

FENTON FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
**FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER**



*Growing in God*

WE COMMIT TO KNOWING JESUS THROUGH WORSHIP, BIBLE STUDY, AND PRAYER,  
ENCOURAGING CONTINUED SPIRITUAL GROWTH AS HIS DISCIPLES.

**Illusion of transparency** by Pastor Robbie Carnes



'5 ways to tell if your spouse is toxic!'; '7 ways to trap a narcissist with their own words!' Sure, you've seen these titles in magazines and online videos, encouraging us to suss out the negative behavior in others so that we can avoid those people and live happier lives. But what if we are the ones who are toxic or narcissistic?

For the next few months I will be exploring how to avoid toxic and narcissistic behavior in our own lives. Using the book of Proverbs and an article from the BBC we will be looking at 5 different ways we can examine ourselves and seek to be better people and friends.

How to avoid being a toxic friend

<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20241129-how-to-avoid-being-a-toxic-friend>

The Spotlight Effect and the Illusion of Transparency: Egocentric Assessments of How We Are Seen by Others

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1467-8721.00039>

Undervaluing Gratitude: Expressers Misunderstand the Consequences of Showing Appreciation

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0956797618772506?journalCode=pssa>

**Hello &  
Welcome**


The Church is not a building. It is a gathering of people brought together to experience God's love and purpose.

God designed the church for **YOU** – you belong here. Are you ready to experience a community of people doing life together? To find out, come worship with us on Sunday mornings.

**Our Mission:** To be a loving community of faith dedicated to helping people know Jesus Christ and grow, share, and serve as his disciples.

**Our Vision:** To provide an inviting and welcoming church home that attracts people of all ages and encourages positive growth, while creating an exciting and dynamic approach as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Thank you for worshipping with us! We are happy to welcome you into this household of God.



There is a documented phenomenon that most of us experience called the ‘illusion of transparency’. This refers to our tendency to believe that our interior thoughts and emotions are clearly displayed on our face and through our words and actions. This can produce two difficulties in interpersonal relationships.

The first is that we assume that our emotions and feelings are being discerned by those around us. Do you wear your heart on your sleeve? Are you an open book? While some people are better at expressing emotions than others, it is clear that most of us assume our emotions are being communicated better than they actually are. This means that we choose to not share our emotions with others because we think they already know, when, in fact, they have no idea what we are feeling.

Can you imagine how this might lead to chaotic relationships and perceptions of being ‘prickly’? The people around you may be experiencing you as a volatile friend if you are acting out of emotions that they are not aware of. You might be very unpredictable if your choices about entertainment, food or other activities are based on hidden emotions. The lack of clarity around your feelings might push people away because they don’t know what they are dealing with.

The second issue that we might be communicating emotions, but not the ones we are actually feeling. When I was a little boy, there was a man in our church whose resting face was a frown. I am not sure why this was, but I assumed that he didn’t like me very much because he frowned at me all the time. Boy was I surprised when the man smiled! Clearly his frown was not communicating the emotions he was feeling inside.

Clarity around the quality and intensity of emotions is very important. Incorrectly assuming an emotion for someone else might do more harm than missing the emotion completely. A multitude of manipulative, enabling and defensive behavior can be avoided sending clear emotional signals.

The challenge with the illusion of transparency is that we may not even know that we are doing it. Therefore, the way to counter this negative tendency is to learn to be clear about our emotions with others.


**Is it ok for you to share how you are feeling with others?**

**Can you do it without oversharing?**

**Can you share how you are feeling without making excuses?**

A lot of the learning necessary for this type of growth is language. How do we say certain things without doing more harm than good? One step is to spend time reflecting on how we are feeling and then putting it in the right wording. Are you joyful? Are you depressed? Are you struggling? Being specific with how we are feeling can help us choose the right words to share with others.

One powerful step toward expressing our emotions in healthy ways is that of expressing gratitude in clear ways. Most people react very positively when receiving gratitude and it can be good practice for our hearts when the time comes for sharing negative feelings. A study that is referenced above studied the reaction of letters of gratitude to important people in their lives and compared the writers’ expectations and the recipient’s reactions. In a reflection of the illusion of transparency, it was found that the recipients were more surprised and pleased at the kind words than the writers expected. The writers also assumed that the other person already knew how grateful they were.



Most of us do not need a scientific study to prove to us that thank cards are important and have a positive impact. Proverbs 16:24 says "Pleasant words are as a honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones." We can have a great impact on the people we care about, work with and live with by simply saying thank you in as many ways as we can.

What is curious to me is that we assume that people already know we are grateful or that our words of gratitude aren't important. If you just read that sentence and thought that it didn't apply to you please reflect on when you wrote a thank you note last. Gratitude is shown best by action and not intention.

**Who can you be grateful to today? How can you best express that? (Body language is a start, but words bring the best clarity)**

Are there other emotions that you need to share with others, simply so that they can understand and be more comfortable around you? Could it be that identifying the emotions that we carry with us and sharing them in healthy ways with others can decrease our personal tendencies of toxicity and narcissism? A thank you card might be a great way to start.



# WORSHIP

HOW TO WORSHIP WITH US

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



Here is how to join us Online

Facebook Live

<https://www.facebook.com/fentonfpc>

Closed Captioning Available

YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/@fentonfirstpresbyterianchurch>

Closed Captioning Available

Zoom

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8309142301?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8309142301?pwd=RHJ4dDBPdEhMN25yKzFzSzZNeUVPQT09)

[pwd=RHJ4dDBPdEhMN25yKzFzSzZNeUVPQT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8309142301?pwd=RHJ4dDBPdEhMN25yKzFzSzZNeUVPQT09)

Meeting ID: 830 914 2301 Meeting Password: 5013

Closed Captioning Available

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).

## FEBRUARY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

**Feb 2 4th Sunday after Epiphany**  
**Communion, Scout Sunday**  
The Four Loves: Affection

**Feb 9 5th Sunday after Epiphany**  
The Four Loves: Friendship

**16th Sunday after Epiphany**  
**President's Day Weekend, Pulpit Exchange**  
The Four Loves: Eros

**Feb 23 7th Sunday after Epiphany**  
**Church's Anniversary (Feb 28th, 1840)**  
The Four Loves: Charity

## Worship is announcing 2025 Lenten & Easter events

- March 5th Ash Wednesday
- March 13th Simple meals start
- April 13th Palm Sunday
- April 17th Maundy Thursday
- April 18th Good Friday service at United Methodist Church starting at 12:00
- April 20th Easter Sunday

Keep an eye out for more exciting information.

## Welcome!

Our church family, along with the Worship Committee would like to welcome Brian Lewis.

Brian is our new Director of Music. Brian brings with him many musical talents. He's energized and is ready to bring his energy to our music program.

Welcome!

# CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

## CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL AND WORSHIP INFORMATION

Class begins at 10AM

Children return to worship after the sermon where they are welcome to sit with their parents or with Miss Tina. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Tina Ritchie.

### FEBRUARY TEACHERS

#### ELEMENTARY & PRESCHOOL/NURSERY

Tina Ritchie & Heidi Roberts/Heidi Howieson

### MARCH TEACHERS

PJ Collier & Heidi Roberts/Heidi Howieson

#### “Into the Promised Land” topics: Unit 7 – Wandering in the Wilderness (Numbers, Deuteronomy)

Israel doubted and disobeyed God, yet God still planned to bless them. God was with God's people as they wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. Finally, God led them back to the promised land. God later sent Jesus so that even disobedient doubters can trust in Him and receive His promised eternal rest.

2/16 Joshua and Caleb  
2/23 The Bronze Snake  
3/2 Balaam and Balak  
3/9 Moses' Farewell

**Big Picture Question:** What does it mean to sin? To sin is to think, speak, or behave in any way that goes against God and God's commands.

**Unit Key Verse:** Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know him, and he will make your paths straight. ~ Proverbs 3: 5-6

#### “Out of Egypt” topics: Unit 8 – Worship in the Wilderness (Exodus, Leviticus)

As the rescued people of Israel traveled through the wilderness, God instructed God's covenant people how to live holy lives in an unholy world. God also gave them rules for worship. God's law sustained their relationship with God until God's perfect plan was revealed through Jesus Christ.

1/26 The Golden Calf  
2/2 The Tabernacle Was Built  
2/9 Rules for Sacrifice

**Big Picture Question:** What is worship? Worship is celebrating the greatness of God

**Unit Key Verse:** “The Lord is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation. He is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him.”  
~ Exodus 15:2



# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

## ADULT STUDIES



**Women's Studies - Wednesday morning or Thursday evening**  
Get Out of Your Head by Jennie Allen

**Wednesday mornings through February 26 from 10am - NOON**  
This class meets in the Conference Room and is facilitated by Tina Ritchie  
**OR**

**Thursday evenings through February 27 from 6:30 - 8:30PM**  
This class meets via zoom and is facilitated by Dee Dee Ainsworth

**Sunday Evening Bible Study**  
5 - 6:30PM

4square Tax & Accounting Conference room  
Led by Larry Zimble, this group will discuss the book of Daniel. Bring your Bible and an open mind.  
Please see Larry for more information.

Join us in person at 4square Tax AND also on Zoom.  
[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82961241969?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82961241969?pwd=MOIPMmxYU001SnQ0Z3cwV3h5Z1phdz09)  
[pwd=MOIPMmxYU001SnQ0Z3cwV3h5Z1phdz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82961241969?pwd=MOIPMmxYU001SnQ0Z3cwV3h5Z1phdz09)  
Meeting ID: 829 6124 1969 Passcode: 017303

**Tuesday Morning Bible Study**

11AM - 12:15PM in the FFPC Conference Room  
Led by Pastor Robbie, during the Month of February this group will be looking at a book entitled, "Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes: Removing Cultural Blindness to better understand the Bible."

We will study specific bible passages and explore different ways of interpreting them according to our cultural understandings. More often than not, western cultures tend to misread the text due to differences in culture. Come join and see scripture in a new way!

Lenten Simple Meals  
Thursday Evenings,

March 13 - April 10,  
5:30pm-7:00pm  
Lead Us Not into  
Temptation

More information  
coming soon

# Growing in Love

WE MODEL CHRISTIAN LOVE TOWARDS EACH OTHER, PROVIDING AN INVITING AND WELCOMING SPIRITUAL HOME THAT ATTRACTS PEOPLE OF ALL AGES TO SHARE THEIR FAITH.

## Youth Group Our mission statement:

To create space for youth to ask questions, encounter God and learn to live as disciples of Christ.

ALLOW, MEET, AND GO!

### Youth Group Events for 6 - 12 graders & friends,

Sign up for special events on the youth bulletin board or email [tina@ffpc.org](mailto:tina@ffpc.org).

Friends are always welcome; a parental consent form is needed for lock-ins and offsite events.

Watch your texts and email or contact Tina Ritchie for more information. Adults seeking to be part of the program are asked to see Tina.

### February

Sun 9: Souper Bowl of Caring during and right after worship

Sun 23, 4-6PM: Youth Group

### March

Sun 9, 4-6PM: Youth Group

Sun 23, 4-6PM: Youth Group

### April

Sun 13, 4-6PM: Youth Group

Sun 27, 4-6PM: Youth Group

## Ways to support Youth Group scholarships & activities

- Bottle returns - Drop off your rinsed returnable bottles and cans to the youth room.
- Kroger Rewards - Linking your Kroger Rewards card to FFPC is easy and earns us quarterly benefits. Contact the office if you need info on how to do this!

## Youth Group "Fudgeraiser"

Youth Group fudge orders will be ready for pick-up by February 9 - just in time for Valentine's Day!

The Library Committee is hosting story time the 2nd Sunday of each month after worship in Fellowship Hall. Children, youth and adults are invited to hear and discuss a story of the month and check out books from the library! Folks interested in being a reader are asked to see Jenn Wenzel or sign up in Fellowship Hall!



**SAVE THE DATE**  
**2025 Congregational Outreach**  
**Activities\***

**Chili Cook Off: Sunday, February 23**

**Potato Bake: Sunday, March 16**

**Pizza/Game Night: April 12**

**Women's Tea: Saturday, May 3**

**Mother's Day: Sunday May 11**

**Father's Day: Sunday, June 15**

**Picnic: Sunday, July 27 at Marilee Smiley's lake home**

**Ice Cream Social Sunday, August 17**

**Pizza/Game Night: Saturday, September 13**

**Halloween Candy Handout: October TBD**

**Apple/Umpkin: Sunday, October 26**

**Jingle Fest Welcome Center: Saturday, December 6**

**Turkey dinner: Saturday, November 8**

**Men's Luncheon: date TBD**

**Women's Luncheon: date TBD**

**\*Dates may be subject to change or be cancelled**





FENTON FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

# LOOKING FOR CHOIR MEMBERS

PRAISE THE LORD THROUGH MUSIC PRAISE THE LORD THROUGH MUSIC

**If you have a passion for singing and/or ringing, join us!**

Practice With Us Wednesday Evenings Beginning in September

Chancel Choir - 7:30pm-9:00pm  
Hand Bell Choir 6:30pm-7:15pm



## Yarn Rappers

Do you knit or crochet, or would you like to learn?



Join the YARN Wrappers  
Tuesdays at 1:00pm  
in the Adult Library

## Communion Table Flowers



*A perfect way  
to honor a  
person, couple,  
or special  
occasion*

*Contact the Church Office  
or Heidi Roberts for more  
information*



## *Happy Birthday - February & March*

ALEX ROURKE FEB 1  
ELAINE PELLETIER FEB 7  
MARSHA SCHWARZ FEB 11  
MARGIE CONGDON FEB 15  
ROG A. ZOLLARS FEB 20

GEORGE HAMELINE FEB 3  
PEGGY FOWLER FEB 8  
BEV WELCH FEB 11  
KATY BLACK FEB 16  
CARLY FOGUTH FEB 23

JAY KIRKEY FEB 3  
P.J. COLLIER FEB 10  
JENNIFER MACLEAN FEB 13  
TY SMITH FEB 19  
JULIE MALONEY FEB 25

SHARI FOGUTH FEB 4  
EDWARD HOEGLUND FEB 11  
CARMEN C ORMSBY FEB 14  
MITZI UEBEL FEB 19  
HEIDI HOWIESON FEB 27

CHARMAINE THORLEY MAR 1  
GUY COWING MAR 5  
JOHN MALONEY MAR 11  
DEBORAH VANDERLIP MAR 19  
OLIVIA KIRKEY MAR 24

MAUREEN UTT MAR 1  
MAGGIE HODGKIN MAR 8  
REBECCA S. RUPPERT MAR 14  
JACK ALLEN MAR 22  
SHARON COWING MAR 25

LOGAN KIRKEY MAR 3  
PHYLLIS CMEJREK MAR 11  
JAN FOSTER MAR 16  
HENRY GLOMSKI MAR 22  
SCOTT GROSSMEYER MAR 25

BOB BROWDER MAR 5  
TONY GRAMS MAR 11  
JUDY HOPE MAR 16  
PAM ANDERSEN MAR 23  
RHONDA MOORE MAR 26

## *Happy Anniversary - February & March*

MIKE & KATIE SIMEON FEBRUARY 28

DOUG & JAN JACOBS MARCH 3

JAMES & JAN FOSTER MARCH 29



# Growing in Community

WE ENGAGE WITH OUR WIDER COMMUNITY, SEEKING TO BE A CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE AND ENCOURAGING OTHERS TO FOLLOW JESUS THROUGH SERVICE IN MISSION AND OUTREACH ENDEAVORS.



"LORD, EVEN AS WE ENJOY THE SUPER BOWL FOOTBALL GAME, HELP US BE MINDFUL OF THOSE WHO ARE WITHOUT A BOWL OF SOUP TO EAT"

**TACKLE HUNGER**  
with the  
**SOUPER BOWL OF CARING**

Souper Bowl of Caring - Sunday, February 9- Youth Group is collecting monetary donations to purchase Grocery Gift Certificates for our Samaritas families. Cash or check payable to First Presbyterian Church marked Souper Bowl can be given to the office or placed in the offering plate.

We are also collecting peanut butter, cans of soup, jars of tomato sauce, and cereal for Center of Hope. Drop off to the bin in the main entryway. THANK YOU for helping us tackle hunger!!!!



Food Bank of Eastern Michigan Volunteer Opportunity - Saturday, March 22nd, 9am until noon. Our local food bank is an award-winning food bank that serves a network of nearly 600 hunger relief partners in 22 counties. They depend on local volunteers to help; and these are always fun, productive events. Sign up in fellowship hall.

# Refugee Welcome Team

MAKING MICHIGAN HOME

## Refugee Welcome Update

### January News...

The first weeks of 2025 have been a whirlwind of activity with eight new arrivals and our newest endeavor- English class!

First the arrivals... three families and 3 individuals have arrived so far this month. Two more individuals should arrive this week. Almost all of the arrivals are coming to Michigan from tropical climates, and our cold is a challenge! Luckily, they have all been referred to Crossover Ministries in Flint to receive winter clothing. Volunteers are needed to provide transportation to and from Crossover. Please let me know if you have availability to provide a ride. Additionally, we have nearly emptied our storage room in our efforts to outfit the new apartments. We are and need of the following:

- Twin and full size sheets
- Twin and full size comforters
- Kitchen towels
- Bath towels
- Sets of silverware
- Kitchen utensils

All donations can be dropped off at First Presbyterian Church Monday through Thursday between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. or you can contact me to drop off at a different time.

We have a new community partner! Thank you to our neighbors at St Jude's for providing these wonderful basic needs bags to all of the new arrivals! Each bag is filled with toiletries, paper products, and cleaning products that will be a wonderful addition to our deliveries.



Now to introduce our newest project! Last week we began offering English classes; 21 students and five volunteers were there for the kickoff! The need for this service is immense, and we are grateful to everyone who is making it possible: Brian, our ESL teacher, all of the volunteers, and El Shaddai Church for generously providing transportation and the meeting space. As this project develops we are anticipating a few new needs. We are looking for:

- Donations of funds to help pay for child care and transportation
- Notebooks and pencils (or donations to purchase them)
- Volunteers to assist during class
- 

Classes are Tuesday nights from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. in Flint. If you would like more details, please let me know. Donations can be made online at [ffpc.org](https://ffpc.org) or by sending a check to the church with “refugees” in the memo line.

Below are photos from our inaugural gathering.

Thank you all for your continued support! I have so much excitement for this, our 7th year of service!

Peace,  
Sarah



We have updated our Amazon Wish List

For more information, to donate, or to  
volunteer please visit

<https://ffpc.org/samaritas/>

or scan the code



# STEWARDSHIP

## DECEMBER FINANCIAL REVIEW

Profit/Loss	December	Budget	Jan. - Dec..	YTD Budget	Annual Budget
Income:	\$ 25,677.23	\$ 21,393.63	\$ 296,095.28	\$ 296,723.60	\$ 256,723.00
Expense:	\$ 36,484.35	\$ 21,540.66	\$ 285,349.85	\$ 269,203.80	\$ 274,146.00
	\$ (10,807.12)	\$ (147.03)	\$ 10,745.43	\$ 27,519.80	\$ (17,423.00)
*This does not include additional obligations such as restricted fund:					
Board of Deacons, Faith & Femininty, Organ Fund, HVAC Fund, etc.					
Statement of Cash Flows		December	YTD		
Cash at Beginning of Period:		\$ 69,539.54	\$ 45,142.12		
Cash at End of Period:		\$ 54,857.62	\$ 54,857.62		
Net Cash		\$ 14,681.92	\$ (9,715.50)		
Balance in the Building Repair & Improvement account as of December 2024 \$6,881.24					
Respectfully Submitted January 7 2025					
Marilee Smiley					
Treasurer					

# FEBRUARY

## bucket list

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MAKE YOUR OWN VALENTINE CARDS

LEAVE A SURPRISE VALENTINE FOR YOUR NEIGHBOR

READ A LOVE STORY

CELEBRATE HOMEMADE SOUP DAY ON 4TH

WRITE A LOVE LETTER

CALL A GRANDPARENT OR A SPECIAL FAMILY MEMBER

WRITE LETTERS TO MILITARY OR MISSIONARIES

BAKE A SWEET TREAT + SHARE WITH A FRIEND

EAT HEART SHAPE PIZZA ON NATIONAL PIZZA DAY 9TH

PICK UP FLOWERS FOR YOURSELF OR A FRIEND

PUT LOVE IN THE AIR WITH AN ACT OF KINDNESS

GO ON A DATE WITH MOM OR DAD

CELEBRATE THE SUPER BOWL WITH FRIENDS

MAKE BREAKFAST IN BED FOR A LOVED ONE

VOLUNTEER FOR A CHARITY

SEND A THOUGHTFUL VALENTINE TO YOUR TEACHER

WATCH A ROMANTIC MOVIE

MAKE A GINGERBREAD LOVE SHACK

TAKE PICTURES WITH LIPSTICK KISSES

SPREAD THE LOVE IN YOUR COMMUNITY WITH HEARTS

GIVE SOMEONE A SINCERE COMPLIMENT

COLLECT AND DONATE CANNED FOODS

CELEBRATE VALENTINES DAY

# 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!!**



**Online Giving:** An easy and convenient 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.



**Church Giving:** 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.



**Automatic Bank Pay:** 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!**