



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
OF WOOSTER

Dear Friends,

This combined June/July edition of the Tower Tidings offers many opportunities for fun, fellowship, study, mission, and worship. Have your calendars handy as you read it, so that you can mark the many dates and events you will not want to miss.

This past Thursday, May 5, the renowned Old Testament scholar and theologian, Dr. Walter Brueggemann, died at the age of 92. Dr. Brueggemann was a professor of mine at Columbia Theological Seminary and became a mentor and friend to me. His painstakingly thorough approach to the biblical texts and his challenging theological insights have shaped my thinking and preaching in profound ways. The online daily newsletter “Religion News Service” featured an article written by Michael DeLashmutt, entitled “Grief and Hope: The Theological Legacy of Walter Brueggemann,” and I want to share with you some excerpts from it.

In his seminal book entitled “The Prophetic Imagination,” Brueggemann painted the prophetic task not as angry denunciation or mere moral exhortation, but as the deeply pastoral, deeply disruptive calling to nurture grief and kindle hope. He showed that prophets break the silence not to shout down the empire, but to sing out another world.

Brueggemann wrote as someone who had wrestled with the text in all its complexity and had come out the other side still listening for the voice of God. His prose was academic and lyrical, unsettling and pastoral. He was unafraid to name the idols of our age — consumerism, nationalism, white supremacy — and to do so with theological clarity, not as a pundit, but as a prophet. And he did so while remaining, in some deep sense, a preacher of the word.

As they read more broadly in Brueggemann’s corpus, my students are drawn to his diagnosis of our cultural captivity to what he called the “myth of scarcity,” the belief that there is not enough to go around, and that we therefore need to hoard, compete and fear. Brueggemann called this a “demonic force” that deforms our imaginations and our economics alike. Against this, he held up the biblical vision of abundance — a God who provides manna in the wilderness and invites Sabbath rest as resistance to empire.

Walter Brueggemann didn’t just write about prophets; he showed us what prophetic imagination looks like. Now, even in his absence, we are left with his words, his witness and the charge to sing a better world into being.

Friends, as the summer goes on, I invite you to explore the theological depths of this singular scholar, teacher, author, and preacher.

Blessings and Peace,

David

Session Highlights

2025	2026	2027	Staff
Paula Abrecht	Wes Davis	Tammy Brooks	Rev. David Rice
Dave Earley	April Gamble	Mark Gordon	Amy Baxstrom, CE
Bobbi Jentes-Mason	Laura Neill	Steve LoGuidice	
Mimi Lewellen	Kris Evans	Jeff Perkins	
		Lisa Rumbaugh, Clerk	

This highlight for Tower Tidings is written to update the congregation on the work of the Session of First Presbyterian Church. This summary will include information from the most recent Session meetings: April 30 and May 28.

During the Annual Congregational Meeting on April 27, Steve LoGuidice updated the congregation on the financial situation of the church and pledge that Session would work to create a strategic plan to grow our resources to do more for our community and our world. To that end, at the April 30 meeting, each Session member agreed to bring at least two ideas to the May meeting. Those elders who lead coordinating teams were encouraged to have discussions and gather ideas from those team members in order to share them at the next Session meeting. The Class of 2028 Session members and Youth Elders were invited to the May meeting so that the current Session and the new board could be together for this brainstorming gathering. Becky Webb, Mark Gooch, Jack Rogers, Calin Baxstrom, Elli Gordon, and Aiden Hinder will be the newest members of Session. We are thankful for Paula Abrecht for staying on for another three- year term. Mimi Lewellen, David Earley, and Bobbi Jentes-Mason are leaving Session after six years of dedicated discernment and care for our congregation.

The May 28 meeting was dedicated to the usual review of the work of the church, a financial update for the month of April and a lengthy, productive discussion that included the sharing of ideas for growth and outreach. These ideas were written down and grouped according to “themes”. Steve LoGuidice facilitated this portion of the meeting and will put the ideas into a document to be discussed at the June meeting. At that time, Session will attempt to choose which theme(s) will be the focus of the strategic plan for growth.

Tammy Brooks agreed to head a group to focus on a grant opportunity offered by the National Fund for Sacred Places. Funds from this grant would help finance some of the structural needs of our church building.

Session also approved a motion for the Clerk of Session at First Presbyterian Church to communicate with the Clerk of Session at Westminster Presbyterian Church, proposing the creation of a joint committee to discuss a possible merger between these two congregations.

Members of Session will continue to meet on the 4th Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. Please reach out to any of the Elders listed above with any questions or concerns. Positive feedback is also welcomed as this team is working diligently to listen, discern and communicate successfully. Minutes from each Session meeting are located in a notebook in the Gathering Area. If you have any questions or concerns to be shared with the Clerk of Session, please use this email address:

sessionclerk@firstpreswooster.org



Greetings from the Resource Development Ministry (RDM)!

As the RDM has communicated in previous Tower Tidings articles and the annual meeting, FPC is currently operating at a deficit of expenses exceeding our income. Please know that RDM is working closely with Session to reverse this trend for 2025 and beyond. During the May Session meeting, Steve Logiudice led the group in brainstorming different ideas to generate congregational growth and trimming our expenses. As we carefully plan and act on these ideas, please let anyone on Session or the RDM know of any ideas, or concerns that you may have. We want to hear from you!!

On the positive side, the FPC investment account had a 12 month return 10.5% as of April 30. This balanced “basket” of investments is professionally managed and closely follows the 2025 General Assembly Divestment/Proscription List created by the Presbyterian Church (USA) Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment.

Feel free to contact any of the RDM member listed below with any questions, concerns, or comments.

Blessings and Peace

Tom Rumbaugh, Chair

Dana Brooks, Laura Neill, Stewart Miller, Mark Gordon,

Jeff Perkins, Steve Logiudice, and David Rice, Pastor



WORSHIP AT OAK HILL PARK

SUNDAY, JUNE 8, 10:00AM

This year our outdoor summer worship service will be held at Oak Hill Park on Sunday, June 8, at 10:00am. **Note:** *If the morning turns out to be rainy, worship will be held in the Sanctuary at 10:00am.*

The park is located on the west side of Oak Hill Rd. at the roundabout.

There is ample pavilion space with picnic table-and-benches seating, but feel free to bring your own chairs. There is also ample car parking space within short, flat, walking distance of the pavilion.

Please mark your calendars and plan to come together for worship at this small gem of a park with inspirational views across the hills and valleys of God's creation.





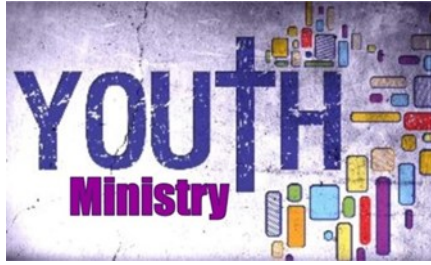
SAVE THE DATE!

VIP (VERY IMPORTANT PRESBYTERIANS) LUNCHEON

Honoring Our Church Friends Over 80

A VIP (Very Important Presbyterians) Luncheon honoring those in our church family 80 years and older will be held Thursday, June 19 at 11:30 a.m. in Bruch Hall. A delicious meal and a musical program featuring David and Karolyn Rice are planned. Invitations will be in the mail soon.





Check out the calendar below for events.

If you have a special activity you would like to do, please let me know!

Upcoming events

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

June 1

Party at Paula's
4:00pm-6:00pm

June 8

Outdoor Service @ Oakhill Park
10:30am

June 9-11

Youth Service Learning Days
9:00am-11:00am

June 17

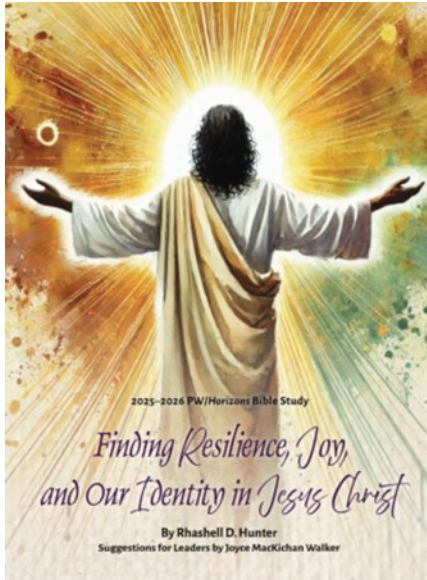
Family Art Night- Bruch Hall
6:30pm- 7:30pm

June 18

Family Hike Wooster Memorial Park
6:30pm

June 22-27

Ghost Ranch!



Starting June 2 at 10:00am we will gather in the Parlor and meet over the summer for some coffee and conversation. In the last several years we have experienced much stress and change. Our political climate, environmental stressors, and family dynamics have created chaos that swirls around us. This summer, we will find the path to healing and peace through two books. We will begin with the Horizon's Bible Study titled *Finding Resilience, Joy, and our Identity in Jesus Christ*. In this study we will follow biblical characters and writers and learn how they model resilience, joy and finding their identity in Christ. We will then move into Steven Charleston's book, *Ladder to the Light*. Charleston's book is one of comfort, truth, and challenge in a time of anguish and fear. Please plan to join us. Email Amy Baxstrom- abaxstrom@firstpreswooster.org



The youth of First Presbyterian Church will be engaging in our Youth Service Learning Days June 9, 10, and 11 from 9:00-11:00. We will begin our time learning about Wooster and Wayne County with a tour of the Wayne County Historical Society. Tuesday we will simulate what it might be like to live in poverty and do some exploring in that area. Wednesday will be our service project which we will talk about and decide on earlier in the week. Please see Amy Baxstrom for more information and to sign your youth up. abaxstrom@firstpreswooster.org.



FAMILY

Art Night

First Presbyterian Church, Wooster

All ages welcome

June 17th

6:30-7:30

RSVP to Amy Baxstrom
abaxstrom@firstpreswooster.org



Join us for a family hike and smores on Wed June 18th at Wooster Memorial Park beginning at 6:30. We will hike with some activities along the way and end with smores! See Amy Baxstrom for more information and to RSVP
abaxstrom@firstpreswooster.org



Please keep the following youth and chaperones in your prayers as they embark on their summer trip to Ghost Ranch June 22-27.

Sarah Davis
Jorn Baxstrom
Nora Davis
Luke DeRodes
Noah Shaffer
JR Wright
Ben Burgett

Amy Baxstrom
Calin Baxstrom
Gabe Reith
Hudson Baxstrom
Tyler Gordon





You are invited to a church picnic at Prairie Lane Park on July 13th from 12:00-2:00.

Please bring a dish to share, your own table service (plates, cutlery, napkins and drink).

There will be swimming available and lots of laughter. Lawn chairs encouraged.

Please see Amy Baxstrom for more information- abaxstrom@firspressooster.org.



Please keep the following youth and chaperones
in your prayers as they embark on their summer
middle school conference in Tennessee
July 16-20.

Amy Baxstrom
Hope Shaffer
Ella Reith
Eliza Davis

Aniyah Odenkirk
Zoey Easterday

FPC FAMILY GAME NIGHT

Join us for a fun game night with
family, friends, and neighbors.

Activities Include

CARD & BOARD GAMES,
PUZZLES, AND MORE
SNACKS PROVIDED

JULY 22ND

6:30-7:30

RSVP to Amy Baxstrom

abaxstrom@firstpreswooster.org





The congregation extends its sympathy to the family of longtime member Jim Burrill who died on May 11, 2025. Jim was born in Burgessville, Ontario, Canada and raised on his family's farm. He joined the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1955 and trained as a pilot, fulfilling a lifelong ambition. He flew in rescue and transport squadrons, rising to the rank of Flight Lieutenant. After his service in the RCAF, Jim began flying for United Airlines in 1967. He retired from United as a Captain in 1995.

At FPC Jim served as an elder and deacon, sang in the choir, attended the Tuesday morning Bible Study, enjoyed First Friends with his wife Monica, and was instrumental in creating the Memorial Garden. Jim was also active in the community as a member of Kiwanis and volunteer at Secrest Arboretum, Habitat for Humanity, and the Vi Startzman Clinic.

Jim is survived by his wife Monica, four children and two stepchildren and their spouses, fourteen grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. A memorial service will be held at FPC on June 7 at 11 a.m.



The congregation extends its sympathy to the family of FPC member Mina Van Cleef who died on May 23, 2025. Mina was born in Havre, Montana and moved with her family several times as her father, a Presbyterian minister, was called to serve different churches. She graduated from Franklin High School in New Athens, Ohio in 1949 and received a B.A. in Physical Education from the College of Wooster in 1953.

Mina met her husband Don in the College of Wooster library, and they enjoyed 71 years of marriage. Don passed away in June 2024. Mina and Don raised their children in Pittsburgh and spent summers at Orient Point on Long Island. In 1971 Mina returned to school and earned an M.S. in Library Science from the University of Pittsburgh. She became a librarian in the same schools her children had attended.

Mina and Don retired from Orient Point in 1985. They moved to Wooster in 2006, spending the academic year here while returning to Orient Point in the summer. At FPC, Mina and Don were regular attendees in worship and at Friday Fellowship. Mina also shared her sewing skills with the liturgical arts team. Mina and Don were often seen around the C.O.W. campus at lectures, basketball games, and other events and were former co-presidents of the alumni association. In recent years Mina resided at West View Healthy Living.

Mina is survived by her children James, Robert, Elizabeth, and Thomas and their spouses; seven grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren. A memorial service was held at FPC on May 31, 2025.





JUNE BIRTHDAYS

June 1	Mark Gordon
June 3	James Kirchhofer
June 4	Polly Johnson, Jamie Ogle
June 6	Wayne Bare, Luke Armour
June 7	Roger Bostancic, Joan Watt
June 8	Carol Miller
June 9	Iva Byler
June 10	Paul Edmiston
June 11	Andy James
June 12	Kris Burris
June 16	Lillian Davis
June 17	Eliza Davis, Laura Bigley
June 18	Mackenzie Hancock, Ellen Armour
June 19	Janelle Collier, Scott Perkins
June 20	Mark Gooch
June 22	Dana Brooks, Cadie Webb
June 23	Marlene Zimmerman, Walter Johnson Elizabeth Perkins, Carol Gates
June 25	Karen McQuate
June 26	Carol Thompson
June 27	Sally Call, Betty Wilkin, Becky Webb
June 28	Monica Burrill
June 29	Kailana James



JULY BIRTHDAYS

July 1	Jane Blake, Mattie Dunlap
July 3	Dave Tugend
July 5	Norma Shaffer
July 6	Julie Pooler
July 7	Marian Cropp
July 12	Valerie Lippert, Fred Short
July 13	Mason Garcia
July 15	Joel Beckler, Bobbi Jentes-Mason
July 16	Sophie Garcia
July 18	Emily James, Jim Tew, Bobby Compton
July 20	Sarah Davis, Kris Evans
July 21	Emily Neill, Joyce Gorrell
July 22	Hanna Morgan, Pat Bare
July 24	Tom Buch, Jane Buch, Oliver Davis
July 26	Fran Cammer
July 27	Peter Gooch
July 28	Tammy Brooks
July 29	Cameron Edmiston, Elsa Boen
July 30	Mary Alice Streeter, David Wilkin
July 31	MaryAnn Wellington



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 2023 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 2023,
please sign-up at the following link:

Thank you!

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

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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/
www.firstpreswooster.org

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