



WINDOW

JANUARY 2024

The Monthly Newsletter of
First Presbyterian Church, Athens, OH

Happy
New Year!

From the Pastor....

I spent a considerable amount of time reading the early mothers and fathers (monastics) who fled the corruption of the early church and society to seek Christ in the solitude of the Egyptian desert. I also enjoyed several contemporary overviews of these eccentric saints: Where God Happens (2005) by former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, and In the Heart of the Desert: The Spirituality of the Desert Fathers and Mothers (2003) by John Chryssavgis, Professor of Theology and former Dean at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology. I love these desert monastics most of all for their profound humility, humanity, and, believe it or not, their wry sense of humor. These saints modeled a spirituality of imperfection in which one is not ashamed or embarrassed to embrace one's brokenness, wounds, darkness, and inner demons. They comfortably acknowledged that lifelong struggle is a necessary virtue.

As we think about New Year resolutions, here are some nuggets of wisdom that I've gleaned from the "sayings" (Greek, Apophthegmata) of the desert monastics.

Never stop starting over: "Abba Poeman said regarding Abba Prin that every day he made a new beginning." "My God, do not abandon me. I have done nothing good before Thee, but grant me, in Thy compassion, the power to make a start" (Arsenius, 5th century).

Live intentionally, not aimlessly: "Think nothing and do nothing without a purpose directed to God. For to journey without direction is wasted effort" (St. Mark the Ascetic, 5th century).

Never, ever despair, no matter what: "Let us eagerly draw near to Christ, and let us not despair of our salvation. For it is a trick of the devil to lead us to despair

by reminding us of our past sins" (St. Makarios of Egypt, 5th century). "When someone is defeated after offering stiff resistance, he should not give up in despair. Let him take heart, encouraged by the words... God raises up all who are bowed down (Psalm 145:14). (St. John of Karpathos, date unknown).

Pray simply, not stupidly: "Often when I have prayed I have asked for what I thought was good, and persisted in my petition, stupidly importuning the will of God, and not leaving it to Him to arrange things as He knows is best for me. But when I have obtained what I asked for, I have been very sorry that I did not ask for the will of God to be done; because the thing turned out not to be as I had thought" (Evagrius the Solitary, 4th century). Abba Macarius said, "It is enough to say, 'Lord, as you will, and as you know, have mercy.' And if the conflict grows fiercer, say: 'Lord, help!'"

Stop judging others: "The monk, says Moses, must never judge his neighbor at all in any way whatever." "They said of Abba Macarius that just as God protects the world, so Abba Macarius would cover the faults he saw, as though he did not see them, and those he heard, as though he did not hear them."

Stay put: Mother Syncretica (4th century), "If you find yourself in a monastery do not go to another place, for that will harm you a great deal. Just as the bird who abandons the eggs she was sitting on prevents them from hatching, so the monk or the nun grows cold and their faith dies when they go from one place to another." "In Scetis a brother went to Moses to ask for advice. He said to him, 'Go and sit in your cell, and your cell will teach you everything.'"

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January 2024

Sunday, January 7th Epiphany/

Baptism of the Lord

10:30 a.m. - Communion,
Installation/Ordination
of New Officers during
Worship

Sunday, January 14th

10:30 a.m. - Guest
minister during Worship

Sunday, January 21st

10:30 a.m. - Worship
1:00 p.m. - Lindley Inn
Hymn Sing, The Plains

Sunday, January 28th

10:30 a.m. - Worship

Annual Report Deadline

by Friday, January 19th

Annual Reports In Sanctuary

Sunday, February 4th

Annual Congregational Meeting

Sunday, February 11th

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

(continued from page 1)

Acknowledge my brokenness:

"The person who has come to know the weakness of human nature has gained experience of divine power. Such a person never belittles anyone. . . . He knows that God is like a good and loving physician who heals with individual treatment each of those who are trying to make progress" (St. Maximos the Confessor, 7th century). "A brother said to Abba Theodore, 'Speak a word to me for I am perishing.' Sorrowfully, the old man said: 'I myself am in danger. So, what can I say to you?'"

Be ruthlessly realistic: "Saint Anthony said to Poemen, 'expect trials and temptations until your last breath.'" "I am convinced that not even the apostles, although filled with the Holy Spirit, were therefore completely free from anxiety. . . . Contrary to the stupid view expressed by some, the advent of grace does not mean the immediate deliverance from anxiety" (St. Makarios of Egypt, 5th century).

Always think good of everyone:
"Show the greatest gentleness

toward all people" (Evagrios the Solitary, 4th century).

Read the obituaries: "When the death of Arsenius drew near, the brothers saw him weeping and asked, 'Truly, Father, are you afraid?' 'Indeed,' he answered them, 'the fear which is mine this hour has been with me ever since I became a monk.'" "At the moment of our death we will all know for certain what is the outcome of our life" (St. Gregory of Sinai, 13th century).

~ Rev. Martin

FPC Church Elders:

2023: John King, Linda Parsons, Susan Loughridge and Hugh Woods

2024: Harvey Ballard, Anne Kemmerle, Katie Tadlock, and Keith Wiens

2025: Adrienne Nagy, Debbie Perry, Andrew Stuart and David Tees

FPC Board of Deacons:

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

2024: Joyce Beauvais, Margaret Bourke, Bobbi Conliffe, Nancy Hartley, and Carol Perry

2025: Alan Boyd, Mary Costello, Kim Jordan, Becky Pankratz and Ellen Sostarich



Prayer Concern Requests and Visitation

Prayer request slips are available in the narthex. 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. If you or someone you know would enjoy a visit from Pastor Rob and a Deacon (Deacon of the Month is Nancy Hartley), or appreciate receiving communion at home, contact the office 740-593-3351 or office@athensfpc.org

January 2024 Worship

First Reading (Liturgist) - *Italics* - Sermon Text

January 7th

First Reading

Second Reading

Genesis 1:1-5 and *Psalm 29:1-11*

Acts 19:1-7 and ***Gospel Mark 1:4-11**

Deep Waters

January 14th – In Thailand

January 21th

First Reading

Second Reading

Jonah 3:1-5, 10 and *Psalm 62:5-12*

1 Corinthians 7:29-31 and *Gospel Mark 1:14-20*

Saying No to God

January 28th

First Reading

Second Reading

Deuteronomy 18:15-20 and *Psalm 111:1-10*

1 Corinthians 8:1-13 and *Gospel Mark 1:21-28*

Love Builds Up



Epiphany Carol Walk Saturday, January 6th

On Saturday, January 6th, the American Guild of Organists will sponsor an Epiphany Carol Walk. This will involve three downtown churches for brief programs of organ music and carol singing. The event will start at First Presbyterian Church at 3:00 featuring organists Marsha Reilly and Janice Robison and a piano duet by Joyce Beauvais and Janice Robison. It will then move to First United Methodist at 3:30 where the bell choir and other organists will perform. Then at 4:00 will be the final program at Christ Lutheran. All are invited to attend any or all of these programs free of charge. This will be a final chance to experience Christmas music.

Christian Education and Other Upcoming Events at FPC

Thank You

A big THANK YOU to everyone who participated in the Advent and Christmas Eve services. With so many of the congregation at less than full health, we needed all your help. We hope everyone gets and stays healthy in the new year.
~ The CE Committee

Weekly

Sundays during Worship - Children's Sunday School - Grade school and pre-school children are invited to attend Sunday School during Worship. If you have questions or would like to help with a class, please contact Barb Martin at barbaramartin729@msn.com or phone the church office at 740-593-3351. Lesson plans and materials will be provided for all volunteer teachers. Class sizes are usually small in number.

Fridays at noon - Women's Book Study - via Zoom - Join the Women's Book Study on Fridays at noon via Zoom starting on January 19th as those attending discuss *Holy Envy* by Barbara Brown Taylor. For more information or to join, please contact Joan Nease at christianed@athensfpc.org or the church office at 740-593-3351.

Court Street Clothesline Donations for Winter Needs - The Christian Education Committee is inviting everyone to donate new winter gloves, mittens, hats, and scarves for the FPC winter clothesline. A collection box will be placed by the Christmas tree in the fellowship hall. Warm clothes will be hung from a clothesline along the railing on the Court Street side of the church for people in need during cold weather.

Game Night Friday, January 26, 2024

Come and play board games with FPC family and friends in the Fellowship Hall beginning at 6:30 p.m. Some games will be provided; players may bring games to share. In case of bad weather or pandemic conditions, the event may be canceled or postponed. Please contact Richard or Joan at christianed@athensfpc.org if interested in participating.

Upcoming Events

- *Souper Bowl Sunday – Youth for Hunger* – February 11th
- *Lent begins on Ash Wednesday* – February 14th
- *Palm Sunday and Holy Week* – March 24th-30th
- *Easter Sunday* – March 31st
- *Presbytery Wide Spring Youth Camping Weekend in Hocking Hills* – April 20th-21st

Windows ON: Amesville-New England THIS MONTH'S NEWS

December was a busy month for the folk in the Amesville-New England Parish.

On December 9th, a Christmas Craft fair was held in Amesville. One of the booths offered Camper-ship Gift Certificates to folk. Over \$1,300 was raised to support Parish Church Camp for 2024 at Geneva Hills Outdoor Education Center.

Fifteen children and youth were part of the Make-it-take it workshop where centers were set up and gifts were made/assembled for loved ones. Centers included: ornaments; hot chocolate mix, angel decorations, beaded sun-catchers, necklaces, snowman candle, etc. Each participant took home a bagful of lovely wrapped gifts. Thanks to the church and community members for facilitating this fun Monday Bible School.

On December 17th, Jenny Bent and Mark Hare presented a powerful environmental program on their work on earth care as Presbyterian Church (USA) mission co-workers at the UBL Seminary and surrounding community in Costa Rica. The Athens Presbyterian Church Bell Choir presented two selections of Christmas Music as part of the service. Sincere thanks to the Bell Choir members and their director, Anna Crum, for enriching the worship on that special Sunday.

The Tuppens Plain Church provided turkeys and food boxes for ten families again at Christmas.

On the morning of Christmas Eve Sunday, Monday Bible School participants took part in presenting the Christmas story through a Nativity Scene, Chime selections, reading Scriptures. Because of

illness among some of the folk, last minute substitutions took place which showed the love and community of members of the congregation.

Jenny Bent and Mark Hare with their daughters Keila and Annika have spent almost a month in Amesville sharing their story with folk from Waverly to Columbus and beyond. They will be returning the Atlanta for several weeks and go back the Costa Rica on the 30th of January. Many thanks for all of their sharing and caring that has been part of their lives and Amesville-New England over these past several weeks.

A Blessed 2024 year from the Amesville-New England Parish to the congregation of Athens First Presbyterian Church.

Mission Outreach Committee Diaper Project Continues

The Mission Outreach Committee continues the Diaper Project for some of the Mission Partners here in Athens: Athens County Food Pantry and Cat's Cupboard. There is a box in the Narthex for your donation of a package(s) of diapers. Many donate food, but the Committee realizes that diapers can be expensive when a person is food insecure.



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 3 - Carla Boyle | 16 - Rita Oberholzer |
| Dorothy Bryant | 18 - Keith Wiens |
| 4 - Mike Boyle | 21 - Emma Hauser |
| 6 - Nicholas Jagers | 22 - Bobbi Conliffe |
| Amy Key | Susan Loughridge |
| 7 - Timothy Jagers | 25 - Matthew Brient |
| 8 - Paul Mullins | Eric Yehl |
| Davis Ann Kramer | 26 - Theodore Broadbent |
| 10 - Annica Strickmaker | 27 - Wanada Baxter-Potter |
| 11 - Brad Graves | 28 - Amy Bianco |
| Debra Rentz | 30 - Anna Wright |
| 13 - Abbey Heinrich | |
| Bethany Jagers | |

JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

- 2 - Lloyd and Barbara Culbertson
15 - Ernest Bastin and Dorothy Bryant
27 - Mike and Carla Boyle

**Windows ON: Mission/Outreach Committee
WV MINISTRY OF ADVOCACY AND WORKCAMPS (WVMAW) 2023 MISSION TRIP**

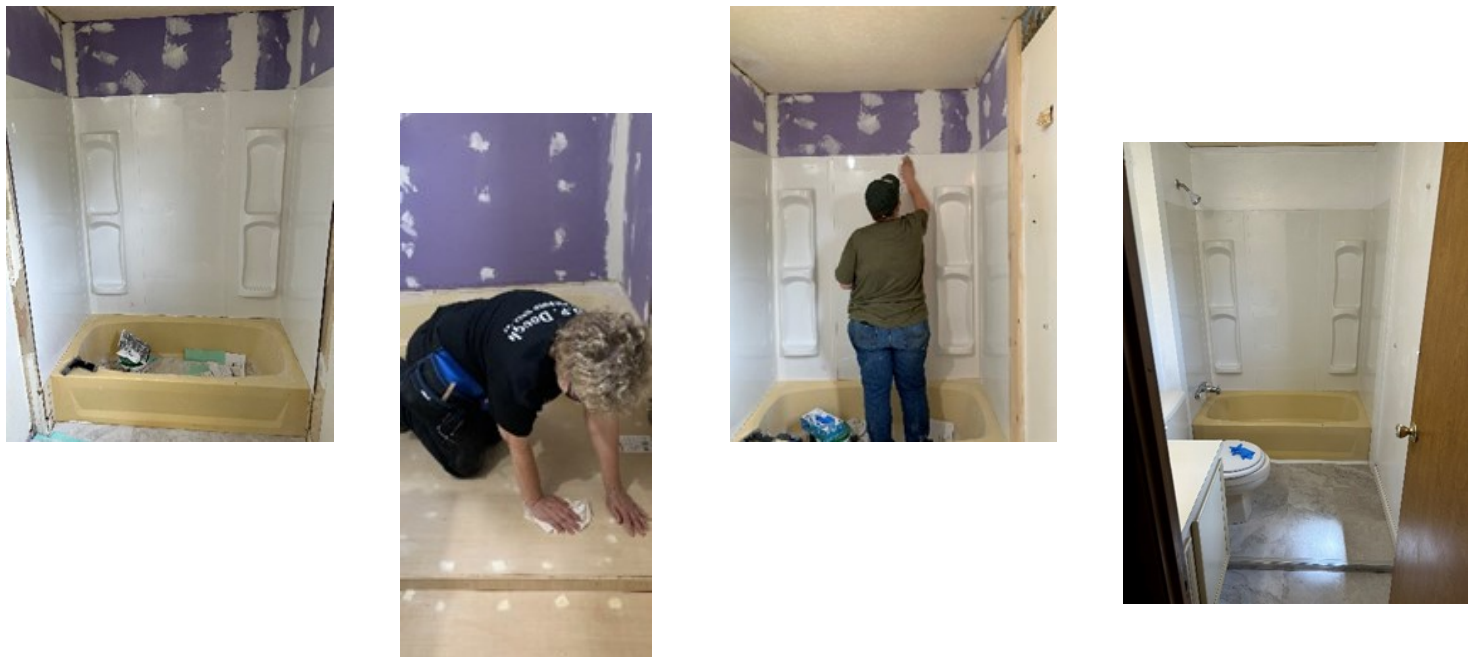
Since October 2001, WVMAW has brought 40-75 volunteer groups per year to work in West Virginia. Their work has consisted of home repair and reconstruction, deconstruction, playground restoration, parks cleanup, streambank stabilization, and vacation Bible schools, among other things. But more than just working with hammers and nails, the groups

have built relationships with people in WV, changing lives in the name of Jesus Christ.

In June of 2023, Debbie Perry, Carol Perry, and Rev. Martin embarked for Summersville Presbyterian Church, Summersville, WV to begin a week of work with WVMAW. All three worked for a week demolishing a deteriorating

bathroom, and then completely remodeling it with a new shower and tub surround kit, toilet, and sink. FPC, Athens has partnered with WVMAW over these last few years, first in Webster Springs, WV, and now Summersville.

The plan is to return with another mission trip in 2024.



2024 Pledge Card - Still time to pledge!



2024 Stewardship Campaign

The theme of the FPC 2024 Stewardship Campaign is 'Telling the Story'
Psalm 78:4b - "...we will tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord,

Name: _____

Address: _____

PLEASE CHECK AND COMPLETE AS APPROPRIATE: ☐ Below is my pledge amount for the 2024 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.

PLEASE CONTACT ME ABOUT: ☐ Making a gift to a FPC Athens Endowment Fund.
☐ Making a gift to a FPC Athens Endowment Fund.



Windows ON: FPC Family and Friends

William Harkins

William “Bill” Harkins, Jr, 77, husband of FPC member, Lois Harkins, passed away on December 13th.

He was born on May 15, 1946 to the late William and Anna Harkins. He graduated from Windsor High School and received both his Bachelor’s and Master’s Degrees from Ohio University. Bill was a veteran of the US Air Force, taught at Federal Hocking Middle School.

Bill enjoyed coaching and participating in sports. He also

worked for Economy Supply following his FH retirement.

He is survived by his wife, Lois, and son, Paul, and other family members.

A Memorial Service will be held on Saturday, January 20th at the Jagers & Sons Funeral Home, in Athens. Visitation is from 10:00 a.m.-Noon, with the Service beginning at Noon. Rev. Martin will be officiating. A reception dinner will follow the service.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made to Heck Harkins Community Center, c/o the Village of Stockport (with Heck Harkins Community Center in memo line), PO Box 158, Stockport, OH 43787 or to FHTA Harkins Scholarship, c/o Federal Hocking Local Schools, 8461 SR 144, Stewart, OH 45778.



Thailand Trip

Presbyterians began mission work in Thailand in 1840, and Presbyterianism is one of the Protestant traditions that helped form the Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT). While the CCT’s membership is relatively small, its work in health, education and social ministries is widely known and appreciated.

First Presbyterian Church is engaged broadly and deeply in God’s mission. The congregation has provided prayer support and partial financial support since 1990 to our sister church in Chang Rai, Thailand.

This month, January 2024, Rev. Martin, Penny Shelton and Bob Stewart will be visiting FPC’s sister church, the Thworntam Church to bring greetings and FPC’s 2024 mission pledge to the church community.

2024 Per Capita Presbytery of Scioto Valley

Per Capita for 2024 “At the November Presbytery meeting, the Presbytery of Scioto Valley approved the 2024 Presbytery budget. The budget was approved with NO increase to per capita which will remain at \$40.00 per member for the coming year”. Your financial support makes a difference. A vital part of the connectional church. We are grateful beyond measure!

Scioto Valley Presbytery’s \$40 Per Capita for 2024 is made up of:

Presbytery of Scioto Valley - \$26.90

Synod of the Covenant - \$3.25

General Assembly - \$9.85

First Presbyterian Church
9 North College Street
Athens, OH 45701

January 2024



Phone: 740-593-3351
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Web: athensfpc.org

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

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

Pastor: Dr. Rev. Robert E. Martin

Church: Corner of Court and Washington Streets
Office: 9 North College Street

Summer 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

Bell Choir Director: Anna Crum

CE Co-Directors: Richard and Joan Nease

Administrative Assistant: Jane Baker

Financial Secretary and Office Custodian:
Jane A. Baker

Church Custodian: Tom Medley

Phone: (740) 593-3351 **FAX:** (740) 593-3352
E-Mail: office@athensfpc.org **Web:** www.athensfpc.org

Worship Service: In person service and can be seen live on YouTube. It is also recorded and under Worship Archives.

Bible Study: Tuesdays at 12:00 Noon in the church library and via Zoom

February 2024 Newsletter Deadline
Tuesday, January 20th

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.