



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
OF WOOSTER

TOWER TIDINGS MARCH 2025

Dear Friends,

Winter will just not let us go! It is continuing to have an icy grip week after chilly week. I think we need to have a word with that groundhog . . . or at least hope that the predicted six more weeks of winter will soon be coming to an end.

That said, we have entered the meditative season of Lent and are invited to use this time to center ourselves in spiritual practices, even as a governmental maelstrom continues to swirl around us. Last week's Ash Wednesday service shared with Westminster was a contemplative point of entry. Our full Lenten schedule can be found on page 8 of this newsletter.

This month brings new opportunities for being engaged in activities and ministry. The next installment of the Great Decisions lectures will be held on Tuesday, March 11, at 7:30 in Gault Recital Hall on the college campus. We will host the Presbytery meeting scheduled for Saturday, March 15, which offers us the chance to welcome our fellow churches from across Muskingum Valley into our space and hospitality. And the college's renowned Wooster Chorus will grace us with the first performance of their spring tour on Sunday, March 23 in our sanctuary.

We congratulate our wonderful youth for the magnificent spaghetti dinner they put on last month, which, thanks to the generosity of our congregation, raised upwards of \$2000 for the special trips they will be taking this summer. In the meantime, they will continue their thoughtful engagement with Lenten themes from A Sanctified Art and ongoing confirmation studies.

Finally, I encourage us in this season to give prayerful consideration to the financial needs of our church as we look forward to Easter newness and the future toward which God is calling us.

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 in February 2025. This meeting took place on February 26, 2025. A busy agenda guided this group of Elders this month and included the approval of several updated policies. Copies of these policies will be included in the Session notebook in the Gathering Area. Also discussed was the need for a Statement of Belonging to be included on the Church's website. April Gamble compiled a statement that was revised and will be added to our website. It is stated below:

Statement of Belonging for First Presbyterian Church, Wooster, Ohio

Aware of our country's complex history, we are intentional about welcoming all people into our beloved church community. We will always try our best to treat all persons with equal respect and concern as beloved children of God. We will examine ourselves, our practices and policies, and will seek to always be open to God's transforming Holy Spirit to reform and transform our actions and lives together. We will intentionally, and in Christian love, be accountable to God and to each other in our language, actions and behavior. We will act as peacemakers and seekers of inclusivity: "God calls the church to work for justice in the world...seeking dignity and freedom for all people,...bearing witness against systems of violence and oppression; and redressing wrongs against individuals, groups and peoples."

First Presbyterian Church, Wooster will be hosting the stated meeting of Muskingum Valley Presbytery on Saturday, March 15, 2025 with worship and business meeting to begin at 10:00 a.m. This is an important way to welcome our neighbors within our Presbytery and to participate in the decisions made by this governing body. Elders were encouraged to attend this morning event and to help with greeting and welcoming our guests.

Please be reminded that the Annual Meeting of the congregation will be held on Sunday, April 27, following the 10:30 worship service. We will combine that meeting with a potluck meal on that day. Anyone who is submitting a report to be included in the Annual Report, please send it to Donna by March 30 at the latest.

During this February meeting of the Session, the financial status of the church was discussed following the RDM report. Session members discussed partnering with other faith communities including Presbyterian congregations and churches of other denominations to explore opportunities to expand mission and ministry in a way to increase the impact of that care and the participation of current and future members of our church family. Rev. Rice, Tom Rumbaugh, Stu Miller and Lisa Rumbaugh (Clerk) met with Matt Skolnik (Executive Presbyter of MVP) to discuss ways to reach out to other congregations to form connections and perhaps, combine resources and energies. The theme of "Growing Our Mission Together" was created and to that end, a decision was made to

Session Highlights

form a group to explore opportunities with faith communities for growing our shared missions.

The March meeting of the Session will be held on April 2, 2025.

The April meeting of the Session will be held on April 30, 2025.

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

Welcome Muskingum Valley Presbytery

Saturday, March 15, 2025

Bruch Hall

First Presbyterian Church Wooster will be hosting the Stated meeting of the Muskingum Valley Presbytery on Saturday, March 15th. These meetings are held quarterly in various locations throughout the Presbytery area. Fellowship time will begin at 9:00 am.
with worship and business meeting to follow at 10:00 a.m.

Please contact Lisa Rumbaugh if you would like to greet our visitors or assist with the luncheon.

sessionclerk@firstpreswooster.org

330-466-5796

This is a small but important opportunity to be of service to the larger church in a very tangible way.



Greetings from the Resource Development Ministry!

Our 2025 Stewardship Campaign is currently sitting at \$336,732 of pledges, down a bit from the 2024 level of \$341,000. Please know that you can still submit your pledge card to the church office or anyone on the RDM. We continue to work on the 2025 church budget and will be able to finalize it for Session approval shortly.

Last year proved to be a particular challenging year for our finances. Congregational giving was down \$14,000, but our investments had a positive return of over 8.5% and we received a generous legacy from the Don Beane estate. Some “surprise” expenses last year included the ceiling repair in the basement, fire system repair, lower-level HVAC repairs, and replacing a roof top air conditioning unit.

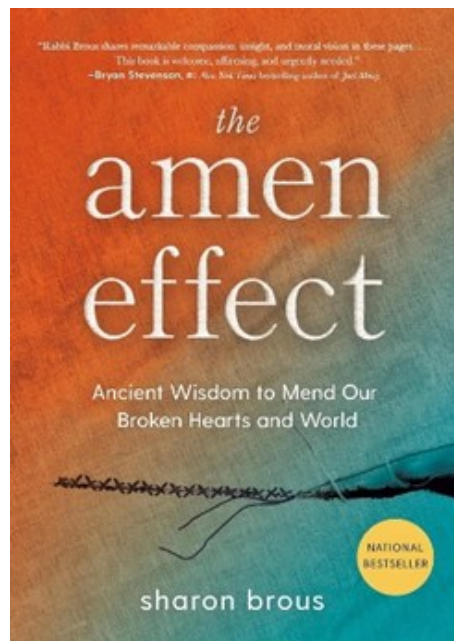
We also continued to fund our local and national mission projects and benefitted from the highest of quality programming and guidance from church staff as we proceed on our spiritual journeys. In order to pay our bills last year, we did have to go over our budgeted allowance from our investment account. We will evaluate last years numbers and make adjustments to minimize the necessary amounts used from our investments for this year.

More discussion and details will be presented to the congregation at this year’s annual meeting in April. In the meantime, please reach out to anyone on the RMD with any questions or concerns.

Blessings and peace,

Tom Rumbaugh, Chair

Dana Brooks, church treasurer; Laura Neill; Mark Gordon; Jeff Perkins;
Stuart Miller; Steve Logiudice; David Rice, pastor



SPRING BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

You're invited to join a discussion of the book *The Amen Effect: Ancient Wisdom to Heal Our Broken Hearts and Our World* by Sharon Brous on four Thursday evenings from March 20th through April 10th. We'll meet from 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. in the church parlor.

Brous, a leading American rabbi, contends that it is through our most basic human instinct – the longing for connection – that we awaken our shared humanity and begin to heal ourselves and our communities. Weaving together ancient Jewish wisdom, contemporary science, and personal experience, she contends that the spiritual work of our time is to find our way to each other in both celebration and sorrow. This practice of knowing and being known and of journeying together is what she calls “the amen effect”.

The Amen Effect is available for purchase online in various formats. At our first meeting on March 20, we'll discuss the Introduction and Chapter 1. Please contact Carol Gates at cmgates23@gmail.com with questions or to sign up. There is also a sign-up sheet in the Gathering Area.



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/Remind for updates. (**Not on the Remind list? You definitely need to be-ask me how**)

March 1-
Italian Dinner
5:00-7:00pm

March 15 Sr. High Only
Wooster Escape Room
4:00pm

March 16 Jr. High Only
Laser Tag
2:00 pm



During this season of Lent, we will be using materials from A Sanctified Art. It is a theme that will make us think of the spaces of gray, the spaces in-between, and the spaces of unknown. Each week we will explore spaces that we normally look over. Through devotionals, cards, and social media we will explore what it looks like to be in those spaces together.



This year, we're letting the Gospel of Luke guide us through Lent in ARISE. Beginning with Jesus setting his face toward Jerusalem (Luke 9:51), this worship series flows through several familiar stories—the Good Samaritan, Mary and Martha, the fruitless fig tree, the Lost Sheep, Zacchaeus, and more. Many of these stories are well-known in both sacred and secular imagination and hold significance in pop culture, church history, politics, and everything in between. Our theme, "Everything In Between," invites us to navigate the polarities in our lives with more faith, intention, and openness to be transformed. You will see that each weekly theme explores two supposed binaries, like "faith & works" or "rest & growth," or "grief & hope." We often consider these ideas to be opposing. However, as we explore these concepts within the scriptures, we find nuance and complexity. We find that these dichotomies are false. We might begin to see a full spectrum instead of black and white. We might find that God is present in between.

And so, this season, we invite you to look beyond black and white binaries and easy answers. We encourage you to notice the dichotomies that define our lives, but also imagine where God might be meeting us beyond the categories we create. This Lent, we're trusting that God shows up in shades of gray, rainbow hues, and everywhere in between.

Join us for ARISE on Sunday mornings at 8:45 in the Chapel.



SEASON OF LENT 2025

ASH WEDNESDAY – MARCH 5

SUPPER AT 6:00PM IN BRUCH HALL SERVICE AT 7:00PM IN THE SANCTUARY

PALM SUNDAY – APRIL 13

ARISE AT 8:45AM SUNDAY SCHOOL AT 9:15AM WORSHIP AT 10:30

MAUNDY THURSDAY – APRIL 17

SUPPER AT 6:00PM IN BRUCH HALL SERVICE AT 7:00PM IN THE SANCTUARY

GOOD FRIDAY – APRIL 18

SERVICE AT 7:00PM IN THE SANCTUARY

EASTER SUNDAY – APRIL 20

SUNDAY SCHOOL AT 9:15AM WORSHIP AT 10:30

**ALL ARE WELCOME IN PERSON OR STREAM SERVICES ONLINE AT
WWW.FIRSTPRESWOOSTER.ORG/WORSHIP**

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF WOOSTER



Faith and Worship

LENTEN SOUP SUPPERS

This year, after much discussion and feedback from other Teams and congregational members, Faith and Worship made the decision to scale back our Lenten Soup Suppers from every Wednesday during Lent to only two soup suppers.

The first Soup Supper which we will share with Westminster here at First Pres, is on Ash Wednesday, March 5. The meal begins at 6:00pm with the Ash Wednesday service to follow at 7:00pm. Women's Fellowship will host a simple meal of soup, bread, and fruit.

The second Soup Supper will be on Maundy Thursday, April 17, at 6:00pm with the service to follow at 7:00pm. This meal will be hosted by Faith and Worship.

LENTEN REMINDERS

During Lent communion will be served only at the Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, and Easter services.

In Memory/Honor of Easter flowers for the chancel are \$12.00 per pot and must be ordered by April 9. To order, please fill out an order form or call the church office.

Nancy Young/Susie Slack, Co-chairs



Easter Flowers for the Sanctuary

This Easter, remember or honor those special people in your life by ordering a pot or two of joyful spring tulips for our chancel.

The flowers are \$12.00 per pot and the names of those you are remembering or honoring will appear in an insert in the Easter bulletin.

Just fill in the form below and put it in the collection plate or call the church office to order: 330-264-9420.

Please order by April 9.

You may take flowers home after the 10:15 service on Easter Sunday.

Name of Donor _____

In Memory Of _____

In Honor Of _____

Liturgical Arts Ministry adds art to worship

First Presbyterian group has been making creative banners for 10 years

By EMILY VOTAW
Staff Writer

WOOSTER — Everyone has different talents. Maybe you're good with your hands, or perhaps you're better with your words or with your mind.

For the members of First Presbyterian Church of Wooster's liturgical arts ministry, the myriad of talents the group has are constantly being used to create gorgeous hanging artwork for the church's chapel.

Currently there are 10 members in the group, whose expertise ranges from everything from hand-dying fabrics to knitting and crocheting. The banners the group creates are incredibly diverse, depicting everything from Easter Sunday with a simple, but gorgeous, cut-vinyl banner to the creation story with various striking hues of bold color.

"We are an eclectic and flexible group," said Marlene Zimmerman, who does quite a bit of sewing for the group. "(We have) different artistic

talents that eventually are blended into a new banner."

The group started in 2005, after First Presbyterian member Connie Barnard started talking to members about collaborating on various banners. Although Barnard is not currently involved with the group, members all expressed that she played a big part in getting many of them involved in the ministry.

"Connie reached out to me during a fabric art exhibit," said Sonya Tugend. "She kept on asking me how I did various parts of my art, and at the time we were still visiting churches in the area, and her contact with me played a big role in us deciding to return to First Presbyterian and become members."

While group member Elaine Arnold was sick several years back, Barnard regularly brought her things to hand stitch to occupy herself while on the road to recovery. Zimmerman explained the process that goes into making the elaborate art

pieces the group creates is actually pretty simple.

"Someone presents an idea for a banner, sketches are made, discussion of its merit and how it can be made (fabric, paint, etc.) follows," said Zimmerman. "After the pros and cons are thrashed out, the work begins."

And that work process can take anywhere from a couple of weeks to a couple of months, depending on the intensity of the work the imagined banner requires.

So far as the design process, Tugend said the group strays away from incorporating words into its creations as much as possible, trying to tell the specific story or message they wish to convey with images over words.

The group works on its projects in the upper portion of the church in a room with a spacious table, a design wall and a place to hang the creations once they are ready to be put in storage.

"My favorite banner might be the one that we use during the Lent-



Mike Schenk photo/www.buydrphotos.com

Jane Taylor (left) and Jane Blake hold up one of First Presbyterian Church of Wooster's many liturgical banners. The group has been making a myriad of banners to be displayed in the church's chapel by hand for 10 years. "We are an eclectic and flexible group," said Marlene Zimmerman, who does quite a bit of sewing for the group. "(We have) different artistic talents that eventually are blended into a new banner."

6-26-2015

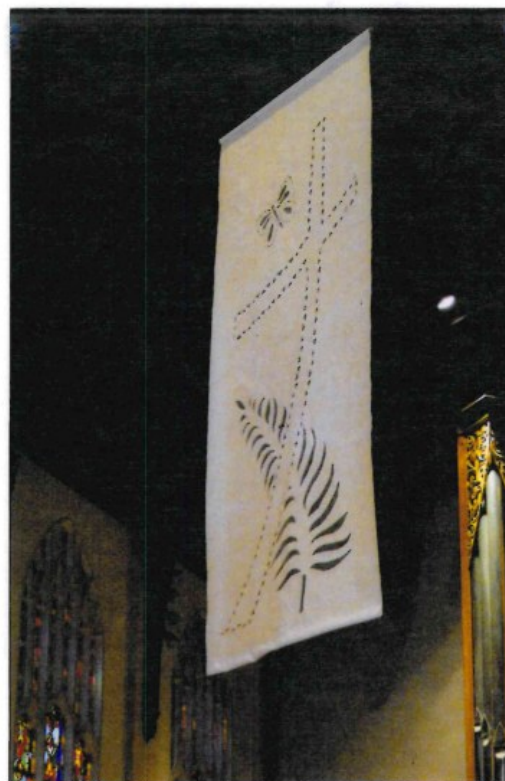
en season," said Tugend, referring to a banner that consists of varying shades of dark purples and blacks. After the Lenten season comes to an end,

on Easter Sunday the banners are decked out with psychedelic, brightly colored and highly jubilant butterflies, signifying the joy that Easter brings

in the Christian tradition. Reporter Emily Votaw can be reached at 330-287-1655 or evotaw@the-daily-record.com. She's on Twitter @EmVotaw.

MADE
2015

The banner hanging over the center aisle of the sanctuary is symbolic of the risen Lord and the joyful shout of our Easter Alleluias



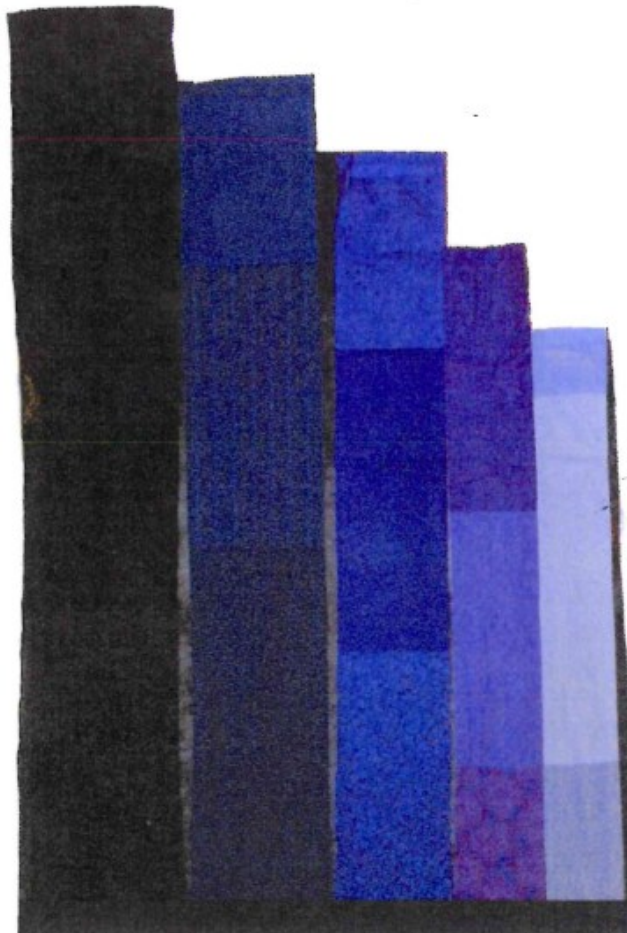
The Lenten Hangings in the Sanctuary

The Liturgical season is Lent. The color is purple symbolizing repentance and preparation. Designed to enter into active waiting in darkness.

In our fast paced, instant, express lane society, we would like to bypass the 40 days of Lent and get on to Easter lilies, butterflies, painted eggs, and the empty cross. However, we need the dark colors of Lent. As we wait in the darkness, much activity can be going on. An embryo becomes a baby, from a dark chrysalis a butterfly emerges, from tomb comes resurrection.

During Lent, we have the opportunity to enter into active waiting in the darkness. As we journey into our inner being, we are able to make space for God, we listen to God's voice and discern God's call in our lives. In the darkness we can be changed and transformed. We enter the darkness humbly and obediently and pray that we may emerge into the light of Easter as more faithful witnesses and servants to the risen Lord. The Liturgical Arts Group created this hanging in 2006.

May the Lenten hangings be to God's glory and the edification of our faith community.





The congregation extends its sympathy to the family of longtime member Pearl Grosjean who died on January 30, 2025 at the age of 90. Pearl was born in Kilkeel, County Down, Northern Ireland and trained as a nurse in London. She worked as a district nurse in Belfast before moving to the United States in 1958 to work as a surgical nurse in Lakewood, Ohio. She married her late husband Walt and moved to Wooster in 1961.

Pearl was active in many community organizations and served as president of Junior Women's Club, Civic Club, and Chapter DF of the P.E.O. sisterhood. She organized the first Parental Aid to Teachers (PAT) program at Parkview Elementary School which later expanded to the entire Wooster City School system. Pearl and Walt traveled extensively in their later years including frequent visits back to Northern Ireland.

Pearl is survived by her children Julie, Heidi, and Scott and their spouses and five grandchildren. A private memorial service will be held.



The congregation extends its sympathy to the family of longtime FPC member Carl Schmid who died on February 14, 2025. Carl was born in Wooster, graduated from Wooster High School in 1955, and served in the Marine Corps from 1955-1957. He married his wife Dottie in 1966. Carl worked briefly at Rubbermaid and then enjoyed a career in construction at Snyder Brothers and T.R. Snyder Construction.

Carl is survived by his wife Dottie, his daughter Lorrie and her husband Shane Thacker, and his son Scott. A funeral service was held at McIntire, Bradham & Slek on February 20, 2025.

**The Wooster Chorus will be in concert at
First Presbyterian Church
on Sunday, March 23, at 7:30 pm.
This is a wonderful vocal ensemble,
and we are hosting them as they embark on their Spring Tour.
Please make plans to attend
this wonderful musical presentation!**



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

March 4	Noah Shaffer
March 6	Jim Watt, Carolyn Rice
March 7	Jon Swank
March 9	Angela Earley
March 12	Audrey Henderson
March 13	Ted Short
March 14	Makena Conrad
March 15	Karen James, Madeline Harrington
March 16	LeRoy Foster, Pat Miles, Carmella Scott
March 17	Olivia Hiner
March 19	Stirling Musselman
March 21	Kathy Turning
March 23	Neil Edmiston, Sarah Dunlap
March 24	Roy Hancock, III
March 27	Peter Swank
March 28	Shirley Badger, Megan Armour



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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Wooster, OH 44691

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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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