

First Presbyterian Church
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First Press

Celebrating Christ and Serving Community

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A New Year, A New Day

As we begin a New Year, I am reminded of how dependent we are on the work of those who came before us. For example, this past week our local PBS station (WTIU) ran two documentaries about theological giants of the mid-20th century: Reinhold Niebuhr (<https://www.pbs.org/video/mpt-presents-american-conscience-reinhold-niebuhr-story/>) and Abraham Joshua Heschel: (<https://www.pbs.org/video/spiritual-audacity-the-abraham-joshua-heschel-story-i3ptfo/>).

Niebuhr famously said:

“Nothing that is worth doing can be achieved in our lifetime; therefore we must be saved by hope.

Nothing which is true or beautiful or good makes complete sense in any immediate context of history; therefore we must be saved by faith.

Nothing we do, however virtuous, can be accomplished alone; therefore we must be saved by love.

No virtuous act is quite as virtuous from the standpoint of our friend or foe as it is from our standpoint. Therefore we must be saved by the final form of love which is forgiveness.”

— **Reinhold Niebuhr, The Irony of American History**

Heschel said:

“It is customary to blame secular science and anti-religious philosophy for the eclipse of religion in modern society. It would be more honest to blame religion for its own defeats. Religion declined not because it was refuted, but because it became irrelevant, dull, oppressive, insipid. When faith is completely replaced by creed, worship by discipline, love by habit; when the crisis of today is ignored because of the splendor of the past; when faith becomes an heirloom rather than a living fountain; when religion speaks only in the name of authority rather than with the voice of compassion—its message becomes meaningless.”

— **Abraham Joshua Heschel, God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism**

Which got me thinking about another theological giant of the late 20th and early 21st centuries, Desmond Tutu, who died just before Christmas:

(https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/12/27/desmond-tutu-knew-work-wasnt-over/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&wpisrc=nl_opinions&utm_campaign=wp_opinions).

One of my favorite Tutu quotes is this:

“I can’t for the life of me imagine that God will say, ‘I will punish you because you are black, you should have been white; I will punish you because you are a woman, you should have been a man; I will punish you because you are homosexual, you should have been heterosexual.’ I can’t for the life of me believe that is how God sees things.”

And so, as we live into 2022, let us remember (with Niebuhr) that nothing worth doing can be achieved in our lifetime, that (with Heschel) the vibrancy and relevance of religion for our own time is up to us, and that (with Tutu) we are called to make church and society ever more inclusive—a reflection of the Kingdom of God itself. That is more than enough to keep us busy for the new year; indeed it is our common calling for a lifetime.

Blessings,
Scott Kenefake
(Transitional Senior Pastor)



SESSION MEETING NOTES - December 12, 2021

Session Actions:

- Approved communion dates for 2022.
Informational Items:
- A survey of the timber on the Larry Crowe property has been completed and provided to the Stewardship Committee.
- The organ company representatives performed an annual service on the organ and replaced a couple of pipes.
- Volunteers are needed to assist with the Live Streaming of worship services. Contact Linda Giedroc if you are interested.
- The Reopening Task Force reported that Monroe County is in the Covid Orange zone as of this date. This means we should continue with wearing of masks, social distancing and encouraging vaccinations.
- The Membership Committee is working with a contractor for preparation and installation of banners in the southeast corner of the building.
- Debbi Conkle reported that the Heifer Market brought in over \$10,000.
- Rev. Kenefake plans to meet with members to continue discussion of Congregational Vitality which is part of the Matthew 25 initiative.
- The following Elders are completing their term on the Session: Debbi Conkle, Gary Crow, Sarah Harriss, Sandra Tracy, Andrew Swank, and Dan Watts. Please thank them for their service to FPC.

Report of the Treassurer

This has been a challenging year for First Presbyterian Church. The books are not yet closed, but thanks to your support, the support of the Presbytery of Ohio Valley following the flood damage in June, and a Payroll Protection loan, it appears that we will have met the financial goals we set for ourselves.

If you have not yet returned your pledge card please do so as soon as possible. Cards are available in both narthexes and also at the welcome center.

We ask that you help us reduce the impact of the 2022 per capita total of \$15,226 on our budget by re-mitting to the church \$46/active member in your household.

Report of the Treasurer

November 30, 2021

General Fund

Balance on Hand January 1, 2021

\$0.00

Income

Prepaid pledges for 2022

Current pledges and contributions of record

427,434.11

Future pledges and contributions of record

-

Prior pledges

-

Plate Offering

433.00

Building Use Income

901.00

Miscellaneous, Reimbursements, Transfers

230,134.78

Bank Interest

11.09

Ledger entries

0.51

Total Receipts

658,914.49

Disbursements

Payroll

Non-payroll GF

(354,331.34)

Other GF Checks/Disb (includes fund transfers, non budgeted items)

(154,659.22)

Total Disbursements

(134,693.50)

(643,684.06)

Balance on Hand November 30, 2021

\$15,230.43

Special Funds, Balance on Hand November 30, 2021

\$90,024.13

Endowment (New Covenant Funds): Balance on Hand November 30, 2021

\$ 94,294.72

Reserve Fund November 30, 2021

\$ 115,352.02

Campaign Fund November 30, 2021

\$ 32,083.28

Campaign Fund Mortgage Balance (monthly payments: 4,934.50,)

\$ (54,788.66)

4.97%

Parking Lot Fund November 30, 2021

\$ 52,230.08

Parking Lot Mortgage (monthly payments: 2,413.99)

\$ (191,904.64)

2.75%

Mary C. McClellan

Treasurer

Adult Education: January Opportunities

A New Year's resolution you can keep! Begin the new year committing to your own faith development by participating in one of the many adult education opportunities.

Lectionary Bible Study

This class discusses Bible passages based on the weekly Revised Common Lectionary, primarily used by the ministers in their sermons. The class uses a PCUSA curriculum, Feasting on the Word to enrich the study. No prior Biblical knowledge is necessary, and you won't feel lost if you miss a session. Volunteers take turns leading the spirited discussion.

In person study on Sunday mornings at 10:00am in Room 5. Jim Ernest coordinates this class. We anticipate starting a short-term Bible study that will be offered online.

Faith Forum

Faith Forum is an exciting way to understand how your Christian faith relates to contemporary issues— theological, social, political, environmental, and historical. The forum discussion is led by an expert in the field coming from FPC, the local community, and/or the PCUSA denomination. Faith Forum is provided in three formats:

1. In person on Sunday mornings at 10:00am in Room 7.
 2. Virtually through zoom connections with Room 7 at 10:00am on Sundays. The zoom link will appear in the Friday announcements before the Sunday class.
 3. Recordings after Sunday: On FPC's vimeo site: vimeo.com/showcase/fpcchristianed
- Questions? Contact Gary Crow at gcrow@iu.edu

January Faith Forums include:

January 2: No Class

January 9: Epiphany Party: An Intergenerational Event.

Watch for details to come.

January 16: Worship and Children: Creating a Space for the Generations

Worship is the intersection for the generations in our congregations, yet, often they are also one of the most challenging spaces for inclusion of the youngest members of our faith community. Join Karen Hahn and others for a look at ways to create a worship space that allows all generations to learn together what it means to be the body of Christ as we respond to God's call.

January 23: 10 am in Room 7 or via Zoom. Implicit Bias.

William Morris will lead us in a mini-workshop on Implicit Bias. Our presenter is a Bloomington attorney, whose private practice includes civil rights, housing, and employment law. “Brother William” is known throughout the community as the DJ host of the Soul Kitchen on Fridays and Saturdays on WFIU. He is an ordained deacon serving at St. David’s Episcopal Church in Bean Blossom.

A couple of useful links:

How to Think About Implicit Bias (Scientific American)

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-to-think-about-implicit-bias/>

Harvard Implicit Association Test

<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>

Bloomington attorney

<https://www.morrislawofc.com>

Soul Kitchen

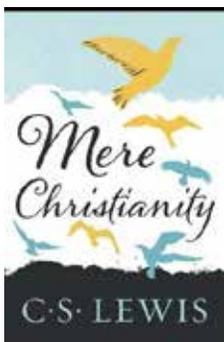
<https://indianapublicmedia.org/soulkitchen/>

St. David’s Episcopal Church

<http://stdavidsbb.org>

January 30: What is a Columbarium and why FPC might consider such a memorial space?

Michael Williams and Don Hollinger will lead a discussion of plans and answer your questions during our Faith Forum.



Mere Christianity by C.S. Lewis

The book *Mere Christianity* is a compilation of C.S. Lewis’s legendary World War 2 radio broadcast talks in which he set out to explain the basic tenets of the Christian faith. Without doubt he inspired a nation in distress as Lewis’ voice became nearly as recognizable as that of Winston Churchill. The book remains popular to this day: ranking third in Christianity Today’s list of the most influential Christian books since 1945.

Our student of all things Lewis, Laura Gardner has already inspired our reading of *The Great Divorce*, *Screwtape Letters*, and *Letters to Malcolm*. Laura will lead a series on *Mere Christianity* beginning January.

The series will consist of six Zoom-based discussions that will meet on Tuesdays at 1 p.m. Contact prothro73@gmail.com for the Zoom link.

And start reading today!

Heifer Market Thank You!



Thank you so much for supporting Heifer International again this year during our 33rd annual Heifer Market, held outdoors!

This year, including contributions made before, during and after the market, we raised \$11,014 to help families and communities in need throughout the world! Your participation and your generous contributions are so appreciated.



And **thank you** to all who volunteered time, energy and imagination in making our first outdoor Heifer Market a success!



Koininia Circle - Christmas Store/Auction Thanks!



It is with GRATEFULNESS that our Koinonia “service” Circle thanks the congregation for their continued support of the Christmas Store and Auction.

Not only did many of our K-8 children get to experience shopping for their loved ones, but we were able to send funds to our sister church in Posoltega, Nicaragua to purchase presents for their children, in addition to supporting a few local charities. WE MET OUR GOAL!

Thanks not only for donations of sale items, but for all who were willing to shop and pay generously. It was a joy to see many perusing the tables and PURCHASING. We also want to thank the Reopening Task Force for approving this event.

Please, in January, start to think about your handywork project for next year’s sale. So much creativity! Many also donated many of their treasured items from their homes.

The Koinonia Circle also supports our youth on mission trips. We have a fund set aside that can be used for that purpose when those trips resume. Currently this circle is meeting via Zoom. The meetings are generally the second Tuesday of the month January/June and September/November at 7:00 pm. We hope that hybrid meetings can be offered in the spring. If you wish to join us in social interaction as well as service projects, please contact Gail Dunning, Leader, to be added to our “Google Group” and thus get information shared with the group.

Gail Dunning - 812-325-0514 or gdunning45@sbcglobal.net

Again, thanks so much.



ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL ANGEL TREE

Thank you so much to the generous, kind people of FPC. Again this year, in only 2 weeks’ time, 40 very needy clients of Area 10 felt the warmth and love of your gifts from our Angel Tree.

Speaking on their behalf, your thoughtfulness was very much appreciated. For many, it was the only physical gift they received during this season, but it also carried the message of shared love. Thank you again for making this a part of your family’s Christmas tradition.

Sincerely,
Outreach Committee

Good news you probably didn't hear about

By Norm Holy and Allan Edmonds

So often we seem to see just the negative in world affairs. But there's a group in Australia that calls itself Future Crunch that scours news sources around the world for "Good news you probably didn't hear about" and publishes and distributes a newsletter with their findings. Their premise is that we need to pay better attention to the stories we tell and how we tell them.

Here are a few of their recent findings related to climate change issues:

Portugal has shut down its last coal-fired power plant, nine years ahead of its 2030 target. It's the fourth country in the European Union to stop burning coal - Belgium quit coal in 2016, and Austria and Sweden followed suit in 2020.

<https://apnews.com/article/business-environment-and-nature-europe-portugal-europe-an-union-b09d32a0ee8c661f6932d79bda9d2d19>

India has achieved its target of having 40% of installed electricity powered by non-fossil fuel energy sources. Energy, mainly from renewables and a small amount of nuclear sources, generates 156.83 of 390.8 GW of the country's electricity. India is committed to reaching 500 GW of clean energy by 2030.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/renewables/india-achieves-40-non-fossil-capacity-in-november/articleshow/88056037.cms?from=mdr>

Germany's new government has announced a new climate protection program that will bring forward its coal exit by 8 years to 2030. The country's aim is to increase renewable capacity from 65% to 80% of its electricity needs.

<https://www.reuters.com/markets/commodities/german-coalition-commits-faster-decarbonisation-2021-11-24/>

Check out Future Crunch at <https://futurecrun.ch/>



Do For Others *By Pat Stackhouse*

I had been in a slump lately. I don't know exactly why.
I just had a case of the blues. Maybe we all get in these moods every
now and then. Maybe you are one of the fortunate ones who don't
experience these.



Fortunately for most of us it doesn't last long, but when we are in one,
we can get awfully wrapped up in ourselves.

A very wise person said that the best way to get out of a slump is to do something for someone else. It
sounded like a good idea.

It isn't easy when we are feeling down ourselves. However, we can begin looking for something even if it
is just a phone call to cheer a person up or a card to help a sick or hurting friend. We can think of a num-
ber of good deeds we can do for others.

Sometimes we only have one opportunity to do something for someone. With this in mind, this poem
came to me and seemed appropriate:

I expect to pass through life but once.

If therefore, be any kindness I can

Share or any good thing I can do

To any fellow being let me do it

Now and not defer or neglect it, as

I shall not pass this way again.

By William Penn

The author of the poem says it well that the opportunity to help someone might not present itself again.
In looking for opportunities to help others our slump will begin to lift. We can see others have needs and
we are there to fill them.

Praise the Lord our slump can lift, and the sunshine come in. Then we may still try to continue to do for
our fellow man.



- 1/7 - Barbara Hanna, Betty Van Bergeijk
- 1/12 - Christopher Goss
- 1/13 - Joanie Blackwell
- 1/14 - Ed Runden
- 1/15 - Mimoza Rista-Dema
- 1/19 - Karin Coopersmith
- 1/25 - Sarah Harriss
- 1/28 - Dale Hepfer
- 1/29 - Chris Holmes
- 1/31 - Deborah Robinson



JANUARY 2022

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|---|-------------------------|---|--|--------|-------------------------|
| | | | | | | 1 New Year's Day |
| 11 am Worship Service (Communion) 12 pm PNC Meeting | 11:30 am Emmaus Group | | 5 pm Stewardship Ctte 5:45 pm Outreach Ctte 6:30 pm Christian Ed | 12 pm Prayer Gathering 1 pm Circle Mary 5 pm Property Ctte 7pm Choir Practice <i>Epiphany</i> | | |
| 10 am Epiphany Party 11 am Worship Service 12 pm PNC Meeting 6 pm FPC Session | 5:30 pm Racial Justice TF | 7 pm Koinonia | 6 pm Worship Ctte | 7pm Choir Practice | | |
| 10 am Sunday School 11 am Worship Service 12 pm PNC Meeting | 11:30 am Emmaus Group 6 pm Theology on Tap | 6 pm Membership Ctte | | 12 pm Prayer Gathering 7pm Choir Practice | | |
| 10 am Sunday School 11 am Worship Service 12 pm PNC Meeting | 5:30 pm Racial Justice TF | | | 7pm Choir Practice | | |
| 10 am Sunday School 11 am Worship Service 12 pm PNC Meeting | 11:30 am Emmaus Group | | | | | |