

**UNITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
**1342 PROSPECT ROAD**  
**ASHTABULA OH 44004**  
**[www.trinityashtabula.org](http://www.trinityashtabula.org)**

**DECEMBER 2025**  
**NEWSLETTER**



“for to you is born this day in the city of David  
a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. “

Luke 2:11





# Ashtabula Times

## JOINT COMMUNITY OUTREACH

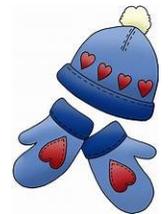
### COMMUNITY COUNCIL DECEMBER 2025

- St John's Kids Closet collection was delivered but will be ongoing.
- Blanket Collection for Catholic Charities through November, partial delivery made.
- 800 Bottles of water donated to Bethlehem Experience from Trinity, East and First Presbyterian Churches with sign indicating donation.
- Leftover Thanksgiving meal was donated to G.O. Ministries.
- A little over \$600 from the Kids Only Fund was spent on clothing for four (4) children and a mother in need.



### UPCOMING MISSION PROJECTS FOR 2025:

- Hat, Mitten & Glove Tree collection will be divided between Kids Only & GO. The tree will be in the sanctuary at First Presbyterian Church.
- Reverse Advent Calendar food collection will be provided for those that want to participate. There is currently a large need at the local food pantries. These items will be delivered to the local food pantry in January.
- Envelopes for the Christmas Joy Offering will be available at First Presbyterian Church.



### NEW BUSINESS:

- The 2026 Mission Calendar will remain the same as the 2025 calendar with additional projects added as needs arise.
- A \$100 Aldi gift card has been purchased with the money from Kids Only Fund for a family of 6 to provide thanksgiving dinner.
- It was agreed to use \$1400.00 from the current Kid's Only Fund to purchase gift cards for them to use as needed.



**NEXT MEETING – January 18, 2026, FOLLOWING WORSHIP**

### VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

- RSVP (Retired Seniors Volunteer Program)  
For information visit [ashtabulagiveback.org](http://ashtabulagiveback.org) or contact Stephanie Blessing – Americore – 440-670-9125 to volunteer
- G.O. Ministries
- Breakfast at First Baptist Church M-F – Feeding homeless  
8:30-9:30 a.m.



**Pam Bloom and Edie Makynen: co-chairpersons**



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## MEETING SCHEDULE

- ✦ Game Day—Postponed Until January
- ✦ ROMEOs—Tuesday, December 9th, 9am at Deb’s Diner
- ✦ Tri-Church Lunch Packing—Thursday, December 11th 10am at Unity
- ✦ Merging Committee —Thursday, December 11th, 1pm at Unity
- ✦ East Side Session—Monday, December 15th, 6:30pm at East Side
- ✦ Trinity Property/Finance—Wednesday, December 17th, 6pm at Unity



## EASTSIDE’S BIRTHDAYS

- Dec. 2 Elaine Robinson
- Dec. 16 Carol Reinhart
- Dec. 18 Joe Burnham
- Dec. 22 Len Edgren
- Dec. 27 Jacquie Quine
- Dec. 31 Betty Emery



## EASTSIDE’S ANNIVERSARIES

- Dec. 31 Gary and Jacquie Quine

## CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

- East Side will have its annual congregational meeting on Sunday, December 7, 2025 after worship in the Sanctuary of First Presbyterian to elect officers and to approve terms of call.
- Trinity will have a congregational meeting on Sunday, December 14, 2025 after worship in the Sanctuary of First Presbyterian to elect additional officers for 2026.
- All three churches will install/ordain new officers during worship on Sunday, December 21, 2025 during worship.



## PRAYER LIST



Genny Wallace, The Family of Berniece Boggs, Jim & Rose Booth, Jim & Caroline Johnston, The Family of Courtney Wetzel, Randy Cotton, Dale Fassett, Beverly Cigani, Sherrie Northrup, Ellen Jacobs, Danielle, and Joanna Fisher



# Ashtabula Times

## REPORT FROM TRINITY'S SESSION

Session met November 19<sup>th</sup> and the normal business was carried out including:

- Approval of minutes from October session meeting., October 27<sup>th</sup> e-mail vote, and the October 26<sup>th</sup> Congregational meeting.
- Joyce Williams was presented to session for examination as the nominated Deacon for the class of 2028. Her ordination is scheduled for Dec, 21<sup>st</sup>.
- Approval of financial reports for October.
- The clerk's report included a thank you letter from the Ashtabula Foundation .
- The Minister's report included:
  - ◇ A spreadsheet of his calls and visits.
  - ◇ Next Town Hall January 7<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 in Unity's sanctuary
  - ◇ A report that First Presbyterian Church voted to break the mesh with Unity beginning January 1, 2026.
- Committee reports
  - ◇ Worship and Music
    - ✦ Christmas Eve at First Pres. the Bell Choir will play.
  - ◇ Community Outreach
    - ✦ We are supplying 800 water bottles for the Bethlehem Project from all three churches
    - ✦ Donated items were taken to St. John's Nurses Closet.
    - ✦ We have adopted and are gathering gifts for 12 from Children Services for Christmas gifts
    - ✦ Linens have been donated for Catholic Charities.
    - ✦ There will be a Christmas joy Offering
  - ◇ Fellowship
    - ✦ 70 were serve at the Thanksgiving dinner.
  - ◇ Property and Finance
    - ✦ The committee is working on the replacement of three exterior doors.
    - ✦ The committee is purchasing replacement floor runners for the main hallways
    - ✦ The preliminary 2026 budget was reviewed and will be presented to Session in December
    - ✦ New runners for the halls will be purchased.
  - ◇ Nominating
    - ✦ Session affirmed the installation of the elected officers at a Congregational Meeting scheduled for Dec 14<sup>th</sup>
  - ◇ Merging
    - ✦ is continuing working on the Manual of Operations
    - ✦ The CPA is working of the legal details of the merger.
    - ✦ The committee met on Sat. Nov. 8<sup>th</sup> with both sessions to discern the committees for Unity



Meeting  
Minutes

Craig Reiter for Mary Belding, Clerk of Trinity



# Ashtabula Times

## MERGING COMMITTEE

The Committee continues to work on the Manual of Operations. This includes guidelines for all committees as well as all policies for operation of the church.

We met on Saturday November 8th with all members of both sessions to begin to discern what committees Unity will have for its operations.

It has been a joy working together. All are engaged in this process.



## MINISTERIAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Our committee meets with Rev. Mong to discuss any issues that may be impacting our church. We are here to talk with Rev. Mark concerning his ministry.

If you have anything you would like to see addressed, please contact any of us.

Mary Belding, Pam Bloom, Cathy Burnham, Beth Dougherty, Edie Makynen and Phyllis Willis.



## THANKS

A big thank you to everyone who worked to make the Thanksgiving Dinner and the Funerals for Courtney Wetzal and Berniece Boggs successful. Your sharing of your skills and time was greatly appreciated and truly many hands make for light work. Thanks.



## BELL CHOIR REHEARSAL

The Three Church Bell Choir will continue to rehearse in preparation for our Christmas Eve contributions to worship directly after worship on Sundays in December at First Presbyterian. Please plan on attending the rehearsals as your attendance will help the music be at its best. Contact Marty Burnham for questions or updates.



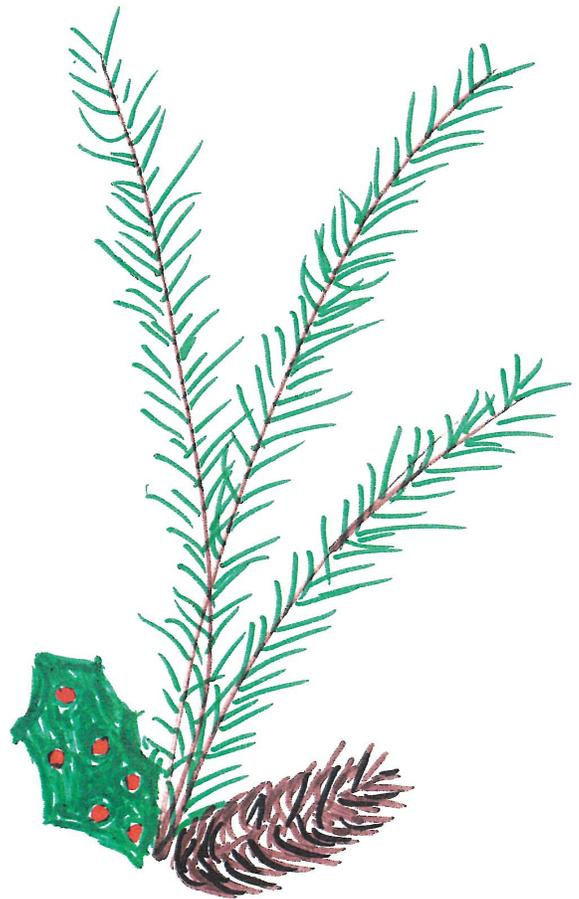


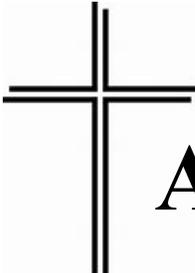
# Ashtabula Times

## REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR

EACH DAY ADD AN ITEM TO A BOX. AFTER CHRISTMAS, BRING THE BOX TO CHURCH TO BE DONATED TO THE FOOD PANTRY IN JANUARY. THESE ARE ONLY SUGGESTIONS. YOU MAY SUBSTITUTE OR REPEAT ITEMS.

- December 1 – box of cereal
- December 2 – peanut butter
- December 3 – stuffing mix
- December 4 – boxed potatoes
- December 5 – macaroni and cheese
- December 6 – canned fruit
- December 7 – canned tomatoes
- December 8 – canned tuna
- December 9 – dessert mix
- December 10 – applesauce
- December 11 – canned sweet potatoes
- December 12 – cranberry sauce
- December 13 – canned beans
- December 14 – box of crackers
- December 15- package of rice
- December 16 – package of oatmeal
- December 17 – package of pasta
- December 18 – spaghetti sauce
- December 19 – chicken noodle soup
- December 20 – tomato soup
- December 21 – can of corn
- December 22 – can mixed vegetables
- December 23 – can carrots
- December 24 – can green beans



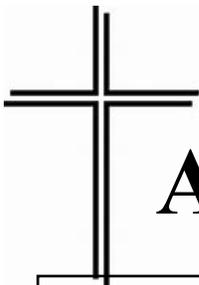


# Ashtabula Times

## REPORT FROM EAST SIDE'S SESSION

- The Minutes were reviewed and approved.
- The Treasurer's Report was reviewed and approved.
- Pastor's Report:
  1. Bible Studies are resuming this week. Wednesday at 10:00 AM and Thursday at 7:00 PM at Trinity.
  2. Reviewed visits and calls with Mark.
  3. New caregiver support group is forming.
  4. Deadline for the newsletter is December 1, 2025.
  5. East Side will hold a Congregational Meeting December 7, 2025, to elect officers and approve the Pastor's Terms of Call.
  6. Courtney Wetzel's funeral service will be at East Side on December 1, 2025. Berniece Boggs passed away November 17, 2025, her funeral service will be December 8, 2025, at East Side.
  7. Mark will be on Study Leave from December 25th to January 2nd. Rev. Joe Fields will fill the pulpit on December 28th.
- Clerk's report: A letter was received from the Pildner family requesting funds from John's Memorial to be released to purchase a bench for the park.
- MRC Committee will continue in 2026.
- Merging Committee is continuing to work on the Manual of Operations. Both Sessions and the Merging Committee met on November 8, 2025, for a Leadership Workshop. They established six Committees for the session for Unity. The next meeting for the Merging Committee will be December 11, 2025, at 1:00 PM.
- Buildings and Grounds: The program on November 11, 2025, was well attended. We were thankful for Marty Burnham's help with the audio equipment.
- Nominating Committee is set for the Congregational Meeting.
- Personnel: The committee will be announcing collection for staff bonuses in December.
- Outreach: The leftover food from the Thanksgiving Dinner went to GO Ministries. The mittens and hats collected will go to GO Ministries and Kids Only. A Gift Card from Aldis was given to a family in need from Kids Only. Keegan will do Minute for Mission for Kids Only in January. The \$170. Offering collected at the Thanksgiving Dinner will go to the Deacon's Fund Thanksgiving. The session approved the mission calendar for 2026.
- Worship and Music: Bell practices started in November at Unity and will continue at First Presbyterian in December. The first Sunday of Advent is November 30, 2025. The Bells from Trinity were sold to Old Stone Church, we gave the pads from East Side to Old Stone Church. Poinsettia order forms need to be completed by November 23, 2025. We will use battery operated candles for the Candlelight Service on Christmas Eve. First Presbyterian Church congregation will continue worship at First Presbyterian Church using pulpit supply as of January 2026.





# Ashtabula Times



## **FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK**

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We once again find ourselves in Northeast Ohio in winter weather season. While we did not receive 60 inches of snow over Thanksgiving week, we did see the return of snow, wind and ice making it difficult to travel. On any given day, we must check the conditions of the roads before we decide to run our errands to the store, bank or friend's houses. If the snow is too deep or the roads too icy, we wisely choose to stay in until the conditions are safer, and when the plows have cleared and salted the roads we choose to go out.

In our text from the prophet Isaiah, we also have a going out, not from our homes, but from Jerusalem and not with our cars but with the Word of God. God promises a time when God will not be stuck at home during a winter storm, but a time when God's Word and Kingdom will pour into the world blessing and filling God's creation with God's own Life and Glory. But the situation of Israel was anything but a time of Kingdom, Blessing, Life and Glory. Israel was surrounded by empires, assailed by enemies within, and in-fighting amongst themselves about how to best resolve the conflicts. Into this space, Isaiah speaks about the day God doesn't stay home but goes out into the world.

But perhaps the most specific thing the people were looking for was an honest and righteous Judge/King. Judges were often corrupt, taking bribes from the rich at the expense of the poor and playing favorites with their friends and with the influential rather than doing the right thing. God promises to come personally to judge correctly and the result of that going out is the peace so poetically described as the people transforming weapons of war into implements of life and creation. But only under the rule of God does Peace and Harmony come about and only if God comes and puts the world to right.

Only after God comes does the creation flow into Jerusalem. I find this most instructive because we certainly want our church to have the people and blessings of the city around us to flow into our buildings, pews and perhaps most importantly our checking accounts. But, the Word of God must go out, the Kingdom of God (which is quite different than our country or our church) must come, and peace must be made first. Then the creation will flow into Jerusalem. We expect the opposite, our neighborhood must come in for Peace, Kingdom, and Blessing, when in fact we must go out.

Perhaps we need to be corrected again. Not to be a church which expects the neighborhood to come in for some goods and services which we offer, but a people that go out to speak Gospel, proclaim Kingdom, and make Peace. Only then may the creation flow into Jerusalem. The problem is we are stuck at home in a storm not of ice and snow, but fear and selfishness. Fear of our neighborhoods that we believe are filled with "different and dangerous" people and selfishness that we believe our time and resources are for ourselves and the people that think like we do.

Now you know why, Isaiah told the people *to walk in the light of the Lord* and not in the fear and selfishness of sin's darkness. The Church has a choice and needs to make a better choice this Advent season. To go out and not hide behind our Church's walls, fences and security systems. To proclaim the Good News and Kingdom of God and not hide in our self-made kingdoms listening to other news. To make things that create out of things that destroy, instead of making a profit or worse making nothing. To walk in the light of God or to hide in the darkness of Sin: this is the Advent Choice, and we must choose between Faith in Christ or faith in someone else or faith in ourselves. Let us answer the call from God to walk in the Light of Christ instead of hiding from the storm. Amen.

In Christ, Rev. Mark