

# The First Presbyterian Church of Sidney, Ohio

A place to seek and serve

December 2009 Newsletter

From your Pastor,

When my family moved in the manse last September, we knew it wasn't a permanent move. I knew there would come a time when we needed a different location, and we would want to buy a home of our own. With my church in Sidney and Kazy's in Piqua we considered buying a home in either town or somewhere in-between, realizing at least one of us would have a little farther drive to the office.

The larger factor was deciding on a school district for our son. Open enrollment enables us to apply to a school in a district outside of where we live, yet there is no guarantee from year to year that he would be accepted that year. When Sidney schools withdrew full-day kindergarten, we were able to enroll in full-day kindergarten in Piqua, and we feel that this is the school system we prefer for him. So we decided to buy a house in the Piqua School District served by the schools we want him to attend. We have found a house in Piqua and are awaiting the confirmation of a closing date in December. After that, you are welcome to visit us at 1820 Britton St.

This may be the first time you are hearing about this decision, or you may have been at the session meeting on November 12 when I announced it to the session, or in church on November 15 when I announced it to the congregation.

#### An apology

Whenever you heard this information for the first time, it was a surprise. And that is due to my mistake. I made a big decision about buying a home without bringing the congregation and officers into the process. As I told the session, I know the value of process and communication. I have even practiced both. But in this case I didn't. I let you know after the deal was done. I surprised you, and I am very sorry.

#### Concerns

If I had shown the good sense to bring the congregation and officers into this decision-making process I could have shared with you my family's commitment to our calls here and the satisfaction Kazy and I each enjoy with congregations that are healthy and prepared to move forward. You would have heard me describe what my family considers as the community we serve, two towns divided by some fourteen miles of highway; and of our commitment to buying a home that plants us firmly in the area.

This arrangement is similar to our previous three calls; where one of us has not lived in the town where our church has been. In South Carolina Kazy drove about 30 miles each way to her church, on Long Island she drove twice that far. In Syracuse we each drove about ten miles each way.

But I did not include you in the decision process, instead I surprised you with this news. And I have heard your concerns about the decision. You are used to your pastor living in the manse, or at least in town. You are not used to your pastor's spouse being a minister who serves another church in another town. You wonder how I will be able to still be a part of the community. You are concerned with what this means for First Presbyterian Church, and anxious when this situation reminds you of unpleasant previous experiences.

#### Covenant

For what it's worth, here is my covenant to you. After we move to Piqua I will keep the same hours at the office. I will be available to you in the same ways; in person, by

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#### Mission Statement

*God Calls us to be a welcoming community of faith, striving to follow the Word of God through worship, prayer, study and ministry to all.*

202 N. Miami Ave.  
Sidney, Ohio 45365  
937-492-4597

#### Rev. Joe Hinds, Pastor

joemhinds3@aol.com  
937-726-8731(cell)

#### Sunday Schedule

9:30am: Christian Education

10:30am: Worship\*

4:00pm: Servicio en Español

\*1st Sunday: Communion  
(Bi-lingual)

*Presbyterian Hour at Dorothy Love Retirement Center on the 3rd Thursday at 2:30pm in the Amos Chapel.*

#### Office Hours

Monday–Friday: 9am–1pm

www.sidneyfirstpres.org

sidney1stpres@embarqmail.com

First Presbyterian Church  
Phone: 937-492-4597  
Fax: 937-497-1265  
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Change Service Requested

Rev. Joe Hinds, Pastor (joemhinds3@aol.com)

Sarah Steenrod, Program Coordinator (ssteenrod@embarqmail.com)

Anne Abbott, Administrative Assistant (sidney1stpres@embarqmail.com)

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#### Session (meet the 2nd Thursday of each month)

2009 Dawn Davis, Christian Education

Don Lochard, Stewardship

Ed Miller, Fellowship

Rick Steenrod, Mission

2010 Doug Bomba, Treasurer

Darryl Cloud, Outreach

Charlie Castle, Nominations

Steve Stilwell, Personnel

2011 Ann Hagen, Worship

Dick Harp, Worship/Communion

Jerry Kauffman, Property

Scott Kelly, Clerk

#### Deacons (meet the 2nd Tuesday of each month)

2009 Sondra Dunham, Moderator

Rosanna Grinstead, Dining Room

Kay Miller, Communion

Sally Stilwell, Treasurer

2010 Carol Barr, Dining Room

Annette Castle, Secretary

Lois Knaggs, Flower

Carol Milligan, Flower

2011 Rita Bomba, Dining Room

Elizabeth Davis, Communion

Jennifer Kelly, Communion

Dianne Wells, Communion



## SARAH'S CORNER



Katie and Blake gave me a new book for my birthday, and I highly recommend it. According to Senator Bob Dole, Have a Little Faith by Mitch Albom is "a timeless story when America needs it the most-about faith, hope, serving others, and the yearning to be involved in something greater than ourselves." It's a story of two clergy from two entirely different backgrounds and how they inspired the life and faith of the author. I'd like to share an excerpt from the book. I invite each of you to read this book, and to search within yourself. God committed His love to us in the birth of His son. During this Advent Season, how do we respond?

Still, the Reb (Rabbi Albert Lewis) knew that marriage was an endangered institution. He'd officiated for couples, seen them split, then officiated when they married someone else.

"I think people expect too much from marriage today," he said. "They expect perfection. Every moment should be bliss. That's TV or movies. But that is not the human experience.

"Like Sarah (Albert's wife) says, twenty good minutes here, forty good minutes there, it adds up to something beautiful. The trick is when things aren't so great, you don't junk the whole thing. It's okay to have an argument. It's okay that the other one nudges you a little, bothers you a little. It's part of being close to someone.

"But the joy you get from that same closeness-when you watch your children, when you wake up and smile at each other-that, as our tradition teaches us, is a blessing. People forget that."

Why do they forget it?

"Because the word 'commitment' has lost its meaning. I'm old enough to remember when it used to be a positive. A committed person was someone to be admired. He was loyal and steady. Now a commitment is something you avoid. You don't want to tie yourself down.

"It's the same with faith, by the way. We don't want to get stuck having to go to services all the time, or having to follow all the rules. We don't want to commit to God. We'll take Him when we need Him, or when things are going good. But real commitment? That requires staying power-in faith and in marriage."

And if you don't commit? I ask?

"Your choice. But you miss what's on the other side."

What's on the other side?

"Ah." He smiled. "A happiness you cannot find alone."

## BELL CHOIR NEWS

"The Bells of Saint Michael" from St. Michaels Catholic Church in Fort Loramie will be joining our "Rejoice Ringers" the third Sunday in December (the 20th) to do a duet. They will be playing at the 10:30 AM service along with us.

## FOOD, FUN & FELLOWSHIP

Food, Fun and Fellowship continues to be a big hit! There's nothing to it: just let the office know by Tuesday morning of that week if you'd like to come and eat with your church family. You can also bring a guest if you want-just be sure to let the office know ahead of time if you can. The cost is \$4.00 per person (we did have to increase it just a tad...). People are always welcome to sign up to host, but this is not a requirement! Sometimes we cook, sometimes we order pizza. It just depends on what we feel like doing that week. Here are the dates for the rest of the calendar year-write them on your calendar, and we'll see you there.

**December 2nd: Steenrods**  
**January 6: still open for volunteers**

**December 16th: Kazy Hinds**  
**December 20th: still open for volunteers**

## OUTREACH COMMITTEE

The members of the Outreach Committee meet once a month to explore, discuss, and initiate opportunities for our church family to extend to our community. The members of the committee include Polly Watkins, Bridget Hughes, Katie Steenrod, Chris Geuy, Blake Steenrod, and Darryl Cloud. In addition, the committee is grateful for the participation of Sarah Steenrod from staff and Pastor Joe as leadership and direction in each meeting.

The concentration and focus of the committee for the past two months has been the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Turkey Trot and the committee wishes to thank everyone for the generous outpouring of support for volunteers. With the continued support of our church family and community, this will be another successful event in support of the Alpha Center and Holy Angel's Soup Kitchen.

The committee would also like to acknowledge Polly Watkins' continued direction of the Greeters Program. Since its inception, championed by Sarah Steenrod, we've experienced outstanding support and participation from the congregation and Polly has done an outstanding job in keeping the records up to date as well as sending out reminders to greeters of dates.

## HERITAGE PROJECT COMMITTEE

Calling all Scouts! The Heritage Project is preparing a Presbyterian Scout exhibit, and we need your pictures, badges, memories, etc.! We will copy your items and give them back. Please drop them off at the church office, to the attention of Rick Steenrod.

Watch for this exhibit in the Heritage Room.

## PASTOR'S LETTER CONTINUED...

phone (office or cell), and e-mail. For those of you who are so inclined, you may be in touch via Facebook and Twitter. My availability for meetings after hours will be the same. My move will not affect my ability to serve the community as I am currently involved with the YMCA, Ministerial Association, Sidney Schools, Alpha Center, Agape Distribution and Compassionate Care. My commitment to these and other Sidney organizations will remain as strong as they are now. I will work harder to make personal visits with you, and be especially sensitive to hearing you when you have concerns about this move.

I am used to living in the suburb and working and ministering in the city, or having a commute to the office. In Syracuse I was as involved in each of the urban areas where my churches were located - about 10 miles apart on the north and south end of the city, as I was in the suburban neighborhood where our house and our son's school were. In our marriage at least one of us has always commuted between house and parish, and we have been able to make it work. In this case, I acknowledge that it will be up to me to prove that this can happen here, too.

### Your Leaders

The article you are reading is a synopsis of the discussion I had with the session and of the sermon I preached on the dates I mentioned before. I want you to know how proud I was to be at the table with the elders at our November session meeting. Some of them were hearing this information for the first time. We acknowledged the challenges with this new living situation and people were honest about their feelings. We remained at the table as each one had an opportunity to express themselves. I was proud to be among the elders, your leaders on the session who served their office well as they remained engaged with each other and with me as we got through a sometimes difficult conversation.

I accept the challenge from the session that it will be my responsibility to prove that this arrangement can work, and I pray that you will be encouraged as I do that, starting now.

When you bring your concerns and comments directly to me, I will be able to hear you and respond directly to you. Sharing openly will set us free from mistaken assumptions or erroneous information and promote a common understanding in which we can move forward.

In Christ's peace and love,  
Pastor Joe ☺

## WORSHIP/MUSIC COMMITTEE

We are planning for an exciting Advent and Christmas worship experience for all who attend. We will have two services on Christmas Eve. Please plan to attend and enjoy the sights and sounds of this glorious season with us.

We are planning for 2010 to be an interesting time in worship at First Presbyterian. Plans are being made for some new worship experiences as well as enhancing some traditional services.

The Worship-Music Committee would like to again thank all the Chancel Choir members and Rejoice Ringers for their dedication by attending weekly practices as well as making Sunday morning worship uplifting with their music.

We will have the sanctuary decorated for Christmas before the newsletter is mailed, but we will need help after Christmas taking down and putting the decorations in storage for another year. All volunteers are welcome.

If you think you might like to participate in planning for worship services with us, we meet the fourth Tuesday of the month in the parlor at 6:30 p.m. Please join us.

## NOTES FROM THE CLERK

The annual Presbytery review of the church's Session minute book and roll book occurred on October 20, 2009. The minute book and roll book were approved without exceptions.

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee prepared the following slate of officers which will be presented and recommended for election at the Congregational Meeting to be held on November 22, 2009.

**Elders - Class of 2012:** Ed Miller, Rick Steenrod, Chip Wells, Maggie Wiley

**Deacons - Class of 2012:** Chris Geuy, Susan Hughes, Sally Stilwell, Margie Tatum

**The following are submitted to complete terms of Deacons retiring early**

**Class of 2010** - Richie Moore, Ross Moore II

**Class of 2011** - Avriel Altschul

The Nominating Committee puts the following names into nomination to serve as members-at large on the 2010 Nominating Committee: Jenny Barhorst, Judy Harp, Dennis Hughes, Tom Watkins

## DEACONS

The board of Deacons is involved in three outreach service in our community. Our newest effort to supply a light supper for the staff and volunteers of Compassionate Care.

The Deacons are reaching out to our neighbors at Jackson Towers by supplying treats and prizes for Bingo games. Dottie Lewis has offered to help by furnishing prizes. Thanks to Dottie!

The Deacons continue to cook and serve an evening meal at the Alpha Center. On November 10th they served 60 people. Pastor Joe conducted devotions and our own Bill Billings was the song leader.

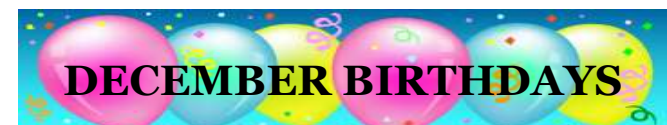
If you want to know more about any of these service projects or is you are willing to help in any way, tell your friendly deacon and continue to pray for our efforts.

## COMMUNION SERVERS

The Communion Servers for **December 6th** are:

**Elders:** Ed Miller  
Jerry Kauffman

**Deacons:** Rosanna Grinstead  
Elizabeth Davis



- 1: Dick Harp  
Larkyn Vordemark
- 3: Alicia Balderrama
- 4: Heidi Stilwell  
Fred Tatum
- 7: Tom Watkins  
Chad Fogt
- 8: Erma Davis
- 10: Payton Martin
- 11: William Fry
- 13: Dawn Davis
- 14: Lori Moore  
Eric Castle
- 15: Ross Geuy
- 16: Kay Baker  
Dianne Wells
- 21: Megan Martin
- 22: Tom Milligan  
Demetrio Cruz
- 24: Ann Hagen
- 25: Tibor Jonas Sr.
- 29: Lois Knaggs

## Did You Know...

Tom Watkins was awarded the YMCA Triangle Award recently. This is the second year for the YMCA to do this. This year it was given to the late Charles Manchester, Virginia Matz and Tom Watkins. Tom was the second President of the local YMCA and he was the Chair of the Building Committee for the new YMCA that was built 40 years ago.

## DECEMBER GREETERS

- Dec. 6th : Ed Miller (p)  
Roger & Rosanna Grinstead (b)
- Dec. 13th: Susan Hughes (p)  
Jeff & Bridgette Hughes (b)
- Dec. 20th: Darryl Cloud (p)  
Scott & Jennifer Kelly (b)
- Dec. 27th: Dana Geuy (p)  
Chris & Ross Geuy (b)

If you have any questions or would like to volunteer to be a greeter, please contact Polly Watkins.

\*p = by the piano

b= in the back of the church

## COFFEE HOUR

There currently is no one signed up to supply the refreshments for the **December 6th** fellowship / coffee hour after morning service. Please let Sarah know if you would like to volunteer.

## MEDIA SCHEDULE

I still have plenty of openings for anyone to training or operate the media program on Sunday mornings. Please sign up, particularly if you need training. Thanks.

-Lyle Drew

- Sunday, Dec. 6th                   Lyle Drew  
Open for training
- Sunday, Dec. 13th                Judy Harp
- Sunday, Dec. 20th                Lyle Drew  
Open for training
- Sunday, Dec. 27th                Lyle Drew  
Open for training

**DEADLINE:**  
The January Newsletter Information will be due to Anne by **December 14th** to allow time for the Christmas Holiday.

# December 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
6 9:30 am: Christian Ed. 10:30 am: <b>Bi-lingual</b> <b>Worship Service</b> 11:30 am: <b>Coffee Hour</b>	7	1 2 pm: Bible Study 3 pm <b>Central Zone</b> 7 pm: Bell Choir 8:30 pm: AA & Al-Anon	2 5 pm: <b>Munch Bunch</b> 6 pm: <b>Food, Fun, Fellowship</b> 7:00pm: Choir Practice	3 3 pm: Youth @ Culvers 7 pm: <b>Christian Ed Meeting</b>	4 4	5 5
13 9:30 am: Christian Ed 10:30 am: Worship 4 pm: Hispanic Worship	14 <u>Newsletter Deadline</u>	8 2 pm: Bible Study 3 pm: CZ & Dinner 5 pm: <b>Alpha Dinner</b> 6 pm: <b>Finance Mtg.</b> 7 pm: <b>Deacon's Mtg.</b> 7 pm: Bell Choir	9 7:00pm: Choir Practice	10 3 pm: Youth @ Culvers 6:30 pm: <b>Session Mtg</b>	11 11	12 12
20 9:30 am: Christian Ed 10:30 am: Worship 4 pm: Hispanic Worship 6pm: <b>longest Night Service</b>	21	15 2 pm: Bible Study 3 pm <b>Central Zone</b> 7 pm: Bell Choir 8:30 pm: AA & Al-Anon	16 5 pm: <b>Munch Bunch</b> 6 pm: <b>Food, Fun, Fellowship</b> 7:00pm: Choir Practice	17 2:30 pm: <b>Presbyterian Hour @ Dorothy Love</b>	18 18	19 19
27 9:30 am: Christian Ed 10:30 am: Worship 4 pm: Hispanic Worship	28	22 10 am: <b>PWA Meeting</b> 2 pm: Bible Study 7 pm: Bell Choir 8:30 pm: AA & Al-Anon	23 7:00pm: Choir Practice	24 Office Closed 7 pm: <b>Worship Service</b> 11 pm: <b>Worship Service</b>	25 Merry Christmas Office Closed	26 26
		29 2 pm: Bible Study 7 pm: Bell Choir 8:30 pm: AA Dinner	30 7:00pm: Choir Practice	31 Office Closed	January 1 Happy New Year! Office Closed	



## 2009 Advent

I caught myself staring impatiently at the countdown timer on the microwave, "Five more seconds until the half-and-half is warmed up before I can add the coffee." After all, it had already been twenty-five seconds, not to mention the three minutes it took for my Bunn coffee maker to brew a pot of coffee. Get a grip, Joe.

Three-and-a-half minutes really does seem like a perfectly reasonable period of time to wait for coffee. I'm just surprised to find myself impatient as I listlessly wait for it to finish.

I don't suppose waiting is a popular way to spend time these days. Do we eagerly anticipate waiting for our ride to come, our plane to take off, a traffic light to change, our turn at the check-out line. Is it possible to find meaning in a few idle moments? ... especially when we feel so busy ... especially this time of year

We are in the season of Advent, a time of waiting. But Advent waiting is not idle waiting, not waiting for something to come that we can't do anything about. Advent is expectant waiting. Advent is the season of preparation for Christmas - the Mass of Christ celebrated at his nativity. Advent is not merely "pre-Christmas," and it surely has nothing to do with the crazed shopping season (don't get me started.) Advent is a season with its own focus and message; a time of preparation and expectation, a time for us to proclaim the coming of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and to prepare his room.

My prayer is that we will receive this Advent season of preparation and look for ways to remember and claim for ourselves *the reason for the season*. How can we simplify our lives this Christmastide? What is our faithful response to the temptation to over-shop and over-spend? How can we best prepare room in our hearts, lives, and witness for the arrival of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Instead of "shop 'til you drop," let us stop and drop to our knees, giving thanks for the good gifts of God, remembering His mighty acts, and pray that we may prepare room for Jesus Christ so that we may live our lives as witnesses to and agents of his saving love.

Prepare his room.

**Weekly Advent Candle Lighting and Liturgy during worship begins November 29**

**Longest Night Service, December 20, 6:00 p.m. (see description below)**

**Christmas Eve**

7:00 p.m. Family Candlelight Service

11:00 p.m. Communion Service

**About the Longest Night Service**

"Have a holly, jolly Christmas." But what if Christmas isn't such a completely jolly time of year for you? Christians recognize the Longest Night Service at the literal longest night, winter solstice. The Longest Night liturgy seeks to provide an opportunity to name and claim that which brings us sorrow, and create a space for contemplation and reflection on grief. The good news is that we are not bound by despair and hopelessness, but before we can release these things we have to acknowledge and name them. If a remembrance of suffering or loss makes it difficult to hear the angel's song; come to worship, to light a candle and pray.

### POINSETTIA ORDERS

If you would like to purchase a poinsettia as a memorial or honorarium, please enclose your name, the person(s) In Honor Of or In Memory Of with your donation. Please turn the information into the church office no later than December 18th.