



Forest Hill Church
presbyterian

The Tower Newsletter

July 2025



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*Cover photo taken on church property by Laura Schultz
Do you know where?*

WORDS FROM THE REV. DR. GENE MCAFEE



Members and friends of FHC, I bring you good tidings: Phase Two of the transition to new pastoral leadership has begun. 😊

To recap the process...

In current Presbyterian tradition, the transition to new pastoral leadership consists of three phases:

1. securing transitional pastoral leadership (completed),
2. assembling a Mission Study Committee (MSC) who produces a Mission Study Report (MSR) (underway), and
3. approving a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) who interviews candidates and presents their recommended candidate to the congregation for extending a call (some months away).

It is the responsibility of Session to appoint the Mission Study Committee, which serves the congregation on Session's behalf. **FHC's Mission Study Committee consists of Kurt Haas, Jessica Kelley, Karen Long, Chiq Montgomery, Treva Offutt, and Ahren Stock.** These members represent both the congregation at large and the Pastor Nominating Committee, which was approved by the congregation at last January's Annual Meeting. They will be advised by the Rev. Arvid Whitmore, representing the Presbytery of the Western Reserve. The MSC met for

their launch meeting on June 4. They are now on their way. Phase Two has begun.

The journey that awaits the MSC is to help our congregation develop three understandings about itself: its identity, its purpose, and its context for doing ministry in Christ's name.

The MSC has a number of tools at its disposal to accomplish their goal. Some of those tools are questionnaires, interviews, town hall meetings, and consultation with professionals in the field of church leadership. It is up to the MSC, with advice from Session and the presbytery, to determine which of these tools best serve the need to produce a Mission Study Report—a snapshot—of and for FHC.

When and as the MSC begins requesting participation by the congregation in their snapshot-forming work, please remember that the more we participate in the process, the better the chances are that the final report will accurately reflect FHC, increasing the likelihood of a good fit with FHC's next called pastor. **When opportunities for input are provided by the MSC, please provide yours.**

And please be generous in your prayers for the members of the MSC as they undertake this important work on behalf of Forest Hill Church. Remember them by name before God in your daily devotions: Kurt Haas, Jessica Kelley, Karen Long, Chiq Montgomery, Treva Offutt, and Ahren Stock. Christ, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Faithfully,

Gene McAfee
Transitional Pastor

FAMILY, YOUTH, AND CHILDREN MINISTRY

Congratulations, Graduates!

On Sunday, June 15, we recognized graduates in our church family.

Gavin Neff, grandson of David Neff, graduated Magna Cum Laude from the College of Wooster with a B.A. in Global International Economics.

Vaughn Ullom, son of Megan Alban and Jeffrey Ullom and grandson of Melanie Alban, grew up at FHC, attending Sunday School and singing in the children's and youth choirs. He graduated from Shaker Heights High School and will attend the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism at Arizona State University, studying sports journalism.

James Ryman, pictured here with his family,



graduated from the Mastery School at Hawken and will attend Carnegie Mellon University to study statistics and data science.

Madi Moore graduated from Shaker Heights High School and will study political science at Syracuse University.

James and Madi were in the confirmation class of 2022 and became members of Forest Hill that year. In addition to participating in youth group classes and fellowship activities, they've served as readers and communion servers in worship and volunteered at the Food Pantry and Labre Ministry at North Church.

We wish Gavin, Vaughn, James, and Madi all the best as they head off to college and other adventures this fall!

Creating Welcoming Spaces for Children, Youth and Families

This summer, the Family, Youth and Children's Ministry, with the help of FHC Building Manager Ann Donkin and the Trustees, will be working to update the hallway and classrooms on the first floor



of the education wing. Our goal is to create spaces that 1) accommodate the needs of our growing programs, 2) reflect the vision of a Beloved Community, and 3) represent the diversity of the families, children, and youth we serve.

We'll be repairing/painting walls and adding rugs and furniture to refresh a multi-use classroom, Family Library, and Art Room. With the help of Trustee Roger Heineman, a large new storage room for FYC materials and supplies was designed and is being constructed at the south end of the hallway. All the work is expected to be completed by the end of summer. We're excited to welcome everyone to these updated spaces this fall!

MUSIC MINISTRY

Freaky Bobs

Many thanks to Freaky Bobs of Cleveland Heights High School—Henry Dyck, Rajata Lekudom, Jordan Lashore and Aaron Putnam—who sang during our worship service on June 15. The congregation was moved by their wonderful renditions of “Go the Distance,” “You’ll Never Walk Alone,” and “Somewhere Over the Rainbow.”



DEACONS

What Do Deacons Do Exactly?

All active members of Forest Hill Church are in a C.A.R.E. group. Each group has approximately 20-30 members in it. CARE stands for Christ-like Attention Reaching Everyone with Empathy. The designated Deacon leads each CARE group throughout the year and also coordinates the needs of the congregation during one assigned month per year. The rosters for every CARE group are posted on our bulletin board by the kitchen. Look for your group and the picture of your leader! Get to know the others in your group.

The **tasks** of Deacons include (but are not limited to):

- hosting coffee hour after worship each Sunday
- delivering flowers when necessary
- providing a card ministry for members
- delivering meals to families due to illness, recovery, births, etc.
- visiting homebound members

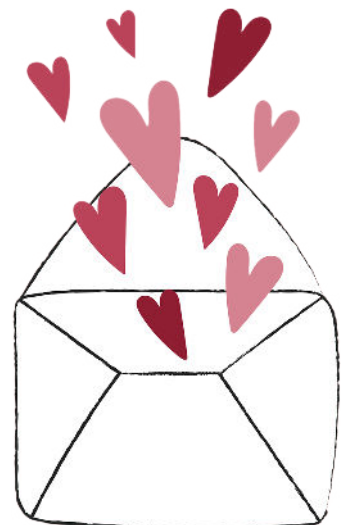
- making phone calls to check on our members
- sending greeting cards for all occasions

Did you know the Deacons can set up a Joyful Meal train for you or a member of your family?

Just contact Julie Lustic at 216-401-5638 to let her know your needs. We have 43 members who are ready and willing to provide delicious and nutritious meals. So far this year we have provided 51 meals.

Would you or a member of your family like a home visit?

Let your CARE group Deacon know or contact Julie Lustic at 216-401-5638, and we will arrange for Pastor McAfee and your Deacon to visit.



FALL FESTIVAL



Save the Date!

On Sunday, September 14, our Fall Fellowship Festival will celebrate the start of our program year. Meats and veggie burgers on the grill, delicious homemade sides, salads and desserts, family fun! Don't miss it! September 14, after the worship service!

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

Vision Statement of Session:

By 2027, Session will courageously embrace the transition by:

*Being spiritually led, more diverse, and more fully prepared to serve
Living into individual gifts
Connecting with and across ministries, and
Communicating openly and actively with congregants, all as a Matthew 25 Church and Beloved Community.*

The Session of FHC met on May 28, 2025. Pastor McAfee served as the Moderator.

The meeting opened with prayer, followed by a spiritual conversation centered on the proposed Stewardship theme for the year—Love is, All in.

The Financial Report for the period ending April 30, 2025, was received.

Session discussed and approved endowment proposals totaling over \$88,000. The funds available included over \$78,000 from the Endowment Fund as well as over \$9,000 in unused funds from completed or cancelled

projects of prior years. A complete list of approved projects is provided in the report of the Endowment Committee on page 7.

Session approved the following recommendations of the Deacons regarding the Membership Rolls:

Move from active to inactive membership status—Karmen Garrett, Stephanie Brown, Kelsey Banks, Lauren Miller, Sam Miller, Josh Webster, Pam Webster, Lauren Sharpe and Rick Sharpe.

Move from member status to non-member status—Amy Wheatley, Karl Wheatley.

The meeting closed with prayer.

Submitted by Elizabeth J. Shaw, Clerk of Session.

Congregants are invited to observe meetings of Session. While observers are not able to actively participate in discussions or decision-making, they can see firsthand how Session coordinates the work of the church. The next meeting will be Wed., Sept. 24, 2025, 7:00-9:00pm in South Hall.

ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

Serving the Kingdom of God through the FHC Endowment

Mark 30 – 32: “He also said, ‘With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all seeds on the earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.’”

Nearly 40 years ago the Forest Hill Church endowment was born. It was but the size of a mustard seed back then. In the decades since, through a combination of wise management and generous estate gifts from FHC members and friends, the value of the endowment has grown to exceed \$2.2 million today. And with that growth, large branches have emerged.

Many of the past and current educational, worship, stewardship, musical, and justice needs of the church have been funded in large measure by the endowment. Session, the FHC governing body, makes requests annually of the Endowment Committee which oversees the management and use of the endowment. Current members of the FHC Endowment Committee are Scott Bissett, Bill Finn, Marina Grant, Keith Logan, Mary McMillan, Robin Mervine, David Olson and Stephen Sedam.

Based on something called a spending rule, the Endowment Committee releases an amount equal to four percent of a 3-year rolling average of the value of the endowment. As the endowment grows, more funds are made available in service of the church.

On June 3, the Endowment Committee met and approved the 2025 allocation of \$88,053,

a record amount. This includes this year’s spending rule allocation (\$78,281) and unspent funds carried over from projects approved in previous years (\$9,772).

Projects that will proceed in 2025 with funding from the FHC Endowment are:

- \$19,570 to maintain the exterior of the church,
- up to \$19,570 for general operating support, as needed,
- \$17,200 for the Justice Ministry,
- \$10,000 for the Racial Repair and Restoration Task Force: Educational Debt Repair Program,
- \$3,400 towards payment of the new piano,
- \$2,500 to assist the success of the 2025 Stewardship Campaign,
- \$2,113 for the Mission Study Committee and Pastoral Nominating Committee,
- \$1,000 for a new Meaningful Conversation program hosted by Adult Spiritual Growth,
- \$7,700 to upgrade audio within Fellowship Hall,
- \$2,500 to purchase a new wireless microphone system for use in Fellowship Hall, and
- \$2,500 for a family worship pilot project.

If you have Forest Hill Church in your estate plans or are interested in knowing how to do so, contact FHC Endowment Chair, Stephen Sedam at Goldens101@aol.com.

STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY

The Stewardship seeks your input for next year's campaign. How does Forest Hill Church, its individuals or groups, demonstrate love?



Take five minutes and fill out [this quick survey](#). (Click the link or scan the QR code.)

Thank you!

Survey					
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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PACESETTERS

On May 16, the Pacesetters enjoyed a beautiful day at Liberty Park in Twinsburg! They ate a deli potluck lunch, and then ventured out for a hike.



Sunset and Socialize

The next event for the Pacesetters will be on Friday, August 8. Gather at Kathy Hanna-Stauffer's cottage for socializing, games, potluck dinner, and to watch the sunset. Come anytime after 3:00pm; dinner will be around 6:00pm. Meat and beverages provided.

RSVP to Kathy at khannas@sbcglobal.net, or call or text 216-544-0916. The address is 6899 Lake Road, Madison, Ohio.



WORSHIP

If you are interested in being a lay reader for worship, please contact Linda Martin at martin3386@ameritech.net or (216) 280-4049. If you wish to assist in serving communion, contact Jeanette Nemcek at jet0830@aol.com or (216) 789-6740.

To contribute flowers for Sunday worship, use this form: <https://fhc.breezechms.com/form/Flowers>



Co-Leaders for July

July 6: Jack Breisch
July 13: Joe Frolik
July 20: Dean Sieck
July 27: Chris Bell

EXPLORING MEMBERSHIP

Are you interested in becoming a member of Forest Hill Church? Then check out our upcoming Exploring Membership Discussions! These discussions provide a pressure-free and engaging way to learn about the church's vision and core values as well as the many opportunities the church offers for growing in spirit, in service and in connection to others. Participating in the discussions is also a great way to grow the network of people who you know within the church community.

The next discussions are scheduled for after church on Sunday, July 27, and Sunday, August 10 (lunch provided and childcare available). If you are interested in registering or finding out more about exploring membership, please complete this form: <https://fhc.breezechms.com/form/ExploringMembership2025>

NORTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ARTS GALA

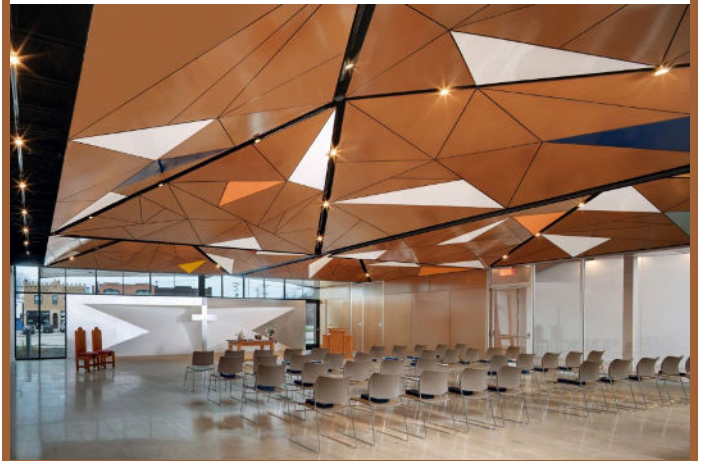
Friday, July 18, 5:30-7:30pm
North Presbyterian Church,
4515 Superior Ave.
(Located inside the headquarters of
Lutheran Metropolitan Ministries.)

Join us for a fun, summer
art auction and music concert!
Support local artists and Urban Ministry.

The sanctuary will be transformed into an art gallery, music hall and silent auction space to support North Presbyterian Church. The partner churches who have been volunteering to make community meals need to get to know one another, as while we each have our own home church, we are collectively the body of Christ serving the most vulnerable in our community.

Light Refreshments will be provided.
Parking across the street.

Please RSVP by July 8: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeePfGCFsMWXVO8munQaR5FQfyfBDrtVP9xWBMwSk0upp26VA/viewform>



FIRST RECIPIENT OF THE RACIAL EDUCATIONAL DEBT REPAIR AWARD

Natasha Lovelace was “shocked” to get Forest Hill Church’s first Racial Educational Debt Repair Award.

“I’m 37, and at times, it’s been hard to see the light at the end of the tunnel,” said Lovelace, a 2005 Cleveland Heights High School graduate. “Receiving this has given me hope, like I’m not doing all this work in vain.”

The Presbyterian congregation will pay off some \$65,000 in student debt for Lovelace. “It’s life changing,” she said.

Forest Hill Church’s Racial Repair and Restoration Task Force in 2024 proposed student debt relief as a tangible way to address the legacy of systemic racism in its community. It decided to assist a Black female college graduate with ties to Cleveland Heights, given evidence that Black students disproportionately rely on loans to finance their education and that the resulting debts often undermine their upward mobility.

Lovelace, who heard about the initiative through an article in the *Heights Observer*, was among more than 20 applicants for the inaugural award. The church hosted a reception on May 15 to celebrate her and redouble its commitment to racial repair and reinvestment.

“What began as a bold idea took root and grew until the church embraced it,” task force member Quentin Smith told the ecumenical audience of more than 60 people. “This will transform Natasha’s credit, her choices and her future.”

“All of this support and community, it’s



Natasha Lovelace, recipient of the first Racial Educational Debt Repair Award

beautiful to see,” Lovelace said. “It gives me the perseverance to keep going.”

Perseverance has defined Lovelace since high school. After giving birth to daughter Makayla while at Heights, she left Kent State after one semester because there was no on-campus housing and few supports for single mothers. She then joined the Army where she served for nearly 18 years, including in Afghanistan. While in the Army, she married and had two more children, earned a sociology degree from Cleveland State and began work on a master’s degree.

Then in 2021, Makayla was hit in the head by a stray bullet en route to work. Lovelace recalls trying to do homework in her comatose daughter’s hospital room. Caring for Makayla and her other two children, Simon and Minnie, eventually forced her to drop out of her graduate program with “thousands and [cont’d p. 11]

[cont'd from p. 10]

thousands of dollars of debt for a degree I didn't get."

Four years later, she's working in mental health and social services and nearing completion of a graduate degree in psychology from Tiffin University. The night before she was recognized at Forest Hill Church, she was at Hiram College, where Makayla, a public health major, was honored for her work against gun violence. "She's a miracle," said Lovelace.

So, she said, is the award – believed to be the first program of its kind in Ohio and possibly the nation. "The fact that the church even has a group of people who are willing to dig this deep – to look for root causes – that alone is priceless," Lovelace said.

"This is not the end," Smith said. "This is the beginning."

Article by Joe Frolik



(left to right) Mark Chupp, FHC task force; Will Fenton-Jones, director of Multicultural Ministries, Eastern Ohio Conference of the United Methodist Church; Marina Grant, task force chair; Danielle Cosgrove, task force member; Natasha Lovelace; Gordon Landefeld, moderator, Presbytery of the Western Reserve; Quentin Smith, task force member; Rev. Ryan Wallace, Fairmount Presbyterian Church; and Jeannine Gury, task force member.

UPDATE ON THE MEG CAMERON LIBRARY

For several years, Pat Jenkins and Zivile Khoury had volunteered in our church library. They organized the collection and kept the library catalog up to date. When Pat passed away in December, Zivile continued to maintain the library by herself. Recently, Zivile thought about who might be interested in working with her in this task. She contacted Claudia Zimmerman to see if Claudia was interested. We are all very glad that Claudia has agreed to volunteer with Zivile!

Claudia has a degree in Library Science. She has worked in several libraries, including driving a bookmobile in more remote areas. Her expertise is greatly appreciated as our library continues to grow!

We thank both Zivile and Claudia for their time and energy in keeping the Meg Cameron Library in good working order. If you have any questions about the library, please contact one of these awesome volunteers!

As a reminder to all, you are invited to utilize the resources in the church library! All library materials may be borrowed except for Reference Materials.

To borrow a book:

- Write your name and the date on the card found in the back of the book.
- Place the card in the card container located on the table at the door.
- Please return books in a timely manner.
- Place returned books in the basket under the table. Please do not put books back on the shelves.

PRIDE IN THE CLE



On June 7, members of Forest Hill Church carried the rainbow banner and marched in the Pride parade in Cleveland. What a beautiful display of celebration and love for all!



LETTER FROM ARCHBISHOP THABO MAKGOBA OF CAPE TOWN TO PRESIDING BISHOP SEAN ROWE

Episcopal Church Presiding Bishop Sean Rowe received the following letter on May 14 from the Most Rev. Thabo Makgoba, archbishop of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa (ACSA).

On May 12, Bishop Rowe announced that The Episcopal Church would end its refugee resettlement grant agreements with the U.S. government after being asked to resettle white Afrikaners from South Africa.

The Episcopal Church has long had a connection with ACSA, first speaking against apartheid and commending the South African church's witness against it in 1958. Beginning in 1966, The Episcopal Church urged church institutions to reconsider investing in South Africa. Later, the church supported the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission—led by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who was then head of what is now ACSA.

– *FHC Immigration Task Force*



FROM THE ANGLICAN ARCHBISHOP OF CAPE TOWN
The Most Reverend Dr Thabo Cecil Makgoba DD (hc) PhD (UCT)

BISHOPSCOURT CLAREMONT CAPE 7708
SOUTH AFRICA

TELEPHONE: +27 21 763 1320
EMAIL: archpa@anglicanchurchsa.org.za

The Most Revd Sean W. Rowe
Presiding Bishop
The Episcopal Church
815 Second Avenue
NEW YORK, NY

May 15th, 2025

Dear Presiding Bishop Sean,

I write to thank you for your call on Sunday, and to assure you of our gratitude for the stand you have taken in support of ACSA and South Africa in regard to the group of South Africans being resettled by your Administration.

What the Administration refers to as anti-white racial discrimination is nothing of the kind. Our government implements affirmative action on the lines of that in the United States, designed not to discriminate against whites but to overcome the historic disadvantages black South Africans have suffered.

By every measure of economic and social privilege, white South Africans as a whole remain the beneficiaries of apartheid. Measured by the Gini coefficient, which measures income disparity, we are the most unequal society in the world, with the majority of the poor black, and the majority of the wealthy white.

While U.S. supporters of the South African group will no doubt highlight individual cases of suffering some members might have undergone, and criticise TEC for its action, we cannot agree that South Africans who have lost the privileges they enjoyed under apartheid should qualify for refugee status ahead of people fleeing war and persecution from countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and Afghanistan.

Please feel free to share this letter publicly.

Blessings,

+ Thabo Cape Town

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA



SUMMER WORSHIP

Worship will be at 10:00am during the summer.

Weather permitting, we will have worship outdoors on July 13 and August 10.



I am so deeply grateful for the amazing response from the congregation in my time of need! Truly, a blessed example of the beloved community! Every meal has been nourishing of heart and soul and body, and tasted amazing as well. Every card, email, text and prayer has contributed to my mental, spiritual and physical healing. I feel so blessed to be part of this church community and to see Christ's love in action.

Love and gratitude,
Jennifer Blakeney

PER CAPITA GIVING



Per capita is the amount of support per member that Forest Hill Church contributes annually to the work of our presbytery, synod and General Assembly of the PCUSA. It is part of the glue that holds Presbyterians together and furthers the mission of Jesus Christ around the world. Your contribution of \$40 for each member of your household can be made via your usual method of giving to the church. If you contribute by check, remember to write "Per Capita" on the memo line. Thank you!

PICTURES REQUESTED

We are building a digital library of church photos. If you take a few pictures at an event, please send them to Laura at [churchadmin@](mailto:churchadmin@fhcpresb.org)



[fhcpresb.org](mailto:churchadmin@fhcpresb.org). If you take a lot of pictures at an event and would like to upload them to Google Drive yourself, contact Laura for access.

BIRTHDAYS

July 3 – Mike Cosgrove
July 5 – Derry Stauffer
July 6 – Beatrice Ampong
July 7 – Brett Himes
July 7 – Diane Moyer
July 8 – Nathaniel Martin
July 9 – Sandy Ladebue
July 9 – Susanne Peterjohn

July 11 – Jon Newton, Sr.
July 12 – Edie Duncan
July 12 – Carolyn Smith
July 12 – Ian Zych
July 13 – John Harmon
July 14 – Peter Williams
July 23 – Ron Polderman
July 23 – Dene Young

July 24 – Don Ghiandoni
July 24 – Jon Newton, Jr.
July 25 – Mary Ball
July 25 – Stephanie Brown
July 26 – Consuelo Heineman
July 30 – Lisa Richardson
July 30 – QinYing Tan
July 31 – Amy Dillenbeck

CALENDAR

July 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2 7:00pm - Personnel Committee	3	4 Independence Day - CHURCH CLOSED	5 10:30am - Men's Group
6	7	8	9 5:00pm - Eastside Citizens' Empowerment Foundation 7:00pm - Ministry Meetings	10 7:00pm - Forest Hills Homeowners Association Meeting	11 5:00pm - Praying with Others	12 10:00am - Fiber Fellowship
13 8:45am - <i>Share the Dream</i> DVD Series 10:00am - Outdoor worship	14	15	16	17 Deadline for the July Tower 5:30pm - Finance Committee Meeting	18 5:30pm - Arts Gala at North Presbyterian Church	19 3:00pm - Pacesetters Pool Party
20 - Labre Ministry at North Church	21	22	23	24	25 5:00pm - Praying with Others	26
27 11:00am - Exploring Membership Discussion	28	29	30	31		
Regularly scheduled events meet every week unless noted 10:00am - Worship service	9:00am - Bulletin and email deadline 6:00pm - AA: Progress Not Perfection 7:00pm - Al- Anon: Now There's Hope 7:30pm - AA: Borton Group	10:30am - 1:00pm Abundance Food Pantry	7:30am - Bible & Bagels (virtual) 12:00pm - Staff Meeting 12:30pm - AA: Wed. Women's Group 6:00pm - AA: Four Absolutes	1:00pm - English Country Dance	10:00am - Al- Anon: Hand in Hand 6:30pm - Scottish Country Dance	

CONTACT INFORMATION

Rev. Dr. Gene McAfee	Transitional Pastor	pastormcafee@fhcpresb.org	x201
Dr. QinYing Tan	Director of Music/Organist	music@fhcpresb.org	x208
Dr. Amy Wheatley	Director of Family, Youth, and Children	CE@fhcpresb.org	x206
Antoinette Richardson	Community Engagement Manager	office@fhcpresb.org	x202
Laura Schultz	Digital Communications Manager	churchadmin@fhcpresb.org	x200
Darlene Holt	Bookkeeper	finance@fhcpresb.org	x203
Ann Donkin	Building Manager	adonkin@fhcpresb.org	x214
Rev. Carol Wedell	Parish Associate	carolwedell@gmail.com	

**3031 Monticello Blvd.
Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118**

Church Office: 216-321-2660

Custodians' cell phone: 216-217-5257

Email: churchadmin@fhcpresb.org

Website: www.fhcpresb.org

Deadline for the August Tower: 9:00am on July 17, 2025
Deadline for The Week Ahead email: 9:00am every Monday

Giving Options

Friends of FHC, you may give monetary gifts or donations by texting 216-400-5300, or see the online giving options at fhcpresb.org/give. You may also mail a check to the church bookkeeper (3031 Monticello Blvd., Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118).