

John C. Lentz, Pastor
Lois Annich, Rachel McDonald, Interim Associate Pastors

*Discovering God's call, celebrating the Spirit's presence
Witnessing to Christ's transformative power!*



The Tower

February 2017

Dear Friends,

February. Chaucer in his *Canterbury Tales*, and later T.S. Eliot in his poem "The Waste Land," claimed that April was the cruelest month, but Chaucer and Eliot never lived in Cleveland during February. I am tired of snow, cold, and sudden temperature variations. Other than the Super Bowl, which happens very early in the month; Valentine's Day, which is ho-hum; and "Ground Hog Day" which makes no sense at all, there is nothing that stands out about this month. Unless you are a skier or enjoy snowshoeing (but there's not even a guarantee of good snow), February is truly "the bleak mid-winter." (Ground Hog Day on February 2 is actually the exact middle of winter – six weeks gone, six more to go.) Lent doesn't even begin until March 1, which is Ash Wednesday this year.

"And yet." These two words are full of spiritual power. **And yet**, February is the month we celebrate Black History. Who said nothing happens in February? Programs, meals, and music! (see the schedule on page 3.) Each year our celebration gets better. **And yet**, already the days are just a wee bit longer than they were in January. **And yet**, in a few short weeks pitchers and catchers will report to Spring Training. **And yet**, even now the sap is beginning to rise in the trees. **And yet**, Deanne and I picked out the beach house at Bethany where the Lentz family will gather in July! **And yet!**

There is always something moving us forward. Some hope, some dream, some promise yet to be fulfilled. It is the way of faith to look ahead with hope and “lay aside every weight and sin that clings so closely and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Hebrews 12: 1-2)

No matter how you are feeling this month, hold fast to faith; persevere. Come to church and be with others. Call a friend, volunteer at the pantry or Labre. Get outside! Use this inward focused time to explore your prayer life; write poetry and song. There’s not much better than good music and a good book to soothe the weary soul.

And yet! Something is coming. Something is on its way. We will get through February together!

Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John", with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left and then curves back under the name.

Rev. Dr. John C. Lentz, Jr.
Senior Pastor

Speaking of Race: **BLACK LIVES MATTER HERE**

- | | | |
|------------|----------|--|
| Sun Feb 5 | 9:00 am | Presentation on "Race Relations in the Church" |
| Sun Feb 12 | all-day | Support a Black-Owned Restaurant |
| Sat Feb 18 | 6:30 pm | Gospel Concert with Mother Wright and The Wright Family Singers |
| Sun Feb 19 | 12:15 pm | Discussion of John Lewis' book <i>March</i> & Soul Food Pot Luck |
| Fri Feb 24 | 7:00 pm | Family Movie Night <i>Zootopia</i> |
| Sat Feb 25 | 12:00 pm | Workshop with Rev. Robina Winbush |
| Sat Feb 25 | 7:00 pm | Jazz Concert with Elegie & more |
| Sun Feb 26 | 11:00 am | Worship with sermon by Rev. Winbush |

BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2017



Forest Hill Church

3031 Monticello in Cleve. Hts.
216.321.2660 www.fhcpresb.org

ALL EVENTS FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

It was around this time last year that our cat, Cortez, moved in with us. During those first few weeks she hid under the bed and barely ate. Now, she has become quite fat and happy. It is clear to all who see her that she is the center of attention. It seems impossible that this is the same cat.



It's hard to remember what that was like when Cortez first arrived. It reminds me of how I feel during the middle of winter, when it seems like warmer days will never arrive. But I do have a vague memory of the hottest days of summer when it seemed like winter would never come. How quickly we forget!

Every year, Forest Hill Church has an annual meeting where we gather to see what we have done the year before as well as look ahead to the year to come. Our staff, session, and ministries do the same process of reflecting through retreats and meetings. This year, our leaders have been asked to use the language of "reporting back" and "looking ahead." This process makes the perfection-driven achievers in our midst happy, but it should also be fulfilling to those of us who want to deepen our relationship with God. When we look back over a long period of time, we often have a better understanding of what has really changed in our lives. This is a spiritual discipline that keeps us open and aware of how God is present in our lives.

I invite you to "report back" over the last year, six months, five years of your life. Look through an old calendar, journal, or the posts you put on Facebook. Where has God been? What do you need to remember and what do you have to be grateful for? How does it shape what you will do next, to what you can "look ahead"?

My prayer for you is to trust that God has been with you in the past and will continue to be with you in the future.

Rachel McDonald
Interim Associate Pastor

Music Notes



February is Black History Month, and Forest Hill celebrates that with gusto! Our services will be enhanced with spirituals, gospel songs and global music. There are two evening concerts which the Black History Committee is presenting in February: a gospel concert on Saturday, February 18 and a jazz concert on Saturday, February 25. Mark your calendars for these two great events!

On Sunday, February 26 (Transfiguration Sunday, the last Sunday before Lent begins), we will welcome Tina Bergmann on hammered dulcimer and her husband Bryan Thomas on upright bass. Promoted as the "Diva of the Dulcimer" by Apollo's Fire, Cleveland's nationally known Baroque orchestra, Tina is known for her driving energy and syncopated rhythms and was described by Pete Seeger as "the best hammered dulcimer player I've heard in my life." Bryan is a versatile bassist who performs as a free-lance musician throughout northeast Ohio. He is the double bass instructor at Kent State University, and he also teaches in the jazz program at Cuyahoga Community College.



A hearty welcome goes out to new singers in the Chancel Choir: soprano Beth Garrett, alto Linda Martin, tenor Carolyn Smith, and bass Keith Sykora. New members are welcome at any time. Remember: We all need artistic outlets that help us block out the stresses of our world. Singing music, particularly sacred music, is a gift to your soul!

Soli Deo Gloria

Anne Wilson, Director of Music

216-321-2660 (church)

216-870-2729 (cell)

annew@fhcpresb.org

Greater Cleveland Congregations

#NOTALLIN press conference was held January 11 outside the Q Arena. GCC asked that consideration by the City of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County to provide \$106 million of taxpayer money to upgrade the arena be made open to public debate. One of our demands is that a matching amount be designated for the city neighborhoods, jobs and schools. Crain's and Cleveland.com also denounce this funding as corporate welfare. **We believe this is bad public policy, a bad public process, and deeply immoral—a term we do not use lightly.** About 50 members were present at the press conference; 9 of us, including Rev. John Lentz, were representing FHC.

- **The next Delegate Assembly, January 26, 7:00 pm**, will focus on this issue and introduction of new slate for the Strategy Team (board). We are excited to announce that John Lentz has agreed to participate on the Strategy Team. Diana Woodbridge is already a member. All are invited to attend the assembly at the Unitarian Universalist Society, 2728 Lancashire Rd, Cleveland Heights.
- **Downtown Subsidy Tour, February 25** from 1-3 pm, location TBD. This will focus on the misspent subsidies to businesses and corporations, and a tour of neighborhoods that need the same attention and commitment.

FHC CORE TEAM: The FHC Core Team is thrilled to have **Scott Lafferty** join us. He comes with much experience and wisdom. We anticipate you will hear even more about GCC this year. Please join us, if you are interested!! You may like to know more about the core team concept and how you can be involved to make ours even stronger. There will be **Core Team Trainings, February 7 and 9**, 7-9 pm at Olivet Institutional Baptist Church, 8712 Quincy Ave. (same training, two nights)

Celebration of Tracey Lind, Dean of Trinity Cathedral -January 25 from 5:30 to 8:00, Trinity Cathedral, 2230 Euclid Ave. Sadly, Dean Lind is retiring. We are all invited to celebrate her amazing work at Trinity, GCC and beyond.

Cleveland Heights Housing Issue Team made great inroads in 2016, focusing on the Noble neighborhood. The energy of this team has brought hope and change to the area by initiating city clean up of vacant properties and action on foreclosed houses. The city staff responsible for addressing these issues have been identified and encouraged to act. With our urging, 3 new housing related positions were added to the budget by City Council.

Stayed tuned as we work with GCC in 2017 to make a difference in the lives of all who live and work in Cleveland and Cuyahoga County.

Jennifer Blakeney



Earth Care Projects, Anyone?

As responsible and faithful members of Forest Hill, we are all very diligentwe recycle, compost, become downright miserly in our use of electricity, water and heat, and bundle our automobile trips to cut down on gasoline usage. Right?

But what do we do – what *can* we do – for our community? The Earth Care Green team is looking for a suitable community project or projects focusing on Earth Care that we can undertake as a group effort.

We are planning another **electronic+metal recycling day** later this spring, and of course there is the always-needed Forest Hill Park **trash roundup** when the weather improves. But does anyone have another idea for a group project in which many of our congregation members can get involved? Plantings, pruning, bird feeder installations? How about helping some of our neighbors' properties to facilitate backyard habitats, capture soil and water runoff? What else?

Come one, come all with your ideas! See me in church, email me (theneffers@sbcglobal.net), or leave a note in my mailbox in the FHC office mailbox array. No Earth Care community project is too small to undertake!

Dave Neff
Earth Care Green Team

FHC Makes History **With the 2017 *Serve One Another* Campaign**

The astounding power of God's love has again been revealed at Forest Hill Church, this time through the 2017 ***Serve One Another*** stewardship campaign.

Clearly, Forest Hill Church found inspiration in the cornerstone of this year's campaign, 1 Peter 4:10 -- "Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received." And serve one another you did.

The campaign began last October 23 with a goal of \$735,000. As of January 13, 2017, a total of \$729,842 in total pledges from 210 pledgers has been received! That is 99.3% toward the goal and represents the largest amount ever pledged in support of Forest Hill Church.

Your exceptional God-centered generosity that made this possible!

This achievement includes 16 new pledgers and 98 who increased their pledge over last year. Amazing!

The members of the Ministry of Stewardship – Elders Stephen Sedam, Ahren Stock, Melanie Alban; leaders David Burleigh, Bill Ladabue, Lance Vernon and Peter Williams – express our deepest gratitude to you for your participation in this campaign.

Oh, one other thing. As we are but a mere \$5,158 short of the goal, anyone interested in adding a wee bit more to their pledge is invited to do so. Just place a clear note about your additional pledge on either a blue commitment card or a white giving envelope found in the pew racks or by informing Becky Austin, FHC Financial Administrator at BeckyA@fhcpresb.org. Thank you!

The 2017 Ministry of Stewardship

Reflections of a Grizzled, Grateful Stewardship Veteran

It has been an honor to serve Forest Hill Church on the Ministry of Stewardship for seven consecutive years. As my long tenure there is now coming to an end, I have something to share.

Forest Hill Church has begun a wonderful transition in its approach to stewardship. Where once stewardship was viewed as all about money, offering plates, and pledges, the church has grown to understand that stewardship is the way we use the abundance that God has entrusted to us to love God and our neighbor.

Through my interactions with church members and other elders, I have learned that collectively we are turning a corner. Stewardship is about the way we love God and neighbor with our whole lives, not just our wallets. Understood this way, stewardship is life-giving and life-encompassing. Living as a follower of Jesus requires not just all of our hearts but also all of our assets, talents, and time – our whole life. At Forest Hill, we give abundantly and are rewarded spiritually by doing so!

While we come together to pledge part of our assets and financial resources to God through Forest Hill Church in the fall campaign, the stewardship season is actually from January through December.

I have been astounded by the depth of generosity and love demonstrated by those who comprise Forest Hill Church. You share your amazing talents. You offer your time in so many God-centered ways. Those who attend FHC are exceedingly generous financially.

You have great stories of transformation to share about your experiences at church. I hope in the days ahead we all will do more storytelling with each other.

Personally, I have gained a great sense of fulfillment by working with others not only to expand the financial resources available to allow the church to meet its mission in this troubled world, but also to assist the church membership in embracing stewardship as a welcome, rewarding element of a full Christian life.

The incoming leaders on stewardship are tremendous. I am sure they will find working with you to be as meaningful as I have.

Thank you.

Elder Stephen Sedam

**Deacons'
Corner**

The Deacons joined each other on January 11 for our first meeting in 2017. Outgoing, current and incoming Deacons gathered to celebrate and expressed appreciation for those who are leaving while welcoming new members who have accepted this call to service.

Barb Hanson thanked the outgoing deacons for their consistent care, concern and action regarding the needs and lives of our church family. Jenny Himmelman, Kemp Jaycox, Kathy Hanna-Stauffer, Suzanne Marcy: You have all shared such wonderful talents in your service as deacons. The common thread woven through it all has been your loving concern, compassion and good humor. We thank you and will miss you.

We now welcome Chris Bell, Wendy Brock and Jeanette Nemcek,

Chris has previously served as an elder and deacon. She was a school nurse and is now semi-retired. She enjoys time with her grandsons, traveling, knitting and cross stitch. Wendy, who is also a nurse, has served as a deacon twice before. She loves the Fall Festival and its intergenerational aspect. Jeanette is the incredible planner of the twice-monthly Labre meals. She is newly retired from her work as a registered dietician and has been enjoying travel this past year.

Marcus Borg, in his book **JESUS**, shares what his mentor and friend Huston Smith told him about his mother's influence on his own religious vision. Borg states that, although he might not have Smith's exact words, he is sure he has the gist of the story right. Mrs. Smith's summation of her faith was "We are in good hands, therefore let us take care of one another."

Let it be so...

Kathy Carr on behalf of the Deacons

Theology on Tap

Do you have a burning question you've always wanted to ask at church, but didn't feel it was appropriate? Do you like to meet over drinks and talk with friends? Join us for a special ***Theology on Tap: All Questions Welcome!*** Members of Fairmount, Forest Hill and Church of the Covenant will gather at the BottleHouse (2050 Lee Road, Cleveland Heights) on Thursday, February 9 from 5-7 pm. Bring a favorite snack to share.

Questions? Just show up! Or contact Rachel McDonald (216-321-2660 or rachelm@fhcpresb.org).

News of Our Church Family

Marriage

Congratulations to Megan Keefe and Jamie Allen, who were married at FHC on December 30, 2016.

In Memoriam We Remember

Deborah Anderson Ungemach, who died December 21, 2016.

Care Group

The Calvary CARE Group will be responsible for assisting the pastors in meeting members' needs during February. Please contact the church office in case of illness, hospitalizations, births or deaths (or other family emergencies) in any FHC family.

Members of the Calvary CARE Group are:

Barb Hansen, Deacon leader

Kevin & Brittani Ball

Marie Bourgeois

Nancy Burcham

R. Bruce & Beverly Cameron

Paul Cary & Sue Yelanjian

Jordan Dail

Kay Dunlap

Alex Heston &

Elizabeth Endicott-Heston

William Finn & Rachel Martinez-Finn

Timothy & Carol Gifford

Ajah Hales

Robyn Hales

Judy Hammer

Barbara Hansen

Christine Henry

Jenny Himmelman

Anne Hunter

J. David Hunter

Paolo Iannarelli & Maria Rajki

Paul Jennings

Ronald & Florence Klein

William & Sandy Ladebue

Fred & Joann Lafferty

Patricia Ludwig

Emelia McGuire

Jeremy Ryman & Diane Moyer

Sampson Tedunjaiye &

Victoria Sampson

Margaret Stauffer

C. Lee & Cathi Thomas

Beryl Williams

Caleb Wright

Robert & Virginia Young

Please remember these homebound members in your prayers:

Marge Drollinger, Emma Jane Gibbs, Al and Iris Gilbert, Ron Klein, Emelia McGuire, Joyce Peters, Jack Quinn, George Sentell, Margie Stauffer, Elaine Tapié, Lorian Thomas

Volunteer Hours in December

The office volunteers – Nancy Grube, Ellen McChesney, Jane and Chuck Ishler, Cathy Ghiandoni, Anne Smith, Elspeth Peterjohn, Joie Hill and Carol Sims, the TOWER assembly team of Betty Clark, Marilyn Wilk, Ellen McChesney and the Ishlers –worked a total of 65 hours in December.

Thank you all!

Social Groups and Circles

The Group (60s – 70s): Super Bowl Party

The Hunters and Ghiandonis will host this year's Super Bowl party, beginning at 6 pm on Sunday, February 5. RSVP to Cathy Ghiandoni (ghiandoni.c@gmail.com); please bring an appetizer, salad or dessert. Soup or chili will be provided, as will soft drinks and coffee. BYOB if you wish.

February 5, Hunters' (853 Hardwood Court, Gates Mills) 6 pm

Young Adults (20s-30s): Lunch together at a Black-owned restaurant on February 12 Watch for more information.

Iris Circle (all women of the church): Book discussion

On February 21 we will discuss *The Gift of Years* by Joan Chittister – a book about growing old gracefully. The book is an easy read with lots of chapters. If you have read the book, pick out 3 chapters that were the most meaningful to you. If you have not read the book, come anyway because the book is relevant to us all. Rev. Lois Annich will guide us through the “gifts” we discover in this book. We will enjoy a pot luck lunch (this means whatever you like) before the book discussion.

RSVP to this month's hostess, Nancy Grube (440-461-4693 or donance@sbcglobal.net).

Feb. 21, Nancy Grube's (5261 Graham Rd, Lyndhurst), 12 pm

We are looking for people to help host meals at Forest Hill during Lent – Ash Wednesday (March 1), Maundy Thursday (April 13), and quite possibly some Wednesday evenings in between. If you are available between 5-6:30 and are willing to help, please contact the church office.

Announcements! Announcements!

<p>Lent begins on March 1, Ash Wednesday. Watch for information about worship, dinners, programs and retreats during Lent this year.</p>	<p>Save the first weekend of May for a possible Washington DC trip</p>
<p>TOWER deadlines: 7 am on Feb.17, March 17, April 14 (this is Good Friday and may get changed)</p>	<p>Easter is April 16</p>

The church phone number is 216-321-2660. Our website is www.fhcpresb.org

Emails for the staff are as follows:

Rev. Lois Annich	<i>Interim Assoc. Pastor</i>	pastorannich@fhcpresb.org
Becky Austin	<i>Finance</i>	beckya@fhcpresb.org
Lynda Bernays	<i>Administration</i>	office@fhcpresb.org
Kate Burleigh	<i>Children</i>	kateb@fhcpresb.org
Ann Donkin	<i>Building mgr.</i>	adonkin@fhcpresb.org
Stavros Gazis	<i>Custodial</i>	office@fhcpresb.org
Shannon Headen	<i>Youth</i>	shannon@fhcpresb.org
Rev. Dr. John Lentz Jr.	<i>Pastor</i>	pastorlentz@fhcpresb.org
Rachel McDonald	<i>Interim Assoc. Pastor</i>	RachelM@fhcpresb.org
Peg Weissbrod	<i>Outreach</i>	pegw@fhcpresb.org
Anne Wilson	<i>Music</i>	annew@fhcpresb.org

Custodians' cell phone: 216-217-5257

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Regularly scheduled events: meet every week unless noted	6:00 Progress not Perfection AA 7:00 AI Anon 7:30 Borton Group AA Boy Scout Trp #403	1:00 Abundance Pantry/ 5:00 Fitness Fusion exercise class	7:30 am Bible & Bagels 12:30 AA meeting	5:00 Fitness Fusion exercise class 6:20 Voices in Bronze 7:30 Chancel Choir	9:30 AI Anon	9:00 CEIRS class
See page 3 for a complete Black History Month schedule						
5 See "Sundays February"	6	7	8 7:00 Ministries worship 7:15 Ministries meet	9 5:00 Theology on Tap 7:30 FH Swim Club	10 6:00 Confirmation class	11 9:00 Deacon Retreat 4:00 Young Family Get-together
12	13	14	15 12:00 Bullshevicks 1:00 Hilltop Garden Club 7:00 TransFamily East mtg	16	17 7:00 am TOWER deadline 6:00 Confirmation	18 8:00 Men's Group 7:00 Gospel Concert
19	20	21 12:00 Iris Circle	22 10:00 TOWER collators 7:00 Session meeting	23	24 7:00 Film: Zootopia	25 Confirmation retreat (Sat-Sun) 12:00 BHM Workshops 7:00 Jazz concert
26	27	28 12:00 Abundance Pantry Lunch	March 1 Ash Wednesday 6:30 Dinner 7:30 Worship	2	3	4 8:00 Men's Group 9:00 Congregational retreat

February 2017

Save the Date: May 5-7 for a bus trip to Washington DC. There will be a limited number of spaces available. Contact the church office (office@fhcpresb.org or 216-321-2660) to reserve a spot or just to say you are interested.