

UNITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
1342 PROSPECT ROAD
ASHTABULA OH 44004
www.trinityashtabula.org

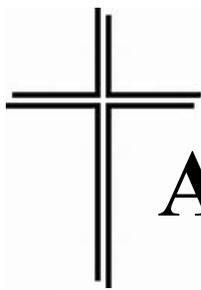
NOVEMBER 2025
NEWSLETTER



“I will praise the name of God with a song; I
will magnify him with thanksgiving.”

Psalm 69:30





Ashtabula Times



All Services are at
10am

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

<u>Date</u>	<u>Liturgical Day</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Anthem</u>
11/2/2025	All Saints Day	Trinity	3 Church Choir
11/9/2025	32nd Sunday in O.T.	Trinity	3 Church Choir
11/16/2025	33rd Sunday in O.T.	Trinity	3 Church Choir
11/23/2025	Christ the King Sunday	Trinity	3 Church Choir
11/30/2025	1st Sunday of Advent	Trinity	3 Church Choir
12/7/2025	2nd Sunday of Advent	First Pres.	Special Music
12/14/2025	3rd Sunday of Advent	First Pres.	Special Music
12/21/2025	4th Sunday of Advent	First Pres.	Special Music
12/24/2025	Christmas Eve	First Pres.	Special Music
12/28/2025	First Sunday of Christmas	First Pres.	Special Music
1/4/2026	Epiphany of the Lord	Trinity	3 Church Choir
1/11/2026	Baptism of the Lord	Trinity	3 Church Choir
1/18/2026	2nd Sunday in O.T.	Trinity	3 Church Choir
1/25/2026	3rd Sunday in O.T.	Trinity	3 Church Choir

REPORT FROM MERGING COMMITTEE

The Merger Committee is hard at work organizing and scheduling the list of items necessary to complete the Merger of East Side and Trinity in a timely fashion.

The by-laws have been prepared, reviewed by the Committee and were discussed at the town hall meeting in October.

The Merging Committee is currently working on revising the Manual of Operations: We are working in teams to start updating each section. Preliminary results will be shared at our November Town Hall Meeting.

A tentative outline of events needed to complete the merger has been prepared and will guide us in completing the tasks as needed.

Our next meeting is currently scheduled for November 6, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.





Ashtabula Times

JOINT COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Meeting held October 19, 2025, following Worship at First Presbyterian Church

COMPLETED MISSION:

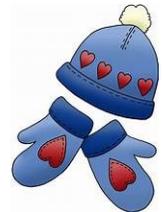
- Peace and Global Witness Offering – 25% will go to Homesafe
- Collection of items for St. John's Nurse for kids in need.



2025 AGENDA

Please retain so you can choose how you wish to share your blessings with these mission projects throughout the year.

- Blankets and linens will be collected for Catholic Charities during October and November.
- 800 8-ounce bottles of water are being purchased for donation to the Bethlehem Experience. They will be labeled with the names of the three churches and a scripture. The cost will be shared.
- Children Services Adoption will take place in November. Names will be available on a tree at Unity for your taking. Gifts are to be unwrapped, tagged, and at Unity by December 1.
- Christmas Joy Offering will be collected in December. Envelopes will be available at First Presbyterian.
- Hat, Glove, and Mitten Tree will be set up at First Presbyterian at the back of the sanctuary.
- We continue to collect food for the food pantry, shoes for First Presbyterian, items for the Blessing Box, loose coins for the Kids Only Mission Fund, 2 Cents a Meal



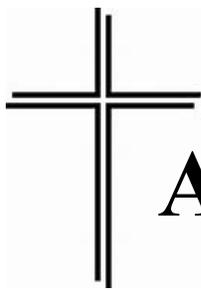
LADIES NIGHT OUT

The Juliets enjoyed a night out on Wednesday, October 22, 2025, @ Old Mill Winery, Geneva, OH. Thanks to Joyce Kren for making the arrangements.

NEXT MEETING: NOVEMBER 16, 2025, following worship at Unity

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- G.O. Ministries
- Breakfast at First Baptist Church, M-F, 8:30-9:30 A.M. (feeding homeless)
- Retired Seniors Volunteer Program (RSVP) for info visit ashtabulagiveback.org or contact Stephanie Blessing Americore – 440-670-9125 to volunteer
Pam Bloom and Edie Makynen: co-chairpersons



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MEETING SCHEDULE

Game Day—Tuesday, November 11th and 25th, 11:30am at Unity
 Town Hall Meeting—Wednesday, November 5th, 6:30pm at Unity
 Tri-Church Lunch Packing—Thursday, November 13th 10am at Unity
 ROMEOs—Tuesday, November 11th, 9am at Deb’s Diner
 Trinity Property/Finance—Wednesday, November 19th, 6pm at Unity
 Trinity Session—Wednesday, November 19th, 7pm at Unity
 Outreach —Sunday, November 16th, after worship at Unity.
 East Side Session—Monday, November 17th, 6:30pm at East Side
 Merging Committee —Thursday, November 6th, 1pm at Unity
 Presbytery Meeting—Monday, November 24th, 6:30pm Zoom only



EASTSIDE’S BIRTHDAYS

29th Paula Raffenaud



EASTSIDE’S ANNIVERSARIES

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

A heartfelt thank-you to everyone who sent prayers, cards, well wishes, flowers, meals, goodies, phone calls, home visits, gifts and chauffeur services while my broken bones in my foot are healing.

God has blessed me with many wonderful people and I truly appreciate each and everyone of you all.
Ruth Allen



PRAYER LIST

Genny Wallace, Berniece Boggs, Jim & Rose Booth, Jim & Caroline Johnston, Courtney Wetzel, Randy Cotton, Dale Fassett, Pat Ford, Those Suffering from Addiction, Barb Beatty, and Joanna Fisher



Ashtabula Times

Semiquincentennial

Independence Forum

..”our lives, our fortunes, our sacred honor”

• **November 11** •

• **7:00 pm** •

• **East Side**

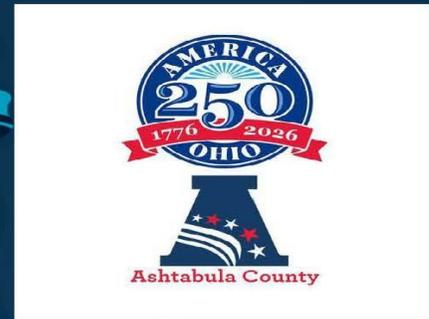
Presbyterian Church •

3440 Edgewood Drive, Ashtabula

Northeasterly Winds Woodwind Quintet

Conversations with County Veterans
Dr. John Patterson, moderator

America250-AshtabulaCounty Theatre Troupe
Marti Milliken Dixon, director





Ashtabula Times

REPORT FROM TRINITY'S SESSION

Session met October 15th and the normal business was carried out including:

- Approval of minutes from December session meeting.
- Approval of financial reports for September.
- The Clerk's report included reviewing the Active and Inactive Rolls of the church. To be on the Active Roll, a member needs to contribute once annually to the worship and work of the church. Three members were moved from the Active to the inactive roll. Twenty-three members were removed from the Inactive Roll.
- The Minister's report included:
 - ◊ A spreadsheet of his calls and visits.
 - ◊ Next Town Hall November 5th at 6:30 in Unity's sanctuary
 - ◊ Session approved for Rev. Mong, study leave November 10-16 and vacation from Dec 26-Jan 2. A Care-givers Support group is forming.
- Committee reports
 - ◊ Worship and Music
 - ◆ A Thanksgiving dinner will be at Unity on November 8th.
 - ◆ Orders for poinsettias will be taken at First Pres
 - ◊ Community Outreach

We are supplying 800 water bottles for the Bethlehem Project
 - ◊ Fellowship
 - ◆ 20 attended the Trinity/Harris/First Christian Celebration of Life
 - ◆ 80 attended the East Side Celebration of Life
 - ◆ There will be a sign up for the Thanksgiving dinner
 - ◊ Property and Finance
 - ◆ The floors in the entrys, hallways, kitchen and Fellowship Hall were stripped and waxed.
 - ◆ New runners for the halls will be purchased.
 - ◊ Nominating has a slate of officers for election on October 26th
 - ◊ Merging is working on the Manual of Operations
 - ◊ Ministerial Relation completed Rev. Mong's evaluation and Terms of Call
 - ◊ Presbytery approved our merger at the September meeting



Meeting
Minutes

Mary Belding, Clerk of Trinity



Ashtabula Times

LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP

Rev. Mark will be leading a workshop for both Sessions of Trinity and East Side to begin discernment about Unity's future committees on Saturday, November 8th from 10am to Noon at Unity. If you are currently serving as a Ruling Elder or will be nominated for a Ruling Elder next year, you are invited to attend and we look at all the responsibilities of Session and how the new joint Session wants to delegate tasks to its committees.



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.



THANKSGIVING DINNER

AT UNITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 9, FOLLOWING WORSHIP, SIGN-UP BY TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2025

We welcome First Presbyterian and Unity Presbyterian members and friends to join us in a celebration of thanks to God for the blessings he has bestowed upon us.

Turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, gravy and beverages will be provided. Attendees should bring a vegetable, salad, or dessert to share.

We will also provide disposable platter-type plates, heavy duty plastic cutlery, napkins, and cups. If anyone prefers to bring their own table service, feel free to do so.

For planning purposes, we ask that **reservations** be made **by Monday, November 3**. **Sign-up sheets** will be available at Unity in the fellowship hall or on the table at the back of the sanctuary. You may also make a reservation by calling the church office at East Side (440-993-7546). If you call when the office is not open, leave a message that provides your name and the number of people that will be attending.



We hope that you will join us for great food and fellowship.



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PLAN OF UNION

This is the tentative timeline and plan for what and when the merger will look like:

Phase One (September 2025 to April 2026)

- Dissolve and Rename corporations
 - Consolidating Financial Accounts
 - Transferring deeds
 - Charter the Rolls
 - Closing Services
 - Opening/Charter Service
-

Phase Two First Congregational Meeting of Unity (April 2026)

- Approve Bylaws
 - Approve Manual of Operations
 - Elect Elders and Deacons
 - Approve Terms of Call
 - Elect Nominating Committee
-

Phase Three First Session Meeting of Unity (April – May 2025)

- Approve Budget
 - Elect Clerk, President, Treasurer
 - Set Communion dates
 - Set Meeting dates
 - Delegate Committees
 - Approve Employee job descriptions and salaries
 - Appoint Moderators of Committees
 - Moderators choose committees and begin work
-

Phase Four (May 2026 – November 2026)

- Sort and Move items to Unity
- Move Office and Staff to Unity
- Begin Good Future Accelerator to discern East Side's redevelopment
- Continue to work on Shaping our worship services together
- New Members Class and Transferring memberships
- Focus on creating the new normal for members and leaders

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REPORT FROM EAST SIDE'S SESSION

- Ruth Best reported that the Deacons from both churches were visiting shut ins and serving home Communion. They helped with the refreshments for the Celebrations of Life at Trinity and East Side and are currently working on the Thanksgiving Dinner to be held November 9, 2025, at Unity.
- The Minutes were reviewed and approved.
- The Treasurer's Report was reviewed and approved.
- Pastor's Report:
 1. The Presbytery meeting will be November 24, 2025, via Zoom.
 2. The Town Hall Meeting will be on November 5, 2025, at Unity, at 6:30 pm. We will be looking at Manual of Operations for Unity and discerning our relationship with First Presbyterian in 2026.
 3. Bible Studies are resuming this week. Wednesday at 10:00 AM and Thursday at 7:00 PM at Trinity.
 4. Reviewed visits and calls with Mark.
 5. A Leadership Workshop scheduled for November 8, 2025, from 10:00 to 12:00 for Elders from East Side and Trinity as well as the Merging Committee.
 6. New caregiver support group is forming.
 7. Deadline for the newsletter is October 27, 2025.
 8. East Side will hold a Congregational Meeting December 7, 2025, to elect officers and approve the Pastor's Terms of Call.
- Mark will be on Study Leave November 10th to November 16th. Rev, Eric Dillenbeck will fill the pulpit on Nov. 16, 2025.
- Clerk's report: deaths to be reported on All Saints Day this past year: Joyce Shellhammer 11/23/24, Charlene Woodburn 12/24/24, Roselind Woodburn 5/14/24, Frances Cogan 6/6/25.
- Buildings and Grounds: No issues currently.
- Annual Audit has been completed for 2024.
- Nominating Committee will be nominating Sandra Brown, Bonnie Pocza and Becki Cleveland for Deacons.
- Personnel: Employee Reviews have been completed. Approved a motion from the Personnel Committee for a 3% cost of living increase for 2026 for employees.
- Outreach: 800 8 oz. bottles of water have been purchased for the Bethlehem Experience. \$40.75 (25% of the Global Peace Offering) will go to Homesafe. We will be adopting 6 boys and 6 girls at Christmas. Then same mission calendar will be used in 2026.
- The Celebration of Life was well attended on September 27, 2025.
- Worship and Music: Bell practices will start in November at Unity. Edie Makynen and Beth will help serve Communion in November at Unity. The first Sunday of Advent is November 30, 2025. We will put candles in the windows and wreaths on the doors at East Side during advent.



**MEETING
MINUTES**

Cathy Burnham, Clerk of Session



Ashtabula Times



FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

With the calendar on my desk flipping over, I can't help but notice that we are entering that time of year, when our schedules become fuller, if that is possible. Our calendars, both on paper and on our phones, are full of all kinds of activities: fall sports banquets, winter sports starting up, report cards coming home, outside chores needing done, candy for Halloween, turkeys on order for Thanksgiving, and we are in full blown denial when it comes to Christmas being less than two months away.

But our schedules are not just full this time of year, many other things are full as well. With all the good things that we have come to enjoy and with all of life's circumstances, we as Americans and as Christians have truly been blessed with much from the hand of God given through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.

I am reminded of another time when the land produced many blessings. A farmer had a tremendous bumper crop which he could not store in his barns. He was vexed because he had no means of storing the grain from his fields and the excess would be lost in spoilage. So, he pulls down his barns, and he builds bigger barns that can hold the enormous quantity of grain. Successful, he says to himself, I have enough resources now to retire and to live a life of leisure, eating, drinking, and making merry.

Like this farmer, few of us are lacking in resources. We might not have everything we want, but few have empty bellies and empty dressers. Also, many have stored up enough resources to be able to retire and enjoy a life less stressful and less busy. Or at least some are busy doing what they want to do not just what they had to do. But, the point being that this time of year finds many of us with full barns and bank accounts and some even had to build bigger barns to store everything God has blessed us with.

But God says to the rich farmer, *you fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?* While many have viewed the problem with this farmer is that he built bigger barns to store the bumper crop; and therefore, a critique of saving for an unknown and certain future; others have found another criticism to be more sinister. The problem is not that he built a bigger barn, the problem is that he didn't build a bigger table. Instead of ensuring that his neighbors were well looked after with the excess food he didn't need, he tells himself *Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.* Instead of blessing others with what he had been overblessed with, he sat on everything in avarice. Instead of being truly grateful and responsible with God's blessings, he became greedy and selfish, keeping it all to himself.

What if the problem is not that we build bigger barns, or bigger savings accounts, or as Trinity, have a very large endowment, what if the more sinister problem is that we fail to build bigger tables that others might share alongside us in God's blessings? The problem is not sins of commission, the problem are sins of omission; not that we do wrong; but we fail to do right!

As we begin this holiday season, both you and I will enjoy the bounty of gifts and blessings all which come from the hand of God in Christ Jesus. But what if we learned to gift and bless others with the bumper crop that God has given and blessed us with? What if we were truly thankful with God's immeasurable gifts, by blessing others, in God's name? What if we were responsible with our full barns, by building full tables for more to share, in God's name? What if we loved our neighbor by pouring out ourselves, like God poured out God's self in Jesus Christ? What if ...?

We might just find that have become sons and daughters of God, who love others as the Son of God has loved us first. So, this holiday season let us become a people of the table, inviting more to share in Jesus' bounty with thankfulness, and if necessary, let us get or build bigger ones for more people to share with us. And it will be a true time of Thanksgiving.

In Christ,
Rev. Mark