THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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Tara Lewellen, Music Coordinator
Hope Labutis, Secretary/Treasurer
Gary Collins, Maintenance

Office hours: Tues, Wed, Thurs 9:00-2:00pm

February 2026

Church Elder Information

Thank you, Session, for your faithful service to FPC.

Clerk of Session – Priscilla Hare

Class of 2027:

Karen Fish - Evangelism & Outreach

Greg Angeletti - Property

Class of 2026:

Keith Hare - Finance

Chris Rainey - Worship

Class of 2025:

Sarah Bowles – Church Life

Becky Mahon – Personnel

Worship

Pulpit Supply Pastors for February

February 1: Liz Tietz, CRE

February 8: Liz Tietz, CRE & Communion

Installation of Elders

February 15: Pastor Ricci Arthur

February 22: Liz Tietz, CRE

SCRIP

The next Scrip order is **February 1.** Please consider ordering gift cards from our Scrip program. Remember that the funds generated are used for church needs. Thank you to all who order on a regular basis. See Gaye Gibson to order.

Y-Healthy Backpack Program

FPC is still actively participating in food packing and food delivery at the facility on Swans Rd. If you are interested in participating in a Community Packing Party please sign up at the link below:

https://signupgenius.com/#!/showSignUp/10C084FABA922A0F9C61-50942615-ymca

Congregational Care

February Birthdays

Rose Gibson 2/7

Diane Dodson 2/11

Chris Rainey 2/13

Donna Kinney 2/23

Meeting Announcement

Please attend our annual congregational meeting on **Sunday, February 1, 2026**. There will be a potluck luncheon this day also. Bring a dish to share with your church family.

FPC Weather Policy

If Licking County is a Level 2, church will be cancelled. If you don't feel safe on the roads, please stay home.

Evangelism and Outreach

Minute for Missions

Please enjoy this update letter from the Hare/Bent Family, sent to us this Christmas.

Dear Friends

Keila, Annika, and I are sharing the table on our back porch, doing our respective things, and enjoying the company of our three young laying hens that we finally acquired after more than a year of contemplation (also known, by some, as procrastination). Annika went with me to pick the chickens out last Tuesday, December 9th, for my birthday. Since then, she has been using some of her free time, during "summer" vacation, gaining the chicken's confidence. She clearly succeeded!

Figure 1 Tsunami checking up on what we're doing. Tsunami, Sunny, and Glory are names from the "Wings of Fire" book series.

Surprising to me, each demonstrates clear character. Tsunami is the explorer and enjoys high places. Glory was the first to make friends with Annika but doesn't feel comfortable being the first to climb. Sunny seems to be a follower—she was the second to climb the chicken ladder in the coop, after Tsunami showed it was doable. After hopping on Annika's lap just now, Tsunami proceeded to inspect my laptop and Keila's journal, then rode my arm like a noble falcon back to the chicken coop to roost for the night; Sunny explored the table as well, then a little reluctantly went with Annika; Glory, without a flutter or a squawk, let Keila pick her up from the floor and carry her home. The goal is for the chickens to produce eggs for our breakfast, but I suspect the three sisters may also pay for their feed with entertainment.

If you are thinking that I did not start writing this letter to tell you about our chickens, you are correct. They just happened. I am really writing to let everyone who is supporting our presence here in Costa Rica with the Latin American Biblical University (UBL) know how grateful we are for your prayers and your financial donations. In this advent season, a season of renewal, many of you have stepped up to participate in the new thing that Scioto Valley Presbytery is doing with the UBL. We currently have sufficient funding to keep us serving with the Green UBL team through September or October of 2026, which is amazing. By God's grace, over the next nine months we will be able to find the support that will keep us going to our final date of June 2027.

It is deeply uncomfortable for me to remember how I was feeling a year ago, after discovering that it was highly likely that Jenny and I would lose our jobs. It was gut- wrenching in January 2025 to find out that the whole World Mission program was being eliminated by the leaders of the Interim Unified Agency. Wow.

Figure 2 At the end of November, we held our third annual "Green Party," celebrating the work from the whole year. We had more than thirty participants, including leaders of the garden from the community, UBL student and professors, students from Costa Rica University who did their community service in the garden, a leader from the municipal government, members of other community gardens, and participants in the six hands-on workshops given leaders organized. It was a moment to celebrate and strengthen the ties the seeds us together.

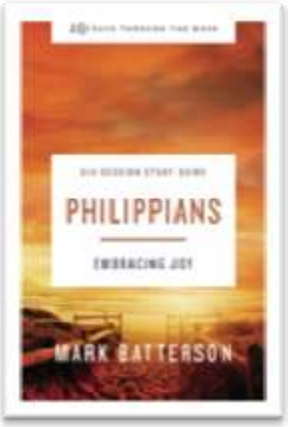
And yet, even as that was happening, the community garden work was exploding, while the leadership of the UBL was telling us clearly that our presence was still important to the institution. And support started showing up, first from one church in Scioto Valley, then from the presbytery, then from other churches, from Jenny's family, from my mother, brothers, and sisters, from New Wilmington Mission Conference, and on and on. In the end, this year has been exhausting, but not because of wondering what we should do; rather, because of the faithful demonstration that we have so much to do, so much to offer.

So, thank you. And if you have not yet donated funds, but would like to, below is the information you need to do that via check. For other donation pathways, please contact:

To donate via check:
Make out to: Presbytery of Scioto Valley
In the memo put: Costa Rica Mission
Mail to: The Presbytery of Scioto Valley,
4131 N. High Street, #B, Columbus, OH 43214

-Mark, Jenny, Keila and Annika

Adult Bible Study



In *40 Days Through the Book: Philippians* video Bible study, bestselling author and pastor Mark Batterson guides you through Paul's letters to the believer in Philippi and what it means for you today. In six-sessions, Batterson encourage will you to find joy through life's ups and downs because all things are possible through Christ.

Join us in person or over Zoom on Sundays. Stay after for a time of Coffee Fellowship in the Fellowship Hall!

Good Morning Bible Study

The Good Morning Bible Study is taking a winter break until March 2026, but will continue to uplift us all in faithful prayer. Thank you, Linda and Gaye, for your faithful leading of this group.

Make Me a Blessing

As the temperatures remain frigid, it is a good time to think of our community members that we serve at the Blessings Box. Items that would be helpful include:

- Warm Socks
- Gloves, Hats, Scarves
- Hand Warmers
- Blankets
- Manual Can Openers

The most requested food items include: nuts and trail mix, oatmeal packets, tuna or chicken in pouches, pop tarts, crackers, ready-to-eat soup, and granola bars. Please remember that canned goods are best with pop top lids.

If it is easier for you to purchase a gift card, please mark it for the Blessings Box and Hope will do the shopping for you and haul in the groceries. Thank you for your help!

Spring Planting Campaign

Order your **Wilson's Gift Cards** for spring planting season via the insert in the sanctuary. We get back $5 from each gift card purchased and your support is greatly appreciated! These will make great Mother's Day gifts if you plan ahead!
Campaign dates for 2026 are 2/1-2/28. See Sandy Noland with any questions.

Property Report

FPC January 2026 Property Report:
The entry door buzzer is finished. Hope can now safely let people in to the building.

Greg Angeletti has secured with the city the right-of-way closures for the sidewalk and alley for the continuing construction work on the exterior of the building in the spring.

We are working on getting the organ repaired. We are waiting on light fixtures to replace the old ones in the organ pipe room. When we get those, we will call DB Organ to come install them so they can work on the organ repair. Hopefully before Easter.

- Linda L. Smith on behalf of The Property Committee.

Finance Report

As of Wednesday, January 28, 2026, the account balances are:

Checking account: $12,005.16
Savings account: $10,330.14
SCRIP account: $2,510.74

-Keith Hare, FPC Finance Chair

Hymn Story: Love Lifted Me

64 Love Lifted Me

James Rowe — Howard E. Smith

1. I was sink-ing deep in sin, Far from the peaceful shore, Ver-y deep-ly
2. All my heart to Him I give, Ev-er to Him I'll cling, In His bless-ed
3. Souls in dan-ger, look a-bove, Je-sus com-plete-ly saves; He will lift you

stained with-in, Sink-ing to rise no more; But the Mas-ter of the sea
pres-ence live, Ev-er His prais-es sing, Love so might-y and so true
by His love Out of the an-gry waves. He's the Mas-ter of the sea,

Heard my despairing cry, From the wa-ters lift-ed me, Now safe am I.
Mer-its my soul's best songs; Faith-ful, lov-ing serv-ice, too, To Him be-longs.
Bil-lows His will o-bey; He your Sav-ior wants to be—Be saved to-day.

Chorus

Love lift-ed me! . . . . Love lift-ed me! . . . . When noth-ing
e-ven me! e-ven me!

1 2

else could help, Love lift-ed me, Love lift-ed me.

Copyright, 1912, by Charlie D. Tillman Robert H. Coleman, owner

Love Lifted Me was a joint effort of James Rowe and Howard E. Smith. The two friends wrote the hymn together.

James Rowe was born in Horrabridge, Devonshire, England in 1865. He was the son of a copper miner. James worked for the Irish government for four years, before immigrating to America. He was 24 years old when he settled in Albany, NY and went to work on the railroad for the next ten years. During this time he married and had at least one child.

After working as an inspector at the Hudson River Humane Society, he went to work for music publishers in Texas and Tennessee. James Rowe became a full time writer that composed hymns and edited music journals. Later in life he moved to Vermont to live with his daughter, an artist. Together, father and daughter wrote messages for greeting card publishers.

Rowe claimed to have written more than 19,000 song texts. Rowe and Smith wrote several hymns together, including "I Would Be Like Jesus" and "Sweeter As the Days Go By".

Howard E. Smith suffered from arthritis so bad that his hands were terribly twisted. "According to Rowe's daughter, Mrs. Louise Rowe Mayhew, Smith was a little man whose hands had become knotted with arthritis, but he could still play the piano."

Love Lifted Me was written in 1912 Saugatuck, Connecticut. James Rowe wrote the lyrics and Howard Smith wrote the melody.

Rowe and Smith wrote the hymn based on the passage Peter walking on the water, becoming afraid, and crying out to the Lord to save him as he was sinking.

Smith would play a few notes and jot them down, matching them with the words Rowe was writing at the time.

According to Rowe's daughter: " I can see them now, my father striding up and down humming a bar or two, and Howard E. playing it and jotting it down…The two huddled together, working line by line, bar by bar, composing this hymn in tandem."

Rowe reminds us of the "redemption from sin by our Savior" in the first verse of this hymn. The second verse shows "the change in our walk as we owe Him our song, our service, our whole heart." The last verse is a "witness to the loss."

The duo sold the copyright of the hymn to Charles Tillman. In 1915, Mr. Tillman transferred the copyright to Robert Coleman for $100.

James Rowe died on November 10, 1933 in Wells, Vermont.

Howard E. Smith was born on July 16, 1863. Smith was an active musician throughout his life and served many years as an organist in Connecticut. He died in 1918.

Read more: https://dianaleaghmatthews.com/love-lifted-me/

Answered Prayer: Transitional Pastor, Reverend Diane Flynn

Sunday afternoon, January 18, 2026, session signed a contract with Reverend Diane Flynn to serve as a transitional pastor for First Presbyterian, Newark for two years.

The role of a transitional pastor is:

1) Exploring the church's heritage both in times of challenge and in times of accomplishment.
2) Discerning the mission of the church – how and where is God calling us in this time and place.
3) Strengthening the leadership of the church for ministry and mission.
4) Building connections to the community and to the presbytery.
5) Preparing for new pastoral leadership with renewed energy and commitment.

The Presbytery usually helps a church find a transitional pastor when their called pastor leaves. However, when Reverend Steve Brand left First Presbyterian in September, 2021, the Presbytery did not have anyone available. Since then, we have been working with various pastors to fill the pulpit on Sundays and session and church members have been providing most of the leadership that a transitional pastor would usually provide.

The mission study we created four years ago is no longer an accurate picture of our church. We need help revising the mission study and figuring out where we are headed and how to get there. At this point, we need someone who has the skill set to guide our church through the process and is willing to work with us.

Rev. Flynn spent fifteen years working in Human Resources (HR) before attending seminary. She graduated from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary in 2017 with a Master of Divinity. She also has bachelor's degrees in elementary and early childhood education from California University of Pennsylvania and a master's in human resources management from St. Francis University.

Rev. Flynn has been serving as the transitional pastor for First Presbyterian Church in Marysville Ohio (https://fpcmarysville.com/about/) for about two years. Marysville Presbyterian is in the process of calling an installed pastor and Reverend Flynn will be available at the end of March, 2026 – Palm Sunday.

Based on our discussion with Rev. Flynn, we believe that she has the skills and personality to help us discern the mission of our church and how we proceed with that mission.

---Keith Hare and Becky Mahon,
on Behalf of Your Session