



First Christian Church

(Disciples of Christ)

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

Chalice Communicator

November 29, 2021

Number 11

Senior Pastor: Rev. Connor Thompson

Assoc. Pastor: Minister Jeff Wilder

Music Director: Michael Hefner

Moderator: John Rabovsky

Elders: Natalie Byrd
Zola McClish
Karen Powers
Lora Schueller
Karen Thompson

SEE YOU IN WORSHIP

Worship – 10:30 a.m.

Modern Worship – Thursday @7:30 PM

STATISTICS: Attendance Offering

11/28	40	752.00
11/21	30/21	\$1,138.10
11/14	47	\$ 2,045.00
11/07	52/19	\$ 2,961.00
10/31	31/17	\$ 783.00
Online Giving		\$ 1,300.00
Thanksgiving offering	\$	52.00
Coins for Camp	\$	50.88

Important

numbers/emails:

Pastor Connor Thompson

(513) 594-0070

pastorconnorlthompson@gmail.com

Assoc. Pastor Jeff Wilder

(513) 594-5421

mastermasonjeff@gmail.com



Connor's Commentary

"It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas, everywhere you go" including at First Christian Church! I want to say thank you to everyone that has worked to setup the lights in the front yard.

The Hanging of the Greens was wonderful, and I want to thank everyone who participated to make the inside of our church look beautiful. There is certainly something special about the church at Advent and Christmas.

I hope you mark your calendars for all of the services and activities going on! From Bible Study about the Grinch to Blue Christmas, and Christmas Eve service. We will be continuing through our Sunday sermon series on The Inn and Pastor Jeff has some fantastic Thursday messages planned.

We have wonderful children's programming offered on Sundays and Thursdays, so bring your kids and grandkids!

So, as we gather as a church family this holiday season, let us remember that we are to be a loving welcoming community for those facing the struggles of the world.

As we prepare for the coming of Christ, remember he was called to serve and so are we. Find a way to serve this Advent season and share a little light with the world!

Blessings, Pastor Connor

THANKS

I just wanted to take an opportunity to thank you for the generous gift of the clothing that has been moved to our homeless outreach. The warm coats, pants, shirts and blankets have put a smile on many faces. The love of God is truly amazing. He uses us all as a great part of his masterful plan. Your congregation has touched our hearts and we welcome your input at any level as we reach the most vulnerable. One man waters, another sews but God gives the increase.

In his service, Pastor John Rice



Prayer List:

Health: Kristen Beck, Temple Ann Hanson, Marla Marsh, 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

DONATIONS AND TAX DEDUCTIONS

According to legislation passed by Congress in December of 2020, there are new limits on charitable donation deductions for those who do not itemize on their federal income tax returns. This law permits single, head of household, and married filing separately non-itemizers to take a deduction of up to \$300 for cash contributions made to qualifying charities in 2021. The maximum deduction is increased to \$600 for married persons filing joint returns. Further information on this law can be accessed on www.irs.com/newsroom.



CWF NEWS

Sarah Circle met Nov. 4th at the church. We had our business meeting, study, and refreshments. Our next meeting will be our Christmas luncheon at Zola McClish's home at 1:00 pm on Dec. 9th. We will be bringing appetizers and desserts. Please call Zola and tell her the item that you are bringing.

We had our Blanket Sunday offering on Nov. 21st.

Thanks go to our FCC children who passed the blanket through the congregation to collect the donations and also thanks to all who contributed. The total received was \$221.

On Nov. 15th, Marilyn C. took 18 tied fleece blankets to the "My Very Own Blanket" headquarters in Columbus. These will be distributed throughout the state to foster children. Thanks to all who have worked on this project.

Marilyn Chamberlain,
CWF President

COMMUNITY MINISTRIES

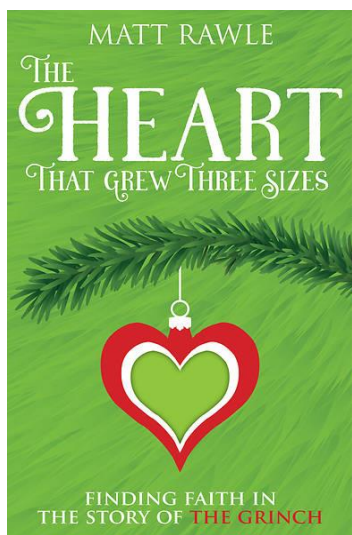
As we look forward to holiday projects, we will again be working with the Salvation Army to provide for children. This year, their organization suggested to us and other churches that we have a **Toy Drive**. New toys are coming in and we will continue collecting through this Sunday, December 5th. Gifts should not be wrapped and may be placed in the bin in the narthex. The only food item requested is Brownie Mix which will be handed out to families after they receive a hot meal at the Salvation Army. Other food items are welcome but our focus will be the Toy Drive.

We are thankful to everyone who donated their time, lights and monetary gifts to help beautify our grounds this Christmas season. We invite the community to come and enjoy the decorations, join us in worship and reflecting on this Christmas season.

INK RECYCLING

CAN YOU HELP? We just renewed our Rewards Program at Staples for another six months and are in need of used ink and toner cartridges. If you can help, or have family or friends who would like to donate, the savings makes quite an impact on keeping our office supply costs down. Items may be left in the Church office or placed in the hanging donation rack next to the restrooms. Thanks to all who cycle!

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 grows 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 meets Wednesdays at 1pm in the afternoon and 7pm in evening through Zoom.

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

FROM OUR MODERATOR

Dear First Christian Church Friends:

Congratulations, A great deal of work has been done (and continues to be done) to make our church a very inviting building and property for Christmas. “Light Up FCC” started our outdoor holiday lights and our “Hanging of the Green” is progressing very nicely!

Our church is looking GOOOD!!

We are participating in the toy drive with the Salvation Army this year Nov 21st to Dec 5th and we are collecting boxes of brownie mix for the food pantry.

Can we make it to 110 and this our Best year yet?

Reminder to place your Poinsettia order with Linda Poynter by calling the church office.

General Board Meeting November 28th. We will be voting on two important items. We want to affirm Kobi Wilder as co-chair and Sharon will serve as treasurer/co-chair of the new community ministries committee. Stay tuned for Lots of great things to come from this team.

Finally, we have had our first planning meeting for the 110th Anniversary Celebration. We need lots of helping hands, please come join us at our next meeting. May 15, 2022 will be here before you know it. (next meeting January 2022, more to follow)

Well Done Team!

The December Chalice Communicator articles will be due Dec 26th. Their will be no December FCC General Board meeting. The, next General Board meeting will be January 23

Have a happy and safe holiday season and Merry Christmas.

FCC has a great deal to be proud of and many exciting activities taking place (or being planned). I hope everyone will continue to take part and enjoy everything we have to offer the congregation in the weeks and months ahead.

Faithfully Yours,

John Ralbovsky

FCC Moderator 2021-22

203-556-0692 (cell)



This Christmas Eve service the youth of the church will be performing two songs! Leading up to the service we will be holding practices Sunday during Sunday School and Thursday during Modern Worship, in the children’s room. Our final rehearsal will be during Cookie Decorating on December 23rd! Our two songs are: “Raise a Hallelujah” and “Jingle Bells” Feel free to practice at home with the attached lyrics and links to the songs! Everyone is encouraged to join and everyone is welcome to join! We will have costumes, instruments, and free t-shirts provided! Any questions feel free to contact Carly at 513-292-8511 or Tyler at 513-804-5160 We look forward to seeing you and your youth at our practices and at service!

Raise a Hallelujah

Link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G2XtRuPfaAU>

I raise a hallelujah, in the presence of my enemies
I raise a hallelujah, louder than the unbelief
I raise a hallelujah, my weapon is a melody
I raise a hallelujah, heaven comes to fight for me
I'm gonna sing, in the middle of the storm

Louder and louder, you're gonna hear my praises roar
Up from the ashes, hope will arise
Death is defeated, the King is alive!
I raise a hallelujah, with everything inside of me
I raise a hallelujah, I will watch the darkness flee
I raise a hallelujah, in the middle of the mystery
I raise a hallelujah, fear you lost your hold on me!
I'm gonna sing, in the middle of the storm
Louder and louder, you're gonna hear my praises roar
Up from the ashes, hope will arise
Death is defeated, the King is alive!
Sing a little louder (In the presence of my enemies)
Sing a little louder (Louder than the unbelief)
Sing a little louder (My weapon is a melody)
Sing a little louder (Heaven comes to fight for me)
Sing a little louder (In the presence of my enemies)
Sing a little louder (Louder than the unbelief)
Sing a little louder (My weapon is a melody)
Sing a little louder (Heaven comes to fight for me)
Sing a little louder!
I'm gonna sing, in the middle of the storm
Louder and louder, you're gonna hear my praises roar
Up from the ashes, hope will arise
Death is defeated, the King is alive!

Jingle Bells

Link:<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3CWJNqyub3o>

Dashing through the snow
In a one-horse open sleigh,
O'er the fields we go,
Laughing all the way.
Bells on bob-tails ring,
Making spirits bright.
What fun it is to ride and sing
A sleighing song tonight, oh!
Jingle bells, jingle bells,
Jingle all the way.
Oh what fun it is to ride
In a one-horse open sleigh, hey!
Jingle bells, jingle bells,
Jingle all the way.
Oh what fun it is to ride,
In a one-horse open sleigh.
Now the ground is white,
Go it while you're young.
Take the girls tonight,
Sing this sleighing song.
Get a bobtailed bay,
Two forty for his speed,
And hitch him to an open sleigh,
And you will take the lead.
Oh, jingle bells, jingle bells,
Jingle all the way.
Oh! what fun it is to ride,
In a one-horse open sleigh, hey!
Jingle bells, jingle bells,
Jingle all the way.
Oh! what fun it is to ride,
In a one-horse open sleigh,
Oh, what fun it is to ride
In one horse open sleigh!

A Moment for History

Christian Education

When this congregation began, Sunday School was a major part of Christian Education. A program devised to recruit more children for Sunday School was called the **Fisherman's League**. A child was promised a silver-colored fish for bringing someone for three consecutive Sundays. After three Sundays the visitor was considered a member of the class and the person who brought the visitor was awarded the fish. The children worked hard to make their string of fish grow longer.

A promotion Sunday was held in September, where students were advanced to the next grade. This tradition was continued for many years.

In June, 1941 Vacation Bible School was held for the first time. Since then, Vacation Bible School or some form of it has been held in the summer months. V.B.C. has not only been attended by FCC children, but also neighborhood children. This was a great way for neighborhood parents to become acquainted with our church.

Sunday School was not just for children. In May, 1913 the **Loyal Women's Class** was issued a Certificate of Organization from the International Sunday School Association. There were 83 women on the initial class roll. The class was dissolved in 1986 due to declining attendance.

Very early in the life of the congregation the **Loyal Men's Class** was established. The class had varying degrees of active involvement over the years. Not only did they have their Sunday morning classes, they sponsored covered dish dinners, minstrel shows in the dining hall below the sanctuary of the church on First Avenue. In the 1930s & 40s the class conducted outdoor ice cream socials. Before the completion of the church, the class was so large it had to meet in rented quarters across the street. At one time during the 30s the class was one of the largest in Middletown with an attendance of nearly 100.

Another class was the **Loyal Friends Class**. Age levels presented various interests and

this seems to have been especially true among women church school classes. Therefore, the younger women organized the Loyal Friends Class. The class had projects such as raising money for the building fund and to provide aid to widowed mothers who needed help for their children.

Also in the 30s two separate classes, the **Loyal Sons** and **Loyal Daughters** merged to form the **Loyal Bereans**. This was a natural result of the number of dating couples and subsequent marriages between members of the two afore mentioned classes. The Bereans were noted for sponsoring large fellowship parties. One notable project of the class was the funding and purchase of a new communion set which was presented to the congregation in November 1952.

The **Searchers Class**, intended for young adults both single and married, was formed in 1980. Classroom discussions included both Bible study and topical studies of spiritual subjects of interest to members. Social activities included dinners at church and member's homes.

There have been several youth groups in church. **Christian Endeavor** groups were formed in the early life of the church. The Endeavor movement was an interdenominational movement, attempting to bring various churches together in active fellowship. The Endeavor group in our congregation met every Sunday before the evening service. In 1935 they received board approval to begin a church library. The Endeavor continued until the 1940s when the present-day **Chi-Rho** and **Christian Youth Fellowship** (CYF) groups were formed. Chi-Rho included students of junior high school age; CYF was for senior high school students.

A "points" program was introduced to help students attend summer camp at Camp Christian near Magnetic Springs, Ohio. Students earned points for attendance in church school, worship service, youth group and performing needed services at the church. Earning points helped subsidize the camper's way to Camp Christian.

Of course, the younger children had their classes also. All the younger children gathered in a common area for a worship service with Bible verses read by a teacher/leader and songs were sung. The kids then broke into smaller classes divided by ages. Age-appropriate subjects and Bible studies were discussed. Classes were dismissed and older students joined their parents for worship service in the sanctuary and the younger ones went to nursery.

Students of Jr. & Sr. high school had their own classes which included prepared material available from the national or state church offices.

Sunday evenings were devoted to Chi-Rho and CYF meetings. These meetings began with a simple meal provided by one of the parents. After dinner, the two groups went to their meeting areas for devotions and discussions. The groups had activities outside their regular meetings. There were holiday parties, skating parties, progressive dinners and picnics, and Christmas Caroling to shut-ins. There was also a youth Sunday when the entire worship service was conducted by the youth.

The last ten years have been a trying time. As with many mainline churches, we've seen a decline in attendance. During this time the Chi-Rho & CYF groups became semi-active. This eventually led to young families leaving the church, partly looking for a vibrant youth program for their children. With no young children there was no need for their Sunday School classes. Even though the youth classes were dwindling, there were attempts to provide classes for adults. There were two classes, one of which was for younger adults which lasted a short while. Another for older adults was going well and had regular attendance until the Covid pandemic caused the church to close its doors, leaving no option but to provide virtual services over social media. Fortunately, FCC had a remarkable group of technical volunteers, including our pastors, who were able to put together a system to send out the services to the public. Even though the church has reopened, the virtual services continue.

Prior to the pandemic a joint youth group called the Middletown Youth Connection was formed. It was a cooperative group supported by FCC, First Presbyterian, St. Paul's Church of Christ and the Gathering churches. During the pandemic the Middletown Youth Coalition, a community organization was formed. FCC, as well as other churches in Middletown, is a supporter. This coalition provides quality activities and opportunities for teens in Middletown. It has gained its own footing and is now a stand-alone organization.

FCC appears to be on a bit of a rebound with people returning to live worship services on Sunday mornings and the new Thursday evening modern service. The youth are also attending and there is a Children's Moment during the Sunday service in the sanctuary as well as a service especially for them in their classroom.

We have a long history of providing Christian Education and fellowship for both youth and adult members. There is no doubt that, as our numbers increase, we will again begin to fill that need.





www.irs.com/newsroom.



December, 2021



Birthdays

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Bible Study 1 PM at the church and & 7 PM through Zoom	2 Modern Worship Service 7:30 PM	3	4
5  SUNDAY	6	7	8 Bible Study 1 PM at the church and & 7 PM through Zoom	9  Janine Saxbury Sarah Circle 1 PM @ Zola's for holiday luncheon Finance Mtg. 6 PM	10	11
12 Special Christmas Offering	13 Church Women's United 12:00	14 Elder Mtg. 6:30 PM	15 Bible Study 1 PM at the church and & 7 PM through Zoom	16 Modern Worship Service 7:30 PM	17	18
19 Special Christmas Offering	20	21 Board Report Due	22  Cameron Fowler Bible Study 1 PM at the church and & 7 PM through Zoom	23 Modern Worship Service 7:30 PM	24  Dave Lombard  7 PM Arrive early for fellowship	25 
26 Board Mtg. Following Church Newsletter Articles due	27	28	29	30 Modern Worship Service 7:30 PM	31 	

