



Forest Hill Church  
presbyterian

# The Tower Newsletter

August 2025



# CONTENTS

PASTOR'S COLUMN: ENDURANCE IN THE VALLEY. . . . .	2-3	GREATER CLEVELAND CONGREGATIONS . . . . .	9
"SINGING FOR JUSTICE" DOCUMENTARY AND CONCERT . . . . .	4	WORSHIP . . . . .	9
FALL FELLOWSHIP FESTIVAL . . . . .	5	BEGINNING GENEALOGY . . . . .	9
MUSIC MINISTRY SUMMER CHOIR. . . . .	6	SUMMER WORSHIP . . . . .	10
FAIR HOUSING WORKSHOP . . . . .	6	FIBER FELLOWSHIP . . . . .	10
EASTSIDE CITIZENS' EMPOWERMENT FOUNDATION . . . . .	6	BIRTHDAYS . . . . .	10
SESSION HIGHLIGHTS . . . . .	7	STEWARDSHIP . . . . .	10
TRUSTEES STRATEGIC PROJECTS SURVEY. . . . .	8	PICTURES REQUESTED . . . . .	10
PACESETTERS. . . . .	8	CALENDAR . . . . .	11
		CONTACT INFORMATION . . . . .	12

## PASTOR'S COLUMN: ENDURANCE IN THE VALLEY

Dear Friends,

Psalm 23 is one of the most beloved passages in all of Scripture. Its words are familiar, comforting, and deeply personal. It opens with the reassuring affirmation, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." And then, with stark realism, it acknowledges life's sometimes grim challenges: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me" (v. 4).

Many of us are feeling that our country has entered the valley of death's shadow — a valley where the obscenely rich and their [cont'd p. 3]

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

[cont'd from p. 2]

supporters are manipulating the nation's wealth for their benefit and to the detriment of those for whom public funds provide a safety net — elderly people, unemployed and underemployed people, poor people, children, and people facing serious health and medical challenges. We step into death's shadow when we butcher the truth about the lived realities of such persons, scapegoat vulnerable people, and ignore the cries of suffering and marginalized people. Such is our dominant political ideology today, and the voice of protest is denounced as disloyal and unpatriotic.

There are two things we do not know about our present historical moment: how bad it will get and how long it will last. What once seemed beyond the realm of possibility is now a living, menacing reality. Sure Foundation Baptist Church in Indianapolis is calling for the government to execute LGBTQIA+ people; we can no longer fool ourselves into thinking that such positions are fringe. The fringe has been handed power, and nothing is too extreme for a fanatical mindset.

Psalm 23 holds a powerful message about one of our most important coping tools in times like ours: endurance. Endurance is not just about getting through hard times — it's about how we live through them with faith, purpose, and trust. In every line of this beloved psalm, there is the assurance that God is present, active, and faithful. There is the recognition, as one of our hymns puts it, that "though the wrong seems oft' so strong, God is the ruler yet."

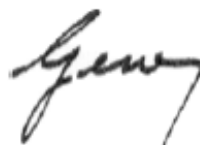
The sovereignty of God — "God is the ruler yet" — is a pillar of our Reformed Christian tradition. God's Word of creative love, according to Genesis and John's Gospel, was

in the beginning, is with us now, and will exist long after our self-destructive ways have wreaked their havoc. That Word took human form, lived a life of miraculous love, and was done to death by state-sanctioned mob violence. And then, in a perfect victory over human sinfulness, that love-made-flesh miraculously emerged again in the lives of God's people, where it lives to this day, while the empire that attempted to obliterate it lies on the ash heap of history.

Tough times never last, the late Robert Schuller said, but tough people do. Endurance begins with knowing we are not alone. "God leads me beside still waters... God restores my soul." We draw strength from the Shepherd who walks with us, not just in green pastures, but also through shadowed valleys. Endurance is possible when we let ourselves be led, when we allow our souls to be restored — not by our own power, but by God's. The Shepherd doesn't promise a life without struggle, but a life sustained by goodness and mercy.

May we all find endurance, not by striving alone, but by following the One who leads us with tenderness and care.

Faithfully,



Gene McAfee  
Transitional Pastor



**Note: Pastor Gene will be on vacation July 28–August 3. During that time, the Rev. Carol Wedell (216-470-0152) will provide on-call pastoral coverage July 28–30, and the Rev. Susan Holderness (216-346-3608) will be on call for pastoral emergencies July 31–August 3.**



## "SINGING FOR JUSTICE" DOCUMENTARY AND CONCERT

**Sunday, August 24, 2:00-4:30pm**  
**Forest Hill Church**

This event is organized by the Justice Ministry.

Sponsored by Folknet (<https://folknet.org/>) and Roots of American Music (<https://www.rootsofamericanmusic.org/>)

The documentary "Singing for Justice", an hour-long film about Faith Petric, a folk singer who sang for the rights of all Americans, makes its Cleveland debut on Sunday, August 24, 2025, at Forest Hill Church, Presbyterian, in Cleveland Heights, Ohio. In addition, a host of local folk musicians will also perform following the film. Social justice organizations will have information tables at the event. The event is sponsored by Folknet, Northeast Ohio's folk, traditional music and dance society, and Roots of American Music, an organization dedicated to bringing music to all through education and performance.

Having met Faith Petric when she lived in San Francisco, Martha Loughridge suggested the movie "as a way to bring people together in the spirit of Faith Petric to face the challenging times and the dismantling of democracy that

we are witnessing. It seemed like a great time to bring the documentary to Cleveland as many of us are justifiably troubled over the loss of our checks and balances, individual rights, democracy, and justice."

Throughout her life, Faith Petric helped the depression-era migrant workers in California, marched for justice in Selma, Alabama, and protested the war in Viet Nam. She died at the age of 98. Filmmaker Christie Herring and Atlanta Musician John McCutcheon have brought the film to life with the help of Estelle Freedman. Said McCutcheon, "She was the living embodiment of what it meant to be a dedicated activist and an artist your entire life."

In addition to the documentary, a host of singer-songwriters will perform with their own justice songs, with many focusing on topics that would make Faith Petric proud. Performers include: Ed Amann, Warren Bendler, Noah and David Budin, Liz Bullock, Sam Hooper, Charlie Mosbrook, Deborah Van Kleef, and Markus Whitmire.

Doors open at 1:30pm. Guests can explore the various organizational tables throughout the event space. The documentary "Singing for Justice" will begin at 2:00pm, followed by the performances from 3:00–4:30pm. Soft drinks and snacks will be available for sale.

A donation of \$15 is suggested, and advance registration will be available through <https://folknet.org/>. Donations will be gratefully accepted at the door.



# FHC Fall Fellowship Festival

**Sunday, September 14, 2025**

following the 10am worship service



- Bounce House
- Games
- Picnic Lunch

Hamburgers, hot dogs, and veggie options will be provided.

Please bring a side, salad, or dessert to share.

Sign up in Fellowship Hall!

**All FHC members and friends are encouraged to attend as we kick off the program year!**





## MUSIC MINISTRY SUMMER CHOIR

Summer Choir is in full swing! Join us on Sundays at 9:15am for music, fun, and fellowship.

Please note: Summer Choir will take a short break on August 3 and 10 for special services. We will resume rehearsals on August 17—see you then!



## FAIR HOUSING WORKSHOP

**Saturday, September 6,  
8:30am-12:30pm at North Church  
4515 Superior Ave., Cleveland**

Have you been wondering if there is anything you and/or your congregation can do to address the housing crisis that is affecting so many communities across Ohio? Mark your calendars now and join others in the Presbytery for a Fair Housing Workshop. We will welcome Tanesha Seaborn and Frank Ford, from Cleveland's Fair Housing Center for Rights and Research. Come learn how your congregation can support better, accessible housing in the greater Cleveland area. Details and registration is available at [preswesres.org/fairhousing](http://preswesres.org/fairhousing).



**Fair Housing Center  
for Rights & Research**

## EASTSIDE CITIZENS' EMPOWERMENT FOUNDATION

**Wednesday, August 13, 5:00-6:30pm  
FHC Fellowship Hall**

**Special Guest Speaker: Dr. Amy Acton**



Dr. Amy Acton grew up in Youngstown, Ohio, under difficult circumstances. But that just made Amy tough. And now, Amy is running for governor to fight for every Ohio family that's struggling today.

Amy has a deep connection with the people of our state. Amy knows how Ohioans are struggling, how hard they work to keep up with the cost of groceries, childcare, healthcare and other expenses.

Agenda:

- Introduction of Special Guest Speaker
- Speech by Dr. Amy Acton
- Open floor for questions
- Refreshments
- Open to volunteer to help candidate

Please come and bring a friend!

If you have any questions, contact Nathaniel Martin at 216-469-9581.

## 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 June 25, 2025. Pastor McAfee served as the Moderator.

The meeting opened with prayer, followed by singing “The World is Full of Stories”.

The Financial Report for the period ending April 30, 2025, was received. The Co-Treasurer also provided a report on the status of funds available for approved 2025 endowment grant projects.

Session approved the following recommendations of the Endowment Committee:

Robin Mervine was approved to become a member of the Endowment Committee. Robin has extensive professional experience in financial management, is a long-term member of the church and has served in other lay leadership roles.

The policy of the Endowment Committee was amended to include a provision that endowment grant funding for projects will be terminated after three consecutive endowment cycles, and remaining funds will be returned to Endowment. This provision is effective beginning with projects to be funded in 2026. It will not apply to projects authorized by Session independently of the

endowment cycle nor to funds approved as a component of the operating budget.

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

Move from active to inactive membership status – Jim Roosa

Move from member status to non-member status – Kianna Eberle, Kevin Stauffer and Laura Staffer.

Session discussed several topics and issues, including: an antiracism policy, support for members who participate in Cultivating the Gift of Preaching (an initiative of the Synod of the Covenant), a planned series of *Tower* articles titled “Who We Are: Past, Present and Future” and support for LGBTQ+ congregants and community. These topics will continue to be developed and discussed at future meetings.

Session also discussed practices to help maintain institutional memory around Session commitments given the reality of yearly changes in ministry leadership.

The church will celebrate its 75th anniversary of establishment at the current location during the Fall Festival in September.

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.

## TRUSTEES STRATEGIC PROJECTS SURVEY

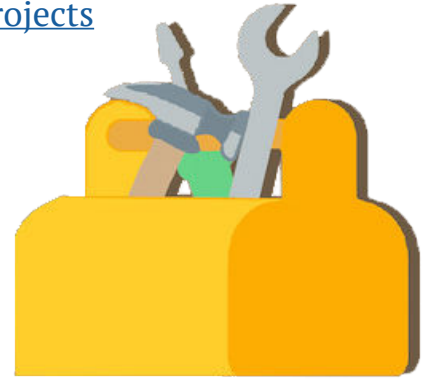
**Have you voted yet? Help Trustees Prioritize Their Strategic Project List!**

Over the past 18 months the Trustee Ministry has developed a three-year strategic project list to maintain the quality, accessibility, safety, and welcoming nature of our interior spaces. At the end of April many reviewed the various projects and voted their preferences. If you haven't voted yet, here is your chance to give your opinion on each project. Fill out

the survey at this link:

<https://fhc.breezechms.com/form/StrategicProjects>

Please respond by August 20. We look forward to hearing from you!



## PACESETTERS

### Sunset and Socialize

**Friday, August 8, 3:00pm until after sunset**

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](mailto:khannas@sbcglobal.net), or call or text 216-544-0916. The address is 6899 Lake Road, Madison, Ohio.

### Pool Party

**Sunday, August 24, 12:00-5:00pm**

You're invited to the Pacesetters Pool Party! Please bring a poolside snack to share and a

beverage of your choice. Iced tea, sparkling water, and hard seltzer will be provided.

Text Jeanette Nemcek at 216-789-6740 to RSVP, or call the church office. The address is 30199 Emery Road, Chagrin Falls.

### Game Party Night

**Friday, September 12, 6:30-9:30pm**

Join us for Game Party Night where we'll play some great party games that will have you laughing as much as competing!

Contact Mark Wedell at [markwedell1212@gmail.com](mailto:markwedell1212@gmail.com) or 216-501-0019 to RSVP, or call the church office. The address is 5645 Hartshire Drive, Willoughby.

Bring an appetizer, snack or dessert to share. Sparkling water, tea and coffee will be provided.

Everyone is welcome to enjoy the fun, whether you've never been to a Pacesetters event before or you're a Pacesetter event veteran (in which case, seek out a new member or visitor to bring along)!



Pacesetters





## GREATER CLEVELAND CONGREGATIONS

**Engage GCC Meeting**  
**Thursday, August 28, 7:00pm**  
**Fellowship Hall**

Forest Hill Church is hosting the Greater Cleveland Congregations meeting on August 28 at 7:00pm. These monthly Engage GCC meetings are an opportunity to meet the GCC staff and members and leaders from the other member congregations and partner organizations.

Everyone from FHC interested in following the important issues that GCC is currently addressing is invited and encouraged to attend. There will be updates about ongoing "Action Items," including: Pre-trial Justice, the Healthy Blocks Initiative, and the Battle for Democracy to get out the vote for upcoming elections.

If you are able to attend, and possibly volunteer to bring cookies, lemonade or iced tea for the event, please contact Judy Sockman at [jrsockman478@gmail.com](mailto:jrsockman478@gmail.com).

Please consider joining us on August 28. We hope for a good turnout from FHC folks!

Your FHC GCC Core Team,  
Kathy Hanna-Stauffer, Scott Lafferty, Ron Register, Judy Sockman, Nonie Stack, and Diana Woodbridge



## WORSHIP

### Co-Leaders for August

August 3: Carolyn Smith

August 10: Judy Sockman

August 17: Kay Hogg

August 24: Laurie Logan

August 31: Marcie Denton



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

## BEGINNING GENEALOGY

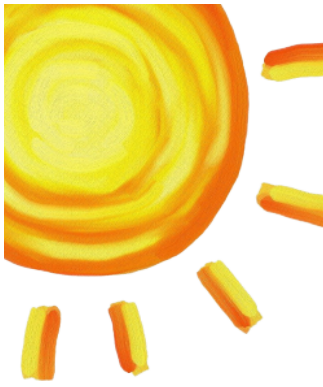
**How to Build Your  
Family History  
and Share Your  
Ancestors' Stories**  
**Sunday, August 17,**  
**11:15am, South Hall**



Join us in our continuing quest to learn more about our individual family histories, focusing in this next class on how to use the U.S. Census in our searches. The census is one of the most important records to use in your search, showing you where they lived, where they and their parents were born, their age, race, marital status, who lived in the household and their relationships, occupation, and immigration status.

The information from each census alone gives you a snapshot of the family, but by combining several years together, you can begin to see patterns in occupation, residences and many other characteristics that can help you discover the stories of your ancestors. And there are always surprises!

Contact Cindy Newton ([newtonoh@aol.com](mailto:newtonoh@aol.com)) to sign up. She will send you materials prior to the class.



## SUMMER WORSHIP

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

Weather permitting, we will have worship outdoors on August 10 and September 14.

## FIBER FELLOWSHIP

Please note that, while Fiber Fellowship will not be meeting in August and October, its next meeting will be on Saturday, September 13, 10:00am-1:00pm. If you are interested in joining, contact Carol Gifford or the church office for more information!

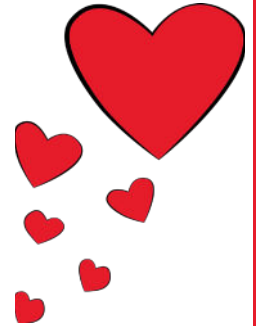


## STEWARDSHIP

The Stewardship Ministry sends everyone wishes for a lovely rest of summer. As you're enjoying family, friends, reading, vacation, and fireflies, please remember to keep up with your pledge commitment. It's easy to let things drop in summertime, and, yet, the church and ministry programs need our consistent support.

We're looking forward to working with everyone to launch the coming year's stewardship season and celebration. Let's just say...

Love is in the air!



## 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

August 1 – Kathy Carr  
August 5 – Megan Alban  
August 7 – Morag Keefe  
August 7 – Leslie Pendleton  
August 8 – Nora Duncan  
August 8 – Scott Duncan  
August 8 – Anne Hunter  
August 10 – Joe Frolik  
August 11 – Betsy Wolf

August 12 – Valeria Stutz  
August 14 – Sheryl Dugard  
August 14 – Barb Lind  
August 14 – James Matej MacQueen  
August 19 – Keith Logan  
August 20 – Tony Boyd  
August 20 – Jessica Kelley  
August 21 – Caty Himmelman

August 24 – Antoinette Franklin  
August 25 – Cate Monaghan  
August 25 – Joanne Shaner  
August 27 – Peg Weissbrod  
August 28 – Mèlani Joseph  
August 30 – Jeanette Nemcek

# CALENDAR

## August 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 9:00am - AMIS Board Retreat 10:30am - Men's Group
3	4	5	6 7:00pm - Personnel Committee	7	8 5:00pm - Praying with Others	9
10 10:00am - Outdoor worship 11:00am - Exploring Membership Discussion	11	12 7:00pm - Church Growth Meeting (virtual)	13 5:00pm - Eastside Citizens' Empowerment Foundation 7:00pm - Ministry Meetings	14 1:00pm - Communications Committee Meeting (virtual) 7:00pm - Forest Hills Homeowners Association Meeting	15	16
17 11:15am - Beginning Genealogy	18	19	20	21 <b>Deadline for the September Tower</b> 5:30pm - Finance Committee Meeting	22 5:00pm - Praying with Others	23
24 - Labre Ministry at North Church 12:00pm - Pacesetters Pool Party 2:00pm - Singing for Justice Concert	25	26	27	28 7:00pm - Engage GCC	29	30
31						
<b>Regularly scheduled events meet every week unless noted</b>  10:00am - Worship service	9:00am - <b>Bulletin and email deadline</b> 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	<a href="mailto:pastormcafee@fhcpresb.org">pastormcafee@fhcpresb.org</a>	x201
Dr. QinYing Tan	Director of Music/Organist	<a href="mailto:music@fhcpresb.org">music@fhcpresb.org</a>	x208
Dr. Amy Wheatley	Director of Family, Youth, and Children	<a href="mailto:CE@fhcpresb.org">CE@fhcpresb.org</a>	x206
Antoinette Richardson	Community Engagement Manager	<a href="mailto:office@fhcpresb.org">office@fhcpresb.org</a>	x202
Laura Schultz	Digital Communications Manager	<a href="mailto:churchadmin@fhcpresb.org">churchadmin@fhcpresb.org</a>	x200
Darlene Holt	Bookkeeper	<a href="mailto:finance@fhcpresb.org">finance@fhcpresb.org</a>	x203
Ann Donkin	Building Manager	<a href="mailto:adonkin@fhcpresb.org">adonkin@fhcpresb.org</a>	x214
Rev. Carol Wedell	Parish Associate	<a href="mailto:carolwedell@gmail.com">carolwedell@gmail.com</a>	

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

Church Office: 216-321-2660

Custodians' cell phone: 216-217-5257

Email: [churchadmin@fhcpresb.org](mailto:churchadmin@fhcpresb.org)

Website: [www.fhcpresb.org](http://www.fhcpresb.org)

**Deadline for the September Tower: 9:00am on August 21, 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](http://fhcpresb.org/give). You may also mail a check to the church bookkeeper (3031 Monticello Blvd., Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118).