



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
OF WOOSTER

# TOWER TIDINGS

## DECEMBER 2025

Dear Friends,

As the days shorten and the light fades into winter shadow and a chill wind blows, we know we are coming to the end of a calendar year. We are also at the close of a liturgical year that has given us so many meaningful times of worship and contemplation and stories from the Gospel According to Luke. Now we stand at the dawn of Advent, a season of waiting and anticipation and hopeful expectation as we rehearse once again the mysterious story of Nativity, when the wondrous gift is given.

Thanksgiving weekend folds into the first of four Sundays of Advent. The Advent schedule in the Newsletter highlights some of the special offerings of this season. It all begins on Friday, December 5, with the annual Downtown Church Walk, allowing us to share our beautiful sanctuary with everyone in the Wooster community. The next day, Saturday, December 6 at 3:00 p.m., we host a seasonal concert given by the renowned Sonnenberg Station. And then Sunday, December 7, features a musical fable entitled “Brother Heinrich’s Christmas,” a joint dramatic presentation by our Sanctuary Choir and Children’s Music program, followed by the Holiday Potluck in Bruch Hall. The following Sunday, December 14, brings the community-wide Alternative Gift Market back to First Presbyterian, a meaningful way to finish one’s Christmas shopping that benefits so many non-profit organizations and communities around the world.

The juxtaposition of our Thanksgiving celebrations leading us into Advent underscores the central place that generous giving holds this time of year. Families sponsored by the Salvation Army hope to receive Christmas gifts from their wish lists, unused Christmas cards are provided to inmates in the Wooster jail to be sent to their family members, the Mitten Tree stands in the Gathering Area to receive warm gifts for those in need, gift certificates are offered by local entities to benefit our community. And even closer to home during this giving season, First Presbyterian continues its 2026 Financial Pledge Campaign as we anticipate a New Year full of opportunities for worship, fellowship, ministry, mission, and building rehabilitation for the generations that will come after us.

Perhaps there is nothing more for me to say other than “Happy Thanksgiving,” and may you and your families and friends be well in body, mind, and spirit as the year closes and a new one peaks over the horizon.

Blessings and Peace,

David



## **Greetings from the RDM!**

Thanks to all that have completed and turned in your pledge cards during our stewardship campaign. As you know, the church staff and various ministry teams use your promises to plan for the coming year of programing, ministry, mission, and structure.

Please know that it's not too late to turn your pledge card in! You can send or drop your card off at the church office or place it in the offering plate on any Sunday. The RDM is looking forward to a successful 2026 and funding the good work that First Presbyterian Church of Wooster does each year!!

**Peace and blessings,**

**Tom Rumbaugh, Chair**

**Dana Brooks, treasurer, Stuart Miller, Laura Neill,**

**Mark Gordon, Steve Logiudice, Jeff Perkins, and David Rice, pastor**



# Advent 2025

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF WOOSTER

Sunday, November 30 - HOPE

8:45AM ARISE 9:15AM Sunday School 10:30AM Worship

Friday, December 5

4:00-7:00PM Historic Downtown Church Tour

Sunday, December 7 - PEACE

8:45AM ARISE 9:15AM Sunday School 10:30AM Worship

11:30AM Church Holiday Potluck

Sunday, December 14 - JOY

8:45AM ARISE 9:15AM Sunday School 10:30AM Worship

10:00 Alternative Gift Market in Bruch Hall

Sunday, December 21 - LOVE

8:45AM ARISE 9:15AM Sunday School 10:30AM Worship

Christmas Eve Service

6:45PM Music Prelude

7:00PM Lessons and Carols

Sunday, December 28

10:30AM Worship

Sunday, January 4

10:30AM Worship





First Presbyterian Church of Wooster Presents:

# BROTHER HEINRICH'S CHRISTMAS

A FABLE WITH MUSIC BY JOHN RUTTER

An illustration of a monk, Brother Heinrich, with a shaved head and a small tuft of hair, wearing a brown robe. He is hugging a grey donkey from behind. The donkey has a white muzzle and a gold halter. In the background is a church with a tall, square tower and a red roof. The scene is set on a green hill with some red flowers in the foreground.

**Sunday, December 7, 2025**  
**during the 10:30 Worship Service**

**A combined effort of the FPC Sanctuary Choir and  
FPC Children's Music Programs**

**Interested in participating?**  
**Contact Rachel at [rking@firstpreswooster.org](mailto:rking@firstpreswooster.org)**



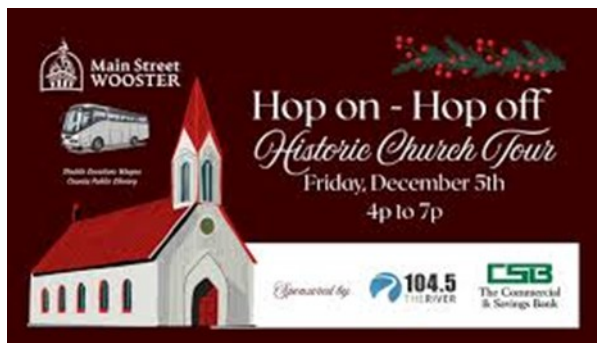
Check out the calendar below for events.  
If you have a special activity you would like to do,  
please let Amy know!

### **Upcoming Events**

These dates are subject to change based on weather,  
so watch your email/text for updates.

#### **December 7<sup>th</sup>**

**Children and Youth Christmas Program  
Holiday Potluck and Youth White Elephant Gift Exchange**



On December 5<sup>th</sup> from 4:00-7:00pm we will be participating in the Historic Church Tour. We will need volunteers to welcome guests into the church, showcase our beautiful Sanctuary, and invite them to Bruch Hall for some light refreshments and spiritual practices. Please let Amy Baxstrom know if you can help!





Once again, we have the opportunity to help those in our community have a special Christmas. Names of families have been given from the Salvation Army with a list of items on their wish list. If you want to help, please contact Amy Baxstrom ASAP so we can get them in the correct hands.

**Thank you!**



**Each year during the Advent and Christmas season,  
we lift up past, present, and our future leaders of the church.**

The Christmas Joy Offering has been a cherished Presbyterian tradition since the 1930s. The Offering distributes gifts equally to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and to Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. The Assistance Program provides critical financial support to church workers and their families.

Please use envelopes in the pews to make your donation; go online to “donations” on the First Presbyterian website; or mail your donation to the church.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!**



Faith & Practice is happy to announce that on Sunday, December 14, First Presbyterian Church will again host the Alternative Gift Market. This year we've moved the opening time up to 10:00 am so that those who attend ARISE and Sunday School will be able to shop early (and often, we hope)!

You may purchase \$5 shares in any of 20 different carefully vetted organizations from around the world.-- they make the perfect Christmas gift for everyone on your list.

- You might buy shares in a mobile library program in Ethiopia for the reader in the family.
- Or for the gardener, shares in fruit tree planting in Haiti would be meaningful.
- And all the kids, whatever their age, would like getting shares of Expanding Opportunities in Kenya that assists with children's school fees, uniforms and/or supplies.
- For all of us concerned with the people of Ukraine, shares are available in the Kline One Foundation and Hungarian Evangelical Fellowship program that each day serves meals to 80-100 people in Konstantinovka in Ukraine's Donetsk region.

In addition, we'll have goods from World Crafts of Kidron, fair trade coffee, and Ghanaian fabric products.

Lunch of soups, chili and desserts will be available for a donation and all proceeds will go to Homeward Bound, our local homeless shelter.

We hope to see all of you there!



# CHRISTMAS CARDS FOR JAIL INMATES PROJECT



The Faith and Practice committee is happy and honored to be continuing a project long chaired by the late Don Beane, -- collecting unused Christmas cards to give to inmates at the Wooster jail. This year F&P will also provide 200 postage stamps for them.

You'll see a box on the counter in the gathering area where you may leave your cards.

**Please make sure they meet the following criteria:**

**No writing on the cards**

**A matching envelope for each card**

**Thank you!**





*In the gathering area you'll now see the Mitten Tree, a familiar sight each Advent season. For many years members have placed their hand-knitted or purchased mittens, gloves and scarves on the tree. Then after Christmas Faith & Practice donates all children's items to Cornerstone School.*

*In addition to the mittens, gloves and scarves, Faith & Practice will be collecting new men's and women's warm socks for the homeless in our area.*

*We hope to see the tree filled with your generous contributions!*



*Westminster has olive oil soap for sale, \$5 a bar. This is made in Zababdeh, West Bank, and helps a small Palestinian Christian church with their community support. Westminster sells it at cost. It makes a great stocking stuffer or hostess gift. I personally use it exclusively due to dry skin; I even ship it to Texas for a customer who bought some once while in Wooster and hasn't found anything comparable.*

*Linda Barbu*

## Faith and Worship

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Faith and Worship has begun planning for Advent and Christmas.

Below are the dates and activities we are sure of right now.



### **ADVENT and CHRISTMAS SEASON**

#### **DECEMBER 2025**

**Chancel Poinsettias:** Call the church office or fill out an order form to **order**  
**In Honor/Memory Of poinsettias** for the chancel.

**12/24: Christmas Eve Service** (Candlelight):  
**Music at 6:45pm; Service at 7:00pm**

**12/28: Shared worship service** with Westminster Presbyterian Church.

#### **JANUARY 2026**

**1/4: Undecorate** the church **after the 10:30 service**; help appreciated.



*Poinsettias in honor or memory of loved ones will be used to enhance the beauty of our sanctuary this Christmas. You may purchase a plant for \$15.00 each. If you do not wish to own a plant, you may donate to the Special Christmas Offering. Names of your loved ones will be listed in the Christmas Eve bulletin and scrolled during the broadcast. Plants may be picked up after the service. Those left will be distributed.*

*Please submit your request to the Office by December 17.*

*Your Name* \_\_\_\_\_

*In Memory: Plant or Donation (circle one)*

*Name(s)* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*In Honor: Plant or Donation (circle one)*

*Name(s)* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_





***You Are Invited...to SEE and HEAR  
Sonnenberg Station perform at FPC  
on Saturday, December 6th at 3:00pm***



We need help to UN-decorate on  
**Sunday, January 4**

Many hands make lighter (and quicker)  
work and are such a blessing!



## **Merry Christmas from the Earth Care Team**

**Jesus has come to dwell among us. This is God's greatest gift. In this quote from Anthony of Egypt (a 3<sup>rd</sup> Century monk), we are reminded of another of God's scared gifts to us: God's creation, our earth:**

***"My book is the nature of created things,  
and as often as I have a mind to read the words of God, they are at my hand"***

**During this Wonderful Time of the Year, we are encouraging all of us to help protect our planet by reducing the amount of waste we produce during our celebrations.**

### **Here are some of our suggestions**

- \* "Wrap" presents in fabric gift bags which can be re-used for many years
  - \* Re-use paper gift bags
- \* Use wrapping paper which does NOT have glitter so that it may be recycled
  - \* Re-use gift boxes
- \* Save the ribbon from packages and use them again next year (and the next!)
  - \* Gently smooth and fold tissue paper and use again next year
- \* Bring in your strands of tree lights which no longer work (they can be recycled)



**Donation to a local Food Bank in a Family member's name or as a tribute to a friend  
Remember, as often as possible, to BUY LOCAL**

How about a Family membership to **Stan Hywet**. This is something my family (3 generations) has enjoyed for over 30 years. Stan Hywet is a magical place not only at Christmas but year round...the grounds are a wonderful place for children, grandchildren and adults alike to explore. My children loved to play in the English walled garden and pretend they were Mary and Dickon from "The Secret Garden"



### WHY NOT BUY AN “EXPERIENCE” RATHER THAN “STUFF”

A Gift Certificate to our **Lyric Theater**

Membership to the **Secrest Arboretum**

Family Membership to the **Wilderness Center**

An Escape Room experience

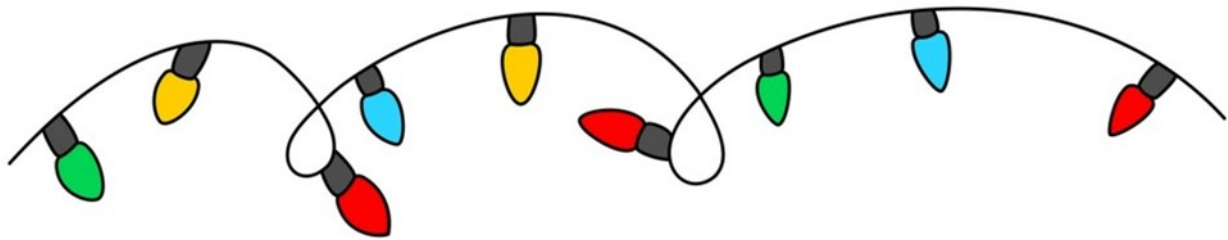
Art lessons at the **Wayne Center for the Arts**

Membership to an Art Museum

Bird Seed (+ a bird feeder if needed J) this could be the beginning of a new experience





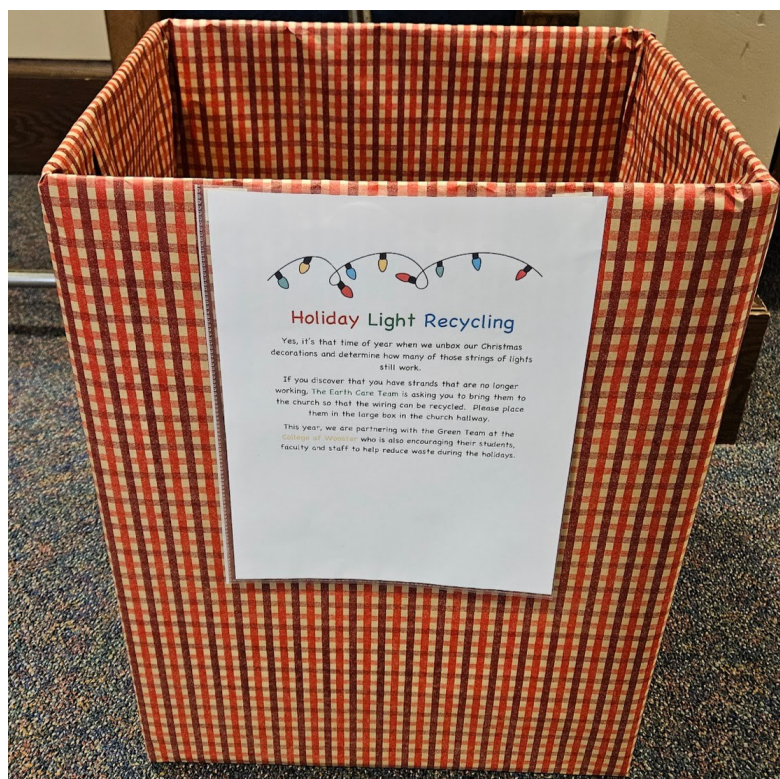


## Holiday Light Recycling

*Yes, it's that time of year when we unbox our Christmas decorations and determine how many of those strings of lights still work.*

*If you discover that you have strands that are no longer working, **The Earth Care Team** is asking you to bring them to the church so that the wiring can be recycled.*

*Please place them in the large box in the church hallway.*



*This year, we are partnering with the Green Team at the **College of Wooster** who is also encouraging their students, faculty and staff to help reduce waste during the holidays.*



*People Caring For People*



There is a new Director at People to People, Sean Michael Murphy. If you are dropping off food, clothing, or other items, stop in and meet him!

People to People need the following food items for their food pantry. Please consider donating and drop them off either at their facility or in the boat in the FPC gathering area. Thank you!

**Spaghetti Sauce**  
**16 oz Creamy Peanut Butter**  
**Saltines**  
**Cereal Bars**  
**Cereal**  
**Canned Fruit**  
**Pork n Beans**  
**Canned Meat**  
**Tomato Sauce**





The congregation extends its sympathy to the family of FPC member Joyce Gerber who died on November 15, 2025. Joyce lived many places during her childhood due to her father's military service. She graduated from Clover Park High School in Tacoma, Washington and came to Wooster to live with her maternal grandmother. Joyce and her late husband Caleb were married in 1957. They lived for a time in Arizona but returned to Wayne County to take up dairy farming, owning first a farm in Smithville and later one in Dalton. After her children were grown, Joyce worked as an executive assistant at OSU Extension until retirement.

Joyce was active in the life of FPC, serving as a deacon and participating in First Friends, Mixed Company, Women's Fellowship, adult education, and book group. She had many interests and enjoyed gardening, reading, and travel. She also volunteered with hospice facilitating support groups for widows and was active in the Herb Society.

Joyce is survived by her children Mark and Julie, their spouses, and three grandchildren. She was predeceased by her husband Caleb and son Tim. A Celebration of Life service will be held at Salem Mennonite Church on December 20, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.



The congregation extends its sympathy to the family of former FPC member Roberta Curry who died September 21, 2025 in Gainesville, Florida. Roberta was born in Dayton, Ohio and earned both bachelor's and master's degrees in Home Economics from The Ohio State University. In 1955 she accepted a position as assistant professor of textiles and clothing at the University of Missouri, where she met her husband, Bruce. Roberta and Bruce were married in 1956 and moved to Wooster in 1960.

Roberta was an active member of FPC during her time in Wooster and served as an elder, deacon, and president and treasurer of Presbyterian Women. She was one of the inaugural members of the adult bell choir formed in 1965, and in 1970 she founded and directed the youth bell choir. She was also a Brownie and Girl Scout leader and president of the Wooster High School Band Parents. From 1973 to 1987 she was manager and sewing instructor at Knits Unlimited (later Fabrics Unlimited), a fabric store located immediately north of the church parking lot on Beall Ave.

Roberta and Bruce relocated to Florida in 1988 and were members of the First Presbyterian Church of Gainesville. She was an active handbell musician there until retiring in 2015 after 50 years of ringing.

Roberta is survived by her husband Bruce, daughter Elaine (Allen) Turner, four grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. She was preceded in death by her son Rob. A memorial service was held in Gainesville on November 13, 2025 with Rev. Dave Shull (son of Gordon and Betty) officiating.





## **DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS**

December 5	Lee Patterson, Emily McMillen
December 11	Joan Firmin, April Gamble
December 13	Tom Gregory
December 17	Hudson Baxstrom, Deborah Smith
December 21	Brian Webb
December 23	Joyce Murphy, Sid Cammer, Julia Hantzsche
December 26	William Wepler
December 27	Elli Gordon, Jane Taylor
December 29	Mona Buehler
December 31	Connie Barnard





## **LITURGIST SIGN-UP - YEAR 2025 IN THE SANCTUARY**

If you or a member of your family (all ages are welcome)  
would like to sign-up to be a liturgist during the 2025 year,  
please sign-up at the following link:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/liturgistsfpc>

**THANK YOU FOR VOLUNTEERING!**



## **FLOWERS IN THE SANCTUARY SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP YEAR 2025**

If you would like to dedicate flowers in honor or memory  
of a loved one in the Sanctuary  
on Sunday mornings during the year 2025,  
please sign-up at the following link:

Thank you!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/sanctuaryflowers>

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Wooster, OH 44691

Phone: 330-264-9420  
Fax: 330-262-7305  
Hours: M, T, Th - 9-4  
Wed & Fri. - By Appt.

Address Service Requested



[www.facebook.com/FPCWooster/](http://www.facebook.com/FPCWooster/)  
[www.firstpreswooster.org](http://www.firstpreswooster.org)

### Office Contact Info

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Pastor & Head of Staff

**Donna Bye**

Office Administrator

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