

FENTON FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

# MAY NEWSLETTER

## *Growing in God*

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

### Appropriate Apology

by Pastor Robbie Carnes



Chances are, you have had a conversation (er... exchange?) with someone you disagreed with this past month. It should be a natural experience to converse with people of differing opinions. However, if that conversation is with someone who is incredibly toxic or narcissistic it can be damaging. 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.

*Proverbs 18 19 An offended friend is harder to win back than a fortified city.  
Arguments separate friends like a gate locked with bars.*

It is a familiar feeling, knowing you conflict with someone and experiencing the separation between someone you are otherwise close to. Sometimes it is as simple as clearing up a misunderstanding. Sometimes it's taking the time to hear another person truly. Sometimes, there is no reconciliation before an apology is made. Attempting to plow forward when an apology is needed is what many term toxic.

We have all done things to garner an apology. Yet we find it hard to apologize freely. We also tend to apologize ineffectively. Some may say that they apologize too quickly or for manipulative reasons. Innate narcissistic interests can convolute. For something that can bring so much freedom to our lives, it is a real challenge to do well.

How to avoid being a toxic friend

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

## 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.





In order to apologize well, we need to appreciate the harm we have caused. Allowing the person whom we have injured to fully express their hurt is hard. Many of us don't want to rehash our bad behavior. It also can take more time to listen than we are prepared to give. We might feel that it is making a mountain out of a mole hill; however, listening for understanding to those we have injured makes an apology more genuine and specific. It is also embodying the reconciliation that is being worked for. The injury led to a separation; the listening brings about the repaired connection.

We may avoid apologizing because we assume that the act of apologizing itself will be too painful and shaming. Generally, this fear is unfounded due to its relative nature. Is the pain and shame of apologizing and living with relational separation greater than a restored relationship and potential future fulfilling connections? Most people would agree that restoration is well worth it. Those who have thought differently usually live with regret. Either way, it is not a healthy or ethical reason to avoid apologizing.

We can believe that the apology will do little to repair the relationship and therefore we avoid it. Once again, this fear is not solid ground to base a decision on. We cannot read each other's minds (believe me I have tried!), and there is no telling for certain how another might react to a heartfelt and genuine apology. Just like the previous excuse for avoiding apologizing, this reveals more about ourselves than about our actions. Could it be that imagining that an apology will be ineffective is really a way to avoid making the amends necessary to truly apologize? We avoid speaking the words because we fear going through with the actions that those words would imply. Both these two fears are 'unnecessary barriers to social connection'.



Sometimes we might say some words of apology, but ultimately, we fail to say the words that will be necessary for healing. In addition to listening to the one we have harmed, we need to consider the following to express a full apology. It should be noted that these are not a step by step checklist. Depending on the pain, this may take time and multiple efforts to truly express. Rather than a task to accomplish, apology is a form of communication in which you must ask yourself, "Am I understanding? Am I being understood?"

- Acknowledge the responsibility for the offense. This means without excuses. Taking responsibility for our actions introduces truth into the situation which can bring meaning into the confusion and hurt.
- Express genuine regret and sadness. Share your feelings. What are you sad about? What do you regret? Sharing your feelings about the incident acknowledges the injured party's feelings and works toward connection.
- Offer to repair damages and make amends. This is putting wheels on the bus of your apology. How are your words going to translate into action?
- Explain how you will avoid making the same mistake in the future. Doubling down on your pledge to action, how have you grown through this? Is the hurt that you cause grievous enough to you that you are willing to change your behavior to avoid it in the future?

It is important to note that one common apology failure is to demand forgiveness or manipulate it in exchange for an apology. Just as we need to work on our characters, so that we can apologize freely, we also need to make room for others to forgive freely. Offering an apology so laden with anxiety that the recipient feels beholden to forgive short-circuits the reconciliatory power of apology. **Apologies are intended to make you vulnerable, they are not negotiation techniques.** True apologies are free for both the injured and the wrongdoer.

It is also important to note that there are times in which we should not apologize. We should not apologize when we are not guilty of wrong doing. This does not get us out of actively listening to others expressing their frustration. Attempts to sooth or placate through an apology for something that we are not responsible for can produce codependent behavior that can be extremley harmful for all involved. This is worth thinking about, especially when we are engaging with people who are demanding apologies. How do you respond truthfully and lovingly?

Apology is a hard business. Broken relationships are difficult to heal and we may feel separated by wrought iron fences. Thank God, 'who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.' (2 Corinthians 5:18). We have the perfect example through Jesus and the power of the Spirit who is transforming us, degree by degree, into the image of Christ.







## Thoughts From Brenna

Taken from the Bi-Weekly Brief

We regularly like to give our very busy Stated Clerk a small break and have a member of Presbytery Council write an article for the Bi-Weekly Brief. For this edition we are grateful to the Rev. Brenna Overland, Pastor of Bay City-First and one of our Pastor To Pastors.

If I am honest, the truth for me lately is that I always feel like I am failing somebody. With a two year old and a 4 month old at home it feels like no matter what I do I am letting someone down. Play with the toddler? Must be letting down the infant who is laying on his play mat alone. Cuddle the baby? Disappoint the toddler who wants to show me his blocks. And it doesn't stop there. Go to work and I feel like I am letting down my family by missing out on being with them. Stay home when one of the kids doesn't feel well? Well then I must be failing my congregation because I was supposed to be at an event or taking communion to someone. And goodness forbid I take any time for myself. Even going to the grocery store alone makes me feel like I am a failure, like I am letting someone down. I am not sure when we decided that as people and pastors we were supposed to be all things, to all people, at all times but I am sure it is not sustainable.

I have been reading a book lately called *Am I doing it Right?: Making Choices Without Mom Guilt*, and have been struck by how much it speaks to me not just as a mom but also as a pastor. The constant tug and pull between people's needs and wants and expectations can leave us feeling like we are a constant source of disappointment. But in the book there is a line that has stuck with me incessantly the past few days: "There is no relationship between how much you believe something is true and how true it is. Did you get that? There is no relationship between how strongly, deeply, fiercely you believe something is true and how true it is."

Just because you feel like or even believe you are a disappointment, or a failure, or not enough... it does not mean that you are. Our brains and the world have a way of trying to make us believe things about ourselves and the world that are not true. Your worth is not dependent on what you do or produce. Working more at the expense of your health, your family, your faith, your joy is not holy or a thing to be admired. Failing at a task or even at a job doesn't make you a failure or unworthy of love and good things.

What is true is this: You are not Jesus. You are, however, a beloved child of God. It is not your responsibility to save people or be all things to everyone. Perfection is an unrealistic and pointless goal. Your call and job do not define you. You will mess up and make mistakes and that is okay and normal. You are loved fiercely, tenderly, and completely by the God of the universe.

On Easter Sunday we celebrated the truth of that fierce love of God. It is an unshakeable truth that has its roots in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. So when you have moments when you begin to believe you are failing, or unworthy, or bad, or any other terrible thoughts that keep us up at night; hold on to the truth. Afterall, the God of the universe loves you, forgives you, and accepts you as you are; perhaps it is time you should try and love, forgive, and accept yourself as well.

In Christ,

The Rev. Brenna Overland

Pastor, Bay City-First

Lake Huron Presbytery Pastor To Pastors



# WORSHIP

HOW TO WORSHIP WITH US

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



## MAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

### **May 4th 3rd Sunday of Easter**

The Gospel in Acts

Special Guest Preacher - Jim Foster

### **May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025 4th Sunday of Easter, Mother's Day**

The Gospel in Acts

Special Guest Preacher - Mike Vanderlip

### **May 18th, 2025 5th Sunday of Easter**

#### **40+ Member Celebration**

The Gospel in Acts

Special Guest Preacher - Peggy Fowler

### **May 25th, 2025, 6th Sunday of Easter**

#### **Memorial Day Weekend**

The Gospel in Acts

Special Guest Preacher - Peggy Fowler

**Closed Captions during worship are available  
on the TV located in the Sanctuary Annex.**

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).

You may have noticed that we have had different paraments in the sanctuary recently. These have been gifted to us by Heidi Roberts. Her belated father was a Pastor and Heidi's mother crafted a number of paraments for the liturgical season. Keep a look out! We will be using these beautiful cloths to decorate the communion table in the future.





# 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.

### MAY TEACHERS

**Elementary &**

**PRESCHOOL/NURSERY**

PJ Collier/Tina Ritchie &  
Heidi Roberts

### **"Into the Promised Land" topics:**

**Unit 9 – The Cycle of Judges**

(Judges; Ruth)

When the neighboring nations threatened and attacked Israel; God provided new leaders, called judges, to help rescue God's people. While these judges could only give temporary help, they reminded God's people that one day God would provide a perfect Judge to rescue God's people for good.

### **5/4 Ruth and Boaz**

**Big Picture Question:** What is repentance? Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to Jesus.

**Unit Key Verse:** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ~ **1 John 1:9**

### **"The Kingdom Provided" topics**

**Unit 10 – Samuel and King Saul**

(1 Samuel)

Despite all that God had done for Israel, God's people continued to rebel against God. They demanded a king, going against God's plan and ignoring God's warnings about how a king would rule them. God provided Israel's first king, Saul, to rule God's people. Christ, the final King, rules over all people as Savior.

**5/11 Hannah and Samuel**

**5/18 The Ark Was Captured**

**5/25 Israel's First King**

**Big Picture Question:** Is there anything or anyone greater than God? No, God is greater than everything and everyone.

**Unit Key Verse:** No one is like you, Lord; you are great, and your name is mighty in power. ~ **Jeremiah 10:6**



**Preschool and Nursery help needed through the summer**

**Adult and youth volunteers are needed to teach and shepherd our preschool and nursery children on Sunday mornings from 10-11am. Youth must be in 6th grade or above to shepherd. Please see the sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall or Tina Ritchie.**



# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

## ADULT STUDIES



### **Sunday Evening Bible Study Starting March 23rd**

"Sitting at the Feet of Rabbi Jesus: How the Jewishness of Jesus can transform your faith."

by Ann Spangler and Lois Tverberg.

Led by Larry Zimble

5 - 6:30PM in the 4square Tax & Accounting Conference room

Zoom participation is available upon request. Please see Rabbi Larry for more information

### **Tuesday Morning Bible Study - Parables of Jesus**

11 am - 12:15pm in the Conference Room

Led by Pastor Robbie, this class will resume April 22 after taking a break through Lent and Easter.

### **Women's Studies - April Women's Bible Study**

**Perfectly Flawed: God Transforms our Weaknesses in Strengths**

**Learn to persevere in your faith, live confidently, and boldly step into God's purpose for you.**

**Wednesday mornings April 23 May 28 from 10am - NOON**

This class meets in the Conference Room and is facilitated by Tina Ritchie

**OR**

**Thursday evenings April 24 through May 29 from 6:30 - 8:30PM**

This class meets via zoom and is facilitated by Dee Dee Ainsworth



# 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.

### May

\*Sat 17, 9AM: Dibbleville Garage Sale Fundraiser

### June

Sun 8, TBD

M, 23 - F, 27: Massanetta Middle School Conference

## Story Time in Fellowship Hall!

The Library Committee is hosting story time the 2nd Sunday of each month after worship. 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.



## 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!

## Calling High School and College Graduates!

We'd like to acknowledge and celebrate your achievements! Please contact the office by May 23 to let us know the school you are graduating from, what degree if appropriate, and what your future plans are. If possible, we'd also like to have a current picture to post which can be emailed to [office@ffpc.org](mailto:office@ffpc.org). Congratulations and may you feel God's love and guidance as you journey onward! "Be strong and keep the charge of the Lord your God, walking in his ways and keeping his statutes, his commandments, his ordinances, and his testimonies that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn." 1 Kings 2:2-3





# 40 YEAR MEMBER RECOGNITION

It's not often in our society that we get to celebrate people who have been members of one church or one community for decades. But today—as part of our annual tradition we recognize those saints in our midst who have been members of this church family for 40 years or more.

**CHRIS ANDERSON  
DONNA ANDERSON  
DEBERA BARD  
DENNIS BEARDSLEE  
JOANN BEARDSLEE  
NANCY BERGER  
PEGGY BLOUGH  
BOB BROWDER  
JUDY BROWN  
PAM ANDERSEN  
GEORGE HAMELINE  
PHYLLIS CMEJREK  
MELISSA ERWIN  
SHARI FOGUTH  
PEGGY FOWLER  
BONNIE GRIFFITH  
BARBARA HUNGERFORD**

**JULIE HUSSAR  
MITZI UEBEL  
TOADIE MIDDLETON  
DENISE MORRIS  
LORI MURRAY  
CAROLYN POST  
JOYCE GUILBAULT  
HAROLD SKINNER  
VERA THORNTON  
GLORIA BUTTS  
LYNNE WATTERS  
JERRY WELCH  
BEV WELCH  
JOHN WRAGE  
SARA WRAGE  
BEV TIPPETT**



# BRING A *Friend*



## **FIRST PRESBYTERIAN SATURDAY GROUNDS BEAUTIFYING WORK GROUP**

We need the help of a few individuals to help keep our flower gardens clean, pretty and weed free.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month, May-September starting at 9am

If you are interested in participating, please contact the office at 810-629-7801  
or see Deb Bard or Mary Zimbler.







# **DIBBLEVILLE GARAGE SALE**



**MAY 16TH & 17TH  
9:00 AM - 5:00 PM**



Fenton First Presbyterian Church and St. Jude's Episcopal Church  
are sponsoring a neighborhood-wide Garage Sale in Dibbleville

**Apply Now!**

## **DEACON'S SCHOLARSHIP**

**TWO OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE**

**APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE IN FELLOWSHIP HALL OR ONLINE**

Are you a Member of Fenton First Presbyterian Church  
or child of a member;



A high school senior OR has graduated and is  
continuing their education at a: college, trade school,  
seeking professional development or a certificate.



Apply Now by Visiting us at <https://ffpc.org/deacons/>





## 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

ACHEL BLACK MAY 1  
MORRIS FULCHER MAY 10  
MELISSA ERWIN MAY 13  
CHRIS COFFIN MAY 19  
ROBERT MCLIVE MAY 21  
BEV TIPPETT MAY 24

MICHAEL PELLETIER MAY 8  
DAVID HALL MAY 11  
JAMES FOSTER MAY 15  
MARK MARTIN-FANONE MAY 19  
JERRY WELCH MAY 22  
JIM ALLCORN MAY 26

MARILEE SMILEY MAY 9  
PAUL L JOITKE MAY 11  
SARAH K MARTIN-FANONE MAY 16  
MADELINE GIBB MAY 20  
JENNY GIBB MAY 23  
GERRI DANULES MAY 29

CAMERON ANDERSON MAY 10  
PAT ALLEN MAY 12  
DEBERA BARD MAY 18  
JOHN DANULES MAY 21  
JEFF STONE MAY 24  
SHIRLEY ISRAEL MAY 30

## Happy Anniversary

JEFF & SHARON STONE MAY 19

DOUG & LYNNE WATTERS MAY 21

# 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.



## FFPC **MISSION** Opportunity!



### DUFFLE BAGS FOR FOSTER CHILDREN

Through June 1st, the Mission Committee will be accepting donations to again purchase duffle bags to decorate and donate to local foster children. The bags cost \$35 each including the contents and shipping. The bags will be decorated at Family Night in Fenton on June 19th in Rackham Park. We'd love to see you there! You can give directly to the church office, to Donna Anderson, or here at this link by noting "For duffle bags".



**SCAN ME**



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

## Fenton Zonta Club Sewing Bee



**Saturday, May 31st from 9am to 12pm**

the Fenton Zonta Club will host a sewing bee in our youth room to make comfort pillows for women who've just had mastectomies.

The pillows are given to local hospitals and to anyone you might know personally who needs one.

Help is needed for hand and machine sewing, cutting, pinning and stuffing. You can sign up in Fellowship Hall.





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## Presbyterian Women Gathering - "Rooted in Faith"

Women in the Presbyterian Church have a special opportunity this summer June 27-28 to attend a "Gathering" of women from around the Synod. Many of you may remember the Rev. Dr. Rhaskell Hunter - she will be our guest speaker. She has written next year's Bible Study.

Come for some time away  
Come for some great fellowship  
Come for some Spiritual Renewals.

We are encouraged to make your hotel reservation soon (lots of activities in Battle Creek this summer)  
Hope to see you there!

Synod Gathering 2025 Information

<https://lakemichiganpresbytery.org/2025/02/28/registration-open-for-the-2025-synod-of-the-covenant-presbyterian-women-gathering/>

## Presbyterian Youth Triennium 2025

July 28-31 2025, the Presbyterian Church (USA) will welcome thousands of its high school age youth and their adult youth workers to Louisville, Kentucky for Presbyterian Youth Triennium 2025. Four days of worship, recreation, bible study, outreach, and faith formation all around the theme of "As If We Were Dreaming".

The presbytery is in need of a volunteer to be the registrar for the event ASAP. Please check out the link below for more information. If interested, please email Staci Percy at [spercy@presbylh.org](mailto:spercy@presbylh.org).

## Change to the PC(USA)s World Mission program which affects our Mission Co-Workers.



Cathy Chang and her husband Juan Lopez are in the process of ending their work in the Philippines.

She asked that we share the link below regarding the changes.

[Article regarding World Mission Changes](#)



Many of you are also familiar with the work of Josh Heikkila in Ghana. Below is a link to his last newsletter as a Mission Co-Worker.

We continue to lift up Josh as well as Cathy, Juan and their daughter Aurelie in prayer along with all of the Mission Co-Workers who are transitioning to other roles.

[Josh Heikkila Newsletter](#)

# STEWARDSHIP

## FEBRUARY FINANCIAL REVIEW

Profit/Loss	March	Budget	Jan. - March.	YTD Budget	Annual Budget
Income:	\$ 24,199.82	\$ 21,027.99	\$ 71,320.43	\$ 62,883.58	\$ 253,545.17
Expense:	\$ 29,469.79	\$ 23,355.22	\$ 5,382.85	\$ 71,524.18	\$ 305,083.06
	\$ (5,269.97)	\$ (2,327.23)	\$ (14,062.42)	\$ (8,640.60)	\$ (51,537.89)
*This does not include additional obligations such as restricted fund:					
Board of Deacons, Faith & Femininty, Organ Fund, HVAC Fund, etc.					
Statement of Cash Flows		March	YTD		
Cash at Beginning of Period:		\$ 50,752.98	\$ 54,857.92		
Cash at End of Period:		\$ 47,283.34	\$ 47,283.34		
Net Cash		\$ (3,469.64)	\$ (7,672.41)		
Balance in the Building Repair & Improvement account as of March 2025 \$7371.91					
Respectfully Submitted April 4th, 2025					
Marilee Smiley					
Treasurer					