

# MATTHEW 25 Fall 2025



Sharing Good News From Matthew 25 Churches and Friends in the Presbytery of Scioto Valley

Matthew 25 Churches seek to build congregational vitality, dismantle structural racism, and eradicate systemic poverty.

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**First, Chillicothe, First, Logan and First, Lancaster** are partnering with Bottoms Up, a diaper bank that helps single mothers provide diapers for their children, by collecting diapers and raising money for this program. Without diapers, babies cannot be placed in child care facilities nor participate in early childhood education programs. Without childcare, parents cannot go to work. You can find more information at [www.bottomsup.life](http://www.bottomsup.life) or Rev Jason Link [revdrjtl@gmail.com](mailto:revdrjtl@gmail.com).

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**Unity, Reynoldsburg** has revitalized their children's book collection with a clear mission: to build a library that reflects diverse representation, includes engaging and relevant topics, and fosters acceptance and empathy. They created a wish list to help fill in the gaps and invited the congregation to donate books. The updated collection will be used to support Sunday School lessons, serve as resources for families, and engage children in meaningful exploration of books. Contact Robin Gray [robynggray75@gmail.com](mailto:robynggray75@gmail.com).

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**Overbrook, Clintonville** is in the early stages of forming a community-based group to work for a just, compassionate, and representative society. Named "Voices for Social Justice," their mission is to confront political polarization and advocate for social justice. Contact Jennifer Keplinger [jkeplinger549@gmail.com](mailto:jkeplinger549@gmail.com)

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**Boulevard, Upper Arlington** continues its support for Freedom ala Cart (an organization that works with survivors of human trafficking), Fund the Climb (an organization that works with those trying to overcome addiction), and Families Flourish (an organization that helps low income mothers with school age children move to safe housing in safe neighborhoods). The church is also supporting two local food pantries, as well as a Blessing Box on their property. Contact Allyson Engdahl [erical73@yahoo.com](mailto:erical73@yahoo.com).

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**Circleville** celebrated that their Faith House affordable house that God built through our congregation was sold in May 2025 to a mother with a teenage son who are settling in well and excited to have their own home. For a focus on Congregational Vitality, the church is hosting the Friends of the Groom, a Christian theatre company, the weekend of November 14-16. More information will be coming soon - all are welcome! Contact Rev Nancy Dederer [njcdederer@gmail.com](mailto:njcdederer@gmail.com).

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**Covenant, Upper Arlington** members and friends participated in Pride events for the third consecutive year, supporting the LGBTQIA+ community at picnics, flag raisings, and other community events. They walked with other Presbyterian Churches in the Columbus Pride March, sporting "You Belong" t-shirts. Contact Tori Vazquez [tori.vazquez@gmail.com](mailto:tori.vazquez@gmail.com).

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**First, Westerville** is supporting one family for the cost of an entire year of resources through Families Flourish, a unique three-year program that transforms the lives of low wage working families and their children by providing a comprehensive path to economic mobility and wellness. The church has also offered hands-on support to FF programs by providing meals, facilities, and children's programming. Contact Bill Hitt [wllmhtt@gmail.com](mailto:wllmhtt@gmail.com).

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**First, Granville's** 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders will go "On a Mission" this school year. One Friday a month they will go out into the community to serve. They will start with a poverty simulation at a local grocery store and discuss the issues people in poverty face daily. After each month's experience, they will have follow up discussions based on the "Bridges out of Poverty" model and scripture, beginning with Matthew 25. Contact Ellen Clark [eclark@granpres.org](mailto:eclark@granpres.org).

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**First, Waverly** continues to offer its annual \$1000 Matthew 25 grant. The purpose of this grant is to support programs in Pike county Ohio that effectively improve long term mental/physical health and economic independence for kids currently living in poverty. These programs are very well received by the congregation. Members have increased personal donations to their Matthew 25 funds and participated in volunteer opportunities. Contact Pat Mikelson, 614-330-9634. [pat.mikelson@gmail.com](mailto:pat.mikelson@gmail.com)

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## Take Out Your Calendars!! Matthew 25 Initiatives/Events/Opportunities

**Immigration Policy:** Organizing to Develop Solutions Event on Saturday **October 4** 2:30 - 4:30pm, Old First Columbus. Contact Mark Stansbery [walk@igc.org](mailto:walk@igc.org).

**The Presbyterian Advocacy Hour** brings together committed people of faith each month to fill your batteries up with information and ways to act on the most pressing issues. Join the monthly online gatherings each fourth Wednesday of the month - hosted by the Presbyterian Church (USA). The next event is on **October 22** at 12:00 pm on LGBTQIA+ issues. Register online at [pcusa.org](http://pcusa.org). Contact Tina Johnson [tinajohnson@gmail.com](mailto:tinajohnson@gmail.com).

“**Mission**” is the theme of the **Presbyterian Women (PW) Fall Gathering** on Saturday, **Nov. 8** at First Presbyterian Church in Lancaster. Kelsey Law, Vice Moderator of PW churchwide, will lead worship, speak on her role as Vice Moderator, and facilitate a workshop on her experiences at the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), which is the principle global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality, the rights and the empowerment of women. Participants will also learn about mission projects in our churches and be part of a mission fair of items that women may purchase to support missions. Cost for the day (9:30 am - 2:30 pm) is \$20 which includes lunch. Contact Betsy Sebastian [betsyseb05@gmail.com](mailto:betsyseb05@gmail.com) before Nov. 1 to register.

Circleville will host the **Friends of the Groom** with a performance on Friday evening **November 14** and a workshop/retreat on Saturday **November 15** on using theatre in worship. Circleville received a Neighborhood Mission Grant from the presbytery to help sponsor this event. All are welcome. Look for more information soon in the Thursday presbytery mailing. Contact Rev Nancy Dederer [njcdederer@gmail.com](mailto:njcdederer@gmail.com).

A workshop on “**Hunger in Ohio**” is set for Tuesday, **November 18** from 1:30 - 3:00 pm at Overbrook Presbyterian Church. Hear the latest on the impact that the state and federal cuts have on those in need and how we as individuals, churches, and a presbytery can respond. The event is free, but registration is requested at [dagmar@psvonline.org](mailto:dagmar@psvonline.org). Contact Kathi Bubb [kathibubb@gmail.com](mailto:kathibubb@gmail.com).

**Universal Human Rights Declaration** on **December 10**.

Contact Mark Stansbery [walk@igc.org](mailto:walk@igc.org).

## SAVE THE DATES for 2026

Our annual **PIE (Partners in Education) Event** will be held on Saturday, **January 31** at Covenant Presbyterian Church, and will include workshops on **immigration and White Christian Nationalism**.

**Rev. Jimmie Hawkins**, PC(USA)'s Advocacy Director for the Washington Office of Public Witness and the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, will be in our presbytery **April 24 - 26** with a variety of events being planned to help individuals, churches, and our presbytery become more involved in **advocacy** for reducing hunger, poverty, and racism.

**What's going on in YOUR church with Matthew 25? Send your congregation's story to [dagmar@psvonline.org](mailto:dagmar@psvonline.org) for inclusion in our Winter Newsletter by December 22.**