

December 2018/January 2019

# The Cornerstone

Christ Church United Methodist  
700 S. Marshall Road, Middletown OH 45044  
513-422-7364 (telephone) • 513-422-2161 (fax) • [www.christum.com](http://www.christum.com)

“Impacting the  
Community for CHRIST”



## Staff

Wynston Dixon, Pastor  
Debbie Alexander, Director of Music Worship  
Betsy Balger, Accompanist  
Julie Coleman, Office Manager

## Sunday Worship Services

8:30 am - Traditional Worship  
11:00 am - Contemporary Worship

## Group Study

### Sunday Adult Classes

Room 113: *Calvary Class*  
Room 115: *Sojourners Class*  
Room 118: *Searchers Class*  
Library: *ReachOut*

### Nursery Care

8:30 am - noon, Ages 0-Pre-K, Rm. 27 & 29

### Sunday Children's Classes

11:00 am - K & Up, Rm. 23



# Letter from the Pastor



Dear Christ Church Family and Friends,

As we come to the end of 2018 with anticipation of entering 2019, I want to take this time to wish you and your families a blessed and happy season. Some may say they have nothing to be merry or happy about because of their current situation. This may be true because 2018 has been a year of both challenges for some and successes for others. If you are one of those who faced a serious challenge in 2018, I encourage you not to give up. For some of us, death snatched away someone who was dear to us, others may have experienced a serious illness in their family, some had financial difficulties and other challenges that they had to deal with. However, through it all, God granted us His grace to go through whatever we experienced and come out victorious. That to me is success. Even if you have not yet rebounded from your challenges, don't despair, but take heart, it will happen sooner than later. The Word of God states, *"Weeping may endure for the night but **JOY** cometh in the morning."* Your morning is on the horizon, watch fervently for it.

My wish for you and your family is that God will open the windows of Heaven during 2019 and pour out His blessings upon you so much so that you would not have room enough to receive them. He personally guarantees this in His Word as recorded in Malachi 3:10. He also says in Psalm 37:4-5, *"Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to Him and He will cause whatever you commit to Him to come to pass."*

By now you may be asking yourself, so how do I delight myself in the Lord or what does it mean to delight myself into the Lord? To give you a quick answer, I refer you to the book of Isaiah, Chapter 58, especially verses 13 & 14. Whatever the situation may be, delight in the Lord and commit that thing you desire to Him, trusting Him as the Psalmist says, and watch His miracle unfold in front of your eyes.

We are determined to accelerate change at Christ Church during the 2019-2020 conference year. We will rely on the Church's Leadership Team to help begin a process of planning new ministries aimed at growth. If Christ Church United Methodist wants to become a

more spiritually thriving, healthy congregation again, we will need to accept changes in the way we do things. This will cause us to be uncomfortable and will cost us financially. We are aware that some people don't like change, but all of us will have to make some sacrifices and take some risks to turn this church around.

Here are some realities we have to face in 2019-2020:

- God's purpose for us is to save souls and not to save buildings. The building is to serve us and not we to serve the building. We are to serve God and help our fellow man.
- You, the lay people, must commit yourselves to change. Pastors don't turn churches around, lay people do. My role is to give you guidance in the process. What worked years ago may not work today because the world has changed and is changing rapidly.
- If we cling to death, we will die. That is a fact. In order to be faithful, we have to accept the risk of failure. There is no room for petty fights over church turf in the Kingdom of God.

In closing, may the Words of the Lord as written in Psalm 37:4-5 and Isaiah 58:13-14 be your portion in 2019. Be safe during this Christmas season and keep your eyes on Jesus. He will take you places in 2019 that you've never dreamed of.

I love each of you, and I thank God for all of you. Thank you for the confidence and support you have given to me to be your pastor.

Be blessed,

*Pastor Dixon*

December 2018

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

## FAITH--Let's Build on It!

For we walk by faith, not by sight *II Corinthians 5:7 (NKJV)*

As you may already know, **Christ Church received a very generous gift from the family of Carol and Paul Hoskins** after Carol's passing in July 2018. The gift, in the amount of \$99,700, was designated to help us reduce the mortgage obligation on our church building. At the time of the gift, the family encouraged us to begin a capital campaign to raise additional funds to help us continue to reduce the remaining debt balance. Beginning today, we are launching our "**FAITH--Let's Build on It!**" Campaign to accomplish what the Hoskins' Family started.

**Background:** Our current mortgage is approximately \$227,000 payable over the next 13 years with a monthly payment of almost \$2,000. **With the Hoskins gift, our mortgage balance will be reduced to about \$127,000 - and so with faith the goal of this Campaign is to reduce the remaining balance by as much as possible to free up dollars to use toward ministries that God is planning and will Reveal to us.** It is our hope that once the Campaign is complete, we will be able to significantly reduce our monthly payment either through re-amortization or re-financing of the balance - perhaps we will be blessed enough to completely eliminate the debt!

**There are three ways to express your FAITH to give to this Campaign:**

**One-time Special Gift during December and January:** He gave His son, once, so we are beginning with a one-time gift request so that we may combine lump-sum gifts with the Hoskins Family gift and apply toward the loan all at once in February 2019. While special gifts are welcome at any time during this 18-month Campaign, we are starting with an initial effort so **please make your one-time gift by January 31, 2019.**

**Pledge Gift - 18 month commitment through July 1, 2020:** He led His disciples over many months and years, and so we would ask you to prayerfully consider making a pledge payable through July 1, 2020, to increase your current giving by an amount of your choice, earmarked for the Campaign. **Please make your pledge by January 31, 2019.**

**Both a One-time Special Gift and a Pledge Gift:** He continues to call us to serve all He represents, each and every day. **If you feel called to make both a special gift and a pledge, please make both commitments by January 31, 2019.** This provides initial mortgage reduction and longer-term reduction.

**Next Steps:** For every \$1 given to the Campaign through one-time giving and/or pledging, Christ Church will save \$1.32 - so no one-time gift or pledge is too small! As you consider your gift, please earnestly pray for God's guidance and His blessing over our church and our ministries both now and as a result of the Campaign.

Pledge cards will be included in a letter being sent to the congregation the week of December 2, and pledge cards and envelopes will be available in the pews throughout the Campaign so that your Campaign gifts can be separated from your regular giving. Pledges can be designated as one-time, monthly, quarterly, or yearly for the 18 months, February 1, 2019 through July 1, 2020.

Throughout the Campaign we will give updates on the Campaign's progress. If you have any questions, please ask one of our committee members whose names and emails are provided below. As we begin today with this Campaign, we are reminded that with God, ALL things are possible for the Community of Christ who we serve!

## FAITH--Let's Build on It!

In Jesus,

Jane Tipton - jane.tipton@gmail.com

Pam Cole - pamdickcole@gmail.com

David Sauter - blessedandretireddms@gmail.com

Dee Sellers - dsellers2@cinci.rr.com



### ADOPT A FAMILY FOR CHRISTMAS

Christ Church has once again adopted eight families who registered for Christmas assistance through the Salvation Army. Not only will we be providing Christmas for each of these families but we also provided Thanksgiving dinner for each family. While all eight families have already been adopted by individual families or small groups within the church, your help is still very much needed.

- Give generously to the Loose Change Offering on December 2 which will help fund this ministry, or make a monetary donation by using a pew envelope and designating "Christmas Baskets" on the envelope.
- Purchase non-perishable food items for the December Feed My Sheep collection to be used in the Christmas baskets. *(Sunday, December 9, will be the last day to donate either food items or give monetary gifts for the Christmas baskets.)*
- Pray for these families.

Thank you Christ Church for your continued support of this mission project.

### Financial Update (as of 10/31/2018)

	<u>Month of October</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
Income	\$27,093	\$236,199
Expenses	<u>(\$22,694)</u>	<u>(\$226,803)</u>
Income/(Loss)	\$ 4,399	\$ 9,396

Note: Our mortgage payment was made in full for October. Compared to September, both our income and our expenses increased which resulted in income decreasing about \$3,000 from September. Our expenses in October also include a full month of salary and benefits for our new pastor versus only a partial month of expenses in September.

As a benchmark, our budgeted expenses for 2018 average just over \$25,700 per month. The good news is that our actual October year-to-date expenses are averaging just a little under \$22,700 a month and our actual giving is averaging around \$23,600 a month!

A second benchmark we use is to compare our average weekly envelope giving this year to last year. That comparison indicates that we are averaging approximately \$400 less per week of giving (\$400 x 52 weeks would increase our annual giving by over \$23,000!).

Should you have any questions or would like more information, please contact Barb Martin.



Since SHALOM's inception in 2002, Christ Church has been a part of this ministry for the homeless by providing a warm, overnight stay for those in need during the cold winter months.

Christ Church will be hosting SHALOM from December 30 through January 6 and January 27 through February 3. Volunteers are needed in the evening to supervise and interact with our guests and to spend the night. Volunteers are also needed to provide dinner, snacks and breakfast items. Of course, monetary donations are always welcome as there will be items that will need to be purchased to assist our guests during their time here.

Additionally, SHALOM is always in need of blankets, pillows, twin size sheets, towels, under clothing and travel size hygiene items. If you wish to donate any of these items, your donation can either be brought to the church or taken directly to First United Methodist Church located at 120 S. Broad Street downtown.

Volunteer sign-up sheets can be found in the lobby for the week of December 30. Thank you for your continued commitment and contributions to this incredible ministry.



Thursday, December 6, at 11:30 am  
Christmas Party at Heritage Green Club House in Monroe

Please bring a covered dish to share and a \$7-\$10 gift if you would like to participate in the gift exchange  
RSVP to Dee Sellers (513) 464-6739

Thursday, January 17, at 10:00 am in Room 113  
Program Speaker will be from the Alzheimer's Foundation.  
2019 pledge commitments will also be received

All are invited!



## THE STORY OF LOVE PACKAGES

### 140 Tons of Good News

Then and now, the gospel message requires messengers. One noteworthy gospel messenger is ***Love Packages***, a ministry whose small staff and countless volunteers collect, sort, package, and ship **about 140 tons of donated Christian literature each month** free to mission fields around the world.

In today's high-tech world, many might assume that all magazines and used Sunday school books are relics of the past. If you live in a dung hut in Nairobi, Kenya, however, there is no online website, no book sale, or hardly any stores. Even if print was available, the people can't afford it. So, this is a way to get materials to them.

Founded in 1975 in Butler, Illinois by Steve Schmidt, ***Love Packages*** began after repeated nudges from God to offer to missionaries the excess Christian literature always piling up on the Schmidt's' dining table.

Surprised to discover that missionaries could use and want the English language materials he offered, Schmidt quickly mailed packages to four different locations. By year's end, he and his wife had shipped out 60 packages filled with used Bibles, books, magazines, Sunday school materials, tracts, and devotionals. Word spread, and soon others began sending literature to the Schmidt family. Volunteers began helping sort and package the donated materials. And slowly their ministry grew from the Schmidt's' dining room to their basement to a warehouse facility.

In 2016, ***Love Packages*** expanded to include Edwin L. Hodges Ministries, a similar literature ministry run by Pastor Hodges for 20 years in Decatur, Alabama. When Hodges retired, ***Love Packages*** was the perfect ministry to keep the Hodges legacy going forward. Subsequently, ***Love Packages*** now operates out of both sites. Individuals, families, or youth groups can volunteer at either location, and they're doing something that's eternal. They're going on a mission trip without having to leave the country.

One lady in particular, now in her 90s, still goes out "booking" weekly to purchase appropriate materials at yard sales, book sales, or discount stores. She recruits friends to transport her book finds to ***Love Packages*** in Illinois. A man in Huntsville, Alabama does his "booking" differently. He periodically shops online at Christianbook.com and has his purchases shipped directly to the Alabama site.

The donated literature is first brought from the warehouse and then opened, sorted and placed into one of six designated categories: Bibles, reference materials; Sunday school literature; books; magazines and daily devotionals; music and DVDS. Churches, individuals, and even corporate donors send excess literature, new or used, one piece or cases at a time. The largest category of donations is Sunday school literature. Finally, the bundled literature is taken into an outer warehouse ready for loading onto a 20-foot shipping container – no pallets or packing materials allowed. ***Love Packages*** literally packs materials into the shipping container from floor to ceiling. *Every hole could be a soul.*

***Love Packages*** ships 41,800 pounds of literature in each seagoing container at an overall freight cost of ten cents per pound. That is impressive stewardship compared to the \$8 per pound it would cost for an individual to mail a package overseas. Once materials are shipped, it takes approximately two months before the containers are opened and distributed.

And the last step for the donated materials is probably the most impressive of all. Men and women from impoverished countries around the world will walk for days over untold miles in order to receive the treasures packed into those shipping containers. Many of them have never seen printed copies of Scripture verses, much less owned their own Bible. When they get their ***Love Packages***, they're smiling ear to ear.

Please continue to leave your donated (new or used) materials in the container marked "***Love Packages***" in the library. We are "recycling the word of God."

## The Meaning of Advent

By Dr. Richard J. Krejcir

*Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. (Isaiah 7:14)*

"Advent" simply means *coming* as in Christ is coming, and for us now He has arrived. This is referring to His birth in history and in humanity. It meant the welcoming or the arrival of a special king and for us; it is our King of kings. This is what the Old Testament prophecies foretold concerning Jesus' Incarnation, the Word made flesh for our hope and Atonement that brought us our deliverance. Advent represents our expectation, anticipation, and preparation for who Christ is and what He has done for us. He arrived into the world as a human being, being fully God and fully man. He came to identify as one of us, as the *Son of Man*, as a baby born in a manger. He came for us, He came for you and He comes into our lives and into our hearts. He is coming again in great power and glory to bring His Kingdom into fruition.

### The Advent Wreath

*And again, Isaiah says, "The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; the Gentiles will hope in him." May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 15:12-13).*

Traditionally, during the Christmas season we have an "Advent Wreath" in our churches, and this is remarkably celebrated in all denominations, including Orthodox, Catholic, liturgical, mainline and evangelical. The Advent Wreath is a venerable tradition that cuts across denominational and theological boundaries. It dates to the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Europe. This Advent Wreath is arranged with 4 or 5 Advent candles, 3 or 4 of which are in a circle, along with one in the center, all on a base of evergreens each has a powerful message for us about our Lord. This has prevailing imagery we should not take for granted or consider just another holiday decoration.

**The Wreath:** The wreath itself means "victory" as Christ's victory over sin so He can save us. The Advent Wreath has 4 or 5 candles that are arranged in a circle symbolizing Christ's eternity, as a circle has no beginning and has no end, it is a symbol for God who is eternal and thus without beginning or end. The evergreens mean He is "ever with us," and are usually pine branches or holly that are used as a base that represents anticipation, newness, renewal and His everlastingness. The red berries of the holly represent the shedding of Christ's blood.

**The Candles:** The Advent candles mean the light of God coming into the world through the birth of His Son. This refers to the significance that Christ is the Light of the world. When they are lit, the illumination is to symbolize the Christ of eternity and His coming as the "Light of the World" and our worship and honor of His most precious gift of His Grace and mercy. These candles also have a color theme too, purple, pink or rose and white. The first two or three are purple meaning royalty and this is also the color of suffering and the darkness of sin, connecting Jesus' birth and crucifixion and His triumph over sin. Pink means joy, and white means purity.

### Each candle has a special meaning:

- o The first candle (purple) "CANDLE OF HOPE" means His promise and hope. We can have hope because God is faithful and will keep the promises He made to us. Our hope comes from God. (Romans 15:12-13)
- o The second candle (purple) "CANDLE OF PREPARATION" means His light and preparation. Preparation means to 'get ready'. "Help us to be ready to welcome YOU, O GOD!" (Luke 3:4-6) (Some traditions combine the first two.)
- o The third candle (pink or rose) "CANDLE OF JOY" means the angels sang a message of JOY! (Luke 2:7-15)
- o The fourth candle (purple) "CANDLE OF LOVE" symbolizes Christ love. God sent His only Son to earth to save us, because He loves us! (John 3:16-17) (Some traditions omit this one.)
- o The fifth candle (white) "CHRIST CANDLE" symbolizes the incarnation, the heart and reason of the season, God giving light to the world. Its location is in the center as Christ's light is central and radiant. This reminds us that Jesus is the spotless Lamb of God, sent to wash away our sins! (In wreaths that have 4 candles, it is in the circle among the rest of the candles.)

Each candle is lighted during the worship services each week in progression until Christmas Eve or Christmas Day when the last candle is lit. (Some denominations and traditions have different color schemes and some only four candles.) Each week the new unlit candle for that week is lighted, and then the previous candles are re-lighted. A family is sent up to do the lighting as a passage is read, a carol sung and or a prayer said. The four weeks are a period of waiting also signifying the four centuries of waiting between the last prophet Malachi and the birth of Jesus. All five candles should continue to be lighted in worship services through Epiphany on January 6 (*Epiphany* means "to show," is the climax of the Christmas Season and the "Twelve Days of Christmas." It is observed to denote the coming of the wise men bringing gifts and their worship to Christ).



# December Birthdays

- 1 Joan Peterson
- 14 Carole Robinson
- 18 Jen Grams
- 20 Paul Radabaugh
- 22 Kathy Stitsinger
- 27 Tom Streiff
- 28 Tim Hezlep
- Beverly Hill
- 29 Diane Neal
- 30 Kevin Strait



# December Anniversaries

- 4 Norman and Karen Gibbs
- 7 Bob and Ann Baber
- 21 Thomas and Diane Hayes
- Denny and Kathy Stitsinger
- 27 Michael and Wendy Minor

# January Birthdays

- 4 Mike Forrester
- 5 Nancy DeSerisy
- Dottie Wasem
- 6 Kay Ellison
- Linda Knapp
- 8 Patty Streiff
- David Teeters
- 9 Deona Bethart
- 10 Caty O'Hara
- Gail Rose
- 11 Dorie Kirkland
- 14 Linda Beekman
- 16 Beth Ditmyer
- 20 Marge Forrester
- 21 Norman Gibbs
- Don Smith
- 22 Suzi DelGrosso
- Cindy Minter
- 23 Amy Pretty
- Deanna Sellers
- 24 Teresa Banks
- 29 Andrea Jackson
- 31 Sherrie Robertson

# January Anniversaries

- 20 Wallace and Joy Michael
- 24 Carl and Shirley Heismann
- 27 Mike and Marge Forrester

*With Sympathy*

Carol Wray and Bill Birch and Family upon the death of their father, George Birch, on November 29

*Thank you*

... for the prayers, cards, calls and visits for myself and family in the passing of my husband, Millard. We appreciate the support at this difficult time.

God Bless,  
Beverly Hill & Family

# December

12/1	8:00 am Emmaus Share Group, Library	12/16	CHRISTMAS CANTATA (Both Services)
12/2	6:00 pm Cantata Rehearsal, Sanctuary	12/18	3:30 pm Whiz Kids, 117 6:30 pm Girl Scouts, NLC
12/4	3:30 pm Whiz Kids, 117 6:30 pm Link's University, 115 6:30 pm Girl Scouts, NLC	12/19	10:00 am Bible Study, 113 12:30 pm NAMI, Library 3:30 pm Yoga, NLC 5:00 pm Men's Choir, Sanctuary 6:00 pm Chancel Choir, Sanctuary 6:30 pm Bible Study, Library 7:30 pm Praise Team, Sanctuary
12/5	10:00 am Bible Study, 113 12:30 pm NAMI, Library 3:30 pm Yoga, NLC 5:00 pm Men's Choir, Sanctuary 6:00 pm Chancel Choir, Sanctuary 6:30 pm Bible Study, Library 7:30 pm Praise Team, Sanctuary	12/22	8:00 am Emmaus Share Group, Library
12/6	11:30 am United Methodist Women's Christmas Party, Heritage Green Club House, Monroe	12/24	OFFICE CLOSED 8:00 pm CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE 10:00 pm CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE
12/8	8:00 am Emmaus Share Group, Library	12/25	OFFICE CLOSED
12/9	6:00 pm Cantata Rehearsal, Sanctuary	12/26	OFFICE CLOSED 12:30 pm NAMI, Library 3:30 pm Yoga, NLC 6:30 pm Bible Study, Library
12/11	3:30 pm Whiz Kids, 117 6:00 pm Admin Team, 113	12/27	OFFICE CLOSED
12/12	10:00 am Bible Study, 113 12:30 pm NAMI, Library 1:15 pm Membership Care, 113 3:30 pm Yoga, NLC 6:00 pm Chancel Choir, Sanctuary 6:30 pm Bible Study, Library 7:30 pm Praise Team, Sanctuary	12/28	OFFICE CLOSED
12/15	8:00 am Emmaus Share Group, Library 10:00 am Cantata Rehearsal, Sanctuary	12/29	8:00 am Emmaus Share Group, Library
		12/30	SHALOM
		12/31	OFFICE CLOSED SHALOM

*Merry Christmas*



# January

1/1	OFFICE CLOSED SHALOM	1/16	10:00 am Bible Study, 113 12:30 pm NAMI, Library 3:30 pm Yoga, NLC 5:00 pm Men's Choir, Sanctuary 6:00 pm Chancel Choir, Sanctuary 6:30 pm Bible Study, Library 7:30 pm Praise Team, Sanctuary
1/2	SHALOM 10:00 am Bible Study, 113 12:30 pm NAMI, Kitchenette 3:30 pm Yoga, Christ Cinema 5:00 pm Men's Choir, Sanctuary 6:00 pm Chancel Choir, Sanctuary 6:30 pm Bible Study, Kitchenette 7:30 pm Praise Team, Sanctuary	1/17	10:00 am United Methodist Women, 113
1/3	SHALOM	1/19	8:00 am Emmaus Share Group, Library
1/4	SHALOM	1/21	OFFICE CLOSED (Martin Luther King Jr. Day)
1/5	SHALOM 8:00 am Emmaus Share Group, Kitchenette	1/22	6:30 pm Link's University, 115
1/8	3:30 pm Whiz Kids, 117 6:00 pm Admin Team, 113	1/23	10:00 am Bible Study, 113 12:30 pm NAMI, Library 3:30 pm Yoga, NLC 6:00 pm Chancel Choir, Sanctuary 6:30 pm Bible Study, Library 7:30 pm Praise Team, Sanctuary
1/9	10:00 am Bible Study, 113 12:30 pm NAMI, Library 3:30 pm Yoga, NLC 6:00 pm Chancel Choir, Sanctuary 6:30 pm Bible Study, Library 7:30 pm Praise Team, Sanctuary	1/26	8:00 am Emmaus Share Group, Library
1/12	8:00 am Emmaus Share Group, Library	1/27	SHALOM
1/15	3:30 pm Whiz Kids, 117 6:30 pm Girl Scouts, NLC	1/28	SHALOM
		1/29	SHALOM 3:30 pm Whiz Kids
		1/30	SHALOM 10:00 am Bible Study, Pastor's Office 12:30 pm NAMI, Kitchenette 3:30 pm Yoga, NLC 6:00 pm Chancel Choir, Sanctuary 6:30 pm Bible Study, Kitchenette 7:30 pm Praise Team, Sanctuary
		1/31	SHALOM

*Happy New Year!*

Christ Church United Methodist  
700 South Marshall Road  
Middletown, OH 45044



### 2019 Calendars

The 2019 calendars have arrived and are available for pick-up in the lobby on Sunday mornings or from the church office during the week. Since we will not be mailing these calendars, please feel free to hand deliver a calendar to a shut-in who either lives near you or with whom you visit regularly.

Thank you to Ron and Judy Spaulding and the Wilson-Schramm-Spaulding Funeral Home for providing Christ Church with another beautiful calendar for 2019.

### “Celebrate Life” Candlelight Chapel Service

December 8 at 7:00 pm  
Woodside Cemetery & Aboretum  
1401 S. Woodside Blvd., Middletown

Come early and enjoy the radiant luminaries that will light the way to the Chapel. Following the service, refreshments will be served in the Community Room