




The TOWER

January 2023



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

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WORDS FROM PASTOR JOHN LENTZ



Dear Friends,

I don't know about you, but I always have a letdown after Christmas and New Year's.

Decorating the tree, the wonder of Advent, the beauty of the 11:00 Christmas Eve service, the countdown to a new year always energizes me. I am caught up in the mystery and festivity of it all. When it is all over, I feel down. I have been that way since I was a child. I remember going to bed the night of Christmas over tired and feeling blue that I had to wait so long until the next Christmas.

However, the thought of what lies before us perks me up! Soon we will gather for our

annual meeting: electing new leaders, thanking those whose terms are finishing, casting our sights ahead. The pace of life will pick up in a hurry and before you know it, it will be the Lenten season and then Easter! Before you know it, we will be complaining about the heat!

So, in this first part of January, 2023, I wish you a Happy New Year! I hope some of you have made a resolution to come back to in person worship. It is always more fun when we are together sitting next to each other.

Here are some things that I am looking forward to in 2023:

- Sharing communion without spilling all over myself trying to open up the all-in-one hosts!
- More fellowship gatherings where we enjoy each other's company. If you came to last month's gingerbread house palooza (organized by Amy Wheatley) you know what I am talking about!
- Ying's concert series.
- The Wright Family concert at the end of February celebrating the life of Mother Willie Mae Wright.
- Continuing the work of being the Beloved Community.
- (On a personal note) Two weddings!

As Dag Hammarskjöld once wrote on the eve of a new year:

**For all that has been THANKS
 For all that is to be YES!**

Let us strive for that spirit as we move into the new year together!

Faithfully yours,
Pastor John

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January 2022

The omicron virus meant lots of masked singing and virtual videos to make sure everybody stayed safe and healthy!

FROM DR. QIN YING TAN

As we approach the end of 2022, here are some pictures of the musical happenings at Forest Hill Church this year! Bravo to the Chancel Choir, Voices in Bronze, Little Crescendos and you all for a wonderful year of music-making!



March 2022: Women's' History Month

Composers featured included Florence Price (1887-1953), Clara Schumann (1819-1896), and Elisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre (1665-1729).



October

World Communion Sunday with the Cleveland Chinese Ensemble.

September

Music program commences with Chancel and Voices in Bronze.



February 2022

Celebration of Black History Month with Elégie!



April and May

Chancel Choir returns!



June 2022

Gospel Choir with Sandra Dixon!



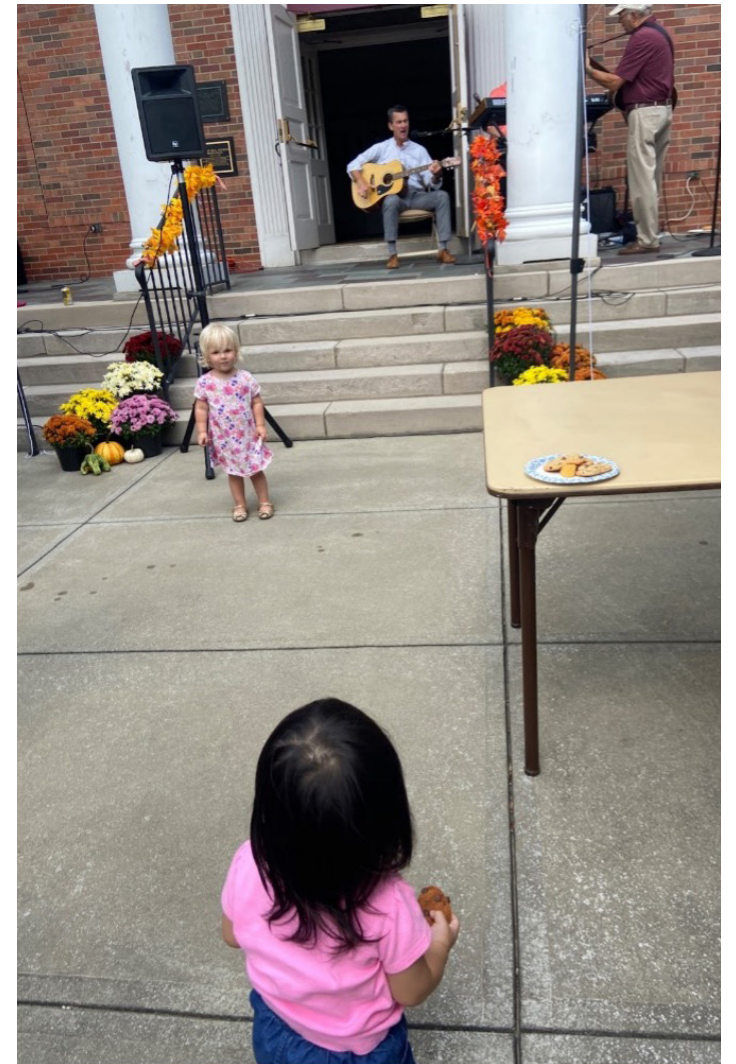
November

Little Crescendos performs!



December

Christmas Celebration!



July and August

Summer Outdoor Worship!



Forest Hill Church
presbyterian

FAMILY, YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S MINISTRY 2022 HIGHLIGHTS

Our first annual **Gingerbread House Event** in December was so much fun! Ninety-seven people, (ages 9 months to 75yrs!) filled Fellowship Hall with joyful conversation, laughter, and lots of creativity. The decorated gingerbread houses were FABULOUS!

On behalf of the Family, Youth and Children's ministry, thank you to everyone who attended and contributed to this event, which benefited Family Promise of Greater Cleveland. Thanks to your generosity, we will donate over \$1,000 to Family Promise, supporting their programs and temporary shelter for families facing homelessness in our city.





Attendance increased significantly as programming resumed. Over 30 families, with 22 little ones (birth to 4yrs), 17 children (K-5th grade), and 13 youth (middle and high schoolers) participated in worship, classes, events and activities.

Blessing of the Backpacks - the congregation shared blessings for the children as they began a new school year.

Confirmation Class, led by Rev. Eric Dillenbeck, met for 10 weeks to explore faith and church membership. In May, five young people affirmed their faith and intention to be actively involved in the life of the church. They were welcomed into membership at FHC and we celebrated at a reception following worship.

Desmond Tutu's Children of God Storybook Bible, along with several other children's Bibles, were placed in all of the sanctuary pews to encourage young people's participation in worship.

Easter Egg Hunt drew many families to the front lawn before worship on a cold and snowy Easter morning.

Family outreach included a weekly Children's Welcome in worship presented by Amy Wheatley and communication to every family including weekly emails, birthday card greetings, suggestions for faith-at-home activities, and special seasonal mailings, such as Advent Calendars.

Gingerbread House Event - 100 people of all ages gathered to decorate houses and enjoy fun and fellowship. The event raised over \$1,000 for Family Promise of Greater Cleveland's work with families facing homelessness.

Hot dogs and hamburgers were on the menu of the FYC Summer picnic, attended by 40 adults, youth and children in the FHC courtyard on a beautiful June evening.

Immense fun was experienced by our Youth Group at events such as Whirlyball, Indoor Rock Climbing, and

Spooky Ranch's Haunted Hayride.

Jumping in the Bounce House was fun for children, teens and even some adults during the Fall Fellowship Picnic.

Kids' Book Bank of Cleveland welcomed our youth, who spent a morning sorting books to be delivered to schools and organizations in our city.

Little Crescendos Children's Choir, led by Julie Minder, delighted us with their singing in several worship services.

Merry Christmas - Young people participated in our Christmas Eve worship, reading scripture.

Nursery childcare was filled on Sunday mornings with active infants, toddlers and preschoolers.

Outdoor Worship found families and their children mingling on the lawn and getting to know each other while blowing bubbles or playing in the sandbox.

Pathways Sunday School class engaged children in learning through story-telling, Legos, art materials, games, and puppets.

Question Box Sundays were opportunities for our Youth Group to meet with Rev. Lentz and hear his responses to their questions about faith, the Bible and the church.

Recognition of Graduates in June - we celebrated important milestones with our young people and their families.

Safe Sanctuary Policy, developed to protect and advocate for children/youth/vulnerable adults participating in the life of our church, was approved by Session. The policy is being implemented in FYC programs to provide an emotionally safe, spiritually grounded, and healthy environment for children and youth.

Teddy Bear in the Rocking Chair greets children on Sunday morning in a sanctuary space designed just for

them, with tables, chairs, coloring materials, children's bulletins and books.

Upstairs in the childcare rooms, TV monitors allow parents and caregivers to listen/see the service.

Volunteers from our congregation and the Family, Youth and Children's Ministry team - we're so grateful for you!

Worship was enlivened by the participation of children and youth reading scripture, singing, drumming, lighting Advent Candles, taking attendance, waving Palm branches in a Palm Sunday Parade and taking communion with the congregation.

Xploration - Follow Me and Growing in God's Love curricula help young people explore what it means to follow Jesus.

Yard Signs were "planted" in the lawns of 40 families in late August with the back-to-school message "Have a Great Year! Blessings from your Friends at FHC"

Zooming Ahead into 2023 - we look forward to another great year

**~Amy Wheatley, Director of Family, Youth and Children Ministry
ce@fhcpresb.org**



FOREST HILL CHURCH THE MINISTRY OF ADULT SPIRITUAL GROWTH CLASSES AND GROUPS FOR WINTER 2023

For the Winter of 2023, the Ministry of Adult Spiritual Growth is pleased to announce the following classes.

- We have tried to balance our offerings of classes in a variety of areas of Spiritual Growth:
- Learning about contemporary approaches to scriptures
- Growing in our ability to follow Jesus
- Strengthening community among class participants
- Demonstrating Christian social witness in our modern world

We hope these classes will help people connect with each other, building our community of faith.

About Sunday Morning Class times:
Please note that the starting time for Sunday morning classes is 10:30 AM. This gives us time to comfortably complete our classes and allows people who need to be somewhere else at 10:30 AM to arrive on time.

If you would like to learn more or register for a course, please click the following link: <https://fhc.breezechms.com/form/3a3065>.





BUILDING AND GROUNDS REPORT MUCH IS HAPPENING AROUND OUR BUILDING THIS PAST MONTH AND MORE PLANNED FOR 2023!

Estimates are being gathered for the repair of the Monticello portico. The issue with contractors is dealing with the steel beam within it. Sorry for the inconvenience.

Please admire newly scrubbed and refinished hallway floors throughout the building. The most recent is the hallway to the choir room.

A new projector has been installed in Fellowship Hall!

The French doors leading to the courtyard are being winterized and secured. Work will finish in January. (Yes - those lower bolts locks are temporary)

Deep cleaning of room 106 has begun! Volunteers are needed to sort not needed items and leftover treasures in the kitchen cabinets and get them organized. If you might help, contact Ann Donkin. Bring a friend; it could be fun!

If you live in the FH neighborhood, you probably miss the chiming bells of our Carillon. The amplifier began an annoying crackling noise and had to be unarmed. Troubleshooting the issue is ongoing. Pray this is fixable. Keep listening in the new year.



Dear GCC Colleagues:

The feedback from participants and media who attended our December 6th hearing on youth bindover has been overwhelmingly positive.

Going forward, we are inviting your involvement with our Bindover Team in this important work to reform the abuse of discretionary bindover in Cuyahoga County.

We have scheduled a meeting of our Bindover Team on Thursday, **January 12th at 7 PM** via Zoom. We hope that you can join us and help build on the considerable momentum we have garnered from the public hearing. GCC will have meetings in the new year

with County Executive Chris Ronayne, County Prosecutor Michael O'Malley, and Juvenile Court Judge Anne McDonough. Our Bindover Team meeting on the 12th will help us prepare for these meetings by reviewing the ideas for reform suggested at the December 6th hearing and discussing our priorities.

Register here for the January 12th meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/876543210>

Below is a link that will take you to the video of the December 6 hearing as well as a petition and a commitment card. The petition demonstrates to key stakeholders the depth

of our concern about youth bindover. The commitment card allows you to indicate the ways in which you would like to participate in this work going forward. These documents can be completed online, if you haven't already done so.

<https://www.greaterclevelandcongregations.org/justice-for-our-children-a-public-hearing-to-end-abuse-of-discretionary-youth-bindover/>

Thank you, and we look forward to being with you on January 12!

Jesse Oates and Ben Sperry, Co-chairs, GCC Bindover Team



STEWARDSHIP UPDATE SHARING THE CHALLENGE

As we wind down 2022, many of us are reflecting on the challenges brought by 2022 and the challenges we may set for ourselves in the coming year. If the notion of "challenge" also strikes a chord with you, you might want to listen to what Em Laudeman-Ezell shares in a recent video describing why she and her family chose Forest Hill as their faith community. Em speaks of the challenges presented to us by the radical life and works of Jesus Christ and of the challenges she's experienced in activism throughout her life - all with the most positive possible connotations of the word "challenge."

So, as the new year approaches, we'd like to take Em's lead and think about challenges as potentially positive forces. Together as a congregation, we share the challenge of gathering the resources necessary to fund the missions and operation of Forest Hill. In fact, together we've raised over \$650,000 as of December 27 toward 2023 expenses. Our

goal is \$800,000, so we have some ways to go. Perhaps your commitment will be part of helping us meet the challenge.

If you haven't already, please consider making a financial commitment for the coming year. You may do so through filling out and returning the card in the packet that was mailed to your home. Or, visit the church web site to submit your card electronically. You can watch Em's video, and many others, through the links on the FHC web site: <https://www.fhcpresb.org/> > "Give" > "Stewardship 2023."

May the first weeks of 2023 challenge you in the most positive possible ways. And, as always, those of us in the Stewardship Ministry are honored to work alongside each of you.



CONFESSIONS OF A REPUBLICAN INDUSTRIALIST

The latest personal account of one FHC Congregant's journey to becoming an Earth Care advocate---my own story.....

Over ten years ago I approached Pastor Lentz for a partial cost study stipend to attend the Presbyterian Earth Care Symposium at the Montreat Conference Center in North Carolina. Coincidentally, one of my conference colleagues there was Keith Mills of Fairmount Presbyterian, right down the road. One of the guest speakers at the conference was Prof. Kathryn Hayhoe of Texas Tech, a renowned Christian Environmentalist/Earth Care advocate, and Keith and I quickly became two of her disciples. Soon both of us launched our respective churches Forest Hill and Fairmount as the first two Earth Care Congregations, becoming the First two such churches in Ohio.....

At that time--10-12 years ago-- there were more than a few folks, even in our own congregation, who doubted climate change, global warming, and the threats of greenhouse gas emissions. It therefore became my mission, mainly through my gift of writing, to use the Tower as a vehicle writing Earth Care articles to agitate, educate,

and advocate for all personal, corporate, and governmental support actions to mitigate the despoiling of the Earth to the greatest extent possible.

Now for the Republican/industrialist connection. Throughout my professional career I was involved in metal casting, a notable polluting, high-carbon emission generating industry. Perhaps not as grievous as others, but metal casting ultimately begins with mining which of course disrupts the land. Yet as I approached retirement, my conscience told me something it was time to shift my focus. Politically I have stayed Republican, but espousing much more moderate positions on many matters and speaking up for Earth Care.

My special passion/love for wildlife and wild places having been able during my lifetime to visit many such venues, drew me into a stronger awareness and consideration of the interdependence of all living things---people, cultures, habitats--and the natural resources--land, air and water quality necessary to allow the Earth and all life to flourish as God intends. My own journey continues.

~Dave Neff

FIBER AND FELLOWSHIP

Will meet from 9 AM to noon in Fellowship Hall to sew or knit!

We are working on re-useable grocery bags for the food pantry and our THIRD Quilt is cut and ready to be sewn!

Knitters are welcome to come and work on Prayer Shawls and Baby Blankets for the Deacons.



Come learn a new skill or bring your own project! **All are welcome.**

Please contact Carol Gifford (cmsgiff79@aol.com) if you are interested.

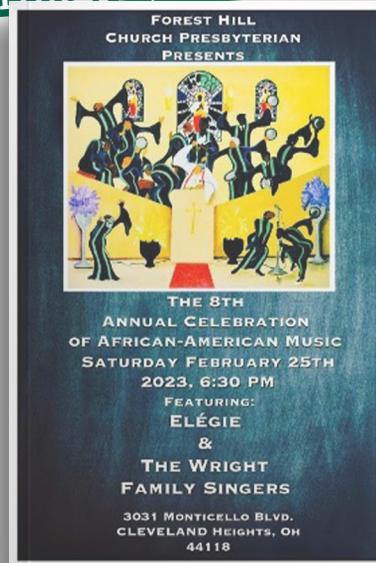
THE RETURN OF THE BLACK HISTORY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Black History Education Committee announces a return of programming for the full month of February.

Watch for more information in the New Year!

Save the Date

FOR THE BLACK HISTORY CONCERT ON SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2023.



AROUND THE TABLE YARNS

Lorraine Ranchod invites weekday knitters to *Around the Table Yarns* on the second Tuesday of the month, starting on Tues., January 10 from 4:00 - 6:00 PM to knit "comfort shawls".



Please reach out to Lorraine (laranchod@gmail.com) if you are interested.

FROM DEAN SIECK

Dean Sieck would like to thank the church staff, Ann Donkin, Michael Broadwater, and Antoinette Richardson for their part in his wife Judy's memorial service. He would also like to thank church member volunteers Dene Young, Cindy Newton, Cathy Ghiandoni, and Sally Davis for the lovely reception they provided, and Kurt Haas for the YouTube streaming of Judy's service and Roger Heineman for pinch hitting for Grant at the last minute for the video Grant produced. He would also like to thank the FHC church family for their attendance at Judy's service. Thank you all!



Lisa	Chuppa	January 01
Emelia	McGuire	January 01
Mia	Pollock	January 01
Lois	Reilly	January 01
Lisbeth	Andrews	January 02
Christine	Henry	January 02
Charity	Stock	January 02
Florence	Klein	January 03
Sarah	Tan	January 03
Anne	Smith	January 06
Ethan	Gifford	January 07
John	Obery, Jr.	January 07
Susan	Dunlap	January 08
Dara	Elliot	January 08
Jennifer	Himmelman	January 08
Paul	Cary	January 11
Megan	Allen	January 13
Lauren	Miller	January 13
Nancy	Burcham	January 14
Sandra	Moran	January 14
Katie	Reed	January 14
Peggy	Sasso	January 14
Peter	Eloff	January 15
Mark	Joseph	January 15
Lisa	Vahey	January 15
Clayton	Minder	January 16
Scott	Peters	January 16
Theresa	Steele	January 16
Sally	Davis	January 18
Rain	Birdsell	January 19
Anne	Caminiti	January 20
Zivile	Khoury	January 20
Jean	Reinhold	January 20
Bader	Boland	January 21
Sara	Shaner	January 21
Molly	Bergman	January 23
Pat	Seeders	January 24
Caleb	Wright	January 24
Linda	Martin	January 25
Muriel	Dean	January 27
Elisabeth	Dolan	January 27
Diana	Woodbridge	January 27
Emily	Brock	January 28
Carol	Leslie	January 28
Patricia	Jeffreys	January 29
Kylie	Evans	January 31
Robin	Mervine	January 31
Eric	Rich	January 31
John	Schellenberg	December 01



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Rev. Dr. John C. Lentz, Jr., Pastor
 Dr. Amy Wheatley, Dir. of Family, Youth & Children's Ministry
 Dr. Qin Ying Tan, Director of Music
 Rev. Carol Wedell, Parish Associate

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Rev. Carol Wedell
 Parish Associate

FEBRUARY TOWER ISSUE DEADLINE: 8 AM ON JANUARY 12

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).

CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR JANUARY

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 -Bulletin and Weekly email Deadline	7:30 am –Bible & Bagels (virtual) 12:00 pm -Staff Meeting (virtual) -AA: Wed. Women's Group	1:30 pm -English Dance 6:00 pm -Bell Choir 7:30 pm -Chancel Choir	9:30 am -AI Anon: Hand in Hand	
JANUARY 1 Communion 9:15 am: Adult Ed. 11:50 am: Little Crescendos and J.A.M.	JANUARY 2 OFFICE CLOSED	JANUARY 3 6:00 pm: Creating Racial Equity Meeting	JANUARY 4 7:00 pm Personnel Committee	JANUARY 5	JANUARY 6	JANUARY 7 10:30 am: Racial Equity Book Club
JANUARY 8 9:15 am: Adult Ed. 11:50 am: Little Crescendos and J.A.M.	JANUARY 9	JANUARY 10 :00 pm: Around the table Yarns 6:00 pm: Creating Racial Equity Meeting	JANUARY 11	JANUARY 12 :00pm: GCC meeting TOWER DEADLINE FOR FEBRUARY	JANUARY 13	JANUARY 14 9:00 am: Fiber and Fellowship
JANUARY 15 9:15 am: Adult Ed. 11:50 am: Little Crescendos and J.A.M.	JANUARY 16 OFFICE CLOSED	JANUARY 17 7:00 pm: GenderSphere	JANUARY 18 :00 pm: Session Meeting	JANUARY 19	JANUARY 20	JANUARY 21 12:00 pm: Baby Shower
JANUARY 22 9:15 am: Adult Ed. 11:50 am: Little Crescendos and J.A.M.	JANUARY 23	JANUARY 24 6:00 pm: Creating Racial Equity Meeting	JANUARY 25	JANUARY 26	JANUARY 27	JANUARY 28 11:00 am: Catering in main kitchen
JANUARY 29 9:15 am: Adult Ed. 11:00 am: Catering in main kitchen 11:50 am: Little Crescendos and J.A.M. 12:30 pm: Annual Meeting	JANUARY 30	JANUARY 30	FEBRUARY 1 Black History Month Begins! 7:00 pm Personnel Committee	FEBRUARY 2	FEBRUARY 3	FEBRUARY 4 11:00 am: Catherine Vinci's baby shower!