



First Christian Church

(Disciples of Christ)

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

Chalice Communicator

October 26, 2021

Number 10

Connor's Commentary

Senior Pastor: Rev. Connor Thompson

Assoc. Pastor: Minister Jeff Wilder

Music Director: Michael Hefner

Moderator: John Rabbovsky

Elders: Natalie Byrd

Zola McClish

Karen Powers

Lora Schueller

Karen Thompson

SEE YOU ON SUNDAYS

Worship – 10:30 a.m.

Modern Worship – Thursday

@7:30 PM

STATISTICS: Attendance Offering

| | | |
|----------------|-----------|-------------|
| 10/24 | 25/15 | \$ 1,443.00 |
| 10/17 | 28/13 | \$ 3,902.00 |
| 10/10 | 33 | \$ 1,663.00 |
| 10/03 | 33/19 | \$ 1,159.00 |
| Online Giving | \$1306.30 | |
| Reconciliation | \$ 10.00 | |

Important numbers/emails:

Pastor Connor Thompson

(513) 594-0070

pastorconnorlthompson@gmail.com

Assoc. Pastor Jeff Wilder

(513) 594-5421

mastermasonjeff@gmail.com



Wow, here we are at the end of October, Halloween is this weekend and November starts next week. Fall weather has arrived, and the leaves are beginning to fall as bonfires are being lit and enjoyed. I love fall, High School Football games (or my preferred Marching Band Festivities), Scouts go camping a few more times before winter, people start enjoying everything pumpkin spice, pumpkin, cinnamon, Apple Cider, Corn mazes start, Hay rides are enjoyed, pumpkins are carved, Trick or treating is done.

Selections from "Gather Us In" Chalice Hymnal #716

Gather us in, the lost and forsaken

Gather us in, the blind and the lame

Gather us in, the rich and the haughty

Gather us in, the proud and the strong

Gather us in and hold us forever

Gather us in and make us your own

Gather us in, all peoples together

Fire of love in our flesh and our bones

Families will gather around tables as we begin the ever lengthening holiday season, dinners are enjoyed, blessings are claimed. As we begin to creep up to the holiday season, I send you the hymn lyrics above. Our General Minister and President, The Rev. Terri Hord Owens has challenged us this year to "Be the church we say we are." First Christian Church is the church where "All are welcome, following the teachings of Jesus Christ by serving our community and beyond."

As we gather in harvest, family, and friends for the holidays, I challenge you to gather with the church. Bring someone who is struggling, bring someone who is lonely, and bring someone who is lost.

Bring yourself! Gather with your church family and feel a little love from those who support you on the mountaintop and in the valley. The last two years have been rough for the world, I know they have been rough for me, and I can only assume they have been rough for you. Come and let God gather us in, to celebrate the blessings we have found in the sorrow and grief we have endured. Come and give thanks for your blessings that others have to point out to you. Come and give thanks for the people who push you to achieve everyday.

I will see you in worship! *Pastor Connor*



Prayer List:

Health: Kristen Beck, Temple Ann Hanson, Linda Neanover

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

Adult Sunday School? Bible Study? Prayer Group?

Are you interested in participating in, or teaching a Sunday School Class?

Are you interested in participating in, or leading a bible study?

Are you interested in participating in, or leading a prayer group meeting?

Let Pastor Connor or Pastor Jeff know. As we continue through this new world with social distancing and COVID, we want to provide you with the Christian Education and spiritual practice opportunities you want to participate in. Let us know what we can do to assist you on your faith journey.

110th Anniversary Committee Forms

It is time to begin planning the festivities for the 110th Anniversary of First Christian Church. We want to start planning and preparing for service and outreach projects, a homecoming service, and more!

If you are interested in helping, plan to stay after worship on Sunday November 14th for an organizing meeting.

CWF NEWS

The next meeting of Sarah Circle will be at 1:00 pm on Thursday, November 4th at the church. We will have a business meeting, a study on Proverbs, and possibly work on our tied fleece blankets. At this point, we have a total of 21 blankets completed. Our plan is to take them to the drop-off location in Dayton next month. They will be given to children in foster care. Thanks to everyone who has been working on this project.

On November 21st we will have our Blanket Sunday collection. This money is given to Church World Service to purchase blankets and other items for families who have lost their homes due to natural disasters such as hurricanes, floods and also those who have had their lives disrupted by wars or other calamities. We will have envelopes available at church for Blanket Sunday or you may designate your Blanket Sunday offering on your check or online giving form.

Marilyn Chamberlain, CWF President

All Saints Sunday, Nov. 7th @ 10:30



We will remember Kathleen Chamberlain, Jean Greathouse, Barb Ingram, Guy Stone, Geraldine Dishun, and Rev. Dixie French. We invite you to bring a picture of a friend or loved one you have lost this year to place on the memorial we will have on the chancel.

Hanging of the greens



Join us following worship on Sunday November 21st to decorate the church for the seasons of Advent and Christmas.

Volunteers are needed to support the operation of the Middletown Interfaith Community Clothes Closet.

First Christian Church in Partnered with St. Paul's to support this ministry. Volunteers are needed from 10:00 AM till 1:00 PM on Tuesdays. If you are available to help, please contact Rev. Rich Luh at revluh@hotmail.com

OUTSIDE THE WALLS

With,
Pastor Jeff Wilder.

This month has been so exciting for First Christian and myself. There has been an amazing opportunity open up for us to spread love all over the city. One of the biggest things has been that the public schools have invited us to speak, build relationships and spread love to the students and teachers alike! This month I was invited to be a guest speaker at the Highview center. We had an assembly with all the students and spoke about bullying, unity, kindness and inclusion for all. The remarkable God moment is when all of the speakers shared the same message and points, but from a different perspective. The kids were very engaged and then went back to their class and continued the discussions in peer groups! The teachers reported they could not stop sharing what each gathered and loved about the messages! The next day myself, Pastor Connor and several pastors in town traveled to every school in the city and delivered thank you gifts to every teacher in the system! We were allowed to walk into class and “borrow” each teacher for a moment and look them in their eyes and tell them they were valued, seen, loved and appreciated. The students would clap and several teachers would just hug and cry with tears of joy that their work had been noticed. God opening doors to be able to spread light and love where the enemy tried to shut down and destroy! God is Good! Doors opening back up in our public schools to the faith community that is Only God! These things have sparked discussion on the faith community being more active in our schools. First step is

to pray every Monday at noon for our educational program and the educators and students. All of us joining where we are at noon to take back our school system from the hands of the enemy! This is Just the beginning of great things to come.

As I am typing the care portal we spoke of a few months ago has sent out its first trial message! Within 24 hours we will start receiving needs from our students that will be shared and fulfilled by us and the faith community! This will keep kids in their homes instead of in foster care. The portal will also provide students with what they need to be prepared and focused on school, instead of the issues no child should worry about! Things like clothes on their back, shoes on their feet or a place to lay their head! Stay tuned and ready church. The community and God will be asking for items to change and better lives of children all over our town! Faith and our faithfulness to God’s work will be the seeds of revival and change our community has needed for a long time!



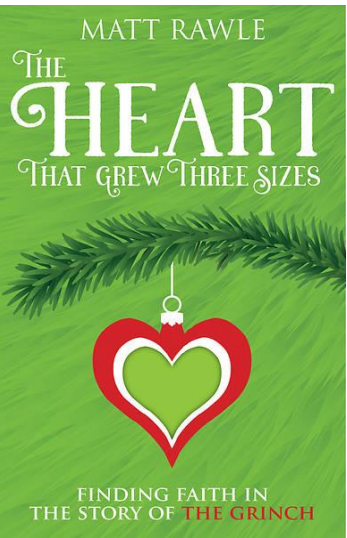
Advent Study

Join Pastor Connor for an Advent Study

“The Heart That Grew Three Sizes” by Matt Rawle.

Rediscover the gift of Advent that comes without packages, ribbons, and bows.

We don’t know why the Grinch hated Christmas. We just know he did. In this new Advent study, Matt Rawle explores the faith themes in the Christmas classic, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* including, how did



the Grinch’s heart grow three sizes come Christmas morning? How did Christmas save the Grinch? Could it be that the very thing we think we hate is the one thing that changes our lives? This Advent and Christmas season, look at a familiar classic through the lens of faith and see how Christ speaks to us through our culture.

Contact Pastor Connor if you are interested in this study, this group can meet in the afternoon and evening on either Tuesday or Wednesday. Contact Pastor Connor for what works for you. We will have 1 afternoon session and 1 evening session

Camp Christian **Summer 2022 Schedule** **Announced!**

We are so excited to share with you the 2022 Summer Program Schedule. There are Summer Programs at Camp Christian for Children and Youth from Kindergarten through 12th grade, as well as Advance Conference for Young Adults. You will also note the two Disciples Fellowship Retreats which are open to all ages. We have also included Adult Conference, which is open to all adults and is held at Northwest Christian Church in Columbus.

Ohio Region Summer Program 2022 Schedule

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| • Disciples Fellowship Retreat | Friday, May 27 – Sunday, May 29 |
| • Grandparents Camp | Thursday, June 9 – Saturday June 11 |
| • Chi Rho Camp #1 | Sunday, June 12 – Saturday, June 18 |
| • CYF Week #1 | Sunday, June 19 – Saturday June 25 |
| • Otter Camp | Sunday, June 26 – Saturday, July 2 |
| • Adult Conference | Monday, June 27 – Friday, July 1 |
| • Ribbit Camp | Wednesday, July 6 – Saturday July 9 |
| • Chi Rho Camp #2 | Sunday, July 10 – Saturday, July 16 |
| • CYF Week #2 | Sunday, July 17 – Saturday, July 23 |
| • Advance Conference | Sunday, July 24 – Sunday, July 31 |
| • Disciples Fellowship Retreat | Friday, September 2 – Sunday, September 4 |

Registration materials for the Camp Christian Children, Youth & Young Adult Camps and Conferences will be available in the coming months. We will also be sharing information on payment plans for registration fees. We hope you'll save the dates and share this schedule with folks from your Congregations, Families, and Communities!!

Peace and God Bless, Camp Christian



Thank you for your support of the upcoming Lifeline Screening being held at First Christian Church on November 17th. Giving access to these screening will offer residents the opportunity to discover their risk for chronic diseases, such as atherosclerosis, peripheral arterial disease or other vascular diseases.

If you would like more information about Life Line Screening and the services that we provide, please visit our website, lifelinescreening.com

Thanksgiving Special Offering to **support Higher Education & Leadership** **Ministries**

From the very beginning of the movement, Disciples have founded institutions of higher learning, encouraging students in their intellectual pursuits. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is still committed to higher education. On November 14 and 21, Disciples churches across the US and Canada will collect the Thanksgiving offering. As we continue to struggle with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, our higher education institutions are facing unprecedented challenges and need our support now, more than ever. Even as they work diligently to ensure safe and healthy learning environments, the financial realities faced by many of our schools is adding additional stress to students, faculty, and staff. This November, please give generously to this year's Thanksgiving offering. Your gifts make a world of difference as Disciples continue our legacy of supporting education and our institutions of higher learning.



Thank you to Carly Wilder for providing children's programming for our Modern Service each week. Your dedication does not go unnoticed.

Thank you to Steve Wilmot and Tyler Bowen for their work with our children on Sunday mornings. Your commitment and dependability for serving the congregation is applauded and appreciated.

Thank you to Judy Lemmert for her continued work creating our monthly newsletter.

Thank you to Marilyn Chamberlain for her many hours each week keeping our books, and making sure bills get paid, and gifts get recorded.

Thank You to Larry Steele, David Lombard, and Mary & Larry Back for their work in the Garden this year. The garden produced over 1100 lbs.

Thank You to Sharon Amburgey for her work keeping grass cut on weeks where no one is scheduled.

Thank You to Crystal Watson, Brenda Gulley, Ginger Alley, Michael Hefner, Kobi Wilder, Kelly Wilder, Kingston Wilder, Steve Wilmot, Tyler Bowen, Michael Hefner, and Pastor Connor who went to Eternal Joy Metropolitan Community Church to hear Pastor Jeff fill their pulpit. Michael was kind enough to provide special music as well!

Thank you to Ed Brooks, Rowan Brooks, Michael Hefner, Crystal Watson, Kelly Wilder, Carly Wilder, Steve Wilmot, Tyler Bowen and Cliff Thompson for working to complete the teacher appreciation gifts that were distributed by members of the Middletown Area Ministerial Alliance.

Thank You to Leah Hadley, Steve Wilmot, Tyler Bowen, Kobi Wilder for distributing blessing bags.

Church World
Service Blanket
Sunday



Sunday November 21st

Congregations around the world host CWS Blanket offerings to live out a mission to serve God’s people near and far; and that’s exactly how two congregations in Washington State became connected.

First Presbyterian Church of Everett has been hosting “Dinner at the Bell” for 18 years. This weekly event is for low-income families, veterans, homeless, people with addictions – any community members in need - all are welcome. Along with a hot meal, guests receive blankets and hygiene kits. “A lot of places push homeless people away, and it is nice for churches to open their arms to help people,” said Amanda, a guest at “Dinner at the Bell.”

In the same city, only five miles away, Cascade View Presbyterian Church fundraises for the blanket ministry of CWS so that organizations and churches like First Presbyterian can serve those in need. “We have a church that believes strongly in how God calls us to love and reach out,” says Pastor Luke Hyder of Cascade View Presbyterian. “We as a church want to make tangible differences for those in need.”

One church gives money so the other can give blankets, and together they give hope and a tangible reminder of God’s love. Hope is powerful, especially in times like these. Will you answer the call to serve God’s people and give hope today?

2020 was challenging, but congregations stepped up and provided 101,472 CWS Blankets and Kits to families impacted by the pandemic, hurricanes, tornadoes, flooding and other crises including homelessness and poverty.

2020 Gifts Provided:

- Blankets:** 21,855
- School Kits:** 32,820
- Hygiene Kits:** 39,855
- Cleanup Buckets:** 6,942

FROM OUR MODERATOR

Dear First Christian Church Friends:

First Christian Church (DOC) Middletown’s Mission Statement (Article II of the Constitution) is *We are the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) where ALL are welcome. We are faith based, following the teachings of Jesus Christ, and carrying the word to others by serving our community and beyond.*

Some highlights of ALL the “Stuff” that has been going on at FCC Middletown. We have a new and updated constitution, and we also adopted the Ethical Guidelines For Congregational Conduct Christian Church (DOC), both governing documents became effective immediately upon approval by the congregation’s vote on October 17th.

The Community Garden’s harvest this year was 1100 pounds of vegetables. Our Senior Pastor Connor and Associate Pastor Jeff have been very busy during October. They have attended City School Board meetings, been guest speakers at Highview Middle School, attended the Ohio District Clergy Gathering and Regional Installation at Gender Road Christian Church, attended meetings of the General Board, Elders, Sarah Circle, Scouts BSA Troop & Kiwanis, and they both continue to lead our worship services on Sunday & Thursday. I want to commend Associate Pastor Jeff and his team of volunteers who have been going “out and handed blessing bags and was able to speak, pray, and love on 21 homeless individuals.” This is just a short list of ALL that goes on at FCC. Well Done Team!

I would like to repeat Pastor Connor’s statement in his board report “*I can feel the momentum building for First Christian Church, our vision is growing, and our community impact is growing as well.*” No Finer words have been written to describe what we do and who we are at First Christian Church Middletown. We truly are doing God’s work. Thankyou one an all.

The November Chalice Communicator articles will be due 11/28. Board Reports for the November 28th board meeting will be due 11/23.

FCC has so many outstanding members and I hope everyone will continue to take part and enjoy everything we will be doing as a congregation in the weeks and months ahead.

Faithfully Yours,

John Ralbovsky, FCC Moderator 2021-22
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A Moment for History

FCC

Ministers/Pastors, Associates & Interims

Through the years the Middletown Church of Christ/First Christian Church (FCC) has had 10 ministers/pastors, at least 6 associates and 7 interim ministers. While there is not much detail on many of the early clergy, I will at least mention their names and their dates of service. If you are interested in historic photos of the church, take a walk down the northwest corridor of the church. There you'll find many photos, including those mentioned in this article.

As mentioned in previous article our first minister was Rev. C. C. Cowgill who was called from Washington, D.C. and began his ministry on August 1, 1913. He was accompanied by his wife and two daughters. Cowgill served until 1916 when illness prevented him from carrying out his duties.

At that time Rev. W.H. Thompson, from Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, succeeded Cowgill. Thompson served the church until 1942 when he suddenly became seriously ill. He died on Nov. 17. The pulpit was filled by interim pastor Rev. Robert Lilly until 1943.

June 6, 1943 brought Rev. Dale Brock to the pulpit. Rev. Brock's wife and four daughters accompanied him to Middletown. Rev. Brock was a graduate of Bethany College and pastor of the Church of Christ in Brilliant, Ohio. Rev. Brock preached his last sermon on March 25, 1951. He resigned to become the minister at the Christian church in Youngstown, Ohio.

On May 6, 1951 Rev. Edwin Bobbitt delivered his first sermon to this congregation. Rev. Bobbitt graduated from Transylvania University in Lexington, KY and the College of the Bible (now the Lexington Theological Seminary). Rev. Bobbitt officially retired on Dec.31, 1974, ending more than 24 years of service as our pastor.

He agreed to stay on as interim minister until March 30, 1975. During his pastorate FCC hired Rev. C. Thomas Steiner as associate Pastor in Feb. 1971 and resigned in Dec. 1974.

After Rev. Bobbitt's departure, Dr. Monroe Schuster served as interim pastor until Rev. Paul Remick was called Aug. 1, 1975. Accompanying him were his wife and two sons. Rev. Remick left FCC in Oct. 1978. Rev. Dale Humbert served as interim minister until April 9, 1979.

On April 15, 1979 Rev. Donald L. Steffy became our 6th minister. He was a graduate of Mount Union College in Columbus, Ohio and the Lexington Theological Seminary. He served churches in Kentucky & Ohio. Rev. Steffy served on the Middletown Ministerial Assoc., Pastoral Counseling Service and other organizations in the area. Rev. Steffy retired in 1994. During his service he had three associate ministers on different occasions. They were Rev. Janice Mahle, Rev. Kay Peacock and Rev. Carol Oetzel.

Rev. Dixie French served as interim Minister until Rev. Michael Weber was installed in November 1995. Weber was joined by his wife and two sons. Rev. Weber served as Sr. Minister until Oct. 1998 at which time Assoc. Minister, Carol Oetzel, served as interim minister.

October, 2000 Rev. Terry Van Heyningen, accompanied by his wife, became our Sr. Minister. Rev. Van Heyningen retired in mid-2005. Rev. Robert Harris served as interim until early 2006 when Rev. Laureen Roe became our minister.

Joining Rev. Roe were her husband and two sons. Rev. Roe formerly served as Associate Minister at the First Christian Church in Wilmington, Oh. Her focus was on the needs of today's family. Rev. Roe resigned in 2017 to become Minister of a church in Germantown, Oh. Rev. Nick Donges assumed the interim position until Rev. Tracy Siegman responded to our call.

Rev. Siegman's calling was to minister to the under privileged of our community. Much of her time with FCC was working with the Outreach committee. Residing in the inner city, Rev. Siegman was very visible in the downtown area talking with and ministering to the underprivileged in the inner city. Rev. Siegman was with us for only one year. She answered the call of another church in Covington, KY.

Once again FCC formed a search committee to select a new minister. It was decided not to hire an interim minister, but rather have guest speakers to fill the pulpit each week. Most of the speakers were ordained ministers, some of whom were retired. We were also blessed to have some of our own members present the message to the congregation. This practice was used for approximately one year. The search committee decided to approach one of the guest speakers who was an ordained minister who was not serving a church at the time. He made a favorable impression on many of our congregants. The search committee submitted the recommendation to the General Board who agreed and the congregation voted and approved and Dr. Rev. Willie Barns-Jackson was hired.

Around that same time our own Connor Thompson, who was studying for the ministry, was hired as Associate Minister. Shortly after Pastor Connor was hired Pastor Jeff Wilder, also studying for

the ministry was hired as Associate Pastor. After a few months of service, it became apparent Pastor Barnes-Jackson was not a good fit for FCC. The Rev. Dr. Barnes-Jackson resigned.

Associate Pastor Connor was named interim Pastor and shortly after was named Sr. Pastor. Pastor Jeff remains as Associate Pastor. Both Pastors are continuing their educations. Not only do they minister to this congregation both are very active in the community by serving on committees and in organizations to better serve the youth and homeless in our city. Both of these men are making FCC well known in this city and around the general area as well. Other churches are seeing what we do and want to be more like us.

“Timothies” of First Christian Church (DOC) of Middletown, Ohio

People who were reared in this congregation or sponsored by FCC who, like Timothy, the Apostle Paul’s protégé who want to learn to minister to people and spread the word of Jesus Christ are recognized as Timothies by our congregation. We have sixteen people we recognize as those who have studied for the ministry.

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| John L. Davis | Eugene R. Simrell |
| Ted C. Smith | Herbert R. Hicks |
| E. Lacy Satterfield | Douglas O. Smith |
| Fred Hoskins | James Frisby |
| Trent Bobbitt | Larry Bobbitt |
| James A. Singleton | Michael Cassidy |
| Sue Glaab | Christian Lombard |
| Connor Thompson | Jeff Wilder |

The Rev. Allen V. Harris Installed as Regional Pastor & President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Ohio.

On Saturday October 23rd, Disciples throughout the state of Ohio gathered together at Gender Road Christian Church in Canal Winchester, Ohio for the Installation of our new Regional Pastor & President, The Rev. Allen V. Harris.

The service consisted of Top Contemporary Christian Hits by the Gender Road Praise Band, an amazing solo performance by The Rev. Luther Young from Woodland Christian Church, and traditional bluegrass Gospel from the UnMeasured Grace bluegrass band from Howland Community Church.

The Rev. Terri Hord Owens, General Minister & President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada brought a message about strength of covenant, and how Christian only walk alone because they choose to, not because they should.



Rev. Hord Owens led the litany of installation in which Rev. Harris made commitments to the church, to God, to his husband The Rev. Craig Hoffman, and to himself. It closed with a social distanced laying of hands by all clergy in attendance, and a prayer of Installation.

Rev. Harris was charged and blessed to remember his duties to various groups of the Christian Church in Ohio, including the Ohio Black Pastors, the LGBTQIA+ Community, Ohio Retired Pastors, Ohio Justice & Equity Advocates, Heartland Conference of the United Church of Christ, Ohio Young Clergy, and the Global Church.



November, 2021

 Birthdays

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|--|--------------------------------|---|--|--------|--|
| | 1 <div></div> | 2 | 3 <div> Dorice Perkins Charlotte Steele</div> | 4 <div>CWF Sarah's Circle 1 PM @ Church Modern Worship Service 7:30 PM</div> | 5 | 6 |
| 7 | 8 <div>Church Women's United 12:00</div> | 9 | 10 | 11 <div> Modern Worship Service 7:30 PM</div> | 12 | 13 |
| 14 <div> Tim Powers 110th Anniversary Committee Meeting Thanksgiving Special Offering</div> | 15 <div> Recycle Day</div> | 16 <div>Elder Mtg.</div> | 17 <div> Judy Lemmert </div> | 18 <div>Modern Worship Service 7:30 PM</div> | 19 | 20 <div> Peggy Byrd</div> |
| 21 <div>Blanket Sunday Hanging of the Greens Thanksgiving Special offering</div> | 22 | 23 <div>Board Report Due</div> | 24 <div> Debbie Wells</div> | 25 <div></div> | 26 | 27 <div></div> |
| 28 <div>Board Mtg. Following Church Newsletter Articles due</div> | 29 | 30 | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

