



# Dialogue

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ASHLAND

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Volume 61, No. 9

September 2021

## Getting through the 'twisties' together as a church family

I really enjoy watching the Olympics. I've kind of been an Olympics nerd for a long time. Many years ago, I even took our then young family out to a freeway overpass when the Olympic flame went through Sacramento. The flame was mounted on a truck, heading to a stadium where runners would take turns carrying the flame on its way to Atlanta. I just had to see that spectacle of the actual Olympic torch, there in front of me.

This year for me, however the Olympics just seemed "off." First, there was the title given for the games, "Tokyo 2020." Every time I saw that display on television, I was reminded that these were no ordinary games, for COVID had delayed them by a year. In addition, there were many Japanese people who did not want the games to be there in the first place, who thought it made no sense to host the Olympic games in the midst of a surging pandemic. Then there were the mostly empty stadiums. No fans to cheer on their heroes. It all felt a bit hollow.

And there was the huge controversy during one of my favorite events, the women's gymnastics competition. Simone Biles, the most accomplished woman gymnast in the history of the sport, suddenly pulled out of events. She explained she had

something gymnasts call the "twisties," when you lose the sense of where you are in the air, feel out of sorts and kind of dizzy, and as a result can get really hurt while trying to do a routine.

I share her story because I, too, feel like I have the "twisties" now. Life seems out of sorts and dizzy as we live through yet another spike in the COVID virus, with a rampaging Delta variant. I really thought for a while we would overcome the virus, re-open the church, have a great re-opening celebration in September, invite the neighborhood, and get back to being together as the church.

Then I saw the increasing number of cases in our area and throughout the nation. After surveying the congregation and speaking with members of session, we made the difficult decision to go back to a mostly virtual format for worship and meetings. Changing the voice-mail message, putting up signs once again warning about the chapel and sanctuary being closed, not having a congregation to visibly see and preach to—all of it made me feel like I have the "twisties."

Now I know, and I think we all know, that COVID is not going to just go away. It will be part of our lives for a while in one way or another. A



*New York Times* article from August 19 stated, "Americans have entered a new, disheartening phase of the pandemic: when they realize that COVID-19 is not disappearing anytime soon. A country that had been waiting for the virus to be over has been forced to recalibrate."

So, we may be in the "twisties" for a while as we recalibrate our lives. And yet, as a colleague in ministry reminded me during a webinar, the church is still the church, and it isn't just something that happens in worship in person on Sunday mornings. The church is Monday through Saturday as well, as we do our best to share the love of Christ with others, doing acts of justice, loving mercy and walking humbly with God through it all.

So remember, even if we aren't able to meet in person for a while, **you** are the Church. I am the church. We are the church together or apart, every day of the week, no matter how "twisty" things may feel! Hang in there. God bless us all,

## Current COVID protocol at church

- Virtual services only, every Sunday of the month at 10 a.m.  
**EXCEPT FOR . . .**
- **The FIRST Sunday of the month we will allow for socially-distanced fully-vaccinated and masked individuals to come to worship in limited numbers. Please call the church office to make a reservation: (541)482-3536.**
- Virtual fellowship will happen via Zoom. The first Sunday of the month folks can gather outside after the service, for fellowship, fully masked.
- All groups or committees are asked to be fully masked and practice social distancing. Zoom meetings are preferred but not required.

## Fall planning team? Maybe not. . . .

Due to the continuing increase in COVID numbers, we won't be having a fall planning team. However, we want to plan for Advent and Christmas, whatever is going on with the world and the pandemic.



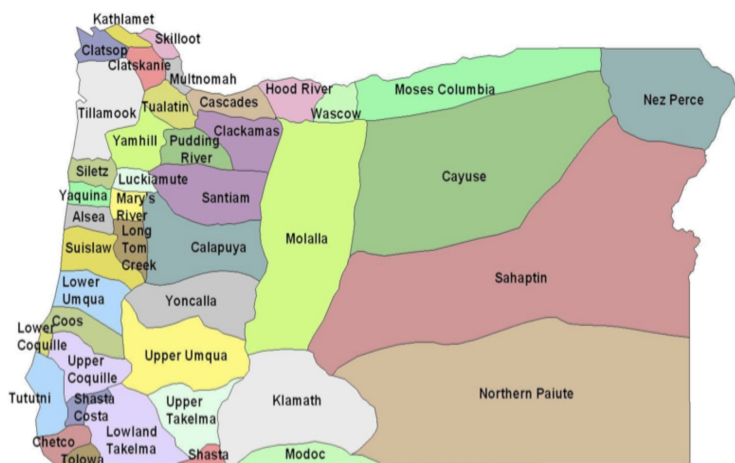
So, if you would like to be part of a **winter** planning team, please let Pastor Dan know. It will begin meeting in November.

## Join Reckoning with Race 'house meeting'

Join us for a Zoom discussion on relations with our Native American kindred Sept. 29 at 6 p.m. We will watch two brief TED Talks by indigenous people from the U.S. One will discuss the constitution and the phrase, "We the people." The other will discuss the speaker's experience at Standing Rock.

This meeting will prepare us for a plaque dedication in October, honoring the ground on which the church stands as belonging to local tribes in Southern Oregon.

Oregon Tribes (ca. 1840-1850)



## Uncle Food's Diner moving back soon

Uncle Food's Diner, who has been using our kitchen in Calvin Hall for the past two months, will be heading back to the United Methodist Church around Sept. 1, pending final construction on their kitchen.

Elizabeth Hallet, director of the Uncle Food's Diner, says, "Peace House wants to thank the Presbyterian Church community for being so welcoming to our Uncle Food's Diner Project, for making your kitchen space available to us, and for being patient with our schedule as we move back to the remodeled kitchen at Wesley Hall. Those of you dedicated to helping us during this two-month marathon, including Susan, Jill and Pastor Dan, have been very kind. We thank you for sheltering our program during the remodel. You can rest assured that the grace with which you have supported Uncle Food's Diner radiates into the lives of those who are hungry and without homes."

God's blessings to Uncle Food's Diner and Peace House as they continue this work of feeding the hungry back at the United Methodist Church.

## The Dialogue

Thanks to all who have contributed to the *Dialogue*. Articles are welcome for the October issue. Please submit by Thursday, September 23. Email (preferred) to [huntermarcia@gmail.com](mailto:huntermarcia@gmail.com)

*Marcia Hunter, editor*

## Volunteers needed for vacation coverage

By Susan Coghill

Many of you may not be aware that PC(USA) has an Administrative Personnel Association or APA, of which I became a member not long after I started here in 2015. For those who want to know more, here is a brief history of the APA.

The Mission of APA is to offer opportunities for professional development and personal growth for those called by God to serve as support staff of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). They accomplish this mission by providing continuing education events for certification and occasions for fellowship, worship and spiritual nurture, and prayer at national and Regional meetings and seminary-sponsored training events.

I became a member of the nominating committee (a 2-year term) to

prepare for being on the Pacific Region Board. I am looking forward to learning more about the APA through our interaction via phone and video conferences.

The APA has a conference every year in September at the Zephyr Point Presbyterian Conference Center on South Lake Tahoe. Due to COVID-19, the 2020 conference was canceled, but the 2021 conference is still on for September 16-19.

I will be taking Monday through Wednesday off as well, so I will need volunteers to answer the phone from 9 am to noon September 13-17. If you are vaccinated and feel comfortable wearing a mask in the office, please call the office at 541.482.3536 to let me know what day you can cover.

## International pilgrimage planned for 2022

"Where God's Story Meets Our Story" is the theme of an international study pilgrimage of the Holy Land and the Passion Play in Oberammergau, Germany next May 14-25, 2022. Led by Brian Heron, Presbyter for Vision and Mission, and pastors Steve Knox and Tim Cayton, the trip explores how Jesus' story informs our story.

The group has 32 reserved tickets, but 21 of them have already been taken by Disciples of Christ and Presbyterians from around Oregon. However, interested persons can put a hold on any of the remain-

ing tickets to guarantee a place — with payment due only when international travel is reopened and the trip confirmed.

For a brochure or more information contact Brian Heron at [brian@potc.life](mailto:brian@potc.life)



### SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 1 – Wendy McAninch
- 4 – Sharon Laskos
- 6 – John Wren
- 7 – Carolyn Johnson
- 8 – Paula Fowler
- 12 – Christie McQuade
- 16 – Robb Grover
- 18 – Adele Hiles
- 19 – Beckie Pinnock
- 22 – Sam Alvord
- 22 – Rick Herst
- 26 – Judy Sockman
- 27 – Nona Hoadley
- 27 – Kathryn Slyt

### SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- 1 – Lawrence and Virginia King
- 1 – Judi and Bill Quiett
- 3 – Ed and Sharon Laskos
- 8 – Barbie and John Breneiser
- 11 – Cathy and Kirk Gerbracht
- 14 – David and Laurel Dryland
- 22 – Glenn and Barb Street

### Haiku for the month

**Crickets chirping now,  
warning us winter's coming.  
But it's still summer!**

By Robb Grover



**"I am not afraid of  
storms for I'm learning  
how to sail my ship."**

*Louisa May Alcott*



## Let's See

### What's Up?

Lousy week.

My cousin, Joanne, lies in a hospital bed in Florida, gasping for air. Her husband, Jim, died a few days ago of COVID. That makes six members of our extended family who are no longer living, yet who never lost faith in the notion that the disease that killed them is a fraud.

All that makes me three things: angry, sad, and baffled. I had to stop reading the stories in the *Mail Tribune* and *New York Times* about my fellow and sister citizens who decided to punish school districts which required masks or one who died with his "ten-year-old son wailing for two hours over his corpse."

Instead, I thought about this passage from J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*. Next to Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, no book has had more influence on how I understand the meaning of the fix we humans find ourselves having to manage.

We arrive on this planet helpless as moss, yet full of senses and powers, but over us flashes a sign that reads "You're gonna die, Buddy."

Yet, we come with a body, imagination, a tribe, a fruited planet, and time. What I learned from Salinger and Dostoevsky is that the quality of those tools and that time is

By Sam Alvord

burnished by humble, grateful, active love. Here is Holden Caulfield's vision.

*Anyway, I keep picturing all these little kids playing some game in this big field of rye and all. Thousands of little kids, and nobody's around—nobody big, I mean—except me. And I'm standing on the edge of some crazy cliff. What I have to do, I have to catch everybody if they start to go over the cliff—I mean if they're running and they don't look where they're going I have to come out from somewhere and catch them. That's all I do all day. I'd just be the catcher in the rye and all. I know it's crazy, but that's the only thing I'd really like to be.*

So, the point is to find multitudes of ways to make life wonderful for each other. We take care of each other and work together and play and make babies and raise them and, when someone is ill, we try to help them heal.

We fight death.

One day we will be done here and away we go. But while we have a pulse, we connect and relish life.

Yet, millions of Americans are scorning the effort to defeat this killer disease. They seem willing to valorize the false choice—"Give me liberty or give me death"—rather



than take the advice of experts who know how to protect them. I am stunned that their pursuit of personal freedom often results in spurning the common good and embracing a lonely, miserable illness and death.

While many of us are working every day to mitigate this disease, others are getting headlines rallying across the street from the hospital denouncing the healers.

What's up?

Here is another line from *Catcher*:

*The mark of the immature person is that they want to die nobly for a cause, while the mark of the mature person is that they want to live humbly for one.*

I admit I am stumped and need time to sort all this out. In the meantime, I work at a public elementary school, and most days those kids and my co-workers and I need a Catcher.



## Women's Book Club reading *Oonu Out of Order*

By Marcia Hunter

The Women's Book Club is reading *Oonu Out of Order* by Margarita Montimore for our September selection. We will meet on the church patio at 7 p.m. on Monday, Sept. 27.

Goodreads calls this book "A remarkably inventive novel that

explores what it means to live a life fully in the moment, even if those moments are out of order."

Following some of the more serious books we have read lately, this one promises to be a fun and intriguing story, just waiting for our lively discussion. Hope to see you there.

## **\*\*Our church's September noisy offering will go to Presbyterian Disaster Relief to benefit Haiti.**

### **Support Haiti in its hour of greatest need**



*And after the earthquake  
... a sound of sheer silence.  
Then there came a voice ...  
that said, "What are you  
doing here?" (1 Kings 19:12-13)*

Following the devastating Aug. 14 earthquake in Haiti, nearly 1,500 people are dead, thousands more injured and an unknown number still missing. Some 13,000 homes were destroyed and roads, bridges and communication systems damaged. Because Haiti is already facing endemic hunger and poverty, COVID-19, continuing civil unrest and the arrival of Tropical Storm Grace, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) is providing emergency relief and short-term recovery through our established local partners and in collaboration with ACT Alliance. The PC(USA), through PDA, will remain active throughout the entire recovery process, accompanying our partners in the area as they determine long-term program needs and providing financial support for rebuilding and resilience.

**The needs for the response will be great. God's people are once again called on to stand in the "GAP" — Give. Act. Pray.**

**GIVE:** Gifts can be made at [bit.ly/PDAHaiti](https://bit.ly/PDAHaiti), by phone at (800) 872-3283 or by check using the below reply device.

**ACT:** • Share our Mobile Cause campaign link ([bit.ly/PDAHaiti](https://bit.ly/PDAHaiti)).  
• Learn how you and your congregation can help families who have lost everything in the devastation. Stay informed and like us on Facebook ([facebook.com/PDAcares](https://facebook.com/PDAcares)), download resources at [pda.pcusa.org/pda/resources](https://pda.pcusa.org/pda/resources) and share updates with your congregation.

**PRAY:** Pray for those who suffered loss of family or home and for those who are working tirelessly to provide rescue, humanitarian aid, and spiritual and psychological support.



☐ \$500   ☐ \$125   ☐ \$50   ☐ \$25   ☐ Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Congregation/PIN \_\_\_\_\_

Please detach the reply form and return it with your gift to your church; or enclose it in an envelope with your check and mail it to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), P.O. Box 643700, Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700.



**PRESBYTERIAN  
DISASTER ASSISTANCE**  
OUT OF CHAOS, HOPE



Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
**Presbyterian Mission**

PDA HE21-BI

## Free Bible study book available to first six people to ask for it!

By Shirley Patton

Free! To six people in our faith community, a handsome copy of the Horizon's Bible study called *Into the Light—Finding Hope Through Prayers of Lament*. It will be PW's gift to the first six individuals who ask for it at the church office.

Why is this offer being made? The pandemic disrupted things all over, and the suspension of gatherings of PW and circles caused me to have six pristine copies of the 2019-2020 still on hand. I don't want to recycle them before they've been read, as within the nine lessons are topics that are especially potent for our current situation. Why not give them to the wider church community?

For those receiving the books there is no obligation. There will be no tests.

Let me quote from author Lynn Miller's introduction, which will give you a sample of what's in store for readers:

"Why lament? This question can be asked in at least two ways:

- + Why offer a study of Biblical lament?
- + Why bother to lament at all?"

"Both questions can be answered by considering the many things in our world that remind us that God's reign has not yet come. War, sickness, death, unfulfilled lives, and threats to creation and to society all cause us to look to God for relief of our pain.

"How do we as followers of Christ acknowledge that, even as we work to change them, the existence

of these things works against God's purpose for the world.

"Current practice turns these and many of society's controversial issues into a fight between 'us' and 'them.' In an argument like this, the first step is to choose a side. The second step is to dehumanize those who have chosen the side that is not our own. Each side hurls accusations and insults at the other on social media, television news, and in printed media. The result is very little movement toward addressing the actual issue.

"Our faith offers another option: lament.

"But how do we lament? Have we forgotten—or never learned—how to lament?

"And as an answer to the question, Why bother to lament?

The author suggests: "Because lament. . .

- + is communication with God,
- + broadens our prayer lives,
- + connects us to the world and

the God who loves it and us,

- + helps us focus on the actual situations that lead us to lament,
- + is an opportunity to confess

our faith in God whose promises are trustworthy.

"When we lament, we move from suffering to faith. In our faith there is hope. We lament in order to hope."

So I'm hoping you'll take up our offer and stop by the church office to get your copy of *Into the Light—Finding Hope Through Prayers of Lament*.

## Presbyterian Women to delay start of in-person meetings

By Barbara Marsh

Sadly, due to the resurgence of COVID-19, the team has decided that Presbyterian Women will need to delay in-person meetings for a while. Public health officials believe that this phase of the virus will peak in September. If that turns out to be the case, we will reschedule for later in the autumn. Please stay tuned — we are eager to gather together again.

In the meantime, our treasury is almost bone dry. Darlene, our treasurer, thinks many of us just plain forgot to honor our January pledges. Please don't feel guilty! You can catch up now by sending your boost to Darlene via the church office. Thanks for your help in solving our 2021 financial problem.

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## Elsie Nelson Circle meeting in September

By Marilyn Mobley

Elsie Nelson Circle will meet on Monday, Sept. 13 at 1 p.m. We are trying something new and different by meeting at the church in the Fire-side Room. Elaine Morgan will be our hostess and will provide us with cookies.

We should be able to socially distance, and if you are more comfortable, you may wear your mask. Hope to see everyone there.



## We welcome Montessori pre-school to our campus

Beginning Sept. 1, the Children's World Montessori preschool will be joining our church campus. They needed a new location due to the school district reclaiming the Lincoln Elementary school building. The school will be using the downstairs of Calvin Hall, the play area outside, along with an extension on the lawn out front on Siskiyou Blvd., plus what was until now known as the Matthew 25 room in the administration building for their toddler program.

We are now converting one of the bathrooms in the administration building to accommodate the toddlers who will be there Monday-Friday.

Here is what their website says about their school. *"Children's Montessori was established in 1984 in Ashland Oregon. Our program is based upon the Montessori philosophy of self-paced learning within a structured environment. This program is*

*enriched with art, Spanish, sign language, gardening, visiting specialists and field trips.*

*Like Maria Montessori, we believe that children possess an absorbent mind. We want to provide the child with experiences needed to grow emotionally, academically and spiritually. The primary goal of our program is to provide the child with a nurturing, safe, aesthetic and stimulating environment that will foster confidence, curiosity, creativity, independence and a love for learning."*

The school will be in operation Monday-Friday from 9-4. The school's director, says, "Hi, my name is Michelle Keller, and I am the director and caretaker of Children's World Montessori. We are delighted to have found a new home on the grounds of First Presbyterian Church.

We are thankful for the church's willingness to work with us and rent

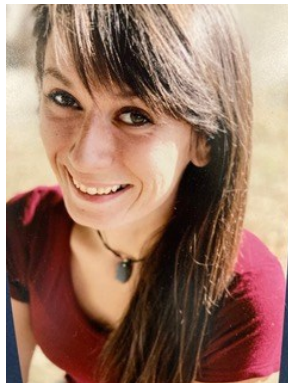


Michelle Keller

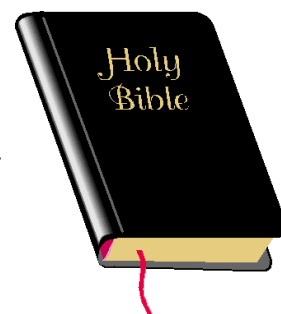
us space so that we can continue to serve families with young children.

This year we will be serving children ages 2 through 5, Monday - Friday from 8 - 4:30.

Here are some photos of the staff as well: Hazel, Devin, Fabiola, Lisa, Ana, Mia, Craig and Deva. We look forward to meeting you!"



## Bible verses for this month



*Ezekiel 34:11-31*

"I, the Sovereign Lord, tell you that I myself will look for my sheep and take care of them in the same way as shepherds take care of their sheep that were scattered and are brought

together again. I will bring them back from all the places where they were scattered on that dark, disas-

trous day. I will take them out of foreign countries, gather them together, and bring them back to their own land. I will lead them back to the mountains and the streams of Israel and will feed them in pleasant pastures. I will let them graze in safety in the mountain meadows and the valleys and in all the green pastures of the land of Israel. I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will find them a place to rest. I, the Sovereign Lord, have spoken.

"I will look for those that are lost, bring back those that wander off, bandage those that are hurt, and heal those that are sick; but those that are fat and strong I will destroy,

because I am a shepherd who does what is right.

"Now then, my flock, I, the Sovereign Lord, tell you that I will judge each of you and separate the good from the bad, the sheep from the goats. Some of you are not satis-

fied with eating the best grass; you even trample down what you don't eat! You drink the

clear water and muddy what you don't drink! My other sheep have to eat the grass you trample down and drink the water you muddy.

"So now, I, the Sovereign Lord, tell you that I will judge between you strong sheep and the weak sheep. You pushed the sick ones aside and butted them away from the flock. But I will rescue my sheep and not let them be mistreated any more. I will judge each of my sheep and separate the good from the bad. I will give them a king like my servant David to be their one shepherd, and he will take care of them. I, the Lord, will be their God, and a king like my servant David will be their ruler. I have spoken. I will

make a covenant with them that guarantees

their security. I will get rid of all the dangerous animals in the land, so that my sheep can live safely in the fields and sleep in the forests.

"I will bless them and let them live around my sacred hill. There I will bless them with showers of rain when they need it. The trees will bear fruit, the fields will produce crops, and everyone will live in safety on his own land. When I break my people's chains and set them free from those who made them slaves, then they will know that I am the Lord. The heathen nations will not plunder them any more, and the wild animals will not kill and eat them. They will live in safety, and no one will terrify them. I will give them fertile fields and put an end to hunger in the land. The other nations will not sneer at them any more. Everyone will know that I protect Israel and that they are my people. I, the Sovereign Lord, have spoken.

"You, my sheep, the flock that I feed, are my people, and I am your God," says the Sovereign Lord.

*Submitted by Debbie Miller*





Regular Sunday Schedule  
10am Streaming Worship  
11am Zoom Fellowship



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
			1	2	3	4	
			Dan on Vacation				
5	6 Labor Day Office Closed	7	8	9 1pm Presbyterian Women	10 2:30pm Finance	11	
			5pm Deacons				
12	13	14 5pm B & G	15	16 5:30 Session	17	18	
	Susan on Vacation			Susan at APA Conference			
19	20	21	22	23 Dialogue Entries Due	24	25 AAUW (CH)	
26	27 7pm Women's Book Club	28	29	30			
Weekly Building Schedule							
Alanon	Fireside Room	7pm-8:30pm	Mon	Lithia Springs Rotary	Calvin Hall	6:30am-8:30am	Tues
Alanon	Fireside Room	7pm-8:30pm	Fri	Realtors	Calvin Hall	9am-10am	Thurs
AA Crack of Dawn II	Fireside Room	7am-8am	Mon-Sat				
Children's World	Matthew 25 Room	8:30am-4pm	Mon-Fri				



First Presbyterian Church  
P.O. Box 626  
service requested  
Dated material



## First Presbyterian Church

Siskiyou and Walker Ashland, OR 97520 541-482-3536

*A welcoming and affirming congregation*

**Pastor:** Rev. Dan Fowler [revfowler@yahoo.com](mailto:revfowler@yahoo.com) **Office Manager:** Susan Coghill [presbyashland@yahoo.com](mailto:presbyashland@yahoo.com)

**Director of Music:** Laurie Anne Hunter [lahunter@mind.net](mailto:lahunter@mind.net) **Parish Worker:** Wendy McAninch [wendy@mcanin.ch](mailto:wendy@mcanin.ch)

**Treasurer:** Jill Turner [fpcashland@gmail.com](mailto:fpcashland@gmail.com)

**Ruling Elders on Session:** Jim Holloway, John Wren, Sam Alvord, Dennis Slattery, Cathy Gerbracht, Brian Almquist, Barb Street

**Clerk of Session:** Marcia Hunter [huntermarcia@gmail.com](mailto:huntermarcia@gmail.com)

**Deacons:** Denise Deneaux, Pat Alvord, Debbie Miller, Ruth Ralls, Rick Herst, Paul Lewis, Sandra Slattery, Sue Sager

**Deacon Moderator:** Marjorie Lininger

**Ministers:** the whole congregation

### Our Mission

We are a faith community centered in Christ, doing justice,  
loving kindness and walking humbly with God.

### Our Vision

Open Minds, Open Hearts, Open Hands, Open Table

Visit the church website at [www.firstpresashland.org](http://www.firstpresashland.org)

"Like" us on Facebook at [fb.com/firstpresashland](https://fb.com/firstpresashland)

