THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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Hope Labutis, Secretary/Treasurer
Katherine Stuart, Church Pianist

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

October 2026

FROM OUR PASTOR

Called to Go: Reimagining Our Mission

by Pastor Diane

At the May 31st session meeting, I presented a “State of the Church” address. I shared my observations about where we are as a congregation and the challenges we face.

For decades our church has experienced a significant decline in membership, worship attendance, and financial stability. These challenges are not ours alone. Churches across the country are navigating cultural changes, shifting family patterns, economic pressures, the growth of online worship, and increasing distrust of religious institutions.

Here at FPC, prolonged periods without consistent pastoral leadership, declining participation, increased financial pressures, and volunteer fatigue have also taken their toll. Ministry strategies that once worked well no longer produce the same results.

That reality led me to challenge us to re-imagine how we carry out Christ’s mission in a rapidly changing world. Rather than simply asking, “How do we keep doing what we have always done?” we began asking, “Where is God leading us now?” From that question, the Gracious Discernment Project was born.

Our initial financial assessment suggested that, without significant changes or unexpected expenses, we had approximately three years of financial viability. Long-term sustainability at our current expense level would require more than 50 additional members giving an average of $2,500 annually. We also recognized that eventually our resources may not be sufficient to maintain both our large building and support staff while also sustaining pastoral leadership.

Then July 16 changed the conversation when plaster collapsed in the sanctuary. Our building was constructed in the early 1900s to serve a congregation of more than 650 members and later expanded to nearly 900 members and 500 Sunday school students. Today, we have approximately 55 members, average 13–15 in worship and have 8–10 adults participating in Sunday school with no programming for children.

Since July, the Session has been carefully assessing the future sustainability of our church. In cooperation with the presbytery, we obtained a professional building inspection identifying repairs necessary to maintain the safety and structural integrity of our facility. We also obtained a professional appraisal of the property.

Now it is time to share those findings with you.

Mark 16:15 reminds us that the church exists for more than maintaining a building or preserving an institution. Jesus sends his followers into the world to proclaim and embody the good news. The question before us is not simply, “How do we save what we have?” but “How can we faithfully continue Christ’s mission?”

You are invited to our **first State of the Church gathering on Sunday, October 18**, in the Fellowship Hall following the soup and sandwich potluck dinner. I will present our findings, and church leadership will be available for questions and conversation.

Your voice matters. Your prayers and participation matter. Together, let us listen carefully for where God is leading FPC next and have the courage to follow.

Jesus said to his disciples, “Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation.” — Mark 16:15

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

Falling into Fellowship: Special Sundays in October

October brings two joyful opportunities to worship, celebrate, and share fellowship with our Presbyterian neighbors!

On Sunday, October 4, we will join the congregation of Woodside Presbyterian Church for World Communion Sunday at 10:30 a.m. Rev. Flynn will preside as we gather around the Lord's Table and celebrate the beautiful reminder that, in Christ, we are part of one worldwide family of faith.

Then, on Sunday, October 18, we are invited to worship at Second Presbyterian Church at 10:00 a.m. for their special Kirkin of the Tartan service. This colorful and meaningful tradition celebrates our Presbyterian heritage and gives thanks for the generations of faith that have gone before us.

After worship on October 18, we will return to First Presbyterian Church for a Soup and Sandwich Potluck Dinner, followed by our Congregational Meeting and State of the Church conversation.

Mark your calendars and plan to join us for these special Sundays filled with worship, tradition, good food, fellowship, and the joy of being connected to the wider family of Christ!

Congregational Meeting: October 18

There will be a brief congregational meeting for Sunday, October 18th for the purpose of electing a President of the Corporation. The meeting will take place following the soup potluck dinner.

Y-Healthy Backpack Program

FPC is still actively participating in food packing and food delivery at the facility on Swans Rd. **1st Tuesdays of the month!** If you are interested in participating in a Community Packing Party please sign up at the link below or contact Sarah Bowles: https://signupgenius.com/#!/showSignUp/10C084FABA922A0F9C61-50942615-ymca

SCRIP

The next Scrip order is **October 11.** 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.

Make Me a Blessing

the BLESSING BOX FOOD PANTRY

Thank you for your continued donations to the Blessings Box. As the weather turns crisp, please remember those in need with ready-to-eat soups, instant oatmeal packets, protein bars, and heavy socks. As you transition to your cold weather clothing, we welcome sweatshirts and jackets for the box as well. Thank you for blessing our community in this practical way.

Liturgists for October

October 4 – Keith Hare

October 11 – Carol Floyd

October 18 – Kirkin of the Tartan

October 25 – Ed Jobes

Congregational Care

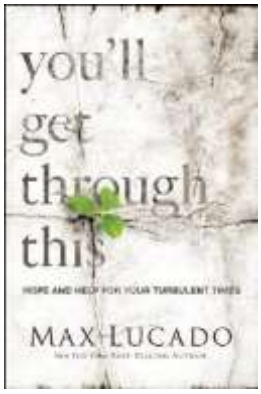
October Birthdays

Dave Kittel 10/2
Emily Hare 10/4
Elias Bowles 10/18
Jean Nichols 10/19

October Anniversaries

Greg & Tina Angeletti 10/22
Bob & Deb Blamer 10/25
Jay & Wendy Hartman 10/27

Adult Sunday School

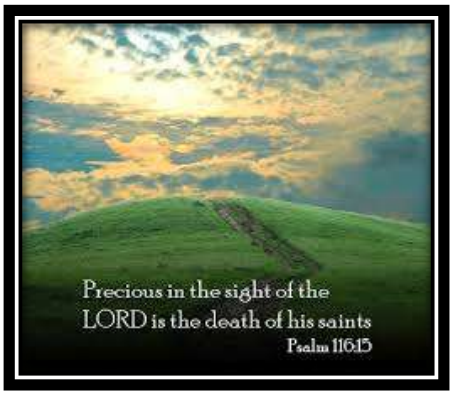


In "You'll Get Through This: Hope and Help for Your Turbulent Times," Max Lucado encourages readers through sharing the Biblical story of Joseph. Stripped of his identity, thrown into a pit and sold as a slave, his was a story of defeat and challenges, but as time passed God worked through his circumstances to bring redemption and reconciliation. And although it may seem hard to believe, you will get through this too.

The story of Joseph's life didn't end in the pit and neither does yours.

Adult Sunday School meets at 9:30 a.m. in the Journey Room. Join us!

In Loving Memory of Dwight Gibson



Dwight C. Gibson Jr. passed away surrounded by his family on September 14, 2026.

Dwight was a graduate of Newark High School and Central Ohio Technical College. He served Our Country in the United States Army. He was a remarkable contributor to many projects in his field as a mechanical draftsman. He served on the Harrison Township Zoning Committee. Dwight was a 50 plus year member of First Presbyterian Church of Newark. He was also a leader and drummer of Rhythm and Brass Dance Band.

Dwight is survived by his beloved wife, Rose (Rhodes) Gibson; a daughter, Dawn; two sons, Robert "Bob" and Gregg; six grandchildren and 7 great grandchildren.

Evangelism and Outreach: In Memory of Leroy Peters

Leroy Grant Peters, age 90, went to be with the Lord on July 21st, 2026. Leroy and his wife Mary Lou (deceased) initially served with Ethnos 360 in Colombia South America, then as a US representative/recruiters, and finally as volunteers at our US home office. Leroy will undoubtable be missed by friends, family, and co-workers.

Evangelism and Outreach: Operation Christmas Child Packing Party

It's time to get ready for our Operation Christmas Child (OCC) Packing Party! This year's packing party will be held on October 25 from 2:00–5:00 p.m. in the church basement. As we prepare to fill shoeboxes for children around the world, we are especially in need of beads and beaded-bracelet kits. These simple craft items can bring a great deal of joy and give children something fun and creative to make and wear. Donations of colorful beads, elastic cord, and complete bracelet-making kits would be greatly appreciated.

Every shoebox is more than a collection of gifts—it is an opportunity to show a child that they are loved, remembered, and cared for. "Let all that you do be done in love." — 1 Corinthians 16:14

We invite everyone to participate. You can help by donating bracelet supplies, contributing other shoebox items, or joining us at the packing party. Many hands make the work lighter—and a lot more fun!

"It is more blessed to give than to receive." — Acts 20:35

Please mark your calendar:

OCC Packing Party
Sunday, October 25th
2:00–5:00 p.m.
Church Basement

Thank you for helping us share God's love with children around the world, one shoebox at a time.

Property Update by Pastor Diane

- Light bulbs in certain section of the building have been replaced.
- A $21,650 bid from Campbell Plastering LLC was accepted to repair the plaster for the chancel repair. It does not include paint or cleaning the sanctuary or organ.
- September 8, the condensation drain backed up at south side blower for the sanctuary AC, leaking water outside the sanctuary door. Caught early, the AC was turned off and DorMar made the necessary repairs for $638.75. The line was cleaned, all filters in both buildings were replaced, and we're trying to renew a maintenance contract with them.
- DorMar noted a small leak in the attic. Robert Stokes identified a broken piece of slate and several other pieces on the vertical wall of the dormer with the stained-glass window into the attic (as seen from the main parking lot) which were dislodged in a recent storm. He will be repairing it soon.
- Thanks to an anonymous donor, the flower garden was landscaped.
- A gate access is needed through the fencing for the Chapel's heat pump for maintenance access. A&B Fence was recommended.
- PJ & Hunter from the Newark Arcade presented an offer of $300 to purchase the popcorn cart. The session approved the offer.
- The Church Mouse Basement Sale is scheduled for November 7. Church Mice and others to help facilitate.

Finance Report

As of Tuesday, September 29, 2026, the church accounts had the following balances:

Checking: $20,919.35
Savings: $2,916.41
SCRIP: $2,866.05

The checking balance includes amounts for several checks that have been written but not yet cashed and the monthly payments to the Presbyterian Board of Pensions that will be withdrawn at the beginning of October.

-Keith Hare, FPC Finance Chair

Upcoming Sale!

From Clutter to Treasure:

The Church Mouse Basement Sale

Saturday, November 7 | 9:00 a.m.–2:30 p.m.

The Church Mice are at it again! As we continue making needed repairs, we are hoping to turn some unused church items into funds for the Chancel Project. With Session approval, the Church Mice and Rev. Diane are compiling a list of larger items to be sold or sent to auction, while smaller items such as books, decorations, and supplies will be offered at our Church Mouse Basement Sale.

Most items will be available for a donation.

Congregation Preview November 1

Before the public sale, church members will have the first opportunity to look things over during the week of November 1. If you see something on the large-item list that you would like, please let us know before November 7.

Calling All Church Mice!

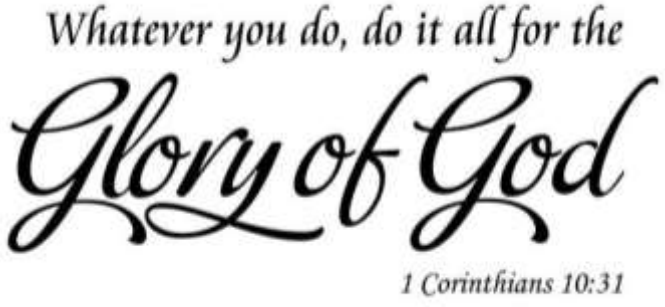
We need plenty of helpers with:

- Moving and sorting items
- Setting up Fellowship Hall
- Advertising
- Greeting and cashiering
- Food or baking
- Cleanup

Setup will begin after the October 18 congregational meeting and continue mainly on Mondays and Tuesdays through October and during the week of November 2.

If you would like to donate something from home, please check with us first. Items should be clean, easy to move, and likely to sell. We are not accepting clothing except holiday items and coats.

To help, contact the church office or Priscilla Hare at 740-485-0338 or Priscilla@jcc.com. Bring your helping hands and your sense of humor and join the Church Mice as we turn clutter into treasure for a good cause!



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2026				1	2	3
4 WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY **Liturgist – Keith Hare** 10:30 Church @ Woodside	5	6 10:00 Church Mice	7	8	9	10
11 SCRIP **Liturgist – Carol Floyd** 9:30 Adult Sunday School 11:00 Church – Chapel	12	13 10:00 Church Mice	14	15	16	17
18 **10:00 Kirkin' of the Tartan @ Second Presbyterian** **Potluck and Congregational Meeting to Follow @ FPC Fellowship Hall**	19	20 10:00 Church Mice 	21	22	23 	24
25 **Liturgist – Ed Jobes** 9:30 Adult Sunday School 11:00 Church – Chapel **2:00-5:00 - OCC Packing Party**	26	27 10:00 Church Mice	28	29	30	31