

THE FIRST WORD



First Christian Church

Vol. 25

Advent 2019

From your Pastor

Dear Members and Friends,

For those who haven't heard, we have recently experienced a Theological incident of near Biblical proportions.

While mowing, George noticed what appeared to be the Ohio River flowing from the front porch of our house. (yes, I am using a bit of hyperbole here) Upon inspection, he discovered that a water line in the upstairs bathroom had broken, and water flowed unchecked throughout the house for at least 2 days. The damage to the house and contents was severe, to say the least. (Hence, my "near Biblical proportions" statement above.)

Please be assured that the insurance company, adjustors, and all appropriate people have been contacted. The severity of the damage was so extreme that the house will be torn down and removed in the near future.

Because of the danger of falling ceilings, crumbling walls, mold, mildew, and asbestos we have been advised not to enter the house and that all items stored will be considered a total loss. A list of lost items has been made and sent to the insurance company. Some items can be replaced, but sadly, others cannot.

Earlier I called this a "Theological incident". May I explain with a quote from Jesus in Matthew 6: 19-21. "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth, rust (and water) destroy. But store up for yourselves treasures in Heaven. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." I think these words speak for themselves but they also speak directly to us. My question to you is, will we lament over lost items or will we choose to see God's hand at work in our lives?

My prayer is that we may see this not as something negative, but as a positive sign that God has a plan for us, is clearing a new path for us, is preparing us for something new, something exciting, and something we can't even imagine. And that this plan has nothing to do with "things", but has everything to do with expanding His Kingdom on earth, and storing up treasures in Heaven.

In His Peace,

Rich



Scriptures For Thanksgiving and All December

Nov. 24th Philippians 4: 4-9 'Give Thanks'

Dec. 1st Advent begins

Matt. 24: 36-44 'I Wonder As I Wander'

Dec. 8th Isaiah 11: 1-10 'The Promise of the Ages'

Dec. 15th Luke 1: 46b-55 'He Surely Could Have Any Wee Thing'

Dec. 22nd Matt. 1: 18-25 'When Mary Birthed Jesus'

Dec. 24th Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Gathering 6:00 Service 7:00

(based on Isaiah 9: 1-8 plus selected readings, solos, and carol singing.)

Dec. 29th Matthew 2: 1-12 'Honoring the King'

DECORATING FOR CHRISTMAS

Mark your calendars - Sunday, Nov. 24th after our service we will decorate our sanctuary for the Advent and Christmas Season. A light lunch and snacks will be provided.



DEVOTIONAL BOOK FOR ADVENT

We found a wonderful devotional book called "I Wonder As I Wonder". It is based on the beautiful Appalachian Carol of the same name. Be sure to pick up a copy to help you discover the "Wonder" of the life changing journey toward Bethlehem.



Please note !!



Pastor Rich has office hours on **Tuesdays - 10:00 to 2:00**. You can also call the office if you need a different time to meet with him. 419-289-7439

Just a reminder!

As a reminder, we are now locking our two doors at the south end of the church during our service on Sunday morning. You will need to use the sanctuary entrance if you arrive after 10:30.

CROP WALK

This year's walk was a great success! 55 walkers, 10 Congregations and over \$8,100 was raised. A special thank you goes to Dick and Lennie Reich for all their hard work and leadership in representing our congregation.

OUR CHURCH HAPPENINGS!



ALL CHURCH ANNUAL MEETING

Our Slate of Officers and our Budget for 2020 will be voted on December 8th. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend. The meeting will be immediately following worship.

SHUT IN GIFT BAGS

We will be delivering gifts to our Shut-ins and Homebound on Sunday, December 22nd. Check out the list of items needed and please sign up for what you will be bringing. We will be making up 16 to possibly 20 gift bags.

IN LIEU OF POINSETTIAS



Your donations for our 2019 Christmas (in lieu of flowers) will be going to the Ashland Pregnancy and Care Center. The monies donated will be going for newborn clothing, diapers and wipes. Watch for the inserts in the bulletin for "In Memory or In Honor of".

CHURCH WORLD SERVICE

During October we raised \$2040.00 for Blankets and Hygiene Kits for the Bahamas Disaster Relief. Well Done Good and Faithful Servants!

SHAKESPEARE

The Advanced English Department of Ashland High School will again be using our building December 5th to study the life and writing of William Shakespeare.

PATHWAYS HOSPICE



December 12th @ 7:00 p.m. here at FCC, there will be a beautiful Remembrance Service given by Pathways Hospice of Ashland County. All are welcome to honor the memory of a friend or loved one.



Warm the hearts (and toes) of local seniors.

SOCKS FOR SENIORS

The Area Agency on Aging and We ACT are sponsoring a Socks for Seniors sock drive for residents of our local nursing homes! Donate a pair (or two!) of new socks and help us bring a smile to the face of a senior citizen this holiday season.

Our goal this year is **4000** socks!

Socks will be collected from Monday, November 25th through Tuesday, December 31st.



We will be partnering with the Area Agency on Aging to help provide **Socks for Seniors** in Ashland, Richland, and Marion county nursing homes. Their goal this year is to provide 4000 pair for those in need. Our collection will begin **Nov 24th** and will end at our **Christmas Eve Service**. Please consider donating socks to this worthwhile project of compassion. (We would like to set our goal at 200 pair)

Please pray for our shut-ins and homebound



Joyce Bradley, Sherry Burns, Jane Foster, Dick Gordon, Carol Imhoff, Betty Imperio, Bernice Lambert, Jane McVey, Kate Miller, Wanda Mish, Marie Pate, Dick Scott, Wayne Smith, Gertrude & Keith Sparks, Dale Wells and Beverly Zimmerman. A visit, call or a card means so much to these members and friends who can't be with us each week.

“With Open Hands” by Henri Nouwen

Maybe someone will say to you, “You have to forgive yourself”. But that isn’t possible. What is possible is to open your hands without fear, so that the One who loves you can blow your sins away. Then the coins you considered indispensable for your life prove to be little more than light dust that a soft breeze will whirl away, leaving only a grin or a chuckle behind. Then you feel a bit of new freedom and praying becomes a joy, a spontaneous reaction to the world and the people around you. Praying then becomes effortless, inspired and lively, or peaceful and quiet. When you recognize the festive and the still moments as moments of prayer, then you gradually realize that to pray is to live.



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