THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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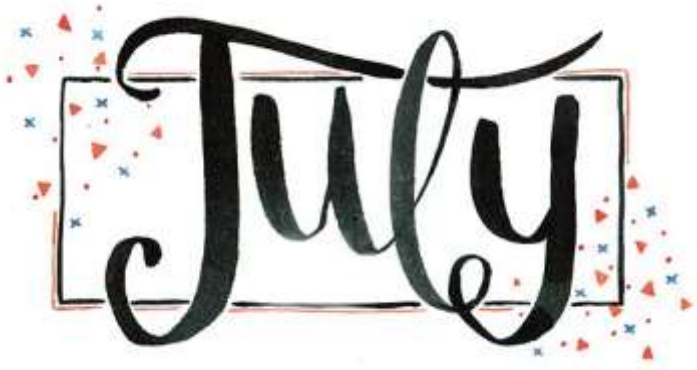
www.1stpresnewark.com
Rev. Diane Flynn, Transitional Pastor
Hope Labutis, Secretary/Treasurer
Gary Collins, Maintenance

Office hours: Tues & Thurs 9:00-2:00pm



July 2026

Church Elder Information

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

Clerk of Session – Priscilla Hare
Class of 2028:
Becky Mahon
Ed Jobes
Class of 2027:
Karen Fish
Class of 2026:
Keith Hare
Chris Rainey

Worship

Communion will be served on Sunday, July 5.

The Church Mice

The volunteers lovingly referred to as the Church Mice meet on Tuesdays mornings to clean and prep our church for the upcoming week. If you would like to help in this ministry, please contact Priscilla Hare.

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

Good Morning Bible Study

The Good Morning Bible Study meets on Thursday mornings at 10 a.m. in the Gold Circle Room. Everyone is welcome for this time of fellowship, study, and prayer!

Congregational Care

July Birthdays

Bob Blamer 7/6

Kim Frick 7/7

Dan Spangler 7/11

Jay Hartman 7/19

Carol Floyd 7/21

Sandy Noland 7/21

Dick Birtcher 7/24

Wendy Hartman 7/29

July Anniversary

Dwight & Rose Gibson 7/24

Make Me a Blessing

The most requested food items for the blessings box include: trail mix, tuna or chicken in pouches, pop tarts, crackers, canned pasta, and granola bars. Please remember that canned goods are best with pop top lids.

SCRIP

The next Scrip order is **July 5.** 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.

Finance Report

As of 2026-06-25, the bank account balances are:

Checking: $18,498.65
Savings: $2,915.69
SCRIP: $2,767.85

The Checking balance includes two large donations, $10,000 designated for building repairs and $11,500.14 that was a tithe given in the form of stock shares.
This amount will be diminished by the budgeted quarterly transfer to Evangelism and Outreach, and the next biweekly payroll.

-Keith Hare, FPC Finance Chair

Property Report

Property Update June 2026

- **Sanctuary** – Houston Plumbing and Heating performed a service call to investigate the lack of A/C in the sanctuary. It was determined to be an electrical issue and advised that we contact an electrician. We will keep you updated after a service call with a certified electrician has been completed.
- **Chapel** – We continue to wait for Robert Stokes to complete the work on the back exterior wall. Please avoid using the exterior front staircase due to crumbling conditions.
- **Pipe Organ** - DB Pipe Organs performed a basic tuning of the organ on June 18th.

-The Property Committee

Property Committee Volunteers Needed

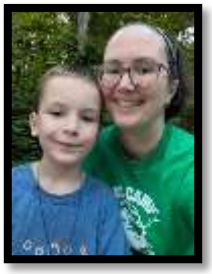
Due to unforeseen circumstances over the past several months, Session has found itself in need of additional volunteers to serve on the Property Committee. This committee plays a vital role in helping to care for and maintain our church building and grounds, ensuring that our facilities remain safe, welcoming, and functional for worship, ministry, and community use.

The work of the Property Committee includes identifying maintenance needs, assisting with building projects, coordinating repairs, and helping Session make informed decisions regarding the stewardship of our church property. All that is required is a willingness to serve, a love for the church, and a commitment to working together.

If you have a desire to help care for our church home, we would be grateful for your involvement. Even a small investment of time can make a significant difference. To learn more about serving on the Property Committee, please contact Pastor Diane at
412-997-0642 or email at
newarkfpcpastor@gmail.com or speak with a member of Session.

Thank you for considering how God may be calling you to use your gifts in service to our congregation.

An Update from Camp



Sarah Bowles gave good reports from the Amesville New England Parish Camp. Thank you FPC for supporting this ministry.

Evangelism and Outreach: Operation Christmas Child

During **July**, the OCC team will be collecting **new T-shirts, for boys or girls, crew socks, for either boys or girls and hand tools** for the boys 10-14. (Please note: **no knives can be accepted**.) Your donation is a simple way to share God's love in a practical and meaningful way to children all around the world. As Scripture reminds us, "Let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth" (1 John 3:18). Thank you for helping us be the hands and feet of Christ by giving generously and making a difference in the lives of others.

Evangelism and Outreach: Paul & Christy Knudson Update

This spring, Paul and I have been studying the book of Daniel at our church. One of the book's central themes is that ***God is in control even when circumstances seem completely out of control***. In a time when governments rise and fall—much like in Daniel's day—and people are faced with difficult decisions about whom they will follow and obey, Daniel challenges and encourages us to stand firm in our faith, remain obedient to God's Word, and seek His guidance through continual prayer.

I am especially grateful for how perfectly God's timing aligns with our lives. As we prepare to return to Bolivia, our study of Daniel has been a timely reminder that the Lord is sovereign over every situation. It has strengthened our faith, deepened our trust in Him, and given us renewed confidence that He is at work even when the future seems uncertain.

Heading back…

As we write this letter, we are busy cleaning, packing, and saying goodbye to the people who have become our "family" here in Wheaton over the past year. God has graciously provided for us in countless ways, most notably through the opportunity to reconnect with friends, family, and supporters. We are grateful for the visits to Indiana, Iowa and Minnesota this spring to share with our supporting churches. Hearing how God has been at work in your lives has been a tremendous encouragement, reminding us of His faithfulness and sovereign hand at work through the prayers of His people.

Caitlyn has enjoyed a wonderful senior year, making new friends and growing in her faith. I have learned so much through serving with the Disability Ministry at our church and am excited to see how God will use those experiences as we return to Bolivia and continue reaching this often overlooked and least-reached community.

Paul has also experienced growth this year, developing a deeper commitment to prayer. He and his leadership team now devote 25% of each weekly meeting to prayer, intentionally seeking God's wisdom and direction as they lead and serve.

Praises:

• Time with family – We were blessed to have my parents stay with us for two and a half weeks. During that time, both of my brothers and their families were also able to visit. We are so grateful that each of them made time in their busy schedules to be with us and create special memories together.

• Caitlyn – We thank the Lord for a successful senior year. We are excited that she will be attending Covenant College in Georgia this August.

• Caleb – We praise God that Caleb received medical clearance to serve internationally with Samaritan's Purse for the next two years. Please continue to pray for him, as he will likely need a double heart valve replacement in the near future unless the Lord chooses to bring healing.

• Abby – She wrapped up her first year of teaching Kindergarten and has accepted a 6th grade teaching position for the coming school year.

FROM OUR PASTOR:

The Gracious Discernment Project: Listening for God's Voice

by Pastor Diane

Discernment is one of the most important practices of the Christian life. There was a season in my own faith journey when it consumed my thoughts 24/7. After experiencing two life-changing events within four days in 2008, I found myself seeking God's direction amid a chorus of competing voices. For nearly two years, I prayed, wrestled, listened, and waited. Then, in January 2010, without hearing an audible sound, I heard God's call for my life with unmistakable clarity. The result was life-changing, and I've never looked back.

To discern God's will, we must prayerfully seek God's wisdom and guidance rather than relying solely on our own preferences. Discernment invites us to listen deeply to the leading of the Holy Spirit through prayer, scripture, worship, and conversation with fellow believers. Throughout the bible, faithful decisions begin not with speaking, but with listening.

The story in 1 Samuel 3 illustrates this beautifully. As a young boy serving in the temple, Samuel heard a voice in the night but did not recognize it. Three times God called to him, and three times Samuel assumed it was Eli the priest. Only after Eli's guidance did Samuel respond, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening."

The story begins with a sobering observation: "The word of the Lord was rare in those days." People were still worshiping, but few were truly listening. Yet even in that difficult season, scripture tells us, "The lamp of God had not yet gone out."

Those words speak powerfully to us today.

Like many churches across the country, our congregation faces important questions about the future. The world has changed. Attendance patterns have shifted. Financial realities are different than they once were. Yet we remain convinced that the lamp of God has not gone out. God is still present. God is still at work. And God is still speaking.

That conviction led our Session to launch The Gracious Discernment Project, a season of intentional prayer, listening, learning, and conversation as we seek God's direction for the future of our congregation. And you are invited to join in the journey.

Discernment is not about preserving the past or rushing toward quick solutions. It is about creating space to listen for God's voice together. As we engage one another, learn from community leaders and ministry partners, and seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we trust that God will reveal the next faithful steps.

We do not yet know exactly where God is leading us. But we do know that the same God who called Samuel, sustained Israel, and raised Jesus Christ from the dead continues to guide God's people today.

As we begin this journey, I invite you to join me in a simple prayer: "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening."

May God open our ears, renew our vision, and guide us faithfully into the future he has prepared.

Preparing Your Heart to Listen

by Pastor Diane

One of the questions Christians often ask is, "How can I hear God's voice when God seems so silent?" It is a question that believers have wrestled with for generations, especially during seasons of uncertainty, transition, or spiritual dryness.

My friend, colleague, and mentor, the Rev. Dr. Graham Standish, has spent much of his ministry helping people explore this very question. Graham is a pastor in the PC(USA) who serves as Executive Director of Samaritan Counseling, Guidance, Consulting in Sewickley, PA, and Director of its Caring for Clergy and Congregations program. He is also an accomplished author, teacher, clergy coach, therapist, and spiritual director.

Drawing upon his extensive experience in spiritual formation and congregational leadership, Graham has written numerous books, articles and led workshops throughout the country on deepening one's relationship with God and discerning God's direction for individuals and congregations.

As our congregation enters a season of prayerful discernment, I thought you might find one of Graham's resources particularly helpful. The following flyer offers practical guidance for learning to listen more deeply for God's voice through prayer, reflection, and spiritual attentiveness.

Take a few moments to check it out. May it help all of us pray Samuel's simple but profound prayer: "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening."

https://www.ngrahamstandish.org/_files/ugd/70be1d_ef3e70b72f594021bd4b9b95b4ef9ace.pdf

For more information about Graham's ministry, visit Samaritan Counseling, Guidance, Consulting at www.samaritancounseling.net

This Month for Prayer & Meditation

- Pray any of the Psalms.

  There are 150 to choose from.

- Genesis 22:1-19 –

  Faith to obey God.

- Isaiah 42:6-7 –

  I have called you in righteousness.

- Matthew 4:18-22 –

  Jesus Calls his first disciples.

- Luke 4:18 –

  The spirit of the Lord is upon me.

- 1 Corinthians 1:36-41 –

  Consider your own call.

- Philippians 3:10-14 –

  Pressing toward the goal.

Liturgists for July

July 5 – Keith Hare
July 12- Carol Floyd
July 19 – Gaye Gibson
July 26 – Ed Jobes