



First Christian Church

(Disciples of Christ)

4520 Rosedale Road
Middletown, OH 45042
513-422-2853
www.fcc-middletown.org

Chalice Communicator

February, 23, 2021

Number 2

Senior Pastor: Rev. Connor Thompson

Assoc. Pastor: Minister Jeff Wilder

Music Director: Michael Hefner

Moderator: Roger Byrd

Elders: Sharon Amburgey

Natalie Byrd

Zola McClish

Karen Powers

Lora Schueller

Guy Stone

Marilyn Strong

Karen Thompson

CONNOR'S CORNER

Well, we are quickly approaching the 1 year anniversary of the COVID-19 shutdowns. Nearly 1 year ago we started acting in the best interest of our neighbors as a country, in a way some had not seen in their lifetime. We committed that if we could stay home for 14 days, we could flatten the curve and get to the otherside. Well, we have learned a little more since then.

SEE YOU ON SUNDAYS

Worship – 10:30 a.m.

Bible Study-Tuesdays

@ 1 PM & 7 PM

STATISTICS: Attendance Offering

| | | |
|----------------------|----|------------|
| Givelify for January | | \$1,435.00 |
| 1/31 | 13 | \$ 380.00 |
| 2/07 | 17 | \$1,615.00 |
| 2/14 | 16 | \$ 895.00 |
| 2/24 | 16 | \$ 730.00 |
| Week of Compassion | | \$ 60.00 |

Important numbers/emails:

Pastor Connor Thompson

(513) 594-0070

pastorconnorlthompson@gmail.com

Assoc. Pastor Jeff Wilder

(513) 594-5421

mastermasonjeff@gmail.com

Elder Co-chairs

Karen Powers (513) 539-7286

Sharon Amburgey (937) 746-9120

To be quite honest, as a leader, I was a little concerned what would happen when the shutdown began. But, we as a faith community figured a few things out. Worship was still held, and made accessible to as many people as possible. Bible Studies were still held weekly on Zoom, we began to figure out other ways to collect supplies for our missions that we are committed to.

We figured it out. As I said in a sermon recently, we figured out that God is not in the virus, the shutdowns, the restrictions. God is in you, me, and what we choose to do with our day. Our calling is still there, and I am so proud of how you all have stepped up.

Now I ask you to step up again! If there is an area of the church where you see a need, talk to Pastor Jeff or myself about tackling it. Do you have a skill that you think the church will benefit from it? Share it with us. A church's ministry is only as strong as its people, and the people are only as strong as they are when they are working together. We have learned a lot of new ways to contribute and provide physical service while still social distancing, so I encourage you to think outside the box of how you can contribute to the ministry of this faith community.

Rev. Connor L. Thompson

Senior Pastor



***Prayer List:***

Health: Mike Blevins, Janice Kash, Linda Neanover, Allen Stone, Guy Stone,

Special Needs: Barbara Cessna, Lois Murphy

Other: All those affected by disasters and pandemic.

Caregivers, first responders, the homeless, heroin epidemic, racism and all human rights, our Country & World, war, violence, our church, congregation and church leaders

CWF NEWS

CWF will continue making tied fleece blankets for the My Very Own Blanket organization.

Crystal has purchased several fleece blanket kits which will be available for anyone to pick up from the church. Please call the church and make sure someone will be in the office to assist you before you come to pick up your kit. Kits can also be picked up after church on Sundays.

Our Bible Study classes will resume on Tuesday, Feb. 23rd at 1:00 and 7:00 p.m. Anyone is welcome to join us either in person or by Zoom conference on the computer.

A NEW BEGINNING

We are excited about the opportunity to start a new service here at First Christian Church. The new service will be a chance to draw new members to a new and exciting worship experience with us. We will be holding a new modern service starting March 25th at 7:30 pm

This will be a Thursday night service that will be streaming on all of our social media platforms.

Our goal is to offer a worship experience that will draw and minister to a new demographic.

The First Christian church will still hold traditional services, and stay true to the very reverent roots of worship with a preacher at a pulpit, Michael to lead the music, and members dressed in their Sunday best. On Thursday, blue jeans are welcome to a service where more upbeat music and technology will help drive the same message, but by an alternative method. In addition to the church's praise and worship music, it will also be non-traditional in the sense it's a "come as you are" church.

Our goal is to provide an environment where people are comfortable in whatever they want to wear, and where ever they are in their walk with the Lord. The service will have a very open order to it. At the end of the message we will open up to discussion, questions and even testimony. The hope is that as new families come they will feel free to ask question about their walk with the Lord and have the ability to seek out leaders and members that can help them on their journey. As we move forward we are learning and growing together. Growth can sometimes be uncomfortable and even irritating. But as long as we are focused on what God would have us do, we will count it all Joy. Please feel free to ask questions, offer advice and even share your excitement or concerns as we move forward. Keeping our eyes on the ministry God has called us to this is an exciting new phase in our ministry, to share and deliver the Gospel to ALL people through love and his word.

HEAD START IN BUTLER COUNTY

The Butler County Educational Service Center is asking anyone interested in enrolling children in their Head Start program to contact them. Children ages 3-5 are eligible and there is no cost to families who qualify based on income. For more information or to register, please call (513) 785-6850.

ELDER MOMENT

As we are in our Lenten journey, many thoughts surface about this season and its history. Lent begins 40 days prior to Easter and excludes Sundays. So why does Easter change dates each year? Easter is celebrated on the first Sunday following the full moon that occurs on or just after the spring equinox (when the Sun shines directly on the equator and the length of day and night are nearly the same). This year Easter Sunday will be on April 4th. From an article written by Mary Fairchild, we read, “Lent is the Christian season of spiritual preparation before Easter. In Western churches, it begins on Ash Wednesday. During Lent, many Christians observe a period of fasting, repentance, moderation, self-denial, and spiritual discipline. The purpose of the Lenten season is to set aside time for reflection on Jesus Christ—to consider his suffering and his sacrifice, his life, death, burial, and resurrection.” During Lent, Christians have chosen to fast or give something up. More recently, many have devoted more time in prayer and reading scripture. Whatever method we choose, we strengthen our devotion to God and that relationship is just another way of God showing his love for us. Blessings,

LENTEN STUDY



During Lent, our Bible Study time will follow with our worship series.

Each week in Bible Study we will dig deeper into the text that was preached in worship the previous Sunday. In study we will watch interviews by Rev. Eric Elnes, PhD. He will interview a guest on the week’s theme. There will be time for group discussion as we dive deeper into that text. The weeks are independent of each other, so you do not have to commit to every week of the study!

Join us on zoom on Tuesdays at 1:00 PM and 7:00 PM. for more details contact Pastor Connor.

During our Lenten journey we will focus our worship time around the following:

- 2/28/21-** *Finding Your Breath: Listening to our Bodies* Romans 8:26-30; 38-39
- 3/7/21-** *Finding a Word: Listening to the Texts* Proverbs 1:20-23
- 3/14/21-** *Finding Your Power: Listening for Healing* Mark 5:24-34
- 3/21/21-** *Finding Your Mystic: Listening Beyond the Voices* Romans 12:2-12
- 3/28/21-** *Finding Your Purpose: Listening to Your Heart* Matthew 26:36-46

2021 LENTEN DEVOTIONAL

As has been a recent tradition, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Ohio has put together a daily devotional for the season of Lent. This year's devotional was contributed to by Pastors, seminarians, Chaplains from throughout Ohio, our Visiting Regional Ministers, our regional staff, staff from the General Ministries of the denomination, and more!

To enjoy it, you can download it [Here](#).



Lenten Devotional Booklet 2021

COMMUNITY EASTER EVENT

Worship is sponsoring a community Easter themed event. We plan on handing out a group of plastic candy filled eggs to each family that would like to participate. We are also going to collect canned goods when handing out the goodies. Along with the eggs, each family will receive a flyer with a link to a zoom meeting. During the zoom meeting, Pastor Jeff will share the Easter story to the kids and their families and also guide them thru a home based scavenger hunt. The eggs will be handed out in a drive-thru event on March 27th from 12pm to 3pm. The Zoom call will be held at 5pm the same afternoon. If you would like to support the event, we are in need for plastic eggs and individually wrapped candy. We can also use help in filling the eggs and handing out them out. If you are interested in helping, please contact Pastor Jeff or Crystal.



Middletown Interfaith Clothes Closet

We've Got you Covered



Many of you have been great at watching us on Facebook and YouTube. For those of you who are part of Facebook and Twitter, I have a favor to ask.

When a post is made on our Facebook page or Twitter feed, Please Like and share it. If you do not share it, it is the equivalent of reading the newspaper, and then not telling anyone about the latest story you read. Spreading the word even in social media is dependent on your help, by spreading it to your friends and followers! You love your church, so tell your friends about it!

Many will say "All of my friends already have a church." Well, you never know when we might be doing something that they want to check out, and will come and visit with you.

So, please, engage with our social media, not just passively observe it.

MIDDLETOWN INTERFAITH COMMUNITY CLOTHES CLOSET

The Middletown Interfaith Community Clothes Closet is set to open beginning Tuesday March 2nd, from 10:00 AM-1:00 PM. They will be looking for one or two volunteers to assist clients in finding clothes, and keeping clothes sorted and neatly organized. The Library at St. Paul's UCC has been converted into the new home for this ministry, and will be perfect.

To donate clothes, please call St. Paul's United Church of Christ at 513-422-4519. Donations will be accepted Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 11:00 AM-1:00 PM.

The Address for St. Paul's United Church of Christ is 114 S Broad St. Middletown, Ohio.

A MESSAGE FROM WEEK OF COMPASSION:

Stay, Pray, Give: How to Help in Texas and
Beyond



A significant winter storm brought historic low temperatures to much of the U.S. and Canada this week. The impact was especially consequential in Texas, where the infrastructure is not equipped for severe cold. Many across the state have experienced prolonged power outages as dangerously cold temperatures persist, as well as water system failures and damage due to frozen pipes.



Week of Compassion is in touch with church leaders in the affected areas, responding to needs through Disciples Regions and local congregations, as well as ecumenical partners.

So far, Week of Compassion has received reports of the following impact to Disciples. Though most of the impact is in Texas, these numbers represent multiple regions across the U.S.:

- 22 churches/camps with damage (ranging from minor leaks to inches of water throughout whole buildings)
 - 19 churches with households with confirmed damage
 - 14 churches/camps provided/providing relief to neighbors
- Across a total of 36 congregations and 2 camps/conference centers

In addition to providing support for congregations and households that sustained damage--primarily from burst pipes and flooding--Week of Compassion is providing ministry grants for Disciples congregations as they serve their neighbors. Our churches across multiple regions are working to provide warming shelters, food assistance, and essential supplies to those in urgent need.

As always, in times of need, Disciples want to help. For now, the best way to show your love and support for those impacted by these winter storms is to “Stay, Pray and Give.” When you give to Week of Compassion, we deploy those resources immediately to ensure that they reach those who need it most. You can give on our [website](#); via check; or by texting WoC to 41444. Designate your gift for “U.S. Storms and fires.”

Your gifts will support these immediate responses, as well as long-term recovery as we continue to work with partners to meet ongoing needs in the weeks and months ahead.

For an interactive map of responses, [visit our website](#).

Departure of Wendy Taylor from the Regional Staff

Our beloved Food Services and Local Outreach Coordinator Wendy Taylor has decided that her call to serve as a paid employee of the Christian Church in Ohio has come to a close. We wanted to share this brief letter from Wendy addressing her decision to leave.

Dear Friends,

I do not think it is a stretch to say I feel as if I was born to do the work I have been doing the last 11 years with The Free Store at Camp Christian. I feel so honored and privileged to have been able to serve our church in this outreach ministry over the years. It has been a joy getting to know so many of my fellow disciples and working with such generous congregations. I've spent time in many of your pulpits, sharing the vision and the mission of The Free Store, as you so graciously hosted me in your communities. Thank you.

With much careful and prayerful consideration, I have decided it is time to end my time as an employee, but surely keep on as a volunteer! Life is seasonal, and during this strange and unprecedented Covid season an opportunity arose for me that fit so beautifully with and for my family. I have continued working both jobs over the past 8 months, as I could not bear leaving the work at The Free Store. But now, it is time for some rest for me. I will continue to stay in touch with our families, volunteer when needed, and fill our Blessing Box as a caring community member. I will continue to pray for our community and our world that we may know each day that we belong to each other and that through service and in the face of each other, we see the face of God.



May God continue to bless you and the ministry of The Christian Church in Ohio. Peace be with you.

In love,

Wendy Taylor

While we are sad to see Wendy leave our employment, we wish her nothing but the best and we know it's not the last we'll see her. It is a blessing to have Wendy be a part of our beloved community!

The Camp Christian Committee along with staff is evaluating the best way forward for the Free Store at Camp Christian. As Wendy mentioned in her message, the blessing box with food and toiletry donations will continue without interruption. These are the most needed items right now in our community and we will continue to stock and collect donations to help meet this need.

To purchase these needed items for the Free Store and have your donation mailed directly to Camp Christian, please visit our wish list on Amazon by clicking [HERE](#).

To make a monetary donation for purchasing needed items and towards future Free Store needs, go to our donation page and designate your gift to the Free Store at Camp Christian - [/donation.aspx](#)

CAMP CHRISTIAN SUMMER 2021!

Dear Ohio Region,

Thank you so much for your patience as we have worked on the plans and details surrounding Camp Christian this summer. We sent an update at the end of 2020, asking you to plan on having Camp and we have been hard at work to make sure that we can safely have our summer programming this year! It has taken a lot of work and conversations with the Union County Health Department, Christian Church in Ohio staff, volunteer directors for the various weeks, and a whole lot of prayer!

To be clear – if the situation changes, or if the Union County Health Department recommends we do not have Camp, we will not have Camp this summer. The only reason why we are planning to have camp is because we believe we can do so safely. Safely having camp will mean a lot of changes to our normal schedule and programming. It will certainly feel and look different this year more than

any other year. But we still look forward to being able to gather together again safely at Camp Christian for our summer programming!

Attached, please find at the link below, our Policies and Procedures for Camp Christian 2021. Included in this working document will be a schedule for the summer, an outline of our policies and procedures, and a plan for our RSVPs, which will be required for this year due to the advanced planning we will need to do.

Please understand that this is a working document based on the most recent conversations we've had with the Union County Health Department, our staff, and directors. As we have updated information and recommendations, we will update our policies accordingly. We cannot anticipate what will happen or what developments may occur between now and July, but with the existing plans in place, we believe that we will be able to safely have Camp this summer. Additionally, we know that many of these may apply to one camp/conference, but not another. More specific program changes are being developed by the staff and directors and will be made available as the dates of camp get closer.

Please ask questions! Undoubtedly, many concerned parents and pastors will want to know more than what is laid out in this document. That is okay! If you have additional questions or would like follow up conversations about these policies, please reach out to our Regional Program Director, Rev. Alan Dicken at adicken@ccinoh.org.

****IMPORTANT NOTE****: We are needing additional counselors who can serve for Junior Camp this year. Without at least 20 additional volunteers, we won't be able to offer Junior Camp, which would be very unfortunate for the youth and for our programming. If you are interested in sending in an RSVP for your child for Junior Camp and would like to accompany them as a counselor this year, we would greatly appreciate that! If you are interested in serving as Junior Camp Counselor this July 18-21, please fill out this form here and we will be in touch with you.

<http://www.ccinoh.org/survey/TakeSurvey.asp...>

Also, we cannot thank you enough for helping to donate to the Renewal Initiative last year. Your gifts and donations helped to make this year possible and your ongoing support to the Renewal Initiative will continue to ensure that Camp Christian will continue to thrive and we will continue to engage in the powerful youth and young adult ministries that happen there every summer. Please click here if you would like to make a contribution to the Renewal Initiative.

<https://www.ccinoh.com/donation.aspx>

Thank you all for your constant prayers and support as we have been working hard to make Camp a possibility for this summer. Please continue to hold us in prayer as we develop even more thorough and effective ways for us to safely have our summer programs up and running.

Peace and Love,

Rev. Alan Dicken

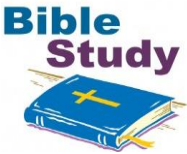



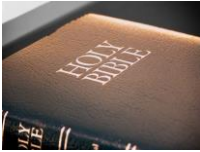








Regional Program Director

For a look at the policies and procedures for this summer, please click here - <https://www.ccinoh.com/cc.../camp-christian-2021-plans.aspx>

March, 2021



Birthdays

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|---|---|---|--|---|------------------------------|
| | March 1 | 2 1PM & 7PM  | 3 | 4  Carol Efker | 5 World Day of Prayer  | 6 |
| 7  GIRL SCOUTS Sunday | 8 | 9 BIBLE STUDY 1PM & 7PM  | 10 | 11  Larry Chamberlain | 12 | 13 |
| 14 | 15 | 16  Mike Cockerham BIBLE STUDY 1PM & 7PM | 17  | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22  | 23 1PM & 7PM  | 24 | 25  Roger Byrd Beginning tonight Non traditional Church Service Come as you are! 7 PM | 26 | 27 Lifeline Screening |
| 28  Linda Lombard  Special Easter offering | 29 | 30 BIBLE STUDY 1PM & 7PM | 31 | | | |
| | | | | | | |

