



LIFELINE

Musings of the Moderator - January 2024

"Compassion is not Cowardice"

Scripture, especially in the New Testament abounds with the nature of compassion. Over and over again, Jesus expresses concern with how people need to be treated with kindness and indeed compassion. Yet in society today, many people regard compassion as a sign of weakness, a willingness to subordinate one's self to the needs of others. This is perceived of as cowardice on the part of those who indulge in this perceived virtue. The modern focus is upon being self reliant and capable of caring for oneself. Of course this also can be interpreted as a form of narcissistic egoism. The issue is hardly confined to the present. Many literary figures have devoted attention to the issue.

One writer who has spent effort at considering the nature of compassion is Joseph Conrad. This can be seen in one his perhaps best known works, *Heart of Darkness*. The setting is the late nineteenth century Belgium Congo. It was hardly a compassionate setting. Conrad's main character, Charles Marlow, is commissioned by an exploitative trading company to seek out the whereabouts of its most successful representative, a man named Kurtz. Marlow is to sail down the Congo River into the backwater of this land of ivory. With each mile he travels further away from what was regarded as civilization and humanity. Without dwelling upon all the circumstances, he finds that Kurtz has turned himself into a God, succumbing to the lure of the darkness of the human soul before his death. This, however, is not what this essay is focused upon. It is concerned with the conclusion of the novel when Marlow has to make a significant decision.

Kurtz, before his descent into evil, was engaged to an innocent young woman who remained behind. Marlow approaches her to offer her his condolences at the news that Kurtz is dead. He does so with trepidation because he is terribly concerned about what to say to her about the degradation of Kurtz's final existence. Indeed, Kurtz himself recognizes at his end the terrible actions in which he has indulged. His final words to Marlow are, "The horror! The horror!" Marlow has to decide what to say to Kurtz's intended when she asks him his final words. After a horrendous introspection, Marlow tells her that Kurtz's final words were her name. Conrad writes, "It seemed to me the house would collapse before I could escape, that the heavens would fall on my head. But nothing happened. The heavens do not fall for such a trifle." Marlow speculates about what might have happened if he had told her the truth. He says, "But I couldn't. I could not tell her. It would have been too dark- to dark altogether..." Conrad, as all good writers do, allowed the reader to decide what to believe.

Many, perhaps even including Conrad, believe that Marlow's decision was an act of cowardice on his part. He should have told the girl the truth. What is really reflected in Marlow's decision is a remarkable act of kind compassion. To tell the truth in this instance would have destroyed the person. Compassion is not weakness or cowardice. It is an important component of Christian virtue and the new Social Gospel that needs to be encouraged more, especially in a world that is teetering on the brink of potential moral collapse.

*Peace and Blessings,
Michael L. Seewer, Moderator
Presbytery of the Miami Valley*



**CLERK'S
CORNER**
Session Recap
January 21, 2024

Pastor Joe led our meeting by welcoming everyone to the start of a new year. He welcomed first time Session member, Linda Hartsock, and returning members Art Myer and Roland Sommer. He thanked Julie for providing today's lunch. He opened the meeting with prayer.

The Clerk reported a quorum was present.

Session approved:

- The November 19, 2023, meeting minutes.
- The membership total as of 12/31/23 was 88.
- Elected Kathleen Seewer as 2024 Clerk of Session.
- Elected Officers of the Corporation for 2024:
 - President: Julie Brown
 - Vice-President: Bill McMillan
 - Secretary: Kathleen Seewer
 - Treasurer: Troy Oliver
- Collecting a "Souper Bowl" offering at the next Sunday Fun Day on February 11th with 100% of the proceeds to the FISH program.
- Dixie Jenkins as Elder Commissioner to all 2024 Presbytery Meetings. There is a Called (special) meeting on January 30, at 4:00 p.m. here at our church. The next stated Presbytery meeting (regular) will be on February 10, starting at 9:00 a.m. using ZOOM video conferencing.
- With regret, the written request from Tommy Thomas to be removed from the rolls as he has permanently moved to Alabama.
- Calling a Congregational meeting on October 27, 2024 to elect new officers and three members-at-large from the congregation to serve on the 2025 Nominating committee.
- The 2023 annual PCUSA Statistical report.
- March 17, 2024 for the next Session meeting.

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Additional Information:

Roll total at the end of the meeting was 87. Troy Oliver provided the final 2023 Financial Report prepared by Carolyn McMillan:

Total income for 2023 was \$216,757; total expenses for 2023 were \$252,563; the net amount for 2023 was -\$35,806.

<u>2024 Committee Assignments</u>	
Nominating Committee	Art Myers (chair)
Congregational Life & Service	Julie Brown (chair)
Christian Education	Troy Oliver
Mission	Linda Hartsock
Worship	Julie Brown
Fellowship	Diane Sondergelt
Stewardship	Troy Oliver (co-chair) Dixie Jenkins (co-chair) Julie Brown
Operations	Art Myers (co-chair) David Sellers (co-chair)
Property	Art Myers (co-chair) David Sellers (co-chair)
Administration	Julie Brown Linda Hartsock
Treasurer Finance	Troy Oliver Roland Sommer
Personnel	Dixie Jenkins (co-chair) Troy Oliver (co-chair) David Sellers Roland Sommer
Other Assignments	
Clerk of Session	Kathleen Seewer
Presbytery Commissioner	Dixie Jenkins
Boy Scout Liaison	Elaine Brown

Kathleen Seewer, 2024 Clerk of Session

Souper Bowl of Caring and Sunday Fun Day—February 11th

Our next Sunday Fun Day is February 11th, as we celebrate "Souper Bowl" Sunday immediately following worship. "Souper Bowl" Sunday was started by a Presbyterian Youth Group in South Carolina many years ago when they asked people to donate one dollar to help fight hunger in their neighborhood. It corresponds to the NFL's Super Bowl Sunday so please wear your favorite team's shirt or their colors. It can be any sport and any level. We will serve bean soup and sandwiches. We will have hot dogs and chips for the children. Our virtual, tabletop football game will also return! Please invite your friends and families to join us. Please see Diane if you have any questions.



A NOTE FROM ECCLESIAL—OUR RESIDENT CHURCH MOUSE

Greetings from my family to yours! January is behind us now - and what a busy month in the life of First Presbyterian! We started the year off with the "unhanging" of the greens that adorned the sanctuary with beauty during Advent. Several helpers made quick work of the task. There was an installation of new leaders in our church - and two ordinations. Linda Hartsock was ordained as an Elder and Shelda Cox as a Deacon. We are so lucky to have them! Several individuals enjoyed a day volunteering at Matthew 25 Ministries. After lunch in their cafeteria, the group worked hard on preparing thousands of donated materials for shipment to disaster ridden locations. I overheard there was a friendly competition between the two tables on who worked the hardest. My wife overheard Troy talking about another rummage sale in early May to earn money to repair the elevator. Start looking around for items you can donate to help her top her last fund raiser! A group also went back and prepared and served lunch at the Senior Center after a two month break for the holidays. It was well attended, and I heard the Chicken Cordon Bleu casserole was a real hit! To close out the month, there was also a called meeting of the Presbytery held at our church. It was fun watching all the preparations take place, and then the actual meeting where our visitors from all over the Miami Valley Presbytery came to visit us. My family and I were careful not to be seen, but enjoyed the activity. As we head into February and the Lenten season, reflect on what it is all about. Stay safe, and stay warm! ~*Ecclesial Mouse*



Sunday Worship

The Class of 2026 Elders and Deacons were installed/ordained on Sunday January 21st. Thank you Elders Linda Hartsock, Art Myers, and Roland Sommer and thank you Deacons Shelda Cox, Donna Kulhanek, and Judy Myers for serving our church.

The children love their time up front with Pastor Joe. Service Dog In-Training, Murphy, also joined the children for time with Pastor Joe. Murphy will have no trouble graduating with flying colors. He is already well mannered, friendly, and bringing smiles to everyone he meets.



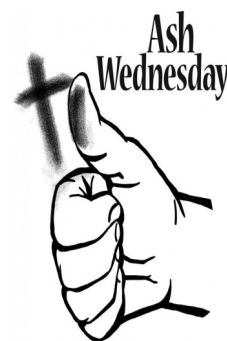
Rummage Sale Coming in May

We're planning on holding a rummage sale sometime in early May. We won't be able to store items at church until mid to late April. While you're doing your spring cleaning, please set any items that you can donate to make the rummage sale successful. The profits from the sale will go towards repairing the elevator. Please see Troy for more information.



Ash Wednesday—February 14

As Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 14, Pastor Joe will be offering ashes and prayers to anyone who chooses to drive through. He will be in the parking lot by the front door from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm and then again from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm.



COME ON IN- THE WATER'S FINE!

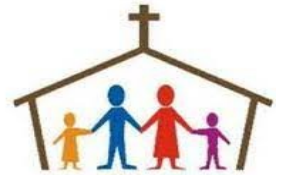
We know that not everyone is able to serve as an elder or a deacon. Some of you have served many times before and you've earned a break! But, are you able to help someone on a one-time basis with a ride to church or a doctor's appointment? Can you pick up a few groceries or a take-out meal? Would you be willing to run an errand or two for someone who is house-bound?

The Board of Deacons is looking to create a pool of volunteers who would be able to do these things as they are available to help. No pressure- no guilt. If you are unable when asked, that's OK. That's the reason for having a pool of people. If you can't help at any particular time, maybe someone else can.

Interested? Contact Shelda Cox (that's me) at (937)572-0072 or at my work number (937)879-3199. You can also text me at the first number or email me at work at spc50plus@yahoo.com.

Thanks!

Shelda



Total ECLIPSE



APRIL 7-8, 2024

SUN. APRIL 7

Events by the University of Virginia Astronomy Club

- Educational Fun for the Whole Family!
- Astronomy Presentations
- Arts and Crafts
- Solar Telescope Demonstration
- Guided Nature Hikes
- Campfires, Family Games and MORE!

MON. APRIL 8 ECLIPSE DAY

Enjoy This Once in a Lifetime Event at Kirkmont Center!

- Food Trucks
- Eclipse Arts and Crafts
- UVA Astronomy Club Experts
- Model Rocket Demonstration
- **TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE!**

Space is limited!
More Info @

WWW.KIRKMONTCENTER.ORG



*All Events Weather Dependent and Subject to Change



Happy Birthday!

Feb	2	Diane Sondergelt
	9	Marilyn Löw
	12	Linda Keller
	13	Harriet Ensor
	19	Jody Hoag

Blanket Party—Monday February 19th

Please join us for our Blanket Party at 10:00 am. We will make fleece blankets for our Transitional Living mission with Fairborn Schools. No experience required. If you can tie a knot, you can help. Please bring a pair of scissors if you have one. Lunch will be served. Please see Linda or Diane if you have any questions.



On January 22nd we enjoyed being together to volunteer at Matthew 25 Ministries (M25M) in Cincinnati. We will go again on Monday March 11th. It's very easy work which can be done entirely while sitting. Please consider joining us to help this very worthwhile organization. We are also collecting plastic grocery bags in a bin in the Lounge. We will turn the bags into sleeping mats for M25M to distribute as part of their humanitarian aid and disaster relief. As an additional benefit, it keeps the bags out of landfills. Please see Diane with any questions.



Fairborn FISH is deeply grateful for the overwhelming community support we have received this year. As our partners, you have enabled us to minimize hunger in our community.

In 2023 FISH provided -

- **424,896** meals and personal hygiene items to **45,054** individuals (**12,412** families), **426** military families and **140** homeless individuals
- **31** beds, bedding & stuffed animals to children (Morris Furniture & United Way) and **419** sleeping bags
- **1,000** personal hygiene kits and **11,116** diapers & wipes
- **8,500** children's books to children, courtesy of Project Read
- **1,000** pairs of warm socks
- **251** children received Christmas presents and a visit from Santa Claus

We also facilitated the following additional services from **Greene County Health Dept., Premier Health, Nourish the Service, Fairborn City Schools & Leo Club, Fairborn Promise Team, Wright State University, Fairborn Lions Club, and Master Gardeners of Greene County.**

Fairborn FISH consists of **76 volunteers** who donated **106,941 hours**. Your belief in Fairborn FISH has made a significant difference in the lives of thousands of people this year, giving them hope so they can envision a path out of poverty. Thank you for supporting our mission; Changing the lives of those we serve.

Jane Doorley
Executive Director



FAIRBORN FISH
FRIENDS IN SERVICE TO HUMANITY

February 2024

Sun**Mon****Tue****Wed****Thu****Fri****Sat**

				1	2	3
4 10:15 am Worship with Communion	5 1:00 pm Hope Circle — Lounge	6	7 2:00 pm Cornerstone Class —Lounge	8	9	10
11 10:15 am Worship and “Souper” Bowl Fun Day 	12	13	14 Ash Wednes- day Drive Thru 11:00am—1:00 and 4:00— 6:00pm No Cornerstone Class	15	16	17
18 10:15 am Worship	19 10:00 am Blanket Party and Lunch— Fellowship Hall 	20	21 2:00 pm Cornerstone Class —Lounge	22	23	24
25 10:15 am Worship	26	27 Lifeline articles due in church office	28 11:30 am Sr. Ctr. Lunch 2:00 pm Cornerstone Class —Lounge	29 		

SCHOOL PANTRY NEEDS

A shopping list is provided for your use. Any items collected will be divided between the Fairborn School Pantry and the Wright State Pantry. You can leave items in the bins in the narthex. If you need help with shopping or with pick-up and delivery, just let me know. I'll be happy to help.

Linda Hartsock

School Pantry Coordinator



Pasta Noodles	Oatmeal	Crackers
Pasta Sauce	Pancake Mix (add water only)	Snacks
Ravioli (Can or individual)	Pancake Syrup	Canned Vegetables
Soup	Poptarts	Juice
Rice and Noodle Mixes	Nuts	Paper Towels
Mac and Cheese (Box or individual)	Pudding	Toilet Paper
Tuna and Chicken cans	Fruit cups	Shampoo/Cond.
Vegetable Oil/Spray	Peanut Butter	Body Wash
Cereal	Jelly	Feminine Hygiene
Breakfast bars/muffins		

***Lifeline*—the monthly newsletter of the
First Presbyterian Church of Fairborn, Ohio
1130 Highview Dr., Fairborn, OH 45324
phone: 937-878-3954**

email: firstpresbyterianfairborn@gmail.com

Office Hours: Tuesday and Wednesday, 10 am—2 pm

Thursday 9 am –11am and 1 pm—3 pm

(closed Monday and Friday)

“The Friendliest Church in Town”

Sunday Worship: 10:15 am with an on-line option from the church website

Pastor: Reverend Joe Hinds

email: pastorjoe1stpres@gmail.com

Financial Secretary: Carolyn McMillan

Organist: Jeff Firestone

Choir Director: Shelda Cox

Director of Chancel Ringers: Rena Leatherman

SESSION

Moderator: Reverend Joe Hinds

Clerk: Kathleen Seewer

Ruling Elders: Julie Brown, Dixie Jenkins, Linda Hartsock, Art Myers,
Kathleen Seewer, David Sellers, Kim Sellers, and Roland Sommer

Articles for next month's Lifeline need to be in the office by March 27th.

**There will be a limited number of copies of the *Lifeline*
in the lower narthex near the Welcome/Visitors table if you want to pick one up.**

**Please let the office know of any meetings that you have scheduled in the church building
so that we can maintain an accurate calendar and answer questions as folks call.**