

Pastor's Pen: State of the Church 2021

Does anyone else remember those long family road trips? In the days before cell phones and tablets, we would sit in the backseat staring out the window. As the number of miles increased, our level of frustration and anxiety would rise. Eventually, my poor father would hear the words for the umpteenth time, "Are we there yet?"

As the calendar shifted from 2020 to 2021, we have moved from a time of challenge and change to more challenge and more change. Variants of the original COVID-19 virus still plague our communities. Economic uncertainty remains our companion. Riots in the streets of major cities have given way to the storming of the Capitol building in Washington D.C. As our frustration and anxiety rise, I'd like to ask whoever is driving this car, "Are we there yet?"

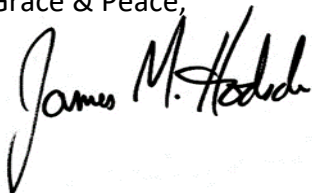
The answer is of course, "no." However, that doesn't mean that our church must be carried along at the mercy of events. When the people of Israel faced crisis and exile, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Jeremiah. God told him that the Israelites needed to "seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile" (Jeremiah 29:7). Rather than complain or despair, they had a responsibility to be peacemakers.

In the current chaos of the culture, the First Presbyterian Church of Norwalk, Ohio has been a calming presence. This year, the session and the Mission Committee set aside over \$50,000 specifically to assist those impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In the aftermath of the death of George Floyd, one of our deacons, Joyce Ditz, has brought together community officials and leaders for monthly discussions on how we can better "love our neighbor." As part of her doctor of ministry project, Julie Murdock developed a series of small group meetings to talk about "peacemaking" and conflict. Bob Sands has organized an amazing ministry to the Hispanic community through "Inspiration Station." The Outreach Committee provided intentional opportunities to connect with the youth from our Firelands Boulevard neighborhood. The deacons have developed a monthly ministry to our older members, our "keenagers." Over the course of the year, we became more engaged with other churches in our community by partnering in both mission and evangelism. In each of these examples and many more, FPC is building community both in the church and outside it.

One exciting way that FPC is "seeking the welfare of our city" has been our new partnership in youth ministry. After the resignation of our Youth Director, church leadership saw the need of a new direction. Not only were we committed to providing care and support for our youth, but we also wanted to reach out to the youth in our community. As a result, we are now working with Young Life, a parachurch organization committed to youth evangelism. The new Youth Director will divide his time between the youth of our congregation and starting a Young Life chapter here in Norwalk. Malcolm James began in June 2021. Already, he has brought a new level of excitement to our youth ministry which we hope will grow as the school year begins.

"Are we there yet?" Not quite. We still have a way to go, but as I approach my third anniversary, First Presbyterian Church is doing exciting ministry here in Norwalk. We are changing the tone for our community. Let us continue to be "rooted in grace, growing in Christ, and reaching out in love" for our city and beyond.

Grace & Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "James M. Hadach". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

St. Jude Virtual Walk

Come and partner with us as our church works to raise \$1,500 for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital! The mission of St. Jude is to advance cures, and means of prevention, for pediatric catastrophic diseases through research and treatment. Unlike any other hospital, the majority of St. Jude's funding comes from individual contributions, and thanks to generous donors, families never receive a bill from St. Jude. Treatments invented at St. Jude have helped push the overall childhood cancer survival rate from 20% to more than 80% since it opened over 50 years ago. We believe in the mission of St. Jude and have partnered with them in their latest fundraising goal.

Our church has created a team, "Jedi Council" (FYI, "Jedi Council" translated from Chinese into English is "Presbyterian Church!") and would love everyone to join us. Simply go to our St. Jude page, which can be found on the main page of our church's website, to signup now. Once you have signed up, you can use your social media accounts, e-mail, or word of mouth to help fundraise. On September 25th at 9am, we will all come together to participate in Cleveland's St. Jude virtual walk by having a walk of our own right here around Norwalk to raise awareness and end our fundraising mission. All are welcome to join our walk, even if you didn't fundraise. We will begin at the church at 9am, walk uptown and return. If you would like to donate, but not be a part of the team, you can give your monetary gift to Kathleen. or visit our "Jedi Council" webpage as well, If you have questions, please contact Kathleen Wheeler.

Snack Donations Appreciated!:

Now that our Kingdom Kids program is back in full swing, we are in need of snacks for our "feast time," which we use to symbolize communion with others. 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 September. Need some ideas of sweet treats? Check these out:

- Fruit snacks
- Packs of pretzels, or goldfish
- Little Debbie snacks
- Pudding cups
- Mini individual bags of cookies
- Applesauce cups
- Cracker and cheese packs
- Small bags of chips

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 your providing snacks!

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). 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.

Sunday School Registration (preschool - 6th Grade):

Are you registered for Sunday School yet? What are you waiting for? We would love to have you be a part of our Sunday School program this year! We will, once again, be working with the curriculum, "Dig In!" which focuses on laying the groundwork for lasting faith. All of our lessons are designed to develop a genuine, growing relationship with God by getting to know His heart! If you would like to be a part of our 2021-2022 Sunday School year, you can sign up your preschool - 6th grade student now by visiting our website, www.firstpresbyterian.net, and clicking on the Sunday School link under the Children & Youth tab. Sunday School will begin September 12th from 9:30 - 10:30am. We look forward to seeing all of you this school year!

NEWS FROM THE SESSION

July 2021

The pulpit exchange with Pastor Sara Hodsden has been moved to September 5.
The August picnic is canceled.

Building and Grounds current projects:

- Purchase 2 Sanctuary projectors
- Repair fire/sprinkler system
- Update Security System
- Complete courtyard drain work
- West Sanctuary window work
- North Sanctuary window work/ Bob Huston & Russ White will replace rotten wood before they are wrapped.

Seventy-five people enjoyed the meal prepared by Fellowship Committee at the Between Service Brunch.

Mission Committee sent pandemic-related relief mission support to PHOC and the Piggy Back Foundation. There will be no Feed the Children mission event this year. Fifteen church members volunteered for the Salvation Army Summer Lunch Program.

Iris Riley will oversee the distribution of wooden crosses at Love Norwalk on August 14 from 6-8:00 P.M.

Parish Associate, Rev. Clair Brewer, retires on September 1, 2021. Session unanimously approved Pastor Emeritus status for Clair. A Ministry Associate for Congregational Care Job Description was developed with the search team to include Elder Wallace, Joyce Ditz, John Flickinger, and Aundrea Gordon.

Recruitment continues for a Nursery Care Giver. and tech person for Sunday live streaming.

A 2022 Confirmation Class is planned. The VBS theme for June 13-17, 2022 is "Spark Studios". Plans are underway for a Small Group Expo.

OUTDOOR COFFEE HOUR FOR REV. CLAIR BREWER SUN. SEPT. 19

Please wear a mask

Thank you for the generous donation to the Piggyback Foundation. The small project, "Kids To Camp" has been a huge blessing to our piggyback families. I have been humbled by the generosity of our local churches. Together, we have been able to help show Christ's love to many families.

Thank you,

Tricia Ebner

Thank you to everyone who sent me a birthday card to help me celebrate my special day. I am blessed to be part of such a caring church family.

Sincerely,

Phyllis Hanick

Is God calling you to lead our congregation as an Elder or Deacon? Do you know someone who has the leadership skills to be an Elder or Deacon? After prayerful consideration, if the answer to either questions is YES, please submit names via the Pew Pad, putting a note in the collection plate, or simply contacting the church office. Questions? Contact Curt Markley or Amy Bower.

~ September 2021 ~						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Lorri Vacation 7a Men's AM Group 7:30p Al-anon Meeting	2 Lorri Vacation 7a Women's Small Group 6:30p Mission Committee	3 Lorri Vacation 10a AA Meeting 1p Keen-Agers 9p 5th Quarter Basketball	4 7a Men's Small Group
5 FOOD BANK SUNDAY COMMUNION Sara Hodsdon Preaching 8:30a & 10a Worship	6 Labor Day Office Closed	7 10a AA Meeting 6p Christian Education	8 7a Men's AM Group 12p Stewardship 4:30p Women Sm Group 7:30p Al-anon Meeting	9 7a Women's Small Group 10a Ohio Dept. of Public Safety Meeting 12p Men's Small Group	10 10a AA Meeting	11 Patriot Day 7a Men's Small Group
12 8:30a & 10:45a Worship 9:30a Sunday School 12p Pot Luck Luncheon 5p Fusion 7p Catalyst	13 10a Staff Meeting 5:45p Worship 7p ACT Board Meeting 7p Bible Banter Sm Group	14 10a AA Meeting 6:30p Outreach 7:15p Fellowship	15 7a Men's AM Group 12p "Love Neighbor & Norwalk Ministerial Assoc. 12:30p B-DAY BUNCH 5:45p Building & Grounds 7:30p Al-anon Meeting	16 7a Women's Small Group 10:30a Morning Circle Picnic at Wende Mersereau's 12p Men's Small Group 7p "Good Grief" Meeting	17 10a AA Meeting	18 7a Men's Small Group 7p FADS
19 8:30a & 10:45a Worship 9:30a Sunday School 11:45a Clair Brewer Re- ception 5p Fusion	20 10a Staff Meeting 7p Bible Banter Sm Group	21 10a AA Meeting	22 7a Men's AM Group 4:30p Women Sm Group 7:30p Al-anon Meeting	23 7a Women's Small Group 12p Men's Small Group 6:30p Session & Deacons	24 10a AA Meeting	25 7a Men's Small Group
26 8:30a & 10:45a Worship 10:45a Worship Service 5p 4th Fusion	27 10a Staff Meeting 7p Bible Banter Sm Group	28 10a AA Meeting	29 7a Men's AM Group 7:30p Al-anon Meeting	30 7a Women's Small Group 12p Men's Small Group 7p "Good Grief" Meeting	Notes:	

DINNERS TOGETHER

We have held this event off and on over the years. It has been called Dinners for 8, Dinners Together, Culinary Cruising, and Cruisin' Cuisine. We are resurrecting it once again as DINNERS TOGETHER.

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 OCTOBER'S DINNERS TOGETHER on September 12th, 19th, and 26th. 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.

THANK YOU FROM THE PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Thank you does not seem enough for the task that we accomplished together. We all worked very hard towards an end goal. We Did It!!! So far, we have raised approx. \$7000!!! Can you believe it? 100% of that money will be given to local, national and global charities. If you would like to know the specific charities, they can be found in the PW booklet, by calling the church office or looking on our church website under Presbyterian Women.

Thank you to everyone and anyone that helped in a small or BIG way. We cannot possibly name all of you, there are way to many to list. There was furniture moved ALL YEAR long. From homes, apartments, condos and garages into the storage room in the basement. We had so many treasures we overflowed both storage rooms and had to invade the youth room for some of their space.

Thank you to all who donated their items and treasures to the sale. We hope you know that we don't take this lightly and we price your items at a good, fair price. If your items are on the valuable side, we research them and price them at a value that you would be proud of. There is a tremendous amount of time and effort that goes into this process. We want you to know that we appreciate you, your treasures and your trust in us to handle them in the best way that we know.

Thank you to all who worked tirelessly the week prior to the sale. Without you, we would not have been as organized.

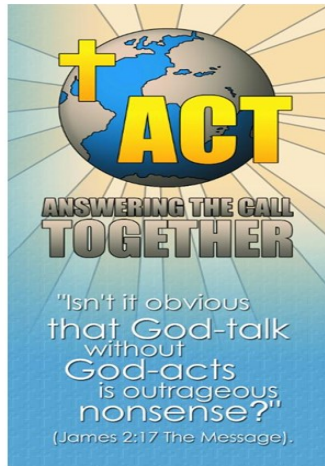
Thanks to anyone who volunteered as a cashier. You are invaluable. As you had to "wing it" on occasion...things not marked, adjusting prices and keeping an eye out on everything. You handled all these things with grace and kindness.

We will cherish the new friendships made and the love that we forged through the process. Thank you again from the bottom of our hearts.

Respect and love to all,

PW Board and Members

Answering The Call Together



David M. Wallace
Executive Director
Phone: 419-706-8656

Chipley, FL Mission Trip

A free mission opportunity is here, ACT is going back to Chipley, FL October 24-29, 2021.

ACT will be working on homes that have been damaged by hurricanes. The people we are helping are low income and/or have no insurance. ACT will provide lodging, meals, tools, and ensure materials will be in place and ready to go! All we need is YOU!

If you are interested in join ACT, please call me at 419-706-8656.

Thank you!
David

NEW SERVICE TIMES STARTING

SEPTEMBER 12, 2021

**8:30am
10:45am**

Coffee Hour to follow

**NOVEL IDEAS BOOK CLUB
SEPTEMBER 26, 2021 at 7pm in the Church library
The Healing by Jonathon Odell
New members always welcome!!!**

BIRTHDAY BUNCH
NOW MEETING THE THIRD WEDNESDAY
OF EACH MONTH
12:30 PM AT
EAST OF CHICAGO PIZZA
Next meeting
September 15, 2021

KEEN AGE NEWS

September will put us back on our regular schedule of KEENAGERS (First Friday Friends) again. We'll meet - **1:00pm on Friday, September 3** in the Great Room.

We look forward to hearing from two more "Getting to Know You" friends. They will share their life's story. It's such a wonderful way to become even better acquainted. Thank you so much Reta Stark and Dee Hodsden.

We will also have the Fire Chief acquaint us with the use and availability of the Knox Box. Several of you have asked for this information.

Please join us for another wonderful gathering of special friends.

*keen: sharp, eager, enthusiastic,, etc. etc. etc.

SERVING IN SEPTEMBER

LITURGIST

8:30am

Sept. 5 Ty Keefer
Sept. 12 Luke Brown
Sept. 19 Kathy Root
Sept. 26 Tom Root

10:45am

Sept. 5 Chris Canfield (10am)
Sept. 12 Suzanne Boegli
Sept. 19 Alice Pleasnick
Sept. 26 Dirk Hiler

USHERS

8:30am

Sept. 5 Bob & Marilyn Huston
Sept. 12 Crissy Cooperrider
Sept. 19 Connie Kluding/Kay Kersey
Sept. 26 Connie Kluding/Kay Kersey

10:45am

Sept. 5 Susan Maguire/Linda Carino (10am)
Sept. 12 Georgiana Scherz
Sept. 19 Carolyn Winkler/Mark Strimpfel
Sept. 26 Susan Maguire/Linda Carino

FOOD BANK SUNDAY

1st Sunday of the month.

Next one will be
September 5, 2021

SEPARATE & DELIVER

FLOWERS

Sept. 5 Cynthia Kniffin
Sept. 12 Nancy Gfell
Sept. 19 Diane Eschen
Sept. 26 Aundrea Gordon

OCTOBER 2021 *Messenger*
Deadline is Weds. Sept. 15, 2021

COFFEE HOUR

Sept. 5 Nancy Gfell
Sept. 12 Kick-off Sunday
Sept. 19 Peggy Case
Sept. 26 Kayla Eyer

CHURCH FINANCES

As of July 2021



YTD Income \$268,461.29

YTD Expense \$251,183.80

Net Income \$ 17,277.49

Details available from Treasurer

One Great Hour of Sharing 2021 - \$8,368.53

Thank you for your generosity.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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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 Hodsden, Pastor

jhodsden@firstpresbyterian.net

Rev. Clair H. Brewer, Parish Associate

Lorri Shane, Office Coordinator

lshane@firstpresbyterian.net

Malcolm James, Youth Director

mjames@firstpresbyterianchurch.net

Kathleen Wheeler, Director of Children &
Family Ministries

kwheeler@firstpresbyterian.net

Michael Matter, Director of Worship and
Music

mpmatter@gmail.com

Serena Bowles, Organist

Patricia R. Babcock, Treasurer

pbabcock@bex.net

Kayliann Schwinn, Worship Media
Coordinator

craftyteacher246@gmail.com

Kay Leimeister, Custodian

Burt W. Zimmerman, Custodian

Rooted in Grace...

Growing in Christ...

Reaching Out in Love

SERVICE TIMES

8:30am & 10:00 am

8:30 & 10:45 starting Sept. 12, 2021

FACEBOOK, YOUTUBE 9:30am

