



The TOWER

JANUARY 2020

WORDS FROM PASTOR VERONICA

On Friday, November 1, I attended an interfaith prayer breakfast on immigration justice, moderated by Pastor John Lentz and Rabbi Joshua Caruso. Before a diverse crowd of religious leaders, with grace-filled vulnerability, Leonor Garcia shared her personal journey as she underscored the continued need for religious communities to prioritize immigration.



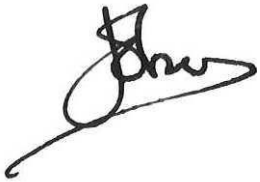
Senator Sherrod Brown was the keynote speaker for the breakfast. I'd met him last summer, when I spoke among faith leaders for a press conference on immigration policy. I was asked to represent the Christian perspective on immigration, and focused my message on Jesus' teaching in Matthew 25, "In as much as you've done it unto the least of these, you've done it unto me." The message resonated with leaders, particularly Senator Brown, who initiated an engaging conversation with me on the text following the press conference.

So, at the November prayer breakfast, I was pleasantly surprised when Senator Brown spoke on Matthew 25 from a different translation, "In as much as you've done it unto those considered to be the least of these, you've done it unto me." Brown stressed the power of our stories, such as Leonor's. "Invite your political leaders into your communities, where they may hear and be changed by your stories, witness...This is what will change hearts, minds, and

policies.” Indeed, Brown was touched by my message in June— now his own far-reaching public witness.

-Pastor Veronica

WORDS FROM PASTOR JOHN



Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! OK, we turn the page on our calendars and we set our sights into 2020... just think the beginning of the third decade of the 20th century.

Remember the panic around Y2K? This message is to support the much-maligned concept of “New Year’s Resolution.” I have made many and have broken them by the second week! I remember when I was going to start running... NOT! I think of that commercial for PELATON and that woman who looks terrorized by the thought of waking up one more day to climb on to her stationary bike!

However, at the memorial celebration of Clyde Loughridge, I was moved by the Declaration that was written by the Session to thank him for his “big idea,” his resolution in starting the Endowment Fund at Forest Hill Church. Perhaps you have heard of the BHAG – Big Hairy Audacious Goal! Clyde’s BHAG was to start a fund that would grow over time and be used to fund creative and faithful projects. As of today, over \$250,000 has been designated to special projects related to the most profound social issues related to social justice and equity. Perhaps you remember the garden that identified the church for several years. The seed (pun intended) money came from the Endowment.

I believe that each of us needs a BHAG. I think the church needs a BHAG too. What is going move us, challenge us, excite us, and perhaps make us feel uncomfortable? The Session’s BHAG for 2020 is to be the beloved community. Now you have heard about this for a few months now – but becoming the beloved community takes time, effort, sacrifice, imagination, discomfort, honesty, prayer – trusting that God will lead us by the spirit to walk in the footsteps of Jesus – building the kind of community that Jesus wanted to build; a

community where everyone matters, and all are welcome, and we are opened to change.

God had a BHAG when God created. The liberation of the children of Israel from Egypt was a BHAG – a real risk! Jesus is, for Christians, the biggest BHAG of all – God's resolution to make himself/herself known in the flesh. God is always thinking ahead, doing a new thing, trying things out (perhaps even making a mistake now and again – e.g. mosquito). God trusts us to move the divine agenda. God wants us to listen to the inner voices of our hearts and imaginations. God wants you to think big and push hard.

So, go BIG! What is God calling you to do this year to help build the kingdom? What are your dreams and visions? What is your BIG AUDACIOUS HAIRY GOAL! Share it with us!

Happy New Year, John

Music Notes

Dear Forest Hill Friends,

I wish you all a blessed New Year--full of happiness, love and a renewed generosity of spirit as we recover from the hustle and bustle of the holidays. On **January 5**, we look forward to singing *We Three Kings* as our three FHC kings journey down the aisle, decked out in their stunning, flowing robes and bright headgear (given in memory of Bill Tapie) as they offer their glittering treasures to the Christ Child.



During the first two weeks of January, I will be touring with the Nebraska Wesleyan Concert Choir in North and South Carolina and in Lincoln, Nebraska. Tom Trenney is the conductor, as well as a former organ student of mine. I must admit, it will be nice to be down south during January! Tim Robson will be leading the music those two Sundays, and I know you will give him a warm FHC welcome.

During the month of January, the choirs will be preparing music for Black History Month, a Compline service during Lent, a Bach Sunday

and more. Details will be forthcoming when dates are finalized. I'm so grateful for all the support that the FHC congregation gives to the music program! New choir members are welcome at any time, but January is a particularly good starting time, since we're learning all new music. Come give it a try! We all need artistic outlets that help us block out the stresses of our world. Singing music, particularly sacred music, is a gift to your soul.

Soli Deo Gloria~

Anne Wilson

Organist/Director of Music

annew@fhcpresb.org 216-321-2660 (church); 216-870-2729 (cell)

Good News Coming



Of course there is good news coming! After all, Advent and Christmas are on the way. We'll have some good news regarding Earth Care in just a couple of weeks. But in the meantime.....Christmas is coming. Here's a poem in the true fashion of holiday spirit: T'was the night before Christmas, and all through the barn, the animals were stirring, for they'd heard a new yarn. A babe was a coming, and soon to be born, right there among them, before the new morn. The babe would become mighty, a King among Kings, and the animals all thought, 'what a marvelous thing! ' Just then two travelers arrived, named Joseph and Mary, entered the stable and began to make ready.

For they were sent by God, their mission sublime-- the straw and the stable, would suit them just fine. And shepherds in fields, tending flocks by night, knew that something was up, when they saw a bright light. A star in the heavens was moving quite fast, and appeared to grow larger as it beckoned them past. They knew in an instant, they'd better be quick, and follow the star, 'cause this wasn't a trick. Soon they arrived, at the most simple stable, and were met with a sight that history would fable.

The star shown above them, giving light down below, creating for all a most special glow. The baby was birthing, the donkey was braying; the cattle were lowing, the sheep were baa-baaing;

Now wise guys from afar—no, not the ones from New Jersey---were moved to consider, how they could be worthy...So they followed the star, and went straight to the stable, each bearing gifts of which they were able Melchior with gold, Gaspar with myrrh, Balthazar with frankincense----but scholars concur---They came not that night, but later in time--- though that is quite useful in completing this rhyme.

And everyone wondered, just what the birth meant—but soon the whole world would know this event. The Angels on high began a great chorus, exclaiming God's son, was now 'ere before us. Yes Jesus had come, the point of this story, sent to earth by God, to proclaim all His glory. The wise guys then knelt, before the babe in the manger, for they knew then that He, had come as their Savior. And they were heard to exclaim as they rode out of sight, Merry Christmas to all--- God's gift for this night.

-Dave Neff, Earth Care Leader
---Dave Neff original 2014--

GCC Update

Last month we reported about Greater Cleveland Congregations' successful negotiation with the Cuyahoga County Administrative Judge and Prosecutor, which has led to creation of a third Drug Court in the County with criteria that will particularly focus on the inclusion of individuals who have had prior felonies, disproportionately people of color. Through the leadership of our Criminal Justice Team, GCC continues to address the issues of jail overcrowding and excessive incarceration through intensive efforts to build a coalition in support of the creation of (optimally) two Mental Health and Addiction Crisis Centers in the County. After significant research including a visit to San Antonio to see their Crisis Center, GCC has concluded that these Centers are most effective if they are pre-booked facilities located offsite from any jail site.

In 2017, County Executive Armond Budish pledged to GCC that he would support efforts to locate 2 Mental Health and Addiction Crisis diversion centers in Cuyahoga County (East and West) as part of the Q campaign. GCC leaders, including Donna Weinberger and Pastor Jawanza Colvin have worked diligently over the last two years to hold the County accountable to this promise. Within the last several months, GCC's work has brought a number of key players to the table to push for action on this important criminal justice reform, including Cuyahoga County Administrative Judge John Russo, County Prosecutor Michael O'Malley, the Gund Foundation, United Way and Metro General Hospital.

Thanks to this work, the GCC Strategy Team, including our new lead organizer Keisha Krumm and Pastor John Lentz met with the County Executive and his Chief of Staff as well as the County Prosecutor to make clear the need for these diversion centers and initial signs are very positive. As these discussions continue, GCC plans on holding a large 1000 person public meeting on Thursday, **February 27** at 7 pm (location TBD) to publicly call on the County to fulfill the promise to create the Mental Health and Addiction Crisis Centers and to announce our progress to that goal. FHC has pledged to bring at least 100 of our members to support GCC at this meeting. Watch for updates in the coming weeks and please join us in this important work on **February 27**.

-Scott Lafferty, Core Team Leader



Come read with us

The Black Caucus of FHC is pleased to announce the formation of its book club. It is open to all people of good will. Our first book is "Strength to Love" a collection of sermons by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The book's message is timeless, thought provoking and moving. One reviewer wrote, "Despite nearly 50 years since its publication, 'Strength to Love' reads as pertinently to our situation as it did in the midst of the civil rights movement. Yet 'Strength to Love' is more than a blueprint of a movement; it is a template for personal authenticity in an age when vast social and economic change demand and depend on personal integrity. As King averred, "Only through an inner spiritual transformation do we gain the strength to fight vigorously the evils of the world in a humble and loving spirit."

This book was chosen as our initial book club reading for a number of reasons; foremost among them is that the book is founded on Christian principles and written by one of the 20th century's greatest social justice activists. Thus, the book reflects our faith and provides insight and a road map to bettering oneself and society.

We hope to read 4 books a year and discuss each on a Saturday morning each quarter. Thus, "Strength to Love" will be discussed Saturday morning, **March 21**, from 10-12 in Bodwell Hall. We would love for you to join us. The Caucus has access to a few copies of the book 'Strength to Love. **If you wish to borrow a copy please see Nicole Lawrence or email her at nalawrence3@gmail.com.**

Although the book is not in the Cleveland Heights library, they can get copies from the ClevNet consortium and have a copy delivered to one of their branches for you. Alternatively, one can order the book via EBAY or Amazon.

The Black Caucus Book Club Committee
Rayba Johnson, Sonji Kenyatta, Nicole Lawrence, and Quentin Smith

It's a breeze...

By now, over 200 church members have received access to Breeze, and more than half have signed in at least once. If you haven't yet received your sign-on information, it's on its way—we are working our way down the membership list one by one to preserve the unique levels of security within Breeze. **(If you just can't wait to get started on Breeze, contact Peg Weissbrod at pegw@fhcpres.org and she'll be happy to move you to the top of the list!)**

Current Breeze users will be pleased to know that they can now edit some of the information about themselves on their profile page. To change your profile photo, click on the current image. When the new window pops up, click on the Upload Image button and select an image from the ones stored on your computer. (Only jpeg images will work—if you aren't sure what kind of file your photo is stored as, **feel free to call Peg at 216-291-2586.**) After uploading your photo, you can crop it to fit the Breeze dimensions. Please only upload photos that will let other members easily identify you and remember to click the Set Profile button when you're finished. Watch for further instructions on what, and how, you can edit other information on your page.

Don't forget:

- Your **username** is always last name followed by first name with no spaces in between. This alphabetical list lets us see at a glance who is a Breeze user and who still needs to be invited.
- Your **password** came from an online password generator and should be changed by you—perhaps to something easier to remember!

Sign that Fellowship Pad!

Have you ever wondered why you need to sign the Fellowship Pad each Sunday? Besides building community and getting to know those sharing your pew, signing the Fellowship Pad is how our office staff tracks worship attendance.

We don't take attendance to be nosy or to judge anyone. We track it for two reasons. By not signing in, it signals the Deacons that you may have stopped coming and they will work to see whether you're all right and if there's anything you need. The second reason is that signing the Fellowship Pad maintains your active membership in Forest Hill Church. If you don't sign in for 12 months or more, you risk being moved to the Inactive list. After two years, the Session can even delete you from membership.

Every January, our national office requires us to submit an Annual Statistical Report stating, among other things, exactly how many Active Members we have. It's much easier to count which members are Active when everyone signs the weekly Fellowship Pad.

Each year, our church pays a "per capita" fee of \$32.41 to our local and national offices for each Active Member. While we don't have to pay this fee for inactive members, the number of votes we can cast in Presbytery meetings is tied to the number of our Active Members. (Not to mention feeding media reports that mainline churches are shrinking compared to non-denominational or evangelical churches.) For more information about the importance of the per capita assessment and what it means to the larger church and Presbyterians in general, you may enjoy [this video](#) from Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson II, Stated Clerk for the PC (USA). In the meantime, please remember to sign that Fellowship Pad!

Where's Waldo?

And...why does Waldo wear stripes??? Because he doesn't want to be spotted!

Now that we have your attention, the Deacons have a request. So the Forest Hill Church staff and ministry members don't have to ask "Where's Waldo" (or Sally or Chris or Margie or Jeanette...) too often, will you please sign the Friendship Register each Sunday that you are in worship? With your real name? We call that little book at the end of each pew a "Friendship Register" because its first purpose is to help us know each other. If we don't sign, we are being unfair to

those around us who want to know who we are so that relationships can develop. Our willingness to sign tells visitors that we are open, inclusive, friendly, and willing. As members or long-time attendees, we should also take note of anyone in our pew who has signed the book and indicated they are visitors. This helps us have reason to say hello, and our words can make a great difference to that person who is new and exploring. Second, the book serves as an attendance record, which has several uses within the Forest Hill Church and the Presbytery. The data actually gets put into our church computer system, thanks to our office volunteers. Imagine how good it would feel, if we've been unable to attend worship, and a pastor or ministry member phoned us to say "You've been missed."

Let yourself be spotted. Come to worship, and let us know you were there, by sharing your name in the Friendship Register.

-With thanks from The Deacons

News of Our Church Family

Care Group (Group Leader-Mary Hosier): The **Calvary** Care Group will assist our pastors in meeting members' needs during **January**. Please call the church office to report an illness, hospitalization, family emergency, birth or death. Information will then be passed on to the Care Group leaders.

Thank You to all office volunteers!

The office volunteers and TOWER assembly team– Lynda Bernays, Betty Clark, Ellen McChesney, Cathy Ghiandoni, and Anne Smith.

Flower donations are needed! Are you interested in donating a flower arrangement in honor or in memory of someone? The arrangements are \$45 each and you may donate the flowers (the deacons will find a recipient) or you may take them home. Please email office@fhcpresb.org if you would like to take this opportunity to help beautify the sanctuary.

Are you interested in becoming part of our Forest Hill Church Community? If so, please email churchgrowth@fhcpresb.org.

Volunteer Opportunities

The following are ways in which you can help Leonor and her family as needed:

1. Picking up Leonor and/or the boys when they need to come to Cleveland from Akron
2. Taking Leonor and the boys back to Akron
3. Providing meals when the family is in Cleveland
4. Providing activities for Luis Mario (8) and Adan (6) during the day and evenings when they are in Cleveland
5. Overnight stays with the family at the church
6. Food preparation with Leonor for special events (she is trying to earn money by cooking and selling her food and by catering events)
7. Transport of food from our food pantry to Leonor every week

If you are interested in becoming a part of this effort, please contact Charity Stock at charityrmcdonald@gmail.com. Your name will be added to the Sign up Genius list and you will be contacted as needed. Thank you for your continued support! -FHC Immigration Task Force

Dear Friends,

We've had a difficult year combined with many blessings. We want to thank all of you for your kindness, support, love, & prayers. Never doubt the impact that your prayers have had on us. We know that we're not alone in this. Having someone pray for Mark's healing & good health is a great comfort. Thank you so much for caring about our family & our well-being. We happily wish you all health & happiness in the New Year!

With Grateful Hearts,
Linda Hansen Davidson & Family

“Reconnecting with God’s Creation” is back for a third year! The course is one of several “small plates” offerings by the Ministry of Education and Spiritual Formation. Classes consist of readings, mixed media presentations, small group discussion, adoption of a place for nature observation, and field trips. Through the course, you will more clearly understand the deep connections between humans and nature and explore how you can act on your responsibility as a Christian for stewardship of the natural world. The 10 classes are focused around 4 themes: preservation and protection, stewardship, wonder and magic, and restoration. Environmental justice and climate change will be emphasized throughout the course. By the end of the course, you will draw closer to, learn from, and be empowered to serve God’s creation. A suggested \$10 donation by participants would be appreciated to offset the cost of class materials and facility rental fee at one of the field trip locations. Please sign up soon as the course is limited to 12 people. **Classes will take place on Sundays from 4-6 pm March 15 to June 7, 2020 excluding Easter (April 12), Mother’s Day (May 10) and Memorial Day (May 24).** They will be held at FHC in South Hall or will include field trips to nearby parks/nature preserves. **If you have any questions and/or are interested in participating please contact Kemp Jaycox (kempjaycox@yahoo.com; 216-785-5375) or Steve Sedam (Goldens101@aol.com; 614-783-4467).**

Social Groups and Circles

Calling all Pacesetters! It is time to plan for 2020!

What is a Pacesetter? Pacesetters began 35 years ago (or so) as a social group of 20-30 year olds at Forest Hill. Pacesetters, (now 50 -70 somethings) includes a mix of long-time and brand-new members and visitors, singles and couples, folks with kids or not who gather throughout the year for a variety of activities, both social and service-related. All are Welcome to the 2020 Pacesetters Planning Party, hosted by Scott and Sue Lafferty.

When: Saturday, January 25th at 7 pm

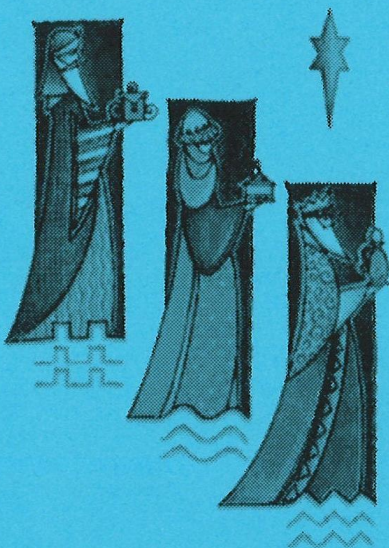
Where: 1969 Bromton Drive, Lyndhurst

Bring along your ideas of activities you would like to join in with the Pacesetters in the coming months *and* an appetizer, salad or dessert to share. Soft drinks and juices will be provided. No RSVP necessary! As we seek to be the Welcoming Community, we encourage long time Pacesetters to greet a new member or visitor and bring them along with you on January 25th. AND new members or visitors to Forest Hill to take a chance and Come and See what the fellowship of this group looks like! You won't be disappointed!

Questions or directions, call Sue 440-669-4885 or Scott @ 440-429-2937 or email swlaff@sbcglobal.net.

"THE BELOVED
COMMUNITY"

EPIPHANY PARTY!



Sunday, Jan. 5, 2020

5:00 - 8:00 PM

hosted by

Carolyn S. Smith

and her students and musical guests

held this year at

Gates Mills Club

Senior Living

6759 Mayfield Road,

Gates Mills, OH 44124

Since 2004, the Smith family has celebrated the tradition of hosting an Epiphany Party near the the 12th Day of Christmas. A good time is had by all, and more friends join in the fun each year.

Therefore, in the spirit of giving, we ask people to bring appetizers, salads, favorite dishes, desserts or drinks for the food table. I'll brew coffee and make punch. There will be a box for collecting cash (or check) donations for the Abundance Pantry at Forest Hills Church, which serves more than 300 families a month in Cleveland Heights and surrounding communities.

A Jam Session and Singalong always an annual bonus to our party, so feel free to bring your instruments and voices!

We hope that our Jewish friends have a blessed Chanukah, that those celebrating Christmas find Joy, that Kwanzaa is filled with good cheer and that the Winter Solstice will be cold and snowy! We also hope and pray once again that the New Year brings all of us closer to Peace in our troubled world.

Call 216-509-3928 for more information or questions.

Sundays in January

9:15 am Childcare begins
9:30 am Adult Education/Youth Education
Descant Choir
10:10 am Pathways
10:30 pm Continental Breakfast
Chancel Choir
11:00 am Worship and Children's Worship
12:00 pm Coffee and Conversation
Sine Nomine Rehearsal (every other Sunday)
2:00 pm Messiah Chorus Rehearsal
7:00 pm Promises on Sunday

Staff Emails

Antoinette Richardson	Administration	office@fhcpresb.org
Genetha Clark	Finance	finance@fhcpresb.org
Ann Donkin	Building Mgr.	adonkin@fhcpresb.org
Stavros Gazis	Head Custodian	custodian@fhcpresb.org
Rev. Dr. Veronica Goines	Co-Pastor	pastorgoines@fhcpresb.org
Rev. Dr. John Lentz Jr.	Co-Pastor	pastorlentz@fhcpresb.org
Peg Weissbrod	Outreach/Breeze	pegw@fhcpresb.org
Rev. David Wigger	Family, Youth, Children	CE@fhcpresb.org
Anne Wilson	Music	annew@fhcpresb.org
Tara Beverly	Youth Leader	youthleader@fhcpresb.org

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Rev. Dr. Veronica R. Goines, Rev. Dr. John C. Lentz, Jr., Co-Pastors
Rev. David Wigger, Interim Dir. of Family, Youth & Children's Ministries
Anne Wilson, Director of Music

TOWER deadline: 8 am on January 16

Custodians' cell phone: 216-217-5257

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Regularly scheduled events: meet every week unless noted	6:00 pm -AA: Progress not Perfection 7:00 pm -AI Anon: Now There's Hope 7:30 pm -AA: Borton Group -Boy Scout Trp. #403 -OA Big Book	1:00 pm -Abundance Pantry 5:00 pm -Fitness Fusion exercise class	7:30 am -Bible & Bagels 12:00 pm -Staff Meeting -AA: Wednesday Women's Group 7:00 pm -Speak Life Bible Study	1:30 pm -English Dance 5:00 pm -Fitness Fusion exercise class 6:20 pm Voices in Bronze 7:30 pm Chancel Choir	9:30 am -AI Anon: Hand in Hand	
December 29 9:30 am -Christmas Celebration	December 30	December 31 -New Year's Eve	January 1 -Office Closed	January 2	January 3	January 4 8:00 am -Men's Group
January 5 9:30 am -New Adult Ed Class Begins	January 6	January 7 11:00 am -Pantry Lunch 7:00 pm -Black History Meeting	January 8 7:00 pm -Ministry Meeting	January 9	January 10 5:00 pm -Annual Reports Due	January 11 9:00 am -Fiber and Fellowship
January 12 12:00 pm -Black Caucus Meeting -Meet and Greet	January 13	January 14 10:00 am -Fiber and Fellowship 6:30 pm -Nominating Committee 7:00 pm -Black History Meeting	January 15 7:00 pm -Session Meeting -TransFamily Meeting -Jung Workshop	January 16 8:00 am -TOWER Deadline 9:30 am -Pantry Group Meeting	January 17	January 18 8:30 am -CEIRS Class
January 19	January 20 MLK Day	January 21 7:00 pm -Black History Meeting	January 22	January 23	January 24	January 25 8:30 am -CEIRS Class 9:00 am -Fiber and Fellowship
January 26 12:00 pm -Annual meeting -Racial Equity Buddies	January 27	January 28 10:00 am -Fiber and Fellowship 7:00 pm Black History Meeting	January 29	January 30	January 31	February 1 8:00 am -Men's Group -CEIRS Class -Tax Prep

January 2020