

STEEPLE NOTES

First Presbyterian Church
September 2023



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A Message from Your Pastor

A few months ago, I shared with you that our congregation is joining a cohort with three other Presbyterian churches to explore the theme of church transformation, led by Leighton Ford Ministries. One of the other churches is Norwalk Presbyterian Church, where my husband is the pastor. We will begin this process in earnest this September 17th. I want to share an article about the process, which Rev. James Hodsden wrote. I hope it gives you further insight into the purpose of the process.

FOCUS CAN MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE

by Rev. James Hodsden

The 2003 book *Moneyball* by Michael Lewis and the subsequent movie starring Brad Pitt tells how the Oakland Athletics built a successful baseball team on the cheap. How did they do it? They changed their focus. They discovered that a player's ability to get on base predicted how many runs he would score better than more traditional measures. Then, they built a team based on this new outlook. Whether you agree with A's statistical analysis isn't the point. What matters is that our focus can make all the difference.



Churches often have the wrong focus. They enslave themselves to the "Three Bs"-- BUCKS in the bank, BUTTS in the pews, and the BUILDING's square footage. These certainly are important, but defining a church's success by them is a fool's errand. Other measures might tell us more.

- Does our church have a clear sense of God's calling?
- Does the church foster a sense of community?
- Does our church make a difference in our city, region, and world?
- Does our church adapt, applying God's love to new situations?
- Does our church leadership act as good stewards of the blessings we have received?

Starting in September, the First Presbyterian Church of Norwalk (editor's note: and First Presbyterian Church of Huron) partners with Leighton Ford Ministries. Thanks to a grant from the Lily Foundation, this organization will use its experience and wisdom to help our congregation chart a course for the future. (continued on page 2)

"For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope." - Jeremiah 29:11

(Pastor's Message, continued)

We are the product of God's grace and the faithfulness of past generations. We want to be just as faithful as we look ahead.

The first step on this journey is to understand where we are. We want to know your perceptions of the church's health and faithfulness. We are asking the entire congregation to take a survey. It can be completed online or with pen and paper. This survey will be the start of our conversation about the future.

It all begins September 17. May God continue to bless the First Presbyterian Church.

TRANSFORMING CHURCH INITIATIVE SURVEY SEPTEMBER 17- OCTOBER 24

We want to hear from you!
Stay tuned for information on how to participate in the process.



Sunday, September 10th
Worship at 10:00 a.m.
Lunch to follow.

Join us as we kick off our fall!



**MEN'S PRAYER
BREAKFAST**

Saturday, September 16th
8:00 a.m. at
Berardi's



Friday, September 8th
11:30 a.m. at
Baybell Restaurant
801 E Bayview Dr, Sandusky
RSVP by noon
Thursday, September 7th
419-433-5018



WHO'S READY FOR DESSERT FIRST?

Deuteronomy 8:10-18 “You shall eat your fill and bless the Lord your God for the good land that he has given you.”

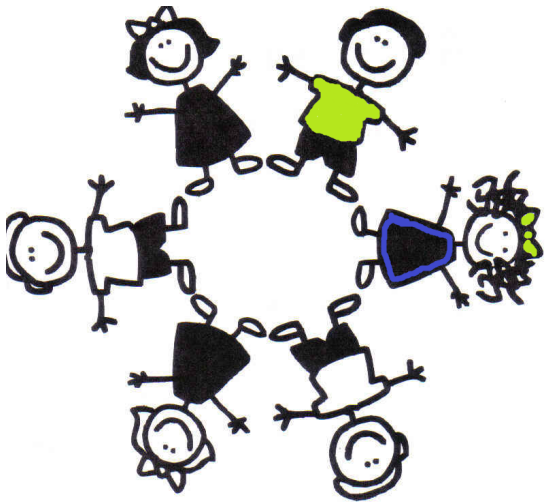
Ah, dessert. It's the best part of the meal! Yet, when we go out to eat, we rarely order dessert. Why is that? I know that when I look at the prices of desserts on the menu, I lose my appetite for dessert. I do it if I have enough leftover funds to buy dessert. Otherwise, I see dessert as optional, extravagant, and unnecessary.

How often do we demonstrate these intentions when giving to God? We focus on our needs first and then offer God what is left over. We eat our salad and main course and save the pie for last.

Giving to God first is a lot like eating dessert first. You look at the dessert menu and order off that before ordering the main course. It's not sensible. One author points out that giving first to God “calls us into a life where every decision we make stands in the shadow of our expressed commitment to Jesus.” God challenges us to give our first fruits, knowing that all He gives us belongs to Him. He takes care of us extravagantly-- and our thanksgiving for that extravagance should overflow.

This fall, we will celebrate Stewardship with the theme “Dessert First.” We will hear stories of stewardship from our members, be challenged to give to continue the ministry of our church, and, yes, we will eat a lot of desserts. Join us for our Stewardship kick-off on Sunday, September 24th, with a celebration meal!

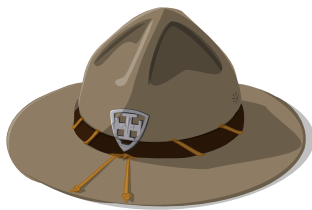
STEWARDSHIP NEWS



Little Wonders
Presbyterian Preschool

First day of school: September 5th
First day of chapel: September 12th
Pizza Fundraiser in November

Please pray for Mrs. Hartnett, Mrs. Rager, and
all the students. May God bless the 2023-2024
school year!



Scout News

Troop 31 Fall Mum Sale

Order your mums today!
A variety of colors are
available: red, yellow,
orange, white, and purple.
Please make checks payable
to Troop 31. You can drop off
payment and order form to
the church office or Renee
Dennis at 419-357-7049.
Delivery will be on
September 18th from 5-6
p.m. at Schwiefert's, 1314
Berlin Rd.
Thank you for your support!

Pack 31 Fall Kick Off

Date: September 11th
Time: 5:30pm - 7:00pm
Location: Pack 31 Campsite
All elementary students are
welcome! There will be a
climbing wall, camp site,
s'mores, and hot dogs.

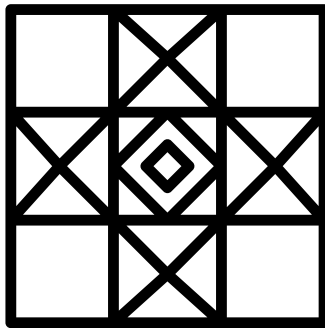




In observance of Labor Day
September 4th, 2023



Starting Tuesday, September 5th:
Monday-Thursday
8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.



Quilting Group
Thursdays 9 a.m. — 2 p.m.
Fellowship Hall
Bring lunch, hang out, quilt with us, or let us teach you!
All skill levels welcome.

Christ's Community Meals

Mondays at 12:00 p.m.

Wednesday 9/13 and 9/27 at 5:00 p.m.

Fellowship Hall



October 7 from 9:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m.

Volunteers needed:

Setup on Friday, October 6th

9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.,

during the sale,

and after the sale.

See Cindy Kaman to volunteer.



PRAYER PAGE

Jesus sent the disciples out two by two to proclaim the Gospel, giving them authority over unclean spirits. (Mark 6:7). They had much success. But then, their efforts to help a boy with an evil spirit proved futile until Jesus arrived and stepped in to restore him. “Why could we not cast it out?” they asked. Jesus responded that this needed prayer. (Mark 9-28-29).

Sometimes, we need to be reminded to pray. To imagine that God’s power is simply at our disposal and under our control is tantamount to unbelief; it’s trusting in ourselves rather than trusting in God. Prayer acknowledges that God must work wonders because we can’t. And until we rely on God’s grace, we cannot intervene in anyone’s circumstances and make an eternal difference. So, we must align our prayers with God’s will and pray to the one who has all the power and deserves all the glory. God can do far more than we even dare to ask or imagine. (Eph. 3:20)

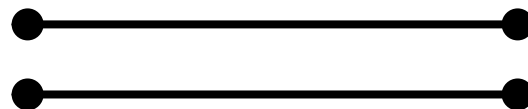
PLEASE PRAY FOR...

Joel Hagy, Ryan, Brian Grigsby, Cameron James, JoAnna Work, John P. Jones, Rebecka Dean, Carol Kopkas, Rachel Leonard, Wilson Pullano, Mary Sue James (Patti Smith’s sister), Denny Velliquette, Eldon Zimmer, June Franduto, Rev. Randal Richards, Paul Brown, Michael Jett, Angela Belliveau, Margaret Swords, Brad Mason, Jim, David Wittmer, Gabe Phillips, Kerry Lynn, Marla Pedersen, Nancy McPeak, David Claxton, Nick LaFace, Gene Darby, Rev. Clair Brewer, Sharon Carnal, Barb Gettman, Roberta Leimbach, Billie Urie, and the family and friends of Mike Hakeman.

FPC Prayer Group
Monday, September 11
Monday, September 25
1:00 p.m. in the Parlor.

Huron Churches Prayer Calendar

- 9/3: Huron UMC,
Pastor Pamela Sayre
- 9/10: Zion Lutheran Church
- 9/17: FPC Huron,
Rev. Sara Hodsden
- 9/24: Journey Church,
Pastor Parrish Purnell, Jr.





Flowers

9/3: Given by John Bickell in loving memory of Marybarbara and Paul Bickell, on their wedding anniversary, September 6, 1952.

9/17: Given by Ron Ruble.

9/24: Given by John Bickell in honor of Andrew Bickell's birthday.

Liturgists

9/3: Betty Reed
9/10: Jack Arthur
9/17: Marcie Muntz
9/24: Chuck Kaman

Counters

9/3: Ellen Drumm, Francesca Lendrum
9/10: Jack and Marsha Arthur
9/17: Bob and Marcie Muntz
9/24: Chuck and Cindy Kaman

Communion

9/3

Set Up: Marcie Muntz
Servers:
Marcie Muntz
Bob Muntz
Janeane Hopkins
Cindy Kaman



9/3: David Asher, 9/6: Fritz Mueller,
9/7: Eileen Darby, Gene Darby, Lesa Guerrero
9/9: S. Baird Pfahl, 9/10: Daniel Ryu
9/12: Charlene Schuman, 9/19: Virginia Parisi
9/22: Sarah Blakeman, 9/23: Dennis Horan,
9/26: Connie Litz, 9/28: Patricia Williamson,
9/30: Andrew Bickell



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27 10:00am Worship 11:30am Wired Word Sunday School	28 12:00pm Christ's Community Meal 7:00pm Scout Troop 31	29 7:00pm AA	30	31 10:00am Bell Choir 7:00pm AA 8:00pm AA	1	2
3 Centsability Offering Communion Sunday Guest Preacher: Rev. James Hodsden 10:00am Worship	4 12:00pm Christ's Community Meal 7:00pm Scout Troop 31	5 Little Wonders First Day Troop 31 Mum Orders Due 7:00pm AA	6	7 9:00am Quilters 10:00am Bell Choir 7:00pm AA 8:00pm AA	8 11:30am Ladies Who Lunch	9
10 Rally Day 10:00am Worship 11:00am Fellowship Meal	11 12:00pm Christ's Community Meal 5:30pm Pack 31 Kick Off 7:00pm Scout Troop 31	12 10:30am Preschool Chapel 2:00pm Preschool Chapel 7:00pm AA	13 5:00pm Christ's Community Meal 7:00pm Session	14 9:00am Quilters 10:00am Bell Choir 7:00pm AA 8:00pm AA	15	16 8:00am Men's Breakfast
17 Transforming Church Initiative Survey Begins 10:00am Worship 11:30am Wired Word Sunday School	18 12:00pm Christ's Community Meal 7:00pm Scout Troop 31	19 10:30am Preschool Chapel 2:00pm Preschool Chapel 7:00pm AA	20	21 9:00am Quilters 10:00am Bell Choir 7:00pm AA 8:00pm AA	22	23
24 Stewardship Sunday 10:00am Worship 11:15am Stewardship Meal	25 12:00pm Christ's Community Meal 7:00pm Scout Troop 31	26 10:30am Preschool Chapel 2:00pm Preschool Chapel 7:00pm AA	27 5:00pm Christ's Community Meal	28 9:00am Quilters 10:00am Bell Choir 7:00pm AA 8:00pm AA	29	30