

FEBRUARY 2020

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

120 S. PARK AVENUE FREMONT, OH 43420 419-334-7171 WW.FREMONTFPC.ORG

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

Becoming a Matthew 25 Beloved Community

Our Lenten Journey is about to begin. What does it mean to be a Matthew 25 Church and commit to following God's word? It means following Jesus' words, to live out Jesus' words in the Gospel of Matthew and reach out to others in bold, new ways. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. used the term "beloved community" for a community in which God's kingdom is truly being realized through seeking peace and justice for all and living out a selfless love for one another. It means striving to live as Jesus lived and loved. Rather than giving up something this Lent, let's see if we can renew our commitment to discipleship and become committed to "creating beloved communities in our own backyards — communities reflecting the inclusive and healing love that Jesus modeled as he made his way to the cross."

Scripture and daily prayer can help us with this commitment. Below you will find daily devotions based on the themes of hospitality, discipleship, faithfulness, justice, compassion, and community. There is a scripture passage and a brief prayer for each day. Some days also have a brief reflection on the passage for the day. Some days, only a verse or two of scripture will be read. Other days, the passage may involve five or six verses. Follow the order or use them for your daily prayer in the order you wish. The first series of devotions (for Ash Wednesday through Sunday, March 14) appear in this newsletter. The March newsletter will contain additional devotions for the remainder of our Lenten Journey.

Blessings,
Pastor Julie

Lenten Daily Devotions for Ash Wednesday, February 17 through Sunday, March 14

Ash Wednesday, February 17

Scripture: Isaiah 58:6-7

Prayer: God, as I begin this journey of Lent, show me the weaknesses I am blind to. Create space in my heart to sit with uncomfortable and uncertain feelings. Show me one small step to take as I follow you. Amen.

Thursday, February 18

Scripture: Psalm 51:4-6

Prayer: Precious Jesus, show me your truth and guide me in your wise ways for my life. Show me moments to listen to your voice and give me ears to hear. Amen.

Friday, February 19

Scripture: Jonah 4:9-11

Prayer: God of all, you call me to live in the light of your life. When it seems like the world is falling down around me, set my feet firmly in your light. Help me to breathe in your Spirit for the moment and to follow the way of the risen Christ. Amen.

Saturday, February 20

Scripture: Luke 13:16

In-person worship has been temporarily canceled until Sandusky County is no longer "Red". There will still be "Zoom" services every Sunday at 10 am and Sunday School at 9 am.

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Opportunities for Worship:

- Sunday School 9 am, via Zoom
- Worship 10 am, via Zoom

CONTACT INFO:

To contact the pastor, call the church office at 419-334-7171. In case of a pastoral emergency, call 419-341-2548.

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office@fremontfpc.org

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Prayer: God of all, we know this is why Jesus came — to set the prisoners free. Therefore, we, the followers of Jesus, must minister to those who are disconnected from beloved community and bring them into the conversations that can heal a society. God of mercy, help us to see what you see so that we can minister to all those who are disconnected from the beloved community. Amen.

First Sunday of Lent, February 21

Scripture: Genesis 4:7

In Genesis, God told Cain, “If you do well, will you not be accepted?” In this context, “doing well” does not mean doing good deeds for someone. Instead, it means keeping one’s focus on God above all things. Cain did not fully rely on God. His own wants and desires led him to kill his brother, Abel. God warned Cain that he needed to control his anger and keep his focus on doing God’s will. In the Lord’s Prayer we pray: Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Do we really mean that?

Prayer: Lord, encourage churches to focus on what God is doing. Give us strength and spiritual maturity so that we may be able to carry out your will. Amen.

Monday, February 22

Scripture: Acts 8:26-38

The good news is that we serve a God who is willing to break down every barrier and tear down all walls to pursue God’s own. This relentless pursuit and inclusion of those once rejected creates a beautiful picture of how we are to respond as the beloved community of God. In the same way that Philip was commanded to “Get up ... go over ... and join,” I wonder who the Holy Spirit might be inviting us to pursue this Lenten season. Do we have the same courage to enter into the lives of those we identify as strangers?

Prayer: Fill us with your grace that we might enter into one another’s lives with hope. May the truth of your love found in Jesus Christ continue to guide and build your beloved community. Amen.

Tuesday, February 23

Scripture: Romans 12:10-13

“Hospitality” is a good word to meditate on during Lent. Hospitality makes room for others and welcomes with open arms. Hospitality says, “There is always space for another” and “Everyone should feel warmly welcomed and valued.” Christian hospitality is demonstrating God’s love toward people who may seem different from us. This Lenten season, may we be a community where all people feel at home among us.

Prayer: Welcoming God, you went to such great lengths to welcome us. You invite us, who were once strangers, to make our home in you. Empower us, through your Holy Spirit, to embody this same hospitality to those we encounter this Lenten season. Jesus, it is for your glory that we pray this. Amen.

Wednesday, February 24

Scripture: Galatians 3:28

The false divisions of social status and wealth dissolve as we reflect on their encounter with mortality. And I find that their prayers are all so similar: for a safe, clean place to live, a renewed commitment to treasure time with their children, or gratitude that by God’s mercy they will live to see another day.

Prayer: God, open our eyes so that we can recognize our siblings in the human family. We pray that you will open our hearts to receive their stories and that we might live more deeply in your love for us and the world. Amen.

Thursday, February 25

Scripture: Romans 8:26

Prayer: God, we pray that you would pour out your healing presence on each member of the human family today, especially those who we name in our hearts. We ask that you enter in and bring the healing that you have for us — physically, emotionally and spiritually. Complete this good work that you have begun in us. Amen.

Friday, February 26

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 12:9

Prayer: God, we ask that you lift the pain from those who suffer today. Give us the strength we need to offer your grace to each person we encounter. May we live in the beloved community that you are creating amid suffering and joy, illness and healing, dying and living. Amen.

Saturday, February 27

Scripture: Luke 12:13-15

We are often so focused on building bigger and better storehouses to hold our ever-increasing material possessions that we ignore and forget our calling as people of faith to share. The Scriptures are clear that we ought to share what we have with others, particularly with the marginalized, poor, and disenfranchised. We are called to act with grace and compassion, and to put on the clothes of righteousness, filling our lives with forgiveness, justice, mercy, and love. When we embody generosity, respect, and acceptance, we will steer away from building bigger barns for ourselves, and instead we will build a beloved community that is truly welcoming to all.

Prayer: Giver of life, with gratitude we acknowledge your provision and blessings in our life. Help us to turn to you with humility and awe, as we discover new ways to experience the presence of the Spirit at work in the world. Through your continued grace and mercy, may we become a beloved community that is rich in love and compassion in all that we do and say. Amen.

Second Sunday of Lent, February 28

Scripture: Luke 14:12-13

Today's reading reminds us of the dignity of all God's people. Dignity is the right to chat with my neighbors when our paths cross. Dignity is the right to be heard.

Prayer: God of compassion, help us to accept in our heart of hearts that you love and affirm us as we are, so that we may turn around and treat others with the same unconditional compassion and acceptance.

Monday, March 1

Scripture: 1 John 4:12-20

Prayer: God, help us to recognize your beloved community in our everyday comings and goings, so that we may see you visible and present in this world. Amen.

Tuesday, March 2

Scripture: Luke 10:30-37

Loving others can often come in simple acts of kindness and compassion.

Prayer: Lord, open our eyes to see the things that we are blind to and help us become more aware of the needs around us. Lead us in being more generous with time, resources and compassion toward others. May we be instruments of your love. Amen.

Wednesday, March 3

Scripture: Luke 21:1-4

Often those who are very poor seem to live with more joy, compassion, generosity and hospitality. Even though they have very little to spare, they may give out of their own poverty to show gratitude.

Prayer: God of grace, help us to be more Christ-like in our thoughts, words, and actions. Humble our minds and our hearts as we learn how to love others with pure hearts. We ask this in the name of the Holy One. Amen

Thursday, March 4

Scripture: Psalm 23

Prayer: God who leads us and refreshes us, grant to us the space to experience your created world and better discern our role in your Creation. Amen.

Friday, March 5

Scripture: John 1:4-5

Prayer: God of Light, help us remember that you are the source of unrelenting light as we go into the world to love and to serve you. Amen.

Saturday, March 6

Scripture: Matthew 18:5

Prayer: God of strangers and outsiders, help us to welcome all with open arms and loving hearts. Amen.

Third Sunday of Lent, March 7

Scripture: Matthew 14:14-16

Prayer: God of generosity and abundance, you have met our every need. However, while we may be satisfied, some of our neighbors and friends do not have enough. Be merciful and give us soft and gentle hearts so that, just like Jesus, we may be moved to compassionate actions when we see someone struggling with poverty. Amen.

Monday, March 8

Scripture: James 1:27

Prayer: God of orphans and widows, open our eyes so that we may see that whenever we care for someone in need, we are tending to you. O Jesus, give us faith that will enable us to love our neighbors as you have loved us. Amen.

Tuesday, March 9

Scripture: Luke 24:32-33

Two friends walking toward Emmaus thought all was lost. They talked about the great things they thought would happen because of Jesus. But not anymore. Jesus was dead. They heard rumors about him being alive, but they just couldn't believe it. And then it happened. Jesus walked alongside them and later joined them to break bread. In the breaking of the bread, their eyes were opened. It was Jesus. They were reunited. They ran back to Jerusalem to tell the disciples the good news. There is great joy in families being reunited. There is so much good happening when dreams get a second chance. Let's be agents of this joy and goodness.

Prayer: Lord of new beginnings, thank you for allowing us to experience the joy of being given the chance to enjoy family and friends. Challenge us to be participants in making these experiences possible for all. Amen.

Wednesday, March 10

Scripture: Matthew 25:37-40

No more are we strangers of God's kingdom. We are citizens, part of God's beloved community.

Prayer: Creator God, giver of all that we need, grant us an abundance of generosity to be able to give and to care. May our lives be examples of the life of Jesus Christ as he gave his life so that all may live. Amen.

Thursday, March 11

Scripture: Luke 14:13-14

Prayer: Dear God, give us the boldness to risk our comfortable lives as we open our churches, and even our homes, to those we think will bring us discomfort. Let us know that this is the only way we can make our church truly a beloved community. Amen.

Friday, March 12

Scripture: Isaiah 58:6-7

Prayer: Help us, O God, to see those who are "fenced-off" and dehumanized — those who some others think are only worthy of hate. We pray for those oppressed and in despair. Minister to them by your Spirit and by us. Teach us to love as you have loved us. Amen.

Saturday, March 13

Scripture: Deuteronomy 31:6

Fear begets fear.

Prayer: God of all, who goes with us and who will never fail or forsake us, grant us strength in the face of fear, wisdom to seek understanding, and clarity of vision to see the impact our beliefs and words have in your world. Amen.

Fourth Sunday of Lent, March 14

Scripture: Joshua 1:6

How can we be used by God in helping to prepare the present generation to succeed?

Prayer: Lord, grant us the courage, passion, and vision to reach beyond the walls of our comfort zones to reach those needing to experience the love and nurture of community. Amen.

See March 2021 newsletter for remainder of prayers for Lent and Holy Week.

Prayers adapted from "Becoming a Beloved Community: A Matthew 25 Journey to the Cross." Presbyterian Today, 2020. PC(USA) and PCUSA Lenten Resources for Matthew 25.

RAINBOW STATION NEWS



Welcome to February! We would like to send a huge SHOUT OUT to Habitat for Humanity for the beautiful donation of a playhouse for the play yard. This house was constructed by the students at Vanguard Vocational School. We are excited to be able to go out and explore and play in it. Thank you to Larry VanDyne, Bob Gamble, the Board members from Habitat, and any others that helped get it into the play yard.

We still have 4-5 openings in the Toddler Room and 3-5 openings in the Preschool Room, depending on the days. We are thankful for the families we have that have stayed with us during this pandemic. We are praying this will all be behind us soon. Trusting God for His provision.

We continue to social distance as much as is possible with little ones, wash hands frequently, do health checks upon arrival, disinfect toys daily, and whatever else we can do to keep the spread down.

Thank you for all of your prayers and support. You are appreciated very much. God bless you all.

Until next month,

Rainbow Station Staff

THANK
YOU

RECYCLE!

Don't forget to bring in your used ink and toner cartridges to be recycled. These are returned to Staples, and Rainbow Station receives credit toward future purchases on needs such as paper and ink. Every little bit makes a difference! Thank you for your continued help!



Happy Birthday!

19 Miss Roberta

Neighbors' News

The Pandemic has changed our lives but not our commitment to help feed the hungry. If you are able to help until we are able to collect food items, please send a contribution to:



The Sandusky County Food Pantry

PO Box 445

Fremont, OH 43420

Please put **First Presbyterian Church Neighbors** on the memo line of your check.

Thanks for your help, Neighbor!

Christ University: New Series

The Adult Sunday School class invites you to join us on Sunday mornings via Zoom at 9:00 a.m. as we study the book of Ruth and get to know this woman of faith with the series "Getting to Know Ruth". Then during Lent we will study the Gospel of John with the series "A Lenten Fast: From Insight to Action in the Gospel of John".

Feb 7: "Ruth: Chapter 3"

Feb. 14: "Ruth: Chapter 4"

New Study: Lenten Series: "A Lenten Fast: From Insight to Action in the Gospel of John"

Feb. 21: "Wanting More"

Feb. 28: "Is New Life Possible"

March 7: "Lives on the Move"

March 14: "From Blindness to Insight"

March 21: "The Community Breaks the Bond"

*Dear Members of First Presbyterian Church,
Thank you all very much for faithfully partnering with the volunteers and staff of Northern Ohio Youth for Christ as we take the wonderful good news of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ to the lost teens of Northern Ohio.*

May God bless you all.

John Roush, WOLT Board Chair

UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have moved, changed phone numbers, or have a new email address, please email those changes to the office at office@fremontfpc.org.

If you received a directory update form from the office, please don't forget to return it to the office by February 14th. You can take a picture of your form and email it to office@fremontfpc.org if you want to save a stamp.

Thank you to those who have already sent yours in!

Amy Monk,

FPC Administrative Assistant

WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

February 7:

Scripture: John 11

Sermon: "Jesus Understands"

Communion (*virtual*)

February 14:

Scripture: John 12

Sermon: "A Decision Demanded"

February 21: First Sunday of Lent

Scripture: John 13

Sermon: "Called Up for Service"

Communion (*virtual*)

February 28: Second Sunday of Lent

Scripture: John 14

Sermon: "This Way"

Happy
VALENTINE'S
DAY



FEBRUARY

	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 9:00a - Zoom Sunday School 10:00a - Zoom Worship	8	9	10 7:30p - Session Meeting	11	12	13
14 9:00a - Zoom Sunday School 10:00a - Zoom Worship	15 President's Day	16	17 Ash Wednesday	18	19	20 Newsletter Articles Due
21 9:00a - Zoom Sunday School 10:00a - Zoom Worship	22	23	24	25	26	27
28 9:00a - Zoom Sunday School 10:00a - Zoom Worship						
Second Sunday of Lent						

Birthdays

6	Ken Myers	17	Kathy Fawley	20	Harry Sargeant
7	Barb Stout	19	Jenna Herman	21	Ellen Abbott
10	Greg Van Dyne	19	Katy Hull	23	Stacey McConnell
10	Trevor Weikert	19	Roberta Patterson	26	Helen Abbott
15	Pam Clark	19	Steven Reinbolt	28	Teddy Ross

SUMMARY OF SESSION MEETING

The regular January Stated Session was held via Zoom on Wednesday, January 13, 2021. Session members present included: Jody Amor, Linda Hamilton, Ken Myers, John Roush, Larry Stout, Bill Taylor, and Rev. Dr. Julie Kling, moderator. Bob Humberger was absent. Pastor Kling opened with a “Matthew 25” prayer provided by PCUSA with items and pauses for responses by session members.

Guest Joan Gamble, Rainbow Station Board Chair, reported 7 preschoolers and 1 toddler were enrolled. The Habit for Humanity donated playhouse has arrived. Joan requested prayers for Rainbow Station staff, children, and families.

With the State’s ruling Sandusky County’s COVID-19 status as “red”, weekly Sunday School and Sunday services will continue to be held on Zoom.

During December, Pastor Kling preached Sunday sermons and prepared worship services for Zoom. She also assisted with the technological leadership for the Adult Sunday School via Zoom. She provided pastoral counseling for concerned persons by phone. Pastor Kling also prepared, preached, and lead the Christmas Eve service via Zoom. She did some reading and study of COVID19, Matthew 25 materials, and participated in several related zoom calls. She moderated the December session meeting and participated in some of the weekly Maumee Valley Presbytery Zoom calls for Pastors and church leaders. She is participating in a weekly Bible study as well as attending some of the lectionary study for pastors and other church leaders. She used the remaining snacks to create Christmas bags for Terra students and staff who remained on campus during the holiday. She had the privilege of being invited to an Advent day of prayer that explored art and using art as part of worship and attended parts of two different trivia/game nights to see how that could work using Zoom. She prepared and led the Advent Wednesday evening prayer and Bible study services that were offered via Zoom and led a Zoom training prior to the last Advent service so all could be comfortable with Zoom for the Christmas Eve worship. Pastor Kling attended a session on the importance of social media and online worship for congregations. While this was a new idea for some congregations, the presenters suggested that congregations will be worshipping online for some months yet as the number of COVID19 cases continues to rise and the deployment of vaccines has been slow. The discussion also included post-COVID19 worship. The leaders mentioned that while online worship may be new to many churches, it will still probably be an option that some congregants expect to continue. It helps those who live outside the area or those confined/homebound to be able to attend worship.

The treasurers’ report for December (includes Rainbow Station): income - \$13,848, expenditures - \$7,256, surplus – \$6,592, 2020 year to date income - \$118,780, expenditures - \$115,435, and surplus - \$3,345.

The Leadership Team reports included: **Administration and Finance** – Note: Bob Humberger, by virtue of his being Chair of the Administration and Finance Leadership Team per the FPC Charter, is the President of the FOC Corporation. **Christian Growth and Nurture** – Adult Sunday School Class will be starting a study of the Old Testament book of Ruth via ZOOM. It was noted this has several out-of-state participants. **Music, Worship, and Sacraments** – Virtual Sunday Worship Services will continue with virtual communion, both by Zoom. **Stewardship Task Force** – A total of \$82,000 in pledges for 2021 (that is 47% of responses in 2020 that totaled \$93,000). **Personnel Committee** – Pastor’s contract for 2021 has been renewed with 3% raise. **Nominating Committee**- Any future action delayed by lack of representative and list of vacancies from the Board of Deacons. **Presbytery Report** – Pastor Kling and Bill Taylor attended the quarterly Presbytery meeting on ZOOM on February 16.

There was no old or new business.

Pastor Kling closed the meeting with prayer.



THE BOARD OF DEACONS

Kaylee Amor
Pam Clark
Gerrie Hensley
Amanda Herman
Anne Humberger
Lisa Zimmerman
Josh Ross (Moderator)
Diane Roush

THE CHURCH MINISTRY TEAM

Pastor	Rev. Dr. Julie Kling
Choir Director	Lori Damschroder
Organist Emeritus	Paul Livingston
Secretary	Amy Monk
Children's Ministry Coordinator	Nicole Whetstone
Rainbow Station Director/Teacher	Roberta Patterson
Rainbow Station Teacher	Kathleen Daley
Rainbow Station Floater	Shari Mehling
Rainbow Station Aide	Kali Norris
Co-Treasurers	Larry & Carol Van Dyne
Volunteer Parish Nurse	Linda Hamilton
Custodian	Scott Slatter

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN **COORDINATING TEAM**

Moderator	Dannita Cowdrey
Secretary	
Treasurer	Carol Van Dyne
Funeral Luncheon	Susan Myers
Rachel Circle	Dannita Cowdrey
Rummage Sales	
At Large	Jo Elder
	Lois Livingston

THE SESSION

Jody Amor
Linda Hamilton
Bob Humberger
Ken Myers
John Roush
Larry Stout
Bill Taylor (Clerk)
Rev. Dr. Julie Kling (Moderator)



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