

1st Presbyterian Church Newsletter

September - October 2025



I've been
meaning
to ask...

a series for curiosity,
courage, & connection

First Presbyterian Church of Perrysburg

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Celebrating Christ's love for all people

Pastor Page:

Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

– Matt. 7:7-8

**“Pastor Katie, we’ve been meaning to ask . . .”
 . . . about the building security upgrades.**

Where we are in the building security upgrades?

Well, we are mid-way through. (*If you see Tom Lingeman, give him a big hug or high-five. He has been doing yeoman’s work as the church representative on this project.*)

And I apologize for any inconveniences you are experiencing while we are getting it all set up and sorted out. Additional door work is yet to be done, and that will take another month. Then we will be trained to use the system. The safety of the young people in our care is of utmost importance, as is having a system in place that allows us to use the building for our purposes easily. It is on the way! Good things come to those who wait. This too shall pass. [Add your aphorism here.]

**“Pastor Katie, we’ve been meaning to ask . . .”
 . . . about this nine-week church program we are hearing about.**

Okay, this is what it is all about. To understand what we are doing this fall at FPC, you have to hearken back to 2020, when this congregation engaged in a Church Assessment Tool Survey (CAT). Five years ago, you all made clear what was important you as a congregation. You answered questions that clarified the church identity and purpose. Your church leadership took your answers very seriously, and began to move us in the direction your reflections indicated God was calling us to go.

Our church is called to know and be able to share the story God in the world and the story of the good news of Jesus Christ. We are called to equip each other in sharing that story and our own stories of lived faith. And we are called to foster peace in our community and the world by honoring the stories of others by creating opportunities for people to speak about hard things in an atmosphere of safety, respect, and compassion. Why are we called to this? Because it is what the world desperately needs from the people of God today.

As we have been honing our ability to understand and speak about these things, we have also been adopting new practices to make them real. The *I’ve Been Meaning to Ask . . .* programming from *Sanctified Arts*, that we have expanded and adapted for our purposes this fall, is an important step in moving further into our congregational calling. Imagine that we as a church came to believe that we were meant to be a congregation of Cirque du Soleil performers. At some point we would need to start practicing tumbling, trampoline flips, and arial tricks. Likewise, we have to begin practicing nonviolent communication skills with one another so that we can show forth the Kingdom of God to the world. I suppose we can always use “Cirque du Soleil Church” as a Plan B . . .

This coming Sunday, Sept. 14, we are going to have a Fall Worship and Practice Kick-off **AND** an Indoor Picnic, all in the Fellowship Hall. So, 10:00 a.m. worship this Sunday will be in the Fellowship Hall. We will celebrate communion and we will begin practicing sharing and receiving stories from one another. At the Session meeting this week, Jay Salvage was recalling that some years ago a presenter had told a study group Jay was in about the way we usually engage in conversation with one another. (*continued*)



Pastor Page—continued

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Usually, someone begins speaking and then, within seconds, the person or people being spoken to begin thinking about what *they* are going to say.

Our intention this fall is to practice interrupting this very human habit and replacing it with “sacred listening.” When we engage in story-sharing practice, we will be **brave** and **trusting** and really try to reach for our truth and express it. And when we engage in story-receiving practice we will pay close attention to what the other is communicating verbally and non-verbally. We won't think about crafting a response to their words, instead we will try to communicate non-verbally that the speaker is safe and respected, and will not be judged or advised or pitied or laughed at.

Posted on the walls of the spaces in which we will practice sacred storytelling and listening will be our **Established Norms** to help us remember to: *Speak from the “I,” Listen from the heart, Step up & step back, Say more & circle back, Hold space, Respect boundaries, and Stay curious.* “Step up & step back” for instance is a way of reminding ourselves to be mindful that you are both speaking up and stepping back to listen. When you finish sharing, you might invite another, or *the* other person to share on the same topic. They can either share or say, “*Pass for Now.*” And “Say more & circle back,” will remind us that a helpful refrain when trying to gain understanding is, “Say more.” And if someone has shared something particularly vulnerable or raw, we can circle back to them at a later time if they need.

One note on circling back is that sometimes when someone has shared something particularly raw or vulnerable, they have said all they want to say about it at that time and do not necessarily desire well-meaning attention after the formal sharing has ended. Granted, this can be difficult to discern, sometimes body language can give us cues on this, sometimes not. If you feel strongly that you want to engage the person further, do a self-assessment first. Do I want to offer them the opportunity to “say more” because they seem to want that? Or do I want to advise or comfort them? If it is the former, ask them directly if they would like that. If it is the latter, you should not proceed unless asked to do so.

On the other side of the coin is that if we get to a point in our practice where we are actually being brave and vulnerable enough to bridge topics that cause division among us or in our communities, as a receiver of someone's story, we might need time to digest what the other person has shared, but find that in compassionate curiosity, we would like to invite them to “say more” if they are willing. So again, you ask the other person directly if they would be willing to engage the topic further by saying more.

“Pastor Katie, we've been meaning to ask . . .”

. . . how and when will we be practicing sharing and receiving story?

I've Been Meaning to Ask . . . is our fall worship and theological reflection theme. There will be two moments for story sharing each Sunday, but the rest of the service will feel like regular worship.

If you are not able to attend an established study group, you can still have a copy of the study journal for your own, home use. Simply contact the church office and request one.

The Sunday and Tuesday Bible study groups are going to engage the *I've Been Meaning to Ask . . .* study journal together. I believe our Sunday youth engagement with Nick & Claire Krabill will also use that resource.

We know our families are super-duper busy, so Pastor Katie, with the help of Lizzy Crawford, is going to send a weekly email to families that gives a recap of what we have done the previous Sunday and a weekly Bible verse to memorize and talk about the next Sunday in the Children's Message time. *(continued)*

Pastor Page—continued again!

Still with me?! Yay!!

In addition to that, we are inviting our families to practice praying together at home for other people. Young people who keep track of times they have prayed together for others will get prizes for when they've done it 15, 30, and 45 days over the fall.

Team Meetings will begin with the chairperson picking a prompt question from the *I've Been Meaning to Ask* . . . Conversation Card pack to be engaged before the rest of the business.

Daily emails will arrive in your inbox, just like every time we use a *Sanctified Arts* theme. This time they will come Monday — Friday only. And they will be written by all of you! Sunday mornings, after worship, we invite you to write your answer to the day's question on a

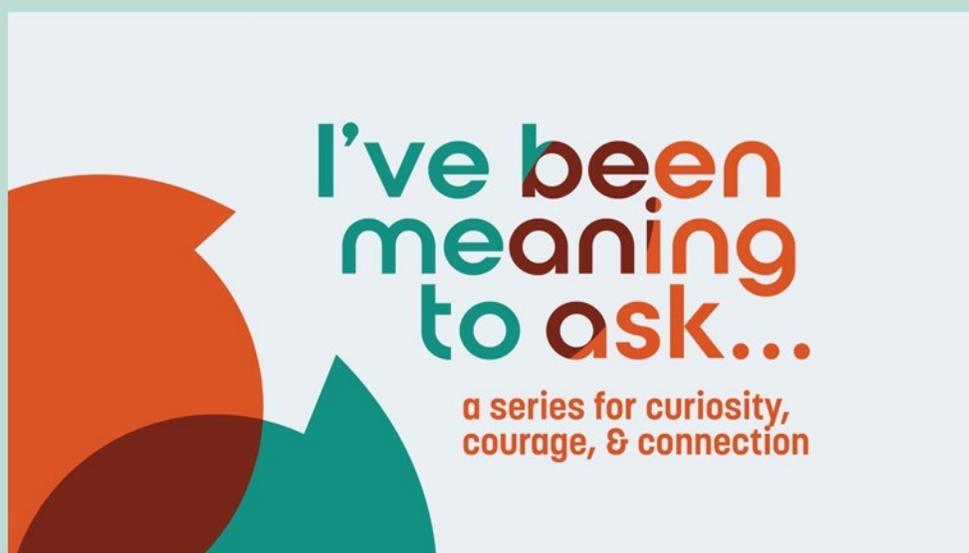
And our Stewardship Campaign, which begins September 28th, will echo the four themes of *I've Been Meaning to Ask* . . . (Where are you from? Where does it hurt? What do you need? And Where can we go from here?) by addressing **who we are as a congregation, what we want for the world, what we need to be able to do our work as a congregation, and how we get there.**

“Pastor Katie, we’ve been meaning to ask . . .”

. . . what happens after the nine weeks are over?

After the nine-week series wraps up, we will have a Congregational Forum after worship to process the experience together — to ask questions and give feedback. And consider together what comes next. Perhaps we will need to loop back and spend more time on “high-wire” and “arial” basics. Or maybe we will be ready to go full-speed ahead with planning a community event. We plan to offer the opportunity to read together *Nonviolent Communication*, by Marshall Rosenberg. And in the winter months of 2026 we will take the CAT Survey again, so we can see where we as a congregation are now, five years down the road from the survey results that set us on this path.

Okay, that's more than enough for now. Trust God, and let's see where the Holy One is taking us! KERT



BEER & HYMNS NIGHT

IT'S BACK!

Beer & Hymns at Hanon's Block Restaurant
(formally Black Cloister...where it all began)

Sunday, September 21

Arrive early if you want to get a bite to eat.

Music from 7-8 pm by the original musicians.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

NOSA cards: August \$1,445

SIMPLY GIVE CAMPAIGN: MEIJER'S - ENDS SEPTEMBER 29

PCU: "One Day Sunday" September 28—Crackers

THE TABLE: OCTOBER 15 | ENTRÉE: BEEF STROGANOFF | DOORS OPEN AT 5PM- DINNER SERVED AT 5:30PM

IT'S FREE, FUN, FABULOUS, FRIENDLY, FRUITFUL!

Peace & Global Witness: September 14—October 5

"Pursue what makes for peace" ~ Romans 14:19

Give what you can—every little bit helps!

Holy shift! Mike Ferguson, Presbyterian News Service, September 5, 2025

LOUISVILLE — The title of Thursday’s webinar, “Holy Shift: Young Parents are Rethinking Everything. So Should We,” was the first clue that the more than 500 people who signed up for the first of three installments were in for a time of learning and sharing ideas. They weren’t disappointed.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kllPZAqW2UQ>

Dr. Josh Packard, a sociologist and research director took the large crowd through key findings from the Young Adult Parents Research Project, “What Happens to Faith When ‘Nones’ Have Kids.” The research investigated the evolving role of religion and spirituality among parents in the United States aged 25-39, a group marked by increasing disaffiliation from organized religion.

It noted that the number of adult “nones” has more than doubled since 2005 and now makes up 1/3 of the adult population. At the same time, the number of self-identified Christians has fallen dramatically.

What happens when nones start having children? “Historically, the church has relied on parents as a pathway back into the faith for adults who maybe stopped attending during their late teenage years and into their 20s,” the report states.

That theory held for much of the 20th century, but increasingly, it’s not the case. “A generation of people who have explicitly rejected institutional forms of religious expression are very likely to raise their children differently when it comes to religious and spiritual formation, if they’re planning on raising kids at all,” according to the report.

Packard discussed the study’s six key findings:

- The faith stops here (or nones are parenting very differently). One respondent told researchers, “I want to pass on the ability to make their own choices. If they are going to have a relationship with religion and faith, I want that to be something that they pick for themselves.” Packard wondered: “Isn’t that parenting? I was shocked to hear it come out that way.”
- Parents are worried about a lot of things, but religion is the least of their concerns. Imparting religious faith to their children was at the bottom of a list that included being responsible, working hard, being well-mannered and helping others.
- Life is hard, and the church is not seen as a resource. 7 in 10 respondents agreed with the statement “life is generally harder than I expected it to be at this point.” Churches and congregations “have a vital role to play [in the lives of these families], but only if they adopt relational approaches that acknowledge the full range of life events shaping people’s experiences,” the study stated. “I think you are exactly who people in their 20s and 30s need,” Packard told attendees, “but they aren’t turning to you in ways they used to because they don’t see institutions and leaders as trustworthy.”
- Jesus is popular, but church isn’t. On a 10-point ranking scale, Jesus scored a 9 among Christians and 7 among people of other faiths. Even nones gave him a score of 6.

(continued)

Holy shift! *(continued)*

Parents are overwhelmingly confident in their ability to teach their kids to lead meaningful lives. More than 80% were “extremely” or “very” confident in their ability to teach their children the skills they need “to lead a life filled with meaning and purpose,” Packard noted.

Parents think virtues are essential for their kids, but that the church doesn’t teach them. For example, about 70% of respondents said that self-control is an important virtue they want their children to have, but 48% said the church emphasizes that virtue.

“Nones are more interested in faith than we thought,” Packard said. “Jesus and spirituality are still important to them, and there is a lot we can do in the church around those things.”

But many church models came about at a time when people trusted clergy and churches more than they do now, Packard said. “We try to get people through the doors and be the authoritative voice on an issue instead of recognizing we are operating in a low-trust environment.”

The importance of the relational component is growing. Packard called that “reaching people where they’re at so they see the church as a real resource in times of need.”

Respondents were asked if they’ll continue to go to church once their children finish high school and leave home. “Our data shows parents are intending to leave once their kids graduate, and that is kind of alarming,” Packard said. Churches may fall into the trap of “once we get parents to come back, we stop paying much attention to their needs.”

“Our ways to reach people have traditionally been through the family,” Packard said. “We might need to think about opening pathways to make sure our churches are still relevant to people without children.”

While the study included “a lot of data, none of it is as important as you sitting down with a young adult parent and having a conversation with them,” Packard told webinar participants. “If you want to take a first step based on this presentation, talk to someone to broaden your own perspective.”



**DO YOU
WANT TO
HAVE A
HALLOWEEN
PARTY WITH
ABBIE?**

LET US KNOW IF YOU
ARE INTERESTED IN
SPOOKY FUN AND
THRILLS

September 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
14 8:30am Men's Bible Study 10am Fall Worship Kickoff & Indoor Picnic	15 4:30pm Stewardship & Finance Team meeting	16 10am Bible Study 3pm MVP Meeting	17 6pm AIAnon	18	19 5:45pm Toastmasters	20
21 10am Worship 7pm Beer & Hymns	22 5pm Cong Life Team meeting	23 10am Bible Study 4:30pm Bldg Management 6pm Joy Belles	24 6pm AIAnon	25 Presby Pies	26	27 Fall Grounds Clean-Up
28 10am Worship	29	30 10am Bible Study				

UPCOMING WORSHIP LEADERS:

September 14: Stephen Potts, Jay & Jo Salvage, Michelle Chavez/Matt Hollar, Kathy Jarosz

September 21: Don Youel, Rauscher Family, Marti Clayton, Gretchen Downs

September 28: Don Youel, Dennis & Jean Thayer, Megan/Jane Merrell, Stephen Potts

October 5: Stephen Potts, David Nunn & Marty Sloan, Allison Mackin, Nancy Gates

Communion: Margot Quick and Julie Lindsey/Brenda Youel and Allison Mackin

October 12: Don Youel, Lowrie Gilmore, Carlee Campbell, Kathy Jarosz

October 19: Stephen Potts, Cecilia Richardson & Delbert Duckins/Marty Sloan, Allison Mackin, Gretchen Downs

October 26: Don Youel, Sarah & Lizzie Crawford/Allison Mackin, Rhyn Davies, Stephen Potts

October 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 6pm AIAnon	2	3	4
5 10am Worship	6	7 10am Bible Study 6pm AIAnon Business Meeting	8 6pm Community Outreach Team meeting 6pm AIAnon	9	10	11 Church Rummage Sale
12 10am Worship	13	14 10am Bible Study 6:30pm Session	15 5pm The Table 6pm AIAnon	16	17 5:45 pm Toastmasters	18
19 10am Worship	20 4:30pm Stewardship & Finance Team meeting 5pm Cong Life Team meeting	21 10am Bible Study 4:30pm Bldg Management	22 6pm AIAnon	23	24	25
26 10am Worship	27 5pm Cong Life Team meeting	28 10am Bible Study 6pm Joy Belles	29 6pm AIAnon	30	31  5:45 pm Toastmasters	