

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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Every year, when I flip the calendar to the month of March, I catch the fever. As soon as we reach March 1st, I start looking forward to the spring season. I have visions of green grass, that smell of new life, of crocuses and daffodils poking their first leaves into the air. Most of all, I can't wait because I can open up the windows to the house again. There is no better feeling around this time of year than that first warm day when you can open every window in the house and get that stuffiness, that dusty, stale air of winter out of the house.

It is also right around the first of March that I begin to make a list of all the other dusty, stale, stuffy areas of the house than need cleaned out. I don't anticipate that part of spring quite as much, but I know it needs done all the same. One of the reasons that I don't quite enjoy those spring cleaning tasks is because I know that they will just need done again. Like making the bed, washing dishes, sweeping and vacuuming; repetitive chores are the worst. I am not sure how it happens but every time I do the dishes, I only have to wait ten minutes and there are more dishes to be done. The same is true for our spring cleaning routine. Things that were organized only a few short days ago stand in disarray. Things that were fixed moments ago need mended once again. Our lives, it seems, move from tidiness to disarray.

The scientific term for this quality of existence is called entropy. While entropy can be defined a few different ways (from heat loss in a thermodynamic system to a loss of information in transmitted messages) the one that works best for us is the definition that names entropy as the inevitable deterioration of a closed system. That definition states that things move from order to chaos. It says that no matter how many times you organize your movies or your music or your Tupperware, you will have to do it again. It says that no matter how many times you wash the windows or vacuum the car out; very soon it will need to be done again.

Now I don't think that it is simply coincidence that the Christian season of Lent falls right in the midst of our spring cleaning because often, far too often, I feel that my spiritual life needs some serious spring cleaning. No matter how many times I clean myself up, no matter how many times I dust myself off, get back to reading scripture and praying and fasting and performing all my spiritual duties, I find I need to start cleaning again. It's exhausting. Every time I feel like I am at the top of a spiritual hill, I look around and find out that I'm in the middle of a valley again. Can you relate to that? It would seem that entropy applies to our spiritual lives just as it applies to the physical reality of creation. But then again, maybe not.

Certainly the Lenten season has always been a time to focus on preparing yourself for Easter. A time to get the cobwebs out through prayer, penance, repentance, almsgiving and self-denial. But I think that statement might be part of the problem as well. Lent has always been a time for the individual to focus on piety. And as we have seen, no matter how many times we clean things out, they will need cleaning again. Just as the concept of entropy states, in any closed system, order moves to disorder. But we are not a closed system are we? Sure, by myself I am a closed system and I will have to keep struggling with spring cleaning every single year. But the church body, made up of individuals in community with the presence of God saturating the space in and between, is not a closed system. We can look beyond ourselves for help. We can move beyond our own thinking and living and find renewal and reinvigoration beyond anything that we can provide for ourselves. In faith communities we can find a way out of our cyclical monotony. With those of faith and through our Creator we can find relief from our old habitual struggles and vices. So this Lent, don't simply go through the same spiritual spring cleaning, let God do the power washing and let the congregation dry you off.
Pastor Chris

HOLY WEEK AT FIRST CHRISTIAN

PALM SUNDAY, MARCH 25

- WORSHIP 10:45 A.M.
- Easter Baskets presented to Homes for Kids during worship.



MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE, MARCH 29, 7:30 P.M.

GOOD FRIDAY TENEBRAE SERVICE, MARCH 30, 7:30 P.M.

PRAYER VIGIL MARCH 31

EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 1

- Worship **10:00 a.m.**
- Easter Egg Hunt 9:15 a.m. for children through grade 5.



OUR 2018 EASTER SPECIAL OFFERING supports the General Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ.) We will be accepting this offering Palm Sunday through Easter Sunday.

OFFICIAL BOARD MEETING will be held **SUNDAY, MARCH 18** in the board room following worship.

BELOW IS A LIST OF THE 2018 CAMP DATES. PLEASE BEGIN THINKING WHICH WEEK YOU WOULD LIKE TO ATTEND:

Otter Camp for youth who have completed 3rd-5th grade: June 17 – 23rd

Chi Rho Camp for youth who have completed 6th-8th grade:

Emmaus: June 3rd-9th; Corinth: July 8th – 14th; Damascus: July 22nd - 28th

CYF Conference for youth who have completed 9th-12th grade:

Conference #1: June 10th-16th; Conference #2: June 24th-30th; Conference #3 July 15th - 21st

CYF SOUP LUNCHEON will be held **this Sunday, March 4** following worship in fellowship hall. Please support our youth with this fundraiser. CYF is hosting a **Parents Night Out** on Fri., March 23 from 6-9 p.m. in fellowship hall. A **CYF Meeting** will be held Sun., March 25 in the CYF Room following worship.



CHI RHO 'THANK YOU' PASTA LUNCHEON will be held **March 11** following worship in fellowship hall. There is no cost. Thank you to everyone who helped with Chi Rho's coffee fundraiser project. \$100 was collected and sent to the Animal Welfare League of Trumbull County. The group will be going to see the movie 'I Can Only Imagine' on March 18. Everyone is welcome to join them.

'SOUPER BOWL OF CARING' UPDATE: Offering collected by our CYF and Chi Rho youth on February 4th totaled \$144, which was divided between Rescue Mission of the Mahoning Valley and Second Harvest Food Bank. Our youth wish to thank the congregation for their support. To date nationwide 2,809 groups have participated in 2018 'Souper Bowl of Caring' with \$7,667,388 in cash and food items given to charities in their areas!

CYF WOMEN VS. MEN FOOD DRIVE UPDATE – the men collected 585 food items; women collected 285 items for a total of 870! All the food was delivered to the Youngstown Rescue Mission of the Mahoning Valley. Thank you for supporting this worthy cause.

BIBLE STUDY meets on Tuesday evenings at 7 p.m. in the church parlor. Everyone is welcome to join us!

DISCIPLE WOMEN'S JAIL MINISTRY TEAM will be conducting worship services on the Mondays of March 5 and March 19 at 6:45 p.m. at the Trumbull County Jail.

FCC VOLUNTEERS will serve a dinner **Tuesday, March 27** 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 the library parking lot.

MARCH BIRTHDAYS:

March 5 Charles Treharn	March 11 Lynne Judy	March 17 J. J. Crowley	March 26 Emily Karr
March 6 Carol Blystone	March 12 Liza Yoder	March 18 Justin Lamp	March 28 Jen Lyszaz
March 6 Maria Crowley	March 14 Doug Neuman	March 20 David Pressell	March 28 Gregg Marsteller
March 9 Tom Appel	March 15 Robert Hughes, Sr.	March 24 Pastor Chris	March 30 Jeff Jornigan
March 9 Jennifer Sheldon-Huff	March 16 Keith Lamp	March 25 Norma Pappada	March 31 Hayden Miller

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION is once again sponsoring **Easter baskets** for **Homes for Kids, Inc.** Homes for Kids, Inc. is a non-profit treatment foster care agency for children. **This mission project is open to the congregation.** Some suggestions (anything that will fit into an Easter basket): **younger folks** - books, games, balls, jacks, jump ropes, crayons, coloring books, dolls, puzzles; **older children** - nail polish, jewelry, barrettes, hand held video games, small cars/trucks, Uno, things for school, gift cards. Baskets will be presented to Homes for Kids during worship on Palm Sunday, March 25. **Deadline for donations is March 11.** Donations may be placed in the box provided in the narthex.



SMALL WRAPPED EASTER CANDY (**NO SUCKERS or GUM** please) is needed for our **Easter Egg Hunt**. Please bring items to the church office **no later than March 25th**.

CHURCH WOMEN UNITED 'World Day of Prayer' will be held this Friday, March 2 at the Warren Salvation Army. Registration begins at 10 a.m.; Program 11 a.m.; Luncheon at noon. Cost for lunch is \$6. For more information contact Georgeanne Walters.

MISSIONS LENTEN PROJECT is collecting pill bottle coins/bills (through Easter Sunday) for the Christian Blind Mission, an organization that distributes vitamin A to children in third world countries (\$1.00 provides a yearly dose of Vitamin A to help prevent blindness in children). Pill bottles to place your donation in are available in the narthex.

PASTOR CHRIS STARK CONTACT INFO: cell phone 330.442.2558; email address pastorchrisstark@gmail.com.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER ITEMS is Mon., March 26 by 11:30 a.m.



MARCH NEWSNOTES **Week of Compassion Offering** total received is \$649 **Elders** will meet this Sun., March 4 following worship in the library **Disciples Men** will meet this Sun., March 4 at 8 a.m. at Perkins **Stewardship** and **Finance** will meet Sunday, March 11 at 9 a.m. **TMH Psych Unit Worship Service** will be held Sunday, March 11 at 2 p.m. **'It Is Finished' Meeting** will be held Sun., March 11 following worship **Lydia Circle** ladies will get together at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, March 14 in the parlor **Ohio Women's Ministry** (OWM) is collecting **canned fruit** for Niles Community Services during the month of March. Donations may be placed in the cabinet in the main hallway

BE SURE TO TURN YOUR CLOCKS AHEAD ONE HOUR SATURDAY NIGHT, MARCH 10.
DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS SUNDAY, MARCH 11.

NEWS & EVENTS
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