

November 2020

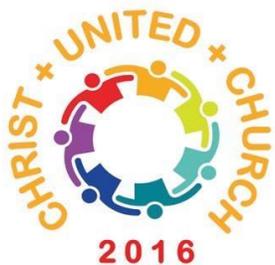
The Good News

The monthly newsletter of Christ United Church

Christ United Church

A federated church
of the Presbyterian Church
(USA) and the
United Church of Christ

With Christ
as our heart
and God's love
as our fire,
we learn, we love,
we care for all
people.



No matter who is President – Jesus is Lord

A message from Pastor Joel

Dear Christ United Friends and Family,

For this November *The Good News*, the only thing that I can really put forward right now is this: Please vote. Make sure your voice is heard, because there are too many in this time whose voices will not. This has been a year unlike any other, and I truly believe that our decision this November will play an important role in the outcome of the next several years, if not more. We are being asked to make a choice over who will continue to lead us through this pandemic, who will be working with Congress to provide relief to Americans, and who will go forward to represent us to the rest of the world. We are voting on our environment and how we preserve it. We are voting on how we believe we should provide care for our neighbors and for ourselves. We are voting on matters of civil rights and human dignity.

This month, especially as we've been exploring the Beatitudes in our worship, let us remember those whom Jesus lifts up as "blessed." Let us remember the call to action that is presented to us in those blessings and let us remember that while the Gospel is not *partisan*, it is undeniably *political*. Vote prayerfully. Vote your conscience. And remember in the next days, weeks, or even months as we wait anxiously to determine the results of this election and what the fallout is going to look like: no matter who is President – Jesus is Lord. ✝



In Christ,
Rev. Joel Montgomery

Mission Opportunity

Do you have a calling to give of your time to a mission need within our church?

The bylaws of the Church Street Ministries (CSM) organization requires that they have on their Board of Directors a representative from Christ United Church. At the present time no one from our church serves in this capacity.

The responsibilities of this position are:

- to attend their monthly Zoom board meetings;
- to review and respond to Board communications when sent;
- to share pertinent information about the organization with our Mission Committee;
- to hold a membership with the CSM organization;
- to work with them to further their purpose and mission through service or participation in their events;
- to represent the best interests of Church Street Ministries and Christ United Church, if a vote should be needed.
- This is a 3-year term.

The CSM Annual Meeting is held on Monday, November 16, 2020. They would like to welcome the new board members at this meeting. If you are interested in being our representative to this important mission, please contact Bonnie Crall, Chair of Nominating Committee at bcrall@ameritech.net or 440-234-2202. †



Did You Know . . .

- . . . Building and Grounds has one person walk through the building each day since the pandemic started to check all is well?
- . . . our music staff has been recording hymns with lyrics so people feel more comfortable singing along with our recorded worship services?
- . . . our two regional denominational offices each have coffee hour-type Zoom events* that happen every week so people can connect with one another virtually?
- . . . Pastor Joel & our organist Nichole have both been honing their video editing skills to bring you all some really great content on Sundays?
- . . . the Prayer Team has continued to meet via Zoom every month and communicate more often by e-mail so they can continue to keep all of us, and especially those in extra need of prayers, in theirs?
- . . . that Christ United has a Zoom link set up each Sunday at 11 am so folks can visit as they once did for Friendship Time and you can join this with only your phone, no computer or smart phone needed?
- . . . all Zoom links for church meetings and activities can be found on the church website calendar. Simply click on the event name on the calendar and a new page will open with the link viewable.

*all Zoom events are set up so that a person may join them with only their phone if a device with a camera isn't available. If you are interested in attending any of those and need help figuring it out, please contact Betsy in the church office.. †



Upcoming Dates

- Daylight Saving Time ends - Sunday, November 1
- All Saints' Day - Sunday, November 1
- Election Day – Tuesday, November 3
- Living Water Assoc. Annual Mtg. – November 7
- Veterans Day - Wednesday, November 11
- Presbytery Meeting – Monday November 23
- Thanksgiving Day - Thursday, November 26
- First Sunday of Advent - November 29

Governing Board News

by Cathy Green, President

Our latest Governing Board meeting was on October 13 via Zoom. Here is a summary of some of the key items that were reported or discussed.

Our Focus Topic was to consider a formal proposal to create an Outreach Task Force focused on the local Berea and Olmsted Falls communities. The new task force will initially work with Natalie Guzzo of Berea Outreach who will refer local residents with requests that CUC might be able to address. Once the process is running smoothly with Berea Outreach, the task force will invite referrals from Christians in Action in Olmsted Falls. Initial task force members will be Barb Silvers (Mission), Don Michaelsen (Stewardship), Rich Spinner (Building and Grounds), our pastors, and an at-large member who has yet to be identified. If you're interested, contact Bonnie Crall of the Nominating Committee.

In addition to approving the proposal and task force charter, the Governing Board also approved initial funding of \$5000 which will come in equal shares from the two church endowment funds. The task force will bring all recommendations for grants to the Governing Board for approval before funds are disbursed. In six months (or sooner, if deemed necessary), the Governing Board will evaluate to determine whether this new program is meeting needs and consider whether it should continue and, if so, whether we should make any changes. We're excited at the opportunity the Outreach Task Force offers us to impact lives in our immediate community.

The Reopening Task Force submitted a recommendation for when and how to allow weddings and funerals in the church building. After a discussion, the Governing Board approved the recommendation for funerals, but determined that it was too early to approve a plan for on-site weddings. The new policy will allow a maximum of 30 attendees and will take effect when Cuyahoga County reaches Level 1 (yellow) which has not yet happened. You can obtain a copy of the full Reopening Timeline and Protocols from the church office, or from Cathy Green. (It was also published in the October issue of *The Good News*.)

September financial results were good,

with a very small deficit of \$304. The Finance Committee projects a deficit of approximately \$10,000 for 2020, less than half of the deficit in the original budget.

Committees reported a variety of other activities and plans but those will be communicated by them at the appropriate time.

If there are any questions or suggestions, please don't hesitate to contact me at green.cjm@gmail.com or 313-580-8072. ☩

Yours in Christ,
Cathy Green, President

September Financials

	<u>Month</u>	<u>Y-T-D</u>	<u>Y-T-D Budget</u>
Congregational Giving	\$ 20,354	\$ 181,942	\$ 197,895
Building Use/Misc.	\$ 1,308	\$ 17,634	\$ 22,200
Total Income	\$ 21,662	\$ 199,756	\$ 220,095
Total Expenses	\$ 21,966	\$ 208,146	\$ 238,570

Happy Birthday!

November

2	Katie Montgomery
4	Amy Marke
4	Joyce Cristman
4	Marijo Rickel
5	Katie Spinner
5	Shirley Gerecke
7	Joan Wiborg
7	Bobbie Perkins-White
7	Jane Dunn
8	Diane Phillips
9	Chris Szabo
10	Joan Kamper
10	Madelyn Schroll
11	Rose Farmer
16	Beverly Maxwell
21	Dale Van Zante
24	Mike Walker
27	Diana Craig
29	Sara Barnett



Nominating Committee Presents...

Faith Formation Committee

This is the third of a series of articles that will appear each month in the newsletter sharing a commentary on the committees that make-up the leadership of our church. The purpose of these articles is to educate members on the purpose of the committee, how it works, and key skills valued to help fulfill their responsibilities. Keep in mind that someday you may be called to serve on one of these committees. You may not feel passionate about or qualified to serve, but God provides what we need to accomplish service in His name.

What is Faith Formation? It is dedicating oneself to a lifetime of learning and growing in faith. We recognize that as we mature, so should our knowledge and understanding of our faith. It is expected that we would have questions and/or doubts, and that searching for answers is a life-long pursuit.

What is the Goal of Faith Formation? The purpose of the Faith Formation Committee is to offer opportunities for everyone in our church family to strengthen their faith, expand their knowledge and deepen their relationship with God and each other. Specific duties include, but not limited to:

- ❖ Religious education classes and Bible study for adults as well as children, including summer education opportunities, multigenerational programs, youth group, church retreats, and confirmation classes.
- ❖ Oversee the provision for a childcare program during worship and at other times as needed.
- ❖ Recruit and train class teachers, Bible study teachers and other leaders as needed.
- ❖ Oversee the selection and upkeep of appropriate materials for the church library.

What are current Faith Formation programs? Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, some programs were put on hold and others adapted to on-line formats. The following continue mostly through Zoom and often in cooperation with other churches: Adult faith formation class, Pub Theology, Church Camp, Vacation Bible School.

What are the initiatives for Faith Formation? Faith Formation has identified six initiatives for the coming year:

- ❖ For members of Christ United Church to understand that faith formation is a life-long journey and they should be open to exploring their growing edges
- ❖ Evaluate and explore how we are engaging children in Faith Formation
- ❖ Continue to send out periodic surveys that assess interest in a variety of educational opportunities
- ❖ Explore the possibility of employing a part-time Christian Education person
- ❖ Receive annual reports from each of our current programs as listed above
- ❖ Support youth fellowship of Berea churches.

Who Makes Up the Faith Formation Committee? People with a thirst for knowledge and growth in mind and spirit. Also people who recognize that growth in church membership requires crossing generational lines to include all ages.

Current Committee Members:

Elected-: Kathy Smith, Marijo Rickel; Governing Board Liaison-Bobbi White; At-Large: Della Barclay, Dennis Stocker, Corinne Wilson.

Realizing that we learn in a variety of ways, new volunteers and suggestions are warmly welcomed.



Minister to your Ministers

Accept them as people.

Build them up. Say “thank you.”

Communicate with them.

Defend them when someone tries to run them down.

Entertain them. They like to have fun, too!

Family. Allow them to have a family life.

Genuine. Be honest with them. Be yourself around them.

Honor them. Don’t put them on a pedestal, but respect them.

Income. Pay them enough so money isn’t a concern.

Judge not! Avoid being critical.

Kind. Treat pastors as you want to be treated.

Love. See 1 Corinthians 13.

Maintain. Their families have the same needs as other families.

Nurture. Help them grow in grace.

Offer to help. The list of things you can do is endless.

Pray for them. Lift up their names to God daily.

Quelch not. Encourage instead!

Rejoice in and with them.

Surprise them — in little and big ways.

Trust them. Believe in them.

Understand them. Put yourself in their place.

Vacation. They need time away.

Welcome them into your home. Don’t wait for an invitation.

eXpend yourself, not them.

Yoke. Help them bear their burdens with grace and dignity.

Zap all gossip! ✝

Martha Circle Meets

Martha Circle held a meeting outdoors at the beginning of October and it was greatly enjoyed by the folks who decided to brave the cold. And they voted Katie Walker and Corky Wilson as co-leaders of the group. Also, it was decided to re-start the monthly Martha Circle meetings, but to do it via Zoom. The next meeting will be held on **Wed., Nov. 11th, at 11 am**. We will open with a few moments

of silence to honor all military veterans, followed by a discussion of our Christmas project and then by some fellowship.

Upcoming Martha Circle meetings will be held on the second Wednesday of the month at 10 am via Zoom. You can access the link for the meetings by clicking on Martha Circle that’s on the appropriate date on the church website calendar, www.ChristUnited.Church. Those who do not have computer access can dial into the meeting on any phone to hear and talk with the other group members. Contact the church office for those phone numbers and the meeting code. No RSVP’s are needed for zoom meetings - and we sure look forward to seeing (or hearing) you!

Exercising our Gratitude Muscles

Expressing gratitude isn’t just a good thing to do; it also appears to be good for us! Indiana University researchers found that participants who performed gratitude-focused writing exercises felt uplifted, and were more likely to express gratefulness through generosity, even weeks later.

Furthermore, brain scans revealed increased gratitude-related activity even months down the road (*New York Magazine*).

Though the study was small, we seem to have a “gratitude muscle” that can be strengthened through exercise. If so, there may be more than we thought to the popularity of gratitude journals and Mom’s insistence that we write thank-you notes. Not to mention the biblical call to “give thanks to the Lord, for the Lord is good” (1 Chronicles 16:34, for example).

Might God have hardwired us for gratitude — not only at Thanksgiving but year round — because it’s good for *us* as well as for those we thank? To that, we respond, “Thanks be to God!” ✝

Wider Church News:

German Evangelicals Aid Shipwrecked Migrants

by Don Michaelsen

Thanks to “crowd-funding” in August, 2019, the Evangelical Church in Germany (ECG) purchased a rescue ship, renamed Sea-Watch 4. This ship aids migrants and asylum seekers who attempt the highly dangerous voyage across the Mediterranean Sea to European countries that will accept them. At the ship’s launch in February, 2020 from Spain, Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, ECG’s chairman, stated “As long as people seeking protection in the Mediterranean drown and government action fails, we will do our utmost to support civilian rescue services.”

The last rescue ship, Doctors Without Borders’ Aquarius, ended operations in 2018 due to harassment from some European countries. Between 1993 and 2018, United for Intercultural Action volunteers logged 27,000 known migrant deaths at sea, though the total toll was certainly much higher. In 2020 alone, an estimated 400 people have drowned. In 2015, a million+ people arrived in Europe, primarily from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan.

As Sea-Watch 4 provides assistance to people at sea, ECG continues its lobbying efforts toward fair asylum procedures and legal migration processing. SOURCE: *The Christian Century*, September 9, 2020.

Update on Christian Engagement in Upcoming General Election

In addition to Vote Common Good, two other progressive Christian groups are engaging religious voters. Faithful America, organized in 2004 as a 501(c)(4) [not tax-deductible] non-profit, focuses this year upon helping these voters to be vocal about the connection between their religious beliefs and their views on key issues. With a modest budget of \$65,000 that recently hired at least four experienced organizers, they are implementing “relational organizing,” involvement in at least 11,000 conversations in the swing states of Florida,

Michigan and Pennsylvania. Since July, 2019, Rev. Nathan Empsall, 29, a part-time Episcopal priest in New Haven, CT serves as director. *Faithful America* claims to be the largest US online community of grassroots Christians engaged in social justice.

Also, Network Lobby for Catholic Social Justice in Washington, DC, opened in April, 1972 by 47 Catholic Women Religious, launched a website designed to target “Pope Francis voters” to become more informed about issues facing our nation and casting votes for candidates that will promote justice. Famous for the annual tour since 2012, “Nuns on the Bus,” Sister Simone Campbell continues as executive director. All these are parallel to their conservative Faith and Freedom Coalition’s intent on spending upwards of \$22.5 million toward their get-out-the-vote efforts. †

Sources: *The Christian Century*, October 7, 2020; *FaithfulAmerica.org*, *NetworkLobby.org*.

The Good News

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