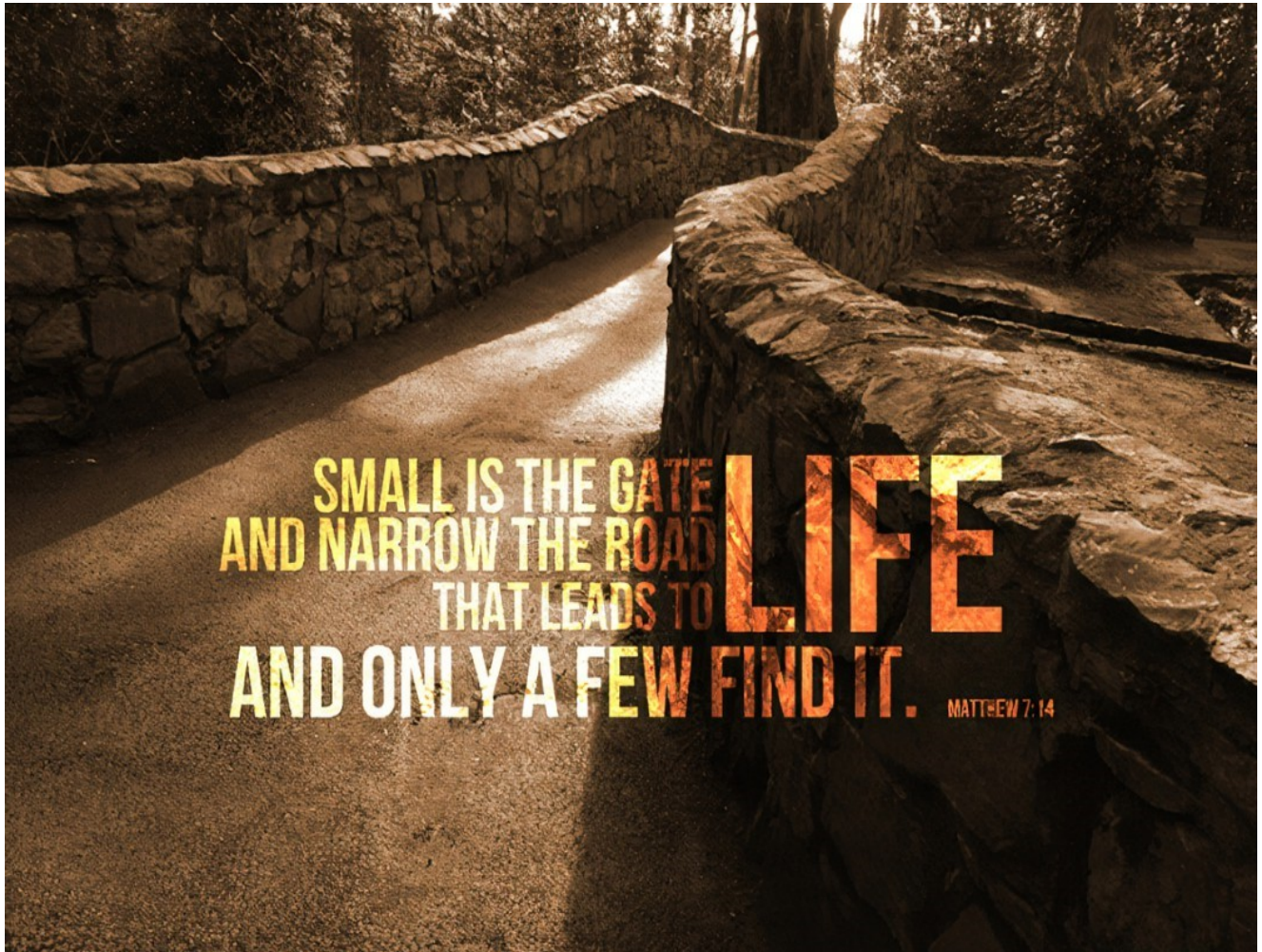


The Evangel



THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
MARCH 2024



“A Righteous Remnant”

The statistics are depressing. Perhaps you’ve seen some of the research that has been done recently on the state of the American Church which only confirms the trend that so many of us have been observing over the past several decades. According to a Pew Research Center study conducted in 2021 (so these stats are already a little bit out of date!), only 1 in 4 Americans now attend worship weekly.¹ That means that on any given Sunday, 75% of Americans are *not* attending church! Wowzers!

Now, there are a variety of ways we can respond to this. We can become smugly self-righteous, sitting in our pews while calmly saying to the world, “Well, if you all want to go to hell, then that’s on you!” Or, we can get all caught up in worry and anxiety and fear, feverishly biting our fingernails and rubbing our foreheads as we fret over what we’re going to do – how we’re going to keep people from leaving and how we’re going to get more people attending. Many Christians have elected to do one or both of those options in these uncertain times of upheaval and change. I personally don’t find either of them helpful, though I have on occasion slipped into both states of mind!

But there’s another option open to us, which is to recognize that what we are experiencing is actually nothing new. For true faith in God has always – *always* – been a minority religion. Here’s what the late Eugene Peterson has to say about all this:

These trials force us, if we are to stay true to the story we are reading, to give up the notion that the Christian community, rightly and obediently lived, can somehow, if we just put our minds to it, be tarted up sufficiently to catch the admiring eye of the world. We have ample documentation by now to disabuse us of such stuff. Eighteen hundred years or so of Hebrew history capped by a full exposition in Jesus Christ tell us that God’s revelation of himself is rejected far more often than it is accepted, is dismissed by far more people than embrace it, and has been either attacked or ignored by every major culture or civilization in which it has given its witness: magnificent Egypt, fierce Assyria, beautiful Babylon, artistic Greece, political Rome, Enlightenment France, Nazi Germany, Renaissance Italy, Marxist Russia, Maoist China, and pursuit-of-happiness America. The community of God’s people has survived in all of these cultures and civilizations but always as a minority, always marginal to the mainstream, never statistically significant. Paul was acerbically brief: “Not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth...God chose what was low and despised in the world.” (1 Cor 1:26, 28).²

Peterson describes here what Jesus Himself teaches: that His Way is a *narrow way*, and that *few find it* (Matthew 7:13). The Good News is that God provides a way in the first place – that’s the evidence of His amazing grace and amazing love. But still – it’s a narrow way. Few find it. That’s how it always has been; that’s how it always will be. We don’t need to fret and worry and fear, nor should we smugly sit back in our pews and pat ourselves on the back for being so much wiser than the rest of the world. Instead, we need to recognize this and to be motivated by it to keep reaching out with the Good News to snatch as many away from the fires of judgment as possible (Jude 1:23). We will never be popular. But it’s not about being popular – it’s about being faithful, and above all, it’s about being with Jesus! And He has come to give His life for us and for our salvation! That is our message, our power, and our comfort in the midst of troubles and strife!

This Lent, let’s rejoice in the narrow way Jesus provides us through His life, His death, and His resurrection – and let’s share that Good News with our world, hoping and praying that *some*, at least, will come to know and love Him as we do! Hallelujah! To Him alone be the glory!

In Christ’s Love,

Joshua

¹Statistic taken from <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2021/12/14/about-three-in-ten-u-s-adults-are-now-religiously-unaffiliated/#:~:text=Currently%2C%20about%20three-in-ten%20U.S.%20adults%20%2829%25%29%20are%20religious,in%20particular%E2%80%9D%20when%20asked%20about%20their%20religious%20identity>. Accessed 2/13/24.

²Eugene Peterson, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places: A Conversation in Spiritual Theology*. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), 288.

Scripture Memorization Continues! Our March Memory verse is:

“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”
(2 Corinthians 12:9, ESV).

“Nails could not have kept Jesus on the cross had love not held Him there.”
-Author Unknown



Coffee & Tea With the Pastor

Coffee and Tea with the Pastor: Our next meeting will be on March 13 from 2-4pm at the Coffee Peddler downtown (112 Harrison Avenue). This is a wonderful time in which you can come and ask your pastor *any questions* - about the Bible, about theology, about the Church, about anything! Please join us for good conversation and delicious caffeinated beverages! All are welcome!

The Pastor's Bible Study continues!

Come join us on Monday evenings at 7pm in the Conference Room as we study The Gospel of John together. This is a great opportunity to dig into God's Word with brothers and sisters in Christ! All are welcome!



Lent continues... Our annual 40-day season of preparation continues throughout the month of March. FYI, if you have not picked up the free Lenten devotions which are available, it's not too late! You can pick these up at the entrances to the sanctuary. Blessings to you as you prepare again to mark the events of Good Friday and Resurrection Sunday.

Library Book Club Review

March will be "Puzzles and Prayers" with Sherry Caito as your host! March 19th from 10am to noon.

Looking forward to April 16 when the Library Book Club will meet again. Mark your calendar to visit and perhaps join this fun group. We meet from 10am to noon.



Prayer Vigil! Friday, March 1 is the **World Day of Prayer**. To honor this special day, we will be having a 12-Hour Prayer Vigil here in our chapel - this means that for 12 straight hours, we will have someone in our chapel praying for our world, our nation, our church, and anything and everything else! If you would like to sign up for a half-hour slot to pray, please look for the prayer vigil sign-up sheet in Faith Hall near that time, or call the church office. Prayer guides will be provided. Let us get on our knees and pray to the Lord, who promises He will always hear us!

Discernment Team Update

Our Denominational Task Force will be available to answer any questions after the 10:45 service on March 3rd in the Chapel or at the Coffee Peddler on March 13 from 2-4pm. . Please continue to pray for our church and congregation. To God be the glory!



Our Lenten Mission Project

The Mission Committee has chosen Heifer International as our special Lenten mission offering this year. Our donation goal is \$3000. There are animals of all types available to be purchased. Go Wild! The children's Sunday School classes have committed to buying a bee hive at \$30.

Let's make this happen!

Heifer International is a global nonprofit working to eradicate poverty and hunger through sustainable, value-based holistic community development.

Heifer distributes animals along with agricultural and value-based training, to families in need around the world as a means to providing self sufficiency. The animals give families a small business, providing wool, milk, eggs and more. Animal donations can provide families a hand up, increasing access to medicine, school, food and a sustainable livelihood. To get more information go to :

info@heifer.org.



Holy Week begins at the end of March. Please join us for the special worship opportunities:



Palm Sunday is March 24. Join us in worship at 8:30 and 10:45am as we wave our palms and shout "Hosannah!" to Jesus Christ!

7pm
service.



MAUNDY
Thursday

Maundy Thursday is March 28. Join us in worship at in the sanctuary as we have our traditional Tenebrae

Good
worship

Friday is March 29. Again, join us in at 7pm as we host our brothers and sisters from Providence Presbyterian Bright. All are welcome!



Resurrection Sunday is March 31. Join us in worship at 8:30 and 10:45am as we give praise to our Living Lord!

**TWO CENTS A MEAL COLLECTION IS
March 10**

Please look for the gold pots at both entrances to the sanctuary to place your monthly donations. If you are not able to make it to a service, please feel free to mail your donation to the church. It goes to a good cause of helping feed the hungry. As always, thanks for your generous donations.

~ The Mission Committee



Four ways to watch our service:

**Church
Secretary**



During the service live-stream our 10:45 service each Sunday on our church website (harrisonpresbyterian.com) using the link.

After the service is over:

- Send an email to video@harrisonpresbyterian.com to receive a link to the full service.
- Watch the sermon on our YouTube channel- "First Presbyterian Church of Harrison, OH."
- Call the Office to have a DVD prepared for you.

Healing Prayer is available upon request. All who wish to receive anointing, the laying on of hands, and prayers for healing are welcome to call the church office.



Meal Ministry

Our free community meal, **Bountiful Hearts**, continues on the first Saturday of every month. Our next meal will be on Saturday, **March 2** from 11 am – 1 pm here at our church.

We will need **donations of dessert items**, either homemade or from the bakery/grocery store. Please let Tamela Hinson or Christine Luca know if you would like to volunteer; **we also need drivers**. We greatly appreciate your donations, both of time and financial contributions; they are what make this meal possible.

“It is curious that people who are filled with horrified indignation whenever a cat kills a sparrow can hear the story of the killing of God told Sunday after Sunday and not experience any shock at all.” -Dorothy Sayers

Looking Ahead to...



- * A memorial service for Terry Johnson will be held on Saturday, 20 April here at the church. Visitation will be from 11am to 12pm with the service to follow in the sanctuary. A meal will be offered for Terry's family and friends following the service. For more information, please contact the church office.
- * The **Pastor will be on study leave** from Friday, April 26-Friday, May 3 in Ottawa, IL. If you have a pastoral care need during this time, please contact the church office and Judy will put you in touch with a local pastor. Please note that there will be NO 8:30 SERVICE on Sunday, April 28. But do please join us at 10:45 on that day as a guest preacher fills the pulpit for us!
- * The Women's Association **Rummage Sale** is coming up! Time to gather your "stuff"! The prep work begins on Sunday, March 31st with the sale on April 5 & 6.

**It's Time to
FOLLOW
JESUS**

Brant Hansen, author of *Unoffendable*, one of our summer book study reads, is holding a conference at Grace College in Winona Lake, IN April 12-14. Brant describes the conference as a "followership conference" saying,

This conference isn't a "leadership conference." There are plenty of those. This one is about... following! Jesus calls us again and again to "Follow me!" That's what this conference is about: How to be a follower of Jesus. An apprentice of Jesus. A disciple.

Brant will speak several times through the weekend, while Sherri "emcees" and does her thing. It will be focused on how to follow Jesus by:

- Loving our enemies.
- Practicing radical forgiveness.
- Praying for those who drive us crazy.
- Living without worry and anxiety.

Partnering with God in life.

The atmosphere of the conference will be about fun and fellowship. We'll also enjoy singing together, and may be joined by some surprise guest artists and speakers.

For more information go to: <https://branthansen.com/>

**“What language shall I borrow to thank Thee, dearest friend
For this, Thy dying sorry, Thy pity without end?
O make me Thine forever; and should I fainting be,
Lord, let me never, never out live my love for Thee!
-Bernard of Clairveaux**

Calling All Prayer Warriors!

Join us each Wednesday at noon in the church library as we lift up our world, our church, and all our other joys and concerns in prayer. All are welcome! See you here!



Young Youth Group

Our next YYG meeting will be on **3/10** at 6pm.. We now have 2 YYG groups. One group will continue to enjoy games, crafts and snacks and meet in SonRise Hall. The second group will enjoy discussions and will meet in the Youth Room at 6pm. Any questions, please contact Mary Craft (513-616-7207).



Notice: Our **February-March Love Thy Neighbor** mission is for **Christ's Loving Hands**. They are requesting: protein products, such as canned tuna, canned chicken and stew. Also Chef Boyardee, peanut butter and cereal. The Mission Committee thanks our wonderful congregation for their continued support of the Love Thy Neighbor program. If you have any questions, please see Judy Gibbs or Rebecca Scherzinger.



Sunday Morning Adult Study

For the Lenten season, we will be studying Philip Yancey's classic, *What's So Amazing About Grace?* Through the series we will explore the concept of grace and what it looks like in action.

Our Sunday School Class meets each Sunday morning in the Conference Room at 9:30am. We begin class after the 8:30am Worship Service ends. Please join us! If there are any questions, contact Sean McCauley.

Adult Sunday School



Senior Saints

Evelyn Stutzman Jim Mendell
Vivian Talley Shirley Quinn Dick Morris

Prayers For Our Church

Our Missionaries: Warmuths, Garrigans & Joneses;
Christ's Loving Hands: Our February/March "LTN" Mission;
Nancy Platt: upcoming surgery on foot;
Art Wolfram: continuing cancer treatment;
Lieschen Turchina: recovering from surgery;

Prayers For Others

Deb Menninger: for Joey & Hank's health;
Marilyn Bourquein: for grandson, Kent's health;
Mary Ann Pickens: for brother, Paul's health and her diagnosis of Parkinson's disease;
Sandra McCauley: for brother, Rodney, awaiting a kidney transplant;
Nancy Schmidt: for grandson, Alfred, had good test results;
Joshua Long: for sister, Rebekah, recovering from surgery;
Vivian Talley: for son, Paul, recurrence of cancer;
Reta Crone: for Tom Jr., recurrence of cancer, taking chemo and for family member, Linda, has an aggressive cancer;
Barry Fury: for neighbor, Lora Lind, recovering from surgery;
Marcia Merse: for husband, George, in hospice care;
Carol Vassil: for niece, Valorie, diagnosed with breast cancer;
Christine Luca: for friend, Carol, recovering from breast cancer surgery;
Linda Hellmann: for daughter, Stacy, diagnosed with stage 1 breast cancer;
Mike Dirr: for godparents, Don & Mary Otten, Mary has Lewy Body Dementia;
Nancy Platt: for niece, Claire, having exploratory surgery;
Doris Emmert: in hospital with swollen legs and breathing issues;

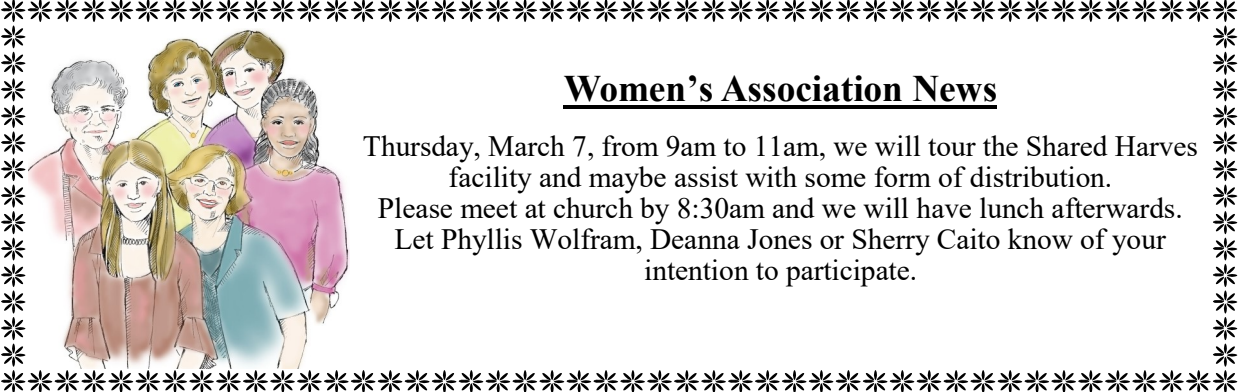
Ongoing Health

Needs

Carter Jones
Louanna Smith
JoJean Kleinfeld
Arlene Anderson
Fran Myers



PRAYER CHAIN CALLS: The Prayer Chain is a group of people who are committed to praying daily for those requesting prayer. This ministry is administered through our Board of Deacons. If you have a prayer request, please contact **Jean Gibbs (513)715-1048 or (513)207-5419 during the day or Phyllis Wolfram 367-4578 during the evening.** For two weeks, the people on the chain will pray daily for the person or situation requested.



Women's Association News

Thursday, March 7, from 9am to 11am, we will tour the Shared Harves facility and maybe assist with some form of distribution. Please meet at church by 8:30am and we will have lunch afterwards. Let Phyllis Wolfram, Deanna Jones or Sherry Caito know of your intention to participate.



Online Giving

Online Giving is available for First Presbyterian Church. Visit our webpage at harrisonpresbyterian.com and click on the GIVE NOW button or scan this QR code. Call the office with any questions.



- 6 Dick Morris
- 8 Judy Gibbs, Stephanie Loos
- 11 Barry Fury
- 16 Jenny Jones
- 18 Bev Hughes, Nancy Platt
- 20 Karen Greschel
- 24 Tim Corcoran
- 28 Ivan Hughes

Office Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Monday - Thursday

Bulletin Deadlines: Wednesdays, 10:00 a.m.

April Evangel Deadline: March 18 by 12 Noon

Send all bulletin and Evangel items to Judy at office@harrisonpresbyterian.com, call the office (367-4301) or drop by the office. Please remember that Fridays are the pastor's Sabbath day. He is available for emergencies only on that day. Thank you.



MARCH FELLOWSHIP TABLE

- 3 Bountiful Hearts
- 10 Debra Frenz
- 17 Debbie McCane
- 24 Mike Dirr
- 31 Barb Wolf

Please fill out the form below if you would like to purchase a lily for Easter to be placed in the sanctuary for a loved one to be remembered or honored.

We must have your order (with money) into the church office no later than Monday, March 25. Each flower is \$15.00 and you may take your flowers with you after the Easter service. If paying by check, please make payable to "First Presbyterian Church" with "lilies" in the memo line.



No. of flowers @ \$15.00 ea. _____

Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____

NAME _____

IN HONOR OF _____

IN MEMORY OF _____

Lenten Sermon Series

Christianity Today recently published an article "Top 5 Heresies Among American Evangelicals." Aren't you curious about what those top heresies might be, and how we can avoid them? Please join us during the Season of Lent as Joshua preaches a 4-week sermon series on these errors and the truth that Scripture teaches to contradict them. (This series will begin on the 2nd Sunday in Lent.)

- * **3 March:** "No, Not One!" (Psalm 15:1-9, Romans 3:9-26). Common Heresy: *Humans aren't sinful by nature.*
- * **10 March:** "Jesus, the One and Only" (John 10:22-42, John 14:8-11). Common Heresies: *Jesus was only a great teacher; Jesus wasn't fully God or fully human, etc.*
- * **17 March:** "Live By the Spirit" (John 14:15-31, Galatians 5:16-26). Common Heresy: *The Spirit is an impersonal force, not a personal being.*





Daylight Saving Time begins on Sunday, March 10. Please remember to “spring forward,” or you will be an hour later to Sunday School and worship!



We collected **535** cans of soup to benefit our local food pantry! Thank you for your continued generosity in helping area organizations.

Faith

First Presbyterian Church
115 S. Vine St.
Harrison, OH 45030
Pastor: Dr. Joshua Long
Church Phone number: 367-4301
Church email: office@harrisonpresbyterian.com
Pastor email: jlong@harrisonpresbyterian.com
Website: www.harrisonpresbyterian.com

OUR CHURCH MISSION STATEMENT

First Presbyterian Church of Harrison, Ohio is growing in faith by building stronger relationships with God and community through prayer and worship. The reading and understanding of God's Word strengthens our commitment to share the Good News of Jesus Christ through love and service to our neighbor so that all may experience God's grace.

