

First Christian Church

(Disciples of Christ)

33 N. Arlington Ave., Niles, OH 44446

News and Events Around
Your Church



Mission Statement:

We celebrate the Good News of Jesus Christ by witnessing, loving, growing, and serving from our doorsteps "to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

VOL. LXIV No. 9

September 27, 2017

Mark Twain once said, "History does not repeat itself, but it does rhyme." I have often seen that sentiment as a cautionary admonition to not repeat the mistakes of those who have come before us. But recently I have found hope in those words. Many of us within the church see flagging attendance, vacant church buildings, and a missing generation as a disturbing sign that points, at best, to a paradigm shift and at worst to the imminent demise of American Christianity. We often view these alarming trends as something that the community of Christ has never had to deal with and so we grope blindly for answers in this new territory. However, the wisdom of Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain's real name) points us to the truth that this is a cyclical trend. This has happened before.

My mind is drawn to our own unique history of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and to Cane Ridge, Kentucky. This site was the location of the largest camp revival in the history of the United States, and it was organized and led by a founder of our denomination and co-leader of the Restoration Movement, Barton Stone. The Restoration Movement, or the Stone-Campbell movement, took place during the Second Great Awakening. Three Great awakenings took place from a period that started in the early 1700's and continued through the middle of the following century. During this time Christianity grew rapidly and fervently in our country. Academic estimates of church affiliated Americans prior to the First Great Awakening have been placed from 5-25%. Think about this. At most, only one in four people were part of a church community, with other faiths being almost nonexistent. More likely, in the early 1700's, only one in twenty people were members of a faith community.

Currently, in our country, about 62 percent of Americans claim to be members of a church organization. At least, that's what Wikipedia tells me. And that doesn't even count the ever expanding and diversifying voice of religion in our modern society. This tells me, at least as far as the perseverance of the body of Christ is concerned; we are in an exponentially healthier place than we were four hundred years ago. Statistically speaking, we have moved from 1 in 20 people in Christian communities to more than 1 in 2. And that doesn't even count those folks from other faith traditions that are lending their voices to our song of love, peace, and hope!

Perhaps things look so alarming in Sunday morning sanctuaries across the country, simply because we are spread so thin. When I served the community of Lakewood, it seemed there was a church on every street corner, and most of those were struggling to stay open. Had we taken the adage of Mark Twain's into practice, we would have seen that a church building on every corner was not a sustainable concept. We would have realized that there would be cycles of growth and decline. Because we don't know the history of where we came from and what those before us have experienced, we were not prepared when things started to rhyme. So now we learn from those mistakes and we must face decisions that seem difficult in the short term. We face consolidations, empty buildings, and lonely church pews. But in the longer time span of the Community of Christ, this is nothing more than a blip on the radar.

Now, we have the opportunity to move back to what we should have been doing in the first place. Joining in community with those folks who are different than us. Joining in singing with people that have a different vocabulary, or perhaps even a different language than us. Moving into community with people that we have recently come to see as competition. Celebrating the reconciling ministry of Christ by practicing it with the myriad of diverse voices within our own faith tradition. In other words, being the body of Christ in a way that exemplifies what Paul wrote about to the church in Corinth, that we are one body with many members. And just as importantly, we are called to know our history. Not just of our local congregation or denomination, but rather the entire history of Christ's body in this world. In knowing how things have gone before, we will continue to preach and live out that message that Christ has given us. We can be released from our personal fears and realize again that we are called to be a people that spread hope, love, peace, and joy from our doorsteps to the ends of the earth.

Pastor Chris

'FROM BREAD & WINE TO FAITH & GIVING' is the theme for October Stewardship Month. Stewardship Sundays will be the Sundays of October 8, 15 and 22. Commitment Sunday will be October 29 with an All Church Potluck Dinner following worship. See attached Stewardship letter for more information. Commitment cards are also attached to make your commitments of time, talents and treasures to First Christian Church for 2018.

DIST. IV MEN'S FALL RALLY will be held Sunday, November 5 [here](#) at First Christian, from 3 to 6 p.m. Guest speaker will be Dan King, noted by Tom Brokaw as a member of the 'Greatest Generation' who flew in World War II as security for bombers. He also spent time in a POW camp in Germany. A sign-up sheet will be posted on the bulletin board by the parlor. We would like to have good participation for this event! Cost for the dinner is \$8.



**In
Mission**

'HELP MOVE THE YOUNGSTOWN RESCUE MISSION' BAKE AND CRAFT SALE will take place **this Sun. October 1** in the main hallway before and after church service hosted by Missions and Knotty Girls. All proceeds from both sales are going to the Youngstown Rescue Mission.

SERVING DINNER, MONTHLY, FOR THE YOUNGSTOWN FAMILY MISSION continues to be a successful project for First Christian. If you would like to help but are unable to serve, anyone can drop off a dessert or fresh fruit by 11am at the church the day we serve. Our friends at the mission really appreciate homemade cakes, pies, or cookies. Fresh fruit is something they can eat there or take with them for a snack. If you have been considering serving at the mission with us, contact Becky Carpenter. It's only 2 hours of your time and is very rewarding. Our next dinner is October 24 from 5 to 7 p.m.

THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE is presently seeking the names of qualified people to serve as elders, serving deacons, preparing deacons, and trustee with terms beginning January 2018. **If you would like to serve or to recommend someone for service, please submit names in writing to the church office as soon as possible.**

MISSIONS LUNCHEON OCTOBER 8 – a chicken finger/mac and cheese luncheon will be served by our Missions Committee on Sun., October 8 following worship in fellowship hall. Purchase your tickets by this Sunday, October 1.

WE EXTEND OUR SYMPATHY to Patricia Gerke and Howard Gerke in the passing of Patricia's husband and Howard's father, William Gerke, on September 7.

BIBLE STUDY begins a new focus starting Tues., October 3 at 7 pm. The curriculum will be emphasizing the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) history and policy.

DISCIPLES MEN GROUP YSU TAILGATE OCTOBER 14 at 4 p.m. **Registration and money is due THIS SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1.** See Rick Pressell or Dennis Havaich for tickets.

DISCIPLE WOMEN'S JAIL MINISTRY TEAM will be conducting worship services on the Mondays of October 9 and October 23 at 6:45 p.m. at the Trumbull County Jail.

UPCOMING YOUTH MEETINGS/ACTIVITIES:

CHI RHO YOUTH GROUP (grades 6-8) will meet this Sunday, October 1 following worship in fellowship hall.

CHRISTIAN YOUTH FELLOWSHIP (grades 9-12) will meet Sunday, October 8 following worship in the CYF Room. The group is planning a **SERVICE SCAVENGER HUNT** on Sunday, October 15 from 12 to 4 p.m. with dinner following at Stacy Gaugler's home. Thank you to the congregation for your support of CYF's luncheon held September 24. Proceeds totaled \$367.86 to be used towards a mission trip being planned for next year.

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS:

Oct. 3 Dennis Havaich	Oct. 13 Robert McCollum	Oct. 22 Faith Pressell	Oct. 26 James Minto
Oct. 4 Dennis Carpenter	Oct. 16 Rick Pressell	Oct. 23 Larry Hoffman	Oct. 27 Chuck Shonk
Oct. 10 Eileen Pressell	Oct. 19 Harold George	Oct. 23 Leianna Thomas	Oct. 28 Carol McCollum
Oct. 10 Kathy Sprague	Oct. 21 Rea Gaugler-Beuter	Oct. 23 Nancy Wick	
Oct. 12 Amanda Stonebraker	Oct. 21 Debby Havaich	Oct. 25 Bryce Kellerman	

KNOTTY GIRL QUILTERS will enjoy lunch Wed., Oct. 4 at 11:45 a.m. at Stonebridge and will quilt at the church from 1 to 4 p.m. on the lower level.

COMMUNITY MEALS WILL BE SERVED BY FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH DURING NOVEMBER. Meals will be served on the Thursdays of November 2, 9, 16 and 30. Monetary donations are being accepted for these meals. If you wish to contribute, make checks payable to First Christian Church labeled 'meals.'

A COLLEGE FUNDING 101 SEMINAR, hosted by Jim Fisher, will be held Wednesday, October 18 from 7:15 to 8:30 p.m. in the church parlor. See the attached invitation for details. RSVP by October 13 to Jim at 234.310.4410; 973.943.6574 or email Jim at jim.fisher@prudential.com.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE NILES FIRST CHRISTIAN MEN'S GOLF TEAM WHO ARE 2017 LEAGUE CHAMPS! Team members are: Joe Prox, Captain; Tom Bevilacqua, Gordie Britton, Dennis Carpenter, Jim Fisher, Howard Gerke, David Moore, Paul Sentgeorge, Pastor Chris Stark, and Donald Utterback.

PASTOR CHRIS STARK CONTACT INFO: cell phone 330.442.2558; email address pastorchrisstark@gmail.com.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER ITEMS is **Mon., October 23** by 11:30 a.m.



OCTOBER NEWSNOTES Week of Compassion designated for Texas flooding total received is \$435 Reconciliation Offering received to date totals \$35 Elders will meet this Sun., October 1 following worship in the library Disciples Men will meet this Sun., October 1 at 8 a.m. at Perkins Stewardship and Finance will meet Sunday, Oct. 8 at 9 a.m. TMH Psych Unit Worship Services will be held Sunday, October 8 and Sunday, October 29 at 2 p.m. Missions Committee will meet on Wed., Oct. 11 at 6:30 p.m. in the church parlor Lydia Circle ladies will meet at 7 p.m. on Wed., Oct. 11 in the church parlor Ohio Women's Ministry (OWM) is collecting macaroni and cheese for Niles Community Services during the month of October. Donations may be placed in the cabinet in the main hallway

NEWS & EVENTS
is a monthly publication of
First Christian Church, Niles, Ohio
330-652-5839 • www.firstchristianiles.org
Rev. Christopher Stark, Minister
Mrs. Carolyn Rossi, Secretary