

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF WARREN

256 Mahoning Ave NW
Warren, Oh 44483

Phone: 330-393-1524

Fax: 330-393-1526

E-mail: info@fpcwarren.org

WE'RE ON THE WEB

WWW.FPCWARREN.ORG



Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Warren, Ohio
No. 151

Merry Christmas from the staff of FPC!

Pastor Greg, Melanie, Marissa, Kathie, Dave, and Cassy

WILLARD ADOPT-A-SCHOOL



FPC once again participated in a fun and rewarding activity on Halloween at Willard School. We provided the fun prizes that the students won as they played bingo. We are continually impressed by the gratitude of the students as we provide the small, inexpensive trinkets for them to win. Thanks to Marissa for helping select these items and to Sharyn Common who thrifts for us and finds amazing items the students love. Thank you, thank you to all who support this program. FPC members and friends are so generous to these young people who need to feel our love.



THE ANNUAL LOVE TREE: This effort, in cooperation with Willard K-8 School, seeks to aid needy students as identified by their teachers. Browse the tags on the tree that detail info on the student and their needs and interests for gift buying. If you select a child's tag, please fill out the second tag attached with your info, drop the tag in the basket nearby, and take a large plastic bag in which to return your purchases. Gifts must be returned to FPC by **Sunday, December 14**. Thanks for your kindness and generosity!



THE SP^{IRE}

ISSUE 2025 VOLUME 12 DECEMBER 2025

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF WARREN



ALTERNATIVE GIFT-GIVING



And the Grinch, with his Grinch-feet ice cold in the snow, stood puzzling and puzzling, how could it be so? It came without ribbons. It came without tags. It came without packages, boxes or bags. And he puzzled and puzzled 'till his puzzler was sore. Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before. What if Christmas, he thought, doesn't come from a store. What if Christmas, perhaps, means a little bit more. (Dr. Seuss)



Alternative Gift-Giving got off to a great start at the November event and will continue through Dec. 15, 2025. Be sure to give those special people special gifts this year by donating to one of the participating organizations: Animal Welfare League, FPC Wish List –ACTS Fund, Free Indeed Ministries, Pink Lights the Way, Second Harvest Food Bank, and Water for the People. Any and all gifts will be greatly appreciated. Make out your check to First Presbyterian Church and put AGG on the memo line. Include the order blank with the name(s) of the charity (ies) you would like to support. Remember: *Happiness doesn't result from what we get, but from what we give.* (Ben Carson)



VETERANS' DAY SERVICE

On November 11, 2025, First Presbyterian Church hosted the Veteran's Day Service. The Cortland Community Band and Warren Harding Madrigals took part in the service. There were close to 100 in attendance.



DEACONS' NEWS



As we enter the holiday season, the Board of Deacons continues their outreach both within the congregation and beyond. The Board met on November 12 to discuss issues for the remainder of this busy year.

We had a successful Community Lunch and Grocery Distribution on November 18. Forty-six lunches of turkey casserole, salad, and dessert were served, and fifty-seven bags of groceries, as well as fresh produce, and baked goods were distributed. Thanks to the efforts of several of our members and staff, we were able to provide a turkey to go along with each bag of groceries. We thank the volunteers who make this event happen each month. We are always looking for additional volunteers for various roles in the grocery distribution process. Please let Kathie Trowbridge or Cindy Athya know if you are interested in participating in this outreach activity.

The Mission Committee is supporting various groups with material and monetary donations. During the holiday season we are supporting Children Services with gift cards, WINGS with grocery gift cards to help with the cost of holiday meals, Free Indeed with financial help for a holiday party for the children of incarcerated parents, and Inspiring Minds for their work with youth in our area. Here at FPC, our Blessings Box continues to be used and replenished daily.

The Congregational Care Committee continues to stay connected with our members. Sympathy cards and get well cards were sent to members over the past month. Birthday cards and sweet treat gift cards continue to be happy reminders of our special days. The Committee will prepare and deliver holiday gifts for our Special Care members in December.

The Fellowship Committee will be serving our annual Founders' Day Dinner on November 23. We will also be honoring our 50+ year members on this day.

The Deacons are grateful for the support of our congregation. Your support allows us to continue our work throughout the year. May your life be filled with faith, love, joy, and peace this holiday season and always.

Cindy Athya, Recording Secretary



Seeking helpers with our Advent Wreath

The lighting of candles on our Advent Wreath is an annual tradition as part of our countdown toward Christmas Day. We would enjoy having volunteers step up to lead simple readings and to light each week's candles. In keeping with our 2025 theme "God's Faithfulness Sustains the Generations", it would be nice to feature families with two or three generations who are involved in FPC's shared life.

Marissa Welke will be arranging the schedules, with one group on November 30, each Sunday in December, and on Christmas Eve. Please contact her if you and your family might be available for this short segment near the beginning of each worship service.

URBANTAP LUNCH



URBAN TAP A BIG SUCCESS!

Church Growth sponsored an after-church event at Urban Tap in Warren on Sunday, November 9. More attended (39 people) than were expected and an extra table was quickly added. Old and new members enjoyed themselves in conversation as they socialized and caught up on news about families, friends, and the community. More events are being planned and give any suggestions to Greg Herriman, Marissa Welke, or Donna Latessa. We are open to new ideas to especially reach out to our younger members and friends.

Why TWO December preview handouts?

The mailed out copies of our monthly *Spire* newsletter always have a special pullout page with calendars and details for the full range of Advent and Christmas events we are blessed to have available at First Presbyterian of Warren. This year, we have doubled up on these December handouts. For good reason.

Keep the green copy for yourself. Tuck in under a refrigerator magnet, or keep it in a prominent place in your home..... *after* you have transferred notes about the activities that interest you onto your own paper or electronic personal calendars. If you have multiple people in your household, take some time looking through the schedule together, and prioritize the ones you want to do.

The extra copy is for you to give to someone else. Whether it is a neighbor, someone at work, some retailer you encounter in this busy shopping season, or someone else, give them an easy way to plug into our congregational life. During December, and especially for Christmas Eve and other special events, the likelihood of a "yes" is multiplied when you invite someone to a church activity in this holy Christmas season. Invitations from a member of a church are far-and-away the #1 way to attract someone to try out a congregation.



GOOD STUFF YOU NEED TO KNOW



SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION Our next celebration of Communion will be *Sunday, December 7, 2025*, during our regular 10:00 a.m. worship service.

TWO-CENTS-A-MEAL OFFERING The Deacons will be collecting for the 2¢-A-Meal offering on **Sunday, December 7**, during our regular worship service. This program helps combat the crisis of hunger.

CONGREGATIONAL CARE If you or someone you know would like a call or assistance from the Deacons or Pastor, please call the Church Office.

LISTEN TO US EVERY SUNDAY MORNING at 10:00 a.m. on 1570 AM or 97.7 FM, talk977.com, or watch us on Facebook at First Presbyterian Church of Warren.

2026 OFFERING ENVELOPES You can pick up your 2026 offering envelopes in Fellowship Hall starting **Monday, December 1, 2025**, throughout the month. Names and addresses are printed on the boxes. Any questions, please call the Church Office @ 330-393-1524.

GIVING All end-of-year giving must be received or postmarked by **December 31, 2025**, for it to be recorded for 2025.

THE CRAFTERS will meet December 3, at 10:00 a.m., to work on the shut-in projects.

SPIRE DEADLINE will be **Thursday, December 18**. Please email your articles and photos of the Church Christmas events to kathietrowbridge@fpcwarren.org.

THE CHURCH OFFICE will **close at noon on December 24 and 31 and will be closed December 25 and January 1**.

MIRIAM ESTHER CIRCLE will discuss Lesson 3 of “Finding Resilience, Joy, and Our Identity” **Thursday, December 4**, at 11:00 a.m. in the Parlor. Lunch will follow at 12. Please bring a bag lunch and plan to stay and help decorate the Christmas tree in the Parlor.

CHRISTMAS EVE LATE SERVICE: If you are interested in attending the 10:00 p.m. Christmas Eve service but are unable to drive. Please call the Church Office to arrange for volunteer transportation.

FPC OFFICE HOURS:

Monday through Thursday 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., with a half-hour lunch break

While *Kathie Trowbridge* and *David Skipper* are here before and after these hours, plus on Fridays, it helps their efficiency to have uninterrupted periods to accomplish certain tasks. Office and cell phones and the doorbell may not be answered outside of these “open” hours, but you can always call, email, leave a voice mail, or schedule an appointment. Thank you for honoring their office hours and their Friday work. As often as possible, please connect with them between 9:00 and 3:30 and not on Fridays.

Greg Gillispie is ordinarily in after 10:30 a.m. Mondays through Thursdays, in order to balance out his evening, weekend, and on-call tasks. Although it changes for emergencies and special events, Friday is his usual Sabbath day. The varied nature of his days means it may be best for you to make an appointment in advance, or at least to call ahead if you are on your way in to see him. The pastor certainly welcomes most drop-in visits when he is in the building.

If you wish to meet with one of our other staff members with versatile schedules (Melanie Vlad, Marissa Welke, or Cassy Tenney), it is likely best to schedule an appointment, either via the Church Office or by calling/texting/emailing that person directly.



A NOTE FROM THE PASTOR

Christmas Eve plans provide in-house and public options

The meaningful, spiritual, memorable celebration of Christ’s nativity will occur here at FPC Warren with two worship experiences on Wednesday, December 24. We will gather around the story of “a good news of great joy” at a pair of Christmas Eve services, at **5:00 p.m.** and at **10:00 p.m.**

The **EARLY** service will include unique ways to involve the worshippers of all ages to be drawn into an interactive telling of the Bethlehem story. There will be aspects which will be especially attractive to children and teens and younger families, but I truly anticipate this will be a simple-yet-powerful time of worship and awe and adoration for individuals and households, across all of our generations. This would be a great opportunity to invite someone to join you for worship.

The **LATE** service will likely feel more traditional, and it too can be powerful for every generation. Expect lessons and carols of the season. The lighting of individual candles throughout the congregation will be back again this year. This would be a great opportunity to invite someone to join you for worship.

Make plans for whichever of these fits your preferences and schedules. If you will be on the road, or working that evening, or unable to attend in person, know that both Christmas Eve worships will be live-streamed on our Facebook and YouTube. Join us virtually, certainly, but if you can participate in person, I trust you will be drawn into the glorious truths of Jesus Christ coming into the world.

Updating you some from behind the scenes: You personally may or may not have been in on some of the preliminary conversations about what our 12/24 schedule would be, or perhaps you heard (or even talked about) potential changes. For this year, at least, FPC will maintain the pattern of two services at a familiar schedule. The Elders of the Session heard the recommendations and ideas from various groups across the congregation, and determined that although there are valid considerations for adjusting our options, FPC will leave 2025 at 5:00 and 10:00. I was impressed by the wise, thoughtful, respectful way our Session meeting went this week. I also am glad that our Elders desire to arrange carpooling for anyone needing a ride to Christmas Eve, perhaps because someone doesn’t drive, or prefers not to drive after dark.

Also, my hope, my wish, my encouragement, is that members of the church turn loose of any schedule-related anxiety some of us had in the past couple of weeks. We are now ready to set our hearts and minds more toward “the reason for the season”. What we do now and next will be to center on the “Comfort and Joy” we can be blessed with, as we come and encounter Christ, the newborn King.

Glo-o-o-o-o-ria in Excelsis! Pastor Greg

Upholding one another in prayer

Prayer updates and congregational news are sent to members of FPC who request to receive the "Prayer Chain" emails. These ordinarily are sent out on most Tuesdays. If you are not yet on that distribution list, please email info@fpcwarren.org, so that we can keep you updated with news about FPC people, community needs, and inspirations for your personal and household prayers.

You also are encouraged to stop by the prayer cards board which in the front right corner of the sanctuary. Individuals can fill out a prayer request, and those stay posted (in most cases) for three months.

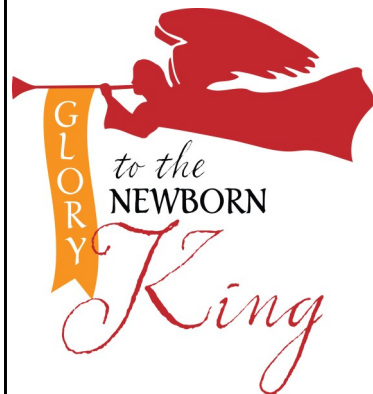




FPC BIRTHDAYS

12/02 Johnna Wright
12/03 Grant Case
12/05 Sandra Vine
12/07 Brittany Muccio
12/08 Sharon Kiracofe
12/09 Dianne Martin
12/10 Jacquelyn Odille
12/11 Jillayne Case
12/15 Amy Burd
12/19 Wanda Hanlon
12/22 David Skipper
12/29 Holly Meyer
Ariana Shannon

If we have overlooked anyone's birthday, we apologize. Please contact the Church Office so that we may update our records.



FPC DECEMBER 2025



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 10:00 am OA, P 5:30 pm Girl Scouts, B 7:00 pm AA, MC	2 9:30 am Al-Anon, MC 5:00 pm Girl Scouts, FH 5:30 pm Girl Scouts, B 7:00 pm NA, MC	3 10:00 am Crafters 6:30 pm AA, MC	4 11:00 am Miriam Esther Circle, P	5 Office Closed	6 11:00 am AA, MC
7 2nd Sun. of Advent Communion/2 Cents a Meal 8:30 am Choir Rehearsal 10:00 am Worship 11:15 am Advent Gathering, FH 11:15 am Bell Practice	8 10:00 am OA, P 11:00 am Lake Vista Study 5:30 pm Girl Scouts, B 6:30 pm BGA Meeting, FH 7:00 pm Voices of Micah 7:00 pm AA, MC	9 9:30 am Al-Anon, MC 7:00 pm NA, MC	10 4:00 pm Deacons Mtg, FH 5:00 pm Someplace Safe, B 6:00 pm NAMI Meeting, P 6:30 pm AA, MC	11	12 Office Closed	13 11:00 am AA, MC 4:30 pm Holidays on the Square- letters and warming station, FH
14 3rd Sun. of Advent 8:30 am Choir Rehearsal 10:00 am Worship 10:15 am Sunday School 11:15 pm Bell Practice 2:30 pm Caroling	15 10:00 am OA, P 5:30 pm Girl Scouts, B 7:00 pm AA, MC	16 9:30 am Al-Anon, MC 10:30 am Free Lunch & Grocery Distribution 5:00 pm Girl Scouts, FH 5:00 pm Finance Meeting, P 5:30 pm Girl Scouts, B 7:00 pm Blue Christmas Serv. 7:00 pm NA, MC	17 1:00 pm Crossroads Bereavement Grp., P 6:30 pm AA, MC	18 SPIRE DEADLINE 12:00 pm Dessert and Dialogue Women's Study, P 7:00 pm Worship Meeting	19 Office Closed	20 11:00 am AA, MC 3:00 pm Voices of Micah Free Indeed Christmas Party, FH
21 4th Sun. of Advent 8:30 am Choir Rehearsal 10:00 am Worship 10:15 am Sunday School 11:15 am Bell Practice 11:15 am Christmas Program	22 10:00 am OA, P 5:30 pm Girl Scouts, B 7:00 pm AA, MC	23 9:30 am Al-Anon, MC 7:00 pm NA, MC	24 Christmas Eve Office Closed 5:00 pm Early Service 6:30 pm AA, MC 10:00 pm Late Service	25 Christmas 	26 Office Closed	27 11:00 am AA, MC
28 10:00 am Worship 10:15 am Sunday School	29 10:00 am OA, P 5:30 pm Girl Scouts, B 7:00 pm AA, MC	30 9:30 am Al-Anon, MC 7:00 pm NA, MC	31 New Year's Eve 12:00 pm Church Office Closed 6:30 pm AA, MC	 <i>Wise Men and Women Still Seek Him</i>		