



First Christian Church

(Disciples of Christ)

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

Chalice Communicator

February 24, 2022

Number 2

Senior Pastor: Rev. Connor Thompson

Assoc. Pastor: Minister Jeff Wilder

Music Director: Michael Hefner

Moderator: John Ralbovsky

Elders: Natalie Byrd

Zola McClish

Karen Powers

Lora Schueller

Karen Thompson

SEE YOU IN WORSHIP

Traditional Worship – 10:30 a.m.

Modern Worship – Thursday @7:30 PM

Lenten Study- March 8th- April 12th
@7 PM via Zoom

STATISTICS: Attendance Offering

02/20	36/19	\$3,480.00
02/13	35/11	\$1,265.00
02/06	28	\$1,305.00
01/30	46	\$ 1,433.00

Week of Compassion- \$20.00

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

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, March 2nd

Can you believe it? It is already time to start the season of Lent! It feels like just yesterday we were gathered by candlelight singing Christmas carols. Before Christians celebrated Christmas, they centered their lives and worship on the significance of Easter. It was the first festival of the church. It was so important that the early church set Sunday, the first day of the week and the day of Jesus' resurrection, as their day of worship. To prepare for the Easter festival, which begins on Easter and concludes on Pentecost, the Christian church in the West designated a forty-day period of penitential preparation. Beginning on Ash Wednesday and concluding with Holy Week, Lent is seen as an imitation of Jesus' forty days in the wilderness at the beginning of his earthly ministry. It is a time to fast, to reflect, to let go and prepare for the Easter festival, the Great Fifty Days

In the early church, and in some congregations today, Lent was and is a time to prepare individuals for baptism. For baptismal candidates it is a time to focus on discipleship, what it means to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior and to follow his way on a daily basis. For everyone, it is to be a time of turning and refocusing on our relationship with God and the impact of that relationship in our relationships with ourselves, with others, and with all of God's creation.

There is not one "right" way to keep Lent. For some individuals keeping Lent means giving something up so that one's sacrifice can make room to grow in one's relationship with God. For instance, one forgoes chocolate or the expensive coffee drink and donates the money saved to care for the poor (almsgiving). Or, one fasts and uses that time that one would have spent eating in prayer and study of scripture. For others, Lent is not a period of giving something up as a time of letting go, letting go of the beliefs, attitudes and actions that are the obstacles for a genuine relationship with God, with self and others as children of God, and with God's creation. As individuals engage in contemplation and self-reflection, they come to know God and themselves in deeper ways and are transformed so that they can be agents of transformation in a broken and fragmented world. Lent is a time for the Resurrection to take root in our lives. Through these roots, nourishment flows that allows the fruit of the Resurrection to mature in our lives. We connect and are connected.

Connect with us during this Lenten season, be it in our Lenten Study, through our special services, or just through your own spiritual practices every day.

I look forward to journeying through Lent right alongside each and every one of you!

Blessings, Pastor Connor



Prayer List:

Health: Ken Amburgey, Kristen Beck, Sandi Cassity, Michael Hefner, Marla Marsh, Linda Neanover, Betty Stacy
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



Dear Members of First Christian Church:

Thank you very much for your donation to The Salvation Army of Middletown's Christmas Cheer Angel Tree Program. Your generosity is deeply appreciated and will make a positive difference in the lives of the people that come to us for help this season. The Salvation Army here in Middletown has remained open and continues to serve the community. At The Salvation Army our motto is “Doing the Most Good.” You have helped to do the most good in our community. We strive to be there when the community is in need. Many programs benefit from your donation; such as The Food Pantry, Sam's Place feeding program, Summer Foods, and Christmas Cheer Angel Tree. Through your thoughtful donation, you are helping us to help the community to be a better place.

God Bless You,
Rachel Earich
Administrative Assistant
The Salvation Army | Middletown Corps

ELDER MOMENT

The Elders continue to reach out to the membership. We want you to know how much we care and appreciate each and every one of you. Please don't hesitate to contact any of us with questions, concerns, prayer requests, suggestions, your joys or just the desire to talk. We are your Elders and want to be approachable to all of you. We enjoy taking part and participating in the events at church. Through Christian love, encouragement, friendship and discipleship, First Christian Church of Middletown, Ohio, will continue to grow spiritually.

In Christian love,
Your Elders



Ash Wednesday

Wednesday, March 2nd, 7:00 PM

Join us at 7:00 PM on March 2nd for Ash Wednesday Service. We will gather to reflect, confess, and begin to look inward as we begin our Journey through Lent.

As we begin our Lenten journey, we're invited to come fully as we are. The prophet Joel proclaims, "Return to God with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning" (Joel 2:12). Your brokenness, joy, gifts, and doubts all belong to God. Brokenness is a beginning. We have to break our faith open to go deeper. Expansive faith is possible when we break open old faith. Digging deeper requires broken ground. Your journey with God is not a performance. It's intimate and rewarding in ways that aren't necessarily measured. We are invited to pursue the wealth of the inner life, which reframes the paradigm that God is outward or beyond us. Instead, we might find God by turning inward, recognizing that God is connected to everything. God wants you, authentically. God wants you, stripped down and vulnerable. You are enough. Come as you are, with all that you are.

DEVOTIONALS AVAILABLE

The secret place devotions for daily worship are available and may be found in the rack in the narthex. New devotionals are received quarterly and copies of previous booklets may be found in the rack as well. We hope you pick up a copy and enjoy the scriptures, thought for the day and the interesting articles.

CWF NEWS

Sarah Circle has decided not to meet in March due to some members being out of town. We will resume our meetings on Thursday, April 7th, at 1:00 p.m. All ladies in the church are invited to join us for our time of Bible study and fellowship.

This past Sunday we studied Luke 6:27-38 which tells us to “love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who abuse you.” We can find examples of this idea in the Old Testament also. Proverbs 10:12 tells us that “Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all sins.” In Genesis 45:3-15 we hear the story of how Joseph forgave the brothers who had sold him into slavery. As you go through this week, remember to think about these scripture lessons. Don’t be overwhelmed by the almost impossible task of loving someone who has wronged you. Instead, just take one small step every day to pursue this goal of offering kindness to all.

Marilyn Chamberlain, CWF President

LENTEN STUDY

The Lord’s Prayer: The Meaning and Power of the Prayer Jesus Taught
Tuesdays at 7PM via zoom March 8th-April 12th

Most Christians know the Lord’s Prayer by heart. We pray it often, at different times and in different settings. We remember it as the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples. But do we really understand and appreciate the meaning and power of its words, what we ask of God each time we pray it?

When the disciples asked Jesus how to pray, Jesus gave them this prayer. He likely taught it to his followers often, not just one time. He never intended the Lord’s Prayer to be a museum piece, framed and placed on a mantel or in a display case. It was Jesus teaching God’s people, through his disciples, how to pray.

In *The Lord’s Prayer: The Meaning and Power of the Prayer Jesus Taught*, pastor and bestselling author Adam Hamilton guides us to really know—and really pray—the Lord’s Prayer. He explores each of its rich lines and their meaning in the Bible, illuminating what we ask of God and what we ask of ourselves through its words. And he teaches us how to use it as a pattern for our own prayer life.

FROM THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN OHIO:

Bruce Bowerman-Jett Called As Camp Food Services Director



Following the work of a subcommittee of the Camp Christian Committee and the Personnel Committee, Bruce Bowerman-Jett was called to be our next Camp Food Services Director. Bruce officially began this last week. His culinary efforts will include three kinds of food service: Summer Camp and Conference, Christian Church in Ohio Events (non-camp), and rental groups (congregations and outside groups.) You can contact him via his new email address bbowerman-jett@ccinoh.org starting next week.



Regional Church Council Affirms Rev. Jim Bane as Volunteer Regional Camp Liaison

At the recommendation of the Regional Minister and the Camp Christian Committee, the Regional Church Council offered its support for a new "Regional Camp Liaison" volunteer position to be created to help aid communication between the planning team for our summer camp and conference programs and the Camp Christian Committee and Regional Minister. This position will also be a resource for advice and counsel to Summer Camp Staff and Directors. The Regional Council also affirmed The Rev. Jim Bane as our Liaison for the 2022 Camp & Conference Season.



Rev. Alan Dicken Called To New Position at Week of Compassion

Our very own Rev. Alan Dicken has been called as the new Associate Director for Refugee and Immigrant Response with the Week of Compassion. Here is part of the announcement from Week of Compassion:

"In this season when needs are increasing, two new staff joining the work at Week of Compassion will increase our capacity for ministry and allow us to respond most faithfully with our partners and communities.

Rev. Alan Dicken will serve as Associate Director for Refugee and Immigrant Response, working with local congregations and regional ministers to equip and connect congregations in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to refugee and immigration assistance. These activities include building partnerships and collaborative commitments with a variety of Disciples and ecumenical partners to establish a sustainable, long-term refugee and immigration response.

You can read the entire press release here:

<https://www.weekofcompassion.org/stories/responding-in-a-changing-landscape>

We are thrilled with Rev. Dicken's call to the larger church and we offer him our support, prayers, and joyful celebration!

WEEK OF COMPASSION SPECIAL OFFERING

Received on February 27 **Love**



Remains

On Memorial Day 2019, tornadoes swept through the Miami Valley of Ohio, destroying thousands of homes and apartments and leaving a trail of downed trees and power lines in their wake. Many of the tornado-affected families have had to relocate multiple times since the tornadoes due to substandard housing conditions and inflated rent.

Two years after the storm, the Stephens family were still unable to find adequate living quarters. The family of ten was forced to live apart. In addition to dealing with unscrupulous contractors, the family had to haggle with insurance companies as they tried to rebuild their home. The Stephens, like so many other families, remained in temporary housing and separated, pending the completion of repairs.

Yet, all was not lost. The Stephens family connected with the Miami Valley Long-Term Recovery Operations Group (MVLTRG,) and volunteer teams finished the repairs. Alongside these traditional home repair projects, and with support from Week of Compassion, the MVLTRG helped launch the Tornado Survivors' Pathways to Homeownership Project to help alleviate the housing crunch in the Dayton area. Volunteers and local nonprofits work together to transition "nuisance" properties and vacant lots into affordable, single-family housing options for tornado survivors who were displaced from rental housing, stabilizing both families and the community. First-time homeowners receive the support they need to build for their futures.

Sammy Deacon, Brethren Disaster Ministries Long-Term Project Leader, says "When you reach out to help someone else, the blessing comes back to you as well. An important aspect of the recovery effort is listening to people's stories and knowing you have the opportunity to help them—physically and spiritually." With support for long-term recovery, including innovative programs like the Pathways to Homeownership project, Week of Compassion helps create opportunities for families to thrive after disasters. Because love remains.

For more information and worship resources, go to

<https://www.weekofcompassion.org/2022.html>

A MOMENT FOR HISTORY - MUSIC

As long as I can remember, music has always played an important role in our congregational worship. Choirs have been strong since the beginning days, including, from time to time, some excellent children's and youth choirs under the direction of Versa Whitt. The first regular church pianist was Violet Frazer, who began playing in 1914. In the 1920's the church even had an orchestra. In 1936, with Board permission, choir members purchased materials and made their own robes.

Also in 1936, a committee was formed to raise money for an organ. In three years the monetary goal was reached and an organ was purchased for \$1400. This organ was used until 1956, when a new organ and chimes were installed and dedicated. Another organ was purchased in 1981 and was dedicated to Mary Alice Mack. The first church organist was Robena Egelston, who had served as Church Pianist during the late '20's and '30's, sharing responsibility with Mrs. Frazer. In 1940 Mary Alice Mack became church organist and served in that capacity for 29 years. Other choir directors were John Stalls, Joe Franklin & Bob Mucha. In 1969 Mary Alice became Organist/Choir Director and held both those positions until her death in 1983. A portrait of Mary Alice, given in remembrance of her many years of service, hangs in the Memorial Room. In 1986 Mrs. Sally Sparks became choir director and later she also assumed the position of music director for the church. Sally served in this position until 2006.

In 2007 Mr. David Donovan, Director of the Lebanon symphony, became director of the Sr. Choir. Also in 2007, Mr. Wade Cummins joined as pianist and youth choir director and later became Sr. Choir Director and formed a Praise Team Choir for the evening Contemporary service. In 2011 Tina Yarber became the youth choir director. At this point we are privileged to have Mr. Michael Hefner serving as Choir Director, pianist, and music director.

Others who have served as organist include Connie Pollard, Christine Baird, Linda Kessler, Suzanne Burg, Roger Burnell, Cinda Pelfrey, Tim Draxler and Patricia Bell.

Pianists have included Rachel Eve Ginter (also served as Choir/music

director), Allyson Michal and Josh Roeser as well as many special guest musicians, vocalists and vocal groups.



Chancel Choir 1st Ave. Circa 1950s



1950s

The Bobbitt Children Circa

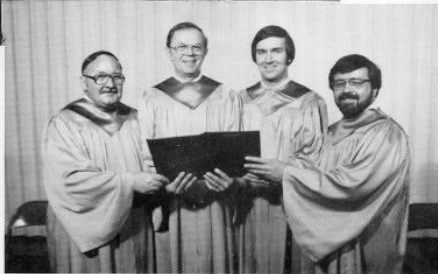




Choir



Choir



Disciples Four



Choir- Rosedale Rd. - 2012



Choir - 100 Anniversary Jubilee - 2012



Children's Choir Circa 1960s



Special Music - Combined Choirs



March, 2022



Birthdays

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2  Service 7 PM	3 Modern Worship Service 7:30 PM	4  Carol Efker 	5
6  Girl Scouts® Sunday 1 st Sunday in Lent	7	8	9	10 Modern Worship Service 7:30 PM	11  Larry Chamberlain	12
13  2 nd Sunday in Lent	14 Christian Women United meets @ 12:00	15 Elder Mtg. @ 7 PM	16  Mike Cockerham	17 Modern Worship Service 7:30 PM	18	19
20  3 rd Sunday in Lent	21	22	23	24 Modern Worship Service 7:30 PM	25  Roger Byrd	26
27 Board Mtg. Following Church; Newsletter Articles due 4 th Sunday in Lent	28  Linda Lombard	29	30	31 Modern Worship Service 7:30 PM		

