Dear Friends,

With all the social distancing we have had to do these past five months, we can give thanks that the weather in northeast Ohio has been so beautiful! Karolyn and I have spent most weekends biking along the wonderful rails-to-trails that run across this part of our state. I hope you have been able to be out in nature yourselves.

The burning issue of the summer has been the overwhelming response in solidarity with our sisters and brothers of color following the police killing of George Floyd at the end of May. The community of Wooster and members of our congregation have gotten involved in record numbers. The Juneteenth March for Black Lives Matter led by the local chapter of the NAACP brought more than 500 people down to the square for an inspiring evening of support.

For the last sixty days and counting, a group has gathered on the square every day from 12 noon until one. On Sundays, the gathering is from 10:30 to noon for people of faith and features prayers and uplifting readings. This past Sunday, we had a good representation from First Pres. I encourage all of you to consider joining these opportunities to demonstrate our faith and commitment to racial justice.

At the July Session Meeting, our Session voted to put up banners on our property adjacent to Beall Avenue advocating our church’s stance on Black Lives Matter, full inclusion of LGBTQ+ persons, Earth Care, and our participation in the Matthew 25 movement. Session decided that we needed to show our witness and stance on these matters of justice to our local community.

The work of righting the historical wrongs of racial injustice in America that continues to this day is a communal as well as an individual process. White privilege is something we must recognize in ourselves and in society. As people of faith, we need to work for racial justice before we can proceed with racial reconciliation. Desmond Tutu put it this way, “If you are neutral in situations of injustice you have chosen the side of the oppressor.” The time is now to make systemic changes. Here are links to inspiring and challenging sermons preached at the Washington National Cathedral in the past two months: https://youtu.be/JZzl_HKwKUB (Rev. Randolph Marshall Hollerith, Dean of Washington National Cathedral) and https://youtu.be/82RTNaG3JHI (David Brooks). I hope you will enjoy them.

This anonymous quote recently came into my inbox and pointedly speaks to the commonly heard retort that “All Lives Matter”: “I say ‘Black Lives Matter’ because ‘all’ didn’t cover Black when they said ‘All men are created equal.’ I say ‘Black Lives Matter’ because ‘all’ didn’t cover Black when they said ‘With liberty and justice for all.’ I say ‘Black Lives Matter’ because they’re still struggling with the definition of ‘all.’”

Blessings and Peace,
David
A Reflection on the BLM Protests in Columbus
Submitted by: Noah Leonard

Noah Leonard is a rising sophomore at the College of Wooster and the newest member of our congregation.

To start, I am a student at The College of Wooster. I study Political Science and Spanish and live in Upper Sandusky, which is about forty-five minutes North of Columbus in a city that is a little bit smaller than Wooster. I decided to attend several Black Lives Matter protests, including the protests in Columbus. It was interesting to see the differences between some of the urban and rural protests. I cannot overstate how vital both settings are; to combat racism, it is essential to raise awareness anywhere and everywhere.

The most noticeable difference between the Columbus protests and the rural protests was the difference in opposition. In Columbus, I did not see any counter-protestors; the police were the biggest opposition. The Columbus Police Department shut down a few medical stations at the protest, and the police used force to disperse the crowds throughout the weeks of protests. The days that I went, the police did not do anything aggressive. The first day I went to Columbus was on June 3rd, and the entire day was moving. The first several hours of protest were led in part by local churches. The churches set up medical stations passed out masks for free and led chants and prayer in the crowd. As more and more people started to show up, other people and groups started to lead the protest, the NAACP in Columbus and other racial justice groups helped organize the protests. All the protesters marched through downtown Columbus to the Columbus police department headquarters to protest racial injustice. After some time had passed, we walked our way back through the streets to the statehouse, where one of the speakers said something that I think is extremely important. The young woman who was leading the protest gave a speech about how protesting in the commercial and political downtown was great for media coverage and putting pressure on political officials to address racial issues, but that this movement needed to be about people; she said the protests needed to go to the places that do not get on the news, the places where people feel forgotten. After her speech, the protestors took a long walk to the poorest parts of the city, where we cried out that Black Lives Matter. It felt powerful and incredibly moving to see people leave their houses to chant in solidarity or to see people leave their homes to join us. We doubled our numbers and took back a massive amount of people to the state capitol. It was getting late, and the group that I went with decided to leave about an hour before curfew started.

The young woman who spoke about taking the protests to where they were needed most resonated with me; she unknowingly convinced me to attend more local rallies. I knew many young people who were commuting to Columbus to protest, but it occurred to me that the anti-racist movement needed to go to places where there is no dialogue about racism. People in small towns and less urban settings need to see that people everywhere stand against racism. I encouraged everyone I knew to attend the locally organized protests and I was excited to protest closer to home. Upper Sandusky is a small white majority city, and it is easy for its white citizens to never think about racism. If things are ever going to change, it means that this dialogue around racism
In Upper Sandusky across the street from our protest stood about a dozen men with semi-automatic weapons (often pointed at us), body armor, and angry signs. It was scary to see all those armed people in response to a peaceful, unarmed protest that consisted of around 100 people. There were more police in response to the Bucyrus, OH protest than at the Columbus protest. When I arrived early in the protest in Bucyrus, I was surprised to see state highway patrol, sheriffs, Bucyrus city police, and the police of a neighboring city. Police surrounded the entire area of the protest. Once again, we were met by counter-protesters with guns who would stand behind us and aim their weapons into peaceful crowds. The people who organized the Bucyrus protest organized it so that we could walk on the street for a planned march through the city with the proper permits and permission. Random individuals aimed their weapons at us while we walked through the street. The police did nothing to deter the threatening counter-protestors. As the protest continued despite the opposition, a group of pickup trucks flying confederate flags, blue lives matter flags, and Trump flags drove by us and blared their engines while yelling things like “race traitors.” Even as I was leaving, I was harassed by a lady who started screaming at me while I walked to my car.

Although the counter-protesting was at times terrifying, I left the protests feeling renewed because for every one person being hateful or threatening, there were three or four people or cars who would honk and wave in support. The protests had great turnouts, and it was wonderful to see people in all these rural communities standing up against racism. To make real change, we cannot let up. Racist sentiments will not disappear in one week, and if all these people protest once and then never think about the topic again then it is all just performative. Performance does not lead to change. Instead, we need real dialogue about racism and to keep the conversation going in places like Upper Sandusky, Bucyrus, and Wooster, OH.
Here is a special opportunity offered by a friend and seminary colleague of mine who is living and teaching in England. Meda will also be preaching for us on August 16. Enjoy! – David

In exchange for donations to the Equal Justice Initiative, I am offering online performances of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) for any group of any size who would like to experience these teachings of Jesus with me. This text offers a guide to the life of love of Jesus and his followers, but non-Christians may also be interested in it. Martin Luther King Jr., Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Dorothy Day, Mahatma Gandhi, and countless others across the centuries have been inspired by the Sermon on the Mount in their struggles against racism, fascism, social injustice, and oppression, and these teachings offer wisdom, courage, and comfort to us now as they call us to strive for the perfect wholeness of love in ourselves, our communities, and the world.
The Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) is committed “to ending mass incarceration and excessive punishment in the United States, to challenging racial and economic injustice, and to protecting basic human rights for the most vulnerable people in American society.” EJI’s founder and executive director, Bryan Stevenson, has written a wonderful book, Just Mercy, which has also been made into a film. He has also done a TED talk and many interviews, and he appears in the film 13th. All of these are good ways to learn about the injustices EJI works to correct and to see the hopefulness with which they do it. I am offering this experience of the Sermon on the Mount -- with its freeing, hopeful call to love fully -- in exchange for donations of any size to the hopeful work of love that EJI is doing.

The performance takes about 20 minutes. For groups with whom I have shared this so far, I have begun with a time of stilling our bodies and minds to become present in the moment and present to God so that we come to the text together as a time of prayer. I find this a fruitful, loving way to approach scripture. Some groups have also requested a time for conversation afterwards, and I am delighted to hear your thoughts and questions if that is something you would like. The performance isn’t recorded because I value highly the shared experience that we can have when it is live.

You may wish to contact your minister David (my seminary colleague and friend) if you’d like to plan something with your church family. For more information about the performance, my contact details, and how to donate to EJI, you may also refer to this longer post: https://parisbooksandcats.wordpress.com/2020/06/04/the-perfection-of-love/.

I wish all of you well in your own good work of love.

Grace to you and peace,

Meda
I think that I can safely say that everyone on the Resource Development Ministry (RDM) misses seeing our church family on Sundays and hearing David’s meaningful sermons. It’s hard to believe that we are over half way through the year. In some ways the year has flown by, and other ways it just seems to drag along. Regardless, it’s been a unique and challenging year so far to say the least!!

One of the many signs of the strength of our church family is your continued financial support. As of June 30, we have been meeting our pledge contribution goals and our ministry teams continue to be careful stewards of our gifts and stay within our budget.

We are also happy to announce that FPC Wooster will soon have a link on our website that will allow you to electronically send your stewardship contributions to the church directly from your checking account or credit card. More information will be sent out about utilizing this service during these days of “COVID-19” and beyond.

Sincerely,

Tom Rumbaugh, RDM Chair
Sarah Baker, Dana Brooks, Stuart Miller, Laura Neill, David Rice

For this coming Sunday’s worship service (2 August), I will be presiding over the celebration of communion. I invite you to assemble bread and wine/juice ahead of the start of the service and join all who are participating as we share the sacrament together. Blessings and Peace David
Betty Shull, wife of Gordon Shull of almost 68 years, peacefully passed from her extraordinary life on July 12 at Wooster LifeCare. She was 94.

Clinical psychologist and counselor, church elder and presbyter, educator, choir member, volunteer, life-long learner, world traveler, Ohio Light Opera enthusiast, and devoted friend, wife, and mother, Betty’s brimming life was centered on her first love—people.

Her volunteer work was extensive and continued into her 90’s. It focused mainly on FPC where she held many leadership positions, including as director of our Adult Education program. She was a pillar in our congregation and community!

She also served in the City of Wooster’s counseling service; supported her dear friend and colleague Dr. Viola Startzman in the Viola Startzman Clinic; and taught the “Art of Listening” course to volunteers in Wooster’s LifeCare Hospice for 30 years. After retirement, she and Gordon volunteered in Egypt with the Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Programs, which promotes community-based development and education throughout the country.

Her long and blessed life touched people in positive ways. Her companionship, love of music, and warm laugh enriched her family and all who knew her. The life she made fuller for so many will live on in rich and happy memories.
Hi David,

I wanted you and your congregation to know that my father, Dr. Harry W. Eberts, Jr., passed away early Sunday morning, July 12, in Kalamazoo, MI after a short illness. He would have been 94 this September. He served the Wooster Church from 1960-67 and would often say that of the six churches he served across the country over a 40-year ministry Wooster was his favorite. I know some of the ministries he helped to begin are still going, such as Wee Care and your fine Adult Education program.

My first memories are in Wooster and I ended up at the College, class of 1981. So Wooster means a lot to me and my family.

Hopefully there still may be a few people who knew my Mom and Dad (Mom died in 2016) and I would appreciate it if you let the congregation know.

My best wishes to you and your ministry!

Harry W. Eberts III
Pastor, First Presbyterian Church of Santa Fe

Congratulations to Wes and Sara Davis
On the birth of their baby boy
July 24, 2020
Oliver William
Faith and Structure

July 2020

The Faith and Structure Coordinating Committee continues to address the structural aspects of the church that impact our spiritual life. Continuing to use Zoom for virtual meetings has worked well. Recent activities to call to the congregation’s attention follow.

The Committee has identified and entertained bids from two potential contractors for the sanctuary sound/video project. We plan to meet with both vendors in the coming weeks to review their bids in greater detail. The F&S Committee’s goal is to recommend a contractor to the appropriate coordinating committees soon.

The interior stairwell walls leading to the choir loft have experienced significant damage due to a water leak in the facade. Able Roofing was on site July 7th to access and repair the leak while still under warranty. Walls are scheduled to be repaired and painted.

Committee: Joel Beckler, Scott Buehler (chair), Paul Edmiston, Roy Hancock, Roy Haynes, Steven Slack, and Jim Webster. David Rice and Tim Hall, ex officio.

Submitted by: Scott Buehler
EARTH CARE

The native columbine that beautify our parking lot have finished flowering and have produced plentiful seed pods. If you’ve always wanted columbine, cut off a seed stalk or two. Break open the seed pods and sprinkle the seed into some loose soil. Water lightly and as the little plants appear. Or just spread the seeds and ignore - over the winter, the snow will nestle them into the ground and they will germinate in the spring. Most of the church’s columbine have pink/white blossoms and provide early blooms for pollinators. Each pod contains dozens of tiny seeds. Share with your neighbors!

Submitted by: Carla Hall
I am so excited to have found out that Kohls participates in a plastic film recycling program with Trex, the folks that manufacture "plastic wood". I confirmed that our local Kohls collects these items in containers in the pick-up/return area (to the far left just past the cash registers).

Grocery bags, bread bags, case overwrap, dry cleaning bags, newspaper sleeves, ice bags, wood pellet bags, ziplock & other re-sealable bags, produce bags, bubble wrap, salt bags, and cereal bags. All materials must be clean, dry and free of food residue.

Submitted by: Carla Hall
Recycle your household bags & wrap into Trex’s Earth-friendly composite decking and railing!

**FROM THE STORE**
- Produce bags
- Store bags
- Ice bags

**FROM YOUR PANTRY**
- Ziploc® & other reclosable bags
- Cereal box liners
- Case overwrap
- Bread bags

**FROM YOUR FRONT DOOR**
- Newspaper sleeves
- Dry cleaning bags
- Bubble wrap
- Plastic e-commerce mailers

Plastics must be clean, dry and free of food and organic residue

Recycled in America

NextTrex™
Jacob Gooch unfortunately will be leaving us in August to return to Otterbein University.

We have been so blessed to have him record and edit our worship services.

Jacob has greatly simplified the recording of our worship services.

We are in need of volunteers to help with the recording.

Please contact David Rice or the church office at 330-264-9420 if interested.

Thank you so much for your consideration.
Come Celebrate Together
in a drive-through baby shower
for the upcoming arrival of
David and Karolyn Rice’s first grandchild.

Saturday, August 8, between 10:00 and 11:00 a.m.
First Presbyterian Church Parking Lot.

Meet the parents-to-be
Brendan and Elisa on FaceTime.
Bring a card and if you wish,
you may drop off
a contribution to a group gift
(stroller/car-seat),
or bring a gift of your choice.

(See next page for details)
Pat Bare and Mimi Lewellen are hosting a long-distance, COVID 19-era baby shower to honor and celebrate with David, Karolyn, Brendan and Elisa. We hope many of you will join us—masks and social distancing of course. Come in your car anytime between 10 and 11 AM, Saturday, August 8, entering the FPC parking lot from College Avenue. You won’t need to leave your car. David and Karolyn will greet you so you can say hello via FaceTime to Brendan and Elisa. If you can’t come at that time but want to participate, call Pat Bare, 330-263-1827 or Mimi Lewellen, 330-345-8684 for pickup of card or gift. Checks toward the group gift should be made out to Pat Bare.
July 1, 2020

Christian Leaders,
Christian values are at the center of our communities. By following the example and teachings of Jesus, churches truly make a difference. Now more than ever, it is critical to support these organizations. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians:

"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7 NIV)

In that spirit, Rural King is honored to host Church Week August 2, 2020 through August 15, 2020. Through this program, our customers can support their local Christian churches, schools, and radio stations.

To receive donations:
1. Christian organizations registered as 501(c)3 can register to receive donations at www.ruralking.com/churchweek beginning July 1, 2020.
2. Once registered, organizations should communicate their involvement in this program to their congregations.
3. During Church Week, customers can choose a registered organization to donate to and begin uploading their receipts. All receipts must be uploaded to www.ruralking.com/churchweek by September 1, 2020.
4. Receipts must be dated between August 2, 2020 between August 15, 2020 to qualify.
5. Rural King will donate 10% of each valid Rural King receipt’s total after sales tax to the registered organization chosen by the customer.
6. All donations will be provided by September 15, 2020 by your local Rural King.

Christian organizations do so much to bless our local communities. Now is the time for all of us to bless them.

If you have any questions, please email churchweek@ruralking.com.

Thank you for everything you do for your community.

Sincerely,

Rural King
America’s Farm and Home Store
Wee Care is having a great summer! We have been enjoying Water Days, art, games, and learning while we play!

Supplies Needed
* Sanitizing Wipes & Hand Sanitizer
* Paper Towels
* Strawberry Jelly
* Band-Aids (all sized)
* Art Supplies
AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

August 2  Kaye Bartlett, Robert Nielsen, Ken Barnard, Scott Murphy
August 3  Emma Strong, William Gastier, Cate Strong
August 4  Suzanne Collins, Andrew James, Jr.
August 6  Dottie Schmid, Mary Stockton
August 7  Walter Kearney, Rhona Black
August 8  Matthew Earley
August 9  Sophia Baxstrom
August 10  Helena Gastier
August 15  Zach Miller
August 17  Karina MacMillan, Nancy Young
August 19  Russell McQuate, Shanna Springer, Rhonda Masci,
           Ashley Compton, Abigail Earley, Carl Short
August 20  Will Ladrach, Rori Compton
August 21  Lorraine Hancock, Norma Cooper, Sean Kirchofer
August 22  James MacMillan, Peter Savage
August 23  Steve Plant
August 24  Elaine Peterson, Jeffrey Musselman
August 25  Bill Mapel, Don Beane
August 26  Wesley Baker
August 29  Becky Smith, Hannah Marcum
August 30  Ruth Ann Odenkirk, Kathy Zink, Laura Neill, Eric Leming
August 31  Conrad Kennedy, Jim Dyer
First Presbyterian Church
621 College Avenue
Wooster, OH 44691
Phone: 330-264-9420
Fax: 330-262-7305

Address Service Requested

www.facebook.com/FPCWooster/
www.firstpreswooster.org

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Deadlines

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<tr>
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