## Fenton First Presbyterian Church

**December 2022 Newsletter** 



In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

JOHN H



# PASTOR'S LETTER

### The Gift of Love

#### Pastor Robbie Carnes

A book that I read recently, "Good and Beautiful and Kind: Becoming Whole in a Fractured World", by Rich Villodas, is one I would recommend to you all. It speaks about how we all have a deep sense of loss for that which is good and beautiful and kind in our world. This is especially evident in the current political culture that has divided community and severed families and friends. Villodas presents some healthy insights into making peace; in our own hearts and in the world.

This is ringing loud and clear as we look toward the Christmas season and hear the Angel's call, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" (Luke 2:14)

The first point of Villodas' book is about the nature of sin. He profoundly defines it as a 'failure to love'. The lack of sin requires the presence of love. The One who is ever-loving cannot stop loving because that One, God, is incapable of sin. This is the reason for Jesus being born; it's an act of love. It had to be done not simply because it was a fulfillment of prophesy, but because it was the marvelous conclusion of the reality of God's love for the world (John 3:16).

Love is required to be an action if it is to embody the fullness of the meaning of the word. It is marvelous to know that God's expression of love is to come near to us in Jesus (John 1:14). This is especially breathtaking when we see God's love in the face of our failure of love, that is, our sin. God is doing what we are not and cannot do.

The second point Villodas makes is that in order to contribute to the creation of a good, beautiful and kind world, we need to take steps to become good, beautiful and kind ourselves. If sin is the failure to love no amount of ethical training, salon weekends and paying it forward is going to leave a mark on our Teflon-sin hearts. The transformative work is that of contemplative prayer. You might wonder if this kind of prayer could ever make the world better. You may also wonder how a baby born into obscurity could change the world as well.

The point is that we are changed and that through the transformation of ourselves, we might be catalysts for transformation in the world. This change is one of self-identity rather than self-improvement. It is knowing who you are and what you are supposed to be doing. Therefore, we can be kind because we have had kindness shown to us. We can be beautiful because we have seen the author of beauty. And we can be good because we operate not through our own power, but that of the Holy Spirit.

## We can be apart of God's family because God sent his son to prepare the way.

Lastly, Villodas shares practical ways we can work toward the transformation of the world. He has three suggestions. The first is that we need to learn how to have good conflict with others. If there are more that two people, conflict is a given. How do you have conflict and remain present with another person? This question has as many answers as there

are people; however, God in Jesus is an example. God, the ever-loving one, sent his Son to be born and live and teach and die among those who could not help but fail to love. Even when we aren't doing what we shouldn't, we don't do what we should. Yet, God chose to be among us. Healthy conflict means that we stay as present with each other can we can. (Please note that this does not suggest that anyone should or deserves to be abused mentally, physically, emotionally or otherwise).

The second practical idea is what Villodas calls the gift of forgiveness. It is easy to offend or be offended and forgiveness should be our go to answer. (I am not referring to harmful offense (like abuse) which may take longer to forgive and has much bigger facets to consider). Offense is that which can strike our pride and injure our sense of self. However, if we know ourselves to be apart of God's family, how can we truly be offended (Romans 8:37-39)? Therefore forgiveness, granted in order to break the cycle of offense and

remain present with each other, is our best action to embody goodness, beauty and kindness.

Lastly, love must be done in a public way. Loving action is more complete than loving words alone. Just like a young man who has found the girl of his dreams rushes her to meet his parents, love cannot be fully love if it is not shown to the world. God could not love the world unless Iesus was born as a baby. God's words of love through the prophets mean nothing unless God actually showed up. This season of Advent, as we wait in expectation, consider how you might transform your loving words into loving actions as well. God's love was incarnated, made flesh in Jesus. How might your love toward your spouse, your family, your neighbors and strangers be incarnated? May your Advent and Christmas season be good, beautiful, and kind because God, in Jesus and through the Holy Spirit, has shown himself to be good, beautiful, and kind



Christmas has become the biggest holiday in North America, arguably the biggest in the world and in many ways, it has become a holiday of "more": more presents, more stuff, more events, more expectations, more stress. But as it turns out, if we dial back the "more," we get closer to the heart of advent and Christmas. For the stories of the season all point in a "less is more"





So this year, let's get back to basics. Let's recapture the beauty of simplicity. Let's have music and presents and celebration yes, but let's focus on what's most important, and put rst things rst. This year, let's have less stuff and less stress and more hope, more peace, more joy, and more love.



# WORSHIP

## How to Worship with Us

Join us online as well as in person Sunday's at 10am

Masks are optional. Paper masks will remain available for those who might need one, and hand sanitizer stations are available throughout the building. **If you feel ill or have been exposed, be considerate and stay home.** 

Here is how to join us Online

Facebook Live: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/fentonfpc">https://www.facebook.com/fentonfpc</a>

**YouTube:** https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCkBa-DrcqSECxjAyeaiC4bg

Zoom https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8309142301?pwd=RHJ4dDBPdEhMN25vKzFzSzZNeUVPQT09

**Use the Zoom app** and use this Meeting ID

**Meeting ID:** 830 914 2301 **Meeting Password:** 5013

Use your telephone line to listen in:

Call +19292056099 and dial 8309142301# at the prompt US (New York) Or Call +13126266799 and dial 8309142301# at the prompt US (Chicago)

### **Advent Worship Schedule**

**December 3rd,** Live Nativity in the Courtyard, Warming Station, Cookies & Crafts in Fellowship Hall (3:00pm-5:30pm)

**December 4th**, 2nd Sunday in Advent "Untangle: Finding Peace in Our Hurried State"

Carol Concert, 4:00pm, Youth Group & Families Triple C Event after church

**December 11th**, 3rd Sunday of Advent, Cynicism & Wonder", Guest Orchestra in Worship Christmas Choir Concert at Tyrone Covenant, 7:00pm

**December 18th**, 4th Sunday of Advent "Presents of Presence?", Lessons and Carols Concert 3pm, Youth Christmas Party, 12pm-3pm

**December 24th**, Christmas Eve, 7pm Cresche Service: The Christmas Story, 11:30 Bells and Candle Service

December 25th, Sunday Christmas Day, Service of Carols 10am

December 26th-27th, Church Office is Closed



# ADVENT

Exodus 23: 10 "Six years you shall sow your land and gather in its yield, 11 but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow so that the poor of your people may eat, and what they leave the wild animals may eat. You shall do the same with your vineyard and with your olive orchard.

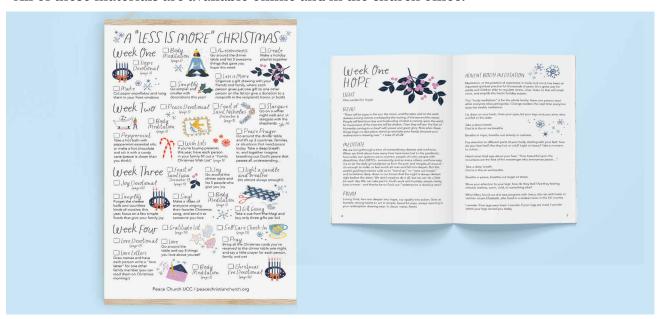
"Six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh day you shall rest so that your ox and your donkey may have relief and your homeborn slave and the resident alien may be refreshed. <sup>13</sup> Be attentive to all that I have said to you. Do not invoke the names of other gods; do not let them be heard on your lips."

The Worship Committee has decided to do something new with the Advent Devotional in 2022. For many years we have solicited daily devotions from the congregation and have benefited from each's reflections on the season and on God's goodness to us. This year we are feeling the need to 'rest and lie fallow'. Therefore, using the theme "Less is More", we are engaging together in a different kind of devotional.

There are two parts. The first is a booklet that guides you through each week of Advent with different meditations and thoughts for the week. Your household is invited to use the traditional advent candles and wreath to create a moment of reflection and holy conversation. If you live alone, consider joining with another household or other individuals to make the experience more rich.

The second part is a poster that offers simple daily activities designed to encourage being present in the moment. Think of it as daily challenges to focus your heart on the incarnation of God and to be present to God's salvation in our lives.

All of these materials are available online and in the church office.



# **MUSIC MINISTRY**







## **CONGREGATIONAL LIFE**

The Congregational Outreach Committee (even though we are a small group) has been busy working to bring back some events to involve the congregation and community. Please note that we welcome you to join us. If you are interested on serving on the committee, please contact Marilee Smiley (mibobalink@gmail.com).



Plan to Go Christmas Caroling on December 17. Meet at the church at 3:45 pm. Caroling will last approximately 1 hour. Those wishing may stay afterwards for pizza and fellowship. The cost will be divided among those that stay for pizza.

- Save the date!!! The next BUNCO night is set for January 21 at 7 pm.
- During Coffee Hour on January 15 we will celebrate all Birthdays for 2023.
   Please sign up to decorate a table and provide refreshments.

Thank You, Thank You to everyone who helped with the Turkey Dinner!!!!





## **STEWARDSHIP**

### Financial Review - October 2022

Profit/ Loss	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Jan-Sept.</u>	YTD Budget	<u>Annual Budget</u>
Income:	\$20,308.13	\$26,429.36	\$322,449.16	\$264,293.60	\$317,152.70
Expense:	<u>\$24,458.74</u>	<u>\$25,619.67</u>	\$301,337.75	<u>\$265,911.70</u>	\$317,152.70
	(4,150.61)*	809.69	21,111.41*	(1,618.10)	

\*This does not include additional obligations such as restricted funds or other payments such as: Board of Deacons, Faith & Femininity, Organ Fund, HVAC Fund, etc.

Statement of Cash Flows	Oct	YTD	
Cash at Beginning of period:	\$43,360.94	\$125,208.38	
Cash at End of Period:	\$40,518.91	<u>\$40,518.91</u>	
Net Cash:	(10,419.04)	(82,303.48)	

Balance in the Building Repair & Improvement account as of October 31st: \$1,979.59

Respectfully Submitted, November 9th 2022 Debera J Bard, Treasurer

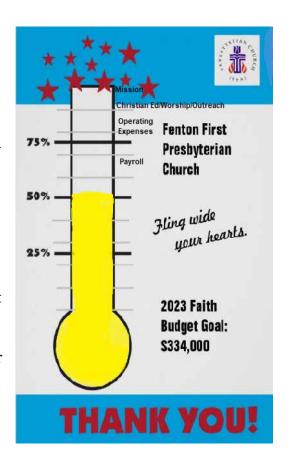
## Pledge Update

46 total households have turned in their pledge totaling \$167,673.00

Fling wide the portals of your heart; make it a temple set a part,

From earthly use for heaven's employ, adorned with prayer and love and joy.

God is working through us and the things we do to accomplish positive change in our own lives and in the world. However, we need to be open to God's working. Every time we give of who we are and what we have, we open up a bit more to what God is doing and that gift becomes ministry and mission. Please keep our congregation in prayer as we move together toward discerning what gifts we will make in the coming year. Pledge cards are available in the office, online at <a href="https://ffpc.org/donate/">https://ffpc.org/donate/</a> or contact Kelly to give you pledge.



## **DEACONS**

The ministry of Deacons as set forth in scripture is one of compassion, witness, and service. We share in the redeeming love of Jesus Christ for the poor, hungry, sick, lost, friendless, oppressed, those burdened by unjust policies of structure, or anyone else in distress.





Helping Hands If you are shut-in and need some help, think about calling the church. The Deacons' Helping Hands program may be just what you need.

If you need someone to run an errand or pick up groceries or a prescription, maybe we can help. Call the church office at 810-629-7801 and leave your name, contact number and your need. We will always wear a mask and leave any deliveries at your doorstep.



## **MISSION**

### Samaritas Update

We have 3 new Samaritas matches. Below I will give brief descriptions of our matches and a list of our current needs.

Family 1 is a family of four from Iran. They have been here one month and recently moved into their first home in Dearborn. We were going to make a delivery to them in December, but then I found out yesterday that they are sleeping on the floor of their rental house. Thanks to some very dedicated volunteers beds were located and delivered.

Family 2 is a family of 3 from Afghanistan. This family also needs a good amount of furniture. We are coordinating with Sayna to assess their needs as there is a language barrier. I am looking for volunteers to make a delivery to this family sometime near the end of November.

Family 3 is a family of 2, soon to be 3. They need a crib and some baby items delivered to their apartment in Detroit. We had a nice crib and mattress donated last week that will be a perfect fit! We will need to find or purchase bedding for the crib.

#### Our current needs are as follows:

- 1. Volunteers for delivery to family 2. Must have a trailer or truck big enough to carry a full size bed.
- 2. Volunteers for a delivery to family 3. This is a smaller delivery with just a crib and baby items.
- **3. Items:** I am trying something new and have created a registry on Amazon.com for our needed items. If you purchase from the list it will ship directly to my home for delivery to families. You can share the list if you know anyone who might like to join our efforts.

#### https://www.amazon.com/registries/custom/2DEQ4NSYO42CL/guest-view

If you would like to donate an item on the list, but prefer not to purchase on amazon you can let me know or mark the item as purchased elsewhere. I hope that this is a helpful way to share the current needs for our group.

Here is the list for anyone who does not use Amazon:

2 Instantpots

2 Large stock pots

2 Small tool kits

3 area rugs 5x7

sleep sacks for baby, gender neutral, 0-3 mos sleep sacks for baby, gender neutral, 3-6 mos

crib sheets, gender neutral

Queen size comforter Full/Queen size sheets

6 Pillows Iron

Inoning h

Ironing board

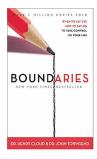
Couch (not on amazon list)

Television (not on amazon list)

Once we have coordinated these donations and deliveries we will take a short break until the new year. I feel incredibly proud of all of the work that our team has done this year. We are finishing strong! Thank you all as always for your continued support. Peace, Sarah Martin-Fanon

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Sunday Morning NEW January Study (There are NO Sermon Discussions through December).



Join Pastor Robbie and Tina Ritchie for a 9 week study on Boundaries January 8 – March 12 from 11:30AM – 12:30 PM in the Conference Room Participant guide is \$9 – register in Fellowship Hall by December 18 Childcare provided!

A boundary is a personal property line that marks those things for which we are responsible. In other words, boundaries define who we are and who we are not. Sounds simple, yes? Then why do we often find ourselves forgetting our own limits and limitations, setting ourselves up for more difficulties than expected?

Having healthy boundaries is essential to a healthy, balanced lifestyle. Join us to learn what are legitimate boundaries; how to set limits and be a loving person; what to do if someone is upset or hurt by one's boundaries; why one might feel guilty or afraid when considering setting boundaries, and much, much more!

#### **Sunday Evening Small Group**

Book of Acts in the Bible, facilitated by Larry Zimbler 5-6PM in the conference room at 4Square Tax in Fenton

#### **Tuesday Morning Adult Study**

Class will resume January 3rd from 11AM-12:15PM In the Conference Room. Led by Pastor Robbie Carnes, watch for topic information in the bulletin and weekly emails.

#### Celebrate Recovery - Every Wednesday from 7-9PM

Worship from 7-8PM in Fellowship Hall Men's and Women's Small Groups from 8-9PM in the Truth and Discipleship rooms

**New Year Women's Study:** Isaiah: Striving Less and Trusting More by Melissa Spoelstra



Isaiah communicated clearly that followers of God could trust in Him. In 7 weeks of group sessions, unpack Isaiah's words to reveal that you can trust God more than your own human effort or the counterfeits the world suggests. You won't be striving harder, but instead trusting more deeply in the Faithful One who is so worthy of our utter dependence. In Him you'll find the comfort and peace you need to sustain you.

Register in Fellowship Hall by December 16 or email Tina Ritchie tina@ffpc.org.

Monday Evening - January 2 - February 13 from 6:30-8:30 Via ZOOM only

**Wednesday Morning -** January 4 – February 15 from 10AM – noon in Fellowship Hall

Participant book is \$22. Register in Fellowship Hall by December 9 or email Tina Ritchie tina@ffpc.org.

## YOUTH GROUP

CREATING SPACE FOR YOUTH TO ASK QUESTIONS, ENCOUNTER GOD, AND LEARN TO LIVE AS DISCIPLES OF CHRIST.

### Allow, Meet, and Go!

### Fall Youth Group Events - for 6 - 12 graders and friends

Watch your texts and email or contact Tina Ritchie tina@ffpc.org for more information. Friends always welcome with a current Parental Consent form on file! Adults seeking to be part of the program are asked to contact Tina.

#### **December**

4th Triple C – cookies, cards & crafts 12:00pm–2pm11th Youth Group Soup & Talk 5-7pm, Location: TBD

18th Christmas Party 12:00pm–3pm25th Merry Christmas - no meeting

#### **January**

**1st** Happy New Year - no meeting

**7th-8th** New Year's Lock-in **15th** Sledding 12-2

**22nd** Movie night wirh Scouts 2:00-5:30pm

Emagine Theatre in Hartland. RSVP

on youth bulletin board



### **Live Nativity and Warming Station during Jinglefest**



3-5:30pm Saturday, December 3rd

Be sure to stop by our Courtyard to experience a part of God's Story! Take in the scene; experience the awe and wonder as church members re-create the story, along with live animals. Children passing by will have the opportunity to dress up as an angel, shepherd, or magi and have their picture taken in front of the nativity. Fellowship Hall will serve as a warming station for the community serving coffee and hot cocoa and offering 2 family craft activities. May you feel God near as you take in this season.

#### Ways to support Youth Group scholarships and activities:

Bottle returns - drop off your rinsed returnable bottles and cans to the youth room.

**Kroger Rewards** - Linking your Kroger Rewards card to FFPC earns us quarterly benefits. Contact the office if you need info on how to do this!

**VG's receipts** – We are \$10,000 short in receipts to receive a \$1000 check. Please turn in your ENTIRE receipt for it to be counted.

## CHILDREN & FAMILY

### **Children's Sunday School and Worship Information**

- 1. From November 27 December 18 only, all children will begin in worship to share in the weekly Advent wreath lighting experience. Afterward, they will leave to go to classrooms for Sunday school that time will be specified in the bulletin and Ms. Tina will be there to lead them.
- 2. Christmas morning falls on Sunday this year; there will be NO childcare or Sunday School that day.
- 3. Sunday School will resume on New Year's Sunday with the normal schedule of class beginning at 10AM and children returning to worship after the sermon. Children are welcome to either sit with their parents or with Miss Tina; masks are optional at their parent's discretion. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Tina Ritchie or Kate Kirkey.

# **"A People Restored" topics: Unit 16 – Hope in Exile** (Daniel, Matthew 1, Luke 2)

After years of living in sin, God's people were sent into exile. The Southern Kingdom of Judah was captured by Babylon. Daniel's visions of the future showed that God is in control at all times. God used faithful people to continue God's plan to provide salvation through Jesus.

11/20 The Fiery Furnace 11/27 Nebuchadnezzar's Dream 12/4 Daniel in the Lion's Den 12/11 Daniel's Dream

**Big Picture Question:** Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know God hears us.

**Unit Key Verse:** Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. ~ 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

#### **Unit 17 – Return to the Land** (Ezra,

Obadiah, Haggai, Zechariah)

After the Israelites' disobedience let to 70 years of exile in Babylon, God kept God's promise to bring God's people home to Judah. Prophets encouraged the people to rebuild the temple. The prophet Zechariah told of a future King who would come humbly on a donkey. God later kept God's promise to send King Jesus.

12/18 Obadiah the Prophet 12/25 Christmas – no class

**Big Picture Question:** How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? Jesus perfectly reveals God the Father and fulfills what the prophets spoke.

**Unit Key Verse:** For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. ~ Jeremiah 29:11

#### **December Teachers**

**Elementary:** Preschool/Nursery: Missy Wing PJ Collier and Jan Foster

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### Join the Saturday Facilities Work Group!

The long standing Wednesday work group has expanded in order to complete additional projects as well as provide those interested, who may not be available on Wednesdays, an opportunity to take part. This group meets once a month on the third Saturday at 9am.

### The "Giving Tree"

located in the New Narthex. This tree is sponsored by the Book Binders. Suggested items are mittens, gloves, hats, scarves, underwear, socks, pajamas. All items are children's sizes up to size 6-18. Thank you for your KINDNESS.

HAPPY A  Dick & Nancy Berger Jerry & Bev Welch Bob & Nessie Brownlee Paula & Henry Glomski  HAPPY B	December December December December	7 7 23 29	RY	
Michael Vanderlip Carey Muntin Doug Jacobs Karen Wensel Larry Zimbler Jim Murray Sarah Smith Nancy Berger Barbara Hungerford Mike Hussar Mary Zimbler Jill Hiscock Melissa Browne Amber Danules Dennis Beardslee Brandon McLive	Dec 1 Dec 2 Dec 8 Dec 8 Dec 10 Dec 13 Dec 14 Dec 19 Dec 19 Dec 19 Dec 19 Dec 20 Dec 21 Dec 21 Dec 21 Dec 25 Dec 27	Scott Rourke Meghan Smith John Foguth Don Kutchey	Dec 27 Dec 29 Dec 31 Dec 31	

# WAYS TO GIVE There are many different ways that you can give back to the Fenton First Presbyterian Church. Together we can make a difference!!



<u>Online Giving:</u> An easy and convienent way to give. Just visit the Presbyterian Mission Exchange link in the Giving section of FFPC.org website. A fast and SECURE way to give back.



<u>Church Giving:</u> You can give during one of our services by placing your check or cash in the Sunday offering plates. When giving cash, please complete a giving envelope so we can properly record your gift.



<u>Automatic Bank Pay:</u> You can set up payments through your financial institution by utilizing the bill pay feature. Simply use First Presbyterian Church as the payee and your name for your account information. Saves on postage!!



Non-Cash Giving: Assets or Planned Gifts



#### Mail offering to Church:

Fenton First Presbyterian Church 503 S. Leroy Fenton, MI 48430

#### THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT OF OUR MISSION!