

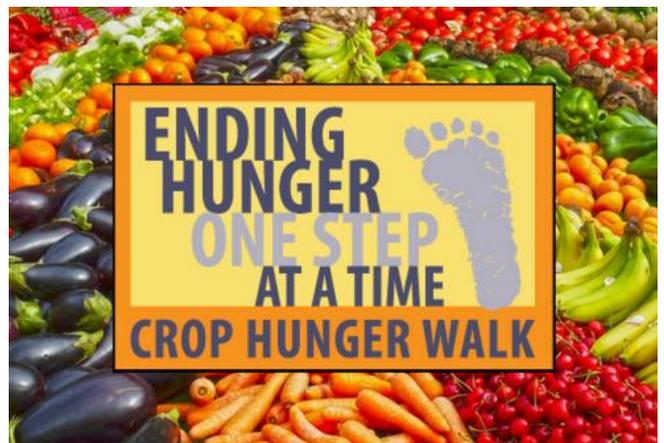
Please join us for our ALL-CHURCH picnic after worship on Sunday, September 12



*Please join us for our
All-Church Picnic in the pavilion,
Sunday, September 12th @ Noon.
Pray for a sunny September!
Fellowship will provide the main dish,
Please bring a side or salad to share.*

CROP Walk 2021

Sunday, September 26th, is the date for the annual CROP Walk which will have an unofficial presence near the Runner's Pavilion in the Beach 1 parking lot at Presque Isle. The 2021 Erie County CROP Hunger Walk will take much the same form that it did last year with the focus on smaller group gatherings. The walk is not limited to that specific day. Instead, it could take place anytime in September that best fits your schedule. You may plan to walk **locally**. Find a good time to schedule a walk with others, or walk on your own. So find a friend, solicit sponsors, and go for a CROP walk!



See page 5 of this newsletter for "Drawing Closer to God by Walking".

For more information about the 47years of CROP Walk in Erie, visit

<http://www.cropwalkerie.org>

From the Pastor

The world is in need of prayer – always has, always will

One of the things which has been recommended to us is to turn off the news.

That makes a lot of sense. Except when there was a major crisis with moment-by-moment changes, it seems that Peter Jennings and Walter Cronkite were able to tell us the most important things that were happening on a given day. And, they were able to do so in a 22-minute evening newscast. There wasn't need to loop it continuously 24/7. Most of the time, we need to turn off – or at least *turn down* – the “news”.

However, the events of the past two or three weeks are an exception to that general principle. The natural disaster in Haiti and the human-caused disaster (*that's a phrase that a lot of people in relief work use for non-natural disasters*) in Afghanistan must draw you and into awareness of what is happening elsewhere in the world. Such news is shocking, horrifying, and paralyzing. Still we must take action. The consequences of turning off the TV or the mobile device or the laptop are too ... consequential.

What shall you and I do. One of the most immediate responses is to pray. God can handle things which you and I cannot. Therefore, I turn the rest of my newsletter column this time around to people who KNOW what is happening in Haiti and in Afghanistan. Firsthand. Unfiltered. Real-world. (There is more news and more prayer recommendations linked from our congregation's [website](#), or ask us to send you printed versions.

Wishing you Jesus' Peace and Joy,

Greg

Lord God! Your children in Haiti are so frightened!

Their walls shook this morning. The ground beneath their feet cannot be trusted!

“Goudougoudou”, they call it!

It's the sound they also heard on January 12, 2010,

when catastrophe came quaking and shaking.

Lord God, their bodies and souls tremble again as a large earthquake broke their houses, crushingly destroying lives and livelihoods.

But their faith in You is not broken, Lord God.

We ask again that You hold them tight,

Bring healing to their bodies,

Bring structure to the disorder,

Bring help for the wounded,

Bring light to this darkness once again enveloping them,

And Lord God, help us to bring aid first by listening to their concerns,

biding by their needs as they share them.

Lord God, your children in Haiti are so frightened.

Please let us shelter them in spirit while we walk with them.

We ask all this in the name of your precious Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.



[www.presbyterianmission.org/
ministries/missionconnections/
cindy-corell/](http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/missionconnections/cindy-corell/)



The current insurgency represents a devastating reality for the small number of Christians in Afghanistan.

Photo by Samaritan's Purse

Afghanistan was already a brutal place for the Church. Followers of Jesus are under constant risk, and the danger they face is very real. Afghanistan is [No. 2 on the 2021 !\[\]\(4729e517bc6a7cd81c8025b9646574fb_img.jpg\) World Watch List](#), and God's people live under intense pressure and the threat of imminent violence.

The most important thing we can do right now is pray. We spoke with Open Doors experts about the reality of life for believers in the region, and they gave us some specific ways to pray. Please, lift up our family of believers enduring constant danger and trauma in Afghanistan.

1. **Pray for an end to the violence and for God to give wisdom to the leaders and all those involved in peace negotiations.** Pray no more civilians would be injured or killed from airstrikes or attacks from either Afghanistan's government or Taliban forces.
2. **Pray for the hungry.** Ask for God's divine provision for those in the margins of the war—for the men, women and children whose stomachs are rumbling due to the drought and lack of access to food and other basic needs. Pray for the Lord's miracles to be real in their lives and that He would provide them both physical and spiritual food to nourish their bodies and souls.
3. **Pray for the sick.** Many people in Afghanistan are infected and dying from COVID-19, especially with the spread of the Delta variant and lack of access to healthcare. Pray for the Lord's healing and restoration to be upon all those who are ill. Pray He would send more vaccines to the country and that the vaccine rollout would be successful even amidst the increasing violence. He is the God of the impossible.
4. **Pray for the displaced.** Many families are in refugee camps, are fleeing their homes or are thinking about fleeing. Pray for the Lord to grant them His protection, wisdom, shelter and provision.
5. **Pray for the believers.** There must be so much fear and trepidation among followers of Christ who are secretly living their faith within their homes in this country, especially with the news of a possible Taliban takeover. Pray for the Holy Spirit to strengthen these secret believers in their inner being. Pray the peace of God would rule in their hearts.

-- Christopher Summers, of [OpenDoorsUSA.org](https://www.opendoorsusa.org). Open Doors is a non-denominational ecumenical Christian organization which supports and rescues Christians in places where their faith puts them in danger.

Upcoming @ FUPC

September 5 On the Sunday of Labor Day Weekend, our gathered sanctuary worship will continue on our summer schedule. The September 5 worship service will begin at 10:00. That morning (as is typical for the first Sundays of most months) will include the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. In August we experimented with allowing worshipers to come forward to a larger table to receive the bread and an individual cup. Reaction our Worship Team has heard was positive, so we will continue this pattern for September 5. A Communion server will also be available to bring the bread and the juice to those who prefer to remain seated.

September 12 That Sunday will mark our return to 11:00 worship in the sanctuary.

Confirmation Journey After a summer break, those young people in this year's Confirmation Journey will resume the gatherings with the pastor and other congregational leaders the second and fourth Sundays of each month at 9:35 a.m., starting September 12. This process is a time to explore their personal faith and develop even more understanding about the significance of discipleship to Jesus Christ and of membership in a local church.

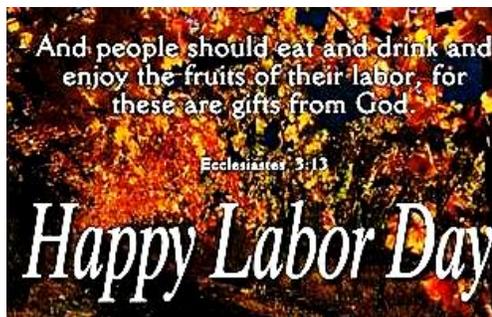
After-Worship Coffee & Conversations Our Fellowship Team is ready to restart our more-familiar patterns for coffee and cookies and fresh fruit, appropriate for whatever safety standards will provide reassuring comfort for all who choose to participate. That group is now recruiting volunteers who would provide the refreshments, serve coffee and lemonade, or assist with set-up or clean-up. A sign-up sheet is located on the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall. Contact Linda Rummel or reach out to the church office to schedule your weekend or ask your questions.

Girard Presbyterian dedicates its new building Sept. 12 at 2:00

We are invited to Girard Presbyterian Church's dedication of their new facilities, just a little more than three years after a fire destroyed their [1892 building](#).

The formal dedication will be Sunday, September 12, beginning at 2:00 p.m. Carpooling from Edinboro can be arranged by calling or e-mailing the FUPC office.

A prayer for Labor Day



Lord Jesus, we give thanks for work, and for the many works you have given us to do. Hear our prayers on this day of rest, and strengthen us for the week ahead. We pray that you would be present with those who work by day, and those who work by night; those who work near, and those whose work carries them far away; and we pray for those who in this uncertain time have no job. We pray all of this knowing that your labors on our behalf never cease, and that your yoke is easy, and your burden is light. Amen.

-- written by Episcopal priest Rick Morley (Basking Ridge, NJ) on his blog ["A Garden Path"](#)

First United Presbyterian Church

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Insights from elsewhere:

Two sides of the same SPIRITUALITY coin: suggested reading and listening

Walking: To intentionally do something to bring you spiritual and physical benefits.

Sitting still: To intentionally *not* do other things, so you can gain spiritual and physical benefits.

Two recent blog posts by BibleGateway.com have what appear to be opposite recommendations, but you may find both will bring your life into better balance, especially if the spinning of the wild world around you has you feeling unbalanced.

One invites you to walk – with a spiritual focus. A number of our FUPC members have spoken about the blessings and recentering they experience because of their running or walking. Pick the pace that works for you, and check out the details below.

The other devotional practice is to *not* walk, or run, or scurry about. Sitting still is one of the ways we can slow our breathing, release tension in our body, and find an answer to tensions in our soul. Sabbath rest can happen for a full day, or for a short period added to your everyday schedule. Those details are also available online or in print.



Draw closer to God by **WALKING**

The Bible includes mandates to “walk in the light”, and to “walk by faith”, and to “walk in truth”. Christian author and seminary professor Mark Buchanan has studied how walking brings about an intertwined wholeness for people who are able to walk, even for short distances and even at gentle speeds. He wrote his research made him “more amazed at the physical, relational, mental, and spiritually benefits of this simple, often necessary, practice. Walking is one of the best gifts God gave us.”

For ideas and recommendations on Spiritual Walking, visit the blog post at [walking-as-a-spiritual-discipline](#). From that BibleGateway link, you can read a transcript of an interview with the writer, listen to an audio version, or watch a video about this devotional practice. FUPC can also print you a copy.

Draw closer to God by **RESTING**

All of life spins in cycles. Day gives way to night, and then night is broken by the dawn. We loop around the sun. Dry spells last for a season. Spring keeps coming. We get to go to sleep at night. Every day is a new beginning.

Our internal life relies on such cycles too.

One of the commands of God—a most serious command, repeated as much as any other command in the Old Testament—is that we choose to *shabbat*, the Hebrew word for “to stop”. Not a rolling stop like a novice driver slinking through a stop sign, but coming to a full stop. And then starting again.

For more on Spiritual Rest, check out this website from [BibleGateway.com](#) or ask us for a printed or e-mail version for the introduction to Pastor Mel Lawrenz’s “How to Live the Bible” multi-part [series](#).