

The Presbyterian

A Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church

February 2024

Exalting Christ. Denying Ourselves. Loving our Neighbors.

How Do We Love Our Neighbors?

It's taught in the scriptures. It's upheld by our doctrine. It's even part of our mission statement as a church. But, what does it actually mean to love our neighbor as we love ourselves, and how well are we actually doing this. Honest self-reflection on topics like this, while vitally important to a healthy Christian life, is nevertheless a difficult thing to do. It's a hard thing to say, "I am falling short in this area, and I'm falling short in these specific ways." Yet, if we seek to grow both as individual believers and as a church, we need to take a step back and try to look at things from a different perspective. If we are to love our neighbors as we love ourselves, then the question we should be asking is *not*, "Do I think I'm being loving?" but rather, "If I was in their shoes, would I think I was being treated lovingly?"

Once you've been part of a system or a community for long enough, you begin to become insulated to the areas where you are weakest. This is a natural human phenomenon in which we seek confirmation bias that helps us maintain a positive outlook and opinion of some group to which we belong. This isn't inherently a bad thing. We should have positive thoughts about our church and rejoice in the good things that God is doing in our midst. Yet, as sinners, we may often do this to the detriment of seeing areas in which we could grow. Loving our neighbors is one such instance in which churches may have a more positive self-perception than they should. Here are some questions we could ask ourselves:

- Would our neighbors say that we are involved in our community?
- Would our neighbors say we understand the needs and challenges they face in a gracious way?
- Would our neighbors say there are consistent ways we demonstrate kindness to those in need through ongoing initiatives?
- Does our community know our presence through local organizations and initiatives that better our community?
- Do those with differing abilities feel accommodated and welcomed when they visit?
- Do our neighbors sense that we seek to foster community and belonging?
- Do our neighbors see us taking a step forward to help during crises, emergencies, and other difficult times?
- Would our neighbors feel free to give feedback on how we can better serve them?
- How would our neighbors rank us on a generosity scale in terms of time, talent, and treasure?
- Most importantly, do people hear the good news of the Gospel when we are around, or simply kind gestures?
- And finally, if First Presbyterian Church ceased to exist, would we be missed by our community?

Hopefully these questions can serve as a guide to think about loving our neighbors better! John Calvin once said, "The Lord commands us to do good unto all men without exception, though the majority are very undeserving when judged according to their own merits. But scripture here helps us out with an excellent argument when it teaches us that we must not think of man's real value, but only of his creation in the image of God to which we owe all possible honor and love. May we love others as Christ has loved us!

For His Kingdom,

Jeremy W McNeill

Pastor, First Presbyterian Church
Bucyrus, OH

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

Session Meeting

The Elders will meet on **Thursday, February 15, @ 6:00 PM** in the Welcome Center.

Gamma Delta

The Gamma Delta group will not meet in January or February. Watch the March newsletter for more information.

Discipleship Group

The Discipleship groups will not meet in January or February. Stay tuned for more information on the next book!

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.

Deacon's Meeting

The Deacon's meetings are to be announced.

Finance Committee

The next Finance Committee meeting will be announced.



Ash Wednesday Services will be held on February 14, @ 6:30 pm





Happy Birthday

- 4 Marcia Dishon
- 10 Beth Cotsmire
- 19 Brydan Lohr
- 26 Phyllis Cole

Anniversary

- 12 Howard and Lucille Gilliland
- 22 Austin and Kaelee Britton

Liturgist

- 04 – Tom Ahlefeld
- 11 – Tasha Nickler
- 18 – Bob Thompson
- 25 – Duane Watts

Ushers/Greeters

- 04 – Lori Rager
- 11 – Carrie Diebler
- 18 – Gary Irwin
- 25 – Duane & Connie Watts

Flowers

- 04 –
- 11 – Tami Robinson
- 18 – Alan & Michelle Bacon
- 25 – Tasha Nickler

Shut-Ins:

Mary Lou Hastings, Sue Headley, JoeAnn Johns

Cancer

Anya Schell
Melody Fagan, friend of Sandy Britton
Erick Sparks
Annette Cheney, a friend of Kathy Bardon
Ellen Andrews, Kathy Bardon's cousin
Bruce Price, Dan's brother

Surgery

Gennie Rios, recovering

Members, Family and Friends of Members:

Dan Price
Dave Hablitzel
Lou Ross, Lori Rager's Dad
Whitney Hildebrand, Courtney Posey's sister
Abigail Sutherland, recovering from heart surgery
Mike McKee, Heart problem. Friend of Kathy Bardon
Becky Bellamy, Parkinson's, friend of Kathy Bardon
Mary Dunham, Kathy Byrne's friend

Military:

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

Elder of the Month: Tom Britton
Deacon of the Month: Sandy Britton



First Presbyterian News

Kudos & Updates from Jan

Thank you to everyone who continues to bring in food and warm clothes & blankets for B.O.R.N. They are so appreciative. Keep up the good work!!!

We made short work of taking down the Christmas decorations. Kudos to the wonderful group who showed up and made it a fun event. What would we do without you?!?

Kudos to the deacons for the delicious luncheon they prepared and served after the Annual meeting. It's always great to be together to review a year in our church life, share a meal and socialize.

More interior renovations will be starting up in the next month. It will be exciting to see the finished results. Pitts Home Improvement will be continuing to do the work for us.

As you know we continue to have a prayer list in our weekly bulletins. Also, **the deacons have a very active prayer chain with more detailed prayer needs.** They will be using this column in the monthly newsletter to keep you aware of more prayer needs. Feel free to let me know if you would like to add anything to our list. We ask for prayers for the following: continued prayers of comfort and peace for **Carrie Diebler** as she mourns the loss of her mother; continued prayers for **Dave Hablitzel** as he tries to gain weight and strength, and for **Debbie** who is his main caregiver; prayers for friends who are dealing with long-term Covid effects; continued prayers for **Gennie Rios** as she recovers from surgery; continued prayers for our friends **Melodie Fagan and Eric Sparks** and their families – both Melodie and Eric

have fought the good fight against cancer and have made life decisions to choose quality over quantity... to enjoy the time they have left with their families and friends; continued prayers for **Tim Mutchler** as he heals from surgery; prayers for **Kathy Randall Johnson** as she deals with severe back pain; **Ronda Hoerig** does not need a second surgery on her foot right now – prayers that the pain will continue to lessen and the will heal; continued prayers for **Dan and Barb Price** as they navigate the many stages of Parkinson's Disease; prayers for **Sam and Joe Rager** as they spread their wings and grow as young men outside of our community; prayers of compassion for **Gary Hess** and others who suffer depression AND live alone; prayers for our congregation as we re-focus our energy and talents to strengthen our congregation and increase our outreach outside of our doors... all for the glory of God!

Jan Fulton – 419/561-0263

Refocus Church Revitalization Training

You may remember at the end of last year that we had **Rev. Andrew Gillman** from our Presbytery Church Health Committee come to preach and begin the official process of church revitalization here at First Presbyterian. We have scheduled the first seminar in that training with him, and we are asking everyone in the congregation to try their best to be present and part of this process. **This seminar will be here at the church on Saturday, February 24th from 11am to 2pm.** A lunch and beverages will be available. Again, please plan to attend and be part of the future success of this church family!

Thank you,
Pastor Jeremy

Mission Team

The CWS Blanket Fundraiser

Thank you all for your generous donations toward the Blanket Fund this year, we raised \$525. These blankets are a blessing to those at home and around the world. The Mission Team appreciates your support.

Thank you

Thank you to my church family for your prayers, cards and support after my mom's passing. We are truly blessed to be part of a loving church who shares Christ's love with others.

Love, Carrie and Diebler Family

Something New

Sharing Recipes from the Congregation



Recipe for: Neiman Marcus Bars
From: Phyllis Reed & Marcia Dishon

Mix: 1 Package of Butter Pecan or German Chocolate cake mix
1 stick of butter (soften or melted)
2 eggs
Pack in greased 9x13 pan
Mix: 1 stick of melted butter
2 eggs
1 lb. Confectioners' sugar
1 8 oz. cream cheese
Pour on top and bake 1 hour at 325°
Cool and cut next day



Easter Flowers

2024 Easter Flowers Order Form

This year we will be purchasing Easter flowers from Flowers and Fancies. Flowers available are Easter lilies, tulips, hyacinths, and daffodils. You may choose the color of hyacinths. **Orders must be in by Sunday, February 25.** Checks should be made out to the church and payment is appreciated with your order. If you have any questions, please call me at 419-561-0263.

Thank you! Jan Fulton

Name _____
Phone _____

Qty _____ Easter lily (\$12.50) \$ _____
Qty _____ Tulips Mix colors (\$10.50) \$ _____
Qty _____ Daffodils (\$10.50) \$ _____
Qty _____ Hyacinths (\$10.50) \$ _____

Hyacinths:

Purple # _____ Pink # _____ White # _____

Order Total \$ _____

In Memory of:

In Honor of:

I will take my flowers home _____

Please give to a shut-in _____