

# Lamplighter

## *focus*

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | 3  
SEPTEMBER ISSUE 2017



## **Help Hurricane Harvey Survivors Through the Week of Compassion Offerings at FCC**

First Christian Church is giving prayerful, focused attention to the horrific conditions in Texas in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey. As of this writing, various news reports indicate there have been 18 hurricane-related deaths. In addition, unprecedented levels of flooding have forced 17,000 people into shelters and 3,500 people being rescued from the floodwaters. Numbers in all of these categories are expected to rise in the coming hours and days

We all are watching the news accounts of the devastation of Hurricane Harvey and wondering what we could do to help our sisters and brothers in Texas. Of course, we will pray for all who have been impacted by the winds and waters. As we pray, let us take a moment to donate money to our denomination's disaster relief ministry/fund, Week of Compassion. Through Week of Compassion, Disciples can help "alleviate the suffering of others through disaster response, humanitarian aid, sustainable development and the promotion of mission opportunities."

First Christian Church will raise a special Week of Compassion offering during worship on Sunday, September 3 and Sunday, September 10. Now if you will not be in worship on either of those days, we strongly encourage you to go to Week of Compassion's Facebook page or website (<http://www.weekofcompassion.org/>) and donate today, or bring your gift to the church office on Wednesday or Friday mornings. Whatever the size of your gift, know that compassion will be conveyed and lives will be enriched through it. Please give.

## **Church Events**

- **September 6, 13, 20, 27—  
9:30 a.m. Taize Prayer**
- **September 1, 8, 15, 22, 29—  
11 a.m. Bible Study**
- **RENEWED MIND Volunteer  
opportunity that continues**
- **Coming UP!!! October 21-  
22 130th Anniversary and  
Homecoming for First  
Christian Church**

# On Track with Pastor Jack

In August, my family and I were among the millions of people who took time out of their day to watch the solar eclipse. By many estimates, the 2017 solar eclipse was the most watched eclipse in history.

Now scientists everywhere warned the public over and over again that looking directly at the eclipse without protective eyewear would expose their eyes to harmful emissions from the sun, rays that could temporarily, if not permanently, damage their eyes.

Fortunately, protective eyewear was readily available to the public. Many libraries even made these valuable tools available free of charge. I was glad that my family and I received our protective eyewear and thus watched the spectacular eclipse while at the observatory on the campus of Bowling Green State University.

All of this begs this question: What harmful emissions are we being exposed to? The spectacle of white nationalists/supremacists marching in Charlottesville, Virginia, the on-again-off-again denunciation of this organized racial hate by our nation's leader, and racist graffiti right here in Findlay are just some of the harmful emissions that are part of our landscape.

However, I am so glad that God has given us protective eyewear that will enable us to avoid being intimidated by ignorance, and will keep us from being held hostage to hate. The protective eyewear is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Through Jesus Christ, we have vision that enables us to analyze and expose patterns and systems of hate, while resisting and dismantling them and ultimately replacing them with the love and justice values of Jesus Christ. By now we know that such work is not optional for Christians; it is essential.

No legitimate Christian group supports personal bigotry and systemic racism. However, what we also need to know is that Christian silence in the face of racism essentially gives permission for racial hate to exist. I am glad to know that First Christian Church, along with scores of other churches, understands that now is the time for the church to use its God-given protective eyewear, the gospel of Jesus Christ, in a comprehensive effort to expose and uproot racism and replace it with love and justice. We do not have to be Christian to oppose hate, but if we are Christian, we must oppose hate. We will not be silent! We will work with other Christians in putting on our protective eyewear and being proactive in spreading Christ's hate-blocking love. Amen.

## **Worship and Fellowship at Litzenberg Memorial Woods!**

Around 50 First Christian Church family and friends gathered for a magnificent time of worship and fellowship in the Barn at Litzenberg Memorial Woods on Sunday, August 30, 2017. Worship was energized by rich, joyful singing, spirited preaching, and participation in the Lord's Supper. After worship, everyone sat down to experience one of the finest potluck meals in the history of Christianity! (Ok, you get the point; it was a great meal!) We are thankful for all who attended the worship service and contributed to the wonderful array of food we enjoyed while at table with each other. Our gratitude is also expressed to those who planned our time at Litzenberg, set up the barn for worship, and stayed around to help clean up afterwards. This is an annual experience for our congregation, and 2017 did not disappoint!

## *Following God's Call*

To my Dearest Friends and Family of First Christian Church,

It is with a heavy heart that I need to inform you that my family and I are leaving First Christian Church. We have been feeling God's call pulling us away from our church home, and we have decided to follow it.

This is the hardest decision that I have had to make in my entire life; leaving the only church that I have ever known. The one that has been my place of worship for over 30 years. I was taught the true meaning of God's love here. I was baptized here. Spent my youth at Logos and Sunday youth group here. Was taught how to live with a servant's heart here. I grew up here, was married, faced family deaths, miscarriages, births and the dedications of my babies, all here at First Christian. I have felt the love, support, and prayers from my church family through all those milestones, and have made memories that will last a lifetime. I will cherish those memories more than I can possibly put into words.

I know how many positions are going to need filled, with all of us leaving, and what that means for those we are leaving behind. For that I am truly sorry, from the bottom of my heart. But I can't ignore God's call any longer. I need to see where this road He has laid before us leads. I don't know if our leaving is meant to be temporary, or permanent. But it will be a prayerful journey, listening to God as we walk along.

We will truly miss everyone at First Christian, and will continue to pray for the growth, outreach, and mission of the church to succeed. Thank you for your support and prayers.

In His Love, *Patty Koehler*

## **Renewed Mind Volunteer opportunity**

**First Christian Church is underway with a new volunteer mission of opportunity and we need YOUR help!**

**Volunteers will take** *(we can use more volunteers at 10 to haul the cooler, please lend a hand and help)* **a cooler of water and approximately 15-20 healthy snacks to the Renewed Mind main office each Wednesday/Friday morning around 10 am.**

**Snacks may be of your choosing for the day you volunteer. Trying to keep them somewhat healthy. We have used small variety bags of chips, fruit cups, granola bars, cookies, bars, etc.**

**OR**

**YOU MAY SIMPLY PROVIDE YOUR DELIVERY SERVICES ONLY.**

**Please help us share God's Word through giving of our time and gifts to those who are finding their faith. See sign up sheets as you enter!**



# Event Reminders

## **First Christian Church Homecoming Set for October 21 and 22, 2017!**

Calling all current, past and future members of our beloved First Christian Church! We are pleased to invite you to Homecoming Weekend with First Christian Church, October 21 and 22, 2017. During Homecoming Weekend, we will reunite with past FCC members, and deepen relationships with current and future church members. We will experience awesome worship services, meals, fellowship and hands-on mission involvement, right here in Findlay! Watch for more details and updates, and plan to be part of First Christian Church Homecoming 2017!

## **Beginning Tuesday, September 12, Pastor Jack will present, "Tea and Talk with Pastor Jack."**

This weekly gathering will be a time for conversation, fellowship, storytelling, and occasional book and movie discussions. We want everyone from the community and congregation to come! Tea and Talk will take place inside the church's sanctuary and will begin at 2pm and end around 4pm. Everyone is invited to come. Feel free to share a baked dish or snack food if you like. If you've got the time, we'll have the tea!

## **New Weekly Bible Study for FCC and Community Members!**

On Wednesday, September 13 at 6:30pm, Pastor Jack will launch weekly Bible Study sessions for FCC members and people in our surrounding areas. Gathering in the church's sanctuary, these weekly Bible Study sessions will help people grow closer to God, understand more of God's vision for humanity as expressed through Jesus Christ, and deepen their commitment to live more faithfully and proactively as agents of God's hope in the world. Each session will last for one hour. Bring a Bible, a sandwich, and an open heart and mind as together we grow in our faith and witness!

# Word of Devotion

Written by **Emily Heath**

*Therefore, pick up the full armor of God so that you can stand your ground on the evil day and after you have done everything possible to still stand. - Ephesians 6:13*

If you're like me, Scripture passages about war and armor are difficult. I don't like the idea of violence. I don't want to encourage militaristic ways of looking at the world, and I especially don't want to perpetuate some idea that Christians need to arm ourselves against others. Every time I read this Scripture, though, I wrestle between these fears and something else: hope.

This is sometimes not an easy world if you try to be a person of integrity, no matter what your faith. You will withstand attacks on your conscience daily. You will be told that you should change yourself or your beliefs in order to get ahead. You will be asked to compromise on what is right with the promise that you can repair any wrongs somewhere down the line.

This is not a battle of our own choosing, but it is one from which we sometimes simply cannot steer clear. So, as I picture someone getting ready to go out into the world to start their day, someone who for whatever reason will face anger, pressure, or manipulation from others, I think about what it means to put on just enough armor to be able to walk through the arrows untouched.

So, put on the belt of truth and the breastplate of justice. Tie on your shoes of peace. Put a shield of faith out in front of you to block those arrows. Put on the helmet of your salvation. Carry a sword of the Spirit that will cut a path for you on those days that you have to forge your own way in the wilderness. You are covered in an armor that is far stronger than any that could be forged by our own hands. It's there not to harm others, but to keep you going when you need it the most.

## **Prayer**

God, on the days when the arrows fall all around me, be my armor. Amen.



# Birthday's and Anniversary's

## **September Birthdays**



9/2 Cindi Beltz

9/8 Melissa Drown

9/15 Amanda Reynolds

9/14 Natalie Williamson

9/19 Robin Kretzinger



## **September Anniversaries**

9/3 Bill & Sharon Booher

9/11 Andy & Patty Koehler



## Prayers/Concerns

- ◆ For those with cancer and undergoing Cancer Treatment: \*Ray Neall, \*Fred Kretzinger
- ◆ For those with various health issues and concerns: \*Jack (brother-in-law of Charlotte Ballard), \*Pat Sharinghouse, \*Nancy Peters, \* Nancy LaRoche, \*Jack Cowart (brother-in-law of Charlotte Ballard), \*Donna Foreman, \*Barbara England, \*Kathleen Schaeffer, \*Janet Powell, \*Karol Smith,, \*Mary Thompson, \*Joe Brinkman
- ◆ Prayers for the families upon the recent death of loved ones, Pastor Jack and Gene Weist.
- ◆ Prayers for peace and just solutions to conflicts, natural disasters, polarizing, police/citizen relationships, terrorism around the world, refugees fleeing and trying to find new host/home countries, and healing of political fractures in our country
- ◆ For our members of this congregation being called to fill positions within our church.
- ◆ For those seeking employment.
- ◆ For those who are having trouble making ends meet
- ◆ For those who are in physical or emotional pain
- ◆ For our First Christian Church, homebound members

**Sharing brings Joy**

**To Us. To Others. To God**

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**DATED MATERIAL - PLEASE DELIVER**

**Sunday Schedule**

**9:30 AM Sunday School**

**10:30 a.m. Worship Service**

**Followed by Fellowship-Coffee Hour**

*First Christian Church is joyfully affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) US and Canada. [www.disciples.org](http://www.disciples.org). We welcome all people whatever their gender identification, race, culture, ethnic background, sexual orientation, economic circumstance, family configuration, or difference in ability into full participation in the life, leadership, and employment of First Christian Church.*

## **FCC Participates in Anti-Hate Rally in Findlay**

First Christian Church was visible and vocal during the "Anti Hate" rally at Riverside Park on Sunday afternoon, August 30, 2017. The gathering was organized by the Findlay Civil Rights Alliance and was designed to counter the hate-laced messages and violence from alt-right, white supremacist and neo-nazi proponents who marched in Charlottesville, VA on August 12. One nazi-influenced attendee from Northwest Ohio drove his car through a crowd of counter protesters, killing 32-year-old peace/justice activist, Heather D. Heyer, and seriously injuring several others. Several days later, racist graffiti was painted on a wall at Findlay's Riverside Park. These two occurrences led the Findlay Civil Rights Alliance to plan the rally. Speakers included Mallie Mae and Katie Finneran of the Alliance, Gabriel Wade of Toledo, Marc Washington and Jerome Gray of Findlay's Black Heritage Library and Multicultural Center, and our own Pastor Jack Sullivan, Jr. "It was my honor to represent our faith our church's mission statement while serving as speaker during the rally," said Pastor Jack. Elders Linda Pitkin, Robin Kretzinger and Beth Reynolds represented the church as well. "Clearly there is much more that we as a church and community must do to counter the influence and actions of white supremacy, bigotry and hate with influential messages and actions rooted in love, justice and equality," said Pastor Jack. "For us, Sunday afternoon was more than a moment; it was the beginning of a local movement for justice, peace and goodwill, one in which we all must participate."