

FLASHES

fpc news

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
DECEMBER 2021



Christmas Begins with “Christ”

Pastor's Pen Article by Richard Lapehn

Three generations ago, most people inherited rather than chose their religious faith. That is, decades ago if your parents were active members of a particular church, most of the children of that household would grow up and likewise take up active membership in that same, particular church.

Today, that is no longer the case. In recent decades, many more people are opting instead for a nonreligious life, for a noninstitutional, personally constructed spirituality. The personally constructed spirituality may or may not include participation in a local church congregation.

Though fewer persons are actively attending local churches (of all denominations, and non-denominational, too), that does not mean that those outside the church do not have a sense of spirituality. They may have a deeply held theology of life to which they adhere. Rather, non-attendance means to me that those outside the church do not feel personally compelled to make worship in a local church a priority for their time.

Church Events

- Dec 5th -Sunday School & Worship and the Sacrament of Holy Communion
- Dec 6th -Ministry Meetings
- Dec 12th -Sunday School & Worship
- Dec 14th -Finance Meeting
- Dec 15th -Session Meeting
- Dec 19th -Sunday School & Worship
- Dec 24th -7pm Candlelight Christmas Eve Service and the Sacrament of Holy Communion
- Dec 26th -Sunday School & Worship

MISSION & OUTREACH

B.A.C.M.

For December, please bring in

**Peanut Butter/
Canned Meats**

Place your items in the basket
outside of the church office or by
the parking lot door.

December's Homebound Member

Katie Leach

Help us brighten her day
with your cards & prayers.

Send cards to
1183 Azalea Boulevard South
Barberton, Ohio 44203

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

On Sunday, December 5th and during our Christmas Eve worship, the Sacrament of Holy Communion will be celebrated. Individual communion kits will be placed on a table in the front of the sanctuary several days prior to worship. As you enter the sanctuary, please take your personal communion kit to your seat to use later in worship. Those who will be worshipping with us online are encouraged to prepare your bread and beverage prior to the beginning of worship.

SMALL GROUPS

THERE IS A PLACE FOR *YOU* HERE AT FPC!

PASTOR'S CHAT ROOM

YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN US AT 10 A.M. IN THE CHURCH LIBRARY ON TUESDAYS FOR A GREAT DISCUSSION! HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE! THERE WILL BE NO CHAT ROOM ON 12/28.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Pastor's Pen

...Continued from Page 1

While their absence in worship is very sad, I also feel a sense of melancholy when the divide between those who are active in a faith community and those who are not spills into the public square. Those who have no experience of a faith community may believe that Christians are out to impose their beliefs on the rest of the world and "turn back the clock" to a less enlightened time. While those participating regularly in a faith community may suggest that those who choose to eschew the community of faith are excessively permissive, lacking any boundaries or guard rails for behavior and belief.

May we each open our hearts and minds to truly listen to one another.

Within our family gatherings during the Christmas season, it is likely that we will have beloved family members present who have no contemporary experience in church life. In those cases, we are the church to them. In the eyes of those who have no present-time involvement in any community of faith, the words we speak, the opinions we present, and the way we address with respect or disdain the challenges of our world, will paint a picture of what Christians think and practice.

May we present to our loved ones the mercy and peace of Christ again this year. For without Christ, there is no Christmas, no reason to celebrate, no reason to hope. Wherever we are, the community of faith is.

For see, we are bringing to our families the good news of great joy for all the people of the world.
(adapted from Luke 2:10)

In the joy of the Advent of Christ our Savior and Lord,
Rich Lapehn



Christmas Joy Offering Sunday, December 19th

**PROMISES MADE.
PROMISES KEPT.**

**THE JOY OF A PROMISE IS IN
KEEPING IT.**

During this Advent season, we reflect on the promise of salvation God made to us—a promise kept with the birth of Jesus. Through this example we understand that while we may make promises in good faith, we must keep them with our good deeds (James 2:14). With the Christmas Joy Offering, we make two enduring promises for our faith: to assist church workers in their time of need, and to educate and develop the future racial ethnic leadership of our church. Half of all funds received will be sent directly to the Presbytery Office to help with these promises, and the other half will stay here at FPC to help the Deacons continue their ministry. Thank you for your generous support!

DECEMBER

HAPPY BIRTHDAYS

12.12 Tyler Crum
12.14 Larry Perkins
12.18 Chris Carder
12.24 Amy Smith
12.28 Carol Bauer
12.30 Terry Kerr



FLOWER SCHEDULE

Birthday? Anniversary? Love Flowers? Please fill out an order form on Sunday & place it in the collection plate, or call Tom O'Neill to place an order for an available date. Thank you to those who have already placed your order.

December	
5	
12	Office
19	
26	Poinsettias
January	
2	
9	
16	
23	
30	

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

636 Park Avenue West, Barberton, Ohio 44203

330.745.2161 fpcbarberton@gmail.com

Office Hours

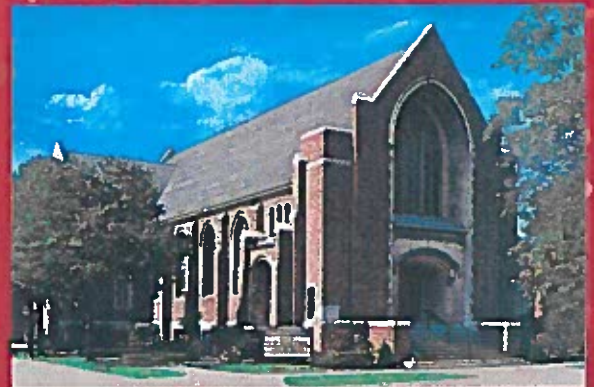
Monday– Thursday
7:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Friday
Office Closed

Join us for...

Sunday School
9:30 a.m.

Worship
10:45 a.m.



Our General Presbyter, and dear friend to First Presbyterian Church,
has announced her impending retirement.

EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERY

P O Box 14436
Poland OH 44514
Telephone (330) 505-2187
eastminsterpresbytery.org



REV. CATHY ULRICH
1201 E. Market Street #427
Akron, OH 44305
General Presbyter and Stated Clerk
cathy@eastminsterpresbytery.org

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA)
pcusa.org

SYNOD OF THE COVENANT
synodofthecovenant.org

November 22, 2021

To the Saints of Eastminster:

Five years ago, I was introduced to Eastminster through a remarkable group of people elected to search for the next presbytery leader. Conversations with that group led me to accept the call as General Presbyter and Stated Clerk. The presbytery elected me for a five-year term which concludes on February 15, 2022. The last five years have been some of the most rewarding of my ministry. I am grateful to each of you and your dedication to sharing the good news of Jesus Christ.

After much discernment, conversation, and prayer, I have decided to retire in the next year. To help Eastminster prepare for its next season of mission and ministry, I am requesting that my term as Stated Clerk, and my role as General Presbyter, be extended for one year. It is a *Book of Order* requirement that a presbytery stated clerk be elected for a defined term. There is no such requirement for General Presbyter. Our Manual of Operations states that the stated clerk is to be elected for a term of five years at the last stated meeting of the year and may be re-elected for two additional successive terms. Therefore, at the December presbytery meeting, the Council will ask that the rules be suspended for one year, and that I be elected for a one-year term to end February 15, 2023.

Eastminster has done amazing work in fulfilling its mission statement to support pastors and churches. The pastors and church leaders have provided marvelous vision and energy to try new things and to address concerns. There are many possibilities for the presbytery as it continues to discern how to serve God in northeast Ohio. The next presbytery leader will be blessed to be called to this ministry among you.

Please contact me if you have questions or concerns and know that you are always in my prayers.

Blessings and peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Cathy Ulrich".