

faith

in action

FEBRUARY 2024
NEWSLETTER
Edition 268



**We are a Community,
seeking to be in stride with Christ.**

Pastor's Corner:

Our Lent theme this year is based on The Book of Forgiving by Desmond Tutu and his daughter, the Rev. Mpho Tutu. From their faith in Christ and personal stories, they have developed a four-fold path for healing ourselves and our world through forgiveness.

In worship we have already considered that two of the hardest things to say are "I am sorry" and "I forgive you" for especially heinous and long-term hurts. The authors acknowledge that forgiveness is not easy and often not immediate, but rather a journey taken over a lifetime.

If you want to work toward forgiving, the four-fold path is: Telling the Story, Naming the Hurt, Granting Forgiveness and Renewing or Releasing the Relationship.

If you want to be forgiven, the path is similar: Admitting the wrong (telling the story honestly), Witness the Hurt and Apologize (owning the hurt you have caused), Ask for Forgiveness and Renewing or Releasing the Relationship.

Sometimes the journey is a private matter walked alone or with a spiritual partner you imagine through your meditation. Sometimes it is making your way to someone else, particularly if you are renewing the relationship. Either way, there will be work to do.



501 Washington Ave.

Defiance, OH 43512

www.1presby.com

Office & Prayer Chain

419-782-2781

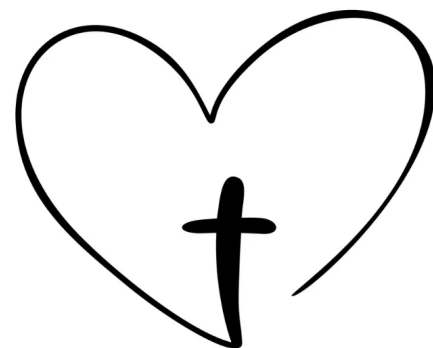
Rev. Ann Wasson

(580) 515-0526 cell

Find us on Facebook at
First Presbyterian Church
of Defiance

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Pastor's Corner	1-2
Birthdays	2
News & Notes	3-4
Session Notes	4
Recipe Corner	5
Calendar	6



Pastor's Corner (cont):

It is your work done privately as you respond to our worship time together. There are prayers, a process of meditation, and some simple exercises. We will have some simple journals available with directions for the meditations, and stones; you take a stone to travel with you on the journey.

If you want your own copy of the book, it is at HarperCollins.com (on sale right now for about \$ 13) or wherever you purchase or borrow books or eBooks.

The Book of Forgiving: The Fourfold Path for Healing Ourselves and Our World by Desmond Tutu and Mpho Tutu, edited by Douglas Abrams, Harper One, 2014. ISBN 978-0-06-220357-1

We know from the Lord's Prayer and from Jesus' teachings that forgiveness is a key component to practicing our faith. When we accept God's forgiveness, we do so, knowing that we are called to forgive. When we have sinned, we are also called to make amends. I hope you will join me on the journey.

*I will forgive you
The words are so small
But there is a universe hidden in them
When I forgive you
All those cords of resentment pain and sadness that had wrapped
themselves around my heart will be gone
When I forgive you
you will no longer define me
You measured me and assessed me and
decided that you could hurt me
I didn't count
But I will forgive you
because I do count
I do matter
I am bigger than the image you have of me
I am stronger
I am more beautiful
And I am infinitely more precious than you thought me
I will forgive you
My forgiveness is not a gift that I am giving to you
When I forgive you
My forgiveness will be a gift that gives itself to me
(from Chapter 2 The Book of Forgiving)*

Pastor Ann

February Birthdays

07 ~ Jeanne Peffley



27 ~ Susan King

Thank you to ***Marsha Karr*** for sponsoring the ***February*** newsletter.
This enables us to print the newsletter in color.

News & Notes:

TOOLS for SCHOOLS

First a thank-you note:

To our Friends at First Presbyterian Church:

On behalf of the students, staff and families here at Defiance Elementary School, thank you for your very generous

donation of school supplies from your Tools for Schools program. We are so grateful and blessed to have such a caring community here in Defiance! We hope you all have a very happy and healthy 2024!

Sincerely, Defiance Elementary School

Also:

Our Tools for Schools Steering Committee met on January 8. We had an energetic exchange of ideas to get us started for 2024. We have ready a draft letter to organizations asking for donations and are following up on filing donation request forms all over town.

We start 2024 with a good balance in the bank to get us going; we want to build a revolving balance so as to take advantage of sales and deals for supplies as they come up. If you come upon a sturdy backpack sale (\$10- \$ 15 range) and want to make a donation of them, or get reimbursed for your purchase, please purchase and bring a receipt to Marsha Karr, member of the steering committee. She can get you the proper reimbursement. The Deacons are setting up a special account for Tools for Schools donations. We served some 300 students last year and plan for more in 2024.

Team members include: Marsha Karr, Nancy Black, Pastor Ann, Amanda Vogelsong from State Bank GIVES, Laurie Shey (Zions' Lutheran Church), Jill Mack (St Mary's), and Diane Zeigler (Citizens in Action). Others may join the fun and preparation.

SHARED MINISTRY UPDATE

Beth Sigg and Curtis Richards represent us on a shared ministry planning team with St John UCC. The team has been meeting this past fall, and in January drafted a shared ministry agreement from a model that Eastminster Presbyterian Church (Oregon OH) and St Peter's UCC (Millbury OH) have been using for several years.

Pastor Ann will be the shared pastor beginning in April and the call will be split 50-50. This will mean that St John will pay 50% of the terms of call beginning in mid- April and Pastor Ann will divide her time roughly 50-50 between the two congregations. Worship times are being discussed as well as some ideas to study and worship together from time to time as the year progresses. We also will want to invite St. John UCC folks to some of our events and they will invite us to theirs.

The Session will review the work thus far and comment on it. We will bring an update to the Annual meeting of the congregation on Feb. 11.

This is an experiment to see if shared ministry is the way forward for these two congregations, given numbers and finances.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN AND FRIENDS

Presbyterian Women and Friends will meet Monday, February 12 at 12:30 pm. The program is the Sight and Sound video about Queen Esther. This is a great melodrama of the Hebrew Scriptures so be prepared to cheer the hero and heroine and boo the nasty villain of the piece!

News & Notes (cont)

One Great Hour of Sharing

For 75 years we have participated in a Lent- Easter Offering to lift up others around the world. One Great Hour of Sharing began as a response to the devastation of Europe after WW2 by several denominations together. It remains an ecumenical outreach governed by each church groups Mission arms. Our offering is divided 3 ways: for Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA), the Presbyterian Hunger Program (PHP) and Self Development of People.

In 2022, PDA granted \$ 3.1 million in 27 US areas met with natural disaster and public violence, and in 35 countries. In partnership with Church World Service, 228,318 Gifts of the Heart Kits and blankets were distributed. Long term support continues in Puerto Rico, Oregon, Kentucky, Colorado, Florida, South Carolina, Texas and more.

In 2022, PHP gave 90 grants totaling \$ 1.2 million impacting 22 nations including ours. These include potable water filters and retention tanks in Guatemala and Bolivia, forming 5 seed banks in Sri Lanka to preserve traditional foods, over 400,000 lbs of cereals distributed in Cameroon. The palms we receive from Eco-palms contribute to sustainable forestry.

In 2022, SDOP gives grants to low- income communities to help them overcome poverty, injustice and oppression. Our gifts help economically poor communities in the USA and around the world develop solutions to their own challenges. The Food Depot in South Euclid Ohio received a grant to help people learn to garden and understand healthy eating. Projects in our synod help local communities such as Detroit, Cleveland (mentoring men & boys), Hilliard (bakers & makers) and Columbus Ohio. International projects often work through ecumenical agencies in country to help entrepreneurs and cooperatives get started with bakeries, chicken farms or honey production from Panama and Nicaragua to Belize and Nigeria.

These are just a few of the ways our One Great Hour of Sharing money goes to work. “When we all do a little, it adds up to a lot. Look for envelopes in the pews and with your March newsletter.

Highlights of the Session Meeting January , 2024—Your Session at Work

Pastor Ann has recently been active in community groups and events including the Lion’s Club, the Anti-Racism and Action Group, NAMI Four County Board, the Defiance Hall of Fame Committee, and Pub Theology. She has been active in the Presbytery, serving as Moderator of Leadership Commission, Vision team and Moderator of Ottawa Presbyterian Church.

The Shared Ministry Team recently met to work on a covenant agreement for our trial of shared ministry with St. John UCC. Details will be shared with the congregation at our annual meeting on February 11th.

The Tools for Schools Committee is actively working; they recently met and a draft letter to request funding has been drafted.

Deacons are planning a “soup contest” for our shared meal on April 10th; Session will have a soup. They need other entrants.

Updates on Property improvements:

- A problem with the elevator has been addressed, and other concerns are being assessed

- We will be getting quotes for replacement of steel doors on the east side of the building

- A water valve has been replaced, a door in the basement has been repaired, the craft room has been painted, and frozen pipes were thawed out after the recent cold snap. Outside lighting will be remedied soon.

CE/We Kirk & Deacons plan to send out gift boxes to students soon.

The Worship/Music committee invites us all to the following: the annual meeting on February 11th; and a pizza meal at 5:30 p.m. before the Ash Wednesday service at 6:30 p.m. on February 14th.

The next meeting of Maumee Valley Presbytery will take place by Zoom on February 20th.

A series of routine motions were made and approved.

***Recipe Corner -
from Holy Chow for the Here and Now! First Presbyterian Cookbook***

Strawberry Pretzel Dessert

from Ann Culver

Layer 1:

2 c crushed pretzels
3 tbsp sugar
3/4 c melted butter (not margarine)

Layer 2:

3/4 c sugar
9 oz Cool Whip
8 oz cream cheese

Layer 3:

1 large strawberry Jell-O
2 (10 oz) frozen strawberries in sugar, thawed
2 c boiling water

In large mixing bowl, add Jell-O and boiling water. Stir until dissolved. Add strawberries.

Layer 1: Mix and press in bottom on 9 x 13 pan. Bake at 400° for 8 to 10 minutes and let cool.

Layer 2: Mix well. Spread on cooled crust.

Layer 3: Mix together, then refrigerate for 10 to 15 minutes. Stir every couple minutes. Pour on top of Layer 2. Refrigerate about 4 hours or overnight.



Level 3 snow emergency

Worship is cancelled and the church is closed.

Level 2 snow emergency

Church is open, everyone should exercise caution

Attend church based on your personal situation and your comfort level, without obligation.

Level 1 snow emergency

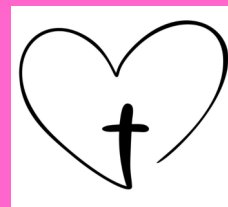
Church is open, everyone should exercise caution

Attend church based on your personal situation and your comfort level, without obligation.

If school is cancelled because of fog, Wednesday evening activities will proceed as planned.

If school is cancelled because of conditions that won't improve during the day, Wednesday evening activities will be cancelled.

February 2024



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 <i>Deacons Calling Day</i> <i>Worship Committee 6:30 pm</i>	2	3
4 <i>Worship 10:00 am</i> <i>Holy Communion</i>	5 <i>AA 12 noon</i>	6	7 <i>WeKirk and Youth meeting with dinner 6:00 pm</i>	8 <i>Deacon meeting 6:00 pm</i>	9	10
11 <i>Worship 10:00 am with the Annual Meeting of the Congregation</i>	12 <i>AA 12 noon</i> <i>PW & F 12:30 pm</i>	13	14 <i>Ash Wednesday Meal 5:30 pm Worship 6:30 pm</i> <i>Valentine's Day</i>	15	16	17
18 <i>Worship 10:00 am</i> <i>Holy Communion</i> <i>New Wineskins Band</i>	19 <i>AA 12 noon</i> <i>President's Day</i>	20 <i>Presbytery meeting on Zoom 10:00 am</i>	21 <i>WeKirk and Youth meeting with dinner 6:00 pm</i>	22 <i>Session Meeting 7:00 pm</i>	23	24
25 <i>Worship 10:00 am</i>	26 <i>AA 12 noon</i>	27	28 <i>Pizza & Program 5:30 pm</i> <i>WeKirk and Youth meeting with dinner 6:00 pm</i>	29		

Food Drive - Pasta and Sauce