



The Messenger

News from “The Friendly Church in the Heart of the Park”

September 2021

FIRESTONE PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

“To grow in spirit and make Christ known...”

“I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. (Isaiah 43:19)

At the August Session Meeting, the Session decided that we would continue to share in a single worship each Sunday with the Allenside Church. We will continue to meet at the Firestone Park Church on the 2nd and 4th Sundays and at the Allenside Church on the 1st and 3rd Sundays (5th Sundays will alternate between both buildings).

The Session thoughtfully and seriously discussed this issue before coming to their decision. The Allenside Session also carefully considered this issue, and they made the same decision as the Firestone Park Session. Both Sessions discussed the pro’s and con’s of continuing to worship together. Here are some of the topics and comments that were shared at the meetings.

Worship is more meaningful to people when they share it with the members of both congregations. We have large sanctuaries that were designed for more people in worship. Having fewer people in larger sanctuaries isn’t conducive to the most effective worship.

We’re worshipping together, and at the same time we’re maintaining our individual identities as congregations. We don’t want to lose our identities as congregations. Each church has a wonderful history of activities and missions, and we want to continue those things. Session members at both churches commented that during our experiment with combined worship, we’ve shown that we can worship together and still maintain our individual identities as congregations. The traditional activities and missions of each church have continued as usual (at least as much “as usual” as the pandemic has allowed!).

Both Sessions acknowledged that, for some members, there is a fear that worshipping together means that we are “merging.” Elder Hal Horton, our liaison from the Eastminster Presbytery Committee on Ministry, attended the August Session Meetings at both churches, and he shared some of the research he has done about how other presbyteries are addressing the issue of declining church membership. He talked about his contact with other presbyteries, and in many cases, the other presbyteries are advising churches against mergers because they aren’t effective. One presbytery has decided to no longer approve church mergers in their presbytery. Instead, they encourage sharing among congregations, and that’s what we are attempting to do. We aren’t changing the activities and missions of each congregation, although we are inviting folks from Allenside Church to participate in our activities and missions if they would like, and they are inviting us to do the same. One Session member put it this way: “I would prefer to worship in my own church building every week. But I realize that our churches need each other in worship. We need to be together to create a meaningful worship service.”

We’re doing a “new thing,” and we’re hoping that it will make us more able to do God’s will in our community. Within the Akron-area Presbyterian Churches, we’re becoming known as leaders for breaking new ground and being innovative in addressing how to be the church in today’s world. One additional benefit to having a single, combined worship service each Sunday is that the church leaders and I, since we are planning just one worship service each week, have extra time to explore new ways to work in our communities and to serve God faithfully.

Thank you to all of you for continuing to support our congregation as we adapt and change in response to the changes occurring all around us.

Blessings,
Francie

FPPC FINANCIAL REPORT

As of July 30, 2021

Our General Fund Income and Expense through July 30th is as follows:

	Total Income	Total Expense
As of Apr 30	\$45,819	\$23,935
May 31	\$8,125	\$4,370
June 30	\$6,896	\$8,476
July 31	\$7,235	\$4,286
YTD	\$68,074	\$41,065

Per capita for 2021 is \$32.00 per person.
Please notate your check "per capita".

As of July 31st, we have \$102,987.26 in the bank, of which \$83,723.40 is available in the General Fund.

Per Capita this year is \$32 per member. Please mark the memo line of your check. Thanks to those of you who have already paid your Per Capita.

Sherry Priest, Treasurer

WOMEN'S GUILD OF ALLENSIDE CHURCH

Submitted by Kim Birk

On Tuesday September 21st, the Women's Guild of Allenside Church will be having their monthly meeting at the Community Center in my allotment (Danbury Glen) at 440 Leighfield Lane, Hartville, 44632. We will have our meeting at 11:00 AM followed by lunch at noon. Barbara Graham has graciously offered her van to anyone that needs a ride, she will be meeting at the church at 10:30 AM. Please RSVP to me by September 17th. My home phone number is 330-877-6675 or my cell number is 330-603-4277. Thank you!

The deadline for October Messenger submissions will be **September 15**. If you think you will need extra time, please let Amy know (including expected length - full page, half-page, etc.) by **September 15** so that she can leave room for your submission. In order to avoid last-minute revisions, anything received after this date without prior notification will be included in the September Messenger.

BOOK CLUB FOR SEPTEMBER

Submitted by Kitty Johnson

Hello fellow readers! Hopefully, you have enjoyed some good books this summer and are ready to discuss a recent one that should be of interest, regardless of whether you have dug into your family history or not. **The Lost Family** by Libby Copeland, published in 2020, “explores the culture of genealogy, the science of DNA, and the business of companies like Ancestry and 23andMe, all while tracing the story of one woman, her unusual results, and a relentless methodical drive for answers that becomes a thoroughly modern genetic detective story.” According to *The Washington Post*, the book reads like “an Agatha Christie mystery and wrestles with some of the biggest questions in life: **Who are we? What is Family? Are we defined by nature, nurture, or both?** *The New York Times* writes, “Before you spit in that vial, read this book.”

Hopefully, this topical non-fiction book sounds like one you would enjoy reading and then discussing via Zoom on **Sunday, September 26th, at 6:30 pm**. Discussion questions will be distributed prior to the meeting, so please let Kitty Johnson know if you will be attending. All are welcome!

MOSES Fall Bible Study Mondays, 9/20-10/25 7:00 p.m. Zoom or Room 14

Adam Hamilton traces Moses’ spiritual and physical journey in his DVD study, *Moses In the Footsteps of a Reluctant Prophet*. While challenging us to consider the moral questions that Moses’ story raises, Hamilton also tantalizes us with beautiful pictures and tidbits about Egyptian history.

The study begins at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, September 20 and continues for the following five Mondays. There are two choices for participation: Zoom or in person in Room 14. The cost for the book is \$12.00. A Kindle version is also available. Please let Karen Babri or the church office know if you need a book.

Moses Trivia

1. Were Moses and King Tut contemporaries?
2. Did Moses or the great pyramids come first?
3. Was Moses’ father-in-law a monotheist or a polytheist?

Answers provided at the Bible study.

NEW ACME CASH BACK PROGRAM

Submitted by Kitty Johnson

Calling all Acme shoppers! A new Community Cash Back Program began on **August 5, 2021** and will end on **December 25, 2021**, so please begin saving your cash register receipts, which offers us another opportunity to support our friend Rev. Bill Yoder in Thailand. More specifically, our earnings from the program will go toward scholarships for deserving students at McGilvary College of Divinity in Payap, Thailand. Despite COVID last year, we were able to send **\$324.24** from the program and contributions thanks to your participation.

Once again this year we will dedicate our earnings to students at McGilvary, who are studying in order to spread God's word and love in Thailand and in other areas of Southeast Asia. The seminary students are all on scholarship support of some amounts, many of them receiving complete support since they come from poor rural areas and tribal groups. Their tuition is made possible by our support of McGilvary and the support of other caring people and churches.

As in past years, we will earn **5%** on the following store brands: **Acme, Food Club, Simply Done, Top Care, Paws, Wide Awake Coffee Co., Sweet P's, Full Circle, Over the Top, Cape Covelle, Pure Harmony, That's Smart, and Crav'n.**

Please begin saving your Acme register receipts beginning August 5th. There will be the typical Acme grocery bags for collection of your receipts at the northeast entrance to the sanctuary and in the hall by the offices. And, please invite your family and friends to save their receipts for you too. That way we have not only more participation and earnings but also a way to let others know of the mission of our church and how they are helping us to help others.

Thanks Acme shoppers for supporting one of our special global missions.

Your Mission Committee

PEACEMAKING OFFERING

Submitted by Karen Babri

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." Matthew 6:9 NRSV

Each day we are faced with news of war, violence, racism and hatred. Many times we feel disheartened and powerless in face of this human suffering. We wonder what we can do to alleviate the suffering. We puzzle over how we can help. PC(USA) provides us an opportunity to help. It sponsors the annual Peacemaking Offering to raise money to support peacemaking efforts. Over the month of September there will be bulletin inserts to describe some of the peacemaking projects sponsored by PC(USA). Our congregation gets to determine how some of our offerings will be directed. Our portion goes to the National Evangelical Synod of Lebanon and Syria which sponsors schools for Syrian refugee children in Lebanon. The offering will be dedicated on Worldwide Communion Sunday on October 3. Please prayerfully consider your donation.

COMMUNITY BLESSING BOX
“Take what you need, Leave what you can”
Submitted by Jona Rohrs

What a blessing our Community Blessing Box has become. I have been at the church and have witnessed firsthand church members, friends, and neighbors placing items in the Blessing Box. Likewise, I have watched those in need, take items so they can eat that day or do their laundry. Our little white box is becoming known throughout the community. It's giving joy to those who give and those who receive.

We can always use anything and everything especially paper and health products not covered by food stamps. Below are suggested items.

Cereal	Pancake Mix	Syrup
Chef Boyardee Ravioli, etc.	Peanut Butter	Jelly
Oatmeal	Baby Cereal	Baby Food
Jiffy Mix	Graham Crackers	Crackers
Applesauce (jar/individual)	Fruit (can/individual)	Jello
Mac-n-Cheese (box/individual)	Baked Beans	Spaghetti O's
Chef Boyardee Pizza Mix	Instant Potatoes	Gravy
Dried Milk	Vienna Sausages	Pork-n-Beans
Bisquick	Juice	Spaghetti Noodles/Sauce
Canned Tuna/Chicken/Turkey	Canned Vegetables – all	Beef Stew
Toilet Paper	Kleenex	Toothpaste/brushes
Bars of Soap	Dish Soap	Laundry Detergent
Deodorant	Feminine Hygiene Products	Shampoo

The second and fourth Sunday of the month worship is at Firestone Park. If you would like to donate, you can bring your items then. Totes are located outside of Rev. Francie office or you can leave your items at the back of the church. Monetary donations are always welcome.

As always, thank you for your continued support.

“If you can't feed a hundred people, then feed just one.” – Mother Teresa.

To my wonderful church friends

thank you so very much for the many beautiful cards you have sent me with the uplifting words. They put a smile on my face with every card I still have back pain and I'm getting an MRI next Saturday. I hope they find the cause.

Also thanks for the many prayers. I hope someday soon I can see all of you church

Thanks again
Sally

FIRESTONE PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE



Rev. Francie visits with Principal Lynnette Stevens (left) and Dean of Students Jessica Holler (right).

Rev. Francie, Chris & Frank Tilenni, and Jona Rohrs attended the Open House at Firestone Park Elementary School on Tuesday, August 24. We had the opportunity to visit with Principal Lynnette Stevens and Dean of Students Jessica Holler, who are both beginning their first year at Firestone Park Elementary after Mrs. Jones retired as Principal and Ms. Curry, the former Dean of Students, accepted another position.

We look forward to working with the school, and we're getting input from Ms. Stevens and Mrs. Holler about ways that we can best help the school. We began our support of the school this year by purchasing ice cream treats for the children and parents who attended the Open House.

We are currently collecting school supplies. Please bring your school supplies to the church and put them at the back of the sanctuary.

If you're interested in helping with projects to support the school, please contact Chris Tilenni or Jona Rohrs.

SEPTEMBER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

(all worship services except September 12 begin at 10:30 AM at building or on Zoom)

September 5 – at Firestone Park

September 12, 10:00 AM – Outdoor Worship, Tadmor Pavilion, 3000 Krebs Dr, Akron, OH 44319 – Pet Blessing Service. Bring your pets (or pictures of your pets), as the North Springfield and New Covenant Community Churches join us for worship, Communion, and a picnic after worship; Zoom access will be available for those who cannot attend in person.

September 19 – at Allenside

September 26 – at Firestone Park

NEW FACILITIES COMMITTEE

At the August Session meeting, the Session approved the creation of a new committee – the Facilities Committee. This new committee will deal with large facilities-related projects, and they are currently dealing with replacing broken windows, scraping/painting/caulking all the sanctuary windows, trimming the trees that surround the church building, and making updates in the sanctuary to support our Zoom worship. Julie Barden is the moderator of the committee, and the members are Arlene Hukill, Carol Jones, Don Amtsberg, and Rev. Francie. If anyone is interested in joining in this work, please contact Julie Barden.

The “Building and Grounds” Committee (led by Chris Tilenni) will continue to handle all the day-to-day maintenance of our building and grounds.

TRANSITIONING AWAY FROM HAVING DEACONS

At last year’s Special Congregational Meeting to elect church officers, the congregation voted to amend our church bylaws to eliminate the Board of Deacons. We did not elect any new deacons for 2021, and the remaining four deacons (Kitty Johnson, Laura Ereth, Larry Shaw and Erica Shaw) have met monthly with Rev. Francie to plan how the activities previously handled by the deacons will be handled now. The Session approved the following recommendations about how the activities will be handled:

- Prayer List - coordinated through the Church Office by Amy, our Office Administrator
- Community Involvement through the Firestone Park Churches Group – handled by Rev. Francie and Lynda Dobbins
- Congregational Care/Visitation – Diane Cox will continue sending cards, and Lynda Dobbins will continue leading/participating in home visits/communions; we are looking for someone to oversee this area
- Fellowship/Kitchen - led by Laura Ereth, Megan Ereth
- Mission – will continue to have a committee, currently led by Kitty Johnson
- Book Club and Wednesdays With Wanda – will continue to be self-supporting groups

Elder Deb Rutan will be the Session liaison for Mission, Fellowship/Kitchen, Congregational Care/Visitation, Book Club, Wednesdays With Wanda, and Book Club

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY

Mark your calendars – the annual Christmas Party will be held on Sunday, December 12, 4:00 – 6:00 PM. This year the party will be held at Guy’s Party Center, 500 E. Waterloo Road. We’ll have dinner, music from the Madrigals, and our annual visit from Santa.