

The *CRIER* Newsletter

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

June 2026



“A Good Word: Or, How to Write a Sermon in 438 Easy Steps”

By Rev. Dr. Jeffrey A. Schooley

I hope, by now, you know how much I love preaching. To be sure, the work of a pastor extends well beyond 60 minutes (okay, who are we kidding?, 75 minutes) on a Sunday, but it is definitely this opportunity to stand amongst you all and proclaim hope in the face of despair, joy in the midst of tears, peace in response to violence, love in the place of hate and apathy, justice that rejects oppression, and grace for our whole lives that drew me to this work in the first place. It is amazing that no matter how many times I preach – I have over 500 services under my belt at this point in my career – or how often the same passages come up in the lectionary, I still feel the same odd mix of anxiety and excitement, week-in and week-out.



Every Monday morning I wake up with an eye toward the next Sunday. I join my friends, the Revs. Ben Beres and Jake Clawson, on Zoom and we spend the next three or so hours going through the nuances of our congregations and communities as we seek a good word for next Sunday. From there, there’s reading/research, a rough draft, edits from Ben and Jake, revisions to my manuscript, punching up (or eight-sixing altogether) my jokes, all before finalizing the sermon before turning to the rest of the liturgy so that I can hopefully help all the different elements of worship coalesce around a single theme for each particular Sunday. If I’ve done my job well, you’ll never see how it all gets stitched together because the whole service will – by the grace of God – become a unified whole. From there, I merely need to step into the pulpit, say “Good morning! I welcome you in the name of Jesus Christ” and more or less black out for the next 60 minutes (and, again, let’s be honest... 75 minutes).

Of course, behind all this is a week I spend each summer with the aforementioned Ben and Jake, plus our friend, the Rev. Dr. Gavin Walton. During this week, we labor together to craft sermon ideas and series for the next year. Over the course of four full workdays – Monday through Thursday – we will, ideally, create a sermon title, two scripture readings, a sermon blurb, and relevant hymn selections for up to 50 worship services. Sometimes we collaborate on a sermon series that we feel will work, albeit uniquely, in each of our contexts. Other times we just pitch each other ideas, help each other wrestle with the lectionary, or otherwise inspire and hold one another accountable to the high, holy calling to which we’ve been called. Oh, and we have fun too! We’re all close friends, so the fun comes easy.

But that’s not all. Because behind the Monday mornings and the Saturday edits – behind the sweaty, smoky week in the summer – lies yet one more, vitally important part of preparing a sermon: You! You are so vitally important to the work I do in the pulpit each week. Your contribution might best be summed up by one of my favorite authors, Kurt Vonnegut, who once wrote, “A book is an arrangement of twenty-six phonetic symbols, ten numerals, and about eight punctuation marks, and people can cast their eyes over these and envision the eruption of Mount Vesuvius or the Battle of Waterloo.” By this, I take Vonnegut to mean that the

audience – be that reader or listener, it matters not – does the vast majority of the work in making a story come alive (or, for my sake, transforming a sermon into a good word).

I take Vonnegut at his point and agree, but – believe it or not – your work is more than just wringing a little Good News out of my 90s pop culture references, my subtle (and not so subtle!) politically commentary, and my extrapolation of the scriptures – you also provide me direct inspiration for a good word each week. Over my time here, I have solicited sermon topics, themes, and biblical passages of interest from you all; you have not failed me. I had barely reached my one-year anniversary here before, for example, Christina Guenther challenged me to take on the topic of the Apostle Paul and gender. Yikes! And yet that sermon stands out in my mind nearly three years later. Or, as another example, Drew Hanna dropped all of a three-sentence email to me that encouraged me to look to the life of Joseph. That one little email turned into a five-week sermon series on holy dreams and reconciliation in Christ. What Drew doesn't know is that my friend Ben enjoyed that series from me so much that he preached his version of it just this spring. Drew is out here inspiring pastors he doesn't even know! And, of course, our summer series on "Singing the Faith," where your favorite hymns became a summer's worth of Good News, was some of the most fun I've had in sermon preparation in years... maybe ever.

So that's what I'm calling for again with this newsletter article. Once again, I beg and beseech you to send me your sermon topic ideas (email: fpcbgjeff@gmail.com). I make this request not just to make sure worship stays relevant to your passions and interests (indeed, sometimes Good News takes the form of challenging us beyond our pre-existing interests) and not because I want to pander, but because I – like every preacher – always mediates our tradition's sacred scriptures and theology through the lens of my own life and experiences. It is inevitable. But when you send something my way – when I get a glimpse of how you are mediating our faith's resources through the lens of your own life and experiences – I get outside my own head just enough that the scriptures come alive anew. Indeed, I suspect one of the reasons God forms us into communities is precisely for this sort of cross-pollinating mutuality.

Each of us have had our own experiences with our Lord and Friend, Jesus Christ. Each of us brings pains and trauma that are unique to us, but still relevant to many. Each of us is striving nobly, each in our own way, to live this faith out in our varied and various circumstances. And the most amazing thing about it all is that the Good Word is big enough to envelope us each and all.

So, please, share your stories. Share your thoughts. Share your questions. Heck, share your complaints about the Bible! Or theology! Or Church history! We'll play a little Christian "Show and Tell" – you *show* up with the fullness of yourself, your best and your worst, and God will *tell* you all about the love and grace running through your life. Amen?

Gloria in excelsis Deo.

WE NEED YOUR TREASURES!



The 2026 Presbyterian Women's annual rummage sale is scheduled for August 21 and 22, 9-3 pm. We will need lots of stuff and lots of helpers to make this a successful event! Now is the time to get control of that clutter! Start cleaning out those basements and closets! **(Don't bring your treasures in until the assigned drop off days TBA).**

Donations of housewares, toys, linens, sporting equipment, etc. can be dropped off in the Fellowship Hall starting two weeks prior to the event. There will be more information on drop-off schedules and volunteer sign up in the upcoming months. All proceeds from this event support various projects, disaster relief efforts and missions, both domestic and international.

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**The office is closed daily for
lunch 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.**



Helping Hands – June 12

Helping Hands is growing, and that's something to celebrate! More neighbors are discovering the assistance program, and our church is proud to pitch in by donating hygiene and cleaning supplies. If you'd like to join the effort, we'd love your help with the following items.

- Children's pull-ups (sizes 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)
- Adult Bladder-control disposable underwear (Unisex sizes M, L)
- Toilet paper
- Facial Tissues
- Paper towels
- Dish soap
- Laundry detergent/dryer sheets
- Body wash/shampoo
- Deodorant

Please place donations in the box located in the church lobby by June 7th for distribution on June 12th at the First Christian Church. If you want to contribute but don't have time to shop, a monetary donation can be made. The Deacons will do the shopping.

If you would like to help with the distribution of the cleaning and hygiene items, just show up on June 12th from 4 to 6 pm at First Christian Church, corner of Poe and Haskins Roads. You will see familiar faces.



Ellyn Stout, Scotty Huntington, Libby Dachik,
Kathy Sweeney, Lee Liebetreu, Anna Beeker, Terri McNamara

If you shop at Kroger, sign-up to help the church—enroll in Kroger Rewards



The community garden is planted and sprouting! Corky has new, enthusiastic gardeners who have already done a lot of work. Keep

watching the garden beds to see how they grow. Part of the produce will go to the Brown Bag Project.

Bob has been busy trimming bushes and trees around the church to keep them healthy and under control. Susan added a few new native plants on the north side of the church.

We are looking for help watering the garden and keeping the weeds under control. If you can help, please talk to one of the Green Team members (Corky, Bob, Susan, Gale). Thank you!



Tip of the month:

Farmers market season is in full swing. The downtown market is open Wednesdays from 4-7 pm at the corner of Clough and S. Main St. There is also a market at the Woodland Mall on Tuesdays, also from 4-7 pm. Use these opportunities to enjoy fresh fruits and vegetables and support local farmers.



Liturgists Needed (a small way to help Chris): One of Chris Williams' many acts of service to this church is

securing liturgists for each Sunday. The office staff is kindly requesting that you consider stepping up and signing up to serve in this way. There is a sign-up sheet for every Sunday through the end of September located in Fellowship Hall and it is Jeff's sincere hope that every spot will be filled after Fellowship Hour today. If you're open to serving, but nervous about what is entailed, Pastor Jeff is more than happy to walk you through all that's expected and even give a few tips and tricks he's picked up along the way. **Thank you for this. Chris will be glad to know his community is rallying together in both prayer and participation.**



June's First Friday - First Friday will be June 5th, at 6:15 (note time change) at The Whitehouse Inn, 10835 Waterville St in Whitehouse. Please RSVP to Nettie by June 3rd, nettierose@aol.com, 419-262-7889.



Do you love baseball? Congregational Care is planning a church outing to the **Toledo Mud Hens** baseball game for **Sunday, July 19th at 4pm**. More details will be coming in the future!

Pop-Up Choir Is Back!



Love to sing but can't commit to weekly rehearsals?

Join the **Pop-Up Choir** this summer! Show up at **9:15 AM** on any of the following Sundays: **June 14th, July 17th, August 16th.**

We'll do a quick warm-up, learn the song together, and sing it in the **10:00 AM service!** All voices welcome—no experience needed. Just bring your smile, your spirit, and your love of music!

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JUNE FYMS PAGE

Family and Youth Ministry Monthly Updates



CAMP OFFERINGS

Camps available for ages 3 - 99!

Don't think that camp is just for the youth! Kirkmont offers, and our church gives scholarships for, camps for almost any age or group check out what Kirkmont has to offer from the list below, check out kirkmontcenter.org for more information or talk to Amanda to see how you can get your camp journey started!

PYC Jr/Sr June 14-20 Grades 3-12	Rejoice July 5 - 11 Grades 3-12	YOU AND ME July 11 - 12 Ages 3-17 (With Adult)	ADULT August 28-30 Ages 18 - 99+
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Nursery Clean-Out

JUNE 13TH 9AM-12PM

The Christian Nurture committee invites you to help in our nursery overhaul project by helping with the clean-out of the nursery to prep for the fixing of it! We will meet in the nursery at 9am to create teams and tackle this important project together!



BOWLING GREEN'S PRIDE EVENT JUNE 27TH 11AM - 4PM

BGOPRIDE invites you to our 2026 Pride event! (Formerly Rainbow Rally) Come to the beautiful Wooster Green and share your pride! A free event for all ages to enjoy and celebrate. We invite you to join us at our 5th annual Pride event, where there will be music, live entertainment and food to enjoy, as well as Local artists. Come celebrate the joy of being your true self! Volunteers still needed!



If you shop at Kroger, sign-up to help the church—enroll in Kroger Rewards

Witte's Words

Note from the Editor: Karen Witte (said "witty") has been a member of FPCBG for 50+ years. She currently resides at BG Manor and isn't able to make it to church, but would still like to bless her church using her God-given gift with words. She used these gifts in her career as a proofreader for the Sentinel-Tribune. Make sure to check out "Witte's Words" each month in the pages of this newsletter. This month's offers a great to begin the Summer season Enjoy this month's poem.

The ABC's of God

God is Awesome

God is Beautiful

God is Creative

God is Divine

God is Everywhere

God is Faithful

God is Great

God is Holy

God is infinite

God is Just

God is Kind

God is Love

God is Magnificent

God is Noble

God is Omnificent

God is Perfect

God is Qualified

God is Royal

God is Sovereign

God is Timeless

God is Unchanging

God is Victorious

God is Wonderful

God is eXtraordinary

God is Useful

God is Zealous

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June

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Closed	2 8 A.A. - FH	3 9-Sort Clothes	4 9:30 D.S. 8-9 Med Grp FH	5 6:15 1 st Friday at Whitehouse Inn	6 1-5 Calla Higgins Grad. Party
7 10 Worship w/Communion 11 Fellowship 1 Guitar Lesson 4 Girl Scouts 7 MRG-GL	8 Closed 6:30-8:30 BG Song - FH	9 5:30 Session 6-7 La Conex GL 8 A.A. - FH	10 9-Sort Clothes 5 Trustees	11 9:30 D.S. 9:30 Staff Mtg. 8-9 Med Grp FH	12 4:30 Helping Hands @ 1 st Christian Tammy vacation	13 9-1 League of Women Voters – FH 9-Nursery Cleanout/Overhaul
14 10 Worship w/pop-up Choir 11 Fellowship 1 Guitar Lesson 4 Girl Scouts 7 MRG-GL	15 Closed Jeff Study leave	16 Tammy vacation 8 A.A. - FH	17 9-Sort Clothes Tammy vacation	18 9:30 D.S. 5 Worship 8-9 Med Grp FH Tammy vacation	19 Juneteenth Office Closed	20 →
21 10 Worship w/Jim Miller 11 Fellowship 1 Guitar Lesson 4 Girl Scouts 7 MRG-GL	22 Closed	23 July Nwsltr 7- Cong. Care & Christian Nurture 8 A.A. - FH	24 9-Sort Clothes	25 9:30 D.S. <i>Sanctuary</i> → 8-9 Med Grp FH	26 <i>Closed for TV Install</i>	27 11-4 BG Pride on Wooster Green
28 10 Worship 11 Fellowship 1 Guitar Lesson 4 Girl Scouts 7 MRG-GL	29 Closed	30 9:30 Staff Mtg. 8 A.A. - FH				

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June Birthdays



June 01	Cameron Orr
June 04	Anna Erman-Walden
June 06	Shirley Brannan
June 11	Marily Nusser
June 14	Alyce Platz, Joyce Kepke
June 20	Libby Dachik
June 21	Roger LaPointe
June 27	Leslee Kirkconnell
June 28	Diane McEwen Martin

2026 Officers of the Church

SESSION

Class of 2026: Dar Bevelhymmer, Karla Geyman,
Chris Williams

Class of 2027: Anne Moser, Christine Guenther,
Lisa Lawson

Class of 2028: Jen Codding, Michael Botts

Moderator: Rev. Dr. Jeffrey A. Schooley:

Clerk: Anne Moser

DEACONS

Class of 2026: Kathy Sweeney, Lee Liebetreu

Class of 2027: Libby Dachik, Scotty Huntington,
Ellyn Stout

Class of 2028: Anna Beeker , Terri McNamara

Chair: Terri McNamara **Secretary:** Libby Dachik

TRUSTEES

Class of 2026: Lowell Nees, Dana Nemeth

Class of 2027: Rosemary Apple, Chet Marcin

Class of 2028: Mike Evans, Joyce Kepke

Chair: Dana Nemeth

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