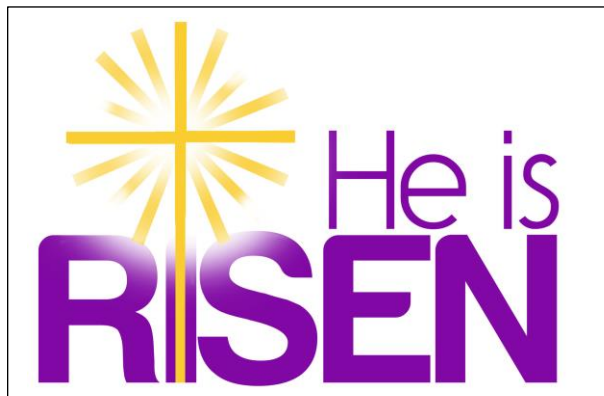


ADVOCATE

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

March 2024



**He is risen indeed. Come and help us celebrate the
Risen Christ!**

HOLY WEEK AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

Sunday, March 24	10:15 a.m.	Palm Sunday Worship
Thursday, March 28	7:00 p.m.	Maundy Thursday Worship
Friday, March 29	Noon	Community Good Friday Worship at Church of the Messiah
Sunday, March 31	6:30 a.m.	Easter Sunrise Service
	10:15 a.m.	Easter Worship with Communion
	11:15 a.m.	Kids Easter Egg Hunt



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 _____

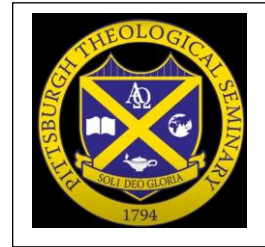
In memory of _____

In honor of _____

In honor of _____

Daily Lenten Devotionals Available

Lent began on February 14, so 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.



Pastoral Transition: Here We Go

The pastoral transition process facing First Presbyterian as Rev. Gauen retires was mapped out at the annual meeting. Led by Transition Coordinators Scott Reichley and Sherri Monteith, the transition has three phases that need to be managed:

- Sending Rev. Gauen into retirement with celebration and blessing
- Analyzing who we are as a faith community and determining who we want to be through a mission study
- Following PCUSA guidelines as we search for a new pastor.

Retirement celebration

This bucket of opportunities was not discussed in the annual meeting, as Rev. Gauen was present. Anyone wishing more information on this should speak directly with or email either Scott or Sherri. Keeping secrets from the pastor is a tall order. Please exercise discretion in the coming months!

Reflection on our faith community

The 2022-23 Step Forward initiative was the foundation for the mission study that awaits us this year. While we have a good feel for what congregants value and where we can improve, the mission study will be more in-depth and include analysis of the Westerville community and our role in it.

The Presbyterian Church USA is cautious and protective of congregations, especially in pastoral transitions such as ours. For that reason, PCUSA will not allow us to begin this transition phase until Rev. Gauen has actually left. Our interim pastor will play a critical role in this transition.

The mechanics of a transition

We will need an interim pastor to take over after Rev. Gauen has retired. Scott and Sherri are working with Rev. Kathy Nice, interim head presbyter for the Scioto Valley Presbytery, to ensure all steps are carefully followed. Rev. Nice has already provided us with several names of interim pastors currently available in the area. Session's goal is to have the interim pastor in place no later than the first of May, and possibly as soon as early April. The overlap between the arrival of the interim and Rev. Gauen's June 2 retirement date will allow for familiarization with the parishioners and processes at First Pres. The interim will not begin preaching until Rev. Gauen has retired. The overlap of pastors will be funded through the unused benefits for Rev. Heather Hicks since her departure last fall.

The interim search can be focused locally or broadly, as Session chooses. For now, our search will be locally focused, then expanded as need be to a regional or national search. The Personnel Committee already has reached out to some local candidates who have spent their careers serving congregations as interims. PCUSA requires that we offer the successful candidate a benefit package that is at least 90 percent of Rev. Gauen's. Unlike the hiring of the permanent pastor, the interim will be hired by and serve at the will of Session. Permanent pastors are governed by the local congregation but are employees of the Presbytery.

After our mission study is complete, our Nominating Committee will assemble a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) to begin the search for a new permanent pastor. The PNC will need to be elected by the congregation; therefore, a congregational meeting will be called for this purpose. Subsequently, we will have a second congregational meeting to call the new pastor. The search process can take anywhere from six months to a matter of years. It is unlikely to begin before fall. Another congregational meeting will be scheduled to call the next full-time pastor and approve his/her terms of call.

Rev. Nice has given us a good news/bad news scenario on this process. The good news is that our congregation will be attractive to candidates. We are considered a large congregation with a wonderful music program, visible community presence, and robust mission involvement. The bad news is that PCUSA currently has one candidate for every 8-10 openings.

Communication

The annual meeting was the communication launch for the transition. Going forward, either Scott or Sherri will give a Mission Moment during our worship service on a monthly basis. They will be available in the Knox Room following that service for any q&a. Updates will appear in the *Advocate* each month. A special email address will be set up so that questions can be emailed to both Scott and Sherri. And a suggestion box will be available on the administrative assistant's console in the Gauen Gathering Area.

Anyone with questions should feel free to reach out to either Scott or Sherri at any time.

Here we go....

Elders and Deacons—What Do They Do?

In February, our church's Nominating Committee begins recruiting people to serve as Elders and Deacons—the servant leaders of our church. If someone from the Nominating Committee calls on 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 Elders and Deacons at First Presbyterian.

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 governing body of the church.



The following are duties required of Ruling Elders:

- The Session meets once a month (except in July) and at other times as needed. Regular meetings are held on the second Monday of the month.
- Ruling Elders contribute to the work of the Session through open and honest discussion of the issues facing the church. The Session is responsible for the general welfare of the church. This includes the ordering of worship, education of the congregation, management of our finances and property, supervision of 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.
- In this way, Ruling Elders help develop how the church carries out the ministry of Jesus Christ through programs and policies and the efficient use of our money, time, and personnel.
- Ruling Elders are expected to cultivate their relationship with Christ and use this relationship to help the Session discern God's will for the church.
- 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. Most committees meet on the first Monday of the month, but committees set their own meeting times.
- Ruling Elders recruit members for their committees and lead their committees in their work on behalf of the church.
- Ruling Elders are expected to bring committee minutes or reports to the Session as well as any actions required of the Session.

Basic Duties of Deacons at First Presbyterian Church

The primary duty of a Deacon is to care for the members of our church. Each Deacon has a list of about 15 to 20 households that they watch over. The Deacon stays in touch with each of these households 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. Deacons meet once a month to coordinate their efforts.

The Deacons also have some ministries as a group, including:



- 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 rides, making repairs, 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 the church, the Deacons help with the greeting, ushering, and reception.
- Special Educational Events. From time to time, the Deacons sponsor special educational events for the congregation related to their ministry of caring.
- Directory. The Deacons are responsible for maintaining our new online Directory.
- 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, gives the devotion at the monthly Deacon meeting, and attends the Session meeting that month.

Worship Leaders Luncheon

Sunday, March 17 at 11:30 a.m.

Our church offers two ways that members can serve as worship leaders:

- Liturgists assist the preacher by reading scripture and leading the congregation in the various parts of the worship service.
- Leaders of the Especially for Children part of the service provide a vital message to kids and their families that they are important and included in the life of the church.

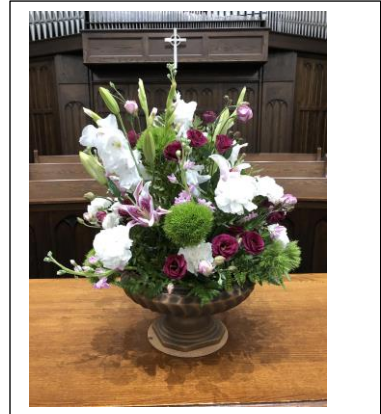
Both are important roles in our practice of worship. We have many members who volunteer to do both ministries, and we are grateful for their gifts. Many other members might feel called to participate in these ministries but might hesitate because they are not sure what to do or how to do it. To encourage more people to become liturgists and leaders of the Especially for Children lesson and to thank those who have been doing these ministries this past year, the Worship Committee is hosting a Worship Leaders Luncheon on Sunday, March 17, at 11:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Room. In addition to a scrumptious meal, the veterans and those who are considering serving will get a review of the practices and procedures of assisting in worship.

If you have been a liturgist or a leader of Especially for Children this past year or are interested in doing so, we ask that you sign up for this luncheon by Sunday, March 10, so that we know how many people to expect. You can sign up in the White Binder or by calling the church office, 614-882-3155.

Flower Donations for the Sanctuary

Thinking about donating a flower arrangement or plant for the Sunday service? 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 Peg Duffy in loving memory of her husband, Mike.



Our Blessing Box



People in the community made many visits to the Blessing Box during February. Some donated items, from condiments to dental floss. Others took what they needed. A few times, the box has been nearly empty.

Response to the *Moment* for Mission and *Advocate* articles has been generous. We have many tuna pouches, among other food items. Come see our full shelves near the Pike County crates.

We will update the White Binder/notebook concerning current needs. Recently items most needed have been shampoo, deodorant, shaving cream, kids' toothbrushes, and laundry soap. Thank you for your continued support.

The Church's January Financial Report

2/5/2024 02:20 pm		First Presbyterian Church Treasurer's Report, Majors with Annual Budget Finance year 2024, January			
Book 01: Operating		Actual Jan. 2024	Actual as of 1/31/2024	Budget as of 1/31/2024	Budget 2024
Income					
01 - Budgeted Contributions		41,541.05	41,541.05	25,629.84	307,558.08
02 - Administrative Services		0.00	0.00	83.33	999.96
03 - Christian Education		35.00	35.00	16.67	200.04
05 - Membership & Evangelism		0.00	0.00	16.67	200.04
08 - Worship		175.00	175.00	216.67	2,600.04
Income:		41,751.05	41,751.05	25,963.18	311,558.16
Expense					
01 - Personnel		17,599.78	17,599.78	22,465.74	231,191.92
02 - Administrative Services		3,925.98	3,925.98	4,475.84	53,510.08
03 - Christian Education		63.93	63.93	375.00	4,500.00
05 - Membership/Evangelism/Events		0.00	0.00	295.83	3,549.96
06 - Stewardship		0.00	0.00	4.17	21,950.04
07 - Outreach		0.00	0.00	83.34	8,800.00
08 - Worship		179.00	179.00	345.83	6,625.00
09 - Deacons		0.00	0.00	20.83	250.00
10 - Communications and Technology		352.06	352.06	702.50	8,430.00
Expense:		22,120.75	22,120.75	28,769.08	338,807.00
Summary: Book 01: Operating		Actual Jan. 2024	Actual as of 1/31/2024	Budget as of 1/31/2024	Budget 2024
Income:		41,751.05	41,751.05	25,963.18	311,558.16
- Expense:		22,120.75	22,120.75	28,769.08	338,807.00
Net Income:		19,630.30	19,630.30	-2,805.90	-27,248.84

February Session Actions

At its retreat on February 4, Session took the following actions:

- Motion was approved for the hiring of an interim pastor to start at least one month prior to Rev. Gauen's retirement, with a possible second month at least part-time. The interim will remain in place until the permanent pastor is installed. Funding for the overlap can come from the unused salary of Rev. Heather Hicks following her resignation. Also included in the motion was a desire to begin our search locally, only expanding to regional or national if a closer-to-home search proves unsuccessful.
- Motion was approved for our Personnel Committee to interview interim pastor candidates, with Scott Reichley and Sherri Monteith acting as liaisons between the committee and Rev. Nice. Personnel will present two finalists to Session for selection.

At its February 12 meeting, Session took the following actions:

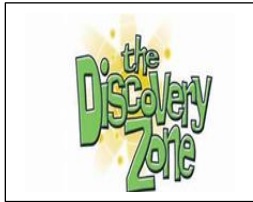
- Scott Reichley was elected as clerk for the current session.
- Motion was approved to allow the choir to move into the current nursery.
- Motion was approved to receive the January financial statement.
- Motion was approved for a Letter of Transfer for Matt Gauen.
- Motion was approved to remove Carol Fuller from rolls due to death.
- Motion was approved to recommend Rev. Gauen's terms of call to be presented to the congregation for approval. Motion was approved for Rev. Gauen's IRS housing letter.

Youth Ministries

Young Families Gathering at the Moes' Home

The next First Presbyterian Young Families gathering will be Saturday, March 9, 3:00-5:00 p.m. at Elizabeth and Nat Moes' house. To RSVP and get directions, email Elizabeth.

Discovery Zone



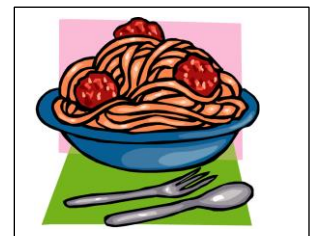
Discovery Zone meets from 11:15 am-12:30 pm on Sundays after church. Children from kindergarten through high school are welcome to attend. Our teachers, Kaitlin Kaste and Bev Etling, lead the children in games, crafts, and Bible stories. Lunch is included.

Kids Space

Our Kids Space worship area is up in the center balcony of the church. There, children can participate in worship while having quiet activities to keep them busy. We have space for the parents to sit as well. Our Nursery Supervisor, Lisa Tennant, is there to help with the activities and to take active kids into the heart room for more activities.

Thanks to All the Youth and Parents Who Helped with Spaghetti Luncheon

After the Annual Meeting on February 25, the Membership, Events, and Evangelism Committee sponsored a Spaghetti Luncheon, and the youth of the church helped out. Thanks to the parents and young people for all their efforts in making the event a success!



Youth Service Project

On March 18 following the worship service, help us create Good Luck Kits for Special Olympic Athletes with Seeds of Caring and Special Olympics Ohio. We will learn more about the Special Olympics and program and pack kits for the athletes. Lunch included.

Kids' 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, following the worship service. Please join us on the most exciting day in our faith life, the day Jesus defied death 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.)

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 is now open! The link for summer camp offerings and registration is <https://www.kirkmontcenter.org/summer-camps/>.

Event Update

Genealogy Club: Thursday, March 21, 7:00 pm



At our February meeting, Ken Bonvallet discussed Artificial Intelligence and genealogy. The program for March 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, March 8, 6:30 pm

On March 8, the Dine-Out group will meet at 6:30 pm at Gianmarco's on 6030 Chandler Ct. (off State St - just north of the Meijers shopping center). 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!



Mary Janes enjoy Dine Outs! Here are our three, from the left: Mary Jane Matthews, Mary Jane Santee, and Mary Jane Hitt. However, you don't have to be named Mary Jane to have a good time at Dine Out!

Ladies' Night Out: Tuesday, March 19, 6:30 pm

Please join us on March 19 for a fun time. In February, 22 of us enjoyed the Cheesecake Factory! Restaurant for March TBD. Suggestions? Contact Diana Westfall.

Fabrics of Faith: Monday, March 25, 1-3:00 pm

Our group creates handmade gifts for those in, or connected to, our church family. Grab your knitting needles or crochet hook or quilt squares and join us! For information, call Beckey Stamm. See you there!

Presbyterian 9 Patchers: Tuesday, March 19, 12:00 – 3:00 pm

The P9P (Presbyterian 9 Patchers) create quilts to be donated to others. Our next meeting is on Tuesday, March 19, 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!

What We Focus on, We Find

So, here we are, in the midst of Lent again.

Last year, I decided to give up something a bit unconventional – criticizing.

What struck me was how critical thoughts seemed to stick together like Velcro. One led to another and another and another.

So I made a conscious effort to “take captive every thought” (2 Corinthians 10:5).

It was eye-opening (ahem...*humbling*) to realize just how many critical thoughts raced through my mind daily – from trivial observations, like wondering why female meteorologists dress like they’re heading out to a cocktail party. And significant frustrations, like when my husband left the house locked up tight while I was on a dog walk...in the rain.

Those six weeks of Lent made me reflect on this timeless truth: What we focus on, we find.

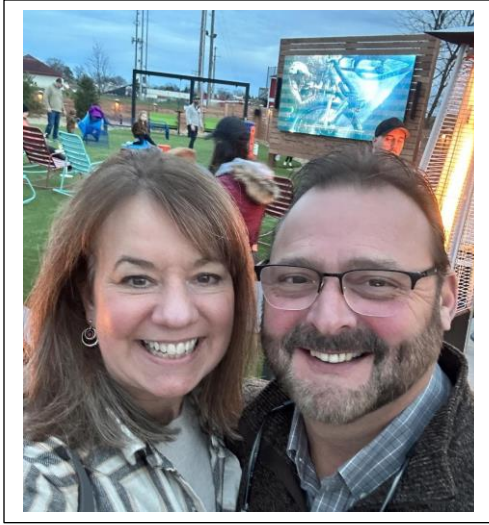
And in that time, I drew closer to God as I reflected on His kindness, patience, love, and ready forgiveness.

So, I've decided to stick with the same practice this Lenten season and continue to abstain from criticism.

You're welcome to join me! Or have you made another Lenten sacrifice this year? Or addition? Perhaps delving into reading a special devotional or book of the Bible? Please share!

From *Uplift* by Suzanne Woods Fisher
Suggested by Olivia Hodorowski

Getting to Know Our New Members: Anne Rothwell and Kenny Goble



Anne and Kenny joined the church last fall after attending regularly for about a year. They live on the east side of Westerville, off Walnut near Hoover Reservoir.

Anne is a long-time State of Ohio employee, currently working as an IT Project Manager. Kenny has been in Otterbein University's facility department for more than 30 years.

Together they have three children, Kenny's two grown daughters and Anne's grown son. They also have two grandchildren that they love to visit and babysit when they get the chance.

When they are not working, they enjoy kayaking on Hoover, hiking, and taking on home projects together. Kenny is active in Westerville's Masonic lodge, and Anne enjoys running with friends. You'll often see them with Anne's parents, who have just relocated here from Kentucky to be closer to family.

Welcome, Anne and Kenny—and Anne's parents!

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.
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 on a new study for 2024, <i>Sacred Horizons</i> , which focuses on the books of Luke and Acts. Our next gathering is on Thursday, March 21.

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, March 25, via Zoom as we take a look at two of the “Hats”: “The Teaching Hat” and “The Preaching Hat.”



Pastor's Page

Dear friends,

I remember as a teenager, attending church on Palm Sunday, waving the palm branches and watching the younger kids parade around the church to the music of "All Glory, Laud, and Honor." I also remember coming to church on Easter Sunday, dressed in a new suit of clothes, smelling the Easter flowers and singing "Christ the Lord is Risen Today!" in loud, triumphant voices. As fond as those memories are, what I remember in a more powerful way, were the Maundy Thursday services. Those were truly special.

Sandwiched between the shouts of "Hosanna" on Palm Sunday and the "Alleluias" of Easter, Maundy Thursday was a quiet retreat. The mood was solemn, but not somber. Voices were kept low, and the lights even lower. There was always something powerful for me in the Maundy Thursday service. Perhaps because there was a reality about it that I didn't always feel at Sunday worship. This was a service that commemorated Jesus' last night, his last meal, his last words. This was the climax of his earthly ministry. This service commemorated his death.

A friend once told me that you can't really appreciate joy unless you have known sadness. Perhaps he was right. Perhaps only those who have suffered hard times can really appreciate the good times. Maundy Thursday reminds us that Jesus knows our toughest times as well as our best times. Maundy Thursday reminds us that the resurrection of Jesus we celebrate at Easter only makes sense if we first understand the death of Jesus. I think that is what appealed to me those many years ago--the power that came from the One who knew suffering. I was always moved by that reality.

There is a mystery about Maundy Thursday, a mystery that cannot be put into words, but can be felt in the community at worship. I invite everyone to come experience the mystery of Maundy Thursday in worship here on March 28 at 7:00 p.m. I think that you will find that Christ has given us a special gift in this worship service...one that we might miss if we only worship on Palm Sunday and Easter.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "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