

Rev. Dr. Veronica R. Goines, Rev. Dr. John C. Lentz, Co-Pastors
*Discovering God's call, celebrating the Spirit's presence
Witnessing to Christ's transformative power!*



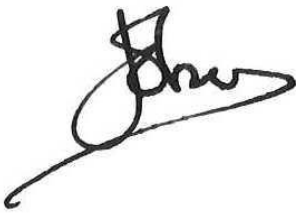
Forest Hill Church
presbyterian

The TOWER

APRIL 2021

happy
Easter

WORDS FROM PASTOR JOHN



Happy Easter! Christ has risen. He has risen indeed!
Alleluia!

I have always liked the Easter story in Luke of the two unnamed disciples walking on the road to Emmaus. These two are met by a stranger. They are amazed that he hasn't heard about the weekend in Jerusalem: about Jesus – the one they thought was going to change their world. The two traveling back home (I suppose) had heard the report of the women that the body of Jesus was not in the tomb, but that news alone really didn't seem to make much of an impact.

ONLY when they walked with the stranger who invited them to an impromptu bible study and then sat down at the table with them to eat and he broke bread were “their eyes opened and they recognized him.” Jesus was right there, and they didn't know.

How do we recognize Jesus in this post- Easter world? It may be that we miss seeing Jesus who is in our midst. I think the story gives us four steps to seeing the risen Jesus who is very close. If you want to see Jesus, do the following:

- 1) WELCOME THE STRANGER – be open to questions, get outside your comfort zone.
- 2) STUDY THE BIBLE – engage, wrestle with the Living Word.
- 3) SHOW HOSPITALITY – Create space for others, share your spaces and places.
- 4) SHARE A MEAL – -EAT! Break some bread!

I think about our life together at Forest Hill. Every time I see Leonor, or Emmanuel, Ifousou, and Idrissa, I feel closer to God. We did the faithful thing in becoming a place of Sanctuary. When folks open their Bibles at **Bible and Bagels** on Wednesday morning, or Kerygma

class on Sunday, morning it creates energy! Opening the church to the members of the community who want to use our space, seeing the volunteers and guests that come each Tuesday to serve and be served gets us closer to the Kingdom. Sunday morning doughnuts and picking up my soul food before the concert become moments of kingdom joy.

We become the body of Christ! We recognize Jesus in our midst! He is with us all the time!

Be blessed.
~John





Family, Youth, and Children Ministries

Family, Youth, and Children is growing and coming up with ways to get together as the weather gets warmer. You may receive a text or email from Amy . . . so stay tuned!



If your family is not receiving communication from our FYC program and would like to be informed about our programming, please contact Amy Wheatley, Director of Family, Youth and Children's Ministry at ce@fhcpresb.org. We'd love to add you to our list!



STILL WE SING

Nationally known song leader Amanda Powell will lead us in a three-part devotional and workshops to help us sing, connect, and have fun! Dates are **Thursdays April 8 and 22, and May 6 at 7:30 PM**. Spots are only available via registration. To register, contact Ying at music@fhcpresb.org.

Weaving together songs and stories, Amanda invites you into a time of renewal and open-hearted connection, utilizing Zoom technology that leads you through unique journeys into singing, reflection, laughter and prayer.

In this time of distancing and grief, a sense of community is vital. My life's work is to help people connect to themselves and one another, and to honor the deep spirit of Love (God!) in our midst. I look forward to singing and walking with your community to find inspiration and strength at this challenging time.

-Amanda Powell

1. Finding Peace

In the opening devotional, Amanda leads people on a journey to their individual and collective center. Together, participants connect with their breath and learn songs of centering and peace.

2. Choosing Love

In these challenging days, we need to choose love for ourselves and for one another. This devotional introduces songs that are about deep, unconditional love. We open ourselves to the ways we are called to bring love into the world.

3. Cultivating Joy

Even as we navigate difficult times, we can look for moments of joy! Experience joyful moments in community with exuberant singing and fun! We learn to keep our eyes wide open for glimmers of joy in the midst of challenge.



Would you like to get back into singing? Or are you eager to connect with singers and music-lovers from Forest Hill Church? The Chancel Choir is meeting weekly on Zoom! Join us for practice. Please email Ying at music@fhcpresb.org for information on how to access the Zoom meeting and download music.

FROM THE DEACONS

Recently, I was fortunate to hear Brene Brown, a researcher and professor who studies vulnerability, host a conversation with The Most Rev. Michael Curry, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church. Brene confessed to the Bishop that she is drawn to attend worship because she loves to sing with strangers and break bread with other seekers. It was a “confession” in her mind because she wondered if she should have more reasons to attend worship that are more closely tied to her faith.

I felt a lot stirring within me as I listened to Brene and remembered certain rituals of my church life. As a child raised in the Episcopal Church, I was transported way back to those days in my life, and I enjoyed supposing that my appreciation for the awesomeness of God was instilled in me by the reverberating sounds of an exquisite organ, the choir boldly processing the center aisle, congregants singing all around me, and, of course, brass instruments proclaiming Easter. All of the sensation and security within it set the stage for me to easily believe the man (yes, it was always a man) standing before us, giving encouragement and assurances-robbed, certain, speaking from an authority that I didn't even need to understand.

I know many of you join me in aching for all that comes with worship as a community. I know, too, that I am not alone in feeling that I've lost a year of my life. It has become difficult to remember when we did “this” or “that,” and when I try, I'm typically off by a year. It hurts to anticipate a second Easter without our community gathering.

Rev. Curry spoke to Brene about our tendency to get stronger as our burdens get heavier. “Use your last hard time as a building block for this one,” he advised. And he also acknowledged that “God is mediated through community...and at this time, we are cut off from the nourishment of others.”

I don't remember much from this podcast beyond that. I guess I needed to stay with a recognition of what is at the root of the hurt and frustration and sadness many of us feel right now: an absence. An absence of the God we know through each other.

The Deacons continue to meet monthly via Zoom, as do other ministries and programs within our church. We delight in seeing each other's faces on screen, for certain. We share how we are tending to others within our congregation, when we know what is needed. We long for *your* faces and *your* company in the pews. We say your names. Please let Pastors Veronica and John know if you or someone you love needs our attention through prayer or direct assistance.

May we all feel the learning within the waiting, and the miracle of Easter over and over again.

~Elaine Turley, on behalf of The Deacons

FOREST HILL CHURCH TREASURER'S REPORT

Thank you to all who support Forest Hill Church and its programs. We could not be the beloved community on the corner of Monticello and Lee without your generosity. The following information summarizes Forest Hill Church's operating income and expenses through February 28, 2021, and February 29, 2020.

2021 Year-to-date Summary FHC Financial activity

	<u>2/28/2021</u>	<u>2/29/2020</u>	<u>2021</u>
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>
<u>Income</u>			
Current Year Pledges	\$ 186,878	\$ 158,915	\$ 675,000
Other Gifts	\$ 25,077	\$ 15,077	\$ 186,000
Church Rentals	\$ 11,110	\$ 4,980	\$ 74,040
Total	\$ 223,064	\$ 178,972	\$ 935,040
 <u>Expenses</u>			
Board of Trustees	\$ 35,917	\$ 36,437	\$ 173,044
Payroll and benefits	\$ 103,213	\$ 111,564	\$ 662,754
Ministries	\$ 15,059	\$ 4,556	\$ 43,690
Justice and Mission	\$ 1,500	\$ 2,575	\$ 54,000
Total	\$ 155,688	\$ 155,133	\$ 933,488
Net Gain(Loss)	\$ 67,376	\$ 23,839	\$ 1,552

Donor-Designated Funds

Beginning balance at January 1	\$ 270,019
Gifts 2021	\$ 40,147
Distributions 2021	\$ (11,706)
Ending Balance at February 28	\$ 298,460

FHC Operating Budget
Distribution

Payroll & Benefits	66%	72%	71%
Trustees	23%	23%	19%
Ministries	10%	3%	5%
Justice & Mission (Note 1)	1%	2%	6%
	100%	100%	100%

Note 1: For 2021, the Justice and Mission budget was calculated as 8% of base pledges; the 6% above reflects the Justice & Mission allocation as a portion of total income.

In 2021, Forest Hill Church is still feeling the impact of the 2020 COVID-19 shutdown. Pledge income remains strong and actually exceeds 2020 pledged income year-to-date. But non-pledged gifts, Sunday offering and church rentals will not rebound until we are able to welcome people in person to services and for building use. As for expenses, the Co-pastors, staff and ministries are managing reduced budgets and carefully considering all discretionary spending. The \$10,000 variance shown for the Ministries is a timing difference – Forest Hill remitted the annual \$13,000 apportionment in February 2021 but not until August 2020. All of this combines to produce a net surplus of \$67,000 compared to a net surplus of \$24,000 at this time last year.

Unlike the Church's operating budget, the donor-designated fund in support of mission and programs - the COVID-19 Fund, the Food Pantry, Sanctuary/Asylum, Friends of Music, etc. - can only disburse cash on hand and thus will never show a net loss.

Ministries, committees and program leaders are working hard to leverage these gifts in support of the donors' wishes and Forest Hill Church's mission.

Thank you all again for all you do to support the work of Forest Hill Church. The work of the beloved community is a blend of strong operations, focused donor designated giving and strong endowment support.

Please feel free to bring any concerns to the Co-pastors, Trustees or myself.

Regards,
Mary McMillan
Treasurer

PS – also, just a reminder – Forest Hill accepts gifts of stock. Please email Finance@FHCPresb.org if you would like Forest Hill's stock transfer's instructions.



CONNECTING THE DOTS



We've now spent the past year in *Pandemic Mode*, and have become most aware of zoonotic diseases those that are borne by wild animals which have actually been with us for centuries. For the most part, history records that there really have been only a few instances of such diseases being transmitted to humans in such widespread fashion as the current situation.

Recent news on the current disease, the coronavirus COVID-19- suggests that it may have sprung from wildlife farms in SW China, which raise such wild creatures for eventual food and ship live animals to so-called "wet markets" for human consumption.

But, let us posit some logic that there is a relationship among Earth Care, Climate Change, and the current pandemic. Increased instances of droughts, floods, earthquakes, wildfires, tornadoes, and hurricanes are being viewed as negative consequences of Climate Change. Coupled with deforestation and human population growth requiring more agricultural land wildlife has been forced into ever-closer proximity to human settlements, especially in lesser developed countries and areas zoonotic diseases have an increasing capability of "jumping on to people". We now know what the consequences are, even thousands of miles away!

What do we do as Earth-caring advocates to shore up God's creation and reduce this problem? We call upon our legislators and Deb Haaland, Secretary of the Interior to protect our American wilderness areas from development, allowing wildlife to thrive without conflict with human populations, thus minimizing the potential for zoonotic disease transmission.

We must also as a body politic advocate for all matters which alleviate the environmental damage which exacerbates the consequences of climactic actions, and which forces wildlife and human populations to come into closer contact. This means combatting air, water, and land pollution caused by overuse of fertilizers and damaging pesticides used by "factory farming", to retard increases in greenhouse gas emissions. We must also call for more clean energy.

On the international scene, next month we'll take a look at how World Wildlife Fund is using state-of-the art technology to improve the lives of both people and wild animals in some of the most pristine areas on earth, to avoid negative consequences of wildlife-human interactivity.

~Dave Neff
Earth Care Leader

FHC BLACK CAUCUS

RACIAL INEQUALITY IN AMERICA: How did we get here and how can we resolve it?



Disparities in the lives of African Americans and White Americans, by every metric (e.g., wealth, income, medical care, policing, housing, education, etc.), are evident and dramatic. As, in this moment, we as a nation are confronted with the harsh realities of their manifestation, at least two essential questions arise: 1) What is the genesis of this inequality? and 2) What paths can we take to resolve it? As our federal legislature renews efforts to explore reparations through the reintroduction of H.B. 40, we also ask: Are reparations part of the answer?

The Black Caucus of Forest Hill Church is planning a five-part series* of ZOOM discussion groups to dissect and untangle this continuing dilemma. Using the Darty/Mullen model of Acknowledgement, Redress, and Closure (ARC), we dive into the historical origins of racial inequality, asking: To what extent have our historic government policies contributed to this inequality gap? Using our responses, we can then address the second question: Are reparations part of the solution?

We begin on March 27, by discussing aspects of slavery in America during the Antebellum period. We examine the development of our Constitution and how it managed the issue of slavery, slavery's economic threads in the foundation and perpetuation of our country's wealth, the impact of the abolition movement, and end with the dawn of the Civil War.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Black adults, especially Black men, are far more likely to end up in jail than White adults. In 2018, Black Americans represented 33% of the sentenced prison population, nearly triple their 12% share of the U.S. adult population. Whites accounted for 30% of prisoners, about half of their 63% share of the adult population. (Source: PEW)

For young men of color in the United States, police use-of-force is among the leading causes of death, according to a study from the University of Michigan, Rutgers University and Washington University. That same survey determined that Black men are 2.5 times more likely to be killed by police than White men. (Source: Institute for Social Research, June 2020)

Black Americans and White Americans use drugs at similar rates, but Black Americans are six times more likely to be arrested for it. (Source: NAACP, "Criminal Justice Fact Sheet, Feb. 2020)

Bias has also been documented in plea bargains and sentencing. On average, Black men in the US receive sentences that are 19.1% longer than those of white men convicted for the same crimes. (Source: US Sentencing Commission, Feb. 2020)

HOMEOWNERSHIP & WEALTH

According to the Pew Research Center, the home ownership gap between Blacks and Whites has widened since 2004 and Black families are less likely than White families to own their own house. Today, 41% of Black households own their own homes, compared with nearly 72% for Whites.

Black households have only ten cents in wealth for every dollar held by White households, according to 2016 data. In 2016, the median wealth of non-Hispanic white households was \$171,000 - ten times the wealth of Black households (that is, \$17,100).

According to our Racial Wealth Divide report, the median Black family, with just over \$3,500, owns just two percent of the wealth of the nearly \$147,000 the median White family owns. (Source: Institute for Policy Studies)

POVERTY

The poverty rate for Black Americans is more than double that of Whites. (Source: US Census, 9/2020)

Blacks are twice as likely as whites to be unemployed. (Source: Center For American Progress, Sept. 2020)

Black graduates are almost twice as likely to be unemployed as their White peers a year after leaving college. (Source: Forbes June 2020)

EDUCATION

Black and Latin students are more likely to attend poorly funded schools. "A-10 percentage-point increase in the share of nonwhite students in a school is associated with a \$75 decrease in per-student spending," a 2012 analysis of Department of Education data by the Center For American Progress found. Black students are less likely to graduate from high school than White students. According to the Pew Research Center, in 2018, 79% of Black students graduated from high school in comparison to 89% among White students.

During the 2015–2016 school year, Black students represented only 15% of total US student enrollment, but they made up 35% of students suspended once, 44% of students suspended more than once, and 36% of students expelled. The US Department of Education concluded that this disparity is "not explained by more frequent or more serious misbehavior by students of color."

PLEASE JOIN OUR MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE ON ZOOM!

Time: Apr 1, 2021, 07:00 PM Eastern Time (the US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85499936691>

Meeting ID: 854 9993 6691

One tap mobile

1-301-715-8592

Good Friday Gathering: Friends, join us for “Holy Conversations: Reflections on the Seven Last Words of Jesus”

This Friday, April 2 at 12 p.m., via Zoom. We will hear 3-minute reflections from our Adult Bible Study teachers and Co-pastors and brief insights offered by active and attentive listeners. So, do come prepared to listen, receive, and offer your own responses and insights gleaned in our Holy Conversation. No registration is necessary. You are encouraged to sign on 10-15 minutes early so we may begin on time. Have a blessed Holy Week, and we will see you on Good Friday at 12 noon.

Join Zoom Meeting by clicking the link below:

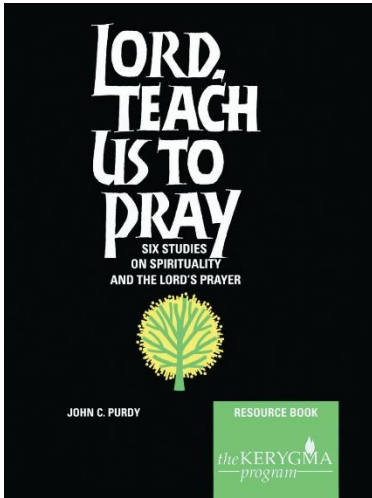
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83882091517>

Meeting ID: 838 8209 1517

One tap mobile

1-646-558-8656

LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY



How should we pray? We all have been taught something about prayer, and we all have had some experiences with prayer. While we are sure that God accepts even our intention to pray, we may wonder what Jesus himself had to say about how to pray.

In fact, Jesus gave us a model of prayer, the Lord's Prayer, found in Matthew 6:9-13, with a shorter version in Luke 11:2-4. Many people memorized it as children, and we recite it most Sundays during our worship service. It consists of an address to God, "Our Father in heaven," followed by six quite different, brief requests. Do you know how to use the Lord's Prayer as a model for your own prayer?

Come join us to explore using the Lord's Prayer as a model. The Ministry of Adult Christian Education will offer classes to explore in-depth the six petitions, learning to pray as Jesus wants us to pray. We will begin with an introduction by Pastor Veronica Goines. In the following weeks, two Zoom groups will be offered. **Please sign up directly with a facilitator using this link:**

<https://fhc.breezechms.com/form/98da6c45453826>

Group facilitators:

1. Kathryn Eloff and Tom Zych
2. Ron Zimmerman

Time: 9:30-10:30 AM, Sundays

Dates: April 11 - May 23

Student resource book: *Lord, Teach us to Pray*, by John C. Purdy. The book is available at the church office for the **cost of \$15.**

SOFTBALL SEASON IS BACK!!

With Heights Recreation set to open its facility and fields later this spring, the Heights Church Softball League will finally resume playing and Forest Hill Team is looking for new players to join.

This year, the league may not start until the end of May or after Memorial Day and run through early August. Games are played Sunday afternoons and evenings. If you are interested in joining, please sign up here: <https://fhc.breezechms.com/form/50acb6>.



Good Friday @ St. Paul's

Ecumenical “Seven Last Sayings” Service

Friday, April 2, available beginning at noon

Our traditional Good Friday ecumenical service recalls the “seven last sayings of Christ from the cross” and will feature homilists from local faith communities. Join us online: stpauls-church.org/e/GoodFriday

Sermons on the Seven Last Words of Christ offered by

The Rev. Andy Call, Church of the Saviour, United Methodist

The Rev. Matthew Bauhof, Plymouth Church, United Church of Christ

The Rev. Dr. Sandra Alexander-Haynes, First Baptist Church of Greater Cleveland

The Rev. Dr. John Lentz, Forest Hill Presbyterian Church

The Rev. Jessica Shields, Peace Lutheran Church

The Rev. Thomas Fanta, St. Dominic Church, Catholic

The Rev. Jessie Gutsell Dodson, St. Paul's Episcopal Church

Music

Excerpts from *The Seven Last Words of Our Saviour on the Cross* by Joseph Haydn
Karel Paukert, *organist & choirmaster*



▪ **St. Paul's Episcopal Church** ▪

2747 Fairmount Boulevard ■ Cleveland Heights, Ohio ■ (216) 932-5815 ■ www.stpauls-church.org



Robert	Baker	April 03	Kermit	Lind	April 20
Nick	Baumgartner	April 10	Patricia	Ludwig	April 27
Phyllis	Baumgartner	April 23	Harold	Musick	April 24
Robert Bruce	Cameron, MD	April 01	Dave	Neff	April 24
Peter	Cary	April 30	Charles	Olson	April 29
Barbara	Cloud	April 17	Grace	Olson	April 29
Lucille	Conde	April 08	Laura	Peterjohn	April 14
Caleb	Correa-Marcy	April 16	Robert	Reynolds	April 01
Marjorie	Drollinger	April 15	Jeremy	Ryman	April 04
Tricia	Dykers-Koenig	April 19	Victoria	Sampson	April 29
William	Finn	April 17	Margaret	Sentell	April 04
Beth	Garrett	April 19	Daniel	Shaner	April 30
Marcia	Grant	April 13	Sharon	Shumaker	April 05
Jeannine	Gury	April 15	Jeff	Smith	April 24
Ajah	Hales	April 17	Benjamin	Stadler	April 19
Jonathon	Hall	April 27	Adam	Stauffer	April 28
Audrey	Himes	April 13	Laura	Stauffer	April 26
Steven	Hosier	April 18	C. Lee	Thomas	April 19
Robert	Jeffreys	April 05	Seth	Ungemach	April 17
Brynn	Keefe	April 01	Roberta	van Dijk	April 05
			Meridith	Vandall	April 29
			Amy	Wheatley	April 15

Staff Emails

Antoinette Richardson	Administration	office@fhcpresb.org
Genetha (Nita) Clark	Finance	finance@fhcpresb.org
Ann Donkin	Building Mgr.	adonkin@fhcpresb.org
Custodians	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
Dr. Amy Wheatley	Family, Youth, Children	CE@fhcpresb.org
Dr. Qin Ying Tan	Music	music@fhcpresb.org
Rev. Carol Wedell	Parish Associate	

3031 Monticello Blvd, Cleveland Hts. OH 44118
216-321-2660 Fax: 216-320-1214
Pastoral Care Emergencies: 216-319-3596
Custodians' cell phone: 216-217-5257

Email: office@fhcpresb.org Website: www.fhcpresb.org

Rev. Dr. Veronica R. Goines, Rev. Dr. John C. Lentz, Jr., Co-Pastors
Dr. Amy Wheatley, Dir. of Family, Youth & Children's Ministries
Dr. Qin Ying Tan, Interim Director of Music
Rev. Carol Wedell, Parish Associate

Next TOWER deadline: 8 am on April 15 (for May)

Giving/donation options- Friends of FHC, during this time, you may give monetary gifts/donations by texting 216-400-5300 or give online using either [our BREEZE Giving Page](#) or [PayPal](#). You may also mail in a check to the church bookkeeper (3031 Monticello Blvd. Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118).

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 -Book Group 7:30 pm -AA: Borton Group -Boy Scout Trp. #403 -QA Big Book	11:00 am -Abundance Pantry 5:00 pm -Fitness Fusion exercise class -Bulletin and Weekly email Deadline	7:30 am -Bible & Bagels (virtual) 12:00 pm -Staff Meeting (virtual) -AA: Wednesday Women's Group 7:00 pm -Guest Group: 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 (virtual)	9:30 am -AI Anon: Hand in Hand	
March 28 HOLY WEEK BEGINS 9:30 am: Adult Education course	March 29	March 30	March 31	April 1 Maundy Thursday No choir rehearsal	April 2 Good Friday	April 3 9:00 am: Tax Prep
April 4 Easter/ Communion Sunday 9:30 am: Adult Education course	April 5	April 6	April 7 6:00 pm: Lenten Dinners *Antoinette will be out of the office	April 8 *Antoinette will be out of the office	April 9 *Antoinette will be out of the office	April 10 8:00 am- Men's Group 9:00 am-Tax Prep
April 11 9:30 am: Adult Education course	April 12 *Antoinette will be out of the office	April 13	April 14 7:00 pm: Ministry Meeting	April 15 HAPPY BIRTHDAY AMY! 8:00 am-TOWER DEADLINE	April 16	April 17
April 18 9:30 am: Adult Education course	April 19	April 20	April 21	April 22	April 23	April 24
April 25 9:30 am: Adult Education course	April 26	April 27	April 28 7:00 pm: Session Meeting	April 29	April 30	May 1
May 2 Communion Sunday 9:30 am: Adult Education course	May 3	May 4	May 5	May 6	May 7	May 8 8:00 am- Men's Group

April 2021