



PASTOR'S PEN: "WONDER AND LOVE UNLEASHED "

"O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together." - Psalm 34:3



Perhaps you have encountered it while hiking in the mountains. Maybe you felt it while listening to a great piece of music. Perhaps it happened at the birth of your children. Maybe it happened during a worship service. No matter where it has occurred, most human beings have experienced awe and wonder. We know deep down that there is a reality greater than the everyday.

That experience is the inspiration of art. It serves as the poet's muse. For Aristotle, wonder was the beginning of philosophy. Even religion has its source in that encounter.

Rabbi Abraham Heschel once noted, "Our goal should be to live life in radical amazement." He further stated, "Get up in the morning and look at the world in a way that takes nothing for granted. Everything is phenomenal; everything is incredible; never treat life casually. To be spiritual is to be amazed."

However, capturing the divine in art, poetry, philosophy, or even religion is elusive. Our humanity limits us. Our minds are too small. Our efforts are too timid. Our moral failings are too great. History is filled with examples of how we impose hell on Earth while reaching for heaven. Wonder can take us only so far. God needs to reach down to us.

Instead of capturing God, God reveals himself to us. In humility, he walked among us. He bridged the gap with his sacrifice. Jesus taught the crowds, healed the sick, welcomed the children, and gave himself completely for our sake. Where wonder starts the journey, love completes it.

This new year, I pray for our congregation and you to experience the wonder and love of God's grace in Jesus Christ. Like the familiar song, "We know we were made for so much more than ordinary lives. It's time for us to more than just survive. We were made to thrive."

*Grace and Peace,
Pastor James Hodsdon*

NEWS FROM SESSION



DECEMBER 2024

Session approved the 2025 budget and revisions to the Fundraising Guidelines that will allow fundraising in response to emergencies and time-sensitive need. Session accepted the proposed Terms of Call for Pastor James which will be presented to the congregation for approval during the annual meeting on January 26, 2025. Session approved revisions to the Ministry Associate for Congregation Care job description. Session approved changing the church office hours to 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, with a break from 12:30 pm to 1:30 pm, Monday through Friday effective December 26, 2024.

The Deacons continue Meals on Wings, their card ministry, and visitations. Building and Grounds reported that new chairs will be purchased for the Great Room. Parts are on order to repair the boiler. Soffit and fascia on the building were replaced. The committee continues to convert to LED lighting to reduce energy costs.

Christian Education reported that early next year, FPC will host a guest speaker who will talk about adolescent anxiety. The new Youth Director will begin work on January 20th although he has already engaged in some youth activities. The Adult Discipleship and Children & Youth Committees have prepared a 6-year plan of initiatives.

Mission reported that host families have opened their homes over Christmas to the eleven Korean students from Hanmi Presbyterian Church. Ringing bells for the Salvation Army raised \$872.53. Preparations continue for the 2025 Belize Mission Trip. Inspiration Station needs a governing structure or board. Anyone interested should contact Bob Sands.

The Worship Committee thanked Shannon Sommers for freshening the Advent decorations. There will be an extended prayer time after the December 29th worship service to allow people to pray with others and to be anointed with oil. Christmas carols will accompany this extended prayer time. Gluten free bread will continue to be offered during communion. Christmas decorations will be removed after the late service on January 5, 2025.

Upcoming Events:

January 5 – Remove Christmas decorations
January 9 – Red Cross Blood Drive
January 12 – Julie Murdock to preach
January 20 – New Youth Director starts

January 26 – Annual Congregational Meeting
February 1 – Elder / Deacon Orientation
February 19-26 – Belize Mission Trip
February 23 – Paul Lamb to preach

NEXT MONTH'S MESSENGER DEADLINE IS FRIDAY, JAN. 17, 2025

FYI: To avoid delays in reimbursement from receipts, PLEASE have them turned into the office no later than Sunday, to be reimbursed that same week. Thanks!



STEWARDSHIP CORNER

CHURCH FINANCES AS OF NOVEMBER 30, 2024

YTD Income	\$ 480,849.02
YTD Expense	\$ 443,421.69
YTD Net Income	\$ 37,427.33

Questions about the finances of the church? Please contact our treasurer, Pat Babcock at pbabcock@bex.net

2024 Church Audit

We are conducting an audit of our church's financial systems & procedures for 2024.

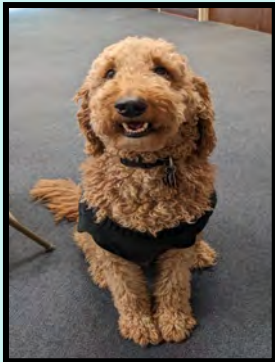
Please look at your 2024 statement of contribution & make sure you agree with it. If you agree, DO NOTHING. If there is a discrepancy, please contact Sharlene White & explain the problem. DO NOT REVEAL THE AMOUNT OF YOUR CONTRIBUTION.

Ways to contact Sharlene: Call or text: 419-577-0353, Email: russnshar@hotmail.com,
Send or drop off a note at the church, IN A SEALED ENVELOPE, addressed to Sharlene.

"A Family on a Mission to Love God and All People"



Keenagers



The Keenagers enjoyed a Christmas Party with the Deacons in December, and wished Katie Howell well, along with many, many thanks!

Put **Friday January 3, 2025 at 1:00pm** on your calendars, for an old fashioned **ICE CREAM SOCIAL** for Katie's last meeting, along with **Friday, February 7th!**

Are you 70 or older? If so, come join us!!! *Dog hugs, Winston*

DATE	USHERS 8:30am—10:45 am	LITURGISTS 8:30am—10:45 am	COFFEE HOUR	VISITATION	GREETERS 8:30am—10:45 am	SCREEN OPERATORS 8:30am—10:45 am
JAN. 5	Kelly & Eric Weisenburger/ Scott Howell Family COMMUNION: Bob & Marilyn Huston & Crissy Cooperrider / Greg Eyer & Cynthia Kniffin & George Scherz	Roger Knight / Julie Gardner	Katie Howell	Katie Howell	Sandy Shope / Jack Churchill & Ralph Leber	Brian Pancost / Brandon Schwinn
Jan. 12	Kelly & Eric Weisenburger/ Karen Becker & Suzanne Boegli	Kathy Root / Julie Murdock	Roger Knight	Roger Knight	Sandy Shope / Jack Churchill & Ralph Leber	Brian Pancost / Kayla Eyer
Jan. 19	Kelly & Eric Weisenburger/ Karen Becker & Suzanne Boegli	Youth /Youth	Donna Allen	Donna Allen	Sandy Shope / Jack Churchill & Ralph Leber	Mindy Klett / Brian Pancost
Jan. 26	Kelly & Eric Weisenburger/ Scott Howell Family	Tom Root / Nancy Cloak	Julie Gardner	Julie Gardner	Sandy Shope / Jack Churchill & Ralph Leber	Brian Pancost / Brandon Schwinn

Please keep in mind, the servers scheduled here are subject to change!

DATE	USHERS 8:30am—10:45 am	LITURGISTS 8:30am—10:45 am	COFFEE HOUR	VISITATION	GREETERS 8:30am—10:45 am	SCREEN OPERATORS 8:30am—10:45 am
Feb. 2	Keith & Becky Chapin / Russ & Shar White COMMUNION: Debb Esch & Connie Kluding/ Wende Mersereau & Linda Carino	Ty Keefer / Greg Eyer	TBD	TBD	Sandy Shope / Jack Churchill & Ralph Leber	Mindy Klett / Brian Pancost
Feb. 9	Keith & Becky Chapin / Russ & Shar White	Abby Keefer / Suzanne Boegli	TBD	TBD	Sandy Shope / Jack Churchill & Ralph Leber	Brian Pancost / Kayla Eyer
Feb. 16	Keith & Becky Chapin / Russ & Shar White	Youth / Youth	TBD	TBD	Sandy Shope / Jack Churchill & Ralph Leber	Brian Pancost / Brandon Schwinn
Feb. 23	Keith & Becky Chapin / Russ & Shar White	Scott Bogen / Nancy Gfell	TBD	TBD	Sandy Shope / Jack Churchill & Ralph Leber	Mindy Klett / Brandon Schwinn

“A Family on a Mission to Love God and All People”



So you think you know.....Me??????



As this will be my final “Getting to Know You” article, I thought I would turn the tables and share a little more about me with my church family.

I moved to Wakeman from Chicago in the Spring of 2000 after my son was born. Originally, I am from Marietta, OH. I am married to Matt Murdock and have 2 grown children, Collin and Charlotte.

I have had many occupations throughout my life – I was an equity raiser for a company of the Chicago Board of Trade, a manager of Sales and Operations for a capital leasing company, and have worked retail in a number of different locations across Ohio. My favorite position, though, has been that of wife and mother; I was a stay-at-home Mom for about 20 years. I was also a “professional student,” attending seminary classes one at a time through Ashland Theological Seminary. Once my children were out of the nest, I continued my education with Northern Seminary, which subsequently led me here. While I remain a dedicated family member of this church, I have stepped down from the staff, so I guess I am currently unemployed - more time for family!

I didn’t realize how hard this interview was until I had to name my favorite book! I have so many; I often joke that I eat books for dinner. I guess my top 2 would be Tolkien’s Lord of the Rings Trilogy/Hobbit/Silmarillion, and C. S. Lewis’ Space Trilogy (that’s actually 8 books). These books challenged me each time I read them; they challenged me linguistically and intellectually as well as morally and theologically. Other books I love and have read repeatedly are C. S. Lewis’ Screwtape Letters and The Great Divorce.

My favorite book of the Bible is Romans 8, the entire chapter. If you want to know why, read it! I don’t think anyone can read Romans 8 without being moved or transformed in one way or another.

Be Thou My Vision is my favorite hymn. I love it for its history and longevity as well as its timeless message. The fact that I’m part Irish doesn’t hurt. *It Is Well With My Soul* is a close second. *In Christ Alone* is my favorite contemporary worship song.

I am so very social and quite a talker, so I don’t know that there is much you all don’t already know about me. Perhaps a lesser-known fact about me (but not for Cynthia Kniffin and Amy Bond) is that I danced classical ballet for more than 12 years and danced in roles as varied as Duck in *Peter and the Wolf*, to Alice in *Alice in Wonderland*, to one of the Four Cygnets in *Swan Lake*, to a sylph in *Les Sylphides*. I have a deep passion still for ballet; it is also from ballet that I got my great love for classical music.

I came, initially, to FPC with a heavy heart. I left my church home of 20 years due to internal struggles and a crisis in that church; I was devastated. My education was at risk as I was half way through my doctoral studies and needed a church in which to continue. I had visited one or two other churches during my search for a new church home, but I always came back to FPC. I was comfortable here, having known the Canfields, the Graves, the Mersereaus, the Kniffin/Bonds and others for years through family and my children’s activities. But it was the Spirit present in this church family that stole my breath and my heart. God’s Holy Spirit works within and through this church like few I have ever witnessed with almost everyone willing to contribute to God’s mission in this area in some way or another. God’s Spirit moves through this church in such a way that people really do consider one another family - we care, we cry, we rejoice, we provide, we help, we sing, we worship, we work, we share, we learn, and we give our hearts to each other. I am humbled and honored that I can call myself a member of this church and lift my praise and thanksgiving to God the Father for all of you!

*Dr. Julie Murdock
Ministry Associate*



ANNOUNCING A NEW YOUTH DIRECTOR: EVAN HOFFMAN

God has blessed our congregation with some amazing youth. They have been a blessing but also a responsibility. We are committed to sharing with them the love of God in Jesus Christ and providing opportunities to deepen their understanding of discipleship. After Malcolm James left us to be closer to his fiancé in Columbus, we had many questions about the future of the ministry. Thanks to staff and volunteers, like Dawson Strong, Tracey Sommers, Carlene Fredritz, Chase Kluding, Jonah Mersereau, Wende Mersereau, Ryan Schaffer, and Joeren Wolfe, our youth ministry has thrived.

A search team comprised of Wende Mersereau, Jennifer Bennison, Jamie Fries, Steve Gfell, Ty Keefer, Tracy Konik, Dawson Strong, and Patricia Tkach was formed. They reviewed and interviewed several candidates. Some were good, but we never found the match that we believed God had intended for us.

As part of the Road Ahead process, we saw this ministry as two-fold. Our new Director of Youth Ministries will be a chaplain to our youth and their friends, but that person will also be a missionary in the community.

We are very excited to announce that our patience and hard work have been fruitful. We have a new youth director. Evan Hoffman starts in January 2025. Evan grew up in Milan and lives in Norwalk with his wife Abby and their new Golden Retriever puppy. He is a phenomenal musician and has served leading youth worship in churches. He has even worked with our music director, Mike Matter, at Musician’s Alley in Sandusky.

We believe God has called Evan for this moment in the life of our congregation. Please pray for Evan and the future of this ministry as we head down the Road Ahead. May God bless the First Presbyterian Church of Norwalk, Ohio.

"A Family on a Mission to Love God and All People"



H.Y.P.E.'D Christmas Party and other FUN!



**Do you have a teenager, grades 7th -12th ?? Have them join us for all the fun and fellowship, on Sunday evenings at 7pm!
Helping - Young - People - Explore - Discipleship**



DECEMBER'S E.D.G.E SUNDAY FUNDAY HAS HOLLY JOLLY

**Do you have a 3rd-6th grader?? Have them join us for all the fun and Fellowship at EDGE! 1st & 3rd Thursdays at 4:30pm!
Also, JOIN US JAN. 12 @ noon— For Pajamas & Pancakes**



**"This is my command
—be strong and
courageous!
Do not be afraid or
discouraged. For the Lord
your God is with you
wherever you go"
(Joshua 1:9)**

**JANUARY'S
VERSE**
Every month
we will challenge
the congregation to
memorize a Bible verse!



JANUARY'S MEMORY VERSE

All year, we are challenging our congregation, from youngest to oldest, to memorize a monthly Bible verse.
Here is our verse for January:

*"This is my command—be strong and courageous!
Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God
is with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9)*

"A Family on a Mission to Love God and All People"



January

Join us on
Friday
January 3
@ 1:00 pm !

Keenagers

Are you 70 or older?

Join us for an
ICE CREAM PARTY!
It's Keenager's fun!

February

JOIN US FOR KEENAGERS

Friday, February 7th at 1:00pm
Join us in the great room to hear from the Huron County Board of Mental Health and the services they offer. Are you 70 years or older?? If so, come join the fun!!

Contact Pastor James for details!

HYPE'D

Join us **Sundays @ 7pm**
in the **Underground**

7th - 12th Grade Youth
Helping • Young • People • Explore • Discipleship

SNACK DONATIONS NEEDED! **HYPE'D** *Bring Canned Items!*

SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY

Sunday Feb. 9th 6pm - 8pm
in The Underground

H.Y.P.E.'D YOUTH!!

Helping - Young - People - Explore - Discipleship

Grades: 7th - 12th
Sunday, Jan. 26th
Meet at the Church @ 2:30pm - \$10 ea

Join us for WHIRLYBALL, Fellowship and FOOD!!

Contact the church for more info @ (419) 668-1923

Join our **"BIRTHDAY BUNCH"** the 3rd Wednesday of every month!

EVERYONE has a birthday! Let's celebrate together with pizza every month @ East of Chicago Pizza at 12:30pm!

Cheers to 80+ Years!

Happy **"80 PLUS"** birthday to:

01/05 Sharon Austin	02/07 Alice Gerstenberger
01/06 Tom Austin	02/20 Russell Deeble
01/08 Dick Lodwick	02/21 Reta Stark
01/23 Jack Churchill	03/02 Judy Uther
01/24 Charles Sommers	03/08 Wilhelm Benz

**Are we missing your birthday?
Contact Kathi at the church office to get us updated!**

January 2025

"A Family on a Mission to Love God and All People"



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
		OFFICE CLOSED NEW YEARS DAY 8p Al-anon	6:30a Women's Small Group 12p Men's Small Group 4:30p EDGE Meeting 6:30p Outreach Committee	10a AA Meeting 1p Keen-Agers	7p AA Meeting	7p AA Meeting
		New 2025 Office Hours Begin: 8am—12:30 pm 1:30 pm— 4pm Mon.—Fri.	Hugs & Snuggles 7a Men's AM Group 10a PW Board Meeting 12p Stewardship Meeting 4p Huron County DD Bears practice 4p Huron County DD Bears 5:15p Hodge Podge 6p Bell Choir 6:45p Westminster Voices 8p Al-anon	6:30a Women's Small Group 12p Men's Small Group 4:30p EDGE Meeting	10a AA Meeting	7p AA Meeting
COMMUNION / FOOD BANK SUNDAY Internet Worship Service 8:30a Worship Service 9:30a Sunday School 10:45a Worship Service	5 9a Staff Meeting (Zoom) 11a Womens Small Group 4p Huron County DD Bears Practice 5:45p Worship Committee 6p Marotta Small Group 7p Bible Banter via Zoom	6 10a AA Meeting 4:15p Mom's Small Group 5:15p CE Meeting 7p Mary Tester Small Group	7 7a Men's AM Group 10a PW Board Meeting 12p Stewardship Meeting 4p Huron County DD Bears practice 4p Huron County DD Bears 5:15p Hodge Podge 6p Bell Choir 6:45p Westminster Voices 8p Al-anon	8 7a Men's AM Group 12:30p Birthday Bunch 5:15p Hodge Podge 6p Bell Choir 6:45p Westminster Voices 8p Al-anon	9 10a AA Meeting 10a AA Meeting	10 7p AA Meeting
Internet Worship Service 8:30a Worship Service 9:30a Sunday School 10:45a Worship Service 12p EDGE Sunday Funday 7p HYPED Meeting	12 11a Womens Small Group 4p Huron County DD Bears Practice 6p ACT Board Meeting 6p Marotta Small Group 7p Bible Banter via Zoom	13 10a AA Meeting 4:15p Mom's Small Group 5:30p Building & Grounds 6p Fellowship Committee 7p Mary Tester Small Group	14 7a Men's AM Group 12:30p Birthday Bunch 5:15p Hodge Podge 6p Bell Choir 6:45p Westminster Voices 8p Al-anon	15 6:30a Women's Small Group 12p Men's Small Group 4:30p EDGE Meeting	16 FEBRUARY MESSENGER INFO DEADLINE 10a AA Meeting	17 6:30p FADS 7p AA Meeting
Internet Worship Service 8:30a Worship Service 9:30a Sunday School 10:45a Worship Service 7p HYPED Meeting	19 11a Womens Small Group 4p Faith McCoy Baton Lessons in Gym 6p Marotta Small Group 7p Bible Banter via Zoom	20 10a AA Meeting 4:15p Mom's Small Group Mary Tester Small Group 6p Marotta Small Group 7p Bible Banter via Zoom	21 7a Men's AM Group 12p LYN Luncheon 4p Huron County DD Bears practice 4p Huron Small Group 5:15p Hodge Podge 6p Bell Choir 6:45p Westminster Voices 8p Al-anon	22 6:30a Women's Small Group 12p Men's Small Group 6:30p Session Meeting	23 10a AA Meeting	24 7p AA Meeting
Internet Worship Service 8:30a Worship Service 9:30a Sunday School 10:45a Worship Service 11:45a Annual Congregational Meeting 12:30p Congregational Luncheon 2:30p HYPED Whirly Ball 4:30p Novel Ideas Book Club	26 11a Womens Small Group 4p Huron County DD Bears Practice 6p Marotta Small Group 7p Bible Banter via Zoom	27 10a AA Meeting 4:15p Mom's Small Group 7p Mary Tester Small Group 6p Marotta Small Group 7p Bible Banter via Zoom	28 7a Men's AM Group 4p Huron County DD Bears practice 5:15p Hodge Podge 6p Bell Choir 6:45p Westminster Voices 8p Al-anon	29 6:30a Women's Small Group 12p Men's Small Group	30 10a AA Meeting	31 9a Deacon & Elder Orientation Meeting

"A Family on a Mission to Love God and All People"



HEALING HEARTS GRIEF SUPPORT

Monthly, ongoing support for the loss of an adult loved one.

**2nd Thursday of every month here at
The First Presbyterian Church
21 Firelands Blvd.
4pm-5pm Rm 107**



MONTHLY LUNCHEON

1st Wednesday of the month at Bob Evans



A College Send-Off for Ben Rothhaar!

For those of you that know Ben, or even if you don't! Please join us in the "Underground" on **Sunday Jan. 12th 2-5pm** to send him off to Rutgers!



"Books for Belize"

Visit the links to provide children's books to send to Saint Oscar Romero R.C. School in Valley of Peace.

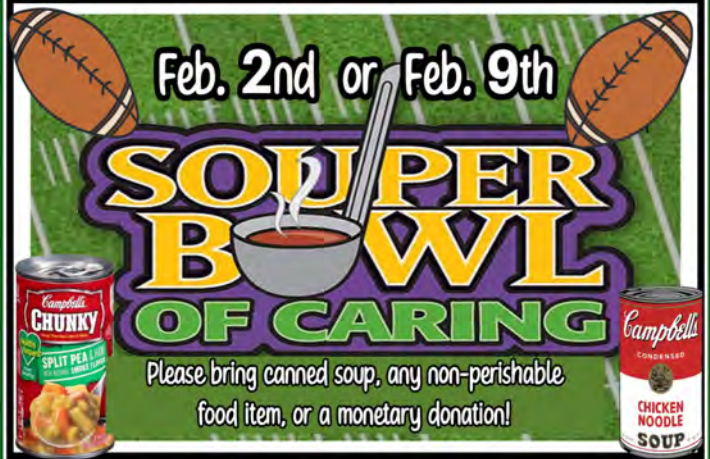


Contact Linda Carino for more details or to order

→ go to Scholastic at <http://firstpresbyterian.net/belize1>



→ or Amazon at <http://firstpresbyterian.net/belize2>



Feb. 2nd or Feb. 9th

SOUPER BOWL OF CARING

Please bring canned soup, any non-perishable food item, or a monetary donation!

Sponsorships needed!
BECOME A SPONSOR
pick a date, pick a message to share!

Donate at <http://firstpresbyterian.net/radio> - \$50 per week



**FPC Radio Show
on WLKR
92.9 FM
at 10 am
on Sundays**

Join Us For Novel Ideas Book Club!

**Sunday
January 26th
@ 4:30 pm**

**"I Am Malala"
by Malala Yousafzai**

Contact Linda Carino or the church office for more information & location.
Can't commit to every month? Be a "some-timer!"



GIVE SOMETHING THAT
Means Something

GIVE BLOOD

BLOOD DRIVE

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
SIGN UP
IN THE NARTHEX
OR
CONTACT
CHRIS CANFIELD

First Presbyterian Church
21 Firelands Blvd. Norwalk
**THURSDAY JAN. 9, 2025
7 am - 1 pm**

Register @ RedCrossBlood.Org

FEBRUARY 19-26, 2025

belize
mission trip 2025

"A Family on a Mission to Love God and All People"



THANK YOU!



We are weighing Mike's options for further treatment of breaks in his shoulder, against his very high risk for any surgery. He thanks everyone for the prayers, cards and calls; they are the best medicine! We love you FPC.

Julie & Mike Myers

I would like to thank my church family for their support of prayers and cards for my unexpected surgery. As with my biological family, you all made me feel loved and protected. Thank you as well to my Bible study group who provided wonderful meals for me. I love you all, and I thank the Good Lord I have you in my life.



Bev Miller

We had a very good time at our Cozy Christmas Tales events!



The Return of Dinners Together for February!
Watch for sign ups in the Narthex on Sundays in January

This is an opportunity for adult members and friends of the church to get to know each other better. You will meet at a host's home to share a dinner and fellowship together. Here's how it works... You sign up, and indicate whether or not you are willing to host the dinner at your house. If you agree to host, you say how many people you can accommodate. Groups will be assigned, and the host will contact everyone in the group. You will find a date and time that works for everyone. The host will provide the meat and drinks, and everyone else will bring a side dish. YOU DO NOT NEED TO HOST. Some people love to entertain in their home, others do not. Do not feel like you need to take a turn as host. Sign-up for FEBRUARY DINNERS TOGETHER on all Sundays in January. Don't miss out on the fun! If you have any questions, please contact Sharlene White (call/text 419-577-0353 or russnshar@hotmail.com). YOU CAN ALSO CALL THE CHURCH OFFICE TO SIGN UP.

THE ROAD AHEAD

FPC NORMAL CORE VALUES God We are sinners called by God, redeemed by Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit.	CORE VALUES CORE VALUES CORE VALUES	FPC NORMAL CORE VALUES Fellowship We value doing life and ministry together, not alone.
FPC NORMAL CORE VALUES Faith We gather in worship and prayer, guided by Scripture and the Holy Spirit, to understand God and the new life God has given us.		FPC NORMAL CORE VALUES Service We encourage and support each other to reach out as God's love to meet the needs of our community.
FPC NORMAL CORE VALUES Family We care for the whole family of faith across the generations.		FPC NORMAL CORE VALUES Sharing We reflect God's grace by generously sharing our gifts at home and abroad.



THE ROAD AHEAD - Key Targets

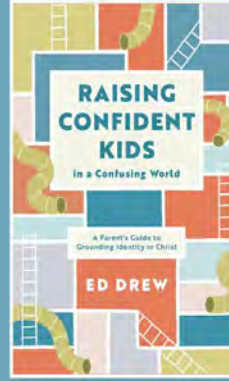
- ✓ **Children/Youth**
Sponsored by Kathleen Wheeler
- ✓ **Involvement**
Championed by George Scherz & Mike Wilde
- ✓ **Discipleship**
Sponsored by Dr. Julie Murdock
- ✓ **Communication**
Championed by Dirk Hiler

"A Family on a Mission to Love God and All People"



This month's featured book is entitled, "Raising Confident Kids in a Confusing World," written by Ed Drew. As kids grow up, they hear many conflicting messages about how they can define themselves. For example, they are told that they can define themselves by their achievements, popularity, sexuality, morality, or gender, or by how they feel. This warm, realistic, and sympathetic book, written by father of three and founder of Faith in Kids, Ed Drew, provides much needed biblical help for parents on this topic. It shows parents how to encourage their kids to find their identity in the fact that they are made and loved by Jesus, and it explores the implications and applications of this truth.

If you are interested in checking out this book or many other helpful parenting resources, visit our Parent Book Nook located next to the Christian Education Office on the 2nd floor of the Children's Wing.



January's Parent Book Nook Feature:

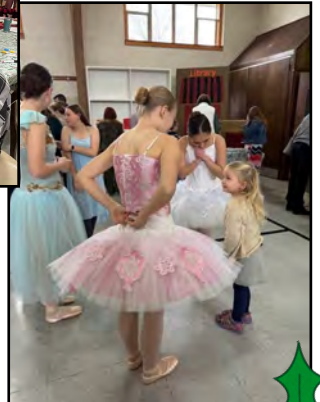
"Raising Confident Kids in a Confusing World" written by Ed Drew.

Please visit our Parent Book Nook located next to the Christian Education Office on the 2nd floor of the Children's Wing.

ADVENTURES RECAP!

WOW! What a great turn out for our annual Adventures event this year! We had so many people visit our "in-home" town of Norwalk, from our neighborhood businesses to our local school and library, we had such a fun time celebrating a Hometown Christmas with you. Thank you to all of our Christian Education committee for providing food, instructing our stations and helping to set up and tear down! Thank you also to several of our local businesses and volunteers who helped man the activities: Flickinger's Insurance with the Flickinger Family, When Pigs Fly with Lisa Hiler, Sommer's Family Dentistry with Norm and Tracey Sommers, Nobil's Sports and Trophies with Dwight and Patricia Tkach, Cynthia Kniffin Dance Academy with Krystle Featheringill and the CKDA ballerinas, and Norwalk City Schools with Lyndsey and Brooke Heyman. Thank you to Diane Eschen and Barb Fries for making loads of cookies! Thank you to Russell White and Reta Stark for managing this year's Christmas greens once again! Thank you to our outreach committee for providing great alternative gift ideas for the year at our Christmas Market! Finally, a super big thank you to my sister, Kayliann Schwinn, for dreaming up this year's theme and helping me to bring it to life, as well as our families for dedicating so much time and energy into making this a beautiful Christmas tradition to remember!

Merry Christmas, everyone ~ Kathleen Wheeler



“A Family on a Mission to Love God and All People”



From the Underground.....



Well, here we are again. Another year. 2025. A fresh start for some and for others a cold slap that comes after the festive holiday season. It's easy to pick one of the sides of the coin when it comes to the new year. A chance to be new, to be better. Or a reminder of passing time, a Shakespearean “oh woe is me” hand to the forehead.

I don't mean to disparage anyone going through a tough scenario or struggling through a stressful season. Nor am I propping up those shiny, free gym memberships that will expire unused in March.

To the point, I'm learning that I tend to think differently than most. I don't put much stock in the New Year. For me, Tuesday became Wednesday like every week.

I'll savvily use the OG Magi to help demonstrate my point, even if I may be partial to the other wise man. These men worked every day, most likely as astronomers studying and searching the sky. They were prepared. They knew the signs, studied the text, and waited. I'd imagine the monotonous process of looking at the sky day in and day out...well night in and night out was very tedious with little to no satisfaction. They didn't know if they'd get the answer in their lifetime. Yet they waited and stayed prepared no matter how many new years it took.

Then one night, there it was. Shining bright in the dark sky. And off they went to see the King.

The Magi weren't lucky that they got to see Jesus. They were prepared for the opportunity if it so came to them. And they didn't need a calendar to tell them to be ready.

A new year brings a lot. Opportunities will come and life will continue as it does. But remember, the star is in the sky. And it may just be your lucky day. Or year.

“Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity.” ~ Seneca

Stay HYPE'D,

Dawson Strong, Youth Director Emeritus



VISIT OUR NURSERY:

All children from birth to Preschool age are welcome to visit our staffed nursery any Sunday during either of the services (8:30 or 10:45am) as well as during Sunday School (9:30). Our nursery caregiver, Jennifer, would love to meet you and show you around our facility! The nursery provides a safe and creative environment for your child to play and learn beginning Bible stories while you attend worship or Sunday School. You can find the nursery on the lower level of the children's wing, beside the library and across from the family room.



HEY KIDS, JOIN US!

Please have your children meet the teachers at the back of the church after our Children's Moment!
10:45 service only
Room 206



JOIN US FOR KINGDOM KIDS!

Our Kingdom Kids Program gives our preschool - 3rd grade students a chance to have an age-appropriate worship and learning experience all their own. If your kids would like to join our Kingdom Kids, simply attend our second worship service on Sunday mornings with your family, and after the children's message, follow the Kingdom Kids leader to their worship room located on the lower level of the children's wing across from the library.

"A Family on a Mission to Love God and All People"



MARK YOUR CALENDAR: VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2025-JUNE 16-20!

Now that the calendar has turned, if you haven't already, make sure you add this year's Vacation Bible School to your summer schedule, June 16th - 21st from 9 - 12:30pm daily. Join us for "MAGNIFIED!" as we encourage kids to look closely at the details of God's amazing world and magnify, or proclaim, the greatness of God. This year we welcome all of our preschool through 6th grade students as we learn that God made us, cares about us, loves us, forgives us, and is faithful to keep all His promises to us. We would love for you to join us as we praise

KINGDOM KIDS SNACKS NEEDED

We are in need of snacks for our Kingdom Kids Sunday morning program. If you would like to donate snack items to our Kingdom Kids program, we will gladly accept all pre-packaged food items during the month of January. Need some ideas of what you could grab at the grocery store?

Check these out:

These and all other snacks are gladly accepted as long as they are pre-packaged, individually sized, and do not require refrigeration. All donations can be dropped off in the church office. Thank you in advance for helping to provide snacks for our kids!



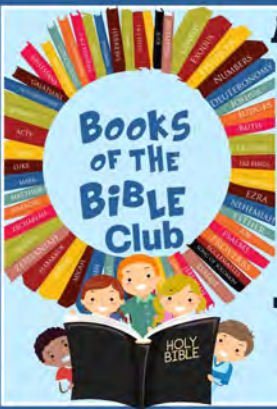


SNACKS NEEDED PLEASE!

- * FRUIT SNACKS
- * PACKS OF PRETZELS, OR GOLDFISH
- * LITTLE DEBBIE SNACKS
- * PUDDING CUPS
- * MINI INDIVIDUAL BAGS OF COOKIES
- * APPLESAUCE OR FRUIT CUPS
- * CRACKER AND CHEESE PACKS
- * SMALL BAGS OF CHIPS

BRING TO THE CHURCH OFFICE





ATTN: Sunday School Students -Grade 1-6

Recite the New Testament Books of the Bible, and become part of **THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE KID'S CLUB!**

Contact Kathleen Wheeler for details

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE KID'S CLUB

Once again, we are encouraging our kids to memorize the books of the Bible in their Sunday School classes. If any student grades 1st - 6th can recite the first half of the New Testament books in order, they will be added to our Books of the Bible Club! Once you're in the club you will receive clues to find hidden treasure! There are 5 levels to obtain as you keep memorizing the order of the Bible books.

Reach all 5 levels and become a GOLDEN STAR member!

See Kathleen Wheeler whenever you are ready to begin!

Congratulations to our newest "Books of the Bible Kid's Club" member: Annie Cramer (level 1). Also, a shout out to Lilly and Lena Howell (level 2) for leveling up! Great job, everyone!!

E.D.G.E.

1st & 3rd Thursdays @4:30pm

3rd-6th grade Youth Group

JOIN US!
Enter through Gym Door.

ETERNALLY DRIVEN BY GOD'S EXAMPLE




3RD - 6TH GRADE E. D. G. E. YOUTH GROUP

E.D.G.E. meets every 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month from 4:30 - 5:30. Pickup and drop off at the gymnasium entrance. Also, keep an eye out for our monthly SUNDAY FUNDAY! We hope to see you and all of your friends at E.D.G.E. Check out our current schedule!

Session 1 (Thursday, Dec. 5):

Do I Have to Go to School?
Bible passage: Proverbs 1:1-7

Session 2 (Thursday, Dec. 19):

Is It Really Cheating?
Bible passage: Acts 5:1-11

NEW YEAR BREAK (Thursday, Jan. 2):

No meeting this day. Happy New Year!

Session 3 (Thursday, Jan. 16) :

Should I Try to Fit In?
Bible passage: John 17:11-23, Romans 12:1-5

Session 4 (Thursday, Feb. 6):

Should I Be Afraid?
Bible passage: Psalm 66

Session 1 (Thursday, Feb. 20): Begin Next New Series

Join us for E.D.G.E. (Eternally Driven by God's Example) as we dive into a study all about school! As we all struggle with having to get up and go to school sometimes, we will discover that God already knows those thoughts and has a lot to say on the matter! Being a Christian in a school setting is a great calling; one that we should equip our kids to do well! Preteens will be taking a look at what the Bible has to say about some school related topics that impact them today.



“A Family on a Mission to Love God and All People”

E.D.G.E. 3rd - 6th Grade Youth Group

Pajamas AND PANCAKES

12 JANUARY 2025

Get your jammy-jams ready and come chow down on some flapjacks with us! It's a midday slumber party!

12 - 2pm. Pickup & dropoff at the gym doors

First Presbyterian Church, 21 Firelands Blvd Norwalk



SUNDAY FUNDAY!



"A Family on a Mission to Love God and All People"



**JAN. 5TH - TIME TO TAKE
DOWN DECORATIONS!**



All help is appreciated!
Sunday Jan. 5 following the 10:45 service

Can't make it to church as often as you'd like?

Would you like us to add you to our HOMETOUCH mailing list? We would like to keep our community strong and vibrant, so we offer a variety of adult devotionals, activity pages, coloring pages, prayers, and crossword puzzles from both the Old and New Testaments, as well as our weekly worship folders.

Contact the church office to be added 419-668-1923

Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.
1 Thessalonians 5:18

**ANNUAL
CONGREGATIONAL
MEETING**

Sunday, Jan 26, 2025
following the 10:45 worship service

Join us to review the work of 2024,
share the 2025 budget, approve the Pastor's Terms of Call,
approve new Elders and Deacons.

POTLUCK

Please bring your favorite dish to go with the Sloppy Joe sandwiches & drinks

Fellowship Committee is providing!!

Sunday
Jan 26, 2025
following the
Annual Congregation Meeting!



What's up with Building & Grounds?

- The Bride's Room is getting revamped. Please, if you need to use a room for an uncomfortable child during church services, you are asked to go to the Family Room #202/204. The live stream of the worship service will be offered there soon!
- The new water heater was installed for the office area.
- Check out the updates to the "Underground" Youth Room.
- Church hallways are DONE being painted, Watch for the next phase!
- Most weatherstripping has been replaced on outside doors, more to come.
- We have a "Lost & Found" box in the sitting area of the Narthex.
- Vinyl soffits and gutters have been installed on the south side, replacing wooden deteriorating areas.



**This will be a monthly update
from our committee.
We want to share the care
and updates with all of you!**

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

21 Firelands Boulevard
Norwalk, Ohio 44857

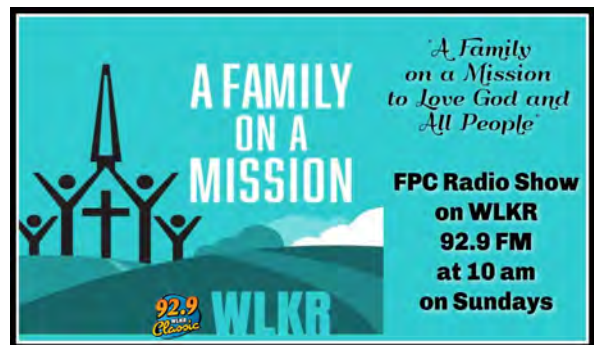
Phone: 419-668-1923
Fax: 419-663-5115
Web Page: <http://www.firstpresbyterian.net>

Non Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
NORWALK, OH
Permit #20

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

CHURCH STAFF:

Rev. James Hodsdon, Pastor
jhodsdon@firstpresbyterian.net
Rev. Clair Brewer, Pastor Emeritus
Dr. Julie Murdock, Ministry Associate
jmurdock@firstpresbyterian.net
Kathleen Wheeler, Children & Family Director
kwheeler@firstpresbyterian.net
Michael Matter, Worship and Music Director
mpmatter@gmail.com
Patricia Babcock, Treasurer
pbabcock@bex.net
Kathi Flew, Church Administrator
admin@firstpresbyterian.net
Serena Bowles, Organist
Jennifer Orth, Nursery Caregiver



8:30am & 10:45am—Worship Services



“A Family on a Mission to Love God and All People.”

