

July/August 2020

The Cornerstone

Christ Church United Methodist
700 S. Marshall Road, Middletown OH 45044
513-422-7364 (telephone) • 513-422-2161 (fax) • 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

10:30 am - Sunday Worship

9:00 am - Group Study

Sunday Adult Classes

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

Sunday Youth Class

Room 4: Jr. High/Sr. High

Nursery Care

10:15 am - noon, Ages 0-Pre-K,
Room 106

Celebration of Life
for
David T. Kirkland
(November 29, 1954 - May 7, 2020)

Friday, July 10, 2020
New Life Center
7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Light Refreshments Will be Served
All Are Invited

Celebration of Life
for
Howard L. Hounshell
(August 31, 1936 - April 9, 2020)

Saturday, August 29, 2020
New Life Center
5:00 pm

A dinner will be provided by the Hounshell family. To help the family know how many to prepare for, please call Sue Hounshell at (513) 424-2823 by Friday, July 10, if you are planning to attend. Sue will call to confirm your attendance two weeks in advance of the celebration and/or to let you know should this celebration need to be cancelled for any reason.

Letter from the Pastor



My beloved Parishioners,

In the midst of protests, riots and a pandemic, I believe the church has to help make sure it is a wake-up call. As the nation watched a policeman murder another human being and was very comfortable doing it, there has to be protests, tears, anger and disappointment in the system that was intended

to protect and serve us.

I believe systemic racism and poverty/inequality are choking the life out of the American democracy. While we may feel like blaming someone else for these painful and deadly times, we ought to look up and ask God, "What's happening and why have You allowed this?"

The Good News is, the answer to our problems is clearly stated in this verse: *"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."* (II Chronicles 7:14)

We are a nation that is marked by moral regression, sexual revolution, and spiritual rebellion. If healing is to come to this nation, it has to come through the church.

America's only hope is not in better government, new political leadership, balanced budgets, missile defense, or a recovered stock market. America's only hope is revival; a God-induced, heaven-sent, prayed-down, Spirit-led revival. But revival begins with the people of God.

I want you to understand something about revival. Revival is not for the sinner; it's for the saint. A sinner doesn't need revival, he needs regeneration. It is the saint that needs revival. The psalmist was right when he said to God, *"Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in You?"* (Psalm. 85:6) You see we act and talk and live as if we, the church, are depending on the world to get right.

The church, instead of depending on America to get right, should understand that America is depending on the church to get right. The problem is we have more of the world in the church than we have of the church in the world. It is the lukewarm church that needs revival. We, the people called by His name, need revival.

The verse says, *"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves..."* The word "humble" literally means "to bend the knee." Humility is the one essential ingredient of revival. The reason why we don't have revival in America is because we, quite frankly, have not gotten low enough.

America reeks with pride, and the stench of our self-sufficiency is a nauseating odor to the nostrils of a Holy God.

You know the real reason why we are rejecting God and His word? It is not just that we are a "pluralistic nation;" it is not just "the separation of church and state;" it is pride. It is pride that leads to disregarding, dismissing, and disobeying God Himself.

There is nothing wrong with asking the question when national disasters begin to afflict the people - "What is God trying to say to us?" I think one of the things God is definitely trying to tell us is we've gotten too big for our spiritual growth.

It is pride that causes us to be in prayer less. Because the man who does not pray is the man who says, "I can do just fine without God. I don't need to call on Him, He needs to call on me."

It is pride that causes us to fight and argue and keep us from getting along. Pride paralyzes, pride polarizes, pride politicizes.

It was pride that got Adam and Eve kicked out of the Garden of Eden. It was pride that got Satan kicked out of Heaven. Pride is that attitude that says, "We don't need God."

Pride says, "I don't need God." Humility says, "I don't need anything but God." God sends no one away empty except those who are full of themselves. So if we want revival, we must first conquer our pride.

The earlier verse does not only call us to humble ourselves, but "that we should pray and seek God with our whole heart." It must be a heart-felt prayer. The prayers of the righteous avails much. We're looking for solutions to our problems in all the wrong places. We ought to be looking to God because He is the solution to our problems.

We must also *"turn from our wicked ways."* Prayer without repentance is a colossal waste of time. Psalm. 66:18 says, *"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear."*

If we meet these conditions, God gives this promise: *"Then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."* Now this is God's definition of revival. It is when God hears and God heals.

We, as a church, nation, a family or you as an individual, face two choices - either God hears and God heals, or God confronts and God condemns.

We're promised God's favor. *"... then will I hear from heaven. . ."* The word "hear" means "to listen to a point where you are moved to action." When God hears God acts, and God moves.

We are also promised God's forgiveness. *"... I will forgive their sin."* When you get your soul clean, God wipes the slate clean.

Then we are promised God's fruitfulness. *"... and I will heal their land."* The word "heal" is the Hebrew word "Rapha." We are in need of a healing that only the great God can give.

Woodrow Wilson's last words to the American people were these: "Our civilization cannot survive materially unless it is redeemed spiritually."

Christ Church, it is time to trust the Lord. Unless we are anchored in the Lord, we will not be able to stand the changing, troubling and uncertain times in which we live.

Be blessed and safe.

Pastor Dixon

Building Usage Guidelines at Christ Church United Methodist During Current Pandemic June 2020

While the guidelines below are subject to change as the State of Ohio and local governing bodies update their protocols and mandates surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic, Christ Church will follow these current guidelines for meetings, gatherings and events held inside the Church.

All meetings, gatherings and events must follow the current state and local guidelines in place at the time of the scheduled meeting, gathering or event including social distancing requirements.

Any person or group requesting use of the building must submit a written plan to the church office explaining how the current guidelines will be followed during their event.

Large Group Guidelines

Round tables set up in the New Life Center for large group events must be spaced at least six feet apart with not more than four (4) people per table. While face masks are not being mandated by the State of Ohio, the wearing of face masks in the church building is strongly recommended and encouraged.

When serving food, self-serve type buffet lines are prohibited. Individuals wearing gloves and masks must be stationed at food/drink tables to serve all food and drinks. If possible, it is recommended prepackaged food and individually bottled/canned drinks be served. All tables, chairs and other equipment should be sanitized after the event.

Small Group Guidelines

If gathering for Sunday School, Bible Study or a church meeting in any of the classrooms, i.e., Library or Rooms 113, 115, 117, 118, current social distancing requirements must be followed, and gatherings are limited to not more than 10 people per room. While the wearing of face masks in public settings is not being mandated by the State of Ohio, the wearing of face masks in the church building is strongly recommended and encouraged. When serving food, self-serve buffet style is prohibited. It is recommended that prepackaged food and individually bottled/canned drinks be served when possible. Otherwise, all food/drinks must be served by individuals wearing gloves and masks. Tables, chairs, and any materials used should be sanitized after the meeting.

Tenant/Outside Group Guidelines

Current tenants, i.e., *Northstar Classical School* and *Rooted in Light Coaching*, as well as any outside groups, i.e., NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) and yoga, will be required to follow all safety guidelines in place at such time as they return to the Church building.

Plan for Worship in Building

(Developed by the Worship Committee)

The following guidelines were put together by the Worship Committee and became effective June 7 when in-house worship began. With the virus situation being very fluid, these guidelines will be revisited and/or adjusted to meet current recommendations as warranted. In-house worship is currently being held in the New Life Center to be able to practice social distancing more easily since the sanctuary can hold perhaps only 60 persons while still practicing social distancing.

- There will be no choir until at least September, and no nursery for the remainder of the year.
- Debbie Alexander and Betsy Balger have worked on a diagram for social distancing seating in both the NLC and the sanctuary.
- Those attending service will be asked to wear a face covering. We will have on hand disposable masks as well as homemade masks to give to those who do not have one. A special “thank you” is extended to Donna Idle, Dee Sellers and Sandy Luksic for their donations to the church of both homemade and disposable masks.
- Communion will be done with prepackaged wafer and drink that will be sterilized and handled with gloves. These packages will be placed on seats to then be handled only by those partaking in communion.
- Offerings will be placed in the offering boxes in the back of the sanctuary or NLC so that there is no passing of the plate. There will not be a bulletin or handling of hymnals for worship. Greeters will need to be socially distanced from those coming to worship. There will be no coffee hour for the remainder of the year since this is a “buffet” type of service and could promote infection.
- The sanctuary will be sanitized weekly. **To make cleaning complete, the carpet in the sanctuary was professionally cleaned.**
- We need to be prepared to handle the mental effects this time may have on our members, especially those that are confined and unable to receive visitors or leave their homes, as well as anyone in our midst who may be struggling.
- Online streaming of the services will continue, and we are looking at ways to enhance the quality. We recently received a \$1,000 grant from the West Ohio Conference to enhance our virtual worship capabilities, and we will be looking into how best to use these funds to make this happen. We are learning as quickly as possible!

Lay Leader Report

May 12, 2020

Worship: Drive-in worship service has been very successful, with more than 40 cars in the three services held. We are learning as we go, and would like to thank Debbie Alexander, Mark Ward, Carl Heismann, Denny Greider and Eddy Sellers for their help each week with logistics and technology.



(Drive-In Worship Service - Additional Photos on Page 5)

West Ohio Conference Grant: Thank you to Dee Sellers for applying for a grant for us to enhance our virtual worship service. While we did not get the full \$5,000 for which we applied, we did receive a \$1,000 grant. We will form a group of people to look at how best to use the funds to enhance the quality of our online services.

Online service streaming: We are continuing with Facebook Live streaming, and I have added a YouTube channel for Christ Church. The YouTube channel is not live, but I will be uploading the service to it each Sunday as another avenue for viewing our services. I have asked Jeff Layne to add a link to our website for YouTube.

Online donation services: West Ohio Conference has set up an online donation service for all churches in the conference to use to promote giving from home. This can be used by members as well as anyone who might happen to view our service and want to give. Links for the donation site are on our Facebook page and website. This service is provided at no cost to us.

One Call Now has been set up and is operational. If anyone is not receiving the phone calls, please let Julie or me know. If someone chooses not to receive the calls, they can also let us know and we will remove them from the list. I still need to train those with subgroups (Sally-Admin Team, Dee-UMW and Finance, among others) to be able to use the system.

The worship committee also met and after reviewing an article regarding safeguards for worship services once we return to the building developed a plan for worship in the building when it is deemed appropriate to return. *(See “Plan for Worship in Building” printed to the left of this report.)*

Blessings,
Jane Tipton

Photos from Drive-In Services . . .



Prayer of Agreement (Submitted by Katherine Johnson)

As a child of the most High God, and as a believer in Jesus Christ, I take authority that is given me. And I come against every act of violence, whether planned or unplanned, by terrorist groups, hate groups, or wicked people. Any form of evil or injustice, we will not tolerate.

So, therefore, we command the Hosts of Heaven to go forth right now to expose every act of injustice and every wicked group working on the side of darkness. Expose where they are - the hidden places, the hidden plans, the hidden agendas, and the evil people who pay groups to carry out their violent plans.

Expose everyone that they may be found out and taken down. May there be no place for them to hide, and may they have no power because we shred the platforms that have been built in the spirit realm.

Go hosts. Pull down every wicked thought, plan or acts of violence being committed now or everyday in the next ten weeks. We want those plans crushed and pushed back. We say this with authority and dominion. Go Hosts. Make toast of the enemy and every violent group operating in both the spirit and natural realms.

We give permission and command this be carried out in the name of Jesus. The Name that is above every name. The Name that Satan and his minions tremble under.

It will be heard on the news, on the Web, and seen in the newspapers. The words that are flying around now will not be the evil bragging of the enemy, but justice and liberty be taken against all the groups and individuals. Go into every state and into every country and pull down the plans of the enemy. Burn every plot/plan in Jesus' name.

- I bind the principalities and powers in my region in the name of Jesus. **(Ephesians 6:12)**
- Lord, release your warrior angels to defeat the demonic princes. **(Daniel 10:10)**
- Bring the iniquity of every profane prince to an end and remove the diadem from his head. **(Ezekiel 21:25-26)**
- I bind the prince of the air in the name of Jesus. **(Ephesians 2:2)**
- I declare that Jesus rules over our nation in righteousness. **(Isaiah 32:1)**
- I declare that the glory of the Lord be revealed to my nation and that all the inhabitants will see it. **(Isaiah 40:5)**
- Let the wicked be rooted out of our land. **(Proverbs 2:22)**

So be it. We give a praise of Hallelujah!



Dear Church Family,

Thank you so much for your prayers, visits and goodies of the last six months. I have really had a lot of pain and still do with sciatica and the death of my daughter-in-law. Things are bad for all of us now due to the latest news. Stay well and know God is in control - and He loves us. I miss you and my seat.

Love,
Norma Meece
3-23-2020

I would like to thank everyone for their phone calls, cards, notes and prayers. All of us here at Bickford have been quarantined in our building with no visitors for almost 3 months. Just last week we were able to go outside and have scheduled visits with our families. You don't know how good it feels to get outside and see my family after being in our rooms for so long. Again, thank you.

Minnie Watt

PICTORIAL DIRECTORY UPDATE . . .

Many have been asking about the status of our new pictorial directory, and so we share this update. Pictures for the activity pages are currently being gathered. Once the directory has been fully assembled, proofed, and printed, it is our hope that copies of the new directory will be available for distribution by the end of August. Thank you for your patience!



God has blessed Christ Church with a \$5,000 grant award from the Middletown Community Foundation to be used to create **SMILE Closets** in two more elementary schools in Middletown. For the last five years we have provided supplies for a closet at Creekview Elementary which has included lice kits, coats, mittens, gloves, pants, shirts, shoes, socks and personal hygiene items such as toothpaste/ toothbrushes. Next school year we will now be able to provide similar supplies for **SMILE Closets** at Central Academy and Mayfield schools to help more children in our community. God is good all the time!

**Church Meeting
Sunday, July 12**

(Immediately Following Morning Worship)

This will be a time of sharing about our . . .

**Church Finances
Ministry Plans for Christ Church**

Financial Update . . .

Operational

	<u>YTD May 2020</u>	<u>Budget YTD May 2020</u>	<u>YTD May 2019</u>
Income	\$104,769	\$ 96,339	\$102,889
Expenses	<u>(\$108,751)</u>	<u>(\$117,318)</u>	<u>\$116,412</u>
Net Income/(Loss)	(\$ 3,982)	(\$ 20,979)	(\$ 13,523)
Transfer of Reserve	<u>(\$ 10,000)</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Adjusted (Loss)	(\$ 13,982)	(\$ 20,979)	(\$ 13,523)

Connectional to District and Conference

Paid	\$ 1,089
Full Yr Amt Owed	\$ 28,492

Notes: The first set of numbers above includes our general operating fund only. Connectional has been excluded as has the mortgage since the building has been paid off.

The year-to-date numbers for May include a reported loss of almost \$4,000 and below that reported loss is \$10,000 from reserved funds used to keep cash in the bank on the positive side. If income was sufficient to meet expenses, then using reserves would not have been necessary. In terms of expenses, they are favorable due primarily to the building being closed in April and May due to Covid-19 (reduced air/ heat, water, etc.)

At the beginning of 2020, the annual budget reflected a loss of almost \$40,000. With the closure of the building or minimal usage for several months, and receipt of a grant of \$3,500 for pastoral benefits and a \$30,800 Paycheck Protection Plan loan (*which should be forgiven and become a grant*) from the Small Business Administration to help small businesses navigate through Covid-19, the budgeted annual loss should be greatly reduced. These grants are one time only, however, so the remainder of this year's financial status will depend on individual giving to meet expenses.



**Thursday, July 16 at 10:00 am
New Life Center**

**Program Speaker will be Middletown City Council
Member Tal Moon**

All Are Invited!

Matthew 25 Ministries

In March, Matthew 25: Ministries began disaster relief efforts in response to the Covid-19 pandemic by assisting local partner organizations including nursing homes and assisted living facilities who are serving at-risk populations such as the elderly, the sick, and the impoverished. Matthew 25: Ministries has also been providing supplies and support to first responders, medical facilities and hospitals with distributions of hand sanitizer, sanitizing wipes, paper products, masks and other items desperately needed at this time.

"Today our home health care agency received a great blessing from Matthew 25: Ministries and I just want everyone to know that because of all the supplies we received our nurses, therapists and home health aides can continue to care for our community." Local Partner



Christ Church continues to collect pill bottles to support Matthew 25: Ministries which can be left in the red container on top of the filing cabinet in the library.



Love. Grow. Serve.

Our Friends at First Christian Church have planted a **Feed My Sheep** community garden to help provide fresh vegetables to those in need in our community. The garden is planted and ready to grow! Volunteers are now needed to help keep the garden weeded throughout the summer. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Jane Tipton at (513) 292-1240. First Christian Church will be putting together a volunteer schedule, and Jane will communicate directly with volunteers from Christ Church as to the specific times you are scheduled. Thank you.

LOVE PACKAGES

Stephen J. Schmidt and his wife started **Love Packages** in the summer of 1975 in their basement in Butler, Illinois. *"God spoke to me as clearly as could be."* That summer God showed Stephen the abundance of Christian literature that he had at his disposal and the tremendous lack of literature in third world nations. Not realizing that everyone was as wasteful as he was, Stephen began to send excess literature overseas. The first year they shipped 60 boxes of literature to missionaries in four countries. Soon the word spread and friends started bringing their excess literature to them for shipment overseas. They then began receiving literature by mail from all over the United States. In 1976 they shipped 3.5 tons; and **their goal for 2020 is 2,000 tons.** **Love Packages** currently ships approximately 1,000 tons annually and has served 119 countries.

Statistically, every piece of literature will be read by an average of 20 people. Each container has at least 1 million pieces, so the shipment of literature has the potential to reach 20 million people every time **Love Packages** sends a container. **Love Packages** sends 20-foot, ocean-going containers to port cities around the world. These locations act as distribution points and have the capability to distribute these materials to thousands of churches overseas.

Love Packages now has facilities in Butler, Illinois and Decatur, Alabama. The sorting and packing are done by volunteers at both of these locations.

Christ Church has been actively involved with **Love Packages** for several years. We collect religious material, new and used, which is picked up by **Love Packages** volunteers from New Freedom Church in Lebanon, Ohio. As of February 2020, Christ Church has donated 1,159.8 pounds to Love Packages. Your donations can continue to be left in the red container on the floor underneath the mail slots in the library. Thank you.

July Birthdays

- 2 Shirley Morris
- 5 Michael Miller
- 6 Donna Phillips
Zelda Stephenson
- 7 Margaret Henderson
Carolyn Lacey
Marilyn Minor
- 8 Jeff Layne
Carol O'Connor
- 11 Norman Gibbs
- 15 Alice Bradshaw
Sandy Luksic
- 16 Cindy Buckey
Denny Luksic
- 19 Pam Cole
- 21 Karen Gibbs
- 28 Virginia Stoops
- 30 Suzanne Hawkins
- 31 Jim Mann

August Birthdays

- 2 Carolyn Kinslow
- 5 Tommy Tipton
- 6 Urith Ellen Thompson
- 10 Robert Gast
- 12 Bill McCall
- 14 Braden Martin
- 17 Kim Flesher
- 19 Richard Owen
- 21 Linda Barton
- 27 Barbara Langworthy
- 28 Diana Hayes
Nancy Karnes

Congratulations to . . .

Ben and Sarah Thaeler (Parents), David and Debbie Thaeler (Grandparents) and Roberta Thaeler (Great-Grandmother) on the birth of **Wesley Arthur David Thaeler** on March 11, 2020.

With Sympathy

Pat Anthony and family upon the death of her sister, Carole Robinson, on February 22.

Alice Bradshaw and family upon the death of her son-in-law, Steven Schraub, on April 4.

Sue Hounshell, Kay Hounshell and family upon the death of Sue's husband, Howard Hounshell, on April 9.

Dorie Kirkland and family upon the death of her husband, David Kirkland, on May 7.

The family Linda Beekman who passed away on May 23.

Carol O'Connor and family upon the death of her husband, Tim O'Connor, on May 26.

Joy Michael and family upon the death of her husband, Wally Michael, on June 3.

David and Nancy Brown and family upon the death of David's brother, Philip Brown, on June 14.

Anniversaries

July

- 4 Tom and Jane Tipton
- 6 Larry and Lynda Banks
Jim and Cindy Buckey
- 15 Ron and Shirley Cox
- 16 Don and Teresa Dean
Jerry and Linda Frechette
Jeff and Janet Layne
- 21 Jack and Sue Myers

August

- 3 Jim and Brenda Mann
- 5 Denny and Sandy Luksic
Walker and Sally Williamson
- 8 Michael and Teresa Banks
- 12 Richard and Bobette Owen
- 15 Glen and Kim Swiger
- 18 Robert and Mallory Hicks
- 21 David and Barbara Martin
- 23 Rex and Debbie Lawson
- 28 David and Gerri Teeters

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Salvation Army Food Pantry

During this time of Covid-19, the Salvation Army Food Pantry has stepped up to meet the needs of the less fortunate in our community. Under normal circumstances, the pantry serves about 400 households a month. During April and May, however, almost 2,000 households were given food assistance!

Normal distribution methods were waived by the state and Shared Harvest as 40 pound boxes of food were pre-packed and handed out the back door of the pantry. In addition to boxes of non-perishable items, families were given frozen meat items as well. In total, over 100,000 pounds of food were distributed over the 2-month period.

All of this took a lot of work by many volunteers. In total, 550 volunteer hours were logged. Seventy percent of those volunteer hours were provided by Christ Church members.

Thank you to all who gave time, money and food and those who remembered the less fortunate in our community in your prayers.

Women's Hope Center

The United Methodist Women will once again be putting together kits for women as they leave the Women's Hope Center in Middletown and integrate back into the community.

Donations are needed to help the UMW prepare these kits. Specific items needed include: bath towels and washcloths, twin bed sheets, Windex, Dow bathroom cleaner and laundry detergent.

The UMW will be putting these kits together on Thursday, August 20, so your donations are needed before that date. Items can be left in Room 118B and marked "UMW."

Thank you.