

# WINDOW

AUGUST 2025

The Monthly Newsletter of

First Presbyterian Church, Athens, Ohio



## August 2025

### Sunday, August 3rd

10:30 a.m. - Communion  
during Worship  
8th Sunday  
After Pentecost

### Sunday, August 10th

10:30 a.m. - Worship  
9th Sunday  
After Pentecost

### Saturday, August 16th

5:30-8:00 p.m.  
Sunset Canoes  
Strouds Run State Park

### Sunday, August 17th

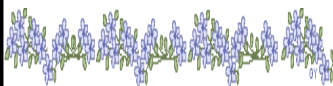
10:30 a.m. - Worship  
10th Sunday  
After Pentecost

### Sunday, August 24th

10:30 a.m. - Worship  
Rally Day  
Welcome Back Sunday  
11th Sunday  
After Pentecost

### Sunday, August 31st

10:30 a.m. - Worship  
Puppet Ministry During  
Worship  
12th Sunday



## From the Pastor....

"Be nice!" was my mother's go-to moral directive. If fighting with my sister's or brother, she'd order: Be nice. If I gossiped with a friend about a someone in class and she overheard the conversation, she'd sternly remind me: **Be nice**. When arguing about politics over family dinner, she'd implore: Be nice. Kindness was everything.

Years later, when I was in seminary, the esteemed Christian ethicist Stanley Hauerwas - known equally for being a pacifist and using profane language in lectures - regularly ridiculed "niceness" as the thin moral gruel of liberal Protestantism. Most church people, he claimed, had one major conviction: God is nice. "I mean, God is dying of niceness," he insisted to a journalist, "It is just awful. One of the reasons I don't think much about whether I curse is I'm just not interested in being nice." Among many things I learned in seminary, I learned that niceness didn't have much to do with the ethics of Jesus. Mom's dictum "be nice" seemed quaint, perhaps even embarrassing.

Kindness however, is actually a fairly complex human action - involving empathy and sympathy, the capacity to celebrate, accept, and serve others, and being both truthful and gentle. A recent book on kindness, [The War For Kindness](#) by Jamil Zaki, claims it is the

"ultimate soft skill in a hard world." My hope is that we are reaching toward a renewal of our life together, a rebirth of American community, and kindness might play a role in shaping it.

In one of my favorite musicals, *Into the Woods* there is a song called, *The Little Nightingale*. Part of the lyrics are: "You're so nice. You're not good, you're not bad, You're just nice." The end of that lyric which is important goes - "I'm just right, I'm the witch, you're the world." She's saying that everyone tries to be nice but that doesn't necessarily mean that they're good or right. She's advocating for doing the right thing even if it means it's not necessarily nice or even good. She goes on in the song, "You're all liars and thieves like his father. Like his son will be too, oh why bother? You'll just do what you do..." In other words, the world goes on being nice, trying to be good, but it doesn't mean they're ever going to be right.

There is a growing scientific consensus that kindness toward others is an important part of well-being and life satisfaction. Kindness lends stability to marriages. It increases our sense of generosity. Acting kindly makes one happier. Kindness improves heart health and positive emotions. Being nice to other people makes you nicer! The empathy and compassion that

*( continued on page two)*

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

(continued from page one)

spark kindness are necessary to imagining justice and developing courage to work for others through both protest and policy. Kindness isn't merely a sort of greeting card platitude - it is actually a skill and practice that enables us to thrive together.

Yet the world is hard, and kindness is

not easy. Even before COVID and social distancing, most Americans had more isolated lives and had fewer friends than generations past. Psychologists have cited a decline in empathy - along with a corresponding rise of narcissism in American society since 1979. All of this whittles away neighborliness and practices of kindness.

If nothing else, however, I can finally argue with Stanley Hauerwas: Nice is good. God is broken-hearted over the meanness that has shadowed our nation. God isn't dying of niceness, but we are certainly dying from its loss. So, don't call people names. Don't send mean tweets. Kindness is counter-cultural, a real revolution. Try it. Be nice.

~ Pastor Rob

### August 2025 Worship

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

August 3<sup>rd</sup>

Treasures in Heaven

First Reading Hosea 11:1-11

Psalm Psalm 107:1-9, 43

Second Reading Colossians 3:1-11

**\*Gospel Luke 12:13-21**

August 10<sup>th</sup>

A call to faithfulness

First Reading Isaiah 1:1, 10-20

Psalm Psalm 50:1-8, 22-23

**\*Second Reading Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16**

Gospel Luke 12:32-40

August 17<sup>th</sup>

A house divided

First Reading Isaiah 5:1-7

Psalm Psalm 80:1-2, 8-19

Second Reading Hebrews 11:29-12:2

**\*Gospel Luke 12:49-56**

August 24<sup>th</sup>

Restoration

First Reading Jeremiah 1:4-10

Psalm Psalm 71:1-6

Second Reading Hebrews 12:18-29

**Gospel Luke 13:10-17**



### FPC Church Elders

**2025** Adrienne Nagy, Andrew Stuart, and David Tees

**2026** Sharon Huge, Linda Parsons, Jane Woodrow, and Hugh Woods

**2027** Harvey Ballard, John King, Susan Loughridge, and Sandy Nesbitt

### FPC Board of Deacons

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

**2026** Helen King, Joyce Mullins, Harold Robison, Riley Smoot, and Ayse Suer

**2027** Carolyn Allen, Margaret Bourke, Bobbi Conliffe, Lois Harkins, and Carol Perry



## Windows ON: Welcome New Bell Choir Director Dr. Peter Haley

Please give a warm welcome to our new Bell Choir director, Dr. Peter Haley. Dr. Haley holds the Doctor of Musical Arts in Conducting from the University of South Carolina, as well as a B.A. in Music from Wingate University and an M.M. in Church Music from Samford University.

In addition to his new duties with First Presbyterian, Peter currently serves as Director of Choral Activities and Assistant Professor of Music at Ohio University, where he conducts the Ohio University Singers and Singing Men of Ohio and teaches course in conducting and music.

He has held leadership roles on the Executive Board of the Presbyterian Association of Musicians and the Southern Region Conference of the American Choral Directors Association.

You may already know Peter, his wife, Ashley and their children Patrick and Libby Kay as they are part of the FPC faith family.



### Need a ride to Church?

### Know someone who does?

Contact the Deacon of the Month

Mary Costello

Phone - 740-592-3444

Email - mbcostello@hotmail.com



In response, to the end of the PCUSA World Mission program, the Presbytery of Scioto Valley voted to hire mission partners Mark Hare and Jenny Bent as Transitional Global Mission Partners, serving at the Universidad Bíblica Latinoamericana (UBL) in San José, Costa Rica.

Mark is the youngest of five. His father Frank, a Presbyterian pastor, served in Appalachia in several capacities. His Mother Catherine, a retired educator of people with intellectual disabilities, is still active in the community church in

Amesville, Ohio. For twenty-five years Mark worked with World Mission in Nicaragua, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic, walking alongside rural families. He's passionate about regenerative agriculture and healing the land.

You can learn more about this ministry, and you can donate or pledge your support: <https://psvonline.org/global-mission-activities/>

**Windows ON: RALLY DAY**

Inevitably, at this time of year, I am asked by at least several people about the meaning of Rally Day.

When we advertise the beginning of the new Bible School year, we call the first Sunday, Rally Day. It is a

day set aside to reassemble or “rally” after the relatively quiet summer of vacations, camps, etc.

In many Protestant churches, Rally day marks the beginning of the church calendar year. It typically occurs in late August or early September early.

The customs associated with it vary quite a bit from parades and picnics to special church meetings where the theme for the coming year are presented.

At First, we use the Sunday just before Ohio University students return as our Rally Day. Together, we’ll celebrate and preview what’s ahead for this vibrant year of faith formation

On Sunday, August 24th we will be celebrating:

- Teacher Recognition
- Sunday School Class Overview
- Local and Global Mission Updates
- Program Year Overview
- Special Events Preview
- Bible Presentations

**AUGUST BIRTHDAYS**

1 – Marilyn Neason  
David Tees  
2 – Gayla Parks  
4 – Elliott Poore  
Bodie Stewart  
5 – Aubrey Hayborn  
Debbie Perry  
9 – Matthew Jagers  
10 – Les Cornwell  
11 – Terry Eiler  
12 – Patricia Frost  
13 – Aaron Wright  
16 – Flavius Mokake  
17 – Randy Longenecker  
Betty Lowe

19 – Jeff Butner  
Darlene Holtzmeier  
20 – Brandon Key  
21 – Liam Morgan  
Penny Shelton  
24 – Mike Sostarich  
25 – Terry Baxter-Potter  
Melanie Schori  
27 – Alexia Gyftopoulos  
29 – Holly Dahlman  
31 – Rachel Henderson Lawson

**AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES**

9 – Mike and Ellen Sostarich  
17 – Alan and Susanne Boyd  
Rob and Barb Martin  
Charlie and Gayla Parks  
David Tees and Melanie Schori  
19 – Guy and Linda Philips  
Judd and Kim Stephenson  
26 – Craig and Jean Seitz  
27 – Tim and Bethany Jagers  
28 – Ken and Theresa Kerr  
30 – Bob Stewart and Penny Shelton



## Christian Education News

### 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](mailto:barbaramartin729@msn.com) or phone the church office at 740-593-3351. Lesson plans and materials will be provided for all volunteer teachers.

### Women's Book Study

The Women's Book Study will be taking a summer break. We will restart on Fridays at noon via Zoom in September as we discuss *The Year of Living Biblically: One Man's Humble Quest to Follow the Bible as Literally as Possible* by A.J. Jacobs. For more information or to join, please contact Joan Nease at [christianed@athensfpc.org](mailto:christianed@athensfpc.org) or the church office at (740) 593-3351.

### Sunset Canoes Strouds Run State Park

**August 16th**

Mark your calendars for August 16th as we meet at the Strouds Run State Park Bobcat Shelter at 5:30 p.m. for our annual "Sunset Canoes" outing. We will rent canoes, paddles, and life jackets for those who need them or use your own. We will also rent a nine person pontoon boat available from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. for all to enjoy. Don't want to canoe? Bring a chair and hang out with friends and fellowship on dry land. Bring snacks and bug repellent. Contact the church office at (740) 593-3351 if you want to reserve a canoe. All ages and abilities welcome! Join us for fun, fellowship, and enjoy the beauty of Dow Lake.



### Rally Day 2025-Sunday, August 24th

Come celebrate and kick-off the 2025-2026 Christian Education year on Sunday, August 24th! Rally Day activities include the presentation of youth Bibles and the teacher recognition during the worship service at 10:30 a.m., Children's Church, classroom open house, and Fellowship Hour immediately following the worship service. Show your support for our teachers and Christian Education program by participating in this fun morning!

### Upcoming Events

*Sunset Canoes - August 16th @ 5:30 p.m.*

*Welcome Back Sunday/Rally Day - August 24th*



***Reminder: most schools begin this month  
ALWAYS stop when bus lights are flashing***





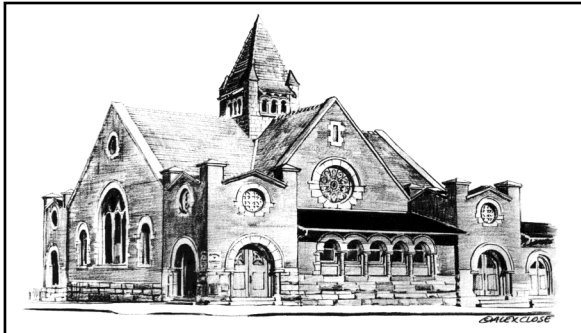
### Mission Workcamp 2025

Rev. Martin, John Hauser, John King, Carol Perry, and Debbie Perry spent the week of July 20th working on projects with the West Virginia Ministry of Advocacy and Workcamps in the Point Pleasant, West Virginia area. We used the Point Pleasant Presbyterian Church as our home base and are grateful for their hospitality. Two building projects were completed and we also assisted the Point Pleasant church with their school supply/backpack distribution event before heading back to Athens on Friday evening.



www.athensfpc.org

**AUGUST 2025**



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



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

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

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

**Office:** 9 North College Street

**Office Hours:** Monday - Friday - 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

**Clerk of Session:** Andrew Stuart

**Choir Director:** David M. Tadlock

**Organist:** Janice Robison

**CE Co-directors:** Richard and Joan Nease

**Bell Choir Director:** Peter Haley

**Administrative Assistant:** Debbie Perry

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

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**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")

**September 2025 Newsletter Deadline**  
**Friday, August 25th**

**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 Ibera 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.