


Rev. Annie Parker, Pastor

THE PRESBYTERIAN MESSENGER

Periodicals Postage Paid at Salem, OH 44460, USPS 442500. Postmaster: Send address changes to *The Presbyterian Messenger*, 436 E 2nd St, Salem OH 44460-2816

<p>20th Sunday after Pentecost <u>October 6</u> <i>World Communion Sunday</i></p> <p>Acts 2:32-36 John 20:19-23</p> <p><i>“Centered in Christ, Powered by the Holy Spirit”</i></p>	<p>21st Sunday after Pentecost <u>October 13</u></p> <p>1 Corinthians 12:4-7; 11-13; 27</p> <p><i>“You are the Gifted Body of Christ”</i></p> <p><i>Reception for Frank and Trina after Worship</i></p>	<p>22nd Sunday after Pentecost <u>October 20</u> <i>Carillon Ringers – 10:30 Worship</i></p> <p><i>Rev. Annie Parker First Sunday in Pulpit</i></p> <p>Liturgist – Lynn Zocolo</p>	<p>23rd Sunday after Pentecost <u>October 27</u> <i>Brass & Timpani – 10:30 Worship</i></p> <p><i>Installation Service for Rev. Annie Parker at 4 p.m. followed by Potluck Dinner in Fellowship Hall.</i></p>	<p>24th Sunday after Pentecost <u>November 3</u> <i>The Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper</i></p> 
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Sometimes a preacher will skip past a paragraph in a sermon manuscript in the interest of time. In my case, since I don’t use a written text, I just leave out (or forget) what I intended to say. Sometimes I wish later that I had not left out (or forgotten) that missing piece.

That happened last week. I was preaching from Exodus, Chapter 6. Verse one told us that God spoke to Moses, telling him that God was going to free the Hebrew people from Egyptian slavery. The second text, a few verses later, said that, “Moses told this to the Israelites; but they would not listen to Moses, because of their broken spirit and their cruel slavery.”(Ex. 6:9) I wanted to say, ‘God DID set the people free! In spite of how the people felt, and regardless of whether they believed Moses or not, God acted on their behalf to end their bondage.’ This is the point I wish I had made: God acts on our behalf, whether we know it or believe it or not.

Perhaps my letting those last three sentences slip through the cracks was providential. You see, I pondered that lapse all week on vacation. And the pondering focused my attention as I read one of the books I took with me. The book is *Hope for Cynics: The Surprising Science of Human Goodness*, by Jamil Zaki. It is literally hot off the press, September 2024. Zaki is a professor of psychology at Stanford. I heard him being interviewed on an NPR broadcast; I was captivated; I wanted to know more. So, I ordered the book. It turns out that hope is the answer to Exodus 6:9. That is the providential part.

I will not review the book here, though I highly recommend it. I do want to lift a few points from the book, and to make an observation that Zaki does not make.

Zaki defines a cynic as someone who believes to everyone is fundamentally bad: selfish, dishonest, and generally untrustworthy to do the right thing. He notes that this was not the original meaning Greek of the philosophy of cynicism, but that is a little beside the point. His point is that if you expect the worst in people, that is more than likely what you will get. On the other hand, and this is where the scientific research comes into play, if you expect the best of other people, more often than not, you will bring the best out of them. ~ *continued on page 2*

“We are centered in Christ and powered by love.”

CHURCH INFORMATION:

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Not always, of course. Which is why Zaki advocates for being a *hopeful skeptic*. By that, he means someone who is willing to examine the evidence that reveals whether someone can be trusted to be good or not. Hope for goodness; expect goodness; and nurture goodness. He calls this “fact-checking a cynical theory,” by being “skeptical of your own cynicism.” Note that Zaki is not suggesting blind optimism nor unquestioning faith in human goodness. His bottom line — give good (hope) a chance.

This brings me to my observation. God is the source of hope. From the beginning, God’s drive is to show love and to create the conditions for love to thrive. I believe the biblical witness shows God relentlessly striving to bring humanity into good, loving relationships. Even in the midst of abject brokenness, God works to bring about the good. This is the fundamental meaning of the life, death, resurrection, ascension and promised coming of Christ. This means that our Christian faith is grounded in goodness. I also believe that God uses human agency to bring about divine goodness. This, among other things, is the meaning of the incarnation and Christian baptism.

While we were in Atlanta visiting our son, Hurricane Helene swept through. We were safe, but others suffered through the wind and torrential rain. We drove down. Coming back, we saw some of wind damage, but nothing like the flooding and destruction in Asheville. Scores of people have died, homes and businesses destroyed, lives disrupted. Perhaps you have friends or loved ones in the disaster zone. Let it be said that there is nothing good in this natural disaster in itself. Where the good is, is in those who helped, cared and loved during the storm; and, we, as a nation of good people, will rebuild.

When I volunteered to write this article, I expected it to be a good-bye letter, a Thank You for letting Trina and me be a part of your witnessing community for a season. Now my heart turns more to words of hope for your future ministry. We of the Calvinist family are prone to look on the cynical, dark side of affairs. I’m reminded of the old Scotsman who, upon stepping out into a sunny day, declared, ‘Oh, we’ll pay for this one.’ On the other hand, I am also reminded of the old gospel hymn, ‘Be not dismayed, whate’er betide / God will take care of you.’

There are questions we cannot answer. But God in Jesus Christ is our hope and future. Trust the God who has proven to be infinitely trustworthy. “The steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting.”

Blessings and much love, Frank and Trina — Bridge Pastors

Thank You Notes:

I would like to thank the Deacons for the Sanctuary flowers which were delivered by Gloria Shafer. Thank you so much! ~ *Archie Crum*

Dear Mark and Friends at First Presbyterian Church, Thank you! We are grateful for your recent gift of \$1,500 to CEDEPCA (a Protestant Center for Pastoral Studies in Central America). Together we celebrate God’s intentions for all of us by bringing change, improving lives, striving for love and justice, and caring for God’s creation. We are grateful for your generosity. ~ *Carrie Saathoff, President of CEDEPCA USA Board*

Thank you so much for the wonderful celebration of my 40 years with FPC – so many hugs, stories, laughter, a delicious cake with a typewriter and its keys on it, cookies, flowers, and all the beautiful cards and words of gratitude! I truly am blessed to be a part of the FPC family. ~ *Phyllis Garlock*



SOCK-TOBER: The Congregational Care Committee is asking church members to bring socks to church during the Sundays in October for the Salvation Army. Any kind of socks are welcome. Baskets for your donations will be at Sanctuary entrances and in Fellowship Hall.

Soup to Go – The Congregational Care committee is looking for Soup to Go teams for the coming year. Paul Fennema will kick the year off with his famous chili in November (date to be announced). The committee is looking for additional teams to make soup in the coming months.

Heggy's Candy – Preschool Fundraiser – Completed forms and cash/checks must be turned in by this Friday, October 4. Milk Chocolate Covered Oreos, Milk and Dark Chocolate Buckeyes, Milk and Dark Chocolate Cashews, Milk and Dark Chocolate Pecans, and Frog Mints.

Preschool Ongoing Fundraiser – Little Critters Soda from Kast Iron – 1 bottle for \$3.00 or 2 bottles for \$5.00. Root Beer, orange, Black Cherry, Blue Raspberry.

Preschool Supplies Needed – Paper Towels, Clorox Wipes, Hand Sanitizer, Facial Tissues, Markers, Small Glue Bottles, Fruit and Vegetable Cups, Granola and Cereal Bars. The Preschool will appreciate it very much if anyone can donate any of these items.

Troop 3 B is having a recruiting drive seeking adult leaders and young persons, ages 11-18. Qualifications: adherence to the Scout Oath and Law, a love of adventure, learning and teamwork. Perks: a world-class team, adventure, and learning amazing things. For more information, see Mark Smith or Frank Lewis.

Gratitude Reception for Pastors Frank and Trina Sunday, October 13

How fortunate our church has been to have had Pastors Frank and Trina Lewis to hold us together during this long transition time as we searched for our new Pastor. The love, strength, and guidance they have shared with us have been invaluable. We have grown to love them in a very special way. Now, it is time for us to show not only our love, but our gratitude for their time with us and wish them well as they finally will get to enjoy their well-deserved retirement years. The Congregational Care Committee is hosting a Gratitude reception following our Worship service on October 13, their last Sunday with us as our pastors. A light buffet lunch will be served. Please plan to be with us that day to help send them off. For those of you who wish to write a personal note to them, there will be a basket available for your cards.



Potluck Dinner following Installation Service for Rev. Annie Parker Sunday, October 27

We are all very excited to finally be able to welcome Pastor Annie Parker and her family to First Presbyterian Salem. As she gets to know our church family, she will soon see that we eat well at our church with soup luncheons, potlucks, Soup to Go etc. Let's show her how it's done by treating her to a Potluck Dinner following her Installation Service on Sunday, October 27. The Deacons and the Congregational Care Committee are teaming up and making plans for the dinner.



Everyone is invited to prepare their favorite Potluck dish and bring it to the kitchen prior to her Installation Service. Dinner will be served soon after the finish of the service. If you are not up to preparing a dish, we understand. You know we always have plenty of food. Don't let that keep you away. Come and enjoy! If you have questions, contact Gloria Shafer or Carol Ricciardi.

Preschool Trunk or Treat – Tuesday, October 29

Halloween is just around the corner and all the fun associated with it. Of course, that means Halloween. Last year many members of our congregation opened their hearts, trunks, and bags of treats for the children of our Presbyterian Preschool with a Trunk or Treat in the church parking lot. Who had the most fun – the children and their families or our church members? It's hard to say. Since it was so much fun, let's do it again! This year's Trunk or Treat is scheduled for Tuesday evening, October 29. You are invited to use your imagination to decorate the trunk of your car and bring a bag of treats to pass out to the children. Please have your car in place in the church parking long by 5:15. The children will meet by the Preschool door and begin visiting your cars by 5:30.

Beaver Creek Church Camp – As the Beaver Creek Church Camp Board, we are ecstatic to announce that our 2025 Camp Season will begin this June! As we await this camping season, the YMCA will be making extensive renovations to update our camp facilities to accentuate the beauty of God's creation surrounding us. Beaver Creek Camp will be under construction for the time being, causing us to delay our Open House. We invite you to our official camp site unveiling this spring! Stay tuned for updates on the renovations including before and after pictures! ~ *Steve Cramer*

Vision Statement

To glorify God and share the Spirit and love of Christ with our community and the world.