



*Discovering God's call
Celebrating the Spirit's presence
Witnessing to Christ's transformative power*

The TOWER

NOVEMBER 2021



Rev. Dr. Veronica R. Goines, Rev. Dr. John C. Lentz, Co-Pastors

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www.fhcpresb.org

Come and see!

WORDS FROM PASTOR JOHN LENTZ

Dear Friends,

Last Saturday (October 16), I witnessed a miracle (in Spanish, *un milagro*). The miracle was that Leonor – the woman who lived in Sanctuary at Forest Hill Church for over two years – was getting married to her lifelong partner, Jose, in a wedding at their house in Akron. They were surrounded by their four children (Margaret, Eric, Luis Mario and Adan) and a host of friends from all over N.E. Ohio.

Five years ago, Leonor was about to be deported. She was about to be separated from her four children. She had an alarm bracelet around her ankle. Even though she was in the process of establishing legal standing in this country, the Trump administration had targeted her for deportation. Without the commitment of Forest Hill Church, Leonor would have been flown south of the border and ended up on her own. She had been in the United States for over 20 years; all her major connections were here, not there.

And then, even after Leonor, thanks to the tireless work of a team of angels, left Forest Hill Church and was free to return to her home in Akron, Jose (a homeowner, successful businessman and taxpayer) was arrested as an “illegal alien” and deported. His chances for a return to the United States were effectively 0%.

A reunion in Canada and perhaps a move to the more welcoming country up north was discussed.

And then things changed.

In August, the Biden administration allowed individuals with a certain status into the country. Jose made his way north, presented his papers and was welcomed in, from the border to Houston to Akron.

And now, Leonor and Jose are married.

The biblical stories came alive for me in a new and powerful way. Leonor and Jose were like Sarah and Abraham setting out on a long journey to find a new home. Like the Children of Israel running from the Pharaoh, Leonor and Jose had escaped the oppression of ICE. They were like Ruth who became part of a new people while maintaining her cultural identity. And their wedding was an expression of *el reino de Dios* – the Kingdom of God.

In this month which culminates in the celebration of Thanksgiving, I am thankful for Jose and Leonor, for the many church volunteers who kept hope alive, for the reality that God is good (*Dios es my bueno!*), and that God makes us all one (*Dios nos hace a todos uno*).

~Pastor John

WORDS FROM PASTOR VERONICA GOINES

“Sending Up a Little Timber: Praxis and Money Matters”

The story is told of a Christian man who died and went to Heaven. The Arch Angel Michael met him at the gate to show the man to his new home. As they walked along the streets of gold, the man remembered with great excitement Jesus' words, “*In my Father's house, there are many mansions.*” He could hardly wait to see his eternal home.

Soon Michael stopped in front of a dilapidated shack that completely lacked curb appeal. The man asked Michael, “When will we get to my place?” Michael replied, “This is your home.” The man gasped, to which Michael replied, “Sorry, we did the best we could with the timber you sent up.”

In my childhood, “Sending up a little timber” was an expression used in our church to stress the importance of *praxis* – of joining our faith and action. We were taught that how we live – how we invest ourselves and our resources – has implications for this life and the life to come.

Similarly, Paul writes to Timothy:

The love of money is the root of all evil...[therefore] pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness (timber!)...take hold of the eternal life.... Do not set your hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but rather on God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.... Do good and be rich in good works, generous and ready to share.

In September Jenny Himmelman and I attended “Kaleidoscope” – a stewardship conference of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and now an ecumenical witness. Woven throughout the plenaries and breakouts was the perspective that stewardship is never separate

from discipleship, and that through our stewardship, we connect our generosity to the mission and inspirational vision of Christ's church.

Thus, through our pledges and non-pledged gifts, and our planned giving, which continues long after our lives end, we send up a little timber and support God's mission through Forest Hill Church, our connectional denomination, and beyond.

Friends, what we do in this life matters! Our commitments of time, talents, and spiritual and practical gifts are an investment in God's expanding Kingdom.

To the Stewardship Ministry, including Peter Williams, Jenny Himmelman, Kay Hogg, Christine Henry, and Keith Logan: Thank you for your faithful, creative, and joyful work.

And to you as a reader, blessings in your prayerful discernment.

Shalom,
Veronica

FROM THE MUSIC MINISTRY

Dear friends,

2020 has been a strange year for all. Most musical activities were shut down for the safety of our congregants and music volunteers. We carefully decided that music during services would be provided by solo singers, duos, trios, and quartets who were masked and physically distanced. We were also privileged to have string quartets, violinists, and cellists provide music for services; the safety of all were taken into consideration seriously and cautiously.

After much discourse on safety measures for singers and musicians during rehearsals and services, we are excited to welcome back the following musical groups at Forest Hill Church:

Chancel Choir

The Chancel Choir is back after singing virtually last season. The group has been rehearsing and exploring classical pieces by Franck and Sibelius, and also more modern justice-focused pieces by Pepper Choplin and Mark Miller.

Below are the safety guidelines followed by the Chancel Choir:

- 1) All singers have been vaccinated, providing proof of vaccinations.
- 2) All singers are masked at all times. We offer medical-grade masks to the singers – Kimberly-Clarke N-95 and KF 94 medical masks.
- 3) All singers are physically distanced during services and during rehearsals. We rehearse in the sanctuary where there are air handlers



with bipolar ionization to provide fresh air and remove viruses. Blue Air purifiers are placed in the Chancel area to provide circulation and clean filtered air during worship services.

We welcome anybody who would like to offer their musical gifts to sing with the Chancel Choir! Please note you have to

show evidence of vaccination to Ying to participate.

Voices in Bronze

The bell choir is back ringing and making joyful noises! We rehearse every Thursday at 6:20PM and welcome anybody who is interested to come and join us! The bell choir is rehearsing in the left transept in the sanctuary where there are air handlers with bipolar ionization. We welcome anyone who would like to ring to contact Ying at music@fhcpresb.org.

Percussion Ensemble

Led by community drumming leader Dylan Moffit, the percussion group welcomes all adults and older children to come and join us in exploring cultures through rhythm and



drumming. We rehearse twice a month on Sundays at 1PM. The next two rehearsals are on November 7th and November 14th. Please contact Ying at music@fhcpresb.org if you are interested in joining the group.

In-person music has taken hold once again. Please be a part of it.

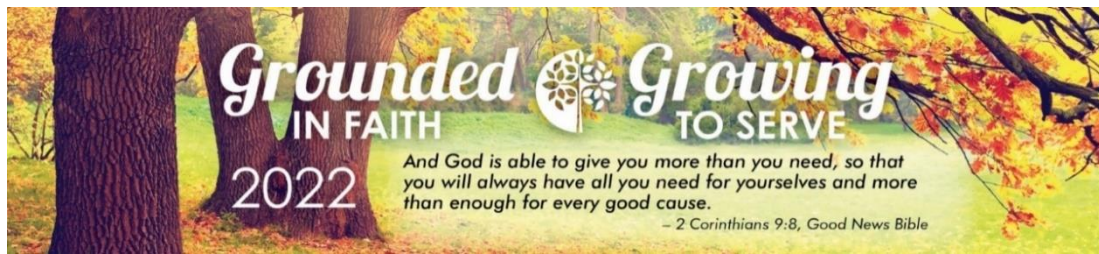
~Dr. Qin Ying Tan, Director of Music

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FOREST HILL CHURCH STEWARDSHIP NEWS – NOVEMBER 2021

(This is the third in a series of 2022 financial drive messages from your Stewardship Ministry Team.)

As each of us contemplates our financial commitment to Forest Hill Church for the 2022 year, it might be helpful to have some perspective of past giving. The following chart shows a historic view of our pledging for the past three years, divided into four giving ranges or categories, called quartiles, for each year.

Pledging Facts	2020	2019	2018
Total Amount Pledged for A Year	\$710,835	\$744,887	\$757,767
Total Amount Actually Given by Pledgers	\$695,940	\$766,169	\$727,278
Number of Pledge Units (individuals/couples)	196	202	209
Average Gift by Pledge Unit	\$3,551	\$3,793	\$3,480
Number of Pledge Units who competed 100% of their pledge	112	142	158
Giving Quartile 1			
Giving Range of this Quartile Group	\$33,000 - \$4,800	\$36,000 - \$5,000	\$32,000 - \$4,368
Average Gift	\$9,368	\$10,085	\$9,399
Percentage of Total Amount Given by Pledgers	65.89%	66.37%	64.50%
Total Amount Given by This Quartile Group	\$468,392	\$514,322	\$488,761
Giving Quartile 2			
Giving Range of this Quartile Group	\$4,680 - \$2,000	\$4,572 - \$2,100	\$4,250 - \$2,100
Average Gift	\$3,016	\$3,168	\$3,106
Percentage of Total Amount Given by Pledgers	22.06%	20.44%	21.73%
Total Amount Given by This Quartile Group	\$156,818	\$158,407	\$164,629
Giving Quartile 3			
Giving Range of this Quartile Group	\$1,944 - \$1,000	\$2,000 - \$1,016	\$2,028 - \$1,000
Average Gift	\$1,338	\$1,510	\$1,395
Percentage of Total Amount Given by Pledgers	9.03%	9.55%	10.86%
Total Amount Given by This Quartile Group	\$64,210	\$73,978	\$82,298
Giving Quartile 4			
Giving Range of this Quartile Group	\$900 - \$25	\$1,000 - \$20	\$924 - \$10
Average Gift	\$466	\$542	\$491
Percentage of Total Amount Given by Pledgers	3.01%	3.64%	2.91%
Total Amount Given by This Quartile Group	\$21,415	\$28,180	\$22,079

Generally speaking, overall pledging to the annual operating budget has been strong. The yellow highlights, however, indicate some concerning trends. And, if our anticipated budget expenses will be nearly \$1,000,000 in 2022, our giving must increase. Can you find which quartile represents your annual giving? Might you consider moving into the next quartile or giving more than the average gift within your current quartile? Hopefully, this data illustrates what we have said throughout this stewardship program: **We are grateful for every gift, and every gift matters!**

AN EARTH-CARE THANKSGIVING



In this series of articles over the past umpteen years, we've covered many aspects of the need for caring for the environment, conservation of resources, consequences of climate change, and concern for maintaining the wonders of God's creation – the Earth. We've enumerated and elaborated on the "Do's and Don'ts" of our options as individuals, such as the "Three R's": Re-use, Refuse, Recycle. We have decried many man-made phenomena causing air and water pollution, our exploitation of natural resources, land and forest degradation, and disregard for wild animals and other fellow creatures in God's Kingdom. We have advocated for Earth Justice with those who govern our societal living – our representatives in government bodies.

This month, in the season of the Harvest and of Thanksgiving, let us abandon our Earth-Caring agonies for the time being and, instead, give thanks to God for what we *do* have in nature that is good:

- We give thanks that we live in a blessed temperate climate where for the greatest part we don't have wildfires, floods, droughts, and extreme heat and cold seasons as many other parts of our lands and others throughout the world experience.
- We give thanks that, despite the scourges of climate change, we still believe that there is time to reverse the trends.
- We give thanks for our land's abilities to feed us.
- We give thanks for our local abundance of fresh air and clean water.
- We give thanks for the sunrises and the sunsets, for the beauty of the flowers and flowering trees, for songbirds, for the existence of all living things.
- We give thanks for all those nature organizations that, like us, are doing all they can to help mend the Earth: NRDC, WWF, NWF, Earth Justice, Rain Forest Alliance, Center for Biological Diversity, and many others.

So, keep in mind evermore God's cornucopia of natural plenty that we *do* have, while we concentrate our continuing efforts to protect it.

~Dave Neff, Earth Care Leader



On Thursday, October 7th, over 350 GCC members and friends on Zoom and another 40 people safely distanced at Shiloh Baptist Church in Cleveland's Central neighborhood listened to moving testimonials from Cleveland residents about issues that keep them awake at night – the state of their neighborhoods, including gun violence and the criminalization of mental health and addiction disease. They turned and faced the Cleveland mayoral candidates Justin Bibb and Kevin Kelley and asked them whether they will act on those issues if elected mayor.

Candidates Bibb and Kelley were asked the following pointed questions:

- *When you are elected, will you meet with Greater Cleveland Congregations by March 1st to negotiate and strategize with leaders on the specifics our constituents want to see in our five key Cleveland neighborhoods (Central, Fairfax, Lee-Harvard, Mt. Pleasant and Slavic Village)?*
- *When you are elected the next mayor of Cleveland, will you commit to make Cleveland the 6th city in Ohio – along with Columbus, Cincinnati, Dayton, Toledo and Akron – to join the Gun Safety Consortium?*
- *When you are elected mayor, will you make the new Mental Health & Addiction Crisis Diversion Center a true pre-booking center by eliminating the need for prosecutorial involvement*

before a Cleveland law enforcement officer takes someone to the Center? Will you enact this policy within 14 days of taking office?

Candidate Bibb and candidate Kelley each responded “yes” to the three questions. **Note: Whoever is elected mayor on November 2nd will be held accountable to his publicly-made responses!**

Capping the successful assembly was the recruitment of 20 neighborhood captains who will join 58 existing captains to build relationships with up to 50 residents in GCC's five key neighborhoods prior to the November 2nd election to act on their voting plans. If we reach our goal of recruiting 100 captains, we can potentially turn out 5,000 voters for the election!

Forest Hill has its own team consisting of Diana Woodbridge, Scott Lafferty, Nonie Stack, Mike Cosgrove, Jennifer Blakeney, and Quentin Smith, who are contacting Cleveland residents as part of the Battle for Democracy.

GCC Announcement: GCC needs 10 people to help with entering data that the neighborhood captains are collecting. This is a critical piece of our Battle for Democracy initiative. If you can help in this data entry effort, please contact Stacey Hren at: stacey@greaterclevelandcongregations.org.

FROM THE DEACONS MINISTRY

Everyone had fun gathering to celebrate the ability to worship together! Here are a few photos from the Fall Festival:





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CHURCH GROWTH MINISTRY

Want to learn more about Forest Hill Church? Learn more about our history, vision, and what it means to be a member (although you do not have to join – just participate and learn!). Come and enjoy our pressure-free Exploring Membership Class.

Classes will be held virtually on Sunday, Nov. 7th, and Sunday, Nov 14th, from 1:00 to 2:30 pm. Attendance at both classes is necessary for membership (if you have a conflict, please let us know). We will also explore an opportunity for class members to meet in person for those interested. Participants who decide to join the Church will be inducted during the service on **Sunday, Nov 21**.

If you have an interest in attending, please sign up here: <https://fhc.breezechms.com/form/98da6c8>.

Questions? Please get in touch with Antoinette in the church office or Mark Wedell (mark.wedell@averydennison.com).



CONGREGATIONAL NEWS

Housing Opportunity for Nursing or PT/OT Student

- FREE lodging in a third-floor suite (one bedroom, one full bath and one sitting room) in our Cleveland Heights home.
- One semester to one year.
- Evening home health assistance with 49-year-old MS patient Sunday through Thursday from approximately 9:30 to 10:30 PM.
- Pay \$15 per hour.
- Occasional morning/weekend help with MS patient if needed, as school schedule permits.

If you know anyone who would be potentially interested, please contact Kemp at 216-785-5375 with any questions or inquiries.

*** The student must have received a Covid-19 vaccine, be a non-smoker and be comfortable with dogs. ***

Women of Forest Hill Church and Friends:

Join us each Saturday morning to walk through Acacia Metroparks Reservation off Cedar Road near Richmond. We meet at 8:00 am and are usually done by 9:00 to leave plenty of time for all the OTHER things you need to do on Saturdays. All are welcome! We are all about building community and getting a little exercise.

Join us any time you can; the more, the merrier. Check with Julie Lustic – jlustic@gmail.com – every Wednesday to see where we will be walking for the week. Hope to see you there! Email us if you plan to join us, so we don't leave without you.

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS!

Lili	Roosa	November 01
Angela	Sanders	November 01
Judy	Hammer	November 02
Michael	Wiggins	November 02
Todd	Webster	November 03
Amanda	Horan	November 04
Christine	Bell	November 05
Mark	Chupp	November 05
Gloria	Webb	November 06
Emma	Haas	November 07
Laurie	Logan	November 07
Matt	Russo	November 07
Mercy	Sampson	November 07
Warren	Young	November 07
Lynda	Bernays	November 08
Elizabeth	Clark	November 10
Janet	Kickel	November 10
Molly	Webster	November 11
Michael	Glaros	November 12
Nancy	Grube	November 13
Barbara	Hansen	November 13
Cathi	Thomas	November 13
Josh	Webster	November 13
Betty	Jenkins	November 15
William	Burleigh	November 16
Edward	Dickson	November 17
Margaret	Glaros	November 17
Jason	Hidek	November 17
Kemp	Jaycox	November 17
Jane	Kowall	November 18
Elliott	Vahey	November 20
A. Guy	Cameron	November 21
Bob	Dawson	November 21
Joyce	Pope	November 21
Jane	Ishler	November 23
Lauren	Sharpe	November 23
Suzanne	Marcy	November 24
Aidan	Peters	November 24
Dr. Walter	Stepanenko	November 24
William	Ladebue	November 25
Karl	Wheatley	November 25
Patricia	Musick	November 27
Beth	Zednik	November 27
Deborah	Adrine	November 30
Mason	Caminiti	November 30
Antoinette	Richardson	November 30

CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR NOVEMBER

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	10:30 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	1:30 pm -English Dance 5:00 pm -Fitness Fusion exercise class 7:30 pm -Chancel Choir	9:30 am -AI Anon: Hand in Hand	
October 31 9:30 am: Adult Education course 4:00 pm: Adult Education course	November 1	November 2	November 3	November 4	November 5	November 6 8:00 am- Men's Group (virtual)
November 7 COMMUNION 9:30 am: Adult Education course 4:00 pm: Adult Education course	November 8	November 9	November 10	November 11 TOWER DEADLINE	November 12	November 13
November 14 9:30 am: Adult Education course 4:00 pm: Adult Education course	November 15	November 16	November 17	November 18	November 19	November 20
November 21	November 22	November 23	November 24	November 25 OFFICE CLOSED	November 26 OFFICE CLOSED	November 27
November 28	November 29	November 30 HAPPY BIRTHDAY ANTOINETTE!	December 1	December 2	December 3	December 4
December 5 COMMUNION	December 6	December 7	December 8 HAPPY BIRTHDAY PASTOR GOINES!	December 9	December 10	December 11

November 2021

-> **December TOWER issue deadline: 8 am on November 11**

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).

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Dr. Qin Ying Tan, Interim Director of Music

Rev. Carol Wedell, Parish Associate