



Forest Hill Church  
presbyterian

# The Tower Newsletter

## February 2026



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## PASTOR'S COLUMN: TURNING TOWARD WHAT IS TRUE

February has been called the cruelest month, and I'm not sure whether that's because it includes Valentine's Day or because we're in the depths of winter or both. It's certainly a hinge month that finds us standing with one foot resting in the brightness of the Epiphany star and the other edging toward the solemnity of Lent.

The days are lengthening, though winter is far from finished. We know this season well in Northeast Ohio: the frequent gray skies, the sometimes challenging snowfalls (several inches fell last night and are waiting for me to start shoveling), the necessary waiting, and the quiet resilience it takes simply to keep showing up.

[cont'd on p. 3]

*Cover photo by Laura Schultz*

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And that, perhaps, is where the spiritual wisdom of February begins. Show up, be a witness, bear testimony. Save the dramatic gesture and heroic action for warmer weather. Lent begins during creation's introspective season. Get on board with that.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, which comes on the early side this year, February 18. (The earliest date Ash Wednesday ever falls is February 4, and Ash Wednesday's date is determined by the date of Easter, which rests on a complicated formula based on the lunar calendar.) Lent will soon ask us to turn inward — not to withdraw from the world, but to examine how we are living in it. Repentance is the theme of this season, which I have written and spoken about already this year, and in its truest biblical sense, repentance means turning — turning toward God, toward neighbor, toward what is true and life-giving. It is less about shame and more about honesty, less about what we have done wrong and more about who we are and who we can become, with God's gracious help.

In a world that encourages distraction, Lent invites attention. In a culture that rewards speed, Lent teaches patience. In a society fractured by fear and mistrust, Lent calls us back to compassion and repair. These are not small tasks. They require courage, humility, discernment, reflection, and community. We launch this spiritually rich season with an evening service — the Ash Wednesday service — which will be held in the sanctuary at 7:00 p.m. on February 18.

As a congregation, we do not enter this season alone. We turn together — through worship, prayer, service, study, and the quiet faithfulness of showing up for one another. Plan now to attend the Ash Wednesday

service, even if you have no intention of receiving the mark of ashes. Let the service help focus your attention and launch you on your Lenten journey. Look around at the others in attendance; they are your companions on the pilgrimage toward Easter. Greet them, support them, and let them support you. In that service, throughout Lent, and through the entire church year, we acknowledge that each of us carries burdens: grief, worry, exhaustion, uncertainty about the future. Lent does not ask us to deny those realities. Instead, it invites us to bring them into the presence of God and the sphere of compassion of a community of faith.

February also reminds us that transformation often begins beneath the surface. The ground is frozen, but life is already stirring. Seeds are waiting. God's work is often hidden before it is revealed.

As we prepare for Lent, I invite you to consider not only what you might give up, but also — and perhaps more important — what you might take on: deeper listening, truer speech, more generous love, a renewed commitment to justice, or a practice that roots you more firmly in God's grace. These are the spiritual disciplines that sustain us — not only for forty days, but for a lifetime.

May this season help us turn toward what is true, toward one another, and toward the God who is always already turning toward us.

Faithfully,

*Gene* Lee  
al Pastor



## **FAMILY, YOUTH, AND CHILDREN'S MINISTRY**

### ***Family Faith Every Day***

**Strengthening faith practices at home**

**Beginning this month, a group of FHC parents with children ages birth to three will participate in an exciting new project that focuses on nurturing faith practices at home.**



Parents want to teach their children about gratitude, hospitality, and generosity. They want them to have a sense of wonder and see how they are connected to something beyond themselves. They want them to live as faithful disciples of Jesus, and hope that they develop faith practices that are sacred, meaningful, and alive.

But it's hard to know how to nurture this kind of faith in the midst of busy family lives, in a society that emphasizes consumerism, wealth and fame, and in a world that is so often chaotic, violent, and unjust.

**Family Faith Every Day is a program designed to address this challenge.**

Forest Hill is one of 17 congregations in the U.S. and Canada chosen to participate in this comprehensive initiative that seeks to help parents nurture their children's faith at home. The three-year program is funded by the Christian Parenting and Caregiving Initiative of the Lilly Endowment Inc.

**During the next three months, participating parents have committed to meet in eight sessions led by Amy Wheatley.**

In each session, participants will learn simple, meaningful faith practices that

can be incorporated into daily life at home. Between sessions, parents will be asked to try out a practice in their daily routine and give feedback on their use of that practice.

**Participating families will receive books, resources, ideas, and practical strategies to nurture children's faith.**

In addition to supporting faith at home, we hope that this program will provide an opportunity for parents to strengthen their connections and community with other Forest Hill families.

**This is the first of several opportunities for FHC families to participate in Family Faith Every Day.**

After completing the current eight-session pilot program with parents of birth to three-year-olds, we'll offer the program to parents of older children. Our hope is that many FHC families will choose to participate in the program this year.

For more information about Family Faith Every Day, please contact Amy Wheatley at [ce@fhcpresb.org](mailto:ce@fhcpresb.org) and see: <https://chalicepress.com/pages/family-faith-every-day>.



## 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 met on December 17, 2025, in a Stated Meeting. Pastor Gene McAfee served as moderator. The following is a summary of the meeting.

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

Session received a report on changes in the leadership for the Ron Register Scholarship Fund. The following current leaders will no longer be active: Diana Woodbridge, Quentin Smith, Susie Kaiser and Louisa Oliver. Reg Evans will continue to serve in a leadership role. The following daughters and sons of Ron Register will step into leadership roles: Akwasi Register, Allen Register, Rhonda Register Ajani and Joseph Register. The following people will also join as leaders: Jennifer Blakeney, Julie Lustic and Ajah Hales. Session showed appreciation for the work of those who have carried out this work so far and support for the new leadership team.

Session continued work on the following topics:

- Finalizing the 2026 Budget.
- Identifying potential sources of funding for FHC membership in More Light Presbyterians and the Covenant Network

of Presbyterians. These organizations work on LGBTQIA+ related matters.

- Identifying potential sources of funding to support FHC members who enroll in Cultivating the Gift of Preaching, a Synod program that helps develop the gifts of lay preachers.
- Policy revisions for the ecclesiastical by-laws and the operations manual.

The meeting closed with prayer by Pastor McAfee.

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., Feb. 25, 2026, 7:00–9:00 p.m. in South Hall.

### MISSION STUDY COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Mission Study team has edited its final report. That report went to Session for consideration at its January 31 retreat. Once members of Session are satisfied with the report, the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry will meet to give its approval. Rev. Arvid Whitmore, who met alongside and counseled the Mission Study Committee, will continue in this role with the Forest Hill Pastor Nominating Committee. When the report approval is secure, the Pastor Nominating Committee will begin its work of advertising the position, interviewing candidates, and calling a pastor to Forest Hill Church.

# OVERVIEW OF THE 2026 FOREST HILL CHURCH OPERATING BUDGET

This article is a transcript of the remarks made at the January 25, 2026, Congregation Meeting about the 2026 Budget. It is provided below for

- Congregation members who weren't able to attend the annual meeting who want to have this information.
- Congregation members who were able to attend the annual meeting, and who want access to what was presented.

## High-Level Summary:

The 2026 operating budget provides the financial resources needed for the church to continue its work toward building the beloved community. How so?

- First, it funds a 3% cost of living increase for all Forest Hill staff members, so that the church can continue to provide equitable pay to all of our program and support staff members who are such vital resources to supporting the church's mission.
- Second, it provides the funds required to continue to maintain the building in excellent condition.
- Third, it provides funding for each of the church's ministries to effectively execute their core functions.
- And finally, the budget is balanced, which is always a key for the church to maintain financial health.

This, then, is a good time to thank all of you, the members of the Forest Hill Church family, for your generous donations and pledges that have made this financial plan for 2026 possible.

## How the 2026 Budget Was Balanced and Implications for Future Years

The actions needed to achieve a balanced budget in 2026 point to challenges that the church will need to address to maintain financial health beyond this year.

For the 2026 budget, the financial challenge was that the church needed to find ways to pay for inflation related cost increases in areas such as salaries and utilities while simultaneously experiencing a decrease in pledge revenues. A decrease in pledge revenue is always significant since about 80% of the church's total operating budget revenue comes from pledges.

The actions taken to balance the 2026 budget then fell into three areas:

- Endowment: A much larger portion of the annual endowment distribution was dedicated to fund operating budget expenses versus to fund non-operating budget projects typically funded by the endowment.
- Cost reductions: Cost reductions were identified and planned, saving costs while not impacting church operations.
- Ministry Budget Reductions: Ministry budgets were reduced so that many ministries will complete their work in 2026 with budgeted amounts that are less than originally requested and less than the amount budgeted for last year.

While these actions were effective for balancing the operating budget in 2026, Forest Hill Church's long run financial stability will depend upon being able to once again grow [cont'd on p. 7]

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pledge revenue versus solely relying on endowment distributions, cost reductions, and budget cuts to balance future budgets.

One perspective to keep in mind about pledge revenue is that it is typical for a church to experience some decline in membership and revenue following the departure or retirement of their pastor. At this point, the percent decline in pledge revenue experienced by Forest Hill Church after John's departure is considerably less than what has been experienced by many other churches in a comparable situation. This fact speaks to the strength and health of this congregation.

Still, given the decline in pledge revenue that

we have experienced, it becomes even more important for each one of us in the coming year to look for ways that

- We can support growing our church community now and into the future, and that
- We can continue to generously support the church financially.

Please feel free to contact me (Mark Wedell) or any member of the Finance Committee (Mary McMillan, Marina Grant, Tim Gifford, Steve Sedam, Scott Bisset and Keith Logan) if you have questions or would like more information about church finances, and we will be happy to meet with you to discuss your questions.

## **RESONANCE PROJECT CONCERT: QIN AND STRINGS**

***Qin and Strings:***  
***A Century of Chinese Music***  
**Saturday, February 7, 7:30 p.m.**  
**Forest Hill Church Sanctuary**

Celebrate the Lunar New Year with a program of evocative and lyrical works for violin and piano rooted in Chinese musical traditions. Violinist Ann Yu and pianist Irwin Shung present a concert exploring themes of love, longing, and transformation through iconic works and lesser-known gems.

At the heart of the program is "The Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto," one of the most beloved Chinese orchestral works, here performed in its virtuosic arrangement for violin and piano. Based on a centuries-old legend often called the "Chinese Romeo and Juliet," the concerto weaves Chinese pentatonic melodies with romantic Western textures in a deeply moving narrative arc.

The program also includes selections inspired by traditional Chinese folk music, poetic miniatures, and contemporary works celebrating the richness of China's musical heritage.

Join us in welcoming the New Year through music that bridges cultures and generations.

Tickets are \$15-20 each, and Pay-What-You-Can tickets are always available! More information is available at [RMseries.com](http://RMseries.com).

With  
gratitude,  
QinYing Tan



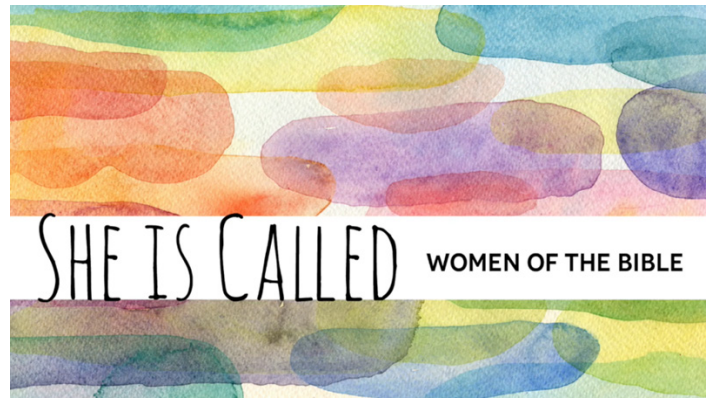
## ADULT SPIRITUAL GROWTH (ASG)

**Rereading Paul: Examining Our Relationship with Paul and His Message**  
**Sundays, January 4–March 22,**  
**9:15–10:15 a.m. Meet in South Hall.**

A full 13 of the 27 books of the Christian Testament are attributed to Paul. Those works have had and continue to have a profound effect on our faith, our church and our concept of God. This winter we will study three of those books: First Thessalonians (perhaps the oldest work in our Christian canon), Second Thessalonians, and Titus.

We will dive into Paul's messages to an early church and the instruction of an early companion, examine Paul's evangelism, and crack open the question of how each of us takes in and incorporates Paul's words into our present life. We also will explore the authorship of these works and what that means to our understanding of Scripture. All are welcome! Facilitated by Tom Zych and Kathryn Eloff.

Register here: <https://fhc.breezechms.com/form/abba6c>



***She Is Called: Women of the Bible***  
**Sundays, February 1–22, 9:15–10:15 a.m.**  
**Meet in Fellowship Hall on February 1.**  
**Meet in Jin Room all other weeks.**

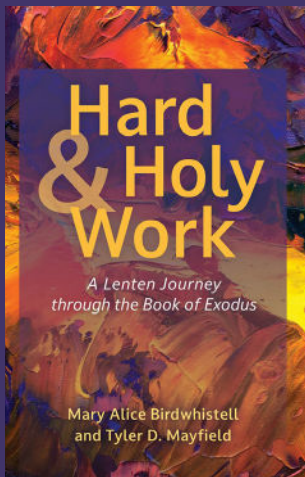
In celebrating Black History Month, the ASG Ministry is offering a study of Black women of the Bible, as presented by Black theologians in the study entitled "She Is Called: Women of the Bible." A brief consideration of womanist theology (liberation theology through the lens of Black women) perspective will be shared for context.

Each week's facilitator will provide the frame for the reading and lead us on rich discussion. No need to purchase a book as a link and reading materials will be provided each week. The women to be discussed are Hagar – Feb 1; Abigail – Feb 8; Zipporah – Feb 15; and Shipparah – Feb 22.

We hope you will be able to join us for all or some of the discussions on these important, but generally unknown women. Come to learn how they contributed their unique faith, talents and gifts to the early Christian community. And explore how our own gifts can be developed and used in the service of our faith journey. All are welcome to join us.

Register here: <https://fhc.breezechms.com/form/SheIsCalled>





***Hard & Holy Work:*  
A Lenten Journey  
through the  
Book of Exodus  
Sundays,  
March 1–29,  
9:15–10:15 a.m.  
Meet in Fellowship  
Hall.**

Do you want to more fully understand how to integrate your personal spiritual life more actively with your engagement in working for justice and the liberation of the oppressed and marginalized? Would you like to become more spiritually awake?

*Hard & Holy Work* by Mary Alice Birdwhistell and Tyler Mayfield provides a space for just that. Lent is traditionally a time of self-reflection and action that prepares followers of Christ to walk more intentionally in the way of God. In this unique Lenten study, we explore and increase our understanding about how God sees those who are marginalized or suffering and how we can work with them as allies in solidarity. We are also called to contemplate how privilege, fear, risk, and feelings of uncertainty can cloud our attention. The book is available both in paperback and eBook format.

Register here: <https://fhc.breezechms.com/form/e241bf>

**Meaningful Conversations:  
Listening with the Heart of Christ to  
Build and Restore Relationships  
Saturday, March 21, 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.  
Meet in Bodwell Hall.**

Through an interactive workshop, the sessions will guide us in deepening our listening and communication skills to build relationships through safe and nourishing conversations with family, neighbors, and friends. To truly build or mend relationships, we must foster an environment where love, respect, and dignity can thrive.

Braver Angels introduces methods to improve conversations and rebuild trust with friends, family, and coworkers you disagree with politically.

Also, InterPlay is an embodied, active, creative practice that helps to connect body and spirit, and is a light-hearted vehicle to build community across differences through simple, accessible story-telling forms.

In this workshop, you will

- Learn how to achieve reconciliation through the practice of understanding and forgiveness.
- Learn how to reflect love and grace in our dialogue with others.
- Learn how to listen to others as if God is speaking to us, through them.
- Experience getting to know other people through sharing stories.
- Discover accessible tools for getting a whole group to feel connected.

Come join us as we explore practices of active listening and respectful discussion that encourage mutual respect without expecting agreement. Light refreshments will be provided.

Register here:  
<https://fhc.breezechms.com/form/efa222>



## THE POWER OF CHOICE AS WE AGE

The Deacons and the Adult Spiritual Growth Ministry are collaborating on a three-part series. Three professionals will help us understand the choices we have as we age. The workshops will be held on Sundays, March 1, 15, and 29, immediately following the worship service. A light lunch will be provided. The speakers we have lined up for this important topic are all from Forest Hill Church!

### March 1

#### **Senior care, senior communities and skilled care facilities**

A 50-year church member, Linn Obery, will be speaking on the topics of senior care, senior communities and skilled care facilities. In his 10-year career with A Place for Mom, a senior resource placement service, he has developed associations with ancillary services such as senior driving, downsizing, dementia assistance and other local resources. He has helped over 9,000 families in the Northeast Ohio area. He will explain what to look for in choosing a new living arrangement and how to determine the best fit at a new place.

Register here for March 1:  
<https://fhc.breezechms.com/form/PowerOfChoiceMarch1>

### March 15

#### **End-of-life care organizing**

Bill Finn will be offering his expertise as the President and CEO of Hospice of the Western Reserve since February 2011. Bill began his hospital and palliative care career in 1983 and has more than four decades of experience serving people with serious illness. He created Western Reserve Care Solutions (WRCS) and managed the integration of Hospice of Medina and Stein Hospice into WRCS. Bill also created Care Solutions Network, a 10-member organization supporting community-based, not-for-profit, hospice care across Ohio. He brings a wealth of knowledge about end-of-life care organizations. He will address how to talk with your loved ones about this difficult topic, how to organize important paperwork, how to make important decisions. He will bring packets of information on making decisions on end-of-life directives.

Register here for March 15:  
<https://fhc.breezechms.com/form/PowerOfChoiceMarch15>

### March 29

#### **Interactive workshop on aging, faith, grief, vocation, and purpose**

Sally Wile will be presenting an interactive,  
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faith-based workshop. We have been aging since birth and are loved by God at every stage of life. That includes the last stages! In our anti-aging society, the changes that old age brings can leave us feeling, at best, deficient and, at worst, alone. That isn't fair or accurate. Despite natural losses and diminishments, our lives continue to have purpose. We are never too old to grow out of what doesn't work for us anymore, or to grow into new understandings.

Drawing on the wisdom of Joan Chittister, Richard Rohr, and Mary Morrison, and sharing the collective wisdom of those attending the class, we will talk about aging and faith, grief, vocation, and purpose. Sally Wile (with her husband Ed Gernerchak) has been a part of the FHC community since 2007. She's a UCC minister who was called to hospice care, parish ministry, and hospital chaplaincy over the course of her career. Married at 37, and having birthed two sons as a "geriatric" patient at age 38 and 40, Sally seeks to embrace the challenges of "growing old" so as not to miss its blessings.

Register here for March 29:

<https://fhc.breezechms.com/form/PowerOfChoiceMarch29>

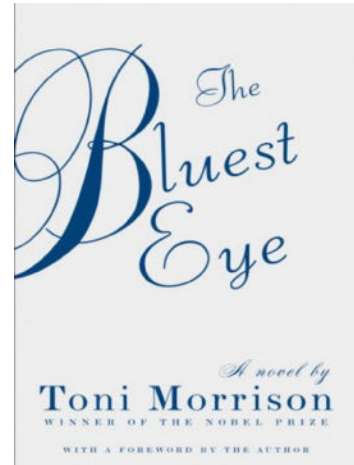
Please join us for any or all of these informative talks from experts in the field.

This is for people 45 years old and up to attend. The more you know, the more prepared you will be when it comes time for important decisions to be made either for yourself or for your loved ones. As Linn says, "The family is in a much better position being prepared... *before* a crisis."

## BOOK DISCUSSION

*The Bluest Eye* by  
Toni Morrison

Monday, March 2,  
6:00-8:00 p.m.  
Meet in the  
library.



Join Karen Long for a book discussion on Toni Morrison's classic, *The Bluest Eye*.

Set in Lorain, Ohio, Toni Morrison's first novel is still targeted by book bans. It tells the story of Pecola Breedlove, a little Black girl in crushing circumstances, who wants blue eyes. Several Ohio humanities nonprofits are launching a Year of Morrison this month.

The book is available from the public library and at a 10% discount from Mac's Backs-Books on Coventry Road.

Register here: <https://fhc.breezechms.com/form/TheBluestEyeDiscussion>



## BLACK HISTORY MONTH: WHY WE TELL THE STORY

We are organizing an engaging series of programs that you won't want to miss. Mark your calendars and meet in Fellowship Hall. All programs are open to everyone of all ages. Please join us every Sunday.

**Sunday, February 1,  
following the worship service**

One-woman presentation of acclaimed poet, writer, speaker, and thinker, MAYA ANGELOU.

**Sunday, February 8,  
following the worship service**

Story hour and African drumming circle with artists from Djapo Cultural Arts.

**Sunday, February 15,  
following the worship service**

Oral histories of members of our congregation!

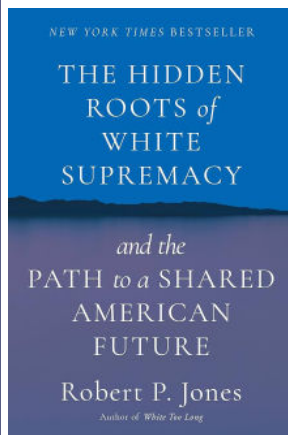
**Sunday, February 22, 6:00 p.m.**

Jazz Concert and dessert reception organized by FHC member Antoinette Franklin (on the saxophone) highlighting local talent. Please bring a dessert to share, especially sweet potato pie, peach cobbler, lemon pound cake with buttercream or red velvet cake.

CELEBRATION  
**BLACK  
HISTORY  
MONTH**  
FEBRUARY



## RACIAL EQUITY BOOK CLUB



**Saturday,  
March 7,  
10:30 a.m. –  
12:00 p.m.  
via Zoom**

***The Hidden Roots of  
White Supremacy and  
the Path to a Shared  
American Future*  
by Robert P. Jones**

Persons interested in reading and discussing books that further individual and collective knowledge about racial equity issues are invited to join the discussions. For more information, or the Zoom links, email [racialequitybuddies@fhcpresb.org](mailto:racialequitybuddies@fhcpresb.org).

The First Congregational Church of Hudson (UCC) and the Ministry of Adult Spiritual Growth of Forest Hill Church, Presbyterian are sponsors of the Racial Equity Book Club and Racial Equity Buddies program.



## MEMORIAL RECEPTION COMMITTEE

Are you looking to volunteer, but you don't have a lot of time?

Join the Memorial Reception Committee!

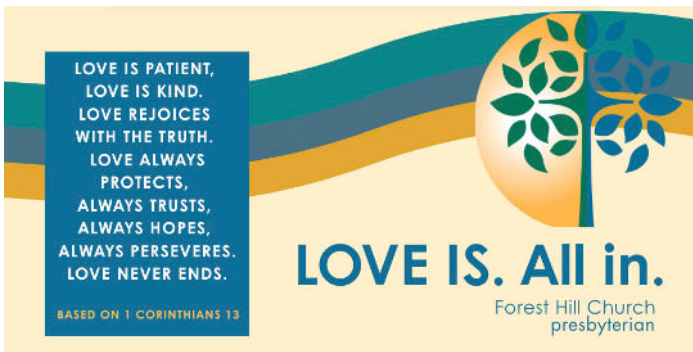
The committee helps with receptions after memorial services: set up/take down, arrange table linens, flowers, plate refreshments, make punch or serve coffee.

You will be notified when the committee is needed, and you let us know if you're available at that time. Volunteers can choose to help set up the day before or serve on the day of the reception.

This is a meaningful way to show love to our church members and their families during a difficult time. For more information contact Cindy Newton at 216-401-9835.



## STEWARDSHIP



LOVE IS. WOW!

As we finish up this year's stewardship season, we are filled with gratitude for our congregation's faithful generosity in supporting the church's budget. We stand at a total of \$677,000 committed in pledges. That amount brings the church's annual budget to a balanced status for the year.

Even more wonderful than the specific total, though, is the fact that 80% of active member households submitted a pledge. Of those who pledged last year and this year, over half were

able to increase their pledged amount for this year. What a faithful testimony to how much we all appreciate and support what is happening in our church. All in, indeed. Thank you!

If you have yet to make a pledge, remember that **ANY AMOUNT COUNTS!** Consider promising an amount you can afford to support our faithful work, and play, and love together.

Submit your pledge here:

<https://fhc.breezechms.com/form/7c646691>

We are, as always, honored to work alongside you,

Your Stewardship Team

Keith Logan and Jean Reinhold, Elders

Carol Gifford, Kim Hill, Jenny Himmelman, and Peter Williams

[stewardship@fhcpresb.org](mailto:stewardship@fhcpresb.org)

## WORSHIP

To contribute flowers for Sunday worship, use this form: <https://fhc.breezechms.com/form/Flowers>. If you are interested in being a co-leader for worship, please contact Linda Martin at [martin3386@ameritech.net](mailto:martin3386@ameritech.net) or (216) 280-4049. If you wish to assist in serving communion, contact Jeanette Nemcek at [jet0830@aol.com](mailto:jet0830@aol.com) or (216) 789-6740.



### Co-Leaders for February

February 1: Marina Grant

February 8: Sheryl Dugard

February 15: Chiq Montgomery

February 22: Nicole Lawrence

## T-COIL SYSTEM INSTALLED

### Hearing loops improve hearing aids!

Digital hearing aids have significantly improved in the last decade, but they do not restore hearing to normal. Difficulties often remain when in challenging listening situations. Hearing loops help hearing aid users and others overcome this problem by broadcasting sound directly to the hearing aid without background noise or reverberation.

find out if your hearing aids have the wireless receiver called a T-coil or Telecoil in order to hear better with the hearing loops in our facilities. The T-coil program is accessed by pushing a button on a hearing aid. This T-coil program has to be activated by your audiologist. Talk to your audiologist to find out if your instruments can have both a T (no background noise pick up) and an MT program (blended micro-phone & T-coil program).

### What is a hearing loop and how does it work?

Hearing Loops allow people who wear hearing aids to directly receive the sound from the PA system in their own hearing aids without having to pick up a separate listening device.

### Do you use hearing aids?

If you wear hearing instruments you will need to



**HEARING LOOP INSTALLED**  
**Switch hearing aid to T-Coil**

**Headset receivers are available for those without T-coil hearing aids.**

For questions about your hearing aids and telecoils, talk to your audiologist.

To learn more about hearing loops visit: [www.hearingloop.org](http://www.hearingloop.org) or [www.brownaudioservice.com](http://www.brownaudioservice.com)

## CARPETING FELLOWSHIP HALL

# WE CAN DO IT!

***Will YOU help to carpet Fellowship Hall by purchasing -  
1 square yard @ \$75?***

The congregational survey of Capital Improvement Priorities revealed the most urgent project on the list to be the flooring issues in Fellowship Hall. Nearing 25 years of constant use, the carpet is faded and stained. The dance floor cannot be repaired and is a liability. Several solutions were studied with the most practical solution being to eliminate the dance floor and carpet the full hall. The major challenge is fundraising the estimated \$35,000 needed for this project.

There are approx 433 square yards of carpet needed. A substantial gift to kick off the campaign has been received from Drs. Bruce and Beverly Cameron. With this gift there are only 270 yards of carpet remaining to be funded! The plan is to sell square yards of carpet for \$75 each to all of you!

A chart to be displayed in Fellowship Hall represents the square yards of carpet needed. The green area represents the Cameron's gift. When a yard is sold, the buyer will receive a colored paper square to physically adhere to the chart. When completely filled, we will proceed to order the new carpet!

Buyers are welcome to purchase 1 yard, multiples or maybe go 1/2 with a friend. No donor names will be displayed. A Trustee will be in the hall each Sunday to handle sales. We have set up a QR code for online and in-person purchases aside from the usual cash or check.



**We are very enthusiastic about this plan and hope you will support this fun campaign. Come on... lets get excited and see how quickly we can complete the goal!**

Make a donation online here:

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



## PACESETTERS

**Note: this event was scheduled for January, but was postponed until February 6. Here is the information again with the updated date!**

2025 was a busy year for the Pacesetters! We gathered for hikes, picnics, visits to museums, and cooking together for Labre ministry, to name just a few of the monthly activities.

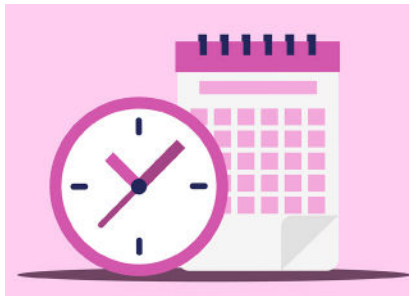
**Now it's time to plan for 2026!**

All are welcome to the 2026 Pacesetters Planning Party, hosted by Scott and Sue Lafferty, on Friday, February 6, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. The address is 1969 Bromton Drive in Lyndhurst.

Bring ideas of activities you would like to do with the Pacesetters in 2026! Also bring an appetizer, salad, or dessert to share. BYOB. Soft drinks and juices will be provided.

No RSVP necessary! Long-time Pacesetters, invite a new member or visitor and bring them along with you! New members and visitors to Forest Hill, take a chance and come and see what the fellowship of this group looks like! You won't be disappointed!

For questions or directions, call Sue (440-669-4885) or Scott (440-429-2937) or email [salaff@sbcglobal.net](mailto:salaff@sbcglobal.net).



## SEED SWAP

**Hosted by Food Not Lawns Cleveland  
Sunday, February 15, 1:00-4:00 p.m.  
Bodwell Hall**

If you're interested in regenerative gardening, building community, food sovereignty, preserving biodiversity, and permaculture, come to our 16th Annual Seed Swap!

Bring saved seeds or something you might swap for seeds in goods or services. There will be starter seeds available and lots of information. We have signed the Safe Seed Pledge and will not knowingly share GMO/Monsanto-owned seed. Please label saved seed with as much pertinent info as possible. We will have envelopes and labels.

Please bring a finger food to share (and indicate if it is vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free or contains meat).

We will also be collecting non-perishable food donations for the Abundance Food Pantry at Forest Hill Church.

For more info, please visit our Facebook group: "Food Not Lawns Cleveland" or email [foodnotlawnsclleveland@gmail.com](mailto:foodnotlawnsclleveland@gmail.com).



**SEED SWAP**



## EARTH CARE CONGREGATIONS



### Earth Care and National Issues in 2026

As Forest Hill families believing in responsible Earth Care, we have naturally focused on what we can do personally and locally for the environment. Recycling, diligent usage of natural resources, and judicious usage of energy have garnered most of our attention.

But overall, national environmental health is based on what our government — executive and legislative branches, buttressed by the judicial branch — does or does not do, which largely governs what protects, preserves, or improves our environment. Appealing to our northeast Ohio national legislators for help is laudable, but neither Moreno and Husted, nor Joyce sits on the governing committee, Environment and Public Work, which oversees the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

*The current Trump administration is openly planning to do away with all previous agency and former democratic executive orders pertaining to the environment.*

In addition to individuals, the administration's actions are affecting communities, such as indigenous peoples, coastal chemical plant residents and the like, as well as

nongovernmental agencies (NGOs) such as Earthjustice, Natural Resource Defense Council (NRDC) and others which carry the fight — and the most weight — into our government arenas and courts to right the wrongs and advocate for remedies for the environment.

As an example, Earthjustice ([earthjustice.org](https://earthjustice.org)) has recently filed lawsuits to challenge unlawful exemptions from clean air standards, advocate and restate grant funds, prevent offshore drilling, and restore censored climate information at the USDA. Other activities include advocating for transforming the power sector, electrifying transportation, stopping fossil fuel expansion and arctic oil extraction, and protecting national forest lands from potential logging and mining exploitation.

Many other NGOs are equally involved in combating political involvement in environmental degradation and are worthy of our support.

David Neff,  
Earth Care Leader

## SOCIAL MEDIA

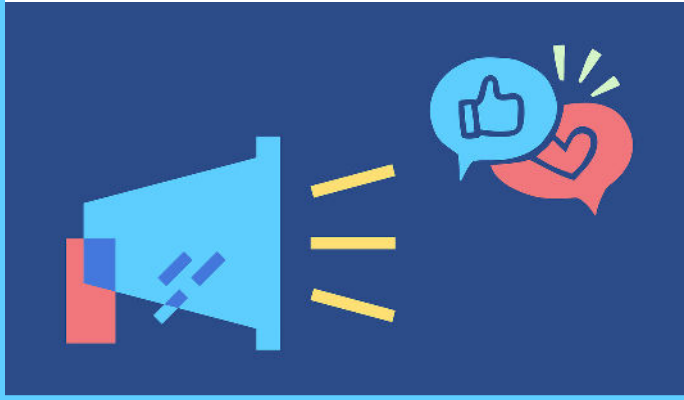
Did you know that Forest Hill Church is on social media? If you are also on social media, please follow us! We post on Facebook and Instagram, and our livestreamed worship services are on YouTube.

We would love for you to like, comment on, and share our posts to further the reach and mission of FHC! Find FHC at the links below.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ForestHillChurch>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/fhcpres/>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC6KcSBcCKdHobprimEdzICA>



## VISIT WITH GRACE UHLE



Grace Uhle will be turning 100 this March! She is at Anna Maria of Aurora, and she loves having people come visit for an hour to chat and read a short article or story.

Julie Lustic is coordinating the visits with Grace. Julie is especially looking for visitors on Mondays, 1:00-4:00 p.m. and Fridays, 3:00-4:00 p.m. in February. If you would like set up a time to visit with Grace, contact Julie at [jlustic@gmail.com](mailto:jlustic@gmail.com) (email) or 216-401-5638 (text).

## BIRTHDAYS

February 5 – Chris Fuller  
February 5 – Bill Hoose  
February 5 – Ron Register  
February 7 – Carol Gifford  
February 7 – Tim Gifford  
February 8 – Sue Lafferty  
February 9 – Kate Burleigh  
February 9 – Demo Solaru  
February 10 – Jamie Allen

February 11 – Gretchen Reynolds  
February 13 – Jennifer Carr  
February 13 – José Luis Claire Villarreal  
February 13 – Lorraine Ranchod  
February 16 – Bev Cameron  
February 17 – Ed Briskey

February 17 – Dave Burleigh  
February 20 – Liz Wollaeger  
February 25 – Brittany Jones  
February 26 – Becky West  
February 27 – Marlene Harmon  
February 29 – Eric Brock  
February 29 – Malik Joseph

# CALENDAR

## February 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 12:30pm - Black History Month: Maya Angelou 4:00pm - Contemplative Scripture Study	2	3	4 7:00pm - Personnel Committee	5	6 5:00pm - Praying with Others 6:30pm - Pacesetters Planning Party	7 10:30am - Men's Group 7:30pm - Resonance Project Concert
8 12:30pm - Black History Month: Story and African Drumming	9	10	11 5:00pm - Eastside Citizens' Empowerment Foundation 5:00pm - Elders' Dinner 7:00pm - Ministry Meetings	12 7:00pm - Forest Hills Homeowners Association Meeting	13	14 10:00am - Fiber Fellowship 4:00pm - Vow Renewal
15 12:30pm - Black History Month: Oral Histories 1:00pm - Seed Swap 4:00pm - Contemplative Scripture Study	16 Presidents' Day - CHURCH CLOSED	17	18 7:00pm - Ash Wednesday Service	19 Deadline for the March Tower	20 5:00pm - Praying with Others	21
22 - Labre Ministry at North Church 6:00pm - Black History Month: Concert and Dessert	23	24	25 7:00pm - Session Meeting	26	27	28

<b>Regularly scheduled events meet every week unless noted</b>  9:15am - Rereading Paul Class 9:15am - She Is Called Class 11:00am - 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 Starting September 11: 6:15pm - Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:30pm - Chancel Choir Rehearsal	10:00am - Al-Anon: Hand in Hand 6:30pm - Scottish Country Dance	9:00am - VITA Tax Service
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## 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 March Tower: 9:00 a.m. on February 19, 2026**  
**Deadline for The Week Ahead email: 9:00 a.m. 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).