



PASTOR'S PEN: ¡OH, CUÁN LEJOS LLEGARÁS!



*Pastor James and Yarlín Yof,
a youth leader in PR, in 2011 and 2024.*

In July 2024, twelve youth and adults from the First Presbyterian Church of Norwalk, Ohio, traveled to Puerto Rico to partner in fellowship, service, and devotion with the Iglesia Cristiana Discípulos de Cristo Espinosa. This was not my first time in Puerto Rico. I took a youth group eleven years ago from a previous church. I am so glad that I could share this experience with our youth. Inside this edition of The Messenger, you will read some of their thoughts and reflections on the trip. You might notice that “eye-opening” was the word of the week.

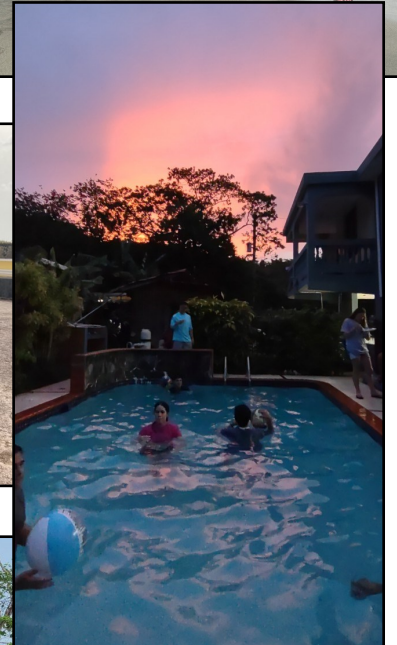
Our theme for the trip this year was ¡Oh, Cuán Lejos Llegarás! That’s based on the Spanish title of Dr. Seuss’ Oh the Places You’ll Go. Together with the youth from the Espinosa Church we considered the parables of Jesus with the stories of Dr. Seuss.

Beyond those times of study, we served together. We helped some of the elderly in the church, assisted a local Presbyterian Church in getting ready for their Vacation Bible School, and even cleaned a beach. We learned local culture and history while having fun in fellowship with our new friends. The heart of this trip was the relationships that we made. We learned how big the Church truly is. We can be brothers and sisters even despite differences in culture, language, and geography.

We are grateful for the support of this church to make this trip possible. Without your support, our youth would not been able to have this faith-deepening experience. We hope that this will be the start of an ongoing relationship. In the near future, we would like to welcome our friends from Puerto Rico to Norwalk. Afterward, we would love for others from our congregation to visit the “Island of Enchantment.”

*Grace and Peace,
Pastor James Hodsden*

2024 Youth Mission Trip to Puerto Rico!



2024 Youth Puerto Rico Mission REFLECTIONS!

My mission trip to Puerto Rico was nothing short of eye opening. Stepping onto the island, you could immediately see the difference in culture and lifestyle. Much of the aftermath of Hurricane Maria was cleared up but many people still were feeling the effects. We ended up assisting many people on this mission trip. The days were hot and long, but each time seeing the smile of these people's faces made it all worth it. Working alongside fellow volunteers and local residents, you really got to get a good sense of life in Puerto Rico. Despite the language barriers and cultural differences, we were united by a common goal: to help these people by showing them God's love.

One of the most pivotal moments for me was meeting an elderly woman whose home had been severely overrun with weeds and tall grass. As we worked tirelessly to clear debris from her yard, she showed us love back by getting us a type of local popsicle. Her gratitude was overwhelming, yet humbling. In that moment, I realized the profound impact that small acts of kindness can have on someone's life.

Beyond the physical labor, our mission trip was also a journey of personal growth and self-discovery. Many people including myself were able to feel God's presence on the island in many ways. These being shown in hospitality and in service. The relationships forged with my fellow volunteers were deepened through shared experiences and mutual support. We all shared many laughs and fun moments.

Moreover, immersing myself in Puerto Rican culture enriched my understanding of diversity and strengthened my commitment to God's faith. This place really helped me see a new but yet so similar way of life that will help me become more enriched as a human.

As I boarded the plane back home, I carried with me a grateful heart and a renewed sense of purpose. The lessons learned and memories made during my mission trip to Puerto Rico will forever be etched in my mind. It was not just a journey of service, but a journey of the heart—a reminder of the power of compassion and the resilience of the human spirit and God's faith.

In conclusion, my mission trip to Puerto Rico was a profound chapter in my life—a chapter marked by empathy, solidarity, and personal growth. It reinforced my belief in Christ and the importance of community and the capacity of individuals to make a difference, no matter how small their actions may seem. I am forever grateful for the opportunity to serve and to learn from the resilient people of Puerto Rico.

-Samuel Konik

The Mission Trip to Puerto Rico was a very eye opening experience. This trip was my first high school mission trip so it was definitely different from the middle school ones. Puerto Rico is a lot different than Ohio. The weather, the houses, the plants, the roads, the language and especially the driving. On this trip I saw God everywhere. When we were doing yard work for a lady I could see God in her. She was so nice and hospitable to us all. I could see God in the people that were hosting us. Melvan were the most friendly people I have ever met. He and his wife got us food, water, a very nice place to stay and they took us everywhere. I could see God with the youth that we were with. I could also see God in the church working with them and showing them the way. We also went to a camp on the day before we left and I could see God at work with all the kids that were there. A lot changed me on this trip. I saw how some people lived when we did yard work. Some houses were dirty and overgrown and the owners couldn't do much about it. And when we helped clean their houses up they were all so grateful. All the hospitality and kindness shown to me has really changed my perspective on life. I made so many memories on this trip. I met a lot of new people and made so many new friends. All the youth were so nice and all the adults that I talked to were amazing. The beach was super cool and so was the Fourth of July pool party that we went to. The food was delicious, especially the ice cream and the chicken. The camp we went to was so fun and cool. The house we stayed at was amazing. Overall, this trip was very eye opening and very memorable.

-Allison Konik

This year's mission trip to Puerto Rico was very educational for me. I met and learned about the people who lived there, saw what their living spaces were like and developed a better understanding of who Puerto Ricans are. To me, the most impactful moment in Puerto Rico was on the third day, Wednesday. We did a lot of yard work. The teens from Puerto Rico were there with us and helped with a lot of the work. We took a break for lunch and then finished the work. When we were finished with everything, the woman who owned one of the houses, Luz, came out and gave us "popsicles".

Before we left, we sang the song "Waymaker". We alternated between singing in Spanish and then English. We came to a part where the song talks about The Waymaker being the light in the darkness and it was really moving to understand the significance in singing this song. The woman's name was Luz, which means light in English. This was a really powerful moment for me. This was a moment when I knew God was with us in that place. After we sang the song, we prayed for Luz and her house, for protection and blessings over her. The look of gratitude on her face was unforgettable. It was a wonderful experience for me to see the smile on her face, with her dog on the porch next to her, and a nice looking yard as we drove away that afternoon.

One of my lasting memories on this trip would be the food. The day we helped decorate for a VBS, we had been decorating for a couple of hours and then we asked what was for lunch. One of the Puerto Rican girls asked her mom and she answered something in Spanish. With a disappointed look, the girl, Hannah, turned around and said we were having sandwiches for lunch. I think everyone from Ohio was a little confused on why they were disappointed. Then Hannah's mom said something in Spanish and all the kids there got excited. Hannah said they were having really good bread made locally. When we had lunch, we learned that the bread was awesome and we ate all of it. Another really good food we had was the water based ice cream. We had some the first night, at the beach, and the last night. Of all the flavors I had, the passion fruit was my favorite.

-Ella Fries

2024 Youth Puerto Rico Mission REFLECTIONS!

I saw God while we were cleaning yards, as well as when we spent quality time with the other youth from the Espinosa youth group. When we were cleaning the houses, I was glad to help someone who really needed it. It was clear that they couldn't keep up with the vegetation growing so quickly all the time. I believe that doing the simplest actions can say way more than a bunch of words can. Being the person in that position to be there, was what brought me so much joy. I also saw God while spending time with the youth group in Puerto Rico. I thought that it was so cool once we got to know them, how similar we were even though we lived so far away. I thought it was amazing how we could form friendships like that and play games together.

I think that my biggest change going to Puerto Rico was with my mindset. Before we left, my dad went through his standard list of warnings of what to be careful of. I remember him telling me that it's like a third world country mentality, that people are only seen as things to use and not people. After the trip, this had changed by a lot. Everyone we met was so welcoming and thoughtful. Not once did I feel like I had to worry about anything. Sure, it's not the best place in the world. I saw a lot of areas that were old and run down with a bunch of graffiti on the walls, but it's a lot farther from the idea that I had about Puerto Rico before visiting. A second huge change was when we did the lessons together. I already knew those parables from the Bible, but the way that we compared them to a Dr. Seuss story and to real life with the message behind them, makes me feel like I actually understand them better, as well as how I can realistically apply that in my life. The lasting memories from this trip will definitely be my first time flying in a plane, and the popping in my ears while flying on said plane. Though that's something that could be crossed off a bucket list, I'll definitely remember for much, much longer, the friends I've made, the culture, the city of old San Juan, and also binge-watching Spiderman movies with Allison Konik. As well as making further plans to watch the chronological order of the Marvel movies, then Star Wars, then DC... (I'm currently on the third Marvel movie) I'm sure for how long it will take me to watch all of them, I will without a doubt remember this trip for a very long time.

-Allison Rothhaar

This years missions trip to Puerto Rico was very eye opening and overall life changing. Throughout this trip God was extremely evident, for example I had seen God after we had done hours of cleaning and landscaping at one of the elder's homes that were one of the members of the church. As we had just finished up, we sang a song of worship which brought this lady tears of joy. After seeing her reaction I could see God's power just from one small act of kindness from each and everyone helping.

While being on this trip I truly got to experience the diverse culture and worship. This was made possible by God's people helping us on our trip. The perception on how other people live made me feel a lot more grateful for the people I have in my life and the life that I was gifted. My view on others has changed in better ways than once before, from getting to visually see the struggles of life that many people experience it really affects my view on others. All in all seeing the struggles of their life being so different from ours made me realize that not everyone is fortunate but that doesn't make them different but makes them the exact same as everyone.

From the week spent in Puerto Rico the memories we spent together were priceless. The bonds that we made with the Esponasa church members were extremely special. One of my personal favorite memories would have to be traveling all around San Juan with the members of the other church, then getting to show us their amazing views and special areas of the island was extremely fun and eventful. After walking long distances we kept going because of the excitement we felt and thrill we got from seeing the exotic areas. We almost never got bored while walking and seemed to always joke around having fun. Overall this trip was more than life changing and a big eye opener for all of us.

-Jaylen Pleiffer

My time in Puerto Rico was a very eye opening and an amazing experience. A question we talked about a lot was "Where did you see God?". I thought about that a lot throughout our trip whether it was just us all enjoying meals together or us laughing and all bonding together. All though there were many more times when God was seen. When we were doing yard work and power washing at the ladies houses and just seeing the light on their face when it was done. That was really great.

After this trip many things have changed for me. The way God touches my heart is a big one. Through every prayer and worship song, I feel it. I feel like his hand is down on my shoulder and he is my light. During those service projects, I really enjoyed seeing the progress being made and just the appreciation that the owners had. I now want to help people as much as I can. Even if it's something so simple like a conversation. I want to help.

There were so many lasting memories on the trip. The friendships and family made on the trip is amazing. These bonds can last a lifetime. Everyone was so welcoming and kind. Our hosts Melvin and Veronica were so lovely. They did all they could to make sure we were comfortable in their home.

The beach days were so fun all together and playing volleyball is always fun even if it can never get hit more than three times. Then we had a pool party with all the youth and it was really fun. I definitely miss all of the people we met in Puerto Rico and I hope to see them again. Something that I was really happy to be apart of was their communion service on Sunday morning. A very nice lady stopped me and asked if I and other Ohio kids would like to serve communion and pick up offerings. I thought that was really special of her to do that.

This trip definitely was an experience and I hope to be able to do it again.

-Morgan Ritter

NEWS FROM SESSION



NO SESSION MEETING IN JULY 2024



THE ROAD AHEAD: WHAT IS THIS?

"The Road Ahead!" We've all heard this catchy phrase flying around the church lately, but what are we talking about? Is it the name of our newest small group, a map to get to the church, maybe a new ice cream flavor? Is it a catchy book about future technology written in 1995 by Bill Gates (well, yes, yes, it actually is)?! No, that's not what we're talking about. Let us share with you what First Presbyterian's "Road Ahead," is really all about.

In a nutshell, "The Road Ahead," is about our church's future. It began with an opportunity to participate in an activity called, "Crossroads." You may remember this as the time we invited our church to take surveys about your involvement, various programs, and their effectiveness. Why would we do this? Are we concerned about the longevity of our church? Well, yes, we are always concerned, however, not in a bad way. Our church continues to thrive, building new relationships and nurturing our congregation continually, but what better time to take a look at our future than when we are strong? We wanted to know what our greatest strengths were, where we needed to look for improvement and how we wanted to shape our programs for a continued strong future.

After compiling all the data from the "Crossroads," surveys, we found trends in what you were saying mattered most: relationships, supporting our children, multi-generational worship, serving others, etc. It was exciting to see all of these values take shape, so much so that we compiled a list of FPC's core values based on what we were hearing. In a way this gave our church its own identity. Yes we are still a church, God and our faith are very evident in all we do, but our other values help define what we care about most, and consequently where our energy in future projects should lie.

So what are these values? Shouldn't everyone know about them by now? Well, that's where "The Road Ahead," comes in! "The Road Ahead," is looking toward the metaphorical road that lies before our church stretching out into our future. It's outlining a plan for what we want to achieve and how to get there. Our very first step on this road is bringing all of you up to speed on what we found in our "Crossroads" data, the values we've outlined because of it, and where we believe this is leading our church. Starting in July we began, very basically, announcing our values at the beginning of each church service. This will continue through August and into our "Kick-Off" Sunday on September 8th. At that point, we will be launching into a more in-depth sermon series based on these values, showing their importance to our church and how we plan on using them as we look toward our future.

There you have it! "The Road Ahead," is our church's plan to lead us into the future. It is exciting, inspired, and filled with anticipation and dreams while being fixed on God, our faith and our values.

Grace & Peace, "The Road Ahead" Steering Team

NEXT MONTH'S MESSENGER DEADLINE IS FRIDAY, AUGUST 16, 2024

FYI: To avoid delays in reimbursement from receipts, PLEASE have them turned into the office no later than Sunday, to be reimbursed that same week. Thanks!

STEWARDSHIP CORNER

Did you know that you can arrange for mandatory distributions from your IRA to be paid directly to First Presbyterian Church without having to pay federal income taxes on the distributions? Well you can! Individuals can donate up to \$100,000 annually, and married couples who qualify separately up to \$200,000. To qualify, you must be age 70 ½ or older at the time of the distribution and the proceeds must be paid directly to the qualified charity.

The donations can even be made monthly.

Consult your financial advisor or contact the church office to take advantage of this strategy.

CHURCH FINANCES AS OF June 30, 2024

YTD Income	\$ 250,504.03
YTD Expense	\$ 243,077.26
YTD Net Income	\$ 7,426.77

Questions about the finances of the church? Please contact our treasurer, Pat Babcock at pbabcock@bex.net



ROOTED IN GRACE

Keenagers



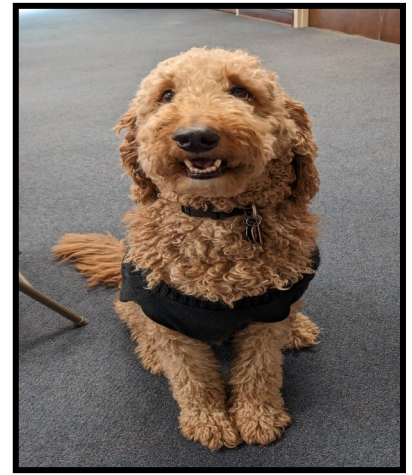
The Keenagers didn't get together in July due to the Independence Day holiday, but we look forward to Pastor James Hodsden being with us in August to share the details from the youth's Puerto Rico Mission Trip. We will plan to meet in the sanctuary, due to the rummage sale set up.

August's meeting will take place **Friday August 2nd at 1pm.**

Keep **Friday September 6th** meeting date on your calendar too!

Are you 70 or older? If so, come join us!!!

Dog hugs, Winston



DATE	USHERS	LITURGISTS	COFFEE HOUR	VISITATION	GREETERS	Screen Operators
August 4	Chris Canfield Family COMMUNION: Iris Hammersmith & Chris Canfield	Tom Root	George Scherz	George Scherz	Jack Churchill & Ralph Leber	Brian Pancost
August 11	Chris Canfield Family	Kathy Root	Shannon Sommers	Shannon Sommers	Jack Churchill & Ralph Leber	Jaime Fries
August 18	Chris Canfield Family	Youth	Julie Gardner	Julie Gardner	Jack Churchill & Ralph Leber	Brian Pancost
August 25	Suzanne Boegli & Donna Allen	Roger Knight	Marcia Barlow	Marcia Barlow	Jack Churchill & Ralph Leber	Mindy Klett

Please keep in mind, the servers scheduled here are subject to change!

DATE	USHERS 8:30am—10:45 am	LITURGISTS 8:30am—10:45 am	COFFEE HOUR	VISITATION	GREETERS 8:30am—10:45 am	Screen Operators 8:30am—10:45 am
Sept. 1 9:30 am	Wes Sellers Family COMMUNION: Diane Eschen & Connie Kluding	Julie Murdock	Marco Caponi	Marco Caponi	Michele Graves / Jack Churchill & Ralph Leber	Brian Pancost
Sept. 8	Jan Marotta & Connie Kluding / Wes Sellers Family	Amy Bower / Chris Canfield	Cynthia Kniffin	Cynthia Kniffin	Michele Graves / Jack Churchill & Ralph Leber	Brian Pancost / Brandon Schwinn
Sept. 15	Jan Marotta & Crissy Cooperrider / Wes Sellers Family	Youth / Youth	Marilyn Huston	Marilyn Huston	Michele Graves / Jack Churchill & Ralph Leber	Jaime Fries / Kayla Eyer
Sept. 22	John Flickinger Family / Wes Sellers Family	Eric Weisenburger / Suzanne Boegli	Heidi Strong	Heidi Strong	Michele Graves / Jack Churchill & Ralph Leber	Mindy Klett / Brandon Schwinn
Sept. 29	John Flickinger Family / George Scherz	Dirk Hiler / Craig Corfman	George Scherz	George Scherz	Michele Graves / Jack Churchill & Ralph Leber	Brian Pancost / Brandon Schwinn

ROOTED IN GRACE



Get To Know New Member.....



.....Lydia Koch.

Our first new member to be featured for this year is Lydia Koch. She has jumped right into this church family with both feet; she has joined a small group study and you may have seen her during the rummage sale. If you're on Facebook, you may have viewed some of her moving paintings on her page as well as Talk of Norwalk.

Lydia and her husband Gary moved to Norwalk from Tijeras, NM, but Ohio is not new to them; Lydia is originally from Worthington, OH and Gary from Parma. They selected Norwalk as their home as it is close to Huron where they currently have a cabin.

When asked what her favorite book is, Lydia didn't hesitate. She has been deeply impacted by "How to Influence People and Win Friends" By Dale Carnegie. She chuckles and says that it sounds rather manipulative today, but when it was written in 1936 it wasn't taken that way. The book is about interpersonal relations and communication and was written by a Christian.

When not reading or attending church and small group, Lydia immerses herself in art. At the moment, she is into watercolor and illustration. In the past she has spent much time in quilting, embroidery, cross-stitch, and sewing. Her love of art also comes out in the form of music; she has played the guitar and the accordion.

A fact that not many people know about Lydia is that she once was an assistant grower at a major nursery in southern California. She worked there for a couple of years and spoke entirely in Spanish. I have been fortunate to benefit from Lydia's deep scriptural knowledge and her thirst to dive deeper into its meaning and application in today's world. Her favorite book of the Bible is Romans because it is like the getting the entire Bible in one book. In particular, her favorite chapter of Romans is Romans 8.

When it comes to hymns, Lydia loves "Tis Not That I Did Choose Thee" written by Josiah Conder in 1836. For her, this hymn exemplifies what salvation really is, that is all on God's part, that it is nothing we are ever able to do. It is perfect theology.

Lydia first came to First Presbyterian church in Norwalk as a result of the Rummage Sale. She was greeted at the door by Ed Yates and invited to have a seat. He talked about the people here; how friendly and supportive they are. Also, Michele Graves greeted her very kindly and answered her questions about our church. Lydia decided that this is where she would attend.

When asked what advice she would offer to anyone, Lydia answered, "Live unto the Lord." She said it's important not to strive to please other people or to live up to whatever expectations you have set for yourself, but to live to the Lord.

Very wise and valuable words, Lydia! We are blessed to have you as a member and a sister in Christ!

*Dr. Julie Murdock
Ministry Associate*

You will be seeing our newest members featured in this article in the upcoming months to "introduce" you to them!

Also, watch for the "NEW MEMBER" feature coming up in September!

Putting faces with the all the names is important for us to know them and welcome them!

GROWING IN CHRIST



A SERVICE PROJECT FOR ST. JUDE

Families, are you looking for a way to give back to those in need this summer? Look no further! This year, our church is sponsoring "Lemonade for St. Jude!" a kids helping kids initiative. St. Jude is a children's hospital dedicated to treating cancer and other life-threatening diseases, providing treatment, at no cost, to families that are in their care. Their ground-breaking research has changed the pediatric cancer world as they continue to discover ways to rid the world of childhood cancers.

Are you interested in supporting St. Jude this summer? Consider hosting a lemonade stand with your family at any time during the Summer season. You can visit the church narthex area to gather decorations and helpful information about running a lemonade stand. Inform Mrs. Wheeler about the date and location of your stand so she can help get the word out. Any donations from your stand for St. Jude can be submitted to the office or Kathleen Wheeler by the end of August. We're all about teaching our youngest generation the power of kindness and giving, taking our example from the one who served others the best, Jesus, our Savior! Won't you consider joining us for "Lemonade for St. Jude," as we work to make someone else's day a little brighter?

CHILDREN'S SUMMER READING PROGRAM

Join us this summer for a reading extravaganza tailored for awesome kids from preschool to 6th grade! Children who wish to participate in this challenge will receive materials to construct their own book tower by reading age-appropriate Christian books and literature for the remainder of the summer. All materials you need to join this summer reading program can be found in the church library (across from the Kingdom Kids Room). Finish your book tower by "back to school" Sunday on August 18th to claim your prize!

CHILDREN'S SUMMER READING PROGRAM



In addition, be on the lookout for a series of interactive story time sessions at the church which will provide a wonderful opportunity for children to socialize and share their thoughts with peers. Parents and guardians are encouraged to get involved by reading along with their children and discussing the moral lessons found within the stories. This collaborative effort will help build a supportive community where both children and adults can grow in their faith and love for literature!

Congratulations

Graduates



Mitchell Sommers,

son of Norm & Tracey Sommers, grandson of Charles and Judy Sommers. Graduate of Ohio State University with a Bachelor's degree in Exercise Science. Mitchell plans on continuing his education by attending dental school.



Luke Rupert,

grandson of Bob and Marsha Sands. Graduate of Dayton University with a Bachelor's degree in Business. Luke has taken a sales position with Keyence Corp. in Chicago. Keyence manufactures sensors for automation equipment.



Grant Fisher,

son of Nancy Woodruff-Smith. Graduate of Kent State University with a Bachelor's degree in Aeronautical Studies, and a minor in Unmanned Aerial. Grant is currently pursuing a Bachelor's degree as a pilot with future plans of flying for an airline.



Luke Leimbach,

grandson of Reta Stark. Graduate of the University of Montana with a Bachelor's degree in Computer Science with a specialization in Software Development.

GROWING IN CHRIST



Congratulations

Graduates



Eli Gross,

grandson of Bob and Marsha Sands. Graduate of Walter Cronkite School of Journalism at Arizona State University. Eli will be continuing on at Arizona State, pursuing his Master's degree in a Graduate Assistant position with the ASU Men's basketball team.



Abigail Rae Gfell, daughter of Stephen and Nancy Gfell. Graduate of Bowling Green State University with a Bachelor of Science in Interior Design; Cum Laude. Abigail is now a full-time Interior Designer for Herman's Furniture and Design in Sandusky, Ohio.



Justin Sommers,

son of Adam and Shannon Sommers, grandson of Charles and Judy Sommers. Graduate of Bowling Green State University with a Bachelor's degree in Insurance and Risk Management. Justin is currently working with Ohio Mutual Group in Bucyrus.



Charlotte Murdock,

daughter of Matthew and Julie Murdock. Graduate of Indiana University with a Bachelor of Arts in Marketing as well as a Bachelor's in Business Analytics. Charlotte has moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota.

JOIN US FOR KEENAGERS

Friday, August 2nd at 1:00pm

Join us in the Sanctuary.

We'll enjoy hearing about the Youth Puerto Rico Mission Trip from Pastor James!!

Are you 70 years or older?? If so, come join the fun!!



Join us on
Friday
September 6
@ 1:00 pm!

**Are you 70
or older?
Join us
monthly for
Keenager's
fun!**

Cheers to 80+ Years!



Happy "80 PLUS" birthday to:

8/9 Richard Miller
8/10 Jon Ditz
9/8 Alice Linn
9/20 Bob Sands
9/26 Bill Carr
9/27 Audrey Trimble
10/28 Ed Yates
10/30 Karen Kuhn



Are we missing your birthday?
Contact Kathi at the church office
or Katie Howell to get us updated!

REACHING OUT IN LOVE



Fall Worship Schedule

Starting September 8th
we will be moving back to our worship times of
8:30 am and 10:45 am
with Sunday School at 9:30 am

Join us on Kick Off Sunday!

September 8th following
10:45 worship service



Please bring your
favorite dish to share!
Fellowship
will be providing
a main dish.

In honor of Labor Day

Our offices will be closed on

Monday September 2, 2024

H.Y.P.E.'D

Needs snacks and bottled water
for our gatherings!

Please drop off at the church office.

Thank
you

Thank
you

Can you
help?

THANK YOU!

thank
you!

Dear Norwalk FPC,

Just wanted to say thank you again this year for helping us promote Christ's love in our world and community.

We will be passing out the crosses over the next two weekends at two events. Your ministry is a blessing for all of us. Thanks again, and God Bless.

Trinity United Methodist Church, Fremont

We would like to thank the congregation for their generous school supply donations. The families of 288 students requested assistance this year and we were able to meet all of their needs, thanks to special people like you. Your help is greatly appreciated!

Norwalk Stuff the Bus



THANK YOU!

Thank
you

Dear Church Family,

Thank you so much for the food, cards, prayers & support during my recent hip replacement therapy. All of it has meant so much to me during my recovery. Both Roger & I are truly blessed to have your love and support.

Always, Nancy Wallace

REACHING OUT IN LOVE



SNACKS NEEDED PLEASE!

*** FRUIT SNACKS**
*** PACKS OF PRETZELS, OR GOLDFISH**
*** LITTLE DEBBIE SNACKS**
*** PUDDING CUPS**
*** MINI INDIVIDUAL BAGS OF COOKIES**
*** APPLESAUCE OR FRUIT CUPS**
*** CRACKER AND CHEESE PACKS**
*** SMALL BAGS OF CHIPS**

BRING TO THE CHURCH OFFICE

KINGDOM KIDS SNACKS NEEDED PLEASE!

We are in need of snacks for our Kingdom Kids Sunday morning program. If you would like to donate snack items to our Kingdom Kids program, we will gladly accept all pre-packaged food items during the month of August. Need some ideas of what you could grab at the grocery store? Check these out:

- *Fruit Snacks *Packs of pretzels, or goldfish**
- *Little Debbie snacks *Pudding cups**
- *Mini individual bags of cookies *Applesauce or fruit cups**
- *Cracker and cheese packs *Small bags of chips**

These and all other snacks are gladly accepted as long as they are pre-packaged, individually sized, and do not require refrigeration.

All donations can be dropped off in the church office.

Thank you in advance for helping to provide snacks for our kids!

SUNDAY SCHOOL REGISTRATION (PRESCHOOL - 6TH GRADE)

Believe it or not, the beginning of our Sunday School year is right around the corner and you're not going to want to miss what we have in store! We will, once again, be working with the curriculum, "Dig In!" which focuses on laying the groundwork for lasting faith. We work through major Old and New Testament stories to teach a comprehensive view of the entire Biblical story in 3 years. Our lessons are designed to develop a genuine, growing relationship with God by getting to know His heart! If you would like to be a part of our 2024-2025 Sunday School year, you can sign up your preschool - 6th grade student now by visiting our website, www.firspresbyterian.net, and clicking on the Sunday School link under the Children & Youth tab. Sunday School begins September 8th from 9:30 - 10:30am



REGISTRATION Preschool 6th grade

Join us for "Dig In!"
which focuses on laying the
groundwork for lasting faith.

September 8th

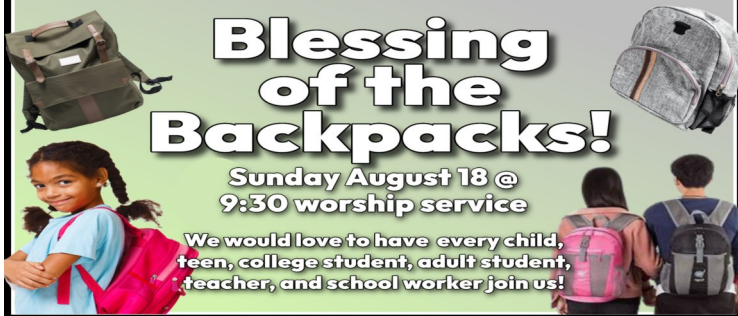
9:30 - 10:30am.

Visit our website,
www.firspresbyterian.net
and click on the
Sunday School link

Blessing of the Backpacks!

**Sunday August 18 @
9:30 worship service**

We would love to have every child,
teen, college student, adult student,
teacher, and school worker join us!



BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS!

If you are headed back to school this year, mark your calendar for Sunday, August 18th for a Blessing of the Backpacks! During the 9:30 service on the 18th, we would LOVE for every child, teen, college student, adult student, teacher, and school worker, to bring their school bag with them to church.

For those who would like to participate, before the service begins, please lay your bag at the front of the church in front of the altar.

During the service we will offer a blessing on all of you for a safe, prosperous, exciting, and productive school year!

CALLING ALL TEACHERS!

The 2024-2025 school year will be here before we know it, and to gear up, we are looking for energetic, passionate, caring individuals to lead our young people in Sunday School this year! From Preschool through teens, our kids will be exposed to God's word in true and relevant ways that foster their spiritual growth and excite their desire to know more about God. Here are a few things to know as you consider being involved in the life of our Sunday School this year: it is our goal to have 3 teachers per classroom.

This allows us to rotate so that not everyone has to teach every Sunday, and it also allows for team teaching in order to share the workload.

Our curriculums give you EVERYTHING you need! Lessons are in place and ready to go.

Simply gather supplies from the Sunday School office and follow the outline.

Sunday School runs from 9:30 - 10:30 every Sunday (except holidays) from September 8th - May 18th. This year, our classes are divided like so:

Preschool & Kindergarten, 1st - 2nd Grade, 3rd - 6th Grade and 7th - 12th Grade.

You can't beat the feeling of joy you get when you see your students understand the Bible concepts you are working to teach them! Who wouldn't want to be a part of this exciting experience? Won't you please consider coming and sharing your time and talent with us as a teacher this year? Contact Kathleen Wheeler, kwheeler@firspresbyterian.net for more information.



WHO'S READY FOR
SUNDAY SCHOOL?

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS NEEDED! PRESCHOOL-12TH GRADE

Teachers needed for the 2024-2025 School Year

Contact Kathleen Wheeler,

kwheeler@firspresbyterian.net for more information.

REACHING OUT IN LOVE



From the Underground.....



The game show “Who wants to be a Millionaire?” has its silver anniversary this year. I’ve often wondered how I would fare if I was ever a contestant on the show. I’d like to have some confidence since my training routine consists of Wordle, Mini Crosswords, and knowing one or two answers on Jeopardy.

However, in my game of life, I feel like I’m already on the Millionaire show. I’m faced with choices, and I don’t know the answers. I sit there calculating risk without a clue. Yet, I know I’m not the only one wondering about what choices to make. I think, “What’s God’s plan for my life?”

Wondering on questions like this is part of our humanity. We want purpose and direction. Otherwise we tend to find ourselves drifting. Biblical figures experienced this too. At the cross, Peter must have felt so lost. The Psalmist experienced the many lows of life. And Esther was put in extremely tense and difficult situations. “Why am I here?” and “How is this the plan?” must have been ricocheting around their minds, even having a monopoly on their thoughts.

I’ve found most existential questions can turn into a labyrinth. By wondering and solely focusing on what the direction of our life is, we can often lose *all* sense of direction. This can isolate and make us feel sorry, as uno is the loneliest number. We have ways to combat these feelings so we don't sink like a battleship.

Peter was with other disciples after the cross. The Psalmist used instruments and nature. Esther leaned on Mordecai. Seeking counsel and support from those around you, from creation and creativity, and the Creator and His Word are ways we can stay connected, instead of isolating.

We all navigate the twists and turns of life. When families feud or there’s trouble, it’s best to connect for the best result. Connect like Peter did. Like the Psalmist did. Like Esther did.

The Body of Christ is connected in so many ways. And we don’t need an operation to know that.

Stay HYPE’D

Dawson Strong, Youth Director Emeritus

REACHING OUT IN LOVE



DRIVERS WANTED!

Make a difference for someone today!



We are looking to create a "Drivers List" for our church family who may need transportation to doctor's appts and other necessities. Please contact Donna Allen or the Church office to sign up.

SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday, August 25, 2024

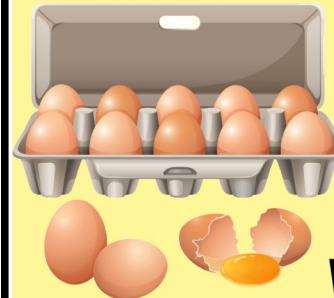
following the 9:30 worship service

Join us to review and approve revisions to the FPC By-Laws
If you would like to attend remotely, please contact the church office.

Join our
"BIRTHDAY BUNCH"
the 3rd Wednesday
of every month!



EVERYONE
has a
birthday!
Let's
celebrate
together with
pizza
every month
@ East of
Chicago Pizza
at 12:30pm!



We are no longer able to purchase eggs in bulk.

**The Norwalk
FOOD BANK
IS NO LONGER
collecting
egg cartons!
We appreciate all
that have given!**

LOVE NORWALK

August 10, 2023

6-8pm

Main Street Norwalk

For more details contact Pastor James

JOIN US!



lovenorwalk
Norwalk churches uniting to love our community

Can you help?

Our church has been asked to collect
300 PACKAGES OF SOCKS this year!
(PACKAGES OF 6 or MORE, ALL AGES)

Please bring them to the Church Office by August 4th



Would you like to join??
FEBRUARY 15-23, 2025

belize
mission trip 2025

PLEASE CONTACT PASTOR JAMES OR
DAVID WALLACE FOR MORE INFORMATION



SAVE YOUR IGA RECEIPTS!
**HELP OUR PRESBYTERIAN
WOMENS ASSOCIATION**



1. Shop at Schild's IGA.
2. Save your receipts.
3. Turn them in at the office or at church services

Contact Shar White or the church office for more details!

REACHING OUT IN LOVE



RUMMAGE SALE

PRE-SALE for Church Members and Employees ONLY
Wed. Aug. 7, 5pm - 7pm

FRIDAY AUG. 9, 9am - 6pm

SATURDAY AUG. 10, 9am - 2pm

CLOTHING ONLY SALE!



First Presbyterian Church
21 Firelands Blvd. Norwalk
Saturday, Aug. 17
9am - 12pm
\$5.00 a Bag!



Can we help??



- Prayers
- Meals
- Errands
- Transportation



**PLEASE
CONTACT
YOUR
DEACON**



We are hiring

Position Available **YOUTH DIRECTOR**

Norwalk First Presbyterian Church is seeking a Youth Director. This is a full time position with benefits, responsible for the ministry to the middle and high school youth of our church and for the leadership of an outreach ministry to the youth of our community.

Please send resume to admin@firstpresbyterian.net



~ August 2024 ~						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 5:30p CE Meeting 6:30p Mission Committee 6:30p Outreach Committee 7p Search Team Meeting	2 10a AA Meeting 1p Keen-Agers	3 9a Vision Team Retreat @ Huron FPC 7p AA Meeting
4 COMMUNION / FOOD BANK SUNDAY 9:30a Worship Service	5 5:45p Worship Committee	6 10a AA Meeting	7 7a Men's AM Group 5p-7p Member / Staff Rummage Sale Day 8p Al-anon	8 6:30p Deacons Meeting	9 9a-6p RUMMAGE SALE DAY 10a AA Meeting 2p Session Prep with James, Amy and Kathi	10 9a-2p RUMMAGE SALE DAY 6p-8p LOVE NORWALK 7p AA Meeting
11 9:30a Worship Service	12 6p ACT Board Meeting	13 10a AA Meeting 5:30p Building & Grounds 6p Fellowship Committee	14 7a Men's AM Group 12p Stewardship Meeting 8p Al-anon	15 7p Search Team Meeting	16 10a AA Meeting	17 9a-12p Clothing Only RUMMAGE SALE DAY 7p AA Meeting
18 9:30a Worship Service	19	20 10a AA Meeting	21 7a Men's AM Group 12:30p Birthday Bunch 8p Al-anon	22 6:30p Session Meeting	23 10a AA Meeting	24 7p AA Meeting
25 9:30a Worship Service 10:30a Special Congregational Meeting	26 7p Bible Banter via Zoom	27 10a AA Meeting	28 7a Men's AM Group 8p Al-anon	29	30 10a AA Meeting	31 7p AA Meeting

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

21 Firelands Boulevard
Norwalk, Ohio 44857

Phone: 419-668-1923

Fax: 419-663-5115

Web Page: <http://www.firstpresbyterian.net>

Non Profit Org.

U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

NORWALK, OH

Permit #20

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

CHURCH STAFF:

Rev. James Hodsdon, Pastor

jhodsdon@firstpresbyterian.net

Rev. Clair Brewer, Pastor Emeritus

Dr. Julie Murdock, Ministry Associate

jmurdock@firstpresbyterian.net

Kathleen Wheeler, Children & Family Director

kwheeler@firstpresbyterian.net

Michael Matter, Worship and Music Director

mpmatter@gmail.com

Patricia Babcock, Treasurer

pbabcock@bex.net

Kathi Flew, Church Administrator

admin@firstpresbyterian.net

Serena Bowles, Organist

Jennifer Orth, Nursery Caregiver

9:30am—Summer Worship Service

Rooted in Grace.

Growing in Christ.

Reaching Out in Love.

