



The Messenger

News from "The Friendly Church in the Heart of the Park"

November 2020

FIRESTONE PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
"To grow in spirit and make Christ known..."

... be content with what you have; for God has said, "I will never leave you or forsake you." So, we can say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?" Hebrews 13:5-6

This year we've "lost" a lot things we take for granted. But have you noticed that there's something inside of us that looks for blessings? We were made by God to express gratitude, and see good things, even while struggling with difficulties. A.A. Milne, the author of Winnie the Pooh, wrote, "Piglet noticed that even though he had a very small heart, it could hold a rather large amount of gratitude." We've all been given hearts that can hold a large amount of gratitude.

I find that I'm more aware of the beauty of nature, I'm more grateful for my home, and I'm more mindful of the little ways that God brings joy and peace and hope into my life. I've learned in new ways this year to "be content with what [I] have."

The scriptures make numerous references to the need for thanksgiving – for acknowledging the blessings that God has given us. In Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians, he says, "give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." It's important to note that we are to give thanks "in" all circumstances, not necessarily "for" all circumstances. When our circumstances are filled with problems, we can thank God for walking with us, for giving us the strength to move forward despite the strain.

Thanksgiving may be different for us this year, but may we still take time to give thanks to God for loving us and caring for us. May we fill our hearts with a large amount of gratitude.

Blessings,
Francie

Thank you to everyone who donated school supplies to Firestone Park Elementary. We had a great response, and the supplies have been delivered!



FPPC FINANCIAL REPORT

As of September 30, 2020

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

	Total Income	Total Expense
As of June 30	\$52,060	\$29,241
July 31	\$3,102	\$3,923
Aug 31	\$13,804	\$5,204
Sept 30	\$5,137	\$3,331
YTD	\$74,102	\$42,139

In September, we were fortunate enough to receive a \$4500 COVID Grant from PCUSA. This money is to be used for operating expenses, and was deposited directly into our General Fund. Unfortunately, Elaine Izzi, who does all of our deposits has had several family emergencies, as well as a death in her family, and was not able to make any deposits in September. If your check has not yet cleared the bank, please be patient. We are working to remedy this situation.

As of September 30, we have \$70,248.04 in the bank, of which \$58,848.11 is available in the General Fund.

Sherry Priest, Treasurer

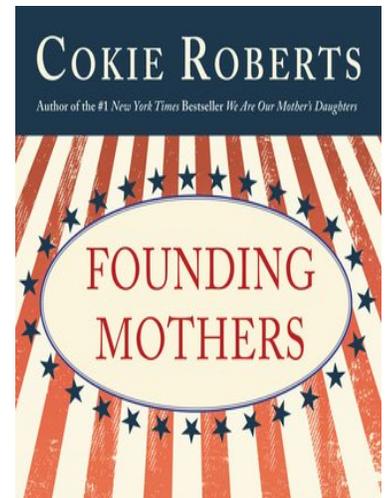
NOVEMBER BOOK CLUB

Submitted by Karen Babri

Founding Mothers by Cokie Roberts

In honor of 2020 being the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage in the U.S., the November book club selection is *Founding Mothers, The Women Who Raised a Nation* by Cokie Roberts. This book brings to light the lives of women who were influential during the Revolutionary War and early years of the American republic. Among the women who are featured in this book are Abigail Adams, Martha Washington, Deborah Read Franklin, Phyllis Wheatley and Eliza Pinckney.

Everyone is welcome to join the discussion via Zoom at 6:30 p.m. on Sunday, November 22. Karen Babri will facilitate the discussion.



Due to the crowds expected on election day, during the week of November 1 Amy will be working on Monday instead of Tuesday.

ACME SHOPPERS

Submitted by Kitty Johnson

More than two months are already “in the books” for this year’s Acme Cash Back Program. If you are attending Sunday services at the church, please remember to bring your register receipts and place them in one of the Acme bags. If you are at home for the time being, please continue to accumulate your receipts. This year’s program will end on December 26th.



This is our longest-running mission program, with our participation now more than 12 years. Most of these years we have supported the students at McGilvary College in Payap, Thailand, through our long-time covenant partner, Rev. Bill Yoder, who has taught there for many years. It was Bill who was instrumental in starting a Master of Divinity program at McGilvary, and it is those students whom we now support with our earnings from the Acme program each year. The graduates go on to spread God’s love in various ways both in Thailand and in other countries in Southeast Asia.

So, you see, our contributions, along with those of others, are important in providing the much-needed scholarships for the students at McGilvary College of Divinity, who would otherwise not be able to attend. Thank you from the Mission Committee for caring for those students through your participation.



To our FPPC Family,

Frank and I would like to thank everyone that came out, sent cards or gifts, and most importantly celebrated with us on our 40th anniversary. As difficult as this year has been, there have been some grateful moments. We have missed worshipping with our church family weekly. We were getting a little depressed at the thought of losing our party and trip. But as always, God works it out. We started our journey 40 years ago at FPPC and we love that we continue to do so. Thank you all for celebrating with us.

With much love, Chris and Frank

I want to thank everyone who sent Get-Well cards, thoughts & prayers during my recent knee surgery & an extra trip to the E.D. on Thursday. Feeling much better now, and hope to be back in church in a few weeks.

Laura Ereth

Special Congregational Meeting – November 8

The Firestone Park Church will have a special congregational meeting following the worship service on Sunday, November 8, 2020, to elect officers and approve a change to the by-laws to phase out the Board of Deacons by 2022.

The status of the current Board of Deacons:

- Lynda/Larry Dobbins – terms expire at the end of 2020
- Larry/Erica Shaw and Kitty Johnson – terms expire at the end of 2021
- Laura Ereth – term expires at the end of 2022

Finding leadership is more and more challenging; going forward FPPC will need access to more leaders to be involved in the strategy work. This has been discussed and approved by Board of Deacons Moderator Lynda Dobbins, Mission Committee Moderator Kitty Johnson and Nominating Committee members Judy Abdallah, Erica Shaw and Don Pucak who all support the idea. The proposal is as follows:

- No new deacons will be elected this year to replace Lynda/Larry Dobbins.
- In 2021, when the Board of Deacons will have 4 people, Rev. Francie will act as moderator.
- In 2021 a “Congregational/Community Care” committee similar to the Mission Committee will be

formed. A Session member will work with both these committees to create a connection between the committees and Session.

- In 2022 the Board of Deacons will be disbanded. A member of Session will be established as a liaison for the Mission and Congregational/Community Care committees.

Plans for Christmas Eve

The Session is considering options for our Christmas Eve Service this year. This is a difficult year for planning the Christmas Eve service. Many of us have strong emotions surrounding our expectations for the Christmas Eve Service, and no matter how carefully we plan the service this year, some of our expectations won't be met. I ask that we all remember that the most important expectation for a Christmas Eve service is that we celebrate the birth of our Savior in whatever way we can, even if it is different from the past. God didn't set any specific expectations on those who came to worship the baby Jesus on that first Christmas – from shepherds to kings, they did what they could do. They weren't bound by the need to worship the way they had always done it in the past. Whatever is decided, it will look differently from prior years. Watch for updates in the weekly e-blasts and the December newsletter.

No Christmas Party This Year

I'm very sorry to tell you that we won't be having our Christmas Party this year. I can't figure out a way to have the party that would be safe. I'm still working on ideas to do something different, and I'll keep you posted. I going to miss the fun of the party, and next year will be the best party ever! Rev. Francie

Thank You!

Thank you for the cards and gifts you gave me as part of Pastor Appreciation Month! It is an honor and delight to share in ministry with all of you, and during this strange and difficult year it was very loving and kind of you to be so encouraging of me. Thank you for making me feel special! And ... I love the helmet you gave me to protect me from military gun salutes for veterans at funerals. I really had no idea that they shot blanks (I thought they were real bullets), and that's why I was concerned that someone might get hurt during the salute!

Change to the Processing of Donations

Effective October 27, 2020, we made a change to the processing of donations. The depositing of checks and cash will be done out of the church office. All other processing of donations – communicating designated giving, documenting donation records for each contributor, etc. – will continue to be handled by Elaine Izzi, Financial Secretary. All questions regarding donations should be directed to her.

As a result of this change, we plan to deposit donations on Tuesday of each week.

Donations should be sent to the church, not to Elaine's home, in order to allow for timely deposits.

Bible Study: The Marks of Spiritual Vitality

Our Bible study is continuing in November, led by Rev. Francie on Thursdays via Zoom. The class is held at two different times on Thursdays – at 3:00 pm and at 6:30 pm (the same class is offered at both times).

The study focuses on the Biblical sources for the Seven Marks of Vital Congregations.

Dates and topics for the studies are:

November 5 - Sharing (Mark 2: Intentional Authentic Evangelism)

November 12 - Partnering (Mark 3: Outward Incarnational Focus)

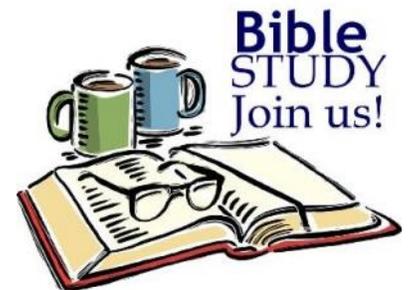
November 19 & 26 – Thanksgiving Break

December 3 - Serving (Mark 4: Empowering Servant Leadership)

December 10 - Enjoying God (Mark 5: Spirit-Inspired Worship)

January date to be decided - Caring (Mark 6: Caring Relationships)

January date to be decided - Connecting (Mark 7: Ecclesial Health)



Office Administrator Position at the Allenside Church

The Allenside Church will be hiring an Office Administrator due to the sad and unexpected loss of Mick Duvall. Carolyn Duvall looks forward to continuing to serve the Allenside Church devotedly as a member and volunteer (and a dear friend to all of us), but she does not want to take on the role that Mick filled so faithfully. The Office Administrator will handle the office work, publish the newsletter, and assist with scheduling and be present when building maintenance vendors are at the building as needed. The position involves two 3-hour days per week in the office – the hours can be worked at any business hours, but once the hours are chosen they must remain the same unless a change is agreed to by the Session. Preference will be given to candidates who are not members of the church. If you know of anyone who is interested in the position, please have them contact Rev. Francie.

Swiss Steak Available for Purchase

The Allenside Church had hoped to hold a swiss steak dinner this year, but it's not possible to do so. They have swiss steak meat that was purchased for the dinner, so they are offering the frozen meat to anyone who would like it at the same cost they paid for it. The meat is in 5 pound packages (it's cut into 3 steaks per pound), and you can purchase a 5-pound package for \$20. Please contact Barb Graham (330-690-2025 cell; 330-745-2242 home; balaba@att.net email) if you are interested in buying one or more packages.

SOUTH STREET MINISTRIES/FRONT PORCH CAFÉ

Submitted by Kitty Johnson

As you know, for the past several years we have supported Front Porch Café as part of South Street Ministries and have seen the development of programs and the restaurant. Most recently, during COVID, we have provided masks and donated our portion of the Pentecost Offering (over \$200) plus \$200 from the Memorial Fund that was designated for the Front Porch Café by Suzy Pucak. Joe Tucker, Director of South Street Ministries, has been most grateful and has requested ongoing prayers for them as they work to provide for and to support many in South Akron through their various programs. Below are some of Joe's comments from a recent newsletter:

"Whether we can be present in person or only online, when a pandemic keeps us socially distanced longer than we'd like, I am deeply grateful we are together, always, in spirit. Your prayers and support for South Street Ministries mean we're still loving our neighbors, still making a difference for the Kingdom, still enriching kids in our communities, still reaching out with the love of Christ. Through it all, you're there with us, and I am so honored that you are. ...know that you are part of the renewal and restoration taking place in Summit Lake and South Akron – and that we appreciate you for being you!"

In another article in the newsletter, Joe writes specifically of the **Front Porch** as follows:

"I am excited to share that the Front Porch is slowly re-opening! We have taken the utmost care and intention to ensure safety and distancing within the Front Porch in light of the pandemic. Very soon, select recovery groups and a revised Reentry Support group will begin to reconvene in limited numbers. Front Porch building partners – such as Faith Servants and the Kingdom Leadership Alliance – are also planning a return to programming and services under limited attendance conditions, mask-wearing, and other best practices.

Additionally, we are choosing to keep our **Front Porch Café** "paused" for the time being. We recognize that restaurants will never be the same again, so we are striving to prayerfully plan through the next chapter of the Café since it is a place of gathering, a hub of connection, a center for workforce development, a profitable social enterprise and, ultimately, a piece of God's Kingdom here on Earth as it is in Heaven!

Please continue to pray for vision and provision, for the next iteration of the Front Porch Café. Thank you!"

To keep apprised of South Street Ministries and the Front Porch, please go to **southstreetministries.org**, where you can learn more about this special local mission we support.

FPPC Mission Committee



FPPC Reaches Out to Help Families In the Firestone Park Elementary School

Submitted by Lynda Dobbins

In speaking to the counselor at the Elementary School, we were given two families that could use some extra help this Holiday Season. Because of the COVID19 we will list the items in this article and ask that you call (234-209-9801) or email Lynda Dobbins (Lynda944@aol.com) and let her know with what items you are able to help...

Family A – a single mom with 3 children. She just lost her mother this summer to cancer and is now unable to work with her children doing virtual school from home.

NEEDS

Boy(11) Long Sleeve Shirts(Size 14-16)
Socks(Shoe Size Boy 6)

Boy(9) Long Sleeve Shirts(Size 14-16 Husky)
Long Pants(Size 14-16 Husky)

Girl(5) Princess Costumes(Size 6-7)

MOM Bath Towels(Gray)

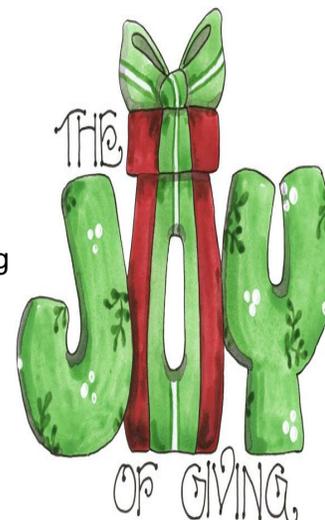
WANTS

Slime Lab or Science Kit

Building Blocks or Magnets
Board Games(EX: Monopoly)
Barbie Doll or Kids Make Up
Barbie Car
Bath & Body(Any Fragrance)

Family B – Single Mom with 5 children trying to work and manage children doing virtual learning

<p>Boy(15) Socks(Shoe Size 8) or T-Shirts(Adult M) Sweat Pants(Adult M)</p> <p>Boy(13) Socks(Shoe 10.5) or T-Shirts(Adult S) Sweat Pants(Adult S)</p> <p>Girl(10) Socks(Shoe Size 6.5) or T-shirts(Adult S) Sweat Pants(Jr S)</p> <p>Girl(7) Socks(Shoe Size 3) or T-shirts(Size 10) Sweatpants(Size 10)</p> <p>Boy(6) Socks(Shoe Size 5/6) or T-shirts(10) Sweat Pants(10)</p> <p>MOM Socks(Shoe Size 8) Basic Kitchen Utensils</p>	<p>Books (Hunger Games Series)</p> <p>Batteries(AA) or Head Phones X Box Speakers Barbie Head (Hair/Make Up) Nail Polish items Barbie Doll Barbie Clothes Dinosaurs or Fire Trucks</p> <p>Bath & Body</p>
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Because of COVID19 we will not be gathering to wrap gifts. If you can wrap them and put a sticky note on the package as to FAMILY and BOY or GIRL and AGE Lynda and her committee will put the name tags on before the family comes to pick up their items. If you need help with wrapping, let Lynda know and we will help with that task.

We also plan to supply each family with Christmas Dinner items and at least one extra pasta meal. Call or Email Lynda and let her know what items below you might be able to help...

- A. Christmas Meal items needed for each family include: Potatoes(5 Lbs), Green Beans, Stuffing, Dinner Rolls, Frozen Pie. Turkeys are already taken care of.
- B. Pasta Meal items needed for each family include: Spaghetti Noodles, Large Jar of Sauce, Garlic Bread, Lettuce, Italian Dressing, Brownie Mix.
- C. We will be collecting paper and cleaning products during the first few weeks of November. These are items that families cannot buy using food stamps. We need toilet paper, paper towels, napkins, soap, dish soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, laundry soap, fabric softeners etc.

If you want to participate but can't do the shopping, we have members that will help us in that task. Send a check to the church marking in the MEMO Line: Christmas Families. We have some Santa's Elves that will do the shopping for you with merriment.

Thank You in advance for helping to make Christmas a little brighter for these two families this year. May your holiday be extra special for reaching out and making a difference for others.