

# First Christian Church

(Disciples of Christ)

33 N. Arlington Ave., Niles, OH 44446

News and Events Around  
Your Church



Mission Statement:

We celebrate the Good News of Jesus Christ by witnessing, loving, growing, and serving from our doorsteps "to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

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You know that stop light at the intersection of West Park and North Arlington? I feel like I have spent a majority of my life in Niles sitting at that intersection, waiting for the light to change. Unless I'm heading to Lordstown, every time I go anywhere, that red light keeps me from moving forward.

When I first was called to serve First Christian, I thought that the intersection was like any other. The red light wasn't a big deal because in all honesty it isn't a very long light. But that light has an uncanny ability to be red every single time I get close. No matter how long it has been green as I approach it, the light turns red and forces me to stop. It can't be based on stopped traffic moving down N. Arlington because there is never a car waiting to get through. Just me. Just the red light. Eternally.

I began to feel as if that light lasted forever. I understand that time is a relative thing and as I waited, on numerous occasions, for that light to change, I began to look for any time of diversion to keep my multi-tasking brain occupied. I would play with the radio. I would examine the folks at the post office. I would notice the deteriorating road conditions as the seasons pass. I reached a point where I was so intently concentrating on waiting for the light, that I wouldn't notice when it finally turned green again. Many times a polite honk would have to recall me from my stupor before I realized that I could continue my journey from that eternal limbo.

Yes, I understand the necessity of a traffic light at that intersection. We need to stop to let others go before us. We have to make time for pedestrians. The laws of the land have been put forth through tradition so that we might have an equitably functioning society. I get it. But Holy Mother of the Perpetually Late, why does it have to last so long! Why is it always red for me!

Let me suggest that many American Mainline Congregations are stuck at a red light as well. We have reached the point, as I had at that blasted intersection, when we are no longer even looking for the green light from God that will allow us to continue on our journey. Perhaps we've had some situations that have taught us that standing still is safer. Perhaps the repeated experiences that we go through every week have trained us that a strict adherence to tradition is more comfortable, less dangerous. Perhaps we have even gotten so preoccupied with waiting, that the prospect of moving forward again doesn't even register on our radar.

Whatever the reasons, and they are diversely individual as well as communally shared, we are stuck. We have been for years. Most of us prefer it that way. It's safe. It's comfortable. It's something that we already know how to do.

But this is not our Gospel. The Good News has little to do with telling the same stories to the same folks who are always in the same pews, singing the same hymns. The hymnals are losing their binding. The pews are rotting away. The roof is leaking. All while we wait for a green light that we've quit waiting on to change.

The Good News is that journey onward into uncomfortable and new territory. The message of Christ was a perilous journey into foreign lands, to people that nobody else wanted to approach. The Gospel was a story of hope and love for those who had forgotten to seek it out, not because they forgot to keep looking but because others, the ones with the message of God, were too busy trying to keep their own rules and systems in place.

The Pharisee's traditions, their own rules made to keep the group following God's path, kept them from serving the very people that God's message would most powerfully help. American churches, steeped in time honored tradition, with our own rules about what to wear in the sanctuary, when the committees must meet, and burdened down by our million little legalistic practices that keep us from serving the very people that need to hear our message of hope and joy and love and peace the very most.

So here we sit, waiting for the light to turn green but not really paying attention. But that realization can provide the freedom that we need. Only when we realize that we haven't moved in quite some time do we remember to look up for that green light to get moving once again. So look up. Get moving. Let us proclaim this Gospel on our journey.

Pastor Chris

OUR STEWARDSHIP FOCUS will be the Sundays of September 30, October 7, and October 14. Commitment Sunday will be October 21. Commitment cards are attached to make your commitment to First Christian Church for 2019.

RECONCILIATION MINISTRY SPECIAL OFFERING SEPTEMBER 30 & OCTOBER 7  
*'Embracing The Call' Micah 6:8* - This offering provides the primary support of Disciples' efforts to advocate for, educate about and organize to eradicate systemic racism and structural oppression within our ministries and institutions, as well as the communities and cultures that we serve. Thank you for your support of this vital ministry! Special Day Offering envelopes will be included in this Sunday's bulletin.

REGIONAL ASSEMBLY 2018 will be held **SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6** from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Gender Road Christian Church, 5336 Gender Rd., Canal Winchester, Ohio. Information and registration form is available at [www.ccinoh.org](http://www.ccinoh.org) or for questions, call 614.633.5691. Pre-registration is \$10 per person if paid by October 5<sup>th</sup>; otherwise \$15 onsite registration.

DESSERT AUCTION/POT LUCK DINNER will take place **Friday, October 12** at 6 p.m. in fellowship hall. Mark your calendars and join us for food, fellowship and fun!

DIST. IV MEN'S RALLY will be held Sunday, Nov. 4 at Champion Christian Church, 151 Center St. W. Registration begins at 3 p.m. Speaker will be James Frost, Park Ranger, US Army Corps of Engineers "Mosquito Creek Lake". Cost for dinner is \$9. A sign-up sheet is posted on the main bulletin board for those who plan to attend. Deadline is Sunday, October 28.

CYF UPCOMING EVENTS: CYF will sponsor a **Parents Night Out** this evening, September 28, from 6 to 9 p.m. They will be collecting **boxed cereal** for Niles Community Services October through November for a service project. Their goal is 100 boxes. A CYF self-defense class will take place Sunday, October 7 from 12 to 1 p.m. A CYF Meeting will be held Sunday, October 21 following worship.



COMMUNITY MEALS WILL BE SERVED BY FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH DURING NOVEMBER. Meals will be served on the Thursdays of November 1, 8, 15 and 29. Monetary donations are being accepted for these meals. If you wish to contribute, make checks payable to First Christian Church labeled 'meals.'

MISSIONS COMMITTEE: 'We apologize for running out of soup and promise to do better next time! Give us another chance in February.' Missions will be collecting new and gently used hats, scarves, gloves and mittens the Sundays of **October 28** and **November 4**.

DISCIPLE WOMEN'S JAIL MINISTRY TEAM will be conducting worship services on the Mondays of October 8 and October 22 at 6:45 p.m. at the Trumbull County Jail.

FCC VOLUNTEERS will serve a dinner **Tuesday, October 30** from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Rescue Mission of the Mahoning Valley, 962 Martin Luther King Blvd. in Youngstown, coordinated by Becky Carpenter. Desserts need to be to the church **by 11 a.m.** using buzzer and door closest to library parking lot.

#### OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS:

Oct. 3 Dennis Havaich	Oct. 13 Robert McCollum	Oct. 22 Faith Pressell	Oct. 27 Chuck Shonk
Oct. 4 Dennis Carpenter	Oct. 16 Rick Pressell	Oct. 23 Larry Hoffman	Oct. 28 Carol McCollum
Oct. 10 Eileen Pressell	Oct. 19 Harold George	Oct. 23 Nancy Wick	
Oct. 10 Kathy Sprague	Oct. 21 Rea Gaugler-Beuter	Oct. 25 Bryce Kellerman	
Oct. 12 Amanda Stonebraker	Oct. 21 Debby Havaich	Oct. 26 James Minto	

THE PARLOR PIANO is being offered to church members. If anyone is interested in the piano, please contact Trustee chair David Brothers (330.219.2668) as soon as possible.

CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST WISHES to Tom Appel and Robert Knapp who were married on September 8th.

IT IS TIME TO REPLENISH our stock of gasoline and Giant Eagle gift cards that can be distributed by the pastor when needs arise. Please contribute to this cause if you are able so that additional gift cards may be purchased. Thank you.

KNOTTY GIRL QUILTERS will enjoy lunch Wednesday, October 3rd at 11:45 a.m. at Applebee's. The ladies will then quilt at the church from 1 to 4 p.m.

ATTENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRS, TEACHERS AND CIRCLE PRESIDENTS! – Please check your **mailbox** in the main office on a regular basis. Thank you.

ANDY HOPKINS' MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND PASTA DINNER is Sat., Nov. 10 from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. at Champion Christian Church, 151 Center St. West. Adult-\$10; \$9 advance sale; Senior-\$8; \$7 advance sale. Children (4-12) \$7; \$6 advance sale. Children under 4 years free. Take out orders will be available. Advance sale tickets available by calling 330.847.0785.

PASTOR CHRIS STARK CONTACT INFO: cell phone 330.442.2558; email address [pastorchrisstark@gmail.com](mailto:pastorchrisstark@gmail.com).

DEADLINE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER ITEMS is Mon., October 29 by 11:30 a.m.

OCTOBER NEWSNOTES . . . . **Elders** will meet Sun., Oct. 7 following worship in the library . . . . **Disciples Men** will meet Sunday, Oct. 7 at 8 a.m. at Perkins . . . . **Lydia Circle** ladies will get together on Wed., Oct. 10 at 7 p.m. in the church parlor . . . . **Stewardship** and **Finance Committee Meeting** will be held Sun., Oct. 14 at 9 a.m. . . . . **TMH Psych Unit Worship Service** will be held Sunday, October 14 at 1:30 p.m. . . . . **Ohio Women's Ministry** (OWM) is collecting **soup** for Niles Community Services during the month of October. Donations may be placed in the cabinet in the main hallway . . . .



NEWS & EVENTS  
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First Christian Church, Niles, Ohio  
330-652-5839 • [www.firstchristianmiles.org](http://www.firstchristianmiles.org)  
Rev. Christopher Stark, Minister  
Mrs. Carolyn Rossi, Secretary