

# The Presbyterian

A Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church

May 2023

Exalting Christ. Denying Ourselves. Loving our Neighbors.

## Getting the Most Out of a Sermon

I'm sure that just by the title of this letter I've already lost half of you... but come back! I understand that this may seem like a self-serving topic to write on, but it's not. My job as your pastor, as a teaching elder, is to "feed the sheep." Therefore, it is my hope and my goal to make this flock good, healthy eaters. We live in a fast-paced, over-stimulating culture. Why is it that we have no problem sitting down to watch several hours of sports or other television, but have difficulty with a 30-minute sermon? A lot of it has to do with how we have trained our minds to function. In other words, the more time and focus we put towards one aspect of shaping our minds, the weaker other aspects will become. So, how do we combat this? I'll give you a few helpful steps to becoming a better listener of sermons.

- 1) **Regularity:** if it is not a common practice to attend worship and sit under the preaching of God's word, you will find it more difficult to have your hearts and minds focused during that time. Habitual attendance aides us in our listening to preaching. In contrast, irregularity of preaching not only hinders our ability to hear sermons well, but is also a sin listed in scripture.
- 2) **Attitude:** Some of you may have said, "I didn't really get anything out of that sermon." And a question you could ask yourself as a follow up would be, "what did I bring to that sermon?" The attitude you bring to the service and to the preaching of the word will have a tremendous impact on how you hear and receive the sermon.
- 3) **Desire:** As Christians, we should have a greater desire to learn the things of God. All learning and knowledge are moral and spiritual matters, regardless of the context of our learning. When it comes to learning the things of God, we are not coming to God as if he were a internet search engine who mechanically spits out answers when we give the right prompts. He is a person, and as such a loving desire to be in relationship with him informs and shapes our ability to hear and listen to the preaching of his word.
- 4) **Effort:** Listening to a sermon is not a passive activity. As you listen to the sermon, make an effort to be able to summarize main points of the sermon in single sentences. It might look like, "God wants me to trust him in times of suffering," or "My obedience is a reflection of my love for Christ and my thankfulness of his forgiveness." This moves us from being passive listeners to *aggressive* listeners. In other words... being a good listener takes work! There will also be clues to help you pick up on the main points of the sermon: the content of both of the scripture readings, the hymns that are selected, and even the sermon title, call all be indicators and clues to help you focus on the main purpose of the sermon. As you listen, you can ask yourself questions like, "How does God want me to be different?" or "what truths about God am I supposed to believe?" or "What steps of obedience does this push me to take?"
- 5) **Prayer:** More than anything, spend time before the sermon (even the day before the sermon!) asking God to help prepare you to hear his word. The Westminster Confession tells us that coming to the Lord's Day requires a "due preparing of our hearts" (WCF 21.8). That means we cannot expect to casually enter into worship and be prepared to hear from God. We are sinners,

which means our minds are prone to wander. Therefore, we should take prayer seriously, asking God to prepare our hearts and minds to hear and receive his word, even days before the sermon is preached! James 1:5 tells us, “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.” Ask God to give you wisdom and understanding. Pray that he would give you a humble and submissive Spirit. Ask him to remove any poor attitudes or apathy from you.

These steps, when practiced and implemented regularly, will help you reap greater fruit from the sermons that are preached. And as we are able to receive more and more from his word, we will find our lives more and more filled with the joy of his salvation, and an increasing love in following him.

## Group and Committee Dates

Please check with the  
Committee Chairperson for information.

### Deacon's Meeting

The Deacons will meet on **Wednesday, May 10, @ 6:15 PM** in The Welcome Center.

### Gamma Delta

The Gamma Delta group will meet **May 18, 2023, @ 12:30 PM.**

### Session Meeting

The Elders will meet on **Thursday, May 18, @ 6:00 PM** in the Welcome Center.

### Discipleship Group

**Ladies' Discipleship** will meet on **Tuesdays, May 2, 16, and 30, at 6:15 PM.**

**Men's Discipleship** will meet on **Tuesdays, May 9 and 23 at 7:00 PM.**

### Finance Committee

The Finance Committee will meet quarterly, the next meeting will be on **Monday, July 17**, in the Welcome Center **at 5:15 PM.**

### 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.



### Happy Birthday

- 3 Bridget Kohls
- 4 Dana Griffith, Alan Bacon
- 7 Kathy Randall, Jared Young
- 9 Megan Young
- 23 Ronda Hoerig, Tommy Randall
- 24 Al Fulton
- 26 Elijah McNeill
- 29 Kenny Hablitzel

### Anniversaries

- 1 Dan and Barb Price
- 6 Al and Jan Fulton
- 13 Tom and Vickie Ahlefeld

### Liturgist

- 07 – Tami Robinson
- 14 – Marcia Stout
- 21 – Tom Britton
- 28 – Courtney Posey

### Ushers/Greeters

- 07 – Lori Rager
- 14 – Barb Price
- 21 –
- 28 –

### Flowers

- 07 – Alan & Michelle Bacon
- 14 – Tom & Vicki Ahlefeld
- 21 – Tasha Nickler
- 28 – Tami Robinson

**Deacon of the Month:** Jan Fulton

**Elder of the Month:** Al Fulton

### **Special Prayers**

Abigail Sutherland, Jay Owen

### **Shut-Ins:**

Mary Lou Hastings, Sue Headley, Jo Anne Johns

### **Cancer**

Patti Howell, cousin of Al Fulton  
Vinny Reed, Jeri Hargis nephew  
Crosby Hieber  
Jennifer Barnes, friend of Connie Watts  
Annette Cheney, a friend of Kathy Bardon  
Ellen Andrews, Kathy Bardon's cousin  
Bruce Price, Dan's brother  
Scott Palmer

### **Members, Family and Friends of Members:**

Dan Price  
Neil Griffith, Dana & Carol Griffith's Son  
Becky Bellamy, Kathy Bardon's sister-in-law  
Donna Parson, Kathy Bardon's friend  
Anya Schell  
Ricky Crary  
Mary Dunham, Kathy Byrne's friend  
Chet Johnston  
Gary Hess, Friend of Kelli Patterson  
Sandy Will, Carrie Diebler's mother

### **Military:**

Keagan Rios, Gennie Rios grandson  
Levi Diebler, member and Carrie Diebler's son  
Grayson Robinson, Tami Robinson's grandnephew

## First Presbyterian News



### Kudos and Updates

#### from Jan:

I am continuing to clean out closets, cupboards and unused rooms in the church. **There is a table set up in the Parlor with various items for sale by donation.** I keep the table filled with new sale additions, so check every week for these new items. There will be a basket for your financial donations. Please give what you feel is appropriate or what you are able to give. The money will go to the Salvation Army for their community outreach.

We are waiting on the carpet to be laid in the new **Information Room** off the Welcome Center. Beautiful oak shelving has been installed above the existing bottom cupboards, and the room has been freshly painted. Work will continue with projects in Michelle's office, the Parlor, the adjoining restroom and the entryway at the top of the Rensselaer Street steps.

**Al Fulton, House Chair, is busy** getting estimates on repairs of the church roof and storm windows from wind damage. The gutter and downspout on the front of the Annex had to be replaced, also from wind damage. The Rensselaer Street wooden doors will be removed and restored in June. We will also be working on the Poplar Street entrance doors to make them easier to use. MR Security will be installing a RING w/doorbell and audio

system on the driveway door in the next month. Otis Elevator also conducted the annual state of Ohio inspection on the elevator in March and we continue to be in good working order.

Stine's finished the **spring cleanup and mulching** on the church landscaping. They have also begun weekly mowing and trimming for the season.

The **fourth Spring Street house** purchased by the church has been demoed. Debris continues to be cleared, and then the foundation will be filled in with dirt. All of the lots will be leveled with more dirt and grass seed will be planted. More information to follow.

**Volunteers are STILL needed to man the elevator on Sunday mornings.** From 10:00 am until 10:35 am, you would need to assist people coming in the glass doors and help them enter the elevator. Please let me know if you can help.

*Jan Fulton, 419/561-0263*



## BORN

On April 28, 2023, BORN will cut the ribbon on the new Bucyrus Blessing Box located on Swigart Street beside the BORN center. The Blessing Box will be open 24/7 and will offer its users non-perishables and dry goods to be donated and taken by community members. This is to assist the community in meeting its food needs because those food insecurity is very real in Crawford County. With the continued raising of food prices, that need is only going to grow. BORN would like our church to sponsor the box for a month. What our church would do is collect non-perishables to fill the Blessing Box for one month.

### **Here is a list of suggested items to be used in the Blessing Box:**

Canned soup and sauces, Canned Meat (Tuna, Chicken, etc.), Canned beans, chili or baked beans, Canned diced tomatoes, tomato sauce and tomato paste, Canned fruit and vegetables, Condiments, Jelly, pancake syrup, Peanut butter, nuts and alternatives (almond, sunflower, coconut butter, etc.), Rice (white or brown), Pasta (preferably in boxes), Cereals/instant oatmeal packs, Crackers/granola bars, Microwave meals/to-go meals and shelf stable meal kits, Individual serving size items, Infant formula, dry infant cereal, Packaged protein drinks, Dried fruit

BORN would like our church to volunteer to sponsor the blessing box for a month and provide these items to stock the Blessing Box. We can begin collecting these items immediately to be donated to and used by the Blessing Box.

Thank you for your support!  
Courtney Posey



## Scholarship Recipients

**The Finance Team is excited to announce** that we will be awarding \$2,500.00 scholarships to Victoria Lohr, Courtney Posey and Sam Rager. They are continuing to achieve exemplary grades and accomplishments in their chosen fields of study, and truly deserve our praise and congratulations. We will honor them at a reception in June.

## Discipleship Groups

### Woman's Discipleship

**Gentle and Lowly by Dane Ortlund**  
May 2, Chapter 12, "A Tender Friend"  
May 16, Chapter 13, "Why the Spirit?"  
May 30, Chapter 14, "Father of Mercies"

**The Ladies group will take a summer break and will resume in September, watch for a reminder in the August Newsletter.**

