



THE CHIMES

FEBRUARY 2025

Volume Number 2
Published 11 Months 2025

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
ALLIANCE, OH 44601
PERMIT NO. 298

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**Our Mission is to Make Disciples of Jesus Christ and to
Serve God by Sharing Compassion Hope and Love**

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THE CHIMES

February 2025



VISION STATEMENT

The people of Christ United Methodist Church will:

- COURAGEOUSLY REACH OUT AND WELCOME
- PASSIONATELY WORSHIP AND PRAY
- INTENTIONALLY NURTURE AND ENCOURAGE
- LOVINGLY SHARE AND SERVE.

MISSION STATEMENT

**OUR MISSION IS TO MAKE DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST (MATTHEW 28:19-20) AND TO SERVE
GOD BY SHARING COMPASSION, HOPE, AND LOVE.**

2024 Year in Review

Once again, our “End of Year” reports have been filed with the East Ohio Annual Conference office. And so, as always, this seems like a suitable time to look at how we did and how things are going. Of course, numbers don’t tell us everything, but I think we had a good year overall.

We began 2024 with 281 members. Over the course of the year, we lost only one member to death and one to transfer, which is much less than in most previous years. In addition, we added six new members, which again, is one more than the previous year. So, we ended the year with 285 members. As I mentioned last year, our survival as a church depends upon us inviting new people to worship, connecting them to small groups and other ministries of the church, so that they eventually feel that becoming a member is an easy decision.

I had expected that our attendance would increase, and it did, but perhaps not as much as I had hoped. But, regardless of my expectations, our average attendance did increase from 70 to 72 and it is always good when we move in a positive direction. Our online attendance via YouTube fell from 36 to 20, likely because we were not streaming during the Advent and Christmas season which normally have more viewers. And our United Women in Faith saw a modest decline in membership falling from 55 to 53. Once again, we saw an increase in attendance with the number of children and youth in attendance increasing from 11 to 13 and overall, Sunday school attendance increasing from 44 to 46. Overall, given our average attendance in worship, the number of persons attending Sunday school is astounding in comparison to national averages.

After seeing a seven percent decline in giving last year, this year we stayed almost flat with a 63-dollar decline. This is good news compared to last year, but as we all know, our expenses aren’t going down any time soon, so this remains a concern. Worse, since our church will no longer sell our burgers in the park during the Carnation Days festival, we can already project a decline in that income for this year.

Our Facebook page has stayed the same with 298 followers and, despite our current livestream hiatus, our YouTube channel has increased from 123 subscribers to 137. Our online sermon webpage gets about 71 visits per week with a slight increase over last year, those same sermons are sent out to 447 subscribers by email, which is an increase of 147 over last year. Of those, about 10 percent actually open the emails, which is about 45 people, and that’s down a little from last year. So, what does all that mean?

It means that we are still relevant, and people are still finding value in what we do. It means that Christ Church is connected to 13 ministries for outreach, justice, and mercy for the poor and the socially marginalized. One of the informal questions that has been used for years has been, “If your church disappeared tomorrow, would anyone in your neighborhood notice?” And clearly, the answer to that is a resounding “Yes.” Many of our neighbors rely on us to get through each week and that means that what we are doing is important. It also means that, through our online presence, we are having an impact far beyond the walls of our church even if we might never meet the people with whom we are connecting. And in a world where declining attendance is normal, our attendance is increasing, and the average age of our congregation is shifting younger.

These are all good things. But we still have challenges in front of us. Our expenses will continue to go up and the loss of many older givers has hurt us. If attendance and giving does not increase, we will soon be faced with the necessity of cutting our budget and staff. We hope that we will not need to make these hard choices. But I know that the people of Christ Church believe in what we are doing so I hope that each of us will continue to invite our friends and neighbors and spread the word about how we are making a difference in downtown Alliance.

Overall, the good things that we are seeing outweigh the negatives. We are doing good. We are growing. We are making a difference and changing the world one life at a time. There is good reason for us to have hope for a brighter future.



LENTEN WEEKLY DEVOTIONS 2025

Again, this year Pastor Chris Martin will offer 30-minute Lenten devotions each Thursday evening during Lent, beginning on Thursday, March 6, and concluding on Thursday, April 10. The devotions will be accessible via ZOOM, beginning at 7 PM and concluding at 7:30 PM each week. The zoom link will be sent out weekly to all emails registered with the Christ United Methodist Church office. Participants are asked to access the link five to seven minutes before 7 PM so we can begin promptly at 7 PM. Each devotion will include a Call to Worship, an Opening Prayer, a Scripture Lesson, and a brief Meditation recalling some aspect of the Passion of Jesus.

2025 LENTEN SERIES

March 6, 2025 – *Recalling the Significance of Ash Wednesday*

March 13, 2025 – *Recalling the Significance of Jesus Washing Feet*

March 20, 2025 – *Recalling the Significance of Palm/Passion Sunday*

March 27, 2025 – *Recalling the Significance of Maundy Thursday Evening*

April 3, 2025 – *Recalling the Significance of Good Friday*

April 10, 2025 – *Recalling the Significance of the Easter Vigil*



The Congregational Care Committee would like to thank the congregation for their continued support in connecting with our persons-of-the-week.

The notes that you have written on the cards that are available in the lounge have been well received. Many of the people have even expressed their gratitude to the church office or directly to the sender.

You probably have noticed that our person-of-the-week is not necessarily a “shut-in”, or even a non-attending member of our congregation. If you know of someone who should be remembered, please make your suggestion to the church office.

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH UPDATE:



United
Women
in Faith

FEBRUARY 4 (7PM) – UNIT MEETING via ZOOM

****Program offered via Zoom only****

Program: **“Experience Mission u”**

Presenter: **Pat Helsel**

Installation of Officers will be held

Our meetings are open to anyone who would like to attend.

If you'd like to “Zoom in”, contact Nancy Prueter at prueter@sbcglobal.net for an invitation.

Gifts to **A Call to Prayer and Self-Denial** will be collected at February Circle Meetings and will directly support United Women in Faith's programs for **Bold Women Transforming Communities**.

Your selfless giving joins the generosity of others who lift their hearts and hands to God to support economic development projects, vocational training, life skills, and livelihood training internationally.

Gifts to A Call to Prayer and Self-Denial 2025 will support international work put into action by United Women in Faith. Funds will support the work of United Methodist conference women's teams that lead projects that make a direct impact on improving the lives of their families and community members. Funds raised will also support the work of the conference women's desk coordinators and Regional Missionaries who partner in this work.

GOOD TO KNOW:

Thank you to everyone that purchased UnStuffed Pepper Soup in January!

IT'S TIME FOR ANOTHER WINTER SOUP SALE!

In **February** we will offer **15 Bean and Ham Soup** - \$8 quart – pickup on February 23
Pre-order is required / watch for our display in the lounge.

“HEAT AND EAT” MEATLOAF MEAL coming in **MARCH**, stay tuned for details!

MARCH UNIT MEETING

March 4th 7PM, Dussel Room

Program: **Alliance Domestic Violence Shelter Update**

Hostesses/Greeters: **May Smyth Circle**

CENTRAL VALLEY DISTRICT MEETING

March 22nd 9AM, Alliance CUMC Fellowship Hall (registration required, please see Jill Greiner)

Registration & Brunch – 9AM, Meeting begins at 9:30AM, Lunch to follow

Program: **HELPING FAMILIES IN NEED**

Mission Theme: **SUPPORTING MISSIONS**
Speakers from "Protestant Family Services & "Soul Care"

Please bring a special collection for Protestant Family Services

United Women in Faith always welcomes guests and new members.
Please call Jamie Greiner at (412) 601-4275 or any Executive Board Officer, if interested.

- The Unit** meets on most 1st Tuesdays at 7pm in the Dussel Room
- ❖ **Peg Williams Circle** meets at 1:00pm on 3rd Mondays at Copeland Oaks, Williamsburg Lounge
 - ❖ **M & M Circle** meets at 7pm on 3rd Mondays in the Dussel Room
 - ❖ **May Smyth Circle** meets at 10:30am on 3rd Tuesdays in the Dussel Room
 - ❖ **Susie Buckel Circle** meets at 7pm on 3rd Tuesdays in the Dussel Room



The January Chuckwagon collected 21 food items and \$95 with \$47 given to the Alliance Salvation Army and \$48 given to Alliance of Churches. Look for the chuckwagon and the noisy can collection on February 16th.

Church Women of Alliance Area

Church Women of the Alliance Area will gather on February 7th at 1 P.M. at the Rodman Library, following the Board meeting. The program/fun entertainment for the day will be "Valentine Bingo" . Bring a friend to enjoy the friendship and fun.

UMF SOUP ORDER FORM

Date: _____

Please fill out this form to order your soup.

NAME _____ 15 Bean & Ham Soup \$8 per quart QTY ____

15 BEAN AND HAM SOUP: Place your order by February 16th. Pickup will be on February 23rd. Soup will be frozen. You may pay for your soup when you pick it up. Thank you for your support!

Hats off to United Women in Faith For making a difference in the community and the world

United Women in Faith has been fortunate to be able to demonstrate the mission of our organization by making a difference in our community and the world again this year.

This holiday season donations were made to the Alliance of Churches, Alliance Community Pantry, Clothed in Righteousness, Domestic Violence Shelter, Habitat for Humanity, RAM Ministries, Salvation Army, Sebring Schools Outreach and the YWCA.

In May, we contributed to the YWCA Transitional Housing Fund to assist in its completion and in establishing a fund with the Greater Alliance Foundation for its continued support by the Alliance community.

We have been able to make this impact in the community for several reasons.

First, we have been able to utilize the generous bequest left to UMF by Leonard and Martha Goldrick. Our second source of income is thanks to you, the congregation, for supporting our soup sales, meatloaf dinner sale and the basement sales. And finally, we thank the faithful members who annually pledge to support global ministries through the unit's generous pledge to the District UWF, as well as contributions to the Prayer and Self-denial offering and the Thank offering.

The United Women in Faith of Christ United Methodist Church were able to put \$42,000 to work turning faith, hope and love into action on behalf of women, children and youth around the world and in our community.

FINANCE

Dear Faithful Members and Friends of CUMC,

As we close the 2024 finances of our church, the Finance Committee is taking this opportunity to share a final report with you.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone for your gifts of time, talents, and financial support throughout the year. These gifts allowed Christ Church to continue its support of local and worldwide missions of both our church and the greater Methodist Church. With your faithful contributions we met ALL of our financial obligations for 2024.

As we turn our attention to 2025 we are confident, with your continued support, we can fulfill the mission of our church, "To Make Disciples of Jesus Christ and To Serve God by Sharing Compassion, Hope, and Love."

With Gratitude,
The Finance Committee

WORSHIP PARTICIPANTS FOR FEBRUARY

USHERS - Team #1

Dick Diser – Captain
Dan Feess John Innerst
Don Kingan Todd Skivolocki
Bob Travis

LITURGISTS

2 Victor Lee
9 Jim Greiner
16 Pat Helsel
23 Chris Martin

WELCOME CENTER GREETERS

2 Jean Webster
9 Bonnie McVicker
16 Kathy Stroia
23 Denise Aeling

SANCTUARY GREETERS

2 Bill Sol
9 Patti Travis
16 Ellen Sol
23 Jill Greiner

FEBRUARY TELLERS

2 Donna Essick/Jill Greiner
9 Jim Greiner/Nancy Prueter
16 Bill Prueter/Dick Diser
23 Pat Helsel/Marilyn Ruff

VISITATION MEMBERS

2 Faye Heim, Alliance
9 Charlie Manypenny, Sebring
16 Dan Gard, Canton
23 Lynn Goldrick, Sebring

BIRTHDAYS

FEBRUARY

5 Christopher Handy
7 Marilyn Ruff
7 Joyce Tolerton
12 Williams Rogers

BIRTHDAYS

14 Michael Shields
14 Bobbie Wright
21 Ellen Sol
21 Dolores Lawrence



FROM THE LIVING MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

Application for a College Grant

All 2023-24 high school graduates who are church members and are advancing their education in any two or four year program are eligible (available ONE TIME ONLY) for a \$500 grant. They may send a letter to the Living Memorial Scholarship Committee, Christ United Methodist Church, 470 East Broadway Street, Alliance, OH 44601-2698 and indicate the level of participation in church (see below), the school they will be attending and the program of study. Also, all undergraduate members of the church now in college, full time, may also apply for this same grant by submitting a similar letter.

Application for a College Loan

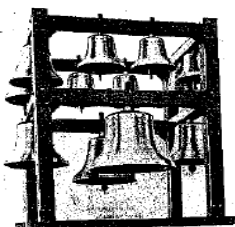
The LIVING MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND which was established in 1960 and revised in 1986 is funded by gifts from the congregation. These funds are held by the Trustees and are granted as loans to persons wishing to further their education.

Criteria established at that time determined that the applicant be an active member of Christ United Methodist Church. Active also means participation in at least three of the following programs at Christ United Methodist Church: (During the pandemic, we know you haven't been able to participate in person. If you have participated in the prior 3-4 years, this will work.)

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| A. Worship Services | E. Handbell Choir |
| B. Church School Classes | F. Boy Scouts |
| C. Youth Fellowship (U.M.Y.F.) | G. Other |
| D. Vocal Choir | |

Loans are now available for up to \$3,000.00 per year for up to 4 yrs. and are approved by the Living Memorial Scholarship Committee. Interest shall be charged at the rate of 1% per annum on the unpaid balance, and repayment will start six months after graduation or discontinuation of schooling. A parent or guardian shall be required to cosign any such loans, if the student is a minor. A written letter to the Committee shall contain the name and address of the applicant, the date, the amount requested, the institution where applicant has been accepted, the class level of the applicant (freshmen, sophomore, etc.) and expected graduation or completion date of study.

The congregation is to be commended for their support in funding the furthering of higher education.



CHIMES DEADLINE: The deadline for the March 2025 issue of *The Chimes* is Tuesday, February 24th. Articles may be placed in the Secretary's slot outside the church office or emailed to secretary@cumcalliance.org

Volunteer Opportunities

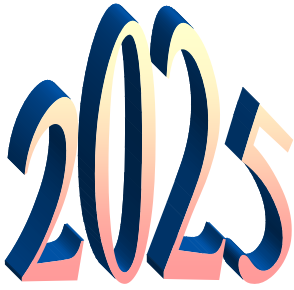
Remember that we can all be part of the Outreach of CUMC. Our commitment of Time, Talent, Gifts, Service and Witness are part of our stated MISSION to make disciples of Jesus Christ by sharing Compassion, Hope and Love in our Church, Community and the World.




Christian Outreach Committee
for the continuation of our work through GOD'S CHURCH
January 19, 2025

CUMC List of Volunteer Opportunities

Will you volunteer to?

- 1) Be an usher? a Sanctuary greeter? Or a Welcome Center greeter?
- 2) Be a Tuesday Neighborhood Dinner host (or substitute)
- 3) Deliver Chuck Wagon food donations to the Salvation Army or Food Pantry
- 4) Be an 'Adult Friend' to one of the Sunday School children
- 5) Send a card to a sick or homebound member (person of the week)
- 6) Help serve the '5th Tuesday' Dinner when CUMC is preparing the dinner
- 7) Make cookies for '5th Tuesday' Dinner (next opportunity in April)
- 8) Prepare and serve lunch at 12:00 noon following the Chapel Service. Usually there are 10 to 15 Mount Union students in attendance.
- 9) Assist in the Alliance of Churches 'Bread Ministry' (1st Floor Education Wing')
- 10) Re-fill the 'Pew racks' with Blue Prayer cards and Offering envelopes
- 11) Encourage your team(group) to prepare and host a Fellowship Luncheon
- 12) Donate office supplies for use in the CUMC Historical Room (binders, folders, sheet protectors, or other miscellaneous office supplies)
- 13) Musical instruments (Brass or Strings) for use with the newly formed choirs (your musical talent as well?)
- 14) Assist in the Church Library
- 15) Add to this list of 'Opportunities' to make CUMC what we all would envision it to be!
- 16) Donate full-sized brown grocery bags (pre COVID size) to the annual Peanut Brittle Project (1 pound coffee cans as well)
- 17) Donate large plastic tubs for storage and shipping donations to Red Bird mission
- 18) Be a Scout Leader or sub-attend Monday evening meetings (Scouts and Cubs)
- 19) Participate with the Prayer Shawl Ministry making Afghans
- 20) Be part of the Sound System or Live Stream and/or WEB page maintenance team
- 21) Assist with communion and wear your name tag every week
- 22) Invite a friend to our church or organize work projects around the Church
- 23) Be a Sunday School teacher or substitute
- 24) Visit church members and/or welcome visitors
- 25) Record and maintain records of church history and/or take photographs
- 26) Maintain church Child Safety policies and/or help with Stewardship activities
- 27) Help with the community garden



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 4 th Sunday after Epiphany Boy Scout Sunday	3 6:30p Scouts	4 5p Comm Dinner 7p Zoom UWF Unit Meeting	5 5:30p Halleluia Bells 6:15p Brass Ensemble 6:45p Chancel Bells 7:30p Chancel Vocal	6	7	8
9 5 th Sunday after Epiphany	10 6:30p Scouts	11 5p Comm Dinner	12 5:30p Halleluia Bells 6:15p Brass Ensemble 6:45p Chancel Bells 7:30p Chancel Vocal	13	14 	15
16 6 st Sunday after Epiphany	17 1p Peg Williams Circle 6:30p Scouts 7p M&M Circle 	18 10:30 May Smyth Circle 5p Comm Dinner 7p Susie Buckel Circle	19 5:30p Halleluia Bells 6:15p Brass Ensemble 6:45p Chancel Bells 7:30p Chancel Vocal	20	21	22
2 7 th Sunday after Epiphany	24 6:30p Scouts 7p UWF Exec. Board	25 5p Comm Dinner 6:30p Trustees	26 5:30p Halleluia Bells 6:15p Brass Ensemble 6:45p Chancel Bells 7:30p Chancel Vocal	27	28 