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PATHWAYS

FEBRUARY 2022

*You show me the path of life. In
your presence there is fullness of joy.*
Psalm 16:11

Find us on social
media @FCCStow!

Week of Compassion Bake Sale **February 26th, After Both Services**

Bring a couple extra dollars on Sunday to take home your favorite cookies and baked goods! Thanks to all our bakers who are participating in this event!

Diaconate Re-visioned

Friends, please read on to see the future of this important team in our church. Self-Nomination cards will be available on Sunday.

Sketti & Skits

Sunday, March 5th, 5 p.m.

Prepare for this year's Sketti & Skits! Sign ups are still available! Tell your friends and invite your neighbors for this night of fun, food, and fellowship!

Brethren Disaster Ministry in Kentucky

Thanks to Charlie Redman for sharing his work and experience with us this past Sunday! If you were moved by this ministry and are interested in joining the great work, read below!

Scammers Targeting our Church

What to Look Out For!

If you've been asked to buy gift cards for a staff member to use via email or text, please read below and contact the office! A Scammer has been fishing our congregation for vulnerable folks. Be wise and read on!

First Christian Church Deacons

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many.

~I Corinthian 12:12-14

For its entire history First Christian Church has embodied these words of the Apostle Paul, believing we are all one in the body of Christ. Also, for its entire history, First Christian Church has depended upon its people to live out the truth the Apostle Paul further speaks of in his letter to the Corinthian church when he says, *“If the foot were to say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body’, that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear were to say, ‘Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body’, that would not make it any less a part of the body.”*

Paul is reminding the Corinthians then, and us today, that we are the body of Christ, and the Church today is a living and breathing entity; made up of many parts, all contributing in their own way to making sure this body thrives. And just as Paul speaks of different parts and roles within the body contributing in different ways, First Christian Church has different roles needing to be done by different people. For the Corinthians, Paul reminded them some were *Apostles*, some *Prophets*, some *Teachers*, and some *Healers*. For First Christian Church some are *Elders*, some *Trustees*, some *Jr. Church Teachers*, some *Youth Group Leaders*, some *Volunteers*. However, for three years one part of the body was made to wait for its role to resume contributing to helping the body thrive. Which is why we are excited to announce that the wait is over! The First Christian Church Diaconate is set to resume its ministry in new and renewed ways.

The Governing Board, in cooperation with the Elders and Trustees, have worked (and will continue to work with the Diaconate) out new and renewed methods for the Diaconate that will support newly evolved needs and ministries of the church, as well as supporting the needs of friends of the church and their related programs.

This revamping of Diaconate duties has come forth because over the last three years our church has shifted from needing Deacons to serve during worship, to needing Deacon support before worship and after worship. Additionally, with new outside groups using our building each week, in addition to occasional special events taking place at the church, there has been a growing need for help in meeting the building and support needs for hosting groups, special events, along with other church activities and ministries. With these changes and additions has come the necessity to revamp how we meet the needs of the church and the ministries we are called to do and share.

To begin this process of reestablishing, and establishing anew, the Diaconate, we will begin with assembling personnel willing to serve as Deacon through a self-nominating process open to any and all who are part of the First Christian Church family. If you have served as Deacon before, your presence would be an immense gift. If you have never served as a Deacon then there is no better time than now to step into this important ministry.

We are forever grateful for the long and faithful list of those who made serving on the First Church Diaconate part of their ministry to God and the Body of Christ. For all who have served as Deacon, we say thank you. Because of your faithfulness, on your shoulders, and by your model of loyal service, we stand today poised to step into and grow this new way of having the Diaconate serve God, the Body of Christ, and all of God’s children who come to, and are served by, First Christian Church.

This newly revamped Diaconate will have a place for, and will need, a body of good and faithful servants who span a broad spectrum of gifts and capabilities. Meaning, no matter how old or young, no matter how spry or mobility challenged you are, there is a need you can fill by serving on the Diaconate. After all, the body does not consist of one member but of many members, each with abilities that can contribute to building up, and sharing with others, the Body of Christ.

Please review the job description, or talk with Jonathan, and then prayerfully consider serving on the First Christian Church Diaconate.

Sketti & Skits
Sunday, March 5th

Make plans to be at this year's Sketti & Skits, Sunday March 5 at 5pm. Sketti & Skits is a time-honored tradition of FCC Stow where the food is great and the entertainment is even better!

Cost for Sketti & Skits is \$8 for adults, \$4 for children, and kids under 3 are free.

All proceeds will go towards Christian Education and the Youth Activity Fund.

Do you have a talent, magic trick, song, skit or something else you would like to perform? Sign-up will be available in February.

April Response – Eastern KY
Brethren Disaster Ministries

On the 19th, we will hear from Charlie Redman about his work with Brethren Disaster Ministries, which is a frequent partner with Week of Compassion. Charlie will be sharing his experience, some of the situations that Brethren Disaster Ministries and Week of Compassion have come together to restore, from blighted homes to repairing uninhabitable spaces after massive weather damage.

Please join us on Sunday, the 19th, via livestream or in person worship, to hear about his work. If you are interested in helping out with this incredibly meaningful work after hearing about his experiences and the lives of those impacted, please see the details below about their upcoming

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Annual Bake Sale!
Benefiting Week of
Compassion

There will be a Week of Compassion bake sale February 26th between and after the services. We need your donations of baked goods. This is a good opportunity to buy something special and support our Week of Compassion drive.

If you're able to help out, please contact Mary Ellen Neitz 330-815-4223

Next Loaves & Fishes + Pantry

Our next Drive Through Meal is March 19th 4-6p.m. Thanks to all our extra volunteers from GSUSA and Mary Ellen's Aerobics class! Extra hands are always welcome.

Bulldog Bags Donations

Mar. 8	Band-Aids and Hand Sanitizer
Apr. 12	Bar Soap (Unscented)
May 10	Granola Bars

week of work coming at the end of April.

April 23 – 29: S Ohio/KY & Charlie Redman Team

Tentative Housing Location:
Hampton UMC, 15 Peggs Fork Rd.,
Campton, KY 41301

What you Need to Know:

- Housing, meals, tools, and transport to project sites provided
- Air mattresses are provided, but you are welcome to bring your own
- Working with Eastern KY Conference of United Methodist Church
- Project Leaders: Charlie Redman, Cliff & Arlene Kindy

Damages: 2022 Flooding Event – Kentucky faced 11” of rain in just two hours. Major highways were 8 to 10 feet under water. 300 homes were destroyed or damaged. There were 39 deaths, and the 40th victim of these floods is still missing.

As are the case with many of their projects, they aren't sure of what they'll need to do until they arrive to survey the damages fully. If you are interested in going, please contact the church office, and you will be put in contact with Charlie and kept up to date with information as it is made available.

STEWARDSHIP CHALLENGE

Hurricanes and natural disasters can bring out some of the best in people. Folks of every race, of every religion or no religion, of every class, step forth to help those who are hurting; whose lives are in shambles; who may wonder if anyone cares about them in the midst of so much suffering.

They need not wonder: for people with trucks and boats have helped carry people to safety, have helped get desperately sick people to hospitals, have tried to make sure that families stay together and have a safe place to recover. But please know this: we too are those people. We may not drive a truck or pilot a boat, but we too can help our neighbors in dire need. While we may want to join our hands to those [*in the affected area*] now is not yet the time. We are ready to help when our presence is needed.

But in the meantime, we can pray. And we can give. Every dollar that you give for disaster relief to Week of Compassion--our wider church family's disaster relief ministry-- will go to work through our partners to assist those impacted by this terrible storm. Those dollars will continue working too. Long after the headlines have faded and the cameras have been turned off, Week of Compassion and its partners will still be there helping with long-term recovery. Please give generously, knowing that your gifts will help both right now and in the months and years to come.

Scam Emails and Texts! **What to Watch Out For**

Friends, one of our congregation thankfully reached out to the office before it was too late. A Scammer had sent them an email impersonating Jonathan and asking for Apple gift cards, claiming that they're giving them away to women fighting cancer. Jonathan has not asked this of a congregant himself, and would not ask a member to do this. This is a common scam going around. If anyone asks you to purchase gift cards, especially Apple, Amazon, or other online-available retailers, they are likely a scam. If you ever get asked to do something like this under the name of a church staff member, even if they describe it as a secret gift, or clandestine for some reason, contact the office immediately and explain what correspondence you've received. The phone number from this latest scam came from **1-469 840 8512**. If you see an area code 469 claiming to be Jonathan, that is the known scammer. Block the number, delete your conversation with them, and if you need help doing any of these things once you receive scam messages, do not hesitate to reach out to Christian at the office to help!

Two Retreat Opportunities **For Disciples Men!**

Ohio Disciples Men's Retreat **May 5 – 6th**

Retreat and Camp Christian All-Regional Church Workday on May 6th

The Ohio Disciples Men's Spring Retreat will be Friday, May 5 and Saturday, May 6. The men of the Regional will gather on Friday night at 7 p.m. We will have an opening worship and then hear our speaker, Rev. Michael Doerr. Michael is presently the Pastor at First Christian Church in Wauseon. He has a heart for God and for men's ministry. Saturday will begin with breakfast and worship followed by work around Camp Christian to get the camp ready for the camping season. More details will be coming. We look forward to seeing all of Ohio's men.

Ourselves in Changing Seasons, in **Light and Dark**

Disciple Men's Retreat

Friday March 17 (6 pm) - Sunday
March 19 (11 am)
Camp Christian

Christian Church in Ohio is excited to offer this weekend-long event at Camp Christian. The retreat will feature Rev. Dr. Paul Koch, an Illuman brother and Minister for the Christian Church Mid-America Region (Disciples of Christ). A Seasoned teacher and retreat leader, Paul brings to Ohio Men his warm, loving presence, and significant ongoing work in the area of men's ministry

The vernal equinox occurs March 20th, the day after the retreat concludes. Working with the theme of changing seasons and shades of light and dark within all of us, our retreat will explore the nature of our

relationship with God in the changing conditions and seasons of our lives.

The cost is \$125 per registrant, and will include lodging at Camp Christian, meals and snacks. Scholarships are available and men (or their congregations) can make additional contributions to help support the retreat.

You can register online at ccinoh.com

Christian Youth Fellowship (CYF) **Winter Retreat at Camp Christian**

February 17-19, 2023
for High School youth in grades 9 - 12

Who God Says You Are, What the rest of the world thinks about you does not matter in comparison to what God Thinks! Join us at the CYF Winter Retreat, as we discover what the Bible Tells us about who God Says we are. Do you ever wonder about how we fit into God's Purpose or how our God given identity can and should impact the way we live. Come to camp for a fun filled weekend with your friends. Bible study, keynote speakers, games, singing and of course s'mores by the lodge fireplace.

Contact Colleen Munley at:
munleycollen@yahoo.com or Matt Thomas
at: matt.thomas1114@gmail.com.

Scholarships are available through the Youth Scholarship Fund

Forms and registration at
<https://www.ccinoh.com/ministries/children-youth/youth-fellowship/cyf-retreat.aspx>

Week of Compassion **Turkey and Syria**

Early Monday morning, February 6, an earthquake with a magnitude of 7.8 struck in southeastern Turkey and northern Syria. At least 78 aftershocks have been reported, and a second earthquake nearly as large (7.5) rocked central Turkey not long after. Early analysis shows that the quake was not only quite strong, but also very shallow, which is often more damaging than deeper ones.

Week of Compassion is in close contact with our partners in the region, including colleagues who were coincidentally traveling in the affected area. Our partners are currently conducting rapid assessments to respond to this disaster in both Syria and Turkey, and Week of Compassion will be ready to support efforts for immediate response and what will surely be extensive long-term recovery. We continue to hear from the region; our colleagues at Global Ministries shared this comment from one of their partners in the midst of assessment:

I have heard from some partners in the region. Our own historic presence in Gaziantep, Turkey, included the establishment of a hospital there, where we had a significant missionary presence. The hospital is now owned and operated by our Turkish partner, the Heath and Education Foundation (SEV). They wrote that the hospital sustained minimal damage but that "Unfortunately, ten cities are affected by the massive earthquake. Gaziantep is one which is badly affected."

As of Tuesday morning U.S. time, more than 5000 people are confirmed dead, 25,000 injured, while hundreds of families remain trapped. Nearly 10,000 search and rescue workers have been deployed and nearly 3000 buildings have collapsed.

How on earth do we fathom such destruction, let alone know where to start doing anything about it? In the face of such immense suffering, how can we begin to envision communities restored? How can we possibly alleviate the suffering or transform suffering into hope?

Amidst the questions of “how?,” we recall that the witness of scripture comes from the depths of rubble and grief. The Lamentations text (Lamentations 3:21-23) that serves as the theme for our 2023 Special Offering, speaks from a moment of national devastation and seemingly unending hopelessness, when the city had been reduced to ruin. The writer of Lamentations brings the response that we share as well: “Because I remember all this, I have hope. God’s compassion has never failed.” God’s presence had never failed, had always seen them through ... and would again this time.

These earthquakes and aftershocks - which were felt as far away as Jerusalem, Lebanon, and Cyprus, and which can be expected to continue for as much as a few weeks - have brought the attention of nations from every direction. The lament and outcry of a nation distraught amid disaster rises up from the very ground. And we pray with confidence that the mercies of God continue to rise up as well. A Syrian population already left vulnerable in the aftermath of war and in the face of ongoing political conflict is left doubly vulnerable to such a catastrophic event. Already weakened buildings (where buildings have remained at all), or those not rebuilt to code, have been further affected

and even destroyed, leading to yet another mass displacement of families and disruption of livelihoods, all in the midst of harsh winter weather.

The scope of such tragedy makes partnership critical. The work of Week of Compassion is the work of partnership – relationships and systems established over years of response and recovery in impacted communities. Week of Compassion can respond immediately, and for the long haul, because of partners through ACT Alliance and the ACT Syria Forum; and because of partners through Global Ministries, including the Fellowship of Middle East Evangelical Churches, the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East, and the Forum for Development, Culture, and Dialogue. These partners will be looking to provide both immediate and long term support.

Week of Compassion is grateful for these key partners, who bring extensive experience in this type of work, and are well-acquainted with the character of the region and the ongoing conflict in the area. The partners Week of Compassion turns to and works through in these moments are ready to respond and best suited to the task because they have been there for years, working through generations of crisis and need.

Because of your generosity - through your gifts to Week of Compassion during the Special Offering and throughout the year - you are present with those who suffer, reminding them of God’s never-failing compassion, mercy, and presence. May God comfort those who mourn, and bring solace to all who are left feeling lost. May God’s mercies never fail, may they rise up anew, mixed with our own fervent prayers and our abundant compassion

