even more valuable for the new pastor when he or she arrives.

Finally, each of you is part of this transition process, and each of you is part of this work of moving from one pastor to the next. One of the ways you can engage yourself in this transition process is to attend the Fourth Monday Class, which is looking at the various roles that a pastor has within a church and how a congregation can support those roles. You can also keep yourself informed by reading the *Advocate* and other mailings, attending the Annual Meeting, and participating in any future informational meetings sponsored by the Session and the Transition Team. Lastly, you can pray for the church, asking God to guide us to the bright future promised to all of us.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark L. Gauer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Pastor Mark