



Forest Hill Church
presbyterian

The Tower Newsletter

August 2026



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The cover photo from the July 2026 issue of The Tower was taken by Mike Murphy at First Presbyterian Church in Cleveland. Previous credit was unknown.

This issue's cover photo by Laura Schultz is a compilation of the banners that hang in the Forest Hill Church chapel.

PASTOR'S COLUMN: CHOOSING THE HARD GOOD

Not long ago, Ying played “Summertime” by George Gershwin and DuBose Heyward, from their 1935 opera, *Porgy and Bess*, as we left the sanctuary following worship:

Summertime and the livin’ is easy.

Summer can create the illusion that life is simpler than it is. Perhaps the heat makes us drowsy.

And yet, even in this generally slowed-down season, the world’s challenges do not pause. Injustice persists. Communities struggle. Creation groans under our relentless extractive mindset.

And the call to faithfulness remains.

Jesus never promised that discipleship would be easy. He promised that it would be meaningful. Again and again, he invites his followers to choose the hard good over the easy wrong, the demanding way of love over the comfortable path of indifference, the narrow gate that leads to life over the broad way that leads to destruction.

As a church, we are called not only to believe the gospel, but to live it. This means paying attention to where our comfort is built on someone else’s discomfort. It means listening to voices we have been taught to ignore, including the voice of creation. It means taking risks for the sake of justice, even when outcomes are uncertain.

Choosing the hard good does not mean doing everything at once. It means doing what we can, where we are, with humility and persistence. It means trusting that faithfulness matters, even when change is slow.

The Austrian poet Rainer Maria Rilke, in one of his famous Letters to a Young Poet (1929), says this about living the difficult:

“Be of good courage, all is before you, and time passed in the difficult is never lost. ... What is required of us is that we live the difficult and learn to deal with it. In the difficult are the friendly forces, the hands that work on us.”

August invites us to reflect on our commitments: to one another, to our neighbors, to God’s creation, and to the values we proclaim. It asks us to consider not only what we believe, but what our lives say about those beliefs and how firmly we embrace them.

May we be a people who choose the hard good — not because it is easy, but because it is faithful.

Faithfully,



Gene McAfee
Transitional Pastor



FAMILY, YOUTH, AND CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Celebrating Confirmation

Lucas Ryman was baptized and confirmed on Sunday, July 26. His parents, Diane Moyer and Jeremy Ryman, and his brother James participated in the service. Members of our congregation – Karen Long, Joe Frolik, Chenoa Stock, Valeria Stutz, Kylie Evans, and Adam Majot – served as mentors, joining Pastor Gene and Amy Wheatley in conversation with Lucas as he prepared for confirmation. They surrounded Lucas in body and spirit on Sunday as we welcomed him into our family of faith. The congregation joined the celebration at a reception following worship.



ADULT SPIRITUAL GROWTH (ASG)

Coming this Fall!

Reading Isaiah in Times of Crisis
Sundays, September 20-November 22,
9:15-10:15am.
Meet in South Hall.

We turn to the Prophets for many reasons: comfort, inspiration, instruction, warning. We also turn to their message when we feel we have few other ways to hear God's word in a loud and angry world. The Prophets often spoke most directly when the people faced a real crisis, whether the people knew it or not. Most of all, we turn to them for word that God remains with us, that even in the harshest judgment of our wrongs, there remains hope that with God's love, our hopes will bear fruit. In this study, we will look at key moments in the Prophet Isaiah's teaching that reveal God's perspective and will, especially in times of crisis and doubt.

A registration link will be provided at a later date.

FOREST HILL PRESBYTERIAN

HAS RESCUED

**1.57 TONS OF
ORGANIC MATERIAL**

FROM THE LANDFILL
SO FAR THIS YEAR.

THANK YOU!



FELLOWSHIP FESTIVAL

SAVE THE DATE!

Sunday, September 13,
after the worship service

"Celebrate New Beginnings" with our Fellowship Festival!

Come after church for a delicious picnic, fun for the kids, and lots of good company.

To volunteer to help, contact Kitty McWilliams at kittymcw@gmail.com or 216-299-5957.



MUSIC MINISTRY

Preserving Our Musical Heritage: Building a Library for the Future

One of the quiet but significant ministries taking place behind the scenes at Forest Hill Church is the growth of our music library.

Over the past year, we have been blessed to receive generous donations of choral music and handbell music from churches in the region. As congregations have closed, merged, or reimagined their music ministries, some have entrusted us with collections that represent decades of worship, artistry, and faithful service.

Rather than allowing these treasures to be discarded, we have embraced the opportunity to preserve them for future generations. By consolidating these collections into our own library, we are creating a resource that can continue to inspire musicians, congregations, and audiences for years to come.

This undertaking would not have been possible without an extraordinary team of volunteers. Over countless hours, they have

sorted boxes, organized folders, identified duplicate copies, labeled music, and carefully filed every donation into our library. Their dedication has transformed what once seemed like an overwhelming project into an organized and accessible collection.

We are deeply grateful for everyone who has given their time and energy to this effort. Their work has laid a strong foundation for the next stage of the project.

Now that the physical filing is complete, we are ready to begin creating a comprehensive digital catalog. A searchable catalog will make it much easier to locate music, manage our collection, identify missing copies, and plan worship services and concerts efficiently. It will also help us steward these resources responsibly for years to come.

We are looking for volunteers to join us in this next phase. If you enjoy organizing information, working with computers, or simply want to contribute to the music ministry in a meaningful way, we would love [cont'd on p. 7]



[cont'd from p. 6]

your help. No advanced musical knowledge is required — just patience, attention to detail, and a willingness to learn.

Whether you can volunteer for a few hours or on a regular basis, your contribution will help preserve and expand a musical legacy that serves not only our congregation but the wider community.

If you are interested in volunteering with the digital cataloging project, please contact Ying at music@fhcpresb.org. Thanks!



PORCH TALKS FOR A BELOVED COMMUNITY

Saturday, August 15, 4:30 p.m.

**East View United Church of Christ
(17300 Van Aken Blvd., Shaker Heights)**

In July 1965, The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke to a large crowd from the porch of Heights Christian Church. This summer, the work to achieve Dr. King's vision goes on through a public event focused on the continued call toward social justice.



Speaker Margaret Wong is an award-winning practicing immigration lawyer, and founder and managing partner of Margaret W. Wong & Associates, LLC, with offices in nine cities. Ms. Wong is nationally known and is beginning her fifth decade in immigration and nationality law and legal practice

management. She is the author of the book *The Immigrant's Way*, and adjunct professor of immigration law at Case Western Reserve University Law School.

The Greater Cleveland Choral Chapter (GCCC) and the Youth and Young Adult (YYA) Choir will perform.

Porch Talks will be held outdoors (weather permitting). Bring a lawn chair or blanket to sit on. In the event of rain, we will move into the church's sanctuary. A reception with light refreshments will follow the program.

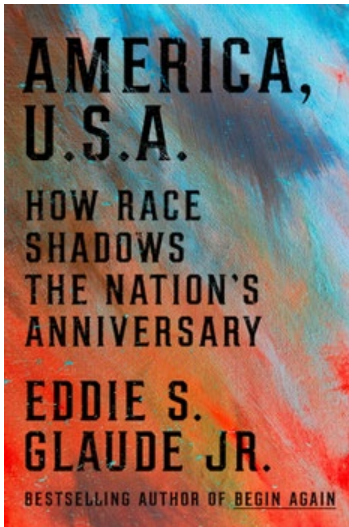
Free and open to the public.

Presented by:
Heights Christian Church
East View UCC
Plymouth Church UCC

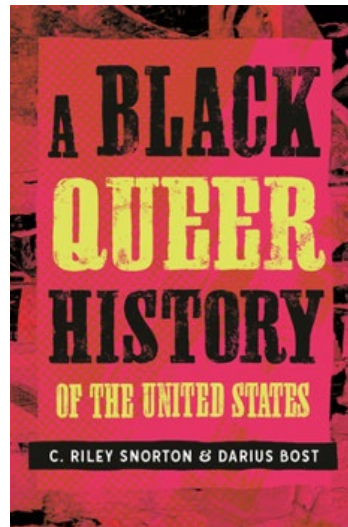
For more information, contact any of the sponsoring congregations or call the Heights Christian Church office at 216-561-4800.

RACIAL EQUITY BUDDIES BOOK DISCUSSIONS

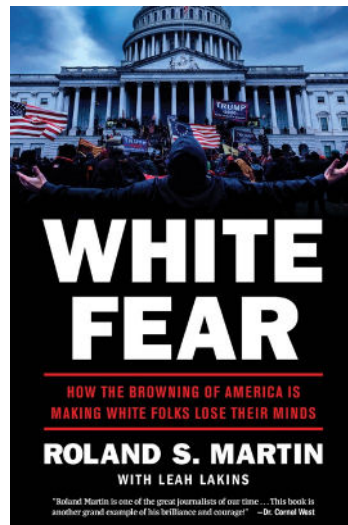
Below are the dates for the 2026–2027 book discussions. All discussions are via Zoom, beginning at 10:30 a.m. and ending at noon. If you are interested in co-hosting a discussion, email racialequitybuddies@fhcpresb.org and indicate which book discussion you would like to lead. If you intend to participate in any of the book discussions, please send an email to receive the Zoom link.



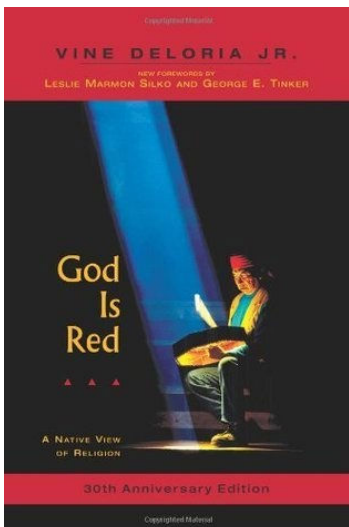
**Saturday,
September 26**
*America, U.S.A.:
How Race Shadows
the Nation's
Anniversary*
by Eddie S. Glaude Jr.



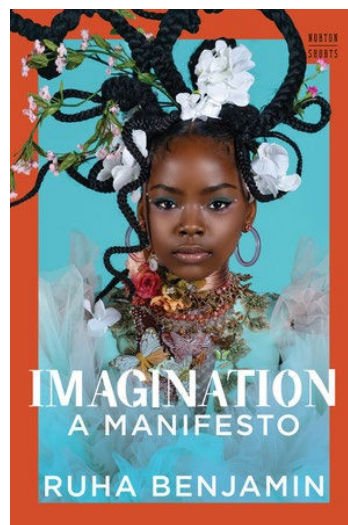
Saturday, March 6
*A Black Queer
History of the
United States*
by C. Riley Snorton
& Darius Bost



Saturday, April 17
*White Fear:
How the Browning
of America Is Making
White Folks Lose
Their Minds*
by Roland S. Martin
with Leah Lakins



Saturday, January 9
*God Is Red: A Native
View of Religion*
by Vine Deloria Jr.



Saturday, May 29
*Imagination:
A Manifesto*
by Ruha Benjamin

GCC PRETRIAL TEAM



**It's the law! But...
who's on the
bench?
Justice begins
before trial!**

**GCC Judges Action Forum
on Pretrial Justice**

**SAVE THE DATE!
Thursday, September 17, 7 p.m.**

Judges preside over felony cases. They decide who awaits trial at home, or in jail (while maybe losing their jobs.) If convicted, the sentence is decided by a JUDGE.

Four races for judgeships in the Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court are **up for election** this November. People often overlook these races when they vote. Come see the candidates. Hear why they are running. **And come November, VOTE!**

We will carpool from Forest Hill Church to Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Cleveland (21600 Shaker Blvd., Shaker Heights).

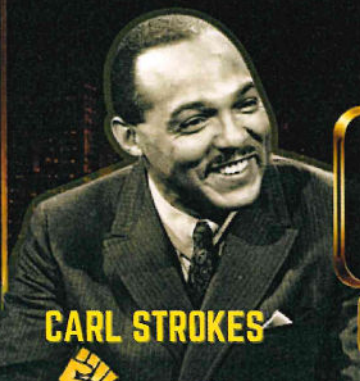
More information and a sign-up link will be provided at a later date.



**REV. MARTIN
LUTHER KING, JR.**



MALCOLM X



CARL STOKES



LOUIS STOKES

**EASTSIDE CITIZENS
EMPOWERMENT
FOUNDATION**
PRESENTED BY
PRESIDENT
NATHANIEL MARTIN

**VOTERS
MADNESS
YOU MUST
VOTE**

 **WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9TH, 2026**

 **5:00 PM - 6:30 PM**

 **FOREST HILL CHURCH PRESBYTERIAN
3031 MONTICELLO BOULEVARD
CLEVELAND HEIGHTS, OHIO 44118**

 **REFRESHMENTS
WILL BE SERVED**

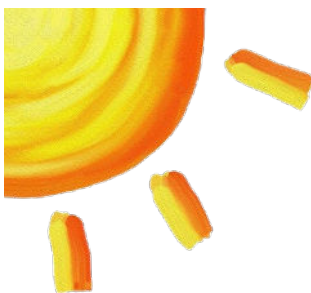
 **PLEASE
BRING A FRIEND**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, YOU CAN CONTACT
NATHANIEL MARTIN, PRESIDENT OF
EASTSIDE CITIZENS EMPOWERMENT FOUNDATION**

 **216-417-4808**

 **OUR VOICES. OUR VOTES.
OUR FUTURE.**

MALLRONDA EDELLA MURPHY
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SUMMER WORSHIP UPDATE

We had hoped to be able to worship outdoors on the second and fourth Sundays of June, July, and August, but, unfortunately, due to technical difficulties with our streaming equipment, we need to move all of our remaining 10 a.m. summer worship services into the sanctuary.

Worship at 11 a.m. will resume on September 13, the day of our fall kickoff.

FOREST HILL CONNECTS

Wade Oval Wednesday
Wednesday, August 12, 5:30 p.m.
10820 East Blvd., Cleveland

All are invited for a fun-filled night at Wade Oval Wednesday! This is for all ages! Come to connect with those you already know and those you don't!

Bring a chair or blanket. Food vendors are available, or pack a picnic dinner. The featured band is The Quenton Rubin Band.

Park on the street, or for a cost at the Botanical Garden and the art museum. We will gather in the area right across from the art museum.



Contact Julie Lustic at 216-401-5638 with any questions.

Game Party Night
Saturday, September 25, 6:30 p.m.
5645 Hartshire Dr., Willoughby

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

To RSVP, contact Mark Wedell at 216-501-0019 or markwedell1212@gmail.com.

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

Everyone is welcome to enjoy the fun!



BIRTHDAYS

August 1 – Kathy Carr
August 5 – Megan Alban
August 7 – Morag Keefe
August 7 – Leslie Pendleton
August 8 – Nora 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 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4	5 7:00pm - Personnel Committee	6 5:00pm - Racial Equity Buddies	7	8
9 11:15am - GCC Teach-In	10	11 7:00pm - Trustees Meeting	12 5:30pm - Forest Hill Connects: Wade Oval Wednesday 7:00pm - Ministry Meetings	13 1:00pm - Communications Committee Meeting 5:30pm - Personnel and Finance Meeting 7:00pm - Forest Hills Homeowners Association Meeting	14 5:00pm - Praying with Others	15
16	17 7:00pm - Deacons Meeting	18	19	20 Deadline for the September Tower 5:30pm - Finance Committee Meeting	21	22
23 - Labre Ministry at North Church 12:15pm - Safety Committee Meeting	24	25	26	27	28 5:00pm - Praying with Others	29
30	31					

Regularly scheduled events meet every week unless noted	9:00am - Bulletin and Email Deadline 6:00pm - AA: Progress Not Perfection 7:00pm - Al-Anon: Now There's Hope 7:00pm - Pastor Nominating Committee Meeting 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	1:30pm - English Country Dance	10:00am - Al- Anon: Hand in Hand 6:30pm - Scottish Country Dance	
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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 September Tower: 9:00 a.m. on August 20, 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. You may also mail a check to the church bookkeeper (3031 Monticello Blvd., Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118).