



Annual Report 2023

2023 Annual Report

First Presbyterian Church

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501 Washington Ave - Defiance, OH 43512
(419) 782-2781 • office@1presby.com • www.1presby.com
Facebook • First Presbyterian Church of Defiance
YouTube Channel • <https://www.youtube.com/user/The1presby>

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation

Sunday, February 11, 2024

Reports to be presented as part of our worship together

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From Pastor Ann 2023

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The year 2023 was a year to consider “What’s Next?” for First Presbyterian Church, Defiance. What’s next in pastoral leadership, mission, fellowship and our worship life together?

The Session spent the year in discussing that topic, reviewing our financial picture, and our active church membership including those who are part of our faith community. While we can make our finances work for us for the next few years, we determined that with our numbers and those able and willing to do hands-on ministry, we should be considering shared ministry as an option for the future. Our discussions centered on sharing a pastor with another congregation. Both congregations would keep their worship services and ministries with the pastor leading worship and serving in both congregations, probably equally. We reached out to St John United Church of Christ in Defiance which was having the same discussion. With a joint team, we discussed what shared ministry might look like and recommended to our respective leaders and congregations that we pursue it. Jim Brehler, pastor at St. John UCC, is retiring after Easter 2024, so this affords a time to experiment with shared ministry; having Pastor Ann serve both congregations beginning in late April or May 1 at the latest. The congregations would then share the finances of her terms of call, adjust worship times, and see how it unfolds. There are several creative ideas within the joint team and we will begin working on the details in mid-January 2024. Stay tuned as more information comes out.

Mission matters to this congregation, especially as we consider how to serve our community. We have our spring and summer neighborhood garden. Big thanks to Mike Peffley for keeping it organized, to all who weed, harvest, clean up around it. The produce stand got a lot of use- for our harvest, plus the extra harvests of your and others gardens. We are getting some “press” on the Defiance Facebook page as people have popped up interested in more gardens in town. “Check out First Presbyterian Church’s garden boxes...”

Tools for Schools, well organized by Pam and Rich Reid, served 300 students in 2023, and over 90 students received back to school haircuts. We had tremendous community support and have formed a Tools for Schools Steering Committee to organize the project and keep it moving forward. Three from our church join 4 others from the community, representing churches and organizations, to work together to fundraise, collect and distribute supplies. I was so energized by this group when it met in early January. We are well on our way to a successful Tools for Schools for 2024. Stay tuned for how you can help!

Coats for Christmas had its 36th year of collecting and distributing coats for men, women and children in the community. We took in 1300 coats and distributed 950 in November. Amazing. We also have expanded the outreach to include volunteers from the wider community and are especially grateful to State Bank G.I.V.E.S. and the volunteer group at St Mary and St John Catholic Churches. These folks helped build the coat racks, when some of our usual folks were unable to help this time. They helped collect and launder coats, and worked at the distribution with our folks, people from other churches and community organizations. As I have said before, we instigate these works of mercy and grace for the community to respond in love. That is the work of Jesus Christ.

Pastor Ann, continued

On All Saints Sunday, we remembered three of our beloved men, Tim Hutchinson, Vic Dunlap and Floyd Culver, and 2 women, Nancy Jehanyar and Judy Rochester (whom I baptized just weeks before her death in January), acknowledging their faith and service in the name of Jesus Christ, receiving the hope and comfort that they are part of the church triumphant.

Looking ahead to 2024, we will continue these ministries, continue to grow in faith and hope together in worship and fellowship. We will enter into the shared ministry experiment and see where it leads. In all we say and do, may God be glorified, may Jesus Christ be seen at work in us and through us.

Pastor Ann Wasson
Epiphany 2024

Session 2023

Walking together -- We are a Community, seeking to be in stride with Christ.

As I put the photo collage together, I am struck by the joyful and faithful participation of all who are involved with our church. It has been a year active for the people of God around us, as we have tried to share our abundant blessings to serve God's kingdom with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love.

At the end of 2023, session consisted of three women and three men. Those ending service in 2023 were Sue King, Curtis Richards and Pam Reid. Serving through 2024 are Charlie Bates, Beth Sigg and Joel Youkers. Curtis Richards agreed to serve another term and Foyle Solether came back on session. We said goodbye to board member Susan and Pam with our thanks and gratitude for their dedicated service to the church. Beth Sigg was elected clerk and Marsha Karr will continue as treasurer on staff parttime for 2024.

There were ten regular session meetings and two congregational meetings in 2023. Average attendance at regular meetings was 91%. Ruling elders continued attending meetings of the Maumee Valley Presbytery on a rotating basis. Joel Youkers continued to serve as third party claims specialist for the Presbytery. The session minutes and the church register were completed for review by the Maumee Valley Presbytery, this year with clerks meeting in groups of two, followed by an official zoom authorization. The Annual Statistical report was filed in February.

Lou Ann Begley retired and Stacie Wagner was hired to serve in the office as needed. She expertly handles the bulletin, the Presb-e-Blast, the monthly newsletter, preparation of Easy Worship slides for Sunday mornings, a new monthly calendar in the form of a refrigerator postcard, and other duties.

Three members of the church and one dear friend passed away during the year. The total adult membership is 76 with approximately 15 others who also actively participate in the life of the church.

Church members continued to provide generous and loving support to many in need through special offerings, donations, and outreach events, such as Souper Bowl Sunday, One Great Hour of Sharing, Peace and Global Witness, Christmas Joy offerings, NAMI, generous scholarships for our friends in Mexico, PATH Center, House of Ruth, St.. John Lutheran food pantry, the mat ministry in the Bryan area, treats for our college students and military personnel, Ravens Care, Inc., recipients of the Thank Offering (Zions Lutheran, St. John UCC, St. Mary Catholic food pantry), Christmas donation to Northeastern Local and Ayersville Schools to help pay off lunch debt for students, and year 36 of Coats for Christmas. You will read about growth of Tools for

Session 2023, continued

haircut program and the neighborhood garden. I know you will enjoy reading these report—the stories of the work of Christ's hands and feet are many. You will see a growth in serving each other and year-round outreach to our community. It is truly a blessing to be a part of this church, working to be in stride with Christ.

We have been blessed as recipients substantial grants to support our work. Twenty eight different community organizations and our Synod joined with us to support Tools for Schools, the Back to School Haircut program and Coats for Christmas with donations and grants totaling over \$16,000. Community support for these projects through volunteer participation has also been wonderful.

Ann's sermons continue to be recorded and uploaded in audio format to the website. It is hoped that many will be able to hear and benefit from Ann's engaging sermons. Home centered members also receive a modified bulletin, which includes an entire worship service. A different paper bulletin is prepared for Sunday worship as well. We continue to worship together in the sanctuary during the fall, winter and spring, and in the air conditioned chapel during the summer, now with a unified year round start time of 10 am.

Communion was served twice monthly. Joel continues to play the organ. The New Wineskins took a hiatus but played again in December. Mike Winners regularly provides special music. On Sundays when Pastor Ann was on study leave or vacation, the pulpit was filled by the Rev. Norm Wasson and parishioners, leading discussion of Nooma videos. Rich Reid and Mike Winners continued to run the sound and Easy Worship projection on Sundays.

The Mexican connection continued with digital communications shared with the church and the generous Mexican scholarship program. Four people plan to visit in the summer of 2024 in combination with the church in Bryan. The group will serve and interact with the Prince of Peace Presbyterian Church in Playa del Carmen. We hope to see friends from Ticul, Opichen and Peto during that visit and take your greetings and love.

Pastor Ann continues to be active in the community and the larger church, heading up the MVP Leadership Commission, formerly the Committee on Ministry. Pastor Ann leads MVP churches in visioning for the future and we reaped the benefit of her experience. She serves locally with the Lions, on the board of NAMI, on the Hall of Fame committee of the Tuttle Museum and the anti-racism reading and action ecumenical group. She preached locally at the Defiance Good Friday service. She was featured in the Crescent News during Pastor Appreciation Month and was recognized with a gift from the congregation.

The session is so thankful for Pastor Ann, our hired staff, our volunteers, and each of you for your enthusiastic service to God and our neighbors. Thank you all for the role you play in sharing God's love. We are grateful for the continued efforts of many to reveal the Glory of the Lord in the work that is being done here and beyond the walls of our building, and as new doors open for us all the time.

In my last report as clerk, I'd like to take the liberty to thank you all, dear friends. As we have moved, we have reflected on our experience at First Presbyterian and are grateful for so many things. You welcomed and nurtured our young family and became our friends. You trusted us to work with the youth and to take them places, were willing to join in to make these trips intergenerational experiences, which was a huge win all of us, youth and adults. We thank you for your ongoing support of the Mexico mission. Little did we know that God had a huge plan for all of us together. You shared in these life changing experiences, encouraging and funding the travel, providing scholarships, opening your hearts and homes to host, and we all have learned how easy it is to

Session 2023, continued

make friends in Christ. You have been so encouraging in serving others. I imagine this church with God⁶ as the helm of the “little engine that could”, helping us all to never give up, to continue to reinvent our work together to care for each other, to serve others, to make a difference. Together this is God’s strong body with able hands and feet, pulling together to love one another and to love beyond our walls, loving our neighbors near and far. Thank you for the sweet send off, the hugs, the cards, and the wonderfully thoughtful gifts that will help others in far off places and nearby. You have filled our hearts. We already miss you. We have learned so much from you, and you go with us. God bless you. *From Romans 1:12 ...that we may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith.* That’s what you’ve done for us.

Respectfully submitted,
Pamela Reid, Clerk of Session

Worship & Music 2023

Committee Members are Nancy Meyer, Marsha Karr, Donna Black and Lynn Bishop. Mike Winners represents the New Wineskins with Pastor Ann also attending.

The New Wineskins resumed playing on December 31, 2023 and will play at their convenience during 2024.

Joel Youkers is the organist and Ned Clark was a guest on the Sundays that Joel was not available. Mike Winners also provided special music periodically.

Communion continues to be served on the first and third Sunday of the month.

Lent began with an Ash Wednesday service. Deacons provided the Maundy Thursday Agape Meal. Members of the congregation brought in spring flowers to enhance the chancel for Easter Services. Fall programs kicked off in September. In October, worship was held at Auglaize Village and World Communion Sunday was observed. All Saints Day was observed in November and candles lit in remembrance of those lost during 2023. A candle light service was held on Christmas Eve with a casual service held on Christmas Eve morning in the annex with singing, prayer and snacks.

Thank you to everyone for your continued support of our church.

Respectfully submitted,
Marsha Karr, Chairperson

Prayer and Care Group 2023

A prayer chain refers to a dedicated group of people who have offered to be involved in the prayer life of the church. They commit to praying individually, regularly, and confidentially for the people and concerns requested of them. The Prayer Chain of First Presbyterian Church has been an active mission group since the 1980s when it was initiated by Mrs. Mildred Hutchinson and carried on via email under the leadership of Sandy Dunlap. The email messaging comes under the subject of Prayer and Care.

The mission of this group is to hold members of our congregation, community, and world in prayer in times of need and in times of thanksgiving. This is a mission for everyone – male/female, young/old, working/retired, active/inactive.

Anyone who believes in the power of prayer is invited and welcome to become a participant in the group. If interested, contact Sandy Dunlap or call the church office at 419-782-2781. Your name will be placed on the prayer chain and you will begin receiving email or other notification of prayer requests.

Jeremiah 29:12 Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.

We Kirk 2023

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WeKirk this year has been a great year. We started the year with four and by the end of the year we were down to three dedicated young children. I am very proud of all the work and dedication the kids have toward their commitments to WeKirk and the church.

In January I once again attended the annual APCE event, but unfortunately I was not able to go in person due to covid restrictions still in place. I attended all the workshops, plenaries, and worships that I was able to via zoom. I attended workshops on how to include the kids in worship and how to build spirituality in a small congregation. I was able to implement the kids worship space inside the large space as you all can see. The kids have been doing very well in the services. I am very thankful to all who have been respectful and accommodating to the littles being with us in the sanctuary.

We continued the year with our Godly play stories and a few seasonal celebrations before taking a break for the summer. Over the summer WeKirk met at least once a month. We had a different activity each time, splash pad, slime water day, and a day at the park. During these events we would just be together and remind the kids we never forget them. Jenni and I would make sure to make ourselves available for the kids if or when they ever needed anything.

During Fall kickoff WeKirk gave Lili to the youth group with a sending off message and celebration of her. WeKirk then continued to meet with the remaining kids getting right back into our stories. The older girls have shown Asher how to act in church and what to do during free reflection time. The kids never cease to amaze me with their commitment to help those in need. They had no hesitation to pass out or pick up the food for our annual food drive. This year the donations were plenty and given to the St. John Lutheran food bank. They were very appreciative to get the donations from all of our community members.

We had a Halloween celebration and were able to attend the Martin Luther event at St. John Lutheran again this year. The kids were able to have a safe and fun time at the event. They got candy and snacks as well as learned a few fun things about Martin Luther and his teachings.

This brings us to our big hooray for the end of the year when we make cookies and prepare for the play for the congregation. This year's play was the Christmas story retold in present day narrative. Aubrey (Mary), Asher (Joseph), and Jacynda (Angel) did a wonderful job this year showing a fun and funny revisiting of the Christmas story.

All around this year has been filled with good times and great memories. I pray the kids will remember these times with WeKirk for years to come. I know I appreciate all the growing they have done and the teaching they have given to me as well as what I have given to them. Thank you to all the congregation for what you have done for the kids this past year and in all the years to come.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristal Alford

Christian Education 2023

Goals

The Christian Education Committee actively endorsed specific curriculum to

1. Strengthen Christians' faith journey
2. Study and apply God's Word
3. Strengthen relationships with God and intentionally share God's love.
4. Create Matthew 25 opportunities for congregational vitality

Membership

The Christian Education (CE) committee consisted of chairperson Pam Reid and members Kristal Alford, We Kirk Director; Cara Richards, Curtis Richards, Youth Group leaders, Barbara Florke, and Pastor Ann Wasson. Barbara Florke served as recorder. This group currently meets quarterly and welcomes new members at any time. Members are not elected from the congregation—this group is open to all participants.

WeKirk

The WeKirk ministry is directed by Kristal Alford, with assistance from Jenni Price. Each Sunday one of the leaders presented the Godly Play story to the children during worship. This fall they were welcomed to stay in worship in their own space that provided sermon related art activities to engage them. This allows the children to be more connected to our worship of God.

Wednesday evening meetings were held from September to May. Kristal and Jenni used the Godly Play and Holy Moly curricula. Volunteer church members provided dinner to facilitate a smooth transition for leaders and participants from work, sports practice, and aftercare.

Special activities during the year included the neighborhood collection of food items before Thanksgiving, which was shared with St. John Lutheran, attendance at the St. John Lutheran Reformation event at Halloween and the presentation of a program after the church Christmas dinner, as well as several fun activities throughout the summer designed to help the children stay connected and to build relationships.

Youth

The Youth Program was led by Curtis and Cara Richards from September to May. The youth also enjoyed the dinners provided by volunteers.

The youth decorated four boxes for treats with a heart theme and the deacons mailed them to our college students and deployed military personnel.

In February the youth led the Souper Bowl of Caring Collection to diminish local hunger and donated the proceeds to the Ravens.

In the spring and summer the youth helped to maintain the garden beds, and assisted at Tools for Schools and also later at Coats for Christmas. Their homemade laundry detergent was again an appreciated gift at Coats.

In the autumn, they welcomed Lily Seiple as a new youth group member and spent some weeks together viewing the film, *Wonder*, and discussing important themes.

Pastor Ann used materials from *A Sanctified Art* with the theme of Seeking to prepare devotionals sheets to take home each Sundays in Lent and for the youth and WeKirk. The Advent theme, also by *A Sanctified Art*, was How does a Weary World Rejoice?

Blessing of the Backpacks was sponsored by CE during the Fall Kick off. Backpack tags were made available for kids, youth, and adults.

Devotional books, *These Days*, are available for all as a gift by a church member.

Defiance Christian Community Justice Group continues to meet, discussing readings and planning projects to help to combat racism and systemic poverty. This supports the Matthew 25 initiative of the PCUSA. Church members who participate describe the study as friendly, informative, and inspirational.

Christian Education 2023, continued

All Church educational mission opportunities included

- Tools for Schools, held in partnership with WeKirk missions, Presbyterian Deacons, and many community partners. Donations and grants received totaled over \$16,000. About half of that was spent on purchasing supplies, which were also supplemented by in-kind donations from the community, making the total cost of supplying backpacks for over 300 students well above that amount. A total of 28 different organizations in the community participated in some way, either by donating money or volunteering at the event. Each person attending received a backpack tag that said “You Matter” along with a prayer on the back.
- The Back to School haircut initiative was also supported in part by the Christian Education Committee. Sylvia Koester and her team of stylists cut and styled over 90 students. While they waited for their turn, students enjoyed Rich Reid’s games in the yoga studio next door, and were enchanted by Justin the Clown and his balloon creating abilities.
- Both of these projects proceeded with the intention of helping each student to be ready for school with the confidence of a new haircut and the supplies needed to start to learn on the first day, to be ready for success in this new year.

The CE committee is committed to strengthening Christians’ faith journey and offering opportunities to intentionally share God’s love. We welcome input and participation and are here to serve.

Creative Concepts 2023

Creative Concepts is a task force whose mission is to generate new and fresh ideas of all kinds for our church. As such, there is no defined membership list, and anyone is welcome to join us.

Pizza and Programs was held the 4th Wednesday of most months, with pizza and side/dessert dishes to share, followed by programs of interest.

We gathered in July for outdoor worship, food, fellowship and fun at Putt Putt Golf and Games.

We helped to organize and execute a very well attended church service and pot luck at Auglaize Village. This has become an annual event. This was held with joint participation from UCC.

The annual Christmas luncheon was held at the church in December with a pot luck meal, a children’s program, an appearance by Santa, caroling, and recognition of our staff.

Respectively submitted,
Beth Sigg

Presbyterian Women Financial Report 2023

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Balance as of 1/1/2023	\$2,018.77
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Receipts 2023

Pledges	\$415.00	
Least Coin Offering	\$33.18	
Lions Club Luncheons	\$1,200.00	
Memorial Donation	\$100.00	
Funeral Dinner Donation	\$100.00	
Thank Offering (church donations)	\$633.00	
Sept. PW Luncheon	\$80.00	
Lions Club Donation	\$500.00	
RADA Cutlery Sales	\$157.40	
Holiday Bazaar and Craft Sale Donation	\$376.10	
Total	\$3,594.68	\$5,613.45

Expenses 2023

Presbyterian Women in MVP Pledge	\$400.00	
Maumee Valley Presbytery Operating Fund	\$30.00	
Least Coin Offering	\$33.18	
Board of Deacons Donation (coats)	\$100.00	
A. Tuttle Museum Donation	\$100.00	
*Thank Offering (St. Mary Food Pantry)	\$300.00	
*Thank Offering (Zion's Lutheran Innkeepers)	\$300.00	
*Thank Offering (St. John UCC Little Libraries)	\$300.00	
Lions Club Food and Supplies	\$449.78	
Horizons Magazine	\$37.90	
Christmas Donation to Local Family	\$100.00	
Gift Cards for Staff	\$90.00	
PW Luncheon Food	\$83.32	
Funeral Dinner Expense	\$65.27	
* \$633 Church Donation, \$267 PW Donation		
Total	\$2,389.45	\$3,224.00

Balance as of 12/31/23	\$3,224.00
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Susan King
Treasurer

Presbyterian Women & Friends 2023

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PW & Friends are very active in our church. We are open to any women who would like to attend our meetings, which explains the “Friends” part of our name. We continue to have a couple of FPC Napoleon members attending monthly. We have invited the UCC church women to join us for our Bible studies.

In the spring we finished the study “Genealogy of Jesus - Women in the Bible”, led by Ann Wasson, Ann Small and Donna Black. In addition, we watched the DVD “Story of Ruth”.

Ann Small was the coordinator for a visit to the Tuttle Museum in April where we learned more about the history of Defiance. Sue King organized a lunch out for May.

Fall saw the beginning of a new Bible study led by Pastor Ann entitled “Sacred Encounters with Jesus” in October and November.

Our Thank-offering was designated to continue to help local missions. Because other churches helped us in the Backpack and Coats for Christmas missions, we invited Zion Lutheran, St. Mary's Catholic and St. John's UCC to send a speaker to tell us about their local missions on Thank-offering Sunday. We also had a coffee hour and a mini-sale with Rada knives, baked goods and other craft items for sale after church.

Our mission giving in 2023 was:

\$300 to UCC church for their outdoor food library box, and weekend food for students.

\$300 to St. Mary's Catholic church for their food pantry and furniture bank.

\$300 to Zion Lutheran church for community dinners and paper products.

\$100 to help a local family for Christmas.

We continue sending caring cards and Christmas packages to our shut-ins. PW has been averaging 12 women in attendance at our meetings, and we welcome more!

Sincerely,
Sandy Youkers

Deacons 2023

The ministry of the deacon as set forth in Scripture is one of compassion, witness, and service, sharing in the redeeming love of Jesus Christ for the poor, the hungry, the sick, the lost, the friendless, the oppressed, those burdened by unjust policies or structures or anyone in distress.

The Deacon Board was active this year with the help of the following members:

Pam Retcher, Susan Price, Elaine McBride — Class of 2024

Barbara Florke, Sigrid Emerling, Jeanne Peffley — Class of 2023

We did not have a Session liaison this last year. Pam Retcher was named moderator, Jeanne Peffley continued as treasurer and Sigrid Emerling served as the deacon representative to the nominating committee. Rich Reid agreed to volunteer as recorder.

Food and Fellowship:

Wednesday night fellowship meals continued in an abbreviated manner with two nights a month and meals prepared by fewer groups and Creative Concepts. Other all-church gatherings were financed by the deacons including the traditional holiday meal. The Agape meal on Maundy Thursday was organized and prepared by the deacons.

The deacons continue to maintain a stock of paper products, plastic ware, take-home containers, condiments, salad dressings and other items to be used by any of the groups in the church. These items are for use by any organization that is holding a church function.

Deacons 2023, continued

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Other Donations:

The Deacons continue to collect food items that are then shared with St. Mary's Food Pantry program in Defiance. The In-house Mission fund continues to help members of this church as needed. Checks will be issued to pay the presented bill when approved by the Pastor, Clerk of Session, or Moderator of Deacons. Payments cannot exceed \$500 in one year.

Member Care:

The Deacons continue to reach out with meal preparations following surgery and other major life events. Please contact a member of the Deacons, church office or the Pastor when you are aware of a need.

The Congregational Care Team called on home-centered members with a visit and small token of our fellowship time in their homes once a month. We delivered home cook treats and often flowers from our collective gardens. Marilyn Smith continues to write notes to each of the home-centered members that we call on.

In February we sent care packages to our college students and deployed military families. The Youth Group decorated the packages and the deacons filled and mailed them.

Community outreach:

The 36th annual Coats for Christmas event brought in just over 1,300 coats that were offered to the public during the distribution on the weekend before Thanksgiving.

Members of Gideon's International provided free copies of the Bible that were distributed as well.

Mercury Cleaner's partnered with us again by dry cleaning of all the coats that could not be laundered.

Other coats were laundered by members of the church and new participating groups.

The sorting team met twice a week in late October and early November and we welcomed the participation of other groups. It was a bustling place to be and the excitement and energy was palpable.

The number of collection points was increased from last year, and we placed barrels under a 10-foot pop-up tent on the church lawn for a well used collection point from the community.

The GM Foundry again granted us \$500 and we used a \$500 increment of a previous gift for seed money for the purchase of new children's coats for next year.

Midwest Community Credit Union also sent us a \$200 grant for coat purchases.

In addition to purchasing children's coats, we also focused on heavy duty gloves for men and also men's coats in plus sizes 3X up to 6X.

About 900 coats were given away on our two-day distribution event. The left-over coats were taken to the Cherry Street Mission in Toledo by volunteers from Napoleon who picked them up at the end of the event.

A number of church members assisted with the collection, sorting, repairing and cleaning of the coats and we had a wonderful turnout of volunteers to set up and tear down. This year we also had an influx of additional volunteers from the Catholic churches in town, the State Bank Gives organization, Citizens in Action, and a number of individuals who wanted to participate on an on-going basis. This is truly becoming a community event.

Deacons 2022, continued

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In August, we hosted Tools for Schools where we gave bookbags and supplies to about 320 (up from last year's 220 and 100 in 2021) students from 130 families in the Defiance area. The supplies were donated by members of our church and the community and a series of grants totaling over \$16,000. The local Meijer store gave us a grant that we used to purchase the facial tissues that we needed. We used grant money and other donations to purchase additional items. The local Walmart worked with us in offering surplus school supplies and left over book bags and winter coats at greatly reduced prices. The distribution days were run by members of our church and St. John UCC, State Bank GIVES, the Catholic churches and others—the same organizations and individuals who helped with Coats.

We held the third annual back to school haircut program. About 90 (last year 60) haircuts were given by the stylists who came to assist in the program at Salon 206. We used the grant money to pay for supplies and a \$10 per cut stipend paid to the stylists. Both Tools for Schools and haircut programs have grown considerably and are in our planning schedule for 2024 as well. A steering committee for our church and various community organizations has been established and will begin planning in January of 2024.

The Staples from the Stable at Christmas time was modified, and we collected cash donations to assist paying down school lunch debts for children in the Northeastern Local and Ayersville School districts.

The Wednesday night dinner account started the year with a balance of \$2,628.94. The account ended 2023 with a balance of \$2,508.49. This fund is also used to pay the cost of the Creative Concepts run activities and other all-church fellowship activities. This year the meals were paid out of this fund and from the free-will offerings at the meals.

The Deacons In-House Mission fund started the year with a balance of \$4,273.40. The fund ended 2023 with a balance of \$1,053.32. This fund is supported by the loose offerings on given Sundays and a line item in the general budget as determined by the session.

The Deacons are very grateful for your participation in the outreach programs that we have organized. It is through your generosity and assistance that we can accomplish our goal of working as the hands and feet of Jesus Christ in our community.

Respectfully submitted,
Richard Reid
Recorder for the Deacons

Youth Group 2023

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In this past year of 2023 we have started to add back in some discussion and lessons as life is getting back on track after the irregularity of COVID, with only a few bumps in the road. The youth group members who attended regularly were Raif, Dirk, and Jamee, with Lily joining the group during the fall school year.

Here is a list of some of our activities in 2023:

- Made paper airplanes then watched and discussed the new Top Gun movie
- Promoted the Souper Bowl of Caring offering where we donated \$247.20 to Raven's Care.
- Decorated the care boxes with a heart theme for our college students.
- Completed an escape room with time to spare.
- Continued to help with church annual events such as Coats for Christmas, Tools for School and the hanging of the greens.
- Celebrated everyone's birthday along with the WeKirk.
- Decorated cookies and played a holiday food challenge called Eat It or Yeet It.
- Played outside and had a water day where we cleaned out laundry containers that we later filled with homemade laundry soap.
- Enjoyed board game nights.
- Played Easter and other Kahoot trivia.
- Tried out the new simulator at Putt Putt since the bowling alley was full.
- Talked about inclusion, uniqueness, being made in God's image, and being loved through the lens of the book *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio.
- Painted bricks in the youth room.

Your continued support for the youth group through prayer, time, and feeding the hungry youth is much appreciated. We might not always show it but it means a lot to all of us to have everyone in the church care about us and take care of our needs.

Respectfully submitted for the youth group,
Cara & Curtis Richards

Technology 2023

Rich Reid and Mike Winners ran the sound and Easy Worship and Mike took over after the Reid's moved. Each Sunday the scripture and sermon is recorded. Pam Reid posted them weekly on the church website, often with a Facebook post to share the link and to encourage listening to the rich messages. How grateful we are for technology, those willing to run it, and all those willing to try to use it! If anyone is interested in serving as a substitute, see Pastor Ann or Mike.

Check out and like the Facebook page: **First Presbyterian Church of Defiance Ohio**
And our website: **1presby.com** (Most recent sermons are archived here under the heading LEARN
YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/The1presby> (Video archives.)

Property 2023

Summary: (For you busy people and/or slow readers)

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Curtis worked on an ongoing project of managing the huge unused chair collection in various rooms around the church. Curtis recycled metals and returned the proceeds (\$53.00) to the church. There are still some light fixture parts to recycle. There are about 120 chairs left in the building on various floors.

The elevator was serviced and the form sent to the state. The State boiler inspection was completed.

The toilet in the men's restroom is working again.

Curtis has been pulling out leaves and gunk from the gutters. He also previously pulled out some leftover shingles from gutters near Fellowship Hall.

Buckeye Roofing will seal things up as the weather allows.

The East Entrance window continues to be a problem, however it has been repaired twice and Brian Campbell has charged \$1200. Buckeye Roofing continues to seal what they can find.

The bushes were pulled at the East Entrance. Marsha added the flower pots and a nice bench was added, one that can be put away in the winter months.

A plan is in place for fixing the pneumatics on the elevator door.

Ann has placed a clipboard for sign up to do some of the following:

1. Vestibule on side entrance to sanctuary--clean gutters, scrape and repaint stain glass window, seal
2. Scrape and repaint East entrance ourselves--
3. Indoor repair work top Floor and main Floor, ceiling tiles.
4. Light at top of the stairs to Chapel
5. There are bats in the basement at the Ensign House.

New safety tape was installed on the steps leading to the Chapel.

Work continues on fixing the doors on the West side of the building.

Craig used his dog catching skills to capture the bat in the kitchen, and saved the day for the Tools for Schools distribution.

A cleaning group (Kristal, Ann, Marsha, Sandy D, Pam Reid) did work on Tuesday, Oct 3 in the craft room and WeKirk room to clean up around windows so work on ceiling tiles and blinds can happen this fall.

The air hiss in the WeKirk thermostat has been repaired.

Curtis has the paint and a primer that will eliminate the mold for the craft room. Minor repairs were made to two of the restrooms.

That about sums up 2023 (even though I probably missed a lot of the little things that go unnoticed but are greatly appreciated.) Thanks to all who gave of their time and talents to keep the Lord's house in good order and repair.

Yours truly,
Charlie Bates

Finance and Stewardship 2023

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In January of 2023 the per capita letter was sent out and Ann explained the importance of the per capita obligation/commitment.

In October the committee worked on the 2024 budget and stewardship. A stewardship letter to the congregation was prepared. The proposed budget created challenges with the increases in insurance and projected utility increases. Joel researched and presented proposals on the pastor terms of call and support staff increases that were within Presbytery guidelines. The proposed terms of call and increases were approved at the December congregational meeting. The 2024 budget, which is a deficit budget, was presented as information in hopes that the congregation will prayerfully consider the financial needs of the church.

Throughout the year the committee reviewed the monthly income and expense statements and balance sheets diligently prepared by treasurer, Marsha Karr.

The finance committee was called on to take a good look at our overall picture, our healthy savings account which we are using, memorial funds that have been unused, and less growth of investments in 2023, to develop a clear idea of our financial assets as we begin to discern what happens next in pastoral leadership.

The group is made up of Susan King, Joel Youkers, Marilyn Smith and Nancy Meyer.

Thank you to all who continue to generously support the life and work of the church, with monetary gifts, time and talents.

Personnel Committee 2023

The Personnel Committee, consisting of Charlie Bates, Ann Culver, Beth Sigg and Joel Youkers, met as needed during the year and considered the following:

1. Reviewed compensation for our staff and made recommendations to Session for compensation in calendar year 2024.
2. Reviewed the terms of call for Pastor Ann Wasson and made recommendations for her compensation package in 2024 for congregational approval. The package was reviewed to insure compliance with Maumee Valley Presbytery requirements.
3. Bid farewell to LouAnn Begley, Communications Coordinator, upon her retirement, and thanked her for her years of service to our church.
4. Interviewed and hired Stacie Wagner to fill the Communications Coordinator vacancy, with some changes to the hours and requirements of the position.

The Personnel Committee members are always available to the staff in order to hear and assist in the resolution of any complaints or conflicts which might arise out of employment by our church.

Joel Youkers, Chair

Membership in Review 2023

In Memoriam

Timothy Reed Hutchinson

died 1/26/2023, memorial service at the church in 4/29/23, officiated by Pastor Ann.

Nancy Jehanyar

died 8/04/2023, memorial service on 9/16/23, officiated by Pastor Ann,
at Glenwood Cemetery in Napoleon.

Floyd Culver

died 10/24/2023, memorial service at church on 11/17/23, officiated by Pastor Ann.

Vic Dunlap, friend of the church

Died 2/13/2023, funeral service at the church on 2/18/2023, officiated by Pastor Ann.

Removed from active membership 3

3 deceased members listed above

Removed from the rolls by transfer 0

Added to Membership 1

Nancy Jehanyar

Added as an affiliate member 0

Births 0

Child Baptism 0

Weddings 0

Total Membership

January 1, 2023 78

January 1, 2024 76

Church Boards 2023-2025

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Session

Class of 2023

Pam Reid 2
Curtis Richards 1
Susan King 3

Class of 2024

Charlie Bates 2
Beth Sigg 1
Joel Youkers 3

Class of 2025

Curtis Richards 2
Foyle Solether 1

Deacons

Class of 2023

Sigrid Emerling 2
Barbara Florke 2
Jeanne Peffley 1

Class of 2024

Elaine McBride 1
Susan Price 1
Pam Retcher 1

Class of 2025

Nancy Black 1
Barbara Florke 3
Jeanne Peffley 2

Nominating Committee

Class of 2023

Jennifer Bates 1
Sue King, Session 2
Elaine McBride, Deacons
Pastor Ann, ex officio member

Class of 2023

Donna Black 1
Sue King 3
Nancy Meyer 1
Foyle Solether, Session, 1
Deacon representative
Pastor Ann, ex officio member

The number after each person's name indicates the number of consecutive terms currently being served. The maximum is **three consecutive two year terms for a total of six years**, as per the Book of order. Note that the 2023 term is over and some members have been reelected.

Nominating Committee serves a **one year term** and each person may serve **three consecutive** terms for a total of 3 years, as per the Book of Order. The number of members on the nominating committee was changed in recent by-law changes. ‘

We give thanks for all who are willing to serve God and this congregation, to lead with energy, intelligence, imagination and love.

Financial information for the year 2023 will be available at the annual meeting of the congregation on February 11, 2024.