

## Do Not Be Afraid

*"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people." Luke 2:10*

There will be a night in the next few weeks when Mandy and I will pile the kids in the car, buy a round of hot chocolate, put on some Christmas music, and drive around Ashland County looking at Christmas lights. The beginning of the trip will be filled with anticipation and excitement. Some of the excitement stems from spending time with the family in what has become one of our little traditions. Most of the excitement stems from having hot chocolate and perhaps a couple cookies. There will be laughter and joy and a sense of wonder that is especially amplified in the Christmas Season. And after we have been driving a bit and the hot chocolate is close to being finished the van will begin to

fill with complaints, and bickering, and perhaps a few tears from the youngest that are tired and tired of being in the car. Such a wonderful tradition this has become; such a great microcosm of the Christmas Season.

Advent is a season filled with emotions. Much like our traditional family trip to look at the lights these emotions will range from many forms of joy to many forms of sadness, often in very short periods of time. I will take joy in watching the kids hang their decorations on the tree, and then be overcome with the realization that they can reach six inches higher on the tree than last year. Before long they won't need Dad's help to reach the top of the tree. Where has the time gone!?! As we gather with family and experience

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## Thank You, Lord, for Our Children

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Alyssa and Her Thankful Poster



Thank you Lord for Your children. Thank you Lord for hope and growth. As we head into 2017, my heart rejoices over the growth this past year in these wonderful blessings with which I get to spend Sunday mornings. Yeah, they are getting taller and smarter but the spiritual growth is what makes me sing praises. They have memorized scriptures, raised money for charity, increased their prayer life, planned their own faith week camp, and

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## Ashland XD—CCO



Representing Ashland University all the way down in WV at Coopers Rock State Park. Jake, Reid, Ed, Alex

Japanese and Chinese students at Blasdel's home for dinner and some monopoly. We met them through Maggie and also at the Well at AU. Ama, who has been attending FPC, introduced us to Akira on the far left of the picture.

The Fall Break Trip was a great success!!! The Lord used this trip in a big way for both Reid and I to build a relationship with Alex and show Christ to him. He is a freshman who grew up in the Church but is questioning God, not involved in church or any campus ministry, and is overwhelmed by school as a freshman. Both he and Reid have committed to go on the Spring Break Rock Climbing Trip. Our destination goal is Joshua Tree, CA. Pray for both Reid and I as we share Christ with him through our lives as rock climbers at AU on Mon, Wed and Fri at the Rock Wall in the Rec Center. Please pray for the following students that are committed or highly interested in the Spring Break Trip: Kyle, Reid, Alex, AJ, Pratima, Kate, Trent, Taylor, Isaac and Ama. Thank you.

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Please be in prayer for the CCO XD Student Leaders and the establishment of a consistent weekly meetings for the Spring Semester

Maggie  
Kyhl  
Tanner  
Kouri  
Austin

Barouk  
Ben M.  
Matt  
Taylor  
Kate

*\*These stories of experiential discipleship and connecting lives to the Gospel are made possible through Christ's presence in FPC's partnership with CCO and the Experiential Design (XD) department. Thank you for your prayers and support.*



↑ Maggie, on the left is a senior student leader who has gone on many trips and to Jubilee twice. She continues to live out her faith as a student. This semester she is mentoring international students having conversations with them so they can practice their English. Wow!!!



## Birthdays



### DECEMBER

4th Amira Boswell  
 5th Donna Harrop  
 6th Betty Garrett  
 10th Jacqueline Blasdel  
 Alysa Frcka  
 Dotty Tennis  
 12th Roslyn Lerback  
 13th Isabel Brinker  
 Sean DeLong  
 Sydney Webb  
 15th Tony Smetana  
 16th Teresa Hudson  
 Jolynn Lopeman  
 21st Jim Hooker  
 25th Shiann Conley  
 26th Bill Latham  
 Helen McClellan  
 27th Andrew Lerback  
 28th Alex Jarvis  
 29th Brett Miller  
 Rochelle Tabler  
 31st Lucille Ford

### JANUARY

7th Elizabeth Richmond  
 8th Al Holdren  
 10th Tom Mason  
 13th Robert Beer  
 Zane Blasdel  
 15th JoAnne Kash  
 20th Dean McBurney  
 24th Faye Baum  
 26th Gabriella Carver  
 29th Sloan Brune  
 30th Kaitlynn Barnett  
 Amanda Robles

### FEBRUARY

5th Anne Downs  
 Debbie Reidy  
 7th Janice Carr  
 8th Carroll Schweyer  
 11th Tommy Foley  
 Jane Sponsler  
 12th Bill Dravenstott  
 18th Dorita Ramage  
 19th Shawn Steere  
 21st Aaron Mason  
 Josiah Mason  
 Jean Mason  
 26th Lana Potter



Thank you Pastor Mike,  
 Linda Mapes, and Carroll  
 Schweyer for your visits  
 while I recovered from my  
 recent surgery. Also, thank  
 you Dr. Yoder for a job well  
 done! Tena Klok



To the family and friends of  
 Michael R. Hudson,  
 who died on November 22.

### *"Serve the Lord with gladness"*

A well-attended Harvest  
 Dinner could not have been  
 possible without the many  
 hands that volunteered to  
 help. Many grateful thanks  
 are extended to all who gave of  
 their time to "serve with  
 gladness" - the set up crew,  
 pie donators, kitchen workers,  
 servers, cleanup crew. Special  
 thanks to Jean Hudkins,  
 Terrence Webb, Mary Jean  
 Stuart, and Sandy and Wayne  
 Bartter for making this a joyful  
 time of fellowship.



### CROP Walk 2016

14 Congregations  
 92 Walkers  
 \$7,703.60 Total Raised

Thank you for supporting this effort.



# Financial Reports

## FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FINANCE REPORT - OCTOBER 2016

<u>Contributions/Receipts</u>	<u>SEPT. 2015</u>	<u>BUDGET 2016</u>	<u>SEPT. 2016</u>
	<u>YTD</u>	<u>YTD</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Pledges	\$141,382.00	\$169,166.70	\$161,355.34 *
Non-Pledged Contributions	\$36,941.20	\$38,916.70	\$34,417.04
Loose Offering	\$4,095.67	\$5,000.00	\$2,625.36
Prior Year Pledges	\$5,525.00	\$500.00	\$625.80
Church Use Donations	\$825.00	\$833.30	\$750.00
Whiting Fund	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
ACCF – Program	\$10,952.85	\$9,750.00	\$13,294.10
ACCF – Building	\$5,505.75	\$5,250.00	\$7,654.50
ACCF - Mission	\$1,949.75	\$1,875.00	\$2,751.50
Interest/Investment Income	(\$749.72)	\$70.80	\$75.79
Miscellaneous Income	\$2,308.67	\$2,083.30	\$2,584.53
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>\$208,736.17</b>	<b>\$233,445.80</b>	<b>\$226,133.96</b>
<u>Expenses</u>			
Personnel	\$168,887.45	\$179,434.90	\$173,229.37
Health Insurance	\$11,862.10	\$12,095.80	\$12,095.90
Property	\$12,176.95	\$17,437.40	\$14,692.33
Property Insurance	\$6,667.00	\$7,575.00	\$7,620.00
Utilities	\$17,276.02	\$18,113.20	\$14,753.82
Finance	\$42.00	\$308.30	\$208.90
Per capita assessment	\$5,019.00	\$5,172.00	\$5,171.40
Session Expenses	\$1,010.88	\$1,250.00	\$350.15
Worship/Music	\$1,202.38	\$2,405.90	\$2,234.55
Office	\$6,899.06	\$10,541.70	\$7,705.55
Discipleship	\$2,343.02	\$2,083.30	\$2,290.59
Pioneer Club	\$209.39		
Stephen Ministry	\$0.00	\$416.70	\$84.89
Mid Week Gathering	\$0.00	\$833.30	\$329.87
Formational Prayer/Training	\$500.00	\$833.30	\$421.00
College-Aged Ministry			
Mission /Giving /Support	\$11,500.00	\$10,000.00	\$11,000.00
Fellowship / Gatherings		\$833.30	\$556.51
ACCESS / Community Care		\$1,250.00	\$803.39
Pastor Discretionary Fund		\$833.30	\$798.29
Deacons - Invite	\$0.00		
Deacons - Connect	\$2,833.42		
Deacons - Send	\$1,436.72		
Deacons - Miscellaneous	\$924.73		
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$250,790.12</b>	<b>\$271,417.40</b>	<b>\$254,346.51</b>
<b>EXCESS INCOME / EXPENSES</b>	<b>(\$42,053.95)</b>	<b>(\$37,971.60)</b>	<b>(\$28,212.55)</b>

\* Includes prepaid pledges of \$27,846.14

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
**Balance Sheet (UNAUDITED)**  
 Consolidated - October 2016

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	Current Year
<hr/>	
ASSETS	
CASH ACCOUNTS	
Sutton Bank Checking Acct	\$18,354.13
JanneyMontgomeryScott LLC	133,710.66
Subtotal Cash Accounts	152,064.79
 TOTAL ASSETS	 <u><u>\$152,064.79</u></u>
 LIABILITIES	
CURRENT LIABILITIES	
200th Campaign Fund	\$1,714.27
Property Purchase	27,510.00
Lick Fund-Children'sMusic	300.00
Library Liability a/c	165.34
Memorial & Special Gifts	
Nancy Donley Estate	7,536.69
Lorraine Wetzel Memorial	964.08
Organ maint. Liability a/c	1,000.00
Kitchen maint. Liab. a/c	708.18
Office Liability A/C	901.19
Office Furniture (Pastor)	459.74
StephenMin./HealingCare	2,155.41
Jesus/StainedGlassWindows	2,249.55
Youth/ Ch.Min.-Plank Mem.	1,080.00
Subtotal Memorial & Special Gifts	17,054.84
Special Mission Gifts	
CWS / CROP	212.00
Young Life	200.00
Subtotal Special Mission Gifts	412.00
Youth Ministry	
ACCF - Johnson	2,408.09
Subtotal Current Liabilities	49,564.54
WITHHELD PAYROLL TAXES	
F.I.C.A.	458.94
Medicare	107.32
Federal Income Tax	536.74
State Income Tax	135.37
City Income Tax	111.13
Employer's Share FICA	458.94
Employer's Share Medicare	107.32
SoutheasternLSDschool tax	1.25
Subtotal Withheld Payroll Taxes	1,917.01
OTHER LIABILITIES	
Pre-Paid Pledges	500.00
TOTAL LIABILITIES	51,981.55
Fund Balance	\$100,083.24
TOTAL FUND BALANCE	100,083.24
 TOTAL LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE	 <u><u>\$152,064.79</u></u>

## CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING

This annual special offering received during Advent is our opportunity to provide support through the Board of Pensions for current and retired church workers in need of assistance. 2015 gifts helped nearly 300 households with income assistance, as well as more than 200 households with housing supplements.

In addition, students at Presbyterian racial ethnic schools and colleges (Menaul School in NM, Pan American School in TX, and Stillman College in AL) affiliated with PC(USA) are assisted in pursuing their professional goals. \$1 million of gifts from 2015 are being used in this way.

Contributions may be placed in the special pew envelopes, or by texting JOY to 20222 to give \$10, or on line at [presbyterianmission.org/give/christmasjoy](http://presbyterianmission.org/give/christmasjoy).

Ever wonder about individuals impacted by your gifts to the Christmas Joy Offering? Hear from people whose lives you've helped improve:

Church workers – from Wendy McAninch, retired pastor: “Rosie, my service dog, goes to church with me on Sunday morning, and the church has embraced her presence and function. She broke down barriers I didn’t know were there.” (Thanks to CJ Offering: was able to live a more active and engaged life, thanks to a grant that helped pay for companion training for her labradoodle to deal with a chronic pain disorder.)

Racial Ethnic leaders – from Debra Duran, grandmother and guardian of a student at Menaul School: “It provides a good education and they teach values, so it’s not just me teaching them at home. She is learning values at school. She is also learning about Jesus and about God.” (Thanks to CJ Offering: was able to provide education and career opportunities at Menaul for her adopted granddaughter, Mariposa.)



### CCO continued from p. 2

*“Local Church Mission Is True Kingdom Mission”*  
-Scott McKnight

Ways FPC Can Be Involved in the Life of College Students:

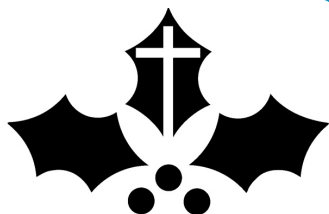
- Join the class that Jake teaches on Sunday Mornings
- Prayer Walk around Campus with Jake
- Mentor/Coach Students through the Well or with CCO core leaders
- Attend the Well on Thursday nights at 8:00pm in the Chapel and sit with students that sit alone. There are many students who sit alone and you would be surprised how many times I have seen international students sitting alone.
- Join us for Friday Adventures, Saturday Breakfasts or Saturday Park and Hikes, or CCO XD Student Leader meetings.
- Adopt a Student
- Plan now on attending Jubilee with the Students February 17-19th
- Be praying for students attending Jubilee & Spring Break Trip March 4-11.

Ask the Lord how He might want you to be a presence in College Students lives.

CCO is all about whole life experiential discipleship with college students in the local church.

Jake Blasdel,  
Director of College-Age Ministry

## Christmas Worship Services



### Christmas Eve:

7:00pm: A family-friendly, blended worship with choir, praise band, and candlelight.

Midnight: A traditional worship service with Communion and candlelight. This is the only worship service we will have on Christmas Day.

FPC encourages families to worship together; the nursery will not be staffed for either Christmas Eve service.

### Christmas Day:

No 10:00am Worship Service

### January 1:

10:00am Lessons and Carols



**ACCESS**  
Our next week  
to host is  
December 4-11

### Holiday Office Schedule:

Friday, December 23  
office open until 12:00pm

Monday, December 26  
office is closed

Tuesday, December 27  
office is closed

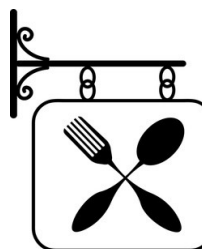
Wednesday, December 28  
office is closed

Friday, December 30  
office is open until 12:00pm

Monday, January 2  
office is closed



## Presby Lunch Bunch December 20



The Christmas Luncheon for the Presby Lunch Bunch will be December 20, at 11:30 am at the home of Jean and Harvey Hudkins. Join us please for this Christmas tradition.

The catered luncheon cost is \$12.00 per person and reservations must be in to Cora Walker, 419-289-2316, no later than Friday, December 16.

## Church Closings and Cancellations:

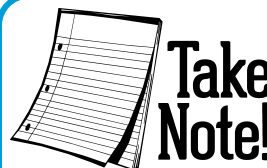
Please tune into WNCO FM 101.3 or AM 1340 for news of cancellations due to weather. It will also be listed on their websites and any of the other Clear Channel stations in the area.



Our church website will also list any closings on our home page  
**ashlandfpc.org**

## Congregational Meeting

Our Annual Congregational Meeting will be held after worship on **January 22**.



Saturday, December 31 is the last day the church can accept contributions for 2016. This year it is a Saturday, so the office will be closed. Payments may be postmarked by December 31 or dropped off in an envelope through the mail slot on the church office door. You can also stop by on Thursday, December 29, 8:00am-3:00pm or Friday, December 30 before noon.

# December

## First Presbyterian Church of Ashland

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3 Presbytery Meeting @Massillon Central PC
4 Advent II Communion Hunger Sunday 11:15am Deacons  Host ACCESS  2:00pm Private Baby Shower	5 Host ACCESS  6:00pm Women's Fellowship Group @	6 Host ACCESS  10:30am Finance Ministry  8:00pm AA	7 Host ACCESS Reports to Session Due 10:00am Bible Study  7:30pm Choir	8 Host ACCESS  6:30pm Evangelism and Outreach Team	9 Host ACCESS	10 Host ACCESS
11 Advent III  Host ACCESS	12  6:30pm Healing Care Group	13 10:00am Staff Staff Lunch  2:00pm Worship Ministry Team 8:00pm AA	14  10:00am Bible Study  7:30pm Choir	15	16	17
18 Advent IV Wassail Reception Christmas Joy Offering 2:15pm Worship @ Kingston	19  6:30pm Healing Care Group	20  8:00pm AA	21  10:00am Bible Study  7:30pm Choir	22  1:00pm Poinsettia Delivery	23 Christmas Eve Observed  12:00pm Church Office Closed	24 7:00pm Family-Friendly Worship Service 12:00am (Christmas) Midnight Worship with Communion
25 Christmas  No 10:00am Worship	26 Office Closed— Christmas Observed  Monthly Newsletter Deadline	27 Office Closed  8:00pm AA	28 Office Closed  10:00am Bible Study	29	30 New Year's Eve Observed 12:00pm Church Office Closed	31



# January

## First Presbyterian Church of Ashland

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b> 10:00am Lessons and Carols	<b>2</b> Church Office Closed—New Year Observed  6:00pm Women's	<b>3</b>  8:00pm AA	<b>4</b> 10:00am Bible Study  7:30pm Choir	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b> Communion Hunger Sunday  11:15am Deacons	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>  8:00pm AA	<b>11</b> Reports to Session Due  10:00am Bible Study	<b>12</b>  6:30pm Evangelism and Outreach	<b>13</b>  HCM Dinner	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> Office Closed- MLK Day	<b>17</b>  8:00pm AA	<b>18</b>  10:00am Bible Study  7:30pm Choir	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>  6:30pm Movie Night	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> Communion  Annual Congregational Meeting	<b>23</b> Monthly Newsletter Deadline	<b>24</b>  8:00pm AA	<b>25</b>  10:00am Bible Study  7:30pm Choir	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b> Loud Sunday Offering	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>  8:00pm AA				

# February

First Presbyterian Church of Ashland

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			<b>1</b> Reports to Session Due  10:00am Bible Study	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5</b> Communion  11:15am Deacons	<b>6</b> 6:00pm Women's Fellowship Group @ Sponslers'	<b>7</b> 8:00pm AA	<b>8</b> 10:00am Bible Study  7:30pm Choir	<b>9</b> 6:30pm Evangelism and Outreach	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> 9:00am Session Meeting
<b>12</b> Host ACCESS	<b>13</b> Host ACCESS	<b>14</b> Host ACCESS  8:00pm AA	<b>15</b> Host ACCESS  10:00am Bible Study	<b>16</b> Host ACCESS	<b>17</b> Host ACCESS  6:30pm Movie Night	<b>18</b> Host ACCESS
<b>19</b> Host ACCESS  2:15pm Worship @ Kingston	<b>20</b> President's Day Office Closed  Quarterly Newsletter Deadline	<b>21</b> 8:00pm AA	<b>22</b> 10:00am Bible Study  7:30pm Choir	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>26</b> Communion	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> 8:00pm AA				

## Passport to Entertainment and Enrichment

Lucado, Max. *Because of Bethlehem: Love is Born Hope is Here*. Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2016.

"I Love Christmas" is the title of the first chapter of Max Lucado's most recent book, *Because of Bethlehem: Love is Born Hope is Here*. It is also the first sentence in the chapter and is repeated several times. Many of his readers will share his fondness for music, decorations, and other things that symbolize Christmas. However, their reasons for the fondness probably are different. His reason is because what he calls "Christmas questions" will soon be asked: "What's the big deal about a baby in the manger?" "Who was he?" "What does his birth have to do with me?" Lucado states that he began asking these things as a young boy and throughout his life has found the answers which he hopes his readers will also.

Because God is always with us, the author has found a life of hope. Part of that hope is because Jesus still enters our lives in many ways. However, like the innkeeper in the

biblical Christmas story, some still miss His coming, but Lucado says, "It's never too late to come to Christ for help." That knowledge provides hope.

The last chapter of *Because of Bethlehem* is entitled "Every Day a Christmas, Every Heart a Manger." In other words one doesn't have to wait until December 25, or have all kinds of decorations to celebrate Christmas. That's because as Lucado says, "The story of Christmas is the story of God's relentless love for us." That, too, provides a life of hope since His love has no limit.

The final section of *Because of Bethlehem* is a fifty-seven page Advent Devotional Guide by Christine Anderson. Included in each day's readings are scripture, a devotion, prayer, questions, and other items applicable to each day's topic.

*Because of Bethlehem* will help readers put their feelings about Christmas traditions and the real meaning of Christmas in perspective.

- Beverly Bixler

### Loud Sunday

When a month has a fifth Sunday, FPC collects a special offering to benefit a local charity or project. This offering is "loud" because we throw our change into coffee cans and make a joyful noise to the Lord.

For 2016, we gave this offering to:

ACCESS	\$140.48
Young Life	\$385.12
CCO Ashland XD	\$194.00
Ashland Christian Health Center	\$224.95

Thank you for saving your spare change.



**HEALING CARE**  
a ministry of formational prayer

Healing Care Ministries and its partner, HCM International, are moving their offices into FPC. They are leasing space from us beginning in December. Specifically, they are using three rooms on the first floor of the education wing, with one space being shared space with FPC, and one room for storage on the third floor. Their move into our building should be completed by the first of the year.

FPC is pleased to partner with these ministries. For more information about them, visit their websites:

[healingcare.org](http://healingcare.org)  
[hcminternational.org](http://hcminternational.org)

# Do Not Be Afraid

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the joy of being together we will find ourselves grieving over those whom we have lost and especially miss this time of year. Our televisions will carry many more news stories of people bringing hope and encouragement to the world, stories that are uplifting and lift our spirits, and yet remain framed within the context of a broken and struggling world. Advent is a season filled with emotions.

The shepherds must have sensed a little bit of awe and wonder at the sight of “an angel of the Lord” appearing to them as “the glory of the Lord shone around them.” (Luke 2:9) One can only speculate about their awe and wonder, but Luke does tell us that “they were terrified” at this sight. They were scared, afraid, and filled with fear. Certainly this was an experience unlike any before, one that must have been especially overwhelming in the dark and quiet night as they watched over their sheep. How could they know that this was an angel of the Lord? How could they know that the message was one of good news? How could they know that this visit was cause to rejoice? The shepherd’s fears were justified in my mind. And so the angel simply encouraged them, speaking to them these words of comfort in the midst of their fear, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.”

Advent is a season filled with emotions. When honest with ourselves, much like the shepherds, fear is one of the core emotions with which we often struggle. We may not always name it. Often experienced as sadness, anxiety, or anger (to name just a few emotions) the fear of loss, fear of not being enough, fear of not being accepted, fear of being alone, can and will quickly overcome us and be present with us even in the midst of the feelings of joy, hope, love, and peace that are also present during throughout this season. Frankly friends, as was the shepherd’s fear, in my mind many our fears also are justified. Life can be difficult; the struggles are real.

And yet there are valuable lessons to be learned from these two verses in the Gospel of Luke. While the fear is present, often justifiably so, the fear does not need to have the final word. First of all, we can name it. We can name the fear as Luke does - the shepherds were terrified. This seems simple, but we do not have to carry our fears alone. By naming them, and saying to someone “I am afraid” or “I am terrified,” it begins to remove the power that the fear can have over us when we keep it bottled up and hold it within ourselves. Sometimes this is hard for us to do – we feel vulnerable when we admit our fears – yet this is an important step if we want to move from being controlled by our fears into a place of freedom from which the Lord desires us to live.

It can also be hard for us to name these fears to the Lord; we may feel as though we are living out of a lack of faith and trust. However, when we are honest with the One who already knows and understands our fears it opens our ears to hear and our hearts to experience the Lord coming to us and speaking the encouraging words that came to the shepherds, “Do not be afraid.” It helps us to receive the good news that the angel gave to the shepherds, news that “will cause great joy for all the people.” “A Savior has been born to (us); he is the Messiah, the Lord.” (2:11)

Advent is a season filled with emotions. In the midst of these emotions, in the midst of our fears, in the midst of our struggles in this life, Jesus the Messiah comes. He came to us as a babe. One day He will return to us as Lord of All. And today He promises to be present with us through the ministry of the Holy Spirit; Immanuel – God with us. I pray that in the midst of this Advent season you will experience the powerful presence of Jesus coming to you, meeting you in the midst of your fears, encouraging you to not be afraid, and filling you with a joy that can only be found in Him.

In Christ’s Love,  
*Pastor Mike*



## Thank You, Lord, for Our Children

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some have even embraced prophetic gifts. WOW!!!! Just revisiting all their accomplishments makes me get even more excited for this upcoming year.

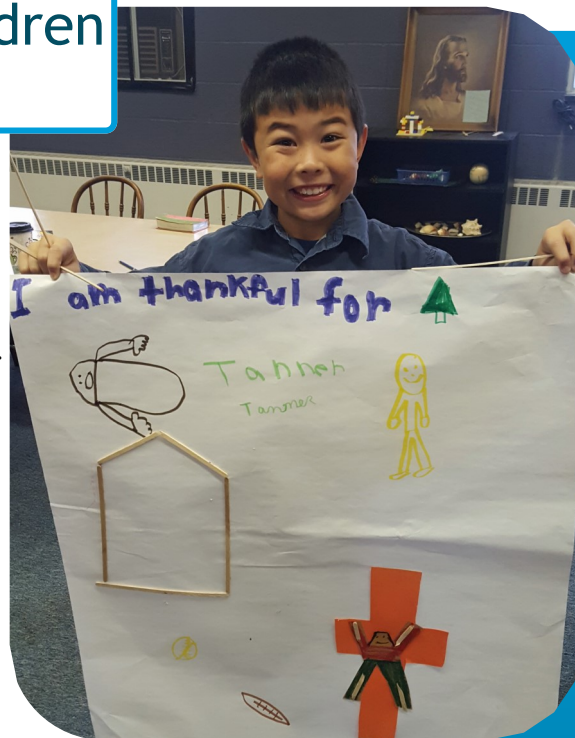
In 2017 we will be implementing a model of learning in the Atrium. We will be studying a selected section of scripture and focusing on it all month. We will read and engage the scripture in following different ways each week:

- 1st week - Read and Learn - we will read the scripture and then learn about the context of it, such as what time was like when written, who the people in the scripture are, and even each one of our interpretations.
- 2nd week - Read and Create - we will read the scripture and then have an opportunity to create something (a picture, sculpture, song, group project) that symbolizes how the scripture makes us feel.
- 3rd week - Read and Play - we will read the scripture and then enjoy it as children do, whether that be a game that goes with the lesson or even a short skit, whatever brings giggles and joy.
- 4th week - Read and Rest - we will read the scripture, then we will find comfortable spots and relax as I read it again in a meditative and feeling/thought provoking way. We will allow their hearts time to remember the past month and all the greatness this scripture has spoken to them. This will end with time talking with me individually about what the scripture meant to them and any questions they may have.

I am super jazzed about all the great things God will be doing in our times together and what the Holy Spirit has in store for and through our wonderful children. I do have a request. Please pray as often as you feel lead to for our children and all those that help them on this journey. Here is a trick I use sometimes when I am adding a new consistent prayer-I set an alarm on my cell phone to go off at a time that is pretty quiet for me and I schedule it for daily.

Thank you Lord for our children. Thank you Lord for searing their hearts with the truth of who they are, the truth of who You are, and the trust to believe in it. Thank you Lord for guidance, wisdom, and boldness as they live into the created path You have laid before them. Thank you Lord for grace, mercy, and patience in and for them. Bless them Heavenly Father with Your presence and all of the joy, peace, and love that comes with it. Thank you Lord for our children.

Tia Sponsler, Director of Children's Ministry



Tanner and Katrin  
and Their  
Thankful Posters



**First Presbyterian Church of Ashland**  
**320 Church Street**  
**Ashland, OH 44805**



Phone: 419-289-6205  
Email: [office@ashlandfpc.org](mailto:office@ashlandfpc.org)  
Facebook: FPC Ashland  
Instagram: [fpc\\_ashland](#)

[www.ashlandfpc.org](http://www.ashlandfpc.org)

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October, 2016



Jake Blasdel and Ed  
CCO Fall Break Trip