

The Presbyterian

A Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church
125 South Poplar Street, Bucyrus, OH 44820

December 2021

Exalting Christ. Denying Ourselves. Loving our Neighbors.

What is Gratitude?

By the time you read this, we will have just celebrated Thanksgiving. The actual history of the origins of this holiday are somewhat suspect, but the actual celebration is nevertheless commendable. As with many such occasions, it often turns into the gathering of friends and family to feast and spend time in merriment (depending on your family, I guess). We may give a few moments to tell why we are thankful, and then we dig into delicious food (for our family, it is always my dad's famous deep friend Cajun turkey). Then we immediately enter into "Black Friday" (which comes earlier and earlier every year) where we begin scavenging for all the new things we don't have, but want to get. Following that comes one of the most consumeristic and materialistic times of the year in our culture: Christmas. We get flooded with buying and giving and impressing and returning. Then those new things eventually end up on shelves or in storage or forgotten. And suddenly, the season of joy and gratitude has passed. For Christians, however, our "season of gratitude" is year-round. Listen to Paul's words in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18:

"Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

Did you catch that? Give thanks in **all** circumstances. Thankfulness should be a way of life for us, naturally flowing from our hearts and mouths. If we are breathing, that breath is a gift. If you woke up this morning, that new start is a gift. And, if you are a believer, you are secure in Christ because of his death and resurrection. Therefore, a Christian has reason to give thanks in **all** circumstances. Yet, so often, we are guilty of complaining and wishing for things we don't have. Like the Israelites in the wilderness, we have been rescued from slavery, and complain about the manna God has rained down from heaven so we can eat. May we never be so calloused.

Instead, what does Paul say God's will for us is in Christ Jesus? To be joyful—**always**. To pray—**continually**. And to give thanks—**in all circumstance**. How much different would our lives, our families, our churches, our communities, and our world be if Christians lived this way? Therefore, let us find all those things for which we can be thankful. Let bitterness, self-centeredness, and discontentedness fall away. When we see something that needs mending—whether relationships, things, or even church—let us approach it with a different kind of heart. A heart of gratitude doesn't complain about a problem, it seeks to be an answer.

Giving thanks to God is one of the key marks of a believer. In Romans 1, Paul condemns those who do not believe saying, "For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or **give thanks to him**, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened." Lacking gratitude is not just impolite. Especially in our relationship with God, lacking gratitude means we are not honoring God as God, our thinking is vain, and our hearts are murky. Instead, let us be a people who honor God with hearts of thanksgiving—for "every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father of lights, in whom there is no variation or shadow due to change" (James 1:17).



Group and Committee Dates
Please check with the
Committee Chairperson for information.

Deacon's Meeting

The Deacons will meet on **Wednesday, December 8th, @ 5:00** in the parlor followed by a meal with the Elders in Fellowship Hall.

Session Meeting

The Session meeting will be on **Wednesday, December 8th, @ 5:00 PM** in Fellowship Hall followed by a meal with the Deacons in Fellowship hall.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee will meet on **Monday, December 13th**, at 4:45 PM.

Women's Discipleship Group

The women's Discipleship group will meet on **Tuesday, December 14th, @ 6:15 PM**, for a Potluck meal. The women's group will not meet in January or February, but will resume their meetings in March.

Gamma Delta

Gamma Delta will meet **Thursday, December 16th @ 12:30 PM in Fellowship Hall for a Pot Luck meal**. Guests are welcome, please bring your own table service. Beverages will be provided. After the meal we will be wrapping gifts for a family, bring scissors and tape.

Table Toppers

The Table Toppers meet Wednesday afternoons at 2:30 until 5:00. All ages are welcome to join in for an afternoon of board games and card games. Bring your snacks and beverage.

Presbyterian Men

The Presbyterian Men's group meets each **Friday @ 7:00 AM, at the Pelican**. All men of FPC are invited to attend.

Annual Congregational Meeting

The Annual Congregational meeting will be held
Sunday, January 30, 2022, following worship service.
Everyone is welcome.





Happy Birthday

- 3 Tim Mutchler
- 15 Tami Robinson
- 19 Victoria Lohr
- 25 Chet Johnston, Janet Kohls
- 30 Jeremy McNeill
- 31 Kevin Kohls,

Anniversaries

- 28 Alan & Michelle Bacon

Flowers

- 05 –
 - 12 – Tami Robinson
 - 19 –
 - 26 – Christmas Poinsettias
- Thank you all for the flowers you provide on Sunday mornings. As we enter the 4th quarter of the year, please give thought to pay for the flowers or bulletins you have given on Sundays.

Liturgist

- 05 – Dave Hablitzel
- 12 – Marcia Stout
- 19 – Tom Britton
- 26 – Tami Robinson

Greeters

- 05 – Tom & Sandy Britton
- 12 – Lori & Sam Rager
- 19 – Lori & Sam Rager
- 26 – Dave & Debbie Hablitzel

Deacon for November: Danny Nickler

Elder for November: Carrie Diebler

The office will be closed December 27th -31st.

Special Prayers

Melodie Fagan, Craig Hargis, Josette (Hahn) Mok, Duane Watts, Crosby Hieber

Shut-Ins:

Mary Lou Hastings, Sue Headley, Glenn Gibson, Grace Kearns, Marcia Dobbins

Cancer

Jay Owen, Barb Price's Son
Dan Black, friend of Al Bacon
Jennifer Barnes, friend of Connie Watts
Nancy Crum
Annette Cheney, a friend of Kathy Bardon
Ellen Andrews, Kathy Bardon's cousin
Bruce Price, Dan's brother
Ruthie Robinson, friend of Gennie Rios

Members, Family and Friends of Members:

Ben Hubble, family of Al and Jan Fulton
Marv Hauenstein
Anya Schell
Judy Eichhorn
John Clime, Friend of the Bacons
Gary Hess, Friend of Kelli Patterson
Bill Irwin, Gary Irwin's brother
Sylvia Lane, Kelli Patterson's grandmother
Jo Anne Johns, Donna Watts's mom
Florence Cooper, Vickie Ahlefeld's mother
Sandy Will, Carrie Diebler's mother

Military:

John T. Ballinger III, Cody Gibson, Keagan Rios, Levi Diebler, Zach Wilson, Brydan Lohr



First Presbyterian News

Advent Sermon Series

Songs of the Son

November 28 – Song of Hope (Psalm 80)

December 5 – Song of Peace (Psalm 85)

December 12 – Song of Joy (Psalm 126)

December 19 – Song of Love (Psalm 89)

Mission Team

A big thank you to everyone that brought in Operation Shoeboxes. With your help we delivered 85 Shoeboxes on Saturday, November 20th, to St. John's UCC.

Kudos and Updates from Jan

Many thanks to everyone who helped with our **Chili Cook-Off** on November 7th. It was a great success...enjoyed by all! Special kudos to Tasha Nickler, Marcia Stout, Dave Hablitzel, Barb Price and our winner, Pastor Jeremy....ALL outstanding entries!! Thank you also for the \$120 in donations that will aid the work of the Deacons. Let me know what soup you'd like us to feature at our next cook-off!!!



DON'T FORGET -- Our Finance Team and Session have decided to help raise money for the **Bucyrus Police Department K-9 Unit**. They currently have Ellie, a bloodhound, who assists in searching for people. They, and we as a community, need a dog who will search for drugs. This project will cost \$20,000 just to get the dog, get it vaccinated, train it and provide daily supplies. Extra monies are needed for an account to cover ongoing care, supplies, equipment and possible future medical needs. Our church is accepting contributions. **For every dollar contributed we will match that dollar up to \$5,000 for this worthwhile project.** Please make your checks out to First Presbyterian Church and add "BPD K-9

Unit" on your memo line. We will be working with BPD to reach out and include the community in this matching program. We are accepting donations now.

November 7th was Pledge Sunday, and I can't thank you all enough for your generous response. We increased pledges by 4% bringing our total to \$109,000. This is 55% of what is needed for 2022 expenses. Please consider other ways that you can support the budget throughout 2022 such as: \$40 for Sunday flowers, \$25 for a month of Sunday bulletins, extra plate offering gifts, paying for your Christian Education or Discipleship books and paying your own apportionment of \$36 per member. I'm happy to give you more information.

Please complete your 2021 financial giving in December. Let me know if you would like your pledge balance.

If you are not currently on the prayer chain and would like to be, please let me know. I can't tell you how much our prayer partners are appreciated. **AND** if you need prayer, call or text me with your need. No prayer need is too great or small!

There are two upright pianos available if anyone would like them. One is in the room between Michelle and Jeremy's offices. The second one is in the new Heritage Room (the old choir room) off the fellowship hall. Please let me know if you would like one as soon as possible. I will be removing them and other old furniture in January.



Wassail receptions begin on Sunday, December 5th! They will run through Sunday, December 26th. Gamma Delta has offered to host December 5th and 26th. If any other church group would like to host a Sunday, please let me know. The Deacons will, of course, fill in where needed.

Jan Fulton, 419/561-0263

Men's Community Breakfast

The upcoming Men's Community Breakfast is scheduled to take place at the **Trillium Event Center located at 1630 East Southern Avenue in Bucyrus, on Wednesday, December 8th @ 7:00 am.** It would be good to arrive early for breakfast so you can get a good seat. There will be a Full Breakfast for only \$9.00 per person. Ladies are more than welcome to attend as well. See the attached flyers and Bio for more details. Feel free to pass this in for. **Please RSVP** so we can be assured there will be enough food from the cater at 419-503-9977 or e-mail: billdenton425@gmail.com

Can only accept cash for the breakfast. There is no access to a credit card machine.

Mr. Clay Hall, Sports Director for ABC 6 / FOX 28, will be the guest speaker for the Men's Community Breakfast. Mr. Hall does the Football Analyst for Fox/ABC; Football Fever.

Thanks for your time and God Bless!

Bill Denton
Cell: 419-503-9977



Poinsettia Order Form

This year we will be purchasing poinsettias from Norton's. Colors available are red, white, and pink. **Orders must be in by Sunday, Dec. 13th.** Poinsettias may be taken home after the Christmas Eve service. Checks should be made out to the church and payment of **\$13.00 per poinsettia** is appreciated with your order. If you had Easter Flowers orders & paid for or if you have any questions, please call me at 419-561-0263. *Thank you! Jan Fulton*

Name _____

Phone _____

Qty ____ Red _____ \$ _____

Qty ____ Pink _____ \$ _____

Qty ____ White _____ \$ _____

Total \$ _____

In Memory of

In Honor of:

I will take my poinsettia home _____

Please give to a shut-in _____





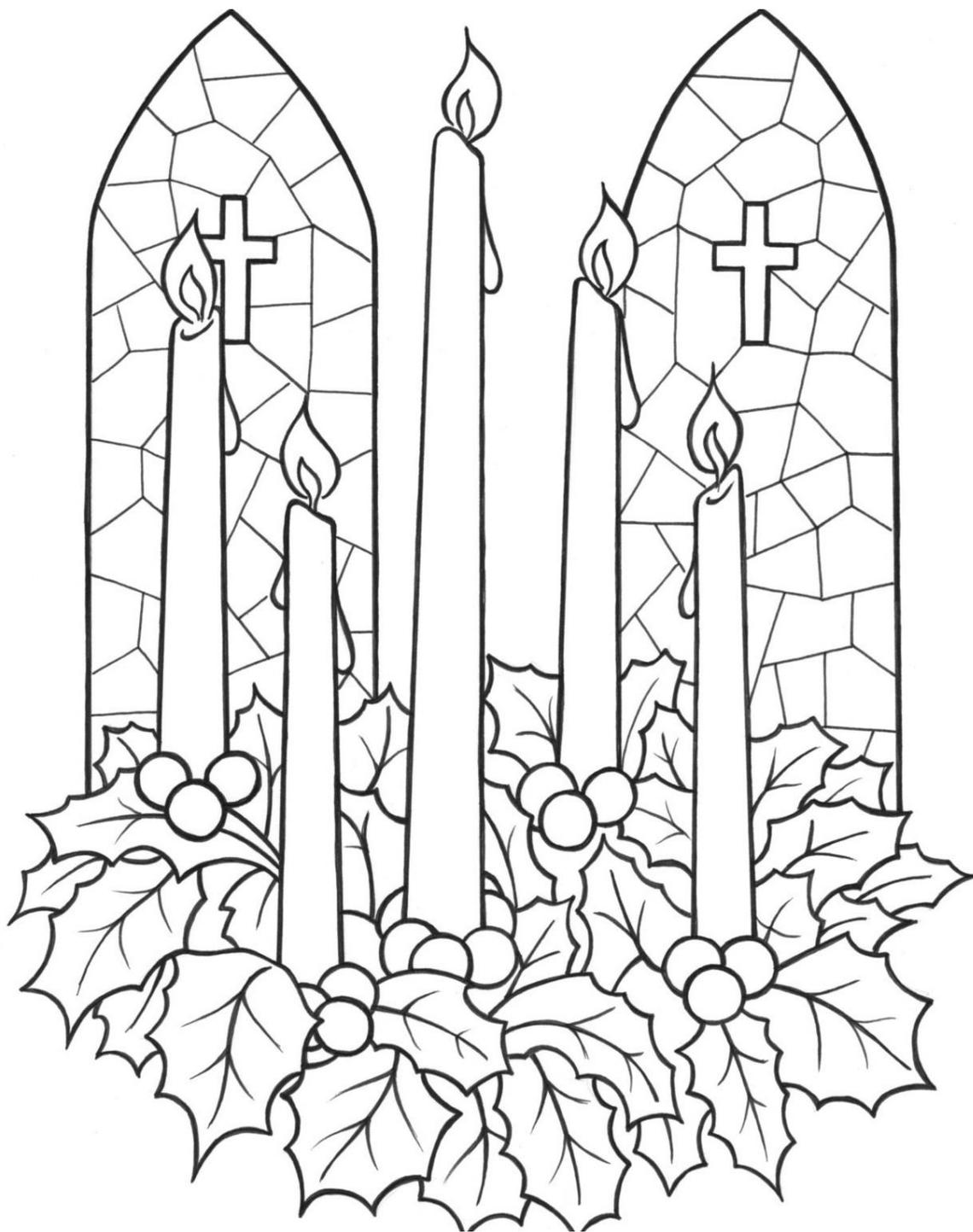
The Christmas Pageant

My husband and I had been happily married (most of the time) for five years but hadn't been blessed with a baby. I decided to do some serious praying and promised God that if he would give us a child, I would be a perfect mother, love it with all my heart and raise it with His word as my guide. God answered my prayers and blessed us with a son. The next year God blessed us with another son. The following year, He blessed us with yet another son. The year after that we were blessed with a daughter. My husband thought we'd been blessed right into poverty. We now had four children, and the oldest was only four years old. I learned never to ask God for anything unless I meant it. As a minister once told me, "If you pray for rain, make sure you carry an umbrella." I began reading a few verses of the Bible to the children each day as they lay in their cribs. I was off to a good start. God had entrusted me with four children and I didn't want to disappoint Him. I tried to be patient the day the children smashed two dozen eggs on the kitchen floor searching for baby chicks. I tried to be understanding... when they started a hotel for homeless frogs in the spare bedroom, although it took me nearly two hours to catch all twenty-three frogs. When my daughter poured ketchup all over herself and rolled up in a blanket to see how it felt to be a hot dog, I tried to see the humor rather than the mess. In spite of changing over twenty-five thousand diapers, never eating a hot meal and never sleeping for more than thirty minutes at a time, I still thank God daily for my children. While I couldn't keep my promise to be a perfect mother - I didn't even come close... I did keep my promise to raise them in the Word of God. I knew I was missing the mark just a little when I told my daughter we were going to church to worship God, and she wanted to bring a bar of soap along to "wash up" Jesus, too. Something was lost in the translation when I explained that God gave us everlasting life, and my son thought it was generous of God to give us his "last wife." My proudest moment came during the children's Christmas pageant. My daughter

was playing Mary, two of my sons were shepherds and my youngest son was a wise man. This was their moment to shine. My five-year-old shepherd had practiced his line, "We found the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes." But he was nervous and said, "The baby was wrapped in wrinkled clothes." My four-year-old "Mary" said, "That's not 'wrinkled clothes,' silly. That's dirty, rotten clothes." A wrestling match broke out between Mary and the shepherd and was stopped by an angel, who bent her halo and lost her left wing. I slouched a little lower in my seat when Mary dropped the doll representing Baby Jesus, and it bounced down the aisle crying, "Mama-mama." Mary grabbed the doll, wrapped it back up and held it tightly as the wise men arrived. My other son stepped forward wearing a bathrobe and a paper crown, knelt at the manger and announced, "We are the three wise men, and we are bringing gifts of gold, common sense and fur." The congregation dissolved into laughter, and the pageant got a standing ovation. "I've never enjoyed a Christmas program as much as this one," laughed the pastor, wiping tears from his eyes "For the rest of my life, I'll never hear the Christmas story without thinking of gold, common sense and fur." "My children are my pride and my joy and my greatest blessing," I said as I dug through my purse for an aspirin. Jesus had no servants, yet they called Him Master. Had no degree, yet they called Him Teacher. Had no medicines, yet they called Him Healer. Had no army, yet kings feared Him. He won no military battles, yet He conquered the world. He committed no crime, yet they crucified Him. He was buried in a tomb, yet He lives today. Feel honored to serve such a Leader who loves us. Merry Christmas to you all

Thank you to Dan Price for sharing this story with us.





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P.O. Box 67

Bucyrus, Ohio 44820