



First Christian Church

(Disciples of Christ)

4520 Rosedale Rd.
Middletown, Ohio 45042
513.422.2853
www.fcc-middletown.org

The Chalice Communicator

Volume XXXVXXII

December 10, 2014

Number 18

Pastor: [Rev. Laureen A. Roe](#)

Music Director: [Rachel Eve Davis](#)

Worship Accompanist:
[Katherine Garringer](#)

Moderator: Karen Powers

Elders: Mike Cockerham
Jerry Hall
Dave Lombard
Linda Lombard
Dorice Perkins
Mike Simpson
Betty Stacy
Marilyn Strong
Sue Tarbox
Cliff Thompson

Upcoming Events:

Each Sunday:

Prayer Group – 9:30 a.m.
Worship – 10:00 a.m.
Bible Study – 11:15 a.m.
Youth Choir – 11:15 a.m.

Weekly:

Wednesdays – Chancel Choir @ 6:30p.m.

Dec. 14	Hannah's Circle @ Mary Helen Shetter's Home
Dec. 15	Sarah's Circle @ Zola's Home Elders Mtg. 7 PM
Dec. 18	Assemble Christmas Baskets 1 PM
Dec. 19	Christmas Basket Pickup 1 PM
Dec. 24	Christmas Eve. Worship 7 PM
Dec. 25- Jan. 5	Church Office Closed
Jan. 18	"Undie" Sunday
Feb. 15-16	Chi Rho Lock In

CHRISTMAS EVE

Candlelight Worship

Wednesday, December 24 at 7:00 p.m., you are invited to a special worship service to celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. We will enter the sanctuary as God's family and hear again the sacred scriptures, sing our praises to God through song, remember the joy of salvation through communion, and celebrate the true LIGHT of the world through the lighting of candles. Make sure you are here for this very special night. Bring your family, friends and neighbors as we welcome the birth of a newborn King.

Invite Someone for Christmas

The Christmas season is here and it's one of the best times of the year to reach the un-churched, the de-churched and those who have fallen away from church. Why? Because we are celebrating with joy, and we are celebrating a baby. These are things that open people's hearts to the possibility of coming to church.

It's time to seize the season! Get out there and begin inviting. As we celebrate this year, invite someone new to join you. Guiding someone into a relationship with God and Jesus Christ is the best gift you could ever give them. It is after all, a gift that gives into eternity.

Luminaries

One of our favored Christmas Eve traditions is the numerous luminaries that light the way into the church. We need volunteers to set these out during the day on Dec. 24, a few other volunteers to light them around 6:00p.m., and a few more volunteers to clean them up after our Candlelight Worship is over. The students from Central Academy will assemble them. Please contact Laureen if you can help with any of these luminary tasks.

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), a church dedicated to loving relationships with God & Jesus Christ, each other and the world.

Staff Christmas Gifts

Those of you who wish to make a contribution to the FCC staff Christmas gifts (Laureen, Rachel Eve, and Katherine) may do so by making your check out to First Christian Church and marking the envelope or the memo line on your check: "FCC staff Christmas gifts". You may place your contribution in the offering plate or mail to the church, "Attention Financial Secretary".

Thank You,
The Elders of FCC

2014 Christmas Offering

"On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh." (Mt. 2:11)

Christmas Special Day Offering benefits our Regional Church. 100% of our Christmas Offering stays here in Ohio to make possible the ministries of The Christian Church in Ohio. These includes support for congregations and pastors, ministry for women, men, young adults, youth and children, Cleveland Christian Home, Camp Christian and so much more!



OUTREACH NOTES

We have so much to be thankful for and the giving within our congregation is a way of expressing our gratitude to God. With your help, we filled and distributed boxes of food at Thanksgiving. We began decorating our **Hat and Mitten Tree** and are in the mist of **collecting food** for families who are in need of a helping hand at Christmas. We are sharing our blessings by **collecting gifts** for children who reside at the Center of Hope for Women and Children (Hope House). As we become more aware of the challenges in the lives of these children, we want to take every opportunity to give them something they can call their own. Your continued generosity is making all of this possible. Thank You!!!

SHALOM

Our congregation will partner with Christ United Methodist Church for two weeks to host area homeless men and women participating in SHALOM. If you can give of your time or help prepare a meal anytime between December 28 through January 3 or February 15 through February 21, please add your name to the sign-up sheet in the narthex or contact Jerry Hall for more information. This is a great opportunity to be a blessing to individuals who are so appreciative in knowing that WE CARE.

UN-HANGING THE GREENS

On Sunday, January 4 following worship we will have the traditional and ceremonial **Un-Hanging of the Greens**. In other words, people are needed to take down and put away all our Advent and Christmas decoration. Please make plans to stay and help.



YEAR-END CONTRIBUTIONS

Any financial contributions you wish to be included in your 2014 giving to the church need to be submitted no later than Sunday, December 28th. Your generous support of the mission of First Christian Church is greatly appreciated as we reach build relationships with God, Jesus Christ, each other and the world. Please consider First Christian Church as you make your decisions about additional gifts to be applied to the 2014 Tax Year. Questions? Please contact Marilyn Chamberlain, Church Treasurer.

HIPPIE THANKS!

Our children's Christmas program, *Have a Very Hippie Christmas*, was groovy, right-on, and far out! Thank you to all the children who participated:



Narrators: Renee Lyons & Tyler Hendricks

Mary: Stella Lyons

Joe: Ethan Otis

Heavenly Angel: Jillian Schatzley

Angels: Andie Andress, Navy Andress, Cassie Riley,
Micah Wright & Kash Wright

Innkeepers: Angel Dearth, Daria Dearth
& Travis Hendricks

Cool Cats: Nicholas Otis, Haley Adkins
& Cayedinn Burggraf

Royal Dudes: Loren Burton, Mason Lyons, Owen Lyons
& Owen Lyons

From making the cool VW bus to directing rehearsals, **Lora Schueller** and **Mary Helen Shetter** brought everything together. Their tireless efforts and giving spirits are a blessing to our children and youth. THANK YOU!!! The music rocked! Thanks to **Rachel Eve Davis** and **Katherine Garringer** for leading our youth choir. We also thank all those who helped with technical support, set up and clean up: **Dave Schueller, Mark Roe, Larry Steele, Sidney Burton, Don Dixon, Mike Cockerham, Tim Powers, Larry Chamberlain, Angie Otis** and **Sarah Andress**.

CENTRAL ACADEMY DAY OF GIVING

On Thursday, December 18 we will be recipients of helpful hands from Central Academy (the school next door) from 9:30-10:30 a.m. Students will walk over to the church and help us with some final preparations for Christmas: cleaning, preparing candles, assembling luminaries, etc. We need a few extra adult hands to guide the students. Volunteers are needed 9:00-11:00 a.m. Please contact Lauren if you are available to help.

CWF NEWS

Christmas Parties:

Hannah Circle – Sunday, Dec. 21, 12N @ Mary Helen Shetter's
Sarah Circle – Monday, Dec. 15, 6:30PM @ Zola McClish's

Upcoming Events:

January 17 – Movie & Discussion

Heaven is for Real, 2PM @ FCC

January 25 – Blanket Sunday

New Baby

Congratulations to Greg and Stacy Plunkett on their new baby boy, **Bennett Robert Plunkett**, who was born on December 8. Proud grandparents are Bob and Debbie Wells.

Sympathy

Our love and prayers are extended to Mike, Dawna and McKenna Simpson. Mike's grandfather, Bill, began his eternal life on December 2, 2014. Please keep the Simpson family in your prayers.

Newsletter Publication

The Chalice Communicator will be published once a month. January's issue will be published on January 14 with articles due to the office by Friday, January 9. February's issue will be published on February 11 with articles due to the office by Friday, February 6.

In Your Prayers...

Our Home-Bound: Pheba Bair, Kathleen Chamberlain, Mildred McEvoy, Jean Greathouse, Elisabeth Lemmert, Janet O'Neal, Sue Whitt, Leah May Wideman

Health: Leigha Blevins, Barbara Cessna, Tom Frebis, Lois Hafer, Vern Hicks, John Holm, Barbara Ingram, Bob Lester, Mary Bob Powers, Don Steffy, Marilyn Strong.

Other: Louanne Aponte, Heroin Epidemic, Racism, Ukraine, Syria, Iraq, Ebola Outbreak, school children, school teachers, Hope House, SHALOM, The Gathering, our church, our church leaders, regional church, general church

Statistics

	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Offering</u>
Nov. 23	85	
Nov. 30	71	\$ 1,870.00
Dec. 7	115	\$ 4,059.00
Thanksgiving		\$ 100.00
Giving Tuesday		\$ 545.00
Pentecost		\$ 6.00
Coins 4 Camp		\$ 70.54

Laureen's Light Lines...

Shortly after Jesus was born, there were angels out in the fields telling shepherds about Jesus' birth. The shepherds decide to go to Bethlehem to find Jesus. Imagine you were one of the shepherds going to Bethlehem. You don't know Mary and Joseph. You don't know Jesus. You just have a powerfully strange message from the angels. You were going to enter the stable and introduce yourself and share what you heard from the angels. Could Mary and Joseph possibly find the message ludicrous and throw you out. As a shepherd stranger, would you be rejected or welcomed?

The shepherds share with Mary and Joseph the Good News they heard from the angels. Luke 2:15-18 reads, *"When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.'"*¹⁵*So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them.*¹⁶¹⁷

With this message from the angels, the shepherds brought confirmation to Mary and Joseph that indeed their son was the Messiah. In a time that had to feel uncertain and scary, God brought to them strangers who believed, who Mary and Joseph could relate to, and people who would witness to others. They were unrelated witnesses bringing confirmation that Jesus was the Son of God, come to save all people.

What about the Wisemen? What did they want? Again, they brought confirmation. A little over a month had gone by, and God sent a message to Mary and Joseph through these strangers on their

doorstep. These strangers, these Magi, these Wisemen were from outside the Jewish faith. They were men of stature and they were there acknowledging Jesus as King. Again, confirmation.

As we journey in our faith, we have mountaintop moments when we are certain of our faith and all we are hearing from God. These moments move us forward with great passion and drive. As humans though, it doesn't take us long to begin to doubt and wonder. Mary and Joseph were the same. So, God used strangers to reinforce the divine message.

The Shepherds, The Wisemen... strangers reaching out to strangers bringing confirmation of God's presence and love. You... Me... strangers called to bring confirmation of God's presence and love to the strangers God brings into our lives. When we do so, we bring confirmation that the story of Christmas is more than mystery and myth, that it is more than a sweet nativity scene filled with a baby, cute animals, shepherds and wise men.

Bottom line... You're strange. I'm strange. We are all strangers to someone. The love of God is our common denominator, and God calls us to be in the world.

Reaching out to someone you don't know with kindness and love of is worth it. Who knows, maybe the stranger has a message for you. Remember Jesus said, "I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Mt. 25:35). We live in this world as strangers with strangers. It is through God and Jesus Christ that we are connected. I pray we can all remember this as we find ourselves encountering strangers this Holy season. Extend a smile, an act of kindness and bring confirmation of God's great love for ALL people.

with Christmas love,

Laureen ☺

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Sundays: 11:15a.m.

Prayer Group 9:30a.m.

Worship 10:00a.m.

Bible Study 11:15a.m.

See you at the Table!





More pictures can be found on
our website and Facebook



