

PresbyNews

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Bagpipers on the front lawn after the 2019 Kirkin' of the Tartan service.

Dear friends,

This Sunday is Kirkin' of the Tartans. It is a Scottish-American tradition started at the New York Ave. Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C. As we prepare for this service, I am reminded of a Scottish blessing:

*If after Kirk ye bide a wee,
There's some would like to speak to ye,
If after Kirk ye rise and flee
We' all seem could and still to ye.
The one that's in the seat with ye
Is stranger here than ye, maybe.
All here have got their fears and cares,
Add ye your soul unto our prayers,
Be ye our angel unawares.*

This blessing encourages people to linger following a worship service so that they can share their prayers and cares with one another. This type of sharing and connection is essential to our faith. We do not live out our faith on our own, rather this fellowship is formative. As we navigate our life together at this time, my hope is that we may find holy interactions--or, as the blessing states, we may find angels among us.

-Michael Isaacs

Session Notes

COVID-19 Update from September Session Meeting

At our September 28 meeting, Session decided to start easing back into congregational singing on October 24, unless there are unforeseen developments regarding the pandemic. All other COVID provisions will remain in place. As a general reminder, these provisions include:

- Masks are encouraged for the inclusion of the immunocompromised and children in worship.
- Social distancing is enforced in the sanctuary by the use of alternating pews.
- The length of the worship services be forty-five minutes and not include the passing of any materials.

Mission Notes

Christmas Baskets

First Presbyterian Church is providing Christmas Baskets for 30 families through the Salvation Army. If you would like to sign up to provide toys for one of the baskets, please call the church office or e-mail sandy@fpcmiddletown.com.

Disaster Response

There seems to be new natural disasters every day. Earthquakes. Hurricanes. Wildfires. Of course, we pray for the people who are in harm's way, for first responders, and for people committed to the long-term care of these communities. The Mission Committee can be a part of a faithful response to these needs, and we would like to offer a short update on our response.

First, thank you to everyone who brought in supplies in response to the earthquake in Haiti. We have delivered these supplies—and are still willing to do so—to Matthew 25 Ministries. These supplies are being accompanied by a one thousand dollar contribution from the Mission Committee. We still are accepting donated goods in the office this week and a list of the materials can be found on the back of your insert.

Second, we are saddened by the hurricanes on the Gulf coast and the fires on the West Coast. We have contributed another thousand dollars to these causes through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance enables congregations and mission partners of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) to witness to the healing love of Christ through caring for communities adversely affected by crisis and catastrophic events.

One Way Farm

One Way Farm is expanding their mission by providing transitional housing for youth who age out of foster care. The housing will be here in Middletown, and the Mission Committee committed \$5000, which is the cost of remodeling and furnishing one efficiency apartment in the new location. We will have a more detailed Minute for Mission soon!

Worship & Music Notes

October Worship Schedule

Preaching in October will focus on the book of Job.

- October 3 - Job 1:1, 2:1-10; World Communion Sunday
- October 10 - Job 23:2-19, 16-17; Kirking of the Tartans
- October 19 - Job 38:1-7, 34-41
- October 24 - Job 42:1-6, 10-17
- October 31 - Reformation Sunday

Note from Joyce

The Kirkin' of the Tartans Service is coming soon with all the exciting sights and sound that it brings. There will be beautiful mums gracing the sanctuary. Anyone who wishes to take one home after the service is welcome to do so. There is no charge for the mums this year, but donations to help defray the cost of the mums would be greatly appreciated.

Save the dates!

- Central State University Choir will be in worship on November 14.

Christian Education Notes

In-person Nursery Care and Sunday School

The Christian Education Committee continues to prayerfully consider and implement safe practices to support the full participation of all ages, especially since children under the age of 12 who do not yet have access to the COVID-19 vaccine. Two childcare workers provide consistent care for our youngest children in the Nursery. We practice physical distancing in Sunday School, as much as is practical in providing care in the Nursery. Both spaces are equipped with hand sanitizer, cleaning supplies, and disposable masks in a variety of sizes. Furthermore, due to the circulating and highly contagious Delta variant, we continue to follow the CDC's

recommendation by requiring universal indoor masking in these classrooms by all individuals (age 2 and older), regardless of vaccination status.

- Nursery Care is available for infants and children up to 5 years old every Sunday, located next to Room 110.
- Sunday School (children ages 6-12) is offered most Sundays* in the Godly Play Room following the *Invitation to Sunday School* portion of worship at which time leaders will escort children to Sunday School. When worship concludes, parents/guardians will need to come to the Godly Play Room to pick up their child(ren). (*Note: In October, Sunday School will meet on 10/17, 10/24, and 10/31. We especially want to include children and youth in special worship celebrations such as Communion, Kirkin' of the Tartans, etc.)

Stories of God at Home

The Purple Table is offering resources for you to share Godly Play stories at home! Email Lisa (lisa@fpcmiddletown.com) to sign up to borrow a story kit. Story videos are easily accessible online (<https://www.storiesofgodathome.com/events>).

Stay connected through The Purple Table!

The Purple Table is a pop-up welcome space, online and in-person, that builds community, affirms, and supports healing. Let us encourage one another as we play, share stories, listen, and find a way through, together! Connect instantly with The Purple Table by visiting the website: <https://the-purple-table.mn.com>.

It's time to develop a Planning Team to dream big and bring future Purple Table events to life in the community! Do you have ideas about where The Purple Table should pop up at local events for affirmation and community building? Do you have connections in the community that might help us expand our love-filled presence to support hope and healing? Contact Lisa Kaufer to learn more about how you can support this new form of ministry.

Tuesday Morning Bible Study

Tuesday Morning Bible Study will meet at 10:00 a.m. in the Youth Room. We will continue our study of Job.

Stewardship Notes

Over the last several years, it has not been uncommon for our Operating Budget (making up mostly of our programmatic, personnel, and administrative costs) to begin with a deficit. However, we consistently end the year with a balance. This is in part due to your generosity and our commitment to spending wisely. This year's budget has a deficit that is larger than in years past at \$49,000, and it is worth an update now that we have closed the books on the third quarter. As of the end of September, we are currently at 76% of our anticipated \$323,200 income and 66% of our anticipated \$372,000 expenses, giving us a year to date balance of \$451.

Now that programming is returning we anticipate an increase in expenses, which we saw last month. We hope that our deficit won't be as large as budgeted, and we appreciate any additional contribution or commitment to help offset our operating costs. There are lots of ways to help:

- You can help by continuing your faithful giving on a regular basis.
- If financial giving is not a regular part of your practice of faith, it's always a good time to begin or to consider increasing your commitment.
- Of course, we appreciate those who regularly contribute above and beyond.

Odds & Ends

Men's Monthly Meeting

Men's Monthly Meeting is an opportunity for the men of the church to get together and socialize over dinner. On Tuesday, October 12, the meeting will be at The Clubhouse Sports Grille, 250 N. Main St., Monroe, at 5:30 p.m. Hope to see you there!

Online Calendar

The church calendar is now online! Go to <https://www.fpcmiddletown.com/calendar>.

We give thanks for the life of. . .

- Jackie Hale, who died on September 5, 2021.
- Dale Ledford, who died on September 22, 2021.

