

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

# PRESBYTERIAN CONNECTION

APRIL, MAY, JUNE 2022

## GREETINGS,

I wish to explore the mysterious longings for the things of God that emerge within us in this newsletter. At the end of last year I suggested we each have a mysterious longing for the Kingdom to sweep into our world of shadows, darkness, and despair. I wrote that we intuitively know that our world is broken and not functioning as it was designed by our Creator and we secretly long for its rebirth and the end to all the narratives of suffering, evil, injustice, and sorrow if we are alive in God's Spirit. Every time we read of Revelation's final vision where God "*will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away*", we experience a warming sense of hope and deep spiritual longing. We can't help but frame our desires for this world in terms of this vision.

In this newsletter, I wish to visit the mysterious longing within for something more personally. I believe that we wish to be more completely human than we are. We wish to prosper as emotional, physical, and spiritual beings. We secretly struggle with the issues that keep us from that kind of life. We know that we are to some degree less than what we try to convince ourselves we are and certainly less than what we want others to believe we are. In our quiet space we secretly lament our dark actions and attitudes. We rue our inability to break free of our addictions. We mourn our powerlessness in the face of our fears and insecurities. We struggle with our inability to deal with painful past actions and words of others that constantly play in the background of our actions and attitudes. If

honest, we know we are broken and we know how powerless we are to fix ourselves. If actively engaged with God, we understand that God's grace is our only hope.

Unfortunately, much of our past approach to faith has led us in the opposite direction of healing. In that approach we were encouraged to mistakenly believe that those who are spiritual are those who commit the fewest sins. We mistakenly believe that there are some who live well above what the rest of us "Lessers" struggle with. But sin is not something always observable in the way of dos and don'ts. Sin is a condition of the heart that resists participating with God in a different way of doing things. Sin is deeply embedded in attitudes of personal independence, pride, selfishness, vilification or disqualification of others, indifference toward the plight of others, and or failing to embrace the call to take up our crosses and follow Jesus. We all have issues in these areas; even those or especially those who we deem spiritual.

The scriptures seek to convince us that the most spiritual among us are those who are constantly discovering new levels or layers of sinfulness within. These disciples never tire of allowing God's amazing grace and compassionate mercy to progressively remedy this condition. Healthy Christians see how damaged they are, how dependent upon God's grace they are, and see God as the trusted partner needed to restore us to our Edenic condition. Only in admitting our needy condition can we trust in God's remedy to restore us.

*(Cont. on page 2)*



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*(Cont. from page 1)* Only when we understand that God is not angry, impatient, or frustrated with our human condition but instead delights in our process of discovering our brokenness and in our transformation that the Spirit seeks to bring.

God knows us better than we know ourselves. He loves us more than we deserve. He longs to help heal us more than we desire healing ourselves. It is as if God smiles with each step of authenticity that we take and each layer of denial that we shed. The more we discover our need to be healed, the greater the smile of God and the greater the means of grace that affects healing. Contrary to our intuition, God is delighted to join with us in bringing remedy to our condition.

Opening our hearts up to past failures, bravely recalling past ill-behaviors and sinful attitudes, and peeling away our excuses and justifications in authentic times of prayer opens access to the Spirit's guidance into meaningful, fruitful existence. This existence is marked by a freedom to be authentic, humble, forgiving, merciful, and compassionate. It is an existence free from coverup, hypocrisy, and the need to be guarded.

Our deepest desire to experience a better life is found in a spirituality that revels in God's deepest joy...a joy found in renewing our life. When we are weak; we are strong. When we are poor in spirit; we are made rich. When we humble ourselves under God; we are exulted. God's strength is perfected in our weakness. So why would we try to sell ourselves as something other than weak, poor in spirit, humble, or broken?

As God seeks his lost sheep, lost coin, and lost son; it is for the purpose of restoring the inherent value in each object. We weren't designed to live among the pigs, wander off as a lone sheep, or remain hidden out of sight; all of which represent life well beneath our created DNA from God. We were designed to live in intimate harmony and relationship with God within an ongoing regeneration of our person. The joy and pleasure God experienced in creating everything is a joy and pleasure that God now enjoys in recreating us.

We know that there is something better in the way of living. We long for escape from our limited lives with all of its struggles and yearn for life that is full and rich. I invite you to see the path forward into this life and begin to take the steps needed to get you there. The last stages of the Lenten season couldn't arrive at a better time.

Blessings, Tom

## HOLY WEEK

**Palm Sunday, April 10, 2022**

**10:00 a.m. Worship with Holy Communion**

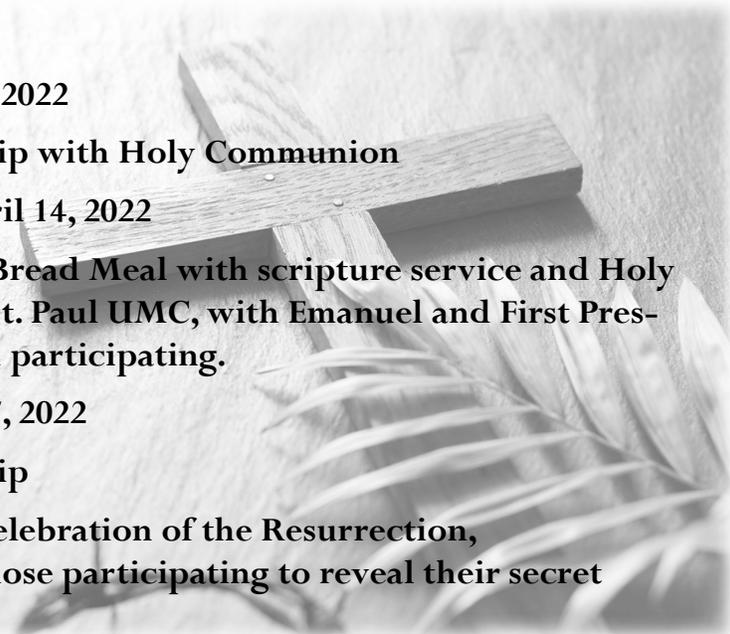
**Maundy Thursday, April 14, 2022**

**5:30 p.m. Soup/Bread Meal with scripture service and Holy Communion at St. Paul UMC, with Emanuel and First Presbyterian Church participating.**

**Easter Sunday, April 17, 2022**

**10:00 a.m. Worship**

**Following the Celebration of the Resurrection, we encourage those participating to reveal their secret prayer partner.**



## SESSION NOTES

Session met Monday, February 14, via Zoom for the first meeting of 2022. Betsy Morgan was elected Treasurer and Nancy Johnston was elected Clerk for the coming year. Annual Statistical Reports have been completed and sent to Presbytery. The annual review of the Session minutes for 2021 has been completed.

Session approved updating the Standing Rules for the Operations Manual to mirror the recent updates to the By-Laws, decreasing the quorum for the Congregational Meeting to ten and the at-large members of the Nominating Committee to two.

The members for the Operations and Congregational Life teams for 2022 were approved. Session discussed how to resume Home Communion for shut-ins. They would like the trumpets to be part of the Easter Sunday service.

The Operations team is still dealing with the boiler that's not working properly and requires regular checks to keep it running. The new drainage system in the west yard appears to be keeping the water from accumulating along the alley.

The next Session meeting will be Monday, April 18.

Nancy Johnston, Clerk

### 2022 SESSION

#### MEMBERS:

DAN BADENHOP

OLGA HALL

JILL BOKERMAN

JACK SCHROEDER

LYNN YARNELL

BETSY MORGAN

## GRADUATION SUNDAY

**2022**



Graduation Sunday will be celebrated on Sunday, May 29, 2022. Being honored this year is Victoria Hall, graduating from Delta High School and also recipients of the Presbyterian Heritage Educational Fund Grant.

## COMMUNION SERVERS

Congregational Life is looking for volunteers to help serve home communion to our nursing home residents and home bound members. If you are interested or want more details, please contact Bruce Brown or Lynn Yarnell.



## STATISTICS FOR JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH

### Attendance

January 2	16
January 9	26
January 16	23
January 23— Snow-canceled	
January 30	26
February 6	28
February 13	32
February 20	33
February 27	27
March 6	29
March 13	33
March 20	24
March 27	31

### Financial

Budgeted expenses/month	
	\$11,435.33
January contributions	
	\$17,629.00
February contributions	
	\$ 8,535.00
March contributions	
	\$ 9,160.00

THANK YOU  
FOR YOUR  
SUPPORT OF THE  
CHURCH,  
COMMUNITY,  
AND THE  
WORLD.

**PER CAPITA DUES FOR 2022**  
**\$37.23/Member**

## EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO UKRAINE WAR



As the violence in Ukraine continues, the number of people being displaced internally and fleeing to neighboring countries increases by the day. And in the midst of the chaos, there are sibling churches and ecumenical partners who are already providing assistance with basic items for survival. Our first priority is to provide funding to these partners on the ground. While the scale of this crisis is new, receiving refugees from Ukraine and other countries in Central and Eastern Europe is not, which means we have trusted, established partners with the knowledge and expertise to carry out this important work. Our response will include both financial and technical assistance as the network of faith communities providing humanitarian assistance grows in the months ahead.

**Make your donation to the church, marked “Disaster Ukraine”, or online at [pcusa.org/UK22](http://pcusa.org/UK22).**

## ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING



OGHS connects us to work for a better world with the people advancing the causes of justice, resilience, and sustainability. During Lent, we celebrate that God connects with us through Jesus’ resurrection and connects us with “Those who have least”. Donations to OGHS may be made through Easter Sunday.

## Happy Birthday

### APRIL

5 Alex Birkhold  
 Emily Birkhold  
 6 Matthew Hall  
 12 Sarah Luzny  
 19 Brenda Stough  
 29 John Yarnell  
 Connie Cobb

### MAY

2 Barb Lauber  
 4 Carole White  
 Beverly Koenig  
 7 Tracy Stevens  
 16 Sara Weaver  
 20 Carol Leonard  
 23 BOB ELLIOTT  
 27 Sue Harris

### JUNE

1 Patricia Birkhold  
 20 Lynne Etoll  
 21 Jim Etoll  
 23 Joel Bokerman  
 25 Lynn Yarnell



Send a card! Bob Elliott turns 101 on May 23.  
 His address is 2010 E. Apollo Ave. Tempe, AZ  
 85283.



## IN OUR PRAYERS



GENECROSS: April Brown

VANCREST HEALTH CARE CENTER: Sherry Joseph

NORTHCREST NURSING HOME: Harold Badertscher

ALPINE VILLAGE: Connie Cobb

FULTON MANOR: Kathy Rubinstein

HOME: Bob Brubaker, Sandy Johnson, Dan Badenhop, Bob Elliott  
 (2010 E. Apollo Ave., Tempe, AZ 85283 c/o Cathy Richardson)

## TIME FOR A POTLUCK

Sunday, June 5, 2022, following worship.

Bring a dish to share.

Ham will be provided by the church.



**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH**

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**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

**303 WEST WASHINGTON ST.,  
NAPOLEON, OH  
419-592-7736**

**FPCNAPOLEON.ORG  
TOM POLKER, PASTOR**

*10:00 a.m. Worship In-person  
or Online at [fpcnapoleon.org](http://fpcnapoleon.org)*

