

THE FIRST WORD



First Christian Church

Vol. 21

Spring 2018

From your Pastor



Dear Members and Friends,

Well, it was beginning to look like Spring would never arrive. But it's finally here. All at once there is an explosion of color; yellow daffodils, forsythia, purple tulips, red and white buds on the trees, and the grasses are getting greener and growing and growing and growing!!!! What an impressive display.

It reminds me though of a Parable Jesus told in Luke 13 about a fig tree that looked beautiful with its buds and leaves but produced no fruit. The owner wanted it cut down and replaced but the gardener said let me give it some special treatment this year. If nothing changes by next Spring, I will remove it. Let's give it one more chance to bear fruit.

There are sadly many in the world that are like that fig tree. They look good, act good but bear no fruit. Jesus, the owner is not at all interested in glitz, glamor and impressive displays. He is looking for lives that touch others, lives that help others, and lives that make a positive impact in this world. You may be asking yourself right about now, "where is he going with this?" Well I just want you to know how pleased I am with you. And how proud I am at how you, as one voice, continue to rise up and help with every need that comes to us. From helping Safe Haven, to the Ashland Pregnancy Care Center and everything in between, you selflessly respond to God's call to be there with love, compassion and aid.

And I feel that Jesus, the owner, is not saying to us well done, but encouraging us to keep planting, keep pruning, and keep on bearing his fruit.

In His peace,
Rich

May 16, 2018



GRADUATION SUNDAY May 27th

Nate Whitmer is graduating from Ashland High School and will be attending Wright State University this fall.

Summer Brightbill is graduating from Ashland High School.

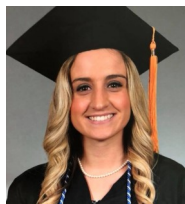
Peter Zimmerman is graduating from Ashland High School and will be attending Oberlin College of Arts and Science.

(Peter has been helping with our After School Program for the past two years.)

Chantelle Brady has graduated from Hiram College.

Rachel Burgett has graduated from North Central State Nursing School .

There will be a cake and punch reception following worship.



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

AFTER SCHOOL Program

Our After School program is coming to a close for this school year. We thank everyone who brought snacks this year. We especially thank Nate Whitmer, Emma Gearhart, Shawn Brady and Peter Zimmerman for taking their time to help these students with their homework and just interacting with them. They don't always realize what this connection means to them.

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.



We would like to take this opportunity to thank all our people who so graciously helped us in the Sunday Lenten Services, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, and Easter Sunday. The readers were, Todd Whitmer, Linda Gardner, Andrea Hinckley, Shelley Carpenter, & Brian Nabors, The special music offered by Lana Bell, Brian Nabors, Pastor Rich, and the Bell Choir under the direction of Yvonne Kimball.



AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM



(Pictured with Pastor Rich is Mona Campbell of the Samaritan Foundation)

The Samaritan Hospital Foundation provided a grant to help support our after school program. For the past four years, our church has provided an after-school program for middle school students of Ashland. We work closely with the guidance department to select students who might benefit from the program. Every Wednesday during the school year, our church offers a safe friendly environment for students (with their family's consent) to come and interact with others, but also to be themselves. Many of the activities offered, such as art, baking, fun science and engineering projects, are designed to improve life skills and promote teamwork. This year Nate Whitmer, Peter Zimmerman, Emma Gearhart and Shawn Brady volunteered their time each Wednesday.



Ben Garrett, owner of Master Minds entertained everyone with his card games.

We made two trips to The Tin Chandelier here in Ashland where the young people painted craft items.



Emma Gearhart also interacts with the students.

Abby, our AU student Volunteer



We love pizza!!



Peter & Nate will be missed!

What's Happening!!



We are always doing something in the community.
Your response is greatly appreciated!

We continue our worship services the first Sunday of each month at Belmont Tower. The residents love Rich's message and of course love Brian as he plays the piano and leads the singing. Communion is served at each visit. It is heart warming to see how happy, blessed and **thankful** they are. You might want to come and join us some Sunday and feel the **love!**

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During the month of March we participated in The Baby Bottle Campaign through the Ashland Care Center. We passed out 30 bottles and asked that they be filled with our loose change and returned by Easter Sunday. We filled the 30 bottles with **\$865.30 !!**



For the first two weeks in May we collected Baby Diapers and Baby wipes for the Ashland Pregnancy Center. You can see our response has been awesome and we have a week to go!!



Sharing Opportunity!

Again on the 25th of May the 7th grade classes at the Ashland Middle School will be using our church for their "life skills" classes. Each student will be bringing in an item for the Ashland Pregnancy Center. You might want to drop in and see these students at work. They will be cooking, sewing, learning about banking and other skills too.

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www.firstchristianashland.org

There is a fresh new look for our website firstchristianashland.org We have been working with Spire Advertising on updating the website so that it is easier to view on tablets and mobile devices. In addition, there will be an option to give offering/donations through PayPal or credit/debit card. Also you will be able to listen to messages and music. The new site was rolled out the first of May. We thank Sue Detrow for all the work she puts in on our site.

BIRTHDAYS



Apr 4 Stephanie Brown

Apr 4 Bill Jackson

Apr 9 Garry Burgett

Apr 15 Marcia Gallaway

Apr 20 Andrea Hinckley

Apr 26 Chuck Case

May 2 John Cochie

May 3 Mark Hinckley

May 4 Brian Nabors

May 4 Dana Scott

May 9 Sandy Bally

May 10 Arlene Whitmer

May 10 Pauline Deever (100)

May 14 Gary Mowry

May 16 William Gardner

May 16 Kelly Gearhart

May 16 Alexis Hasting

May 16 Lauren Hastings

May 16 Rachel Hastings

May 16 Carol Imhoff

May 21 Dale Wells

May 24 Yvonne Kimball

May 25 Alice Metcalf

May 25 Ruth Miller

May 26 Janice Strine

May 27 Wanda Mish

May 28 Marty Mowry

May 31 Paige Carpenter

Jun 1 Keith Sparks

Jun 2 Dick Baum

Jun 2 Lennie Reich

Jun 7 Mary Lee Hammond

Jun 13 Janet Whitmer

Jun 17 Wade Kimball

Jun 19 Sherry Burns

Jun 20 David Gearhart

Jun 22 Pam Jackson

Jun 23 Jenny Hastings

Jun 26 Kohler Scott

Jun 30 Carol Cochie

Jun 30 Jo Ellen Zender



This past Easter our 'In Lieu of flowers' funds were the Shoe Fund and our Campership Fund. Your donations brought in \$520.00 for the Shoe Fund and \$360.00 for the Campership. Many thanks!!

Church Finance Update

Thanks for your continued financial support of the church. We are meeting our budget requirements . Over the past year we have reached out to many different ministries and agencies in our community with our time, talents, and resources. We are also still receiving donations for debt reduction. If you would care to make a donation, please see Kim Mercer or mark your check 'loan reduction'. We give praise and thanks to God as we share in His unending bounty with all His creation.



**Our Christian love and sympathy
is extended to:**

Carol Imhoff and her family in the passing of Jim Imhoff on January 2, 2018.

Dick Gordon and family in the death of his brother, Everett Gordon on January 30, 2018.

Stephanie Brown and family in the death of her brother Richard Lambert on February 14, 2018.

Marcia Gallaway and family in the death of her husband Glenn Gallaway on March 3, 2018.

Please pray for our shut-ins and homebound



Joyce Bradley, Sherry Burns, John Cochie, Pauline Deever, Jane Foster, Dick Gordon, Carol Imhoff, Betty Imperio, Bernice Lambert, Bob McCormic, Jane McVey, Kate Miller, Wanda Mish, Dick Scott, Wayne Smith, Ed Snook, Gertrude & Keith Sparks & Dale Wells. Also pray for Al & Bev Zimmerman who continue to have health issues. A visit, call or a card means so much to these members and friends who can't be with us each week.



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