Dear Friends,

These are strange and anxiety-plagued times as we head into yet another month of social distancing, masks, and hand sanitizer. I continue to hear encouraging and hopeful reports of the many ways that we are looking out for each other. The distance may be physical, but the bonds of compassion and care that we share keep us close and our congregation vital.

I am grateful for the countless messages of support for our “online” worship services and the imaginative and uplifting presentations of Amy Baxstrom and Rachel King. Unseen, but not to be discounted, is the ongoing work of all the staff of First Presbyterian: Building Supervisor Tim Hall, Office Administrator Donna Bye, and Office Assistant Donna RuLon, Parish Associate Charles Cureton, and our Custodians Brian Miller and Shannon Bennett. I am thankful for each one of them. Eric Gastier’s musical gifts are beautifully on display each Sunday and a meaningful addition to our worship has been liturgical leadership from living rooms. May we maintain gathering in this way until we have passed the pandemic.

We will have two special services in May, beginning with this coming Sunday’s celebration of our graduating high school seniors. Sharing their thoughts of times past and their hopes for their futures will be Cameron Edmiston, Mason Garcia, MacKenzie Hancock, Emma LoGiudice, and Zach Miller. We will also offer a blessing for them as their journeys go on from here.

Then, on May 17, our children and youth will present our Spring Celebration of the end of First Presbyterian’s Program Year as we prepare to move into summer. Accomplishing this by video and Zoom won’t be easy, but Rachel always has a few tricks up her sleeve. It will be a joy once again to experience the leadership and energy of our young people.

At the May Session Meeting, the elders of the church will revisit the decision to keep the building closed. These ongoing considerations will be made in full cooperation with the Governor’s office and with careful prudence for the safety and health of our congregation. Until then, let us remain in thought and prayer for one another and for our deeply hurting brothers and sisters all over the world. Keep the faith and abide in hope.

Blessings and Peace,
David
Greetings from the Resource Development Committee!

Our Church has closed the financial books on the first quarter of 2020....finally! The unprecedented effects of the COVID-19 pandemic has thrown the world-country-state-city-church into uncharted territory to say the least. Obviously the current state of our financial markets has negatively affected our endowment funds. Please be assured that the RDM is continuing the investment policies that have been in place and are working closely with our investment managers to minimize the effects on our balanced portfolio of stocks and bonds.

Other negative financial effects specific to our church is the loss of income that we receive from the various groups that rent Bruch Hall. As the full effects have yet to be realized of the current economic “shutdown” and Ohio leaders plan to reopen our state, the RDM is exploring alternatives to replace these income sources.

I can end on a positive note however! Congregational giving is up a little over 2% as of the end of March 31, 2020 compared to this time in 2019. Thank you all for your recognition of the reality that the work and expenses of First Presbyterian Church of Wooster continues and the importance of the steady flow of your generous pledge promises.

As always please feel free to contact me or anyone else on the Resource and Development Ministry listed below.

Peace,

Tom Rumbaugh

Members of the RDM:
Sarah Baker, Dana Brooks, Stuart Miller, Laura Neill, David Rice, and Tom Rumbaugh

2020 PHOC MAPLE SYRUP - The Pleasant Hill Outdoor Camp maple syrup program to support the youth programs was very successful again this year with good weather and great volunteers! Quality was excellent and we have plenty of pints, quarts, half-gallons, and gallons for sale. Unfortunately, we cannot sell it in the welcome center between and after services on Sundays in May. So you will have to call The Shorts (Ted’s cell: (330)466-2763; Karen’s cell: 330-466-3404) for special orders and pick-ups at their home at 935 Fenwick Circle after May 6. It will be valuable to have a check made out to PHOC for the exact amount to minimize cash exchanges. Pints will again be $9, quarts $16, half-gallons $28, and gallons $50. Please call Ted or Karen if you have questions or special needs.
Session Highlights

The Session

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<th>2020</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tammy Brooks</td>
<td>Carol Gates</td>
<td>David Earley</td>
<td>Rev. David Rice</td>
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<td>Paul Edmiston</td>
<td>Mark Gooch</td>
<td>Bobbi Jentes-Mason</td>
<td>Nancy Young, Clerk</td>
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<td>Jon Neill</td>
<td>Pat Miles</td>
<td>Mimi Lewellen</td>
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<td>Mary Stockton</td>
<td>Jim Webster</td>
<td>Stuart Miller</td>
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<td>Jim Tew</td>
<td>James West</td>
<td>Tom Rumbaugh</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emma LoGiudice(Y 2020)</td>
<td>Zach Miller (Y 2020)</td>
<td>Kenzie Hancock(Y 2020)</td>
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Please keep in your prayers: your church, its needs, and those whom you have elected to serve in leadership roles.

April 2020

Clerk’s Report: Nancy Young

Session did not meet in March, the first month we closed the church to worship services and church business. Session met this month on April 22 at 7:00pm using the Zoom app on our phones, computers or tablets. The meeting was successful and session will continue meeting this way as long as the church remains closed and the need for a meeting arises.

Session interviewed, via Zoom, prospective new member Noah Leonard. Noah is a first year CoW student now working from his home in Upper Sandusky. He is a Political Science and Spanish double major and hopes to go on to law school. Noah’s faith has always been important to him and on-campus he was guided to First Presbyterian by Erin Guzman. He said he knew after one service and a talk with Pastor David that he wanted to become an active member, participating in our mission and community work as much as he can during the school year. MOTION (Brooks): To accept Noah Leonard into the membership and fellowship of First Presbyterian by reaffirmation of faith; 2nd (Lewellen); PASSED (u).

Resource Development Ministry: Tom Rumbaugh

Tom reported that through March we have a surplus of income over expenses but overall pledges were down from last year and the 2020 budget was adjusted accordingly. The endowment took a hit in March but Tom said so far it has been steadily regaining lost revenue. Tom presented the 2020 budget of $597,137. The 2019 budget was $622,939. Pledges in 2019 were $468,582. So far in 2020 they are $430,524. Session moved to accept the 2020 budget. PASSED (u).

Session also approved our continuing policy to include 5% of the 12-31-2019 market value of our endowment in the 2020 budget; PASSED (u). Tom noted that in the three years we have allocated 5% of the endowment to the operating budget, we have never used anywhere near the entire 5%.

Pastors Report - The Rev. David Rice

Session moved to continue to keep the church closed through the month of May until we see what happens when the state begins to “open up.” This decision will be revisited at session’s May meeting in light of Governor DeWine’s directives and the particular needs and concerns of our congregation.

With the understanding that the novel coronavirus is going to be part of our reality for a considerable amount of time, session is aware that opening the church will take a lot of thought and planning. In light of this, session
Session Highlights continued:

charged Pastor David with forming a task force to consider what opening the church will entail and how we can best go about doing it so everyone who uses the building is as safe as can be expected. You will be hearing more about this in the near future. If you know of anyone who would be a helpful addition to this new task force, please let David know as soon as possible.

James West, on behalf of the Faith and Worship Team, mentioned how grateful they are for David, Eric and Jacob Gooch and the excellent Sunday Worship Services they have been presenting online. Session unanimously agreed and also added praise for the online activities, meditations and music that Amy Baxstrom and Rachel King have been providing for our families. Everything that helps us stay connected matters so much now.

Session closed the meeting at 8:30 with the Lord’s prayer.

MCC Webinar Series on Immigration and Border Realities

**Immigration**: We are invited to participate in a Mennonite webinar series on Immigration and Border Realities. This series seeks to engage community members with the reality of immigration from the perspective of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC)'s staff and partners' perspectives from their fields. Please join if you want to learn more about current immigration topics and how our Christian partners are addressing these situations. The topics for this webinar series are:

- May 5: Border Realities
- May 19: Asylum
- June 2: Church efforts to address immigration
- June 16: MCC's migration work in Mexico, Honduras, and Guatemala/El Salvador
- June 30: Church-based immigration legal services

The webinars are every other Tuesday at 2 p.m. Please use this link to register for any individual topic in which you are interested: https://mcc.org/immigration-webinar-series
In these interesting times, the Faith and Structure Coordinating Committee continues to address the structural aspects of the church that impact our spiritual life. In April, we held our meeting via Zoom, enabling us to really practice our social distancing while doing our necessary business, a first for our committee. Items of note from the meeting include:

- The roof air conditioning unit, which had its cooling coils fail some months back, has now been replaced and is working. There are a few tweaks yet needed to optimize efficiency, however, whenever we return to our ‘new normal’ no one will need to worry about it getting too hot in the main meeting areas of the church as summer comes.

- The outside signage project is now mostly complete. We thank Jim and Cindy Webster for the wonderful additions for which we have received many, many compliments. The remaining aspect of the project is landscaping around the College Avenue/Bowman Street sign. Women’s Fellowship is providing funding for the landscaping.

- We have made arrangements to seal and stripe the church parking lot as well as to repair two catch basins. Although the dates for the project have not yet been set, you should see activity soon. The deteriorating condition of the driveway made this project a priority.

- Tim Hall and his assistants are making good use of the extended time the church has been mostly empty by systematically going through the church to clean and sanitize. We are fortunate to have staff who look for opportunities to make a positive difference, even in the face of the current discouraging pandemic.

We plan to meet by Zoom again in May. There are several additional activities in the discussion phase and we look forward to sharing them with you in the future.

Committee: Joel Beckler, Scott Buehler, Paul Edmiston, Roy Hancock, Roy Haynes, Steven Slack
Amy Baxstrom will be holding a weekly Zoom Bible Study. If you are interested in joining her, please email her at amybaxstrom@gmail.com and let her know!

Thank you.

Music News

May 17 is our Spring Celebration Sunday, and this year we are putting it together long-distance! Families, please check your emails from Rachel to see how you and your kids can be involved in the service. If you didn’t receive something or need more information, please let Rachel know. We would love to have as many participants as possible to help lead our online worship that Sunday.

Our FPC Summer Musical 2020 is on hold! We were originally scheduled to start rehearsals in late July and perform during worship in early August, just like we did last year with “The Tale of Three Trees”. We are hopeful that we still can put something together for either an online or in-person service, but will wait to see what the situation looks like once we get into summer before making a final call. Please let Rachel know if you are interested in being a part of the musical, either as a kid/youth participant or an adult helper, and she will make sure to keep you in the loop!
Thank you to all who attended our virtual GNO with Rachel! We had a great time and look forward to doing it again!  Amy Baxstrom

Gardener needed. I need someone or a couple or a family to care for the garden at the east end of the north garden. The north garden is the long garden that you first see as you drive up the driveway from College Avenue. The east end garden starts at a now blooming crab apple tree and curves around. In it is mounted one of the new signs. An hour once a week or every other week is all the time that's necessary to keep it looking nice. If interested, contact me at haynes@wooster.edu. Roy Haynes
On April 19, we had a great breakfast group meeting followed by church service with coffee still in hand! Ken and Nancy Anderson joined us from Florida, Stacey (our Greenleaf waitress), and former students Bridgette from Colorado and Morgan from the Cleveland area. See who else you can recognize!

Carla Hall

Bible Study Group - Thank goodness for technology. Our Tuesday morning Bible Study Group continues to gather for thoughtful consideration of God's words and for fellowship using the now well-known Zoom meeting. The same is true of our Sunday morning breakfast group. And if you think old dogs can't learn new tricks, the average age of these groups is well above retirement age! We all truly value our church families at this time and always and to be able to gather in His name.

Carla Hall
"Plogging is a combination of jogging with picking up litter (Swedish: plocka upp). It started as an organized activity in Sweden around 2016 and spread to other countries in 2018, following increased concern about plastic pollution. As a workout, it provides variation in body movements by adding bending, squatting and stretching to the main action of running, hiking, or walking". [Wikipedia] Since so many of us are escaping house arrest by walking and getting outside, may I suggest that you carry a small plastic bag (bread wrapper, newspaper bag) and pick up trash along the way. Of course, we need to be careful of germs - I put the plastic bag on my hand/arm, then grab the trash and pull the bag inside out to contain it. Your Earth Care Team
In the December 2019 issue of Tower Tidings, the Church Library Committee shared a wish list of books identified as desirable additions to the collection. We are grateful to those who found a title of interest on this list and made a gift to the church to purchase the book for the library.

To make this process (hopefully) easier, with the help of Donna Bye, we have set up an FPC - Library Wish List on Amazon.com.

We are presenting the list again this month and to view this list, go to https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/303IMG6JXP8SJ?ref_=wl_share. From there you can select a title for purchase from the wish list. Click on the “Add to Cart” button and follow the same process you use for any Amazon purchase. You may have the book delivered to your home address and bring it to the office when it arrives, or simply add and select the church’s mailing address to your shipping address list and it will be delivered directly to the church. In either case, please notify the church office of your gift so that it can be properly recognized. Also, don’t forget to use the Amazon Smile program and select First Presbyterian Church Wooster to generate additional benefits for First Presbyterian.

As always, support for the library through donations, suggestions, or by simply using the collection, is greatly appreciated by the Library Committee. Our goal is to cultivate and curate a collection that benefits the entire church family. We look forward to seeing you when the church building is open again.

We extend the sympathy of the church to the following families:

George Spencer on the passing of his brother,
Heber Spencer and his wife Ellen
and
Marilyn Snoody on the passing of her grandson,
Chris Belcher
Congratulations to Jill Woods (Wee Care Director) and her family on the birth of their daughter, Isabella Arlieen Woods, born on Wednesday April 22. We wish her and her new family God's blessings!

A shout-out to volunteers Janet and Daniel Calhoun for volunteering at Ohio’s Hospice Lifecare for 25 years. They were recognized by Ohio Hospice Lifecare and listed in the Wooster Weekly News.
Wee Care - May 2020

Even though we aren’t at school, our kiddos have still been busy learning! Jill has been sending education ideas to families during the closure. Andy decorated cookies and Remi made his name out of play-doh.

Wee Care is gearing up for summer camp.

Ways FPC can help...

*Sponsor a Summer – donations towards our “Sponsor a Summer” campaign will assist towards registration/activity fees, and weekly tuition for families struggling to pay.

*Donations – beach towels, swim wear & extra clothes sizes 2T-youth Med, band-aids (all sizes), summer outdoor toys (chalk, water toys, yard games, bubbles), art supplies, AA and AAA batteries

*Volunteer – We are looking for volunteers to lead a clinic each week of the summer. This could be about your profession, a sport, an activity/craft, truly endless possibilities. This would be a 30-45 minutes presentation/activity to share with our school-age children. Contact Jill if you are interested at weecarejill@gmail.com

Jill had her baby girl Isabella on April 22 and will be on maternity leave for a few weeks following.

Sierra Bright & Jamie Horsky will be in charge during her absence.
MAY BIRTHDAYS

May 2   Kay Rowekamp
May 3   Jeffrey Perkins
May 5   Shannon Foster, Hailey Padden
May 7   Tim Walker
May 8   Jodi Hannan, Matthew Nielsen
May 12  Dick Lewellen
May 13  Sue Froelich, Seth Miller
May 14  Janel Lynn Usternul
May 15  Betty Shull
May 17  Gordon Shull, Kendall Alexander
May 21  Sonja Tugend
May 23  Carol Young, Stephanie Reardon, Lisa Rumbaugh, Trevor Dunlap
May 24  Steve LoGiudice
May 25  Barbara Somogy, Emma LoGiudice
May 26  Bill Smith
May 28  Don Van Cleef, Kathy Odenkirk
May 30  Leigh Oaks, Kim Ogle
May 31  Bryan Bigley, Dana Brooks, III
First Presbyterian Church
621 College Avenue
Wooster, OH 44691

Phone: 330-264-9420
Fax: 330-262-7305

Address Service Requested

Firstpresbyterianchurch-wooster.ohio
www.firstpreswooster.org

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Deadlines

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