

“New Year, New... You?”

By Rev. Dr. Jeffrey A. Schooley



It's all quite arbitrary. Time moves in one direction – forward. And yet our calendars are cyclical. The incongruity between reality and a social construction like a calendar – while arbitrary – gives us, however, some creative space. The start of a new year fills us with at least the emotions of newness, which might just be what we need to help us kick old (negative) habits and/or start new (positive) routines. Indeed, it is this incongruity between reality and calendars that gives rise to the very notion of a “New Years Resolution.”

And while I don't tend to recommend selling out to arbitrary social constructions – faithfulness is best found when grounded in reality – I do still appreciate the creative space that New Years gives us to reimagine the parts of our lives that aren't working well for us or to imagine new expressions of life and faith that we just simply haven't yet dared to pursue. Who knows? Maybe this *is* the year you find and commit to that workout routine... or begin to pray more regularly... or really commit to helping out that community organization you've always admired, but never had time for? And since our God is in the re-creation business, we can see even the otherwise arbitrary turn of a calendar page as an invitation to God's newness in our lives.

Of course, no sooner do we commit to something new – do we dare to let ourselves dream – than the crushing reality of “startup friction” inserts itself in our lives! “Startup friction” (a term borrowed from the tech business world where “startups” are always the rage) names the gap between the excitement of a new venture and the messy reality, manifesting as resistance to change or feeling overwhelmed.

I feel that. Do you feel that? Do you feel that gap between the best dreams you can dream for yourself and then the steps needed to actually chase that dream – especially the *first* step? Oof! That gap can really be a chasm, even a canyon. But since it our God does like to do new things – and since we probably (in the long run) enjoy cultivating healthy habits – let's look at a few tips for learning to partner with God in pursuing our good, holy, new thing.

- **Prepare in advance** – Whatever your goal is, put it in the way of your normal life and routine. For example, if you want to work out more, set out your workout clothes the night before
- **Schedule** – As a specific extension of preparing, don't leave yourself asking (for example), “When am I setting aside that time to pray more today?” The mental work to figure out the answer only reduces the likelihood that you'll actually do it. Instead, know from the moment your eyes flutter open in the morning what you'll be doing and when. Even put it on your digital calendar so that your phone gives you a reminder!

- **Start small** – People who want to learn to pray more shouldn't sign up for a week-long silent prayer retreat. People who want to work out more shouldn't enter a triathlon. Set really small, reasonable, manageable goals. For working out, that might be only 15 minutes; for prayer, that might be only 5 minutes. Trust that you'll know when the right time to increase length and/or frequency will be.
- **Find joy** – If you're not enjoying it, you won't still be doing it by MLK Day. Sometimes you'll just need a variation on a theme. Let's say you want to work out more, but you're really hating it. Maybe what you need is an adult volleyball league that meets weekly. That might be just the thing to give you enough joy to keep after it all year round. And, of course, the thing you don't enjoy today might be something you love later, after you've had a few other successes, so don't count anything permanently out.
- **Be Kind to Yourself** – You won't be good at the thing you set out to do... probably. That's okay. You don't need to be good at doing a good thing (especially early on); most of the time, it's sufficient to do a good thing poorly (which is always preferable to doing a bad thing well!). So, celebrate that first piddly work out. Rejoice the first time you pray for 4 minutes. Small victories are still victories.
- **Don't rob yourself** – Building off of being kind to yourself, don't rob yourself. Comparison is the thief of joy, so if you begin a new thing with a competitive and comparative spirit, there's a very good chance that you won't do that thing very long. I know it's culturally in vogue to make light of participation trophies, but those criticisms tend to come (hypocritically enough) from people who *aren't* participating! So, go ahead and buy yourself a participation trophy. Or get yourself a medal for 438th place. Celebrate what you *have* done more than compare yourself to against what you haven't done.
- **Accountability** – This is maybe the scariest step and the most relationally fraught. If you want to start doing a good thing, you need to tell someone. And then you need to be okay with it when they ask how that new thing is going. Ideally, you'll even ask them to ask you how the new, good thing is going. Make sure to choose someone who functions from a place of kindness and who isn't inclined to compare you to others. Find someone who can laugh off a bad week at the gym or a bad week trying to read your Bible more. Find someone who loves you enough to want you succeed and who loves you too much to belittle you when you don't. That person is who you need for this journey with God into your new thing.

I'm sure there's more (even better) advice out there. But these steps are certainly sufficient to get you through the startup friction and to a point where you'll even begin to feel your body crave time at the gym/in prayer/doing community service/whatever good thing you and God create together for this new year.

Who knows? Maybe this is the year it actually works!



FYMS PAGE

Family and Youth Ministry Monthly Updates



January Slow-Down



January will see a slow-down on Christian Nurture events to gear up for the new CE Semester as well as Lent in March. Amanda will be off two Sundays in January. WeMeet will start back up in February as well as fundraising events for camp.

*Do not be anxious about anything,
but in every situation, by prayer and
petition, with thanksgiving, present
your requests to God. And the peace
of God, which transcends all
understanding, will guard your
hearts and your minds in Christ
Jesus.*

PHIL. 4:6-7



Thank You!

The Deacons thank the entire congregation for your extraordinary support of the Deacons Christmas Breakfast Ministry.

The event was truly amazing. There was such a feeling of community, it was overwhelming. Together, we made Christmas better for 58 families and individuals with \$100 Aldi gift cards for each family and gave 108 children each a \$40 Walmart gift card. Without everyone's generous support of your time volunteering during the breakfast and your monetary donations beforehand, the event wouldn't have been possible. The Deacons sincerely appreciate each and every one of you as do the event participants who you helped this holiday season.



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



Helping Hands

In the new year, our church will continue to support the project. Your donations of cleaning supplies and personal hygiene items help more people than you will ever know. We see some of the same people from month to month, however, we see many new people. Most come once and we never see them again. These are the people who find themselves in a difficult situation and just need a “Helping Hand.” Your support gets people through the rough patches in life.

The next Helping Hands hygiene and cleaning item distribution is January 9th. Donations of the following items would be greatly appreciated: laundry detergent, dryer sheets, dish soap, paper towels, toilet paper, body wash, shampoo, cream rinse, tissues, toothbrushes, baby diapers (all sizes), wet wipes. Your donations can be dropped off in the box located in the church lobby. The hygiene and cleaning products will be collected on January 4th and taken to First Christian Church for distribution on January 9th. If you want to contribute but don't have time to shop, a monetary donation can be made. We will do the shopping. If you would like to help with distribution on January 9th, join us from 4:00 to 6:00 pm at First Christian Church, on the corner of Poe and Haskins Roads.

D  **ACONS**
Following to Lead | Leading to Serve

We are making a difference in people's lives. Thank you for supporting these community projects.

Terri McNamara, Ellyn Stout, Scotty Huntington, Libby Dachik, Kathy Sweeney, Lee Liebetreu, Dave Horger

Thank you for decorating our Mitten Tree with so many useful and colorful items. Many were given out at the Deacons' breakfast and the rest will be given throughout the winter in the Deacons' Shop. Our nice warm tree will keep our neighbors warm all winter.



Christmas decorations—As you pack away your Christmas decorations, you may find there are some you no longer need. You can donate those unwanted decorations to next year's Jingle Jumble Sale. Just box them up and bring them up to the 3rd floor of the church for storage and please mark them "Xmas decorations for the Jingle Jumble Sale". Thank you!



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you all from the Green Team!

If you have a live Christmas tree, note that the city will begin pick up of the trees on January 5, 2026. Have your tree out on the curb by then.

But before then, enjoy the light and your friends and family.

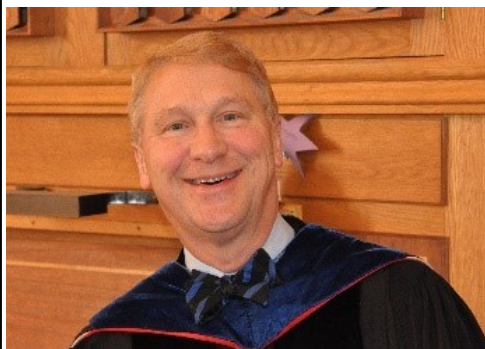


In **January 2026** there will be **NO First Friday** held. Look for information for our next scheduled on in February on Feb. 6th.



Kindred Spirits Circle will hold their next meeting on Monday, January 19th at 4:30 pm. They will meet in the church library to discuss *The Widow with Two Mites* parable. All are welcome to join us :)

Congregational Meeting - Following worship on **Sunday, January 11, 2026** we will hold a congregational meeting for the purposes of (1) approving Pastor Jeff's 2026 terms of call, (2) electing new officers, and (3) reviewing and amending the church's bylaws. Please plan to stay after worship for this meeting. Fellowship Hour will still take place after the meeting.



Greetings from Ed Duling (our former church organist) who recently sent a letter updating all of us on his life. . .

I have often joked—when someone wondered where I was or why I did not respond quickly to a call or text—that “Well, I haven’t left for Tahiti.” But by the time you read this, I will be cruising through those very Tahitian isles that I kidded about. Just to catch you up: no, I have not been “all over the world” since I left BG a little over

five years ago. Rather, as Dickens would put it, I have lived a very circumscribed life, serving two Sundays a month at my old village church in Canal Lewisville (Coshocton), and playing/directing two Sundays a month for “mad money” at a (formerly) large Lutheran church in Columbus. (Yes, you can conduct from the organ with your hands and use just the pedals!) When needed, I continue to teach in the online music education master’s program at KSU. In addition, there is nearly a half-acre to keep up with older outbuildings and oddball wiring, sump, well, and septic tanks—and two “needy” inside cats (Ozzie and Harriet) and three trap/neuter/release kiddos outside! (All I need is Hank Kimball, ag agent from *Green Acres*, to give me advice!) My biking—miss the trail in BG—is nearly nil, but I swam off 12# this past summer at the Newcomerstown pool.

I have not traveled because spare funds have helped me keep a tiny studio apartment in Columbus—I call it my “escape” apartment; it is handy when I have had a long rehearsal over there and do not want to drive through the deer-infested roads of east central Ohio back up to Coshocton. (Reminder to NW Ohioans: Coshocton is neither Circleville nor Chillicothe, LOL.) It’s also handy to get away to concerts or to play at Merry Tuba Christmas (as I did last night)—or when my neighbors back home get on my nerves with oddball theories or still wring their hands over Obama’s birth certificate.

Even after all this time, I want to thank you for continuing to keep in touch and for the “send off” I received in 2020. A lot of water has been over the dam in that time, but I am just now at the point that I may be able to toss out (Yes, remember I am a bit of a hoarder) the cards that I was given then, and the next spring, at the “Leftover” reception when I was up to play. I finally got the storage unit by the bowling alley cleaned out about 18 months ago, lessening any need to come up. However, I do hope to transition out of the Columbus job fairly soon, so hope to be up to sub some Sunday if I can break free of the demands of the home UMC church—at 71, I actually feel I am one of the able-bodied willing to keep an eye on it since it’s nearly next door.

All the best for the New Year!

Yours,

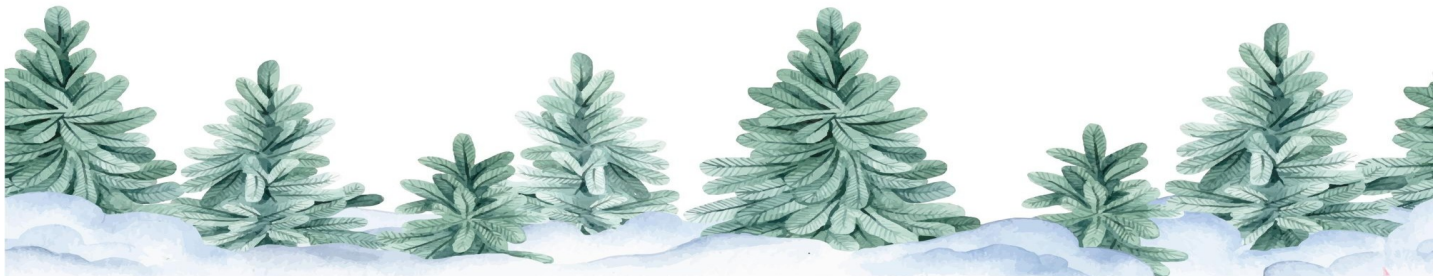
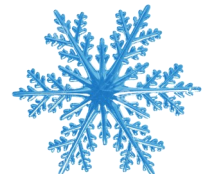
Ed Duling (ebd2140@aol.com)

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 offering can be read as a sort of poetic, New Years resolution for us all.

Why?

Why does the world think it's bad to be good?
Why is honesty misunderstood?
What's wrong with being gentle, tender and kind?
People who are usually have peace of mind.
That's a goal we should all seek
And not by trampling on the meek.
Why are we so greedy, always wanting more?
That's the kind of thinking that often leads to war.
What's the good of that, pray tell?
Waging war is far worse than raising hell.
It destroys all that's in its path.
It turns men into killers
Who someday will face God's wrath.
Why are those that strive for peace
Looked upon as fools?
Why does man prefer to fight,
Breaking all the rules?
Satan must be happy with the world just as it is
When he looks around him, it seems that we are his.
But there is a ray of hope
In all the doom and gloom.
Christ has overcome the world
And in heaven there is room.



January 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
ESL=English as a	YG=Youth	Med.	HYT=Horizon	CN=Chris. Nurture	TL= Trumpet	SC=Sort Clothes
				1 Closed	2 Closed No First Friday	3
4 10 Worship & Communion 3:30 Girl Scouts 7 MRG-GL	5 Closed	6 1 Book Group in Library 5:30 ESL Classes 8 AA in FH	7 9 Sorting Clothes 3-4 Trumpet Lessons	8 9:30 Deacons' Shop is open & Staff mtg. 5:30 ESL Classes 6 Bell Choir 7 Choir 7 MR in FH	9 4:30- Helping Hands at First Christian Church	10
11 10 Worship w/Congregational Meeting 11 Mission 3:30 Girl Scouts 7 MRG-GL	12 Closed	13 1 Book Group in Library 5:30 Session 5:30 ESL Classes 8 AA in FH	14 9 Sorting Clothes 3-4 Trumpet Lessons 4:30 Trustees	15 9:30 Deacons' Shop is open & Staff mtg. 5:30 ESL Classes 6 Bell Choir 7 Choir 7 MR in FH	16 Closed DEADLINE FOR 2025 ANNUAL MTG REPORTS <u>DEADLINE</u>	17
18 10 Worship & Ordination/Installation of Officers 11:30 Deacons 3:30 Girl Scouts 7 MRG-GL	19 Closed 4:30 Kindred Spirits Cir. In Library 	20 1 Book Group in Library 5:30 ESL Classes 8 AA in FH	21 9 Sorting Clothes 3-4 Trumpet Lessons	22 9:30 Deacons' Shop is open & Staff mtg. 5:30 ESL Classes 6 Bell Choir 7 Choir 7 MR in FH	23	24 9-3 Officer Training in the Fellowship Hall 10 Dog Park Group in GL
25 10 Worship 3:30 Girl Scouts 7 MRG-GL	26 Closed	27 Feb. Newsletter Deadline 1 Book Group in Library 5:30 ESL Classes 7 Christian Nurture & Cong. Care Mtgs. 8 AA in FH	28 9 Sorting Clothes 3-4 Trumpet Lessons	29 9:30 Deacons' Shop is open & Staff mtg. 5:30 ESL Classes 6 Bell Choir 7 Choir 7 MR in FH	30	31



January 2026

Jan. 02	Bentley Carter
Jan 05	Chris Dunn, Camilla Marsteller
Jan 07	Susan Dunn
Jan 09	Sandi Carsey
Jan 11	Lisa Lawson
Jan 14	Dan McNamara
Jan 15	Scarlett Gensler-Nic
Jan 22	Jan McLaughlin
Jan 23	Samantha Coddling
Jan 24	Janet DeLong
Jan 26	Stewart Orr

(if your birthday doesn't appear here, please contact the office with your date of birth mm/dd/year)

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

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 Anne Beeker

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 Evens, Joyce Kepke

Co-Chairs: Dana Nemeth

Secretary:

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We are on Facebook.

