

# WINDOW

NOVEMBER 2021

The Monthly Newsletter of

First Presbyterian Church, Athens, Ohio



## From the Pastor....

I'm sorry. I wish it weren't true, but I just don't know what to make of Job--the man or the book. He's well beyond me, and so is his story. So, I'm to believe that Satan shows up one morning at the House of the Lord. He's not alone. He's come with the angels for what seems an ordinary or customary visit. This morning, there he is, oddly enough. Does this happen often?--weekly, monthly? It just strange to me that Satan hangs around with the angels, and that he'd choose one morning, for no understandable reason, to show up at the Creator's place.

And it's not Satan who brings up this great man, Job. It's God himself. *"Have you considered my man Job?"* God asks, hanging the man out there like a sweet and soft target. This Satan was not the devil, as we usually think of him.

The idea of an evil being who operates separately from God did not develop in Judaism until a couple of hundred years after Job was written. In Job's time, the Satan was a perfectly respectable member of God's cabinet, a heavenly being who served as divine prosecutor. His name was *hasatan*, the Accuser, and his job was to bring people to trial when God said so, but only if God said so. He had no power to do anything except the power God gave him.

"I don't think he's the prize you make him out to be," the *hasatan* says.

"After all, you've blessed him with all the accoutrements of 'the good life.' Take the goods away, and he'll drop you like a bad habit." It seems, anyway, that God gets taken in by old Scratch, because no sooner does the *hasatan* tell God that looks can deceive with respect to the saints, that God tells him it's okay with him if *hasatan* wants to take a shot at

smashing Job's substantial moral compass without taking his life. The Creator is not without complicity in the whole wretched mess.

Then, holocaust: property nixed, herds destroyed, kids dead, Job wracked by some awful skin diseases--it's not pretty. That Job would kick about his fate makes all kinds of sense. Let it be known, he is a victim. He didn't deserve the punishing blows he suffered. Nothing he did brought on the calamities that beset him. Seems like a game to me, a competition licensed by God.

Three guys with oddball names come by to sit with him in his misery, and then begins what amounts to the burden of the book, continuing conversation and debate about the whys and wherefores, endless bickering and battering that's not only trying but downright impossible to understand, forty long-winded chapters that go back and forth, back and forth with arguments of far, far more hot air than distinguishable substance.

Frederick Buechner, in his book, Beyond Words says to read Job in its entirety. At least thirty chapters of the book of Job is bickering that appears to go absolutely nowhere. Job's wife has her own cameo role. "Curse God and die," she says to her husband. Job is not a cheery book. There is not much rejoicing.

"The Lord giveth, the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." That's a moral that can certainly be mined from the story, but it's not the line you're going to offer to someone who's just lost a loved one. Some losses are for keeps. This is why the ending of Job's story mystifies

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## November 2021

### Sunday

November 7th

### TIME CHANGE

"fall back" one hour

10:30 a.m. - Communion,  
during Worship  
In-Person and live on  
YouTube

### Sunday

November 14th

### Stewardship Sunday

10:30 a.m. - Worship  
In-Person and live on  
YouTube

### Sunday

November 21st

### Thanksgiving

### Christ the King Sunday

10:30 a.m. - Bell Choir  
during Worship  
In-Person and live on  
YouTube

Following the Service -  
Organ Recital by  
Janice Robison  
Church Sanctuary

### Thursday

November 25th

### Thanksgiving

There will be no  
Thanksgiving meal at the  
church this year

### Sunday

November 28th

### 1st Sunday of Advent

10:30 a.m. - Worship  
In-Person and live on  
YouTube

"We are a Christian community of faith that shares the love of God with all people everywhere."

(continued from page 1)

me. It's simply not true that nothing is ever lost. It's just plain not the case that everything happens for an ultimately good reason, or that tragedy always makes us better people, or that God owes us shiny, happy endings.

At the end of the book of Job he tells us that "*the Lord restored the fortunes of Job,*" giving him twice what he had before calamity ruined his life. I see the writer of this ancient text making a move that's painfully familiar. It's a meaning-making move, a parrying move, a survival move. It's a move to make the reality of suffering okay by somehow canceling it out with blessing. But it's not, in my opinion, a truthful move. A truthful move requires us to sit with catastrophe and chaos, and find new life in their wake. It requires us to admit that sometimes we lose things and don't get them back. It requires us to divorce our trust in God from the fairy tale expectation of "happily ever afters."

In her thought-provoking book, Getting Involved with God: Rediscovering the Old Testament, theologian Ellen F. Davis does exactly this. She reads the ending of Job as an affirmative answer to

one of the central questions of the book: "Can you love what you do not control?"

When we first meet Job, he is a careful and perhaps even fearful father, a man who covers all bases and secures God's protection for his family by even praying for his children's possible sins. What would it take, Davis asks in her book, for a man as cautious and guarded as Job to rise up from the ashes and truly live again after losing his precious sons and daughters? She writes: "*This book is not about justifying God's actions; it is about Job's transformation. It is useless to ask how much (or how little) it costs God to give more children. The real question is how much it costs Job to become a father again. How can he open himself again to the terrible vulnerability of loving those whom he cannot protect against suffering and untimely death?*"

When we last see Job, he is lavishly loving his new children, breaking social custom to give his daughters as well as his sons inheritances, and naming his three beautiful girls with almost mischievous delight: Dove, Cinnamon, and Horn of Eye-Shadow. In other words, when we

last see Job, he is choosing life. Choosing courage. Choosing to open his heart to love what he cannot control.

This is the choice that lies before us, too. When suffering comes, when loss shatters our belief in a predictable world and a "safe" God, what will we do? Will we opt out? Will we close our hearts around our wounds and never risk life again? Or will we participate in the lavish, unbounded love of God, who adores a created cosmos that includes contingency, chaos, destruction, and disorder? We are free to choose — just as God is. We are free to risk our hearts or not — just as God is. Can we love what we do not control?

Job is a remarkable book.

A difficult book.

A book to struggle with.

What I've found in these last few weeks of wrestling with this timeless story is that God meets me in my resistance and doubt, just as much as God meets me in my trust and surrender. The Spirit is more than equal to everything I bring to the pages of scripture, because my wrestling is always in the arms of God — and so is yours.

~Pastor Rob

### November 2021 Worship

*Italic—first reading and \*Bold, italic—preaching text*



November 7th	<i>First Reading Ruth 3:1-5, 4:13-17</i> and Psalm 127:1-5 Second Reading Hebrews 9:24-28 and <b>*Gospel Mark 12:38-44</b>	"To Be Noticed"
November 14th	<b>*First Reading 1 Samuel 1:4-20</b> and Canticle 1 Samuel 2:1-10 Second Reading Hebrews 10:11-14 (15-18) 19-25 and <i>Gospel Mark 13:1-8</i>	"Naming Your Child Hannah"
November 21st	First Reading 2 Samuel 23:1-7 and Psalm 132:1-12 (13-18) Second Reading <i>Revelation 1:4b-8</i> and <b>*Gospel John 18:33-37</b>	"The Truth, The Whole Truth and Nothing but the Truth"
November 28th	First Reading Jeremiah 33:14-16 and Psalm 25:1-10 Second Reading <i>1 Thessalonians 3:9-13</i> and <b>*Gospel Luke 21:25-36</b>	"How Do We Say Hello to Here?"

### Accepting Advent Stories for Devotional Deadline - November 7th

The story of the birth of Jesus sounds like a travelogue. Mary and Joseph travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem. The angels meet the shepherds out in the fields and then the shepherds go to Bethlehem to find the newborn Baby. The Magi follow a star to the palace in Jerusalem, ask for directions, and continue following the star to Bethlehem.

Do you have a favorite story you would like to share about traveling for holiday gatherings that we may include in this year's Advent devotional booklet? The Committee is looking for short stories of 300 words or less. Children are welcome to submit drawings or stories.

For more information and story submission, email Joan Nease at [christianed@athensfpc.org](mailto:christianed@athensfpc.org) by **November 7th**. There are 28 days in Advent giving the committee lots of opportunity. Booklets will be available by

### After-Church Organ Recital By Janice Robison Sunday, November 21st

Janice Robison will play an organ recital Sunday, November 21st, immediately following the worship service. The music will be for Thanksgiving and Advent. All are invited to stay for this thirty minute recital.

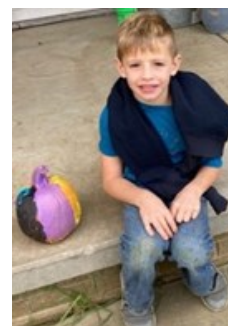
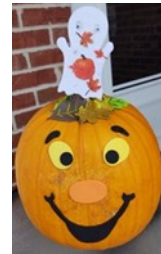
### Children and Youth Cookie Baking and Icing Event November 29th - 10:00 a.m.

The Children and Youth Cookie Baking Event will be Monday, November 29th beginning at 10:00 a.m., in the church kitchen. Come cut-out and decorate delicious sugar cookies with your FPC friends.

Masks will be required.

### Halloween Fun!

Last month, the Christian Education Committee passed out pumpkins and craft supplies. And were the pumpkin designers creative! Below are some of their pictures. Check out the church's Facebook page to see them all. Thank you to Nancy Hartley, Richard Nease, Florence McGeough, Martha Johnson, Barb Martin, Wendy Toadvine, Helen and John King, Alexia Gyftopoulos, Andrea Frohne, Margaret Bourke, Marla Longenecker, Greylynn Isaacs, Noah Isaacs, Jaxson Isaacs and Jane Woodrow.



## Windows ON: Church Support Committee FINANCIAL REPORT

<b>Income and Expenses, 2021</b>			
Offering Budgeted for 2021	\$252,400	Offering Received to Date	\$194,990
Other Income Budgeted for 2021 (endowment, parking lot lease, Putnam apt. rent, interest)	\$158,704	Other Income Received to Date	\$100,307
<b>Total Income Budgeted 2021</b>	<b>\$411,104</b>	<b>Total Income (Received to Date)</b>	<b>\$294,297</b>
Current Assets (checking & petty cash)	-----	Total Cash on Hand	\$23,603
<b>Expenses Budgeted in 2021</b>	<b>\$410,936</b>	<b>Expenses to Date</b>	<b>\$293,470</b>
<b>Other Endowment and Contribution Activity in 2021</b>			
Special Offerings (Christmas Joy, Pentecost, One Great Hour of Sharing, and Peacemaking)	\$3,046	Sent to Presbytery (40% of Pentecost is retained for local use/25% of Peacemaking offering is retained for local use)	
Offering Gifts (Athens Co. Food Pantry, Good Works, My Sister's Place, Planned Parenthood, Habitat for Humanity, etc.)	\$4,366	Disbursed to appropriate agency or group	
Memorial Gifts (Ron and Mary Jane Black, Ralph Izard, Jack and JoAnne Kerr, Kenny and Nada Kerr, Glen Knudson, and Ray and Shirley Strickmaker)	\$690	Disbursed as directed by donors	
Offering gifts designated for the Discretionary Fund (Local Emergencies)	\$1,631	To be distributed by the Pastor for local emergencies	
Local Emergencies (Special)	\$100	Community donations for a refugee family. Flow-through account for FPC to pay family bills.	
Gifts supporting AFPC Mission Projects	\$4,029	Used for AFPC mission work projects	
Gifts Supporting Trail Mix Ministry	\$0	Used to buy supplies.	

## Windows ON: Amesville/New England THIS MONTH'S NEWS

The Parish extends sincere sympathy to Burt Stumpf and his family on the death of Margaret. Margaret was a major helper at the Special Group that met in the basement of the Athens Church for many, many years. Margaret was always there to greet those who attended, and shared stories from her great collection of children's books. Margaret could be counted on for

any task that needed to be done, and her influence on all everyone who were a part of that program was greatly appreciated.

The women of the church will be providing food for Good Works' Saturday Night Life on Friday, December 10th.

Catherine Hare, along with two of her grandsons, Seth and Zachary Dobbelaer have tickets to fly to Costa Rica to spend Christmas with Co-Mission workers Jenny Bent and Mark Hare and their daughters Keila and Annika.

### NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

3 – Jamie Poore  
5 – Kim Stephenson  
7 – Jonathan Hunter  
8 – James Stewart  
9 – Joyce Mullins  
Becky Pankratz  
11 – Neal Nesbitt  
13 – James Cox Jr.  
15 – Steve Kramer  
16 – Eleanor Barstow  
17 – Connie Cornwell  
18 – Dan Neason

19 – Mike Hunter  
20 – Dorothy Broadbent  
Clair Ping  
21 – Herman Hills  
Marvin Marty  
22 – Ann Fox  
25 – Jerry Jagers  
Dave Palmer  
Lisa Yehl  
26 – John Mitchell  
27 – Ben King  
28 – Katie Tadlock

### NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

4 – Brandon / Tori Stephens  
12 – Debi Orr Roderick/ David Roderick  
19 – Jerry / Peggy Jagers  
23 – Butch / Ann Hill  
24 – Dan / Marilyn Neason  
26 – Keith Wiens / Becky Pankratz  
30 – Ray / Jennifer Strickmaker



## Windows ON: FPC Member MARGARET STUMPF

Margaret Duncan Stumpf passed Thursday, October 21st at the age of 92.

She attended Beloit College and National Louis University where she received a Bachelor's in Teaching. She went on to receive her Master's in Teaching from Ohio University. She spent her years instilling her love of reading and sense of wonder on generations of children and grandchildren in Athens and beyond. Margaret was awarded the Ohio Reading Teacher of the Year by the International Reading Association in 1987.

She loved her children and grandchildren deeply and loved others as her own, often opening her home to those studying abroad when they could not see their own families. As a member of Athens First Presbyterian Church for over 50 years, she truly embodied the love of God and sought to pass that joy on to all.

She is survived by her husband Folden Burt Stumpf, her daughter Elizabeth Fisher, her son John Stumpf, her daughter-in-law Laurie Stumpf, and three grandchildren Allie, Katrina, and Anna.

"She came with the sun and left with the moon, not a minute too late or a moment too soon."

A memorial service was held at First Presbyterian Church, Athens on Monday, October 25th. Rev. Robert Martin officiating. A committal service followed at Alexander Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Alzheimer's Association ALZ.org

Arrangements were made with Jagers & Sons Funeral Home, Athens.



### CROP Walk 2021 UPDATE

Thanks to all who supported FPC walkers during this year's Walk. The total donated to date, from FPC and other participating churches is \$3,065.00



## Windows ON: Mission Outreach Committee HABITAT NEWS

**Scrap Metal Drive** - The scrap metal drive on Saturday, October 2nd brought out a crowd of donors.

The truckload of ferrous metals earned Habitat \$900.00. Additional income from the sale of aluminum, brass, and copper donations brought the total for the day to \$1,199.88. Thank you to everyone that brought donations!



**Rummage Sale** - Saturday, November 13th from 8:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Noon at Christ the King church, corner of Stewart and Mill Streets. Donations of clothing, household items, toys, books, CDs, kitchenware, small tools, small furniture, and decoration items are appreciated. Please bring donations to Christ the King on Thursday, November 11th from 10:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m. or Friday, the 12th from 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

### TV Service Broadcast

Complete recordings of the FPC services are available on the church's YouTube Channel. Services may be viewed by using your internet browser or smart TV connected to the internet. Go to <https://www.YouTube.com/athensfpc> Select the "Video" tab. Services and other videos are arranged by date.



**“FOLLOW ME” - STEWARDSHIP 2022****Pledge Sunday is November 14th**

**Please return your pledge form - by Sunday, November 14th, when we also celebrate Commitment Sunday and all we are able to do together through our generous response to Christ's call to “Follow Me.”**

**Why is it important to make a pledge commitment for 2022?**

Pledging makes it possible for First Church to discern what commitments to make for the year ahead; it provides church leadership with an understanding of the resources that can be available for those commitments. First Church asks all new and ongoing members for pledges of time, talent, and treasure. There is an expectation that all members will participate with a pledge that is meaningful and manageable in their current financial situation.

**Why does my gift matter?**

Pledged commitments directly determine what is possible for us to do through mission and service, education and discipleship, and worship and music: more than 50 percent of First Church's annual revenue come from pledged commitments. At the same time, pledging is about more than what we can do. It is also about who we are: making a commitment and giving annually to the church is one of the ways we express what it means to be disciples and a part of this faith community. By being generous in our financial giving, we express our gratitude for what God is doing in our own lives and in the world.

*2022 Stewardship Campaign*

The theme of the FPC 2022 Stewardship Campaign is "Jesus said 'Follow Me'"  
*Matthew 4:19 And he said to them, 'Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.'*



**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE CHECK AND COMPLETE AS APPROPRIATE:** ☐ Below is my pledge amount for the 2022 Budget.

Amount			
Payment Interval (choose 1)	Week	Month	Year

- ☐ I will not formally pledge but will give as I am able throughout the year.  
☐ Please provide giving envelopes.

### FPC Volunteers/Workers Needed

**Youth Ministry Volunteers** - Join the Youth Ministry Team at First Presbyterian Church. Benefits include: all you can eat goldfish crackers, exercise during worship, unlimited high fives, instant hero status and free crayons.

**Sunday School Teacher Volunteers** - Want to make an impact in young lives? Come help the children attending FPC to learn about God as a Sunday School Teacher.

**Child Care Workers** - If you are a college student, educator, retiree, or have a passion for children and are looking for part-time work, please contact the church office for more information on helping with child care during worship, special events, and other times as needed.

**If interested in any of these positions, please contact the church office  
740-593-3351 or [office@athensfpc.org](mailto:office@athensfpc.org)**

### Prayer Concern Requests and Visitation

Prayer request slips are available in the narthex or contact the church office for prayer requests. If you would like others in the church to pray for a person or for a concern near to your heart, place the slips in the Prayer Request box in the narthex, or let the church office know. If you or someone you know would enjoy a visit from Pastor Rob and a Deacon, or appreciate receiving communion at home, contact the office 740-593-3351 or [office@athensfpc.org](mailto:office@athensfpc.org)



### Windows ON: Mission / Outreach Committee OHIO UNIVERSITY CATS' CUPBOARD

The Ohio University Cat's Cupboard project continued to pick up steam during October, with extensive help from Athens FPC members and friends, in providing food and other necessities for needy OU students. The number of students signing up to receive items from the Cupboard rose from about 200 in September to over 300 by late October. Also, often a student would request items to help feed and clothe family members. When one counts these people, the number of folks aided exceeded 450.

Church members and friends contributing to the project are urged to bring items by Monday afternoon of any given week.

Wendy Toadvine shops for food and other items especially needed by Cupboard students. She, along with Helen King, Alan and Sue Boyd, take these items to a pickup point at the main entrance to Baker Center between 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. on the second Tuesday of each month. In addition, a box for donations has been set up on the

second floor of Baker Center. Folks can bring items to the main storage area on the fifth floor.

Staff permitting, Cat's Cupboard hopes to provide additional pick-up periods soon on Wednesday and Thursday mornings.

Cat's Cupboard staff includes several work-study students. The number of "chiefs" as well as "Indians" (student workers) has also grown! Kathy Fahl, Interim Associate Dean of students, works alongside Charlie Fulks, Basic Needs Coordinator in the Office of Students' Life, and Karah Davis, a graduate assistant in the office.

The need for such a food pantry remains great as the CoVid pandemic hangs on. Fulks indicates plans to expand outreach and offerings in the coming weeks. Students may pick up a list of available items on the fifth floor of Baker Center, check off items they need, and have them packaged for later pick-up. Or one can simply ask for items on the shelves.

Several organizations, on and off campus, contribute to Cat's Cupboard. However, there is still a special need for food palatable to international students – a large part of the project's "customers".

Financial contributions remain welcome. Checks should be mailed or taken to the church office, 9 North College Street, Athens, OH 45701. The phone number is 740-593-3351. Checks should be made out to FPC, with Cat's Corner in the memo line. Wendy Toadvine can then shop for specific needed items for the cupboard with this fund.

FPC members and friends, Peace Corp volunteers, and residents of Elmwood Place on Athens' east side have contributed generously.

Kathy Fahl, Charlie Fulks and Karah Davis express deep appreciation for FPC's support.



### Women's Book Study Continues on Fridays at noon - in person and by Zoom

"Tokens of Trust: An Introduction to Christian Belief" by Rowan Williams - If you like reading or want to get in touch with your inner bookworm, dive deeper with discussions on books, please plan to join in the Women's Book Study group this fall. Gain different perspectives, broaden your horizon and grow with friends! Please contact the church office if you are interested - 740-593-3351 or [office@athensfpc.org](mailto:office@athensfpc.org).

### Sundays in November

**November 7th** - Daylight Savings Time Ends - "Fall Back"

**November 14th** - Pledge/Stewardship Sunday

**November 21st** - Thanksgiving/Christ the King Sunday

**November 28th** - First Sunday of Advent



### What is Advent?

*(From the PCA Committee on Discipleship Ministries)*

Advent is a time to reflect on the truth revealed by the Apostle John: God so loved the world that he gave his only son (John 3:16). "Advent" means the arrival of a notable person or event, and in the four weeks before Christmas, we remember how Christ came to save us. *Mankind's rebellion caused separation and spiritual darkness; yet in the birth of Jesus, the Light of the World dispels the darkness and restores mankind's relationship with God.*

The light of the Advent candles are a testimony to the light Christ brings to a fallen world. The **purple** candles remind us of the royal status of the King of kings, who set aside the privileges of being the Son of God and took the form of a servant in human flesh. **He humbled himself because he loved us.**

We light a **pink** candle (the "joy candle") on the third week of Advent. This color reminds us of the joy of the season, as God demonstrates his love in such a wonderful way. To those who receive him, he gives the right to become children of God (John 1:12). **We experience deep and unshakable joy because he loved us.**

We light the **white** candle (the "Christ candle") on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. This color reminds us of the purity of Christ, whose perfect sacrifice brings peace between God and man. For those who trust in what Christ has done, the crimson stain of sin is made white like snow (Isaiah 1:18). **We are spiritually clean because he loved us.**

In the weeks preceding Christmas, many people celebrate sentimental expressions of love. Christians move beyond mere sentimentalism. We love from the firm foundation of experiencing the love of God in Christ. His love colors and shapes every aspect of life. In him, we demonstrate humility and joy. Cleansing cannot come from saying the right thing or doing the right thing. Justification is by faith alone.





### Sunday School

Sunday School continues with the Home Sunday School Lesson Bags through the month of September for pre-school through elementary grades. FPC will be offering a confirmation class this fall, led by Rev. Martin.

Deciding What's Best for Your Family - Whether you plan to attend online-only, or feel comfortable coming back to in-person gatherings, FPC will meet you where you are to help you stay connected to your First Church family. The church has transitioned from a pre-recorded worship service to livestream for online worship. Church staff and members are working to provide the most magnetic worship both in the sanctuary and online.

Encouraging You to Get Your COVID Vaccine - Everyone seems to be in an in-between time. It's clearly not the way it was, even just a few months ago, but this pandemic is not over yet either. So, as everyone lives in the midst of this in-between time, FPC is trying to move forward in a way that is safe and also meaningful.

Prayers for Your Grace – Rev. Martin shares, “It was a difficult decision to suspend worship over a year ago, but it's a far more complicated decision about how and when to reopen. So, we solicit your prayers as we make these decisions and your leaders, lay leaders and staff engage in that process.” Plans are subject to change depending on the ongoing health situation in our community. The Church will continue to seek the guidance of Session for criteria to advance to the next steps of the reopening of all of FPC programs.

### Youth News

#### Presbytery of Scioto Valley Youth Retreat

Saturday, January 29th from 10:30 am to Sunday, January 30th Noon.

Camp Akita for grades 6-12 will be at Camp Akita with the theme: "Attitude of Gratitude"

(There will NOT be a confirmation track at the Retreat.)

Cost: \$80.00 by January 6, 2022. \$100 after that through January 23rd.

COVID protocols will be observed.

#### Presbyterian Youth Triennium

Mandatory pre-event “Get together”: Sunday, July 17th - 5:00-7:00 p.m. (Location TBA)

Triennium is set for July 24 - 27, 2022 in Indianapolis. This national youth conference for those entering 9th grade through graduating seniors (and chaperones!) is an AMAZING event.

Registration deadline: January 15, 2022 and reserved with application and \$100.00 deposit. The cost is \$700.00 (includes transportation via Presbytery rented bus, hotel stay booked through Indy Housing Bureau, meals and program costs). PSV is contributing \$100.00 per youth.

Flyers available in Narthex and Church office  
if you would like one mailed to you please contact the church office.

#### **FPC Church Elders:**

**2021:** John Hauser, Anne Kemmerle, Katie Tadlock, and Keith Wiens

**2022:** Carolyn Allen, Pamela Harvey, Sandy Nesbitt, and David Tees

**2023:** Carl Franz, John King, Linda Parsons, and Susan Loughridge

#### **FPC Board of Deacons:**

**2021:** Joyce Beauvias, Nancy Hartley, Marla Longenecker, Danny Moates, and Marge Shelton

**2022:** Mary Costello, Harold Robison, Andrew Stuart, and Patrick Tegge

**2023:** Martha Johnson, Helen King, Mindy King, Debi Orr-Roderick, and Wendy Toadvine

## Windows ON: Presbyterian Outlook Article CAREGIVING AND THE DIGITAL CHURCH

### Caregiving and the digital church Presbyterian Outlook, 10/26/2021

Recently on my way home from work, my wife asked me to stop at the grocery store to pick up a few things we needed for dinner. She said, "We need chickpeas, spinach, cheese and tomatoes." I replied, "Hold on; let me write that down," to which she replied, "Do you really need help remembering four things?" She and I like to help each other, and we'd been having an ongoing discussion about memory. I said to her, "You're right. I can remember four things." I repeated the grocery items to myself a few times, then went into the store and remembered to buy what we needed.

In Plato's work *Phaedrus*, which is written as a dialogue between Socrates and his interlocutor named Phaedrus, Socrates says about the invention of writing: *"If [people] learn this, it will implant forgetfulness in their souls. They will cease to exercise memory because they rely on that which is written, calling things to remembrance no longer from within themselves, but by means of external marks."*

This always comes to my mind whenever the conversation occurs about whether or not churches should be using new forms of technology in their ministry. To some extent, Socrates was correct, as evidenced by my reaction to write down a small grocery list so that I wouldn't have to remember it in my brain. On the other hand, 2,400 years have gone by since Socrates wrote that and, during that time, we've found a way to balance the utility of writing with the use of memory. Will the same be true of all new technologies we might adopt?

This came up recently during a church meeting with our communications committee. The COVID pandemic has pushed many of our

churches to a point of needing to embrace technology in order to continue doing ministry together. My congregation is livestreaming worship to YouTube. We're hosting meetings virtually — some Zoom-only, others using a hybrid model. We've got a very active Facebook account. But the question came up: What about Snapchat and TikTok? Should we have church accounts on those social media sites?

This question came up in the context of a discussion about church communication as it relates to caring for our young people. Many of our congregation's children and youth aren't comfortable coming to in-person events at the church.

It's a compassionate and pastoral instinct to wonder if we are successfully keeping them connected to our church's ministry. We want to be sure that they aren't overlooked and that we include them in our worship, fellowship and mission. Are our weekly emails to the congregation enough? Are they even on Facebook to see what we're posting there? Do they feel connected through postcards and group chats?

When the question of being on Snapchat and TikTok came up, I was really impressed by the response from our associate pastor. She said that some of our youth didn't even have any social media accounts until they graduated from high school and that other youth had parents that were leery of them being on sites like Snapchat and TikTok, specifically out of a concern over bullying and harmful messages sometimes conveyed through those sites about standards of beauty. She said, "I wouldn't want to create church social media accounts that encourage our young people to visit sites their parents don't want them to visit out of a concern for keeping them safe." That might not be true for the youth in every church, but I

really appreciated her wisdom about our youth.

Throughout the pandemic, I have tended toward fully embracing technology as the wave of the future. My refrain has been, "This is the era of the digital church!" However, those insightful words from our associate pastor helped me to see that even caring efforts offered with good intentions can be toxic. Probably one of the most important questions to ask before offering care is: Will this actually help? We can sometimes assume we know what "kids these days" (or anyone else, for that matter!) are doing. Our assumptions may not be correct, however.

Only time will tell what we might lose as individuals and as a society in exchange for adopting new technologies. Asking whether or not our efforts are truly helping is a good place to start. The only way to know that is to listen to the people we're trying to help. "You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak" (James 1:19).

Aaron Neff is head of staff at  
First Presbyterian Church of Pittsford, NY

## **Windows ON: Session Approves New Position CREATIVE DESIGN AND DIGITAL MEDIA ADMINSTRATOR**

At the Session October meeting, a new job position within First Presbyterian Church, Creative Design and Digital Media administrator was approved. That seems like a mouthful, but it represents a position that would oversee the Sunday live broadcasts as well as build and maintain FPC's social media presence. There is not only have the FPC Website, but now have a digital presence on Facebook and Twitter. There may be more that FPC can do! Session is anticipating the job to begin in January of 2022. FPC members and friends will be kept posted.

### **CREATIVE DESIGN AND DIGITAL MEDIA ADMINISTRATOR**

**Overview:** The Creative Design and Digital Media administrator will work with the Pastor and Session to develop the style, tone, and brand of First Presbyterian Church. They will be responsible for developing web-based and digital content to advance FPC's mission and key objectives.

#### **Qualifications (desired):**

- Bachelor's Degree in Communications, Public Relations, Marketing, Graphic Design, or related field of study along with a minimum of two years' experience in development, design, and production of various communication components
- Knowledge of Word, Adobe, Google.
- Demonstrated competence in writing and graphic design
- Creative vision for effective communications, initiative and energy to upgrade and improve current communications
- Experience designing and maintaining websites in WordPress
- Photography and videography experience preferred

#### **Essential duties and responsibilities:**

- Development and design of digital media and video content
- Collaborate with ministries to develop a communication plan, look, and feel of projects
- Ensure brand identity and message consistency
- Create and maintain a church-wide social media plan; serve as the primary manager of all social media channels
- Collect and communicate social media metrics that describe the effectiveness of the church's social media ministry
- Provide copywriting and editing for church communications
- Curate media for use on website and social media
- Work with the Pastor to prepare the weekly e-newsletter, ensuring accuracy in writing, grammar, and style
- Create and edit video content for Sunday worship
- Provide photography services at events and gatherings for use in publications

#### **Essential knowledge, skills, and abilities:**

- Writing, reading, proofreading, critical thinking
- Interpersonal skills that enable effective collaboration with other ministry leaders and staff
- Ability to organize and initiate work with minimum supervision
- Ability to prioritize and manage multiple projects and adapt production timelines to changing conditions
- Ability to work both independently and collaboratively within a team to assess needs and produce results
- Commitment to excellence, attention to detail and accuracy
- Availability on Sunday mornings and weekends to record, and photograph worship or events

#### **For further information contact:**

Rev. Robert Martin, at the church office 740-593-3351 or [rmartin@athensfpc.org](mailto:rmartin@athensfpc.org)

#### **Please send your letter of interest and resume to:**

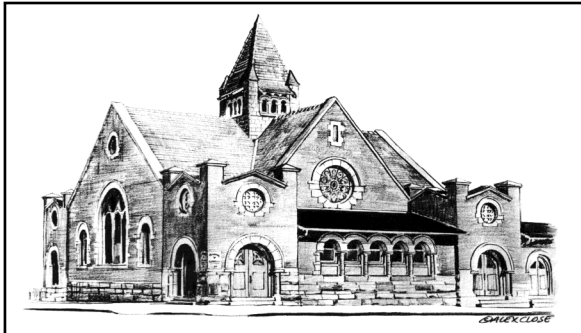
Athens First Presbyterian Church, 9 North College Street, Athens, OH 45701

Or electronically to: [office@athensfpc.org](mailto:office@athensfpc.org)

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. Beginning date is anticipated for January of 2022.

www.athensfpc.org

NOVEMBER 2021



**First Presbyterian Church**  
9 North College Street  
Athens, OH 45701



Phone: 740-593-3351

Fax: 740-593-3352

Email: [office@athensfpc.org](mailto:office@athensfpc.org)

Web: [athensfpc.org](http://athensfpc.org)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AthensFPC/>

<https://www.Youtube.com/athensfpc>

**Pastor:** Rev. Robert E. Martin

**Church:** Corner of Court and Washington Streets

**Office:** 9 North College Street

**Office Hours:** Monday - Friday - 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

**Clerk of Session:** Andrew Stuart

**Choir Director:** David M. Tadlock

**Organist:** Janice Robison

**CE Directors:** Richard and Joan Nease

**Bell Choir Director:** Tyler Thress

**Administrative Assistant:** Jane A. Baker

**Phone:** (740) 593-3351

**FAX:** (740) 593-3352

**E-Mail:** [office@athensfpc.org](mailto:office@athensfpc.org)

**Web:** [www.athensfpc.org](http://www.athensfpc.org)

**Worship Service:** The service can be seen live and recorded on YouTube.

**Bible Study:** Tuesdays at 12:00 Noon in the church library (via "Zoom")

**Newsletter Helpers:** Jane Baker, Hugh Culbertson, Lillian Dinos, Nana Jenkins, Susan Loughridge, Barb Martin, Rev. Martin, and Harold Robison.

**December 2021 Newsletter Deadline:**  
Monday Noon, November 22nd

**First Presbyterian Church, Athens, Ohio** - FPC has occupied its site in the center of Athens, Ohio since 1809. Among the founding fathers was Ohio University's first president, a Presbyterian minister, the Rev. Jacob Lindley. Dr. Lindley served this congregation as Moderator and Pastor until 1824. Over the years, thirteen pastors of the church have been either university presidents or members of the faculty. Dr. William Holmes McGuffey, author of the McGuffey's Readers, was called to serve as President of Ohio University and served as pastor of the church in 1839.

**Presbytery of Scioto Valley** - The Presbytery of Scioto Valley encompasses twenty-six counties in south central Ohio. From Ironton in the south to Ibra in the north: Hanover in the east and London in the west, FPC's presbytery consists of 95 congregations many of them historic where Presbyterians today are carrying on a long tradition of witness and service in their communities. All over FPC's presbytery, Presbyterians reach out to welcome the stranger, sharing the Gospel and God's love as Christ bids us to do.

**Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)** - The PC (U.S.A.), with denominational offices in Louisville, Kentucky, has approximately 2.3 million members, more than 10,000 congregations and 14,000 ordained and active ministers. Presbyterians trace their history to the 16th century and the Protestant Reformation. Its heritage, and much of its doctrine began with John Calvin (1509-1564), whose writings crystallized much of the Reformed thinking that preceded him.