

The Service on Aug 10 was lead by the youth. Nine of the ten shared about their experience at the recent Youth Triennium in Louisville, KY.

Madelyn Himebauch

I would say that the Triennium was such an amazing experience (I'm sure others would agree). I made so many friends from around the country and even outside of it that had similar minds and beliefs.

Before the Triennium I knew WHO people where but I didn't KNOW who they were. Being up here with these people today not only shows me I have a bigger community, but a support system and a family. It was so much fun getting to learn and grow in my faith with others throughout that week.

And if I had to give one bit of advice for the next group of kid going 3 years from now; try every activity, talk to everyone, get as many pins as possible and do so while being open to Gods presence and his blessings.

Addie Wray

This experience that I am so grateful to be a part of was so meaningful. The worship services were energizing and helped me learn more about myself and my faith. The music at triennium was exciting and different for me.

One of my favorite parts of the worship was a testimony where someone my age talked about the importance of home and how home means something different for everyone. I liked hearing from someone who was around my age because I could understand and relate with what they were saying on a deeper level.

Also it was comforting to be around so many people that share similar values and beliefs. I really enjoyed getting to meet new people from all over the country and the world.

It was fun seeing how different states compared to each other. For example we learned that a very popular energy drink called bubbler is only a Midwest thing. I also got closer with our group of youth at triennium.

I got to know everyone better as we went through this impactful experience together.

Carly Schilling

As we left for Triennium on Sunday July 27th, I was very nervous. I had no idea what was going to happen. Little did I know that this would be such a monumental week for me.

Soon after we arrived in Kentucky we sat down for our first worship service. There was music, energizers, and a great sermon. I looked through the audience, 2,000 people attending from all over the world. There were so many youth close in age to me, it was truly amazing to see that they too have been brought here by God just like me.

Seeing so many young faces throughout the days and nightly worship was something I'm not used to but it felt nice to know that there were young people out there, like me, who held the same beliefs as me. And I'm very appreciative of the community we built here at First Presbyterian Church. It was truly a connection to God and to the people under the same faith as me I had never experienced.

Lastly, I would like to thank all the people who supported all of us going on this unforgettable journey, it meant so much to every single one of us in so many different ways.

Kelsey Wray

There were so many amazing and unforgettable aspects of triennium. One of them that stuck out to me was meeting people from around the world.

Usually when I meet people I feel anxious or scared, worrying about what I should say or worrying about what they think of me. I always want to make a good impression. Introducing yourself to new people at first was hard, although as the week went on it got easier and easier to go up to people to ask "Where are you from?" "Would you like to trade pins?" I would ask. Suddenly meeting new people wasn't so bad. God had brought us all together, to worship, to experience an experience like no other.

The thousands of people that were there, all felt connected by Gods presence. Everybody took the time to get to know each other, and everyone made me feel connected and loved. I felt welcomed, especially at night during worship when all the youth came together as one to worship God.

I will never forget this once in a lifetime experience where I met amazing people from all around the world.

Nola Christopher

The 2025 Presbyterian Youth Triennium was a very surprising and memorable experience. To start, every worship service was so amazing. The preachers were so passionate and kept you engaged. Each preacher had amazing messages like, Reverend Peggy Jean Craig told us that if we do not transform our pain we will transmit it. This phrase suggests that if we do not turn our pain into something good like strength or empathy, it could lead to negative behaviors that affect others. She gave us an example of this by explaining a story in Genesis about Joseph and his brothers. How Joseph transformed his pain into empathy. Another amazing part of worship was the music. The love band was so cool and the songs were so good and helped me feel closer to God.

One of the other memorable parts of the triennium was being able to meet different people from all over our country and even a few other countries. I found it so cool that everyone there shared the same beliefs and religion as me. I met so many kind people that were just as excited to talk me and to meet new, and as someone who isn't a very outgoing person that was very comforting. I am so grateful that I was able to go on the triennium and it is something I will remember forever.

Emma Halle

Now I know a lot of people wanted me to talk about my pins, but that's not what I wanted to talk about. I wanted to share about the similarities and differences from the Triennium and mission trips. A lot of you might come up to us that have been on a mission trip and ask, which one did you like more? Which one was better? Or some type of variation of that. But the truth is you can't compare the two because they are two completely different events with completely different experiences. It's kinda like comparing your best friend to your dog, you can't chose one, they both have pros and cons but are nothing alike. When I first heard we were going on the Triennium I'm not going to lie I was bummed out that we were going to miss out on this year's mission trip. Personally between the two I would have chosen mission trips but that's my personal opinion. I still believe that mission trips are one of the best experiences I have been through, I have learned so so much from them and truly felt like I was being a servant leader and serving the lord through those trips. I still had loads of fun on this year's Triennium and I'm supper grateful I got to attend and experience this wonderful event that only happens every three years and I am grateful that I got to attend. They are similar in certain ways, for example you grow in your faith, learn more

about the Bible and gods promises, and have fun doing so. But again I can't compare the two because



they are polar opposites. Thank you

Brinley Daul

Some of my favorite things about the Triennium experience were worship and flexibility.

Worship was eye opening. The energy, passion, everything. The songs weren't traditional hymns. They were songs that could play on any Christian radio station, and they just felt so genuine. Everyone was singing along. The sermons were some of the best I'd ever heard. The amount of energy radiating through their voices made it so easy to focus and made everyone to be able to feel how genuine it was. They helped me understand how to find God within my life and how even if it doesn't feel ideal to us, God has a reason. As Jerry Cannon said at our last sermon there, "Your plans are good, but God's plans are gold." Listening to all of the amazing inspirational sermons truly made me excited for the chance to learn from whoever FPC's new pastor will be.

As for flexibility, I would like to touch on how understanding the coordinators of Triennium were that everybody worships differently. We were never forced to do anything and there were options for everyone. Like traditional vs. silent worship. This truly opened the doors for everyone to encounter God without being overwhelmed by something they didn't want to do. They were able to accommodate to the fact that God made everyone's ideal worship different.

I truly loved everything about this experience and I would go back in a heartbeat if given the chance. These were just two things that really stuck out to me with this whole wonderful experience.

Elliot Johnson

Triennium 2025... What an experience. At the beginning of Triennium one question that was often asked was, "What are some things you are hoping to do during Triennium?" Every time I'd answer "Meet people from all over, get closer to God, and last but not least, have fun. Well each of the things I wanted, happened. Let's start with meeting new people.

Each day I probably meet 20-30 new people which was mostly enabled by these pins *show off pins* With 2,000 people in one space it can seem overwhelming, but these pins gave you a good reason to walk up to someone new and start a conversation. Another way that I met new people was in the interest groups. In the first interest groups there were only about 20 people so it was easy to do an ice breaker. In the second interest group it was about board games and there were probably 100-150 people, so it would be hard for us to learn where everyone was from. We split into small groups and I got to play games with some people from Atlanta. The people that I met that were the furthest from Wisconsin would probably be people from Trinidad and Tobago which is an island just north of Venezuela.

The second thing I wanted to do was get closer to God. In the first Interest Group it was all about spiritual practices. Some people were sharing what they did that made them feel closer to God, during that I realized, "Wow, I barely spend time with God. All I do is go to church every week. I barely read my bible or do a devotional. So, later I sought and found an app that gives a daily verse and lets you think about what God wanted you to learn with that single verse. I've been using the app since then. This accomplished the second thing I wanted to do. Now it's just the third and final goal, have fun.

There were many different ways we could have fun during the trip. But I think everyone that went on the trip can say most of the trip was really fun. One evening event I did was a silent disco. Which is a dance party with no speakers and everyone has headphones that play the same music and everyone can control their own volume. To me it felt silly but I tried it, and it was lots of fun. Everyone was dancing, laughing, singing along and having fun. So if you ever encounter a silent disco try it, it's more fun than you'd think.

Overall I met lots of new people, got much closer to God and had so much fun. I can't wait for the next time I am able to go to Triennium in 3 years.

Oliver Johnson

As if We Were Dreaming

As you have heard from some of the other youth, these worship services were very impactful. Others have brought up specific parts from them, like the music or certain lines from the preachers. I will be taking a much more general approach, sharing the messages from the sermons of Triennium. Every day, we had a worship service, and each was themed around something to do with dreaming, going from born to dream to collective dreaming to facing the nightmare to waking up and dreaming. This is an abridgement of those sermons, through my own lens.

There is work to be done. Undoubtably, there is. There are soup kitchens that need helpers. There are food pantries that need volunteers. There are rotary lights that need putting up, there are streets that need to be cleaned. There are people that need to be connected to, be given compassion so that they can turn their lives around. There are people who need to hear the word of God, and people who need to see the work of God. There is absolutely work to put our heads down and do. There is this need for work. But there is also a need to dream. A need to say “I know this work is necessary today, but maybe there is other work that can be done to make this work unnecessary tomorrow.”

To dream is to say I will plant this seed today. And I know it will not sprout at any point in the next 10 years, but I will water it every day. And I will trust, I will have faith, that it will someday sprout. And when it sprouts it will not sprout into a normal, run of the mill, everyday tree. No. Instead, it will be a gigantic tree. One that by its own existence radically changes the ecosystem of other trees and waterers among it. Now that is a dream.

A dream is to see something that needs changing in our world and change it. Make a plan, rally the people, and get the job done. A dream is to have a vision for the future and act it out. A dream is a version of the world that it is not now and that we long for it to be. A dream is something that we yearn for, that changes our circumstances for the better. And when our dreams come true, we will shout with joy.

Now we’ve got some big dreams. We’ve also got some small dreams. Some dreams are so big that a whole community together cannot even make them come true by themselves. Some are so big you cannot even comprehend them now. First, we often think we, by ourselves, carry the weight. That it is my dream, and my dream alone, to end homelessness or bring upon world peace. But that’s not true. It is many, many people’s dream to end homelessness or bring upon world peace, every person with this dream helping out in their own way. These are the collective dreams of humanity.

And maybe you’re more concerned with one than the other. Maybe you’re putting all your energy into ending homelessness, and another person’s full energy is being used for world peace. That does not make you two enemies, just because you have different dreams. We

often fall into this idea that we have been given a dream by God, and because we have that dream, it is the “right” dream. But God gives different dreams to different people. And we must work together to achieve our separate dreams, and we must also work together to achieve our collective dreams.

And these dreams are big. So big that they are bigger than your dream or my dream, they are God's dream. And these dreams of God might be so big they might be hard. The work you might need to do to make them true might be scary. But we must push through this fear, push through the nightmare.

Look at the story of Joseph's dream. When, in Genesis 37, he told his brothers that he had a dream where his stalk stood upright and all of his brothers' stalks bowed down towards his stalk. Now the brothers didn't like this, this would be a nightmare for them. They even asked him, "Are you indeed to reign over us?" Hearing this dream made Joseph's brothers hate him even more. This was the point when they decided to sell him into slavery, which was a nightmare for Joseph. But out of this nightmare, Joseph saved Egypt from the drought by predicting it and preparing for it. "What you intended for evil, God intended for good," he told his brothers. He did not wallow in his pain of being abused by his master's wife, or in the hurt of slavery. No. He transformed his pain, using his situation in Egypt to interpret the Pharaoh's dream, and get put in charge of preparing for the drought. And instead of transmitting his pain, when he saw his brothers again, he forgave them, and the family was together again.

There will be trials and tribulations along the road towards bettering our world. There will be superiors who say no. There will be other politicians who win the vote by a small margin, or a landslide. There will be times when our ideas will be shot down, and if our ideas are radical enough, we will be shot down with them. There will be pain caused. There will be nightmares that we will go through. And we will come out stronger. Because while evil will happen, it is only a step on the way to good. We know to transform our pain, and not transmit it. And we know that we can lay down our burdens, lay down our hurt, to the Lord, and he will sustain us and give us rest. And we know that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. You and I, we have these big dreams. We want to make America a safe nation for all. We want all people to be able to be who God made them to be. We want to fight and end homelessness. We want to influence the legislature to make the government more fair and reflective upon all people. We want to change our economic system to incentivize charity. And not only are these our dreams, they are dreams sent to us by God. God wants us to respect people. To treat people fair. To see people as they were made to be. To bring people towards safety, to help the homeless, to give our money and our time to charity. God wants us to love our neighbors as ourselves. To see the weak and the needy and help them, for they are the least of these, and helping them is helping God. We are the hands and feet of Christ in this world, and we are called towards love, and service. We are made in God's image to do God's work here, and without work, our faith means nothing. So go out, and love thy neighbor. Love the stranger, and love your enemies. For that is what we were sent here to do. Amen