

# PresbyNews

The Monthly Newsletter Publication of  
First Presbyterian Church  
Middletown, OH

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Dear friends,

Session decided to begin outdoor worship services on August 9 in the West Parking Lot as pictured above. These in-person worship services will be immediately suspended if Butler County returns to a Level 3 (Red) Emergency or if someone in attendance of the service tests positive for COVID-19 within two weeks of being in worship.

We pray that this decision honors the need to gather, as well as mitigate as much risk as possible.

Here are some important details:

- Worship, for now, will begin at 9:30 instead of 10:00. This is to maximize shade and keep cooler temperatures.
- Masks and physical distancing are required.
- If you are able, please bring your own seating. Chairs will be available. We are trying to minimize the number of surfaces that will need to be sanitized.
- The service will include music, prayer, scripture, and preaching. We will refrain from congregational singing.
- Inclement weather plans will be shared before the first service.
- Please do not come if you are feeling any symptoms related to COVID-19.
- Virtual worship, though in a modified form, will continue to be made available.

Please do not feel compelled to attend in-person worship services. There are so many other ways to stay connected to God and one another at this time. We do ask that you let Pastor Michael or an elder know if there is anyway we can help you stay connected.

There will be unanticipated challenges as we take this step together. We trust that we will engage these challenges with patience, understanding, and a sense of humor!

Blessings,

Pastor Michael Isaacs & Clerk of Session, Anne Frantz

# Mission Notes

## Back to School Mission

This has been a challenging year for all schools deciding how to open with COVID-19. The Middletown School District, including Highview is no different. It is a very fluid situation and as many of you know, Middletown Schools were going to open in classroom learning but they have since moved to at home online learning to start the year.

Initially, we were going to provide 100 students with a smaller list of school supplies than in prior years as the need is different for at home learning. However, the CARES ACT has stepped up & will be providing all students with a small bag of supplies to start the year. Therefore, there is no need to provide supplies for those 100 students.

When the schools change to in classroom learning, there will be additional supplies needed for those 100 students & STEAM supplies required. We are asking for donations now so we are ready when that time arrives. Our annual needs are \$3700.00 each school year which includes student & STEAM supplies. We will be working with Highview throughout the year to assist with their needs.

Please prayerfully consider helping us with this important mission and send a check to the church office. We request that you mark it "Back to School Mission" on the memo line.

Thank you & Blessings to All,  
Kathi Howard & The Mission Committee

## Pre-Kindergarten Readiness Program

The Pre-K Readiness Program will be delaying the start of the school year until Session is prepared to open the building.

### Treasurer's Report

Through June 2020, pledged contributions received are \$112,958 which equals 44% of our budget. That amount also includes 10 online gifts. Currently pledges are behind budget by \$16,700. As a comparison, Pledged Contributions received through June 2019 were \$130,652. In March the Finance Committee and Session had approved the use of funds from the Contingency Fund to cover expenses during these challenging times but, with careful management, no withdrawals have been made.

While we have been blessed to cover expenses, please give thoughtful consideration to maintaining your pledge commitments. Checks can be mailed to the church office (2910 Central Ave, Middletown, OH 45044) or made online.

# Worship Notes

## Upcoming Worship

We will be following the Revised Common Lectionary in worship during August. These are the passages likely to be highlighted in worship:

- August 2 - Genesis 32:22-31
- August 9 - Matthew 14:22-33
- August 16 - Exodus 1:8-2:20
- August 23 - Exodus 3:1-15

We give thanks for the musical gifts of Tara Downie, Cyndi Zopff, Lara Moon, Mick Susco, Tony Susco, Sarah Thornbery, Phil Thornbery, Janet Scott, Tina Newlin, and Audrey Schmid in the month of July.

We give thanks to God for the life of...

- Carol Friedman, who died on July 21.

## Odds and Ends

### Evotionals: Have you signed up for our Evotional?

This is our mid-week devotional e-mail. Each Evotional this summer has focused on favorite hymns that were submitted for worship. Click on the date and title to revisit an Evotional, or click on *YouTube* to see the hymn sang for virtual worship:

[July 22 - Amazing Grace - YouTube](#) | [July 15 - Blest Be the Tie that Binds - YouTube](#) | [July 8 - There's A Wilderness in God's Mercy - YouTube](#) | [June 25 - Here I Am Lord - YouTube](#) | [June 17 - Leaning on the Everlasting Arms - YouTube](#)

Sign up for the Evotional at <https://www.fpcmiddletown.com/weekly-evotional>.

### Presbyterian Historical Society

Amid the COVID-19 crisis, churches across the nation have shown themselves to be beacons of hope. The Presbyterian Historical Society has responded to this unprecedented moment by gathering 2020 Easter Sunday worship services and sermons from PC(USA) congregations and other worshiping communities.

First Presbyterian Church submitted our worship service and was featured in the promotional video. Check it out here: <https://youtu.be/dTVaTnZ3FL0>.

To view select video contributions visit: <https://digital.history.pcusa.org/eastercovid19>

### Reading Group

The Racial Justice Reading Group is planning on reading "Anxious to Talk About It: Helping White Christians Talk Faithfully About Racism" next. Author Carolyn Helsel is a Presbyterian pastor and professor at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. If you'd like you'd like to join the discussion, please let Michael or Lisa know.