

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

PRESBYTERIAN CONNECTION

JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH 2022

GREETINGS,

Trials are a part of life. Seasons of testing, struggling, doubting, and suffering do not discriminate in securing hosts for adversity or favoring certain seasons on the calendar. Sometimes multiple events happen at once making everything seem overwhelming. Other times struggles are parceled out a little here and a little there. Any one at any time can be visited by difficulty. Rich and poor, male and female, young and old: all fail at being exempted.

So, the matter before us is not “if” we will face trials and its pals, but “when”. The important matter before us is not “why is this happening?” but rather, “how will I deal with it?” The past couple of years have been especially fertile ground for trials. The regular trials and suffering inherent in normal living have not chosen to take a back seat because a new source of struggles have arrived on the scene. The scope of trials and suffering has simply expanded and deepened. Perhaps you’re feeling it as you face the new year in front of you.

During seasons of trial, most of us must deal with life-sucking thoughts that we have been forsaken by God. Or we must work our way through the temptation to doubt God’s ever-abiding love for us. Or we fall victim to a remorse fill self-pity adventure steeped in our own failures and mistakes. Or we become angry and vengeful at others who may have been a catalyst in bringing about present troubles. Or we simply become discouraged, depressed, or dispassionate toward life itself.

I think it is safe to say that all of us when engaged at the most difficult level doubt whether things will ever work out or how

the present situation can ever be made right. Let’s face it, getting through tough times is hard on all of us.

Trials reveal what is actually in our hearts and expose our weaknesses residing in our character, our virtues, and our faith. What is exposed has always been there, often without our knowledge, but it comes to the fore under the heat of moment. If I am honest, I believe that often I am more upset over what is revealed than the circumstances themselves. I’d like to think I am better and more mature than what I discovered to be, and that I am filled with stronger faith and deeper resolve than I exhibit. But deep down I struggle with being relegated to total dependence on God. I can talk a good game...put up a public show of faith...but I often fail awkwardly when my faith is tested at its core. Panic often follows.

We all need to know that difficult times are an invitation to sidle up next to God and listen to God’s affirming words and experience God’s compassionate nature to see us through our struggles. With circumstances and fear screaming at us, we must tune out the noise by hearing what is offered in near silence by God’s Spirit. “We will not be overcome” is a promise from God that we hear in silence. In the midst of rough life passages, strained times of pressure, and seeming impossible obstacles we must find our way to God. Once there we must rediscover again that God loves us, delights in us, and strengthens us.

Our trials actually offer us a path to know ourselves better *(Cont on Page 2)*



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(Cont from Paage 1) and add to our personal inventories of character, virtue, and faith. Rightly understood we embrace the fact that getting to the other side of the trial is not nearly as important as how we conduct ourselves along the way. We must become convinced that the struggle is worth it if it leads us to deeper trust in God and a more authentic understanding of ourselves. It is worth it if we emerge with a deeper personal humility, a fuller sense of peace and joy, a more active compassion for others, and a more powerful grasp of grace and mercy that fills in the vast expanse between what we are in

truth and what we need to become. It is worth it if we know going in that the darker the adversity, the better the opportunity for improvement and growth.

During this season of compounded trial and struggle, it is good to be reminded that even things such as suffering can offer God's redemptive purposes to us. What gets tested by fire will always come forth more refined, stronger, and purer than what went into the fire to begin with if it goes in with God.

Blessings,

Pastor Tom

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION AND CORPORATION

Sunday, January 30, 2021

For the purpose of election of officers and presentation of the 2022 Budget.



ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

7:00 p.m.



As part of our Lenten experience this year we are inviting you to participate in Prayer Partners. Sign up on the clip board in the back of the sanctuary on February 13, or email or call the church office. You

will then be assigned someone to keep in your prayers while someone in the church family will be praying for you.

This is a great way to deepen the connections within your church family during a time when we really need to stay connected.

SESSION NOTES

Session met Tuesday, December 14, 2021, in person for the first time since February 2020. Prior to the regular meeting, the steering committee from PiLLars of Success presented their proposal for a transitional housing project for area homeless called Safe Haven. The goal is to purchase property and build two duplex apartments and one triplex apartment to provide affordable housing for homeless families.

During the regular meeting, Session approved the 2022 Proposed Budget for \$137,850 and the Pastor's Terms of Call for \$69,000. Mission giving for 2021 in the amount of \$3,000 was approved.

The Congregational Meeting was set for January 30, 2022, and the Membership Rolls Review was approved. We currently have a total of sixty-four active members. We lost the following six members during the year: Delores McColley, Donald Stange, Charles Leader, Mary Ann Spieth, Franklin Brown, and Lois Stange. They will be fondly remembered and missed.

Look for the west church yard to be dug up to repair and replace damaged drainage tile. Then the elevator sump pump can be re-attached and no longer drain water on the drive creating an ice patch during cold weather. Thanks to the Operations Team for keeping the building and grounds in good repair.

Following the regular meeting, Session discussed the Safe Haven proposal and approved pledging money from a memorial bequest to support the project.

Nancy Johnston, Clerk

2022 SESSION

MEMBERS:

DAN BADENHOP

OLGA HALL

JILL BOKERMAN

JACK SCHROEDER

LYNN YARNELL

BETSY MORGAN

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday

8:30 a.m.—1:00 p.m.

STATISTICS FOR NOVEMBER, DECEMBER

Attendance

November 7	33
November 14	32
November 21	34
November 28	30
December 5	34
December 12	35
December 19	25
December 26	23

Financial

Budgeted expenses/month	
	\$ 12,635.00
November contributions	
	\$ 6,655.00
December contributions	
	\$ 26,245.00

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



Dear First Presbyterian Church,

The Henry County Ministerial Association gratefully acknowledges your generous gift to the 2021 Christmas cheer Program. Your thoughtfulness provides blessings for over 330 families.

We wish you and yours a very blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year!

The Henry County Ministerial Association
Christmas Cheer Board of Trustees

Dear Friends:

On behalf of the Northwest Ohio Salvation Army and the hundreds of individuals that your generous donation will assist, please accept our heartfelt thanks and appreciation.

We want to emphasize how much your generosity means to those we assist. Each person has their own unique story as to why they cannot provide the basic essentials for themselves-some have had a medical crisis, some have lost their jobs, some have slowly been losing their footing, and so on. Though each story is different, your generosity ensures that they have someone to stand in the gap for them until they can stand by themselves. Thank you for showing them that there are those who care about them.

We believe that by standing together, we can make a difference in our community.

NW Ohio area Service Coordinator, Major Tom Duperree

Dear Friends,

The PiLLars of Success organization is very grateful for your generous donation. We are appreciative and will work hard to make good decisions regarding the money given to us.

Your donation will help us reach out to people of Henry county without housing, offer transitional housing, and provide avenues for them to obtain the skills needed to live independent, successful lives.

Thank you,
PiLLars of Success, Board of Directors

Happy Birthday

JANUARY

19 Bob Brubaker
21 Kathy Rubinstein
22 Phillip Etoll
27 Lisa Brejcha

FEBRUARY

4 Chris Luzny
10 Jim Johnston
18 Ben Reese
21 Jim Stevens
24 Carol Detmer

MARCH

4 Sherry Joseph
6 Julie Polker
23 Nancy Johnston
24 Liz Keiper

COLLEGE CARE PACKAGE



Brighten the gloomy days of winter for our college student, Claire Birkhold. Donations of baked goods, packaged snacks, stationery, gift cards, and/or personal notes may be brought to the church Fellowship Hall by Sunday, February 6.

IN OUR PRAYERS



LUTHERAN HOME: Sherry Joseph

NORTHCREST NURSING HOME: Harold Badertscher

ALPINE VILLAGE: Connie Cobb

FULTON MANOR: Kathy Rubinstein

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



Our deepest sympathy is extended to John and Lynn Yarnell and family following the death of Lynn's mother, Lois Stange on November 8, 2021, at the Lutheran Home.

"Thank you for the beautiful flowers for my mother's funeral and for the love, support and kindness from our church family.

*You are a blessing for us,"
Lynn and John Yarnell*

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**

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FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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NAPOLEON, OH

419-592-7736

FPCNAPOLEON.ORG

TOM POLKER, PASTOR

*10:00 a.m. Worship In-person
or Online at fpcnapoleon.org*

