

October/November 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*
Room 117: *ReachOut*

Sunday Youth Class

Room 4: Jr. High/Sr. High



Sunday Morning Worship Returns to the Sanctuary

On September 13 Sunday service returned to the sanctuary after a 6-month absence. As we continue to social distance, the sanctuary easily accommodates a maximum of 56 people which is more than adequate given our current attendance. Seating in the pews has been appropriately marked, sanitization and spraying of the sanctuary continues to be done between Sundays, and morning offerings can be dropped in the boxes at the door. And we, of course, continue to encourage everyone to *please* wear a face mask out of consideration for others.

Sunday School Classes Resume October 4

Adult Sunday School classes are resuming on October 4 at 9:00 am. The class locations are as follows:

Calvary - Room 113
ReachOut - Room 117
Searchers - Room 118
Sojourners - Room 115

Social distancing will be observed and face masks are strongly encouraged.

CHURCH CONFERENCE

**Sunday, October 25
at 4:00 pm
Rev. John Wagner presiding**

Church Conference is a yearly event that all are welcome to attend. However, only members of Christ Church will have a voice and be able to vote on the important matters placed before the conference.

Letter from the Pastor



My beloved Parishioners,

To all who read these pages, I greet you in the name of our Liberating Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. I have chosen to use my pastoral page to pen a message which weighs very heavily on my heart.

This has been one of the most challenging six months of ministry in my 35 years of service in the West Ohio Conference.

The pandemic did not catch some of us by surprise. The Almighty God revealed years ago that our lives were about to be changed forever. The life we have known and experienced as Americans would no longer be the same. This warning was given from the pulpit many Sundays.

“When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command the locust to devour the land, or send pestilence among **my** people, ¹⁴ if **my** people who are called by **my** name 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)

In my sermon last week, I spoke about storms. Why are we experiencing so many storms? We are facing economic storms, moral storms, physical storms, spiritual storms, chaos, hatred, racism, sexism and storms of fear. I am convinced that God is speaking to us in the midst of all these storms, but are we listening to Him? When we reflect on all that has happened in the last six months, it should raise our consciousness. Is there a Word from the Lord in the midst of all the storms?

We are promised healing but we have defiled the house of the Lord. I believe repentance, not healing, needs to be our focus.

God is a good God. He will use this contagion for His purposes. He will use it! I keep seeing and hearing how He’s using it! Families are coming together. People are

reaching out to each other with intentionality and love. People are helping one another. Social distancing has brought a lot of good attention to our need to connect with people. And people are connecting!

Suffering, discomfort, and fear are things that will drive people to seek God. Past experiences have taught us that people will seek Him because they have nothing else. When we are flat on our backs, there no place to look but up.

I pray that we as Christians would stop asking for peace and comfort and healing, and start asking for the conviction of God to overcome us that we would repent of our sins and live as Christ: sacrificing our own comfort that those who are lost may be found.

I believe that Jesus Christ is coming soon to reclaim and rebuild His Kingdom. Our focus should be praying for a deeper and personal relationship with Jesus. **We need to give up this love for worldly freedom and arrogance.** My personal prayer to God is, “Lord, help me to withstand whatever pain, discomfort or stress that you will use to give others one more chance to accept you as Lord and Savior.”

My concern is, will the church be ready to minister when people come seeking answers and hope. We spend so much of our time and energy dealing with internal conflict in the church that we are left with very little energy to vitalize our ministries.

Jesus Christ established His church to love, serve, magnify and glorify God in all actions, ministries, meetings and life. God will fulfill His purpose in the midst of trials and tribulations.

Finally, my brothers and sisters, brace yourself for what is about to take place in November. Know who you are in Jesus Christ. Stay in the Word of God, pray and fast for strength. This election will be beyond any human understanding. All signs will point to one thing, but the outcome will be entirely different. Keep the faith.

Prayerfully,

Pastor Dixon



SERVING THE HOMELESS WILL BE DIFFERENT THIS WINTER

SHALOM has been serving the homeless and less fortunate in Middletown during the winter months for the last 18 years, however, this winter will be different because of the Covid-19 virus. After much prayer and discussions with health care professionals, SHALOM has determined that they will be unable to safely serve the homeless this winter and has cancelled this year's hosting schedule. SHALOM's Bill Fugate writes: *"Many of our volunteers are included in the most at risk groups for the virus that has affected not only our local communities but our entire world. This decision (to cancel this winter's hosting schedule) has been made to help protect all of our wonderful host churches who have faithfully opened their doors and facilities to the homeless for so many years. The health, safety and welfare of our volunteers and churches has always been a top priority of SHALOM and will always continue to be in the future. SHALOM will still be available to assist and serve those in need this winter in different forms as long as we can safely do so."*

Please keep the homeless and SHALOM in your prayers as SHALOM continues to do everything possible to assist and serve those most vulnerable and in need during this pandemic.



Upcoming Events

Thursday, October 15, 2020 - Business Meeting
 2021 Local and District Pledging
 Planning for 2021
 10:00 am in Room 113

Thursday, November 19, 2020
 Program Speaker: Director of Hope House Center
 for Women and Children
 10:00 am in Room 113

Thursday, December 3, 2020
 Christmas Party
 Heritage Green Clubhouse
 416 Heritage Green Drive, Monroe
 11:30 am



NORTHSTAR
 Classical School

School Year Begins In Person

Northstar opened its doors for its second academic year with schooling, spirituality and safety at its core. This second year of a two-year contract has nine teachers, one administrator, a communications director, and continuing schooling for 47 students from pre-kindergarten through fourth grades. Temperature checks, masks, air purifiers and remaining separate from Wesley Community Services and Christ Church to insure social distancing are going well. A three-year contract is currently in review to continue the partnership from August 2021 through May 2024, with a tentative fee structure continuing through May 2026 as Northstar continues to expand by offering schooling through the eighth grade.

PICTORIAL DIRECTORY UPDATE . . .

We are excited to report that the proof book for the new church directory was returned to Universal Directories for correction and print in mid-September. We anticipate that the new directory will be available for distribution in early to mid-October. Thank you all for your patience.



Berns Gift Cards are available for purchase from the United Methodist Women

Cards are \$25 (with \$5 from each card sold returned to the UMW)

Cards can be purchased from Pam Cole (513-422-2989)



2020 West Ohio Conference Annual Session Summary

(By Amy Graham and Kay Panovec)

The 51st session of the West Ohio Annual Conference was a virtual gathering of nearly 1,600 clergy and lay members. Bishop Gregory V. Palmer presided over the conference under the theme, "Be Not Afraid, God Is With Us." Using the 23rd chapter of Revelation, Bishop Palmer preached about the uncertain times facing our nation, world and global church. *"In spite of the chaos;*

in spite of the wars; in spite of the rumors of war; in spite of the repression and suppression; in spite of tribalism; in spite of animus; in spite of our enmity; in spite of our alienation, God says, 'I'm going to make a home among you.' What a God! God does not abandon us. God is with us," Palmer said.

Mitchell Harper and Shannon Spencer were affirmed as conference lay leaders for the 2021-24 quadrennium. Their work will focus on building relationships and sharing Christ's love throughout the conference.

Tracy Chambers will continue at Director of Lay Servant Ministries for another four-year term. A complete list of committees and leadership teams may be found at westohioumc.org.

Bishop Palmer commissioned two West Ohio laywomen, Katelin Hansen and Kristyl Shoaf, as deaconesses. The order of the deaconess is for laity called by God to a full-time vocation in ministries of love, justice and service.

Bishop Palmer commissioned one associate member, two provisional deacons and six provisional elders. He ordained four deacons and eight elders.

Other Business Included:

The three recommendations before the annual conference passed with overwhelming support.

Recommendation #1 – 2021 Budget

- In 2020, we declare clergy benefits fully funded. For the first time, perhaps since the 1969 merger, we will not be apportioning for clergy benefits.
- The United Methodist Foundation of West Ohio, created earlier in 2020, replaces the Council on Development. The Foundation is already on its way to self-sufficiency.
- Because of the above and other efficiencies, West Ohio will apportion \$ 15,660,000, which includes General Church Connectional Support. This represents a 6% reduction.

Recommendation #2– Pension and Health Benefits

- Clergy serving at least half time will be eligible for the Clergy Retirement Security Plan (CRSP).
- The Past Service Rate (PSR) for pre-1982 plan participants remains unchanged at \$611.

Recommendation #3 –Commission on Equitable Compensation

- Minimum salaries for clergy will increase at a rate of 2%. The committee is aware the cost of housing and clergy benefits is increasing but understands the need to make sure clergy and their families are cared for.

The conference recognized the missional contributions of the Rev. Sue Nilson Kibbey and the Rev. Stan Ling. Nilson Kibbey will move into a new ministry setting at the end of the year. Ling will retire after serving the conference Council on Development and newly formed Foundation.

Membership stands at 140,309 and worship attendance at 84,629 with an additional 10,561 online worshippers and 2,440 professions of faith.

The 52nd session of the West Ohio Annual Conference is scheduled for June 6-10, 2021.

The High Calling of Servanthood

(By Dr. Charles Stanley)

The New Testament often calls believers "servants."

The books of Romans, Philippians, James, and Second Peter all begin with references to the writers being servants or bondservants of the Lord Jesus Christ. These early church leaders were following the example of our Savior, who was equal with God but humbled Himself and became a man (Phil. 2:5-11). In spite of His popularity, Christ never sought earthly power or position. Our Lord remained committed to offering Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. Jesus told His disciples, "Whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave." (Matt. 20:26-27).

Unfortunately, most Christians aren't interested in being servants. Our thoughts, actions, and even our prayers center around fulfilling *our* desires. Instead of serving others, we fight for the highest position or the most impressive title. The Bible clearly teaches that the way to true greatness is through serving Christ (John 12:26). We do that by genuinely and lovingly caring for other people. Biblical service can be defined as *a loving act performed in the power of the Holy Spirit to meet the temporal and spiritual needs of those around us*. Each of us must stop focusing on ourselves and generously meet the needs of others. If we do this without expecting recognition from people, Scripture promises that the Father will honor us.

Servanthood is God's work for every single believer.

All our actions should reflect the fact that Jesus is not only our Savior but the master of our lives. The apostle Paul called himself a bondservant, the slave with the lowest position in the house, whose tasks included washing the feet of any visitors to the home. James also called himself a bondservant. Although these men were leaders in the early church, they weren't concerned with titles but with serving their Savior. Salvation means more than forgiveness and the assurance of heaven; it means we are now servants of the living God. By actively serving Him here on earth, we are preparing for eternity with the Lord (Rev. 22:3).

It is how God carries out His work.

In John 14:11-14, Jesus told His disciples that they would do even greater works than He. Does that mean a human can do something more significant than Christ's death on the cross? No. But the Great Commission—to take the gospel to every living creature—is an impossible task, humanly speaking. It can only be fulfilled because the Holy Spirit equips us to share the message of salvation with the entire world. None of us know our maximum potential as followers of Christ. As we surrender our lives to the service of the most high God, He will honor our lives with true greatness.

Servanthood is essential to a believer's spiritual growth.

If you are not serving God in some fashion, you are not maturing spiritually. In every church, there are people who have talents, skills, or gifts but never use them for the work of the Lord. Ephesians 2:10 says, "We are His workmanship, created in

Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." We are not saved merely to be freed from guilt and sin but so that we will serve the Lord and others.

We should humbly seek to serve people with the attitude Christ had. Even when our giving is overlooked or taken for granted by everyone, our heavenly Father notices. Hebrews 6:10 says, "God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints." He will reward us for blessing other people.

It is the purpose for spiritual gifts.

Every believer has one or more spiritual gifts, and we are to use them to serve the body of Christ (1 Peter 4:10). That same attitude of humble service should extend outside the church as well. You may know people at work who are going through difficulty and hardship. Ask them, "Is there some way I can help? How can I serve you?" Opportunities to assist others are everywhere.

It is no assurance against conflict.

An attitude of service does not guarantee we will enjoy harmonious relationships. Paul and Barnabas disagreed about whether or not to take John Mark with them on the second missionary journey (Acts 15:36-38).

Those who serve the Lord aren't always popular. Some people may not like you, or they may falsely accuse you. When that happens, concentrate on maintaining a servant spirit and allow the Lord to handle the unfair criticism.

And don't leave a job or ministry position unless He tells you it's time to leave. Sometimes, the Lord will call you to stay where you are. Make a conscious choice to serve in that place no matter what. Genuine servants don't run when there is conflict.

To get through a difficult situation, remember that serving God means allowing Him to work in and through you—not striving to serve Him in your own strength. Also, whatever your job is, keep in mind that you are working for the Lord Jesus Christ (Col. 3:23). Finally, those who want to put God first must let go of selfishness. If you angrily decide to walk away from a position, you are serving yourself. Serving God means obeying His commands and trusting Him to take care of you despite hardship.

CONCLUSION:

Greatness is not found in a title, a salary, or a position of influence. True greatness is found in servanthood. We must be willing to seek the best for others rather than for ourselves. Jesus said, "If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him" (John 12:26).

Willingly meet the needs of others without looking for recognition from people. God's Word promises that He will honor your humility. And when believers finally realize that our calling is to serve—not seek our own interests—then we will have an irresistible impact on this world and everyone in it.

Fall Back Daylight Savings Time Ending

Don't forget to set your clocks back one hour before going to bed on Saturday, October 31



TRUNK OR TREAT

Halloween Trunk 'n Treat has been cancelled for this year in an effort to keep all who would have been involved safe.

MEETINGS IN CHURCH LIBRARY ARE NOT BEING PERMITTED

The size of our church library makes social distancing problematic. As a result, the decision has been made to not hold any meetings in the library for the remainder of 2020.

Pastor Dixon Reappointed to Christ Church

Following Annual Conference in September, we are pleased to announce that Pastor Dixon has been reappointed to Christ Church through this next conference year ending June 30, 2021.

Financial Update . . .

Operational

| | YTD AUG 2020 | Budget YTD AUG 2020 | YTD AUG 2019 |
|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Income | \$158,245 | \$149,241 | \$154,453 |
| Expenses | <u>(\$163,467)</u> | <u>(\$180,083)</u> | <u>(\$175,099)</u> |
| Net Income/(Loss) | (\$ 5,222) | (\$ 30,842) | (\$ 20,646) |
| Transfer of Reserve | <u>(\$ 10,000)</u> | 0 | 0 |
| Adjusted (Loss) | (\$ 15,222) | (\$ 30,842) | (\$ 20,646) |

Connectional to District and Conference

| | |
|------------------|-----------|
| Paid | \$ 2,178 |
| Full Yr Amt Owed | \$ 28,492 |

Notes: The first set of numbers above includes our general operating fund only. Connectional has been excluded.

The year-to-date numbers for August include a reported loss of over \$5,000. Below that reported loss, however, is the \$10,000 from reserved funds used to keep cash in the bank on the positive side so the actual income loss is over \$15,000.

Reported income for the current year exceeds budget and prior. However, approximately \$5,000 in income reported in August is from the pastoral benefit grant of \$3,500 and September's rent from Wesley Food and Northstar totaling approximately \$1,400.

In terms of expenses, they are favorable primarily due to the building closure and/or minimal usage since April due to Covid-19 (reduced air/heat, water, janitorial, etc.)

At the beginning of the year, the annual budget reflected a loss of almost \$40,000. With the reduced building expenses, the grant for pastoral benefits and the Payroll Protection Plan loan (*which should be forgiven and become a grant*), the budgeted loss should be reduced. These grants are one time only, however, so next year's income will not reflect such gifts.

Christmas Cookie Sale

The United Methodist Women will be selling homemade cookies the first weekend in December in time for the start of the Christmas season. The cookies will be boxed and will make a delicious gift for family and friends.



Happy 100th Birthday

Mary Jane Hummel

Mary Jane was born on September 28, 1920, at home in Middletown, Ohio. Her parents were Edward and Maude Setty Hummel. She is a lifelong resident of Middletown which makes her a walking encyclopedia of the last hundred years of Middletown.

Mary Jane was educated in the Middletown public schools, attending Jefferson and Maple Park Elementary, Roosevelt Jr. High and graduating from Middletown High School. She walked to school every day from first grade through high school graduation, and remembers having to cross railroad tracks in her trek to Roosevelt Jr. High. If a train was stopped on the track and in her way, she would crawl under the train to avoid being late for school.

She first worked for W.T. Grant Department Store and while many in her family believe she was born with a love for clothes and accessories shopping, especially pocketbooks, this may be where her love for such first developed. Mary Jane took business courses and left Grant's to go to work at Barnitz Bank where she remained until her retirement many years later. She was a member of WBAC (Women in Business), a professional outlet that afforded her many interesting activities and long friendships.

Besides work, Mary Jane has always been devoted to her family, providing excellent company to and care for her parents, and is still well loved by her niece, Joan Warstler Kruger, and her great- and great-great nieces and nephews. Her first great-great-great nephew was born in South Carolina in 2019. Additionally, Mary Jane has always loved to travel and still enjoys day trips to the country, particularly to visit the area around Peebles and Sinking Springs, Ohio, where the family had a country get-away for many years known affectionately as "The Farm." She also enjoys music and frequented concerts and plays in Middletown through the years, enjoying especially First Friday Concerts and similar events. Since quitting driving just a few years ago, she still participates in these interests through travel shows and can tell you quite a bit about who the best dancers are on "Dancing with the Stars."

Fun Facts:

Mary Jane remembers having chicken pox as a child and the doctor coming to the house to put a "Quarantine" sign on the front window.

Mary Jane didn't start driving until adulthood, taking a driver's training class, gaining a license and getting her first car at that time. She drove well into her 90's before giving it up and still misses it!

Her great-nieces and nephews remember how fun she was when they were children. She took them to see many movies at the theatre downtown. Her great-nieces and great-great nieces especially remember her great eye for fashion and her ability to pick out the best gifts, many of which became favorites of theirs as children.



Thank You

Thank you to my church family for all the glorious birthday wishes I received this year. Continued blessings to all.

Marilyn Minor

Thank you for all your prayers, phone calls and cards following the death of my sister. This outpouring of love was both comforting and a blessing.

Jack Achberger

Dear CUMC Friends: Thank you so much for your prayers, kind wishes, calls, thoughts and cards. Mary Alice and I truly appreciate your expressions of good will. I am recovering slowly but surely.

Bob Gast

Thank you for your cards and prayers following the death of David's brother, Philip. An outdoor celebration of life service was held on Saturday, June 27, at Cobblestone Church in Lebanon.

David and Nancy Brown

Thank you to our Christ Church family for all your prayers, cards and phone calls following the death of my mother, Amanda Lorig. We appreciated this very much.

David and Nancy Brown

Thank you for your monetary contributions to our "No Bake Bake Sale" fundraiser this year. We raised \$1,281 which will be used for missions within the church and in our community.

United Methodist Women

Dear Rev. Dixon and Church Members: Thank you for the use of your parking lot on Saturday, September 19, for our mum fundraiser. We appreciate your support.

*Mike Shaffer, Board President
Southwest Ohio Philharmonic*

Change in Guidelines for Member Use of Church Facility

At the September 8, 2020 meeting of the Administrative Board, the Board considered and approved the following changes to the guidelines for use of the church building by church members. There will continue to be no charge for use of the building, including set-up and tear-down, for funeral/celebration of life events by church and/or family members. There will now, however, be fees for all other events such as parties, family reunions, family dinners, etc. Specifically, an hourly fee of \$25 will be assessed for set-up and tear-down including time spent cleaning following an event. Additionally, if there is any damage done to church property during an event, the user (person requesting use of the space) will be required to pay for the cleaning/repair/replacement of the damaged property.

All requests for building usage will continue to be scheduled through the church office.

October Birthdays

- 3 Judy Crump
- 5 Bergit Clark
- 9 Joe Ditmyer
- 10 Debbie Alexander
- 11 Steve Dishun
- 14 Denny Greider
- 15 Jeanne Siewny
- 16 Rhonda Crider
- 20 Teresa Dean
- 21 Wilma Thompson
- Henrietta Witt
- 26 Chelsea Adams
- 28 Lynne Rentschler

Anniversaries

October

- 2 Jim and Gertie Schweitzer
- 14 Joe and Beth Ditmyer

November

- 3 Ward and Zelda Stephenson
- 16 George and Linda Knapp
- 17 Eddy and Deanna Sellers

November Birthdays

- 5 Jane Berns
- Debbie Lawson
- 8 David Martin
- 10 Barbara Strait
- 11 Mark Idle
- Robyn McCall
- 14 Becki Tolson
- 15 Jim Schweitzer
- 18 Kim Swiger
- 20 Jim Alexander
- 22 Jane Tipton
- 23 Becki Davis
- 27 Pat Anthony
- Donna Idle

With Heartfelt Sympathy

Connie and Phillip Young and family upon the death of Connie's father, James L. Stump, on June 1.

Jim and Brenda Mann and family upon the death of Jim's sister, Helen Mann, on June 24.

Jack and Jayne Achberger and family upon the death of Jack's sister, Elizabeth J. Slough, on July 31.

David and Nancy Brown and family upon the death of Nancy's mother, Amanda A. Lorig, on August 5.

Marilyn Minor, Wendy Minor and family upon the death of Marilyn's sister, Margaret A. Henderson, on August 30.

Patty Mendenhall and family upon the death of Patty's father, Lee Mendenhall, on September 22.

COLLEGE ADDRESSES NEEDED

If you have a child or grandchild in college currently and would like the church to reach out to them during this academic year, we would ask that you please share their name and address with us by contacting the church office at 422-7364. Thank you.

Reminder from the Finance Committee . . .

In an effort to help the Finance Committee effectively plan and properly manage the finances of the church, all purchases and/or expenditures first need the approval of the Finance Committee. All such requests can be submitted to Dee Sellers, Chairperson of the Finance Committee. Thank you.

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Middletown, OH 45044

Additional photos from Mary Jane's 100th birthday celebration . . .

