



# ***THE CHIMES***

***March 2025***

Volume Number 3

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Christ United Methodist Church  
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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***

**March 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.**

## **The Importance of Being Invitational**

This past week (February 23<sup>rd</sup>), the Sebring United Methodist Church held their last worship service. Shortly, they will turn the keys to their building over to the East Ohio Annual Conference and next week their congregation will begin to worship with the neighboring Presbyterian church. Officially, the United Methodist congregation will still exist, but as a partner to the Presbyterian congregation and with a single pastor that serves both paper churches in the same sanctuary. I don't know if this will be listed as a church closure at Annual Conference or if they will name it something else, but from a conversation that I had with one of their church members, for some of them, it sure feels as if the church has ended and they are grieving a death.

I am also aware of another local congregation that will soon make the decision to close. No public statement has yet been made so I will not provide any more details beyond the following. They might make it until Easter or might stretch until summer, but financially, the writing on the wall seems to be clear that soon they will be unable to pay their bills. Here at Christ Church, it appears that we are continuing to grow, but slowly. Even so, the losses that we have seen in recent years are being seen in our budget and in the offering plate. If we had not inherited our endowment from the faithful members of earlier generations, we might well be facing a similar crisis.

Rather than ring our hands, and worry about the future, there are things that we can be doing. Separate from church, I would like to show you two examples. You may know that Troop and Pack 50 are both doing well. Monday evening six more Cubs received their Arrow of Light award and crossed over into our scout troop. But every year, our Cub scouts, scouts, and scout leaders have recruiting drives. During this time of year, every elementary school will be visited, flyers are sent home, presentations are made, questions are answered, and children and their parents are invited to join the Cub pack. Scouts also regularly invite their friends from school, an open house(s) is held, more parents are invited, more questions are answered, and our scout troop sometimes even holds a campout at Silver Park to demonstrate scouting skills to the public and invite young people to join the pack or troop, as appropriate.

Two years ago, the Sebring Model Railroad Club, where I am a member, decided to do something different in the way that they promoted their annual open house. A generation ago, they would run an advertisement in the local newspaper, distribute a few flyers around town, and a thousand or more people would visit and donate to the club. But, as we have seen in the church, in recent years fewer people subscribe to, or read, newspapers. One result has been that attendance at the club open house fell from well over a thousand, to just over a hundred. But two years ago, the club decided to try something different. We printed two thousand business cards that invited folks to our open house. Every club member was expected to pass out 75 to 100 cards over the span of a few months, inviting friends, coworkers, and anyone they met throughout their day. We also purchased yard signs for members to put out along the streets where they lived. And attendance increased. What's more, as we've done a better job advertising ourselves, our membership has increased as well. We still have a long way to go before we see the kind of crowds that were common a generation ago but, so far, we've been able to double our attendance. This year, we're trying something else that is new to us. We know that it's going to take time, but we're willing to innovate and experiment. Our survival depends upon it.

I am convinced that Troop and Pack 50 are healthy and growing, in part, because of the efforts that they make to be invitational. I am certain that the Sebring Model Railroad Club would not be doing as well as they are if they had not decided to innovate, experiment, and be more personally invitational. What may have worked a generation ago, doesn't necessarily work today. There are many reasons why the members of Christ Church choose to attend here. The people are great, the music program is strong, the building is gorgeous and well maintained, and the pastor might be okay as well. But no

one is likely to know that unless someone tells them. Even people who know something about us probably won't come unless someone invites them.

At the model railroad club, two thousand (last year) invitations increased our attendance by one hundred guests. That works out to be a success rate of about one in twenty. What if we did that at Christ Church? What if every regular attender invited twenty people over the course of the year? If we had that same kind of success at the train club, the result might be eighty first-time visitors each year and some percentage of those might choose to attend more often or even join the church. If we all choose to innovate and experiment, it is entirely possible that we could double the size of our congregation in five years. Doing what we've done for generations doesn't guarantee success. It is important that every one of us becomes more invitational.

Maybe that means we have more conversations with the people that we meet in the community, or that we become more intentional about passing out invitation cards. But it is important that we do something different.

Our survival may depend upon it.

Blessings,

*Pastor John*



## HEAT AND EAT MEATLOAF MEAL ORDER FORM

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please fill out this form to order your carry-out meal(s).

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Meatloaf Meal

\$12 per meal

QTY \_\_\_\_\_

**HEAT AND EAT MEATLOAF MEALS:** Place your order by March 23<sup>rd</sup>. Pickup will be after church on Sunday, March 30<sup>th</sup>. Meal includes meatloaf, scalloped potatoes, corn, coleslaw and cookies. Each meal will serve one person and will be packaged for carry-out to heat and eat. You may pay for your meals when you pick them up. Thank you for your support!

**UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH UPDATE:**



United  
Women  
in Faith

**March 4 (7PM) – UNIT MEETING, Dussel Room**

**\*\*Program also offered via Zoom\*\***

**Program:** Alliance Domestic Violence Shelter Update: *“Help is Available”*

**Greeters/Hostesses:** May Smyth Circle

**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](mailto:prueter@sbcglobal.net) for an invitation.**

**GOOD TO KNOW:**

A big **THANK YOU** to everyone that prepared and purchased **15 HAM AND BEAN SOUP** in February! The money collected helps support the needs of women and children in our community.

**“HEAT AND EAT” MEATLOAF MEAL** is back!

The meals are \$12.00/each, orders will be taken in the Lounge through March 23<sup>rd</sup>, and **pick-up will be March 30<sup>th</sup>**

**CENTRAL VALLEY DISTRICT MEETING**

**March 22<sup>nd</sup> 9AM**, Alliance CUMC Fellowship Hall (**registration required**, please see Jill Greiner)

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*

*Lite Brunch & Lunch provided*

**APRIL UNIT MEETING**

April 1, 7PM, Dussel Room

**Program:** Alliance Salvation Army Update: “Doing the Most Good”

**Hostesses/Greeters:** M&M Circle

**UPCOMING (Save the dates):**

**United Women in Faith Sunday, April 27<sup>th</sup>, Theme:** “Love in Action”

**Spring Basement Sale**, Set-up May 1<sup>st</sup>, Sale May 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>

**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.

- ❖ **Peg Williams Circle** meets at 1pm 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

# WORSHIP PARTICIPANTS FOR MARCH

## USHERS - Team #2

Jim Greiner – Captain  
John Christian            Mike Greiner  
Jim Harshman            Bill Sol  
Gene Stroia

## LITURGISTS

2    Jamie Greiner  
9    Bill Sol  
16   Susan Haddox  
23   Ellen Sol  
30   Judith Hookway

## WELCOME CENTER GREETERS

2    Karen Locke  
9    Peg Rodefer  
16   Kathy Stroia  
23   Denise Aeling  
30   Nancy Prueter

## SANCTUARY GREETERS

2    Bill Sol  
9    Ellen Sol  
16   Patti Travis  
17   Dick Diser  
30   Jill Greiner

## TELLERS

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

## VISITATION MEMBERS\*\*

2    Sharon & Casey Riddle, Alliance  
9    Mary Aufrance, Alliance  
16   Craig Post, N. Canton  
23   Faye Heim, Alliance  
30   Charlie Manypenny, Sebring  
\*\* If you would like their complete address, please  
contact the Church Office

# BIRTHDAYS

## MARCH BIRTHDAYS

4	Brian Skidmore	22	Courtney Webster
9	John Webster	27	Dave Austin
10	Brad Bolog	27	Lew Shields
14	L. Chris Martin	29	Amanda Montgomery
18	Craig Post		

## MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

20	Dan & Sheila Gard
30	Janet & John Fisher



**CHIMES DEADLINE:** The deadline for the April 2024 issue of *The Chimes* is Tuesday, March 19<sup>th</sup>. Articles may be placed in the Secretary's slot outside the church office or emailed to [secretary@cumcalliance.org](mailto:secretary@cumcalliance.org)

# EASTER

March 5 <sup>th</sup>	ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE	7:00 P.M.
April 13 <sup>th</sup>	PALM SUNDAY	7:00 P.M.
April 17 <sup>th</sup>	MAUNDY THURSDAY	7:00 P.M.
April 18 <sup>th</sup>	GOOD FRIDAY ALLIANCE COMMUNITY SERVICE	7:00 P.M.
April 20 <sup>th</sup>	EASTER VIGIL	8:00 P.M.
April 21 <sup>st</sup>	SONRISE SERVICE	8:00 P.M.
	EASTER WORSHIP SERVICE	10:15 A.M.



## 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*

# ***BLESSING BAG UPDATE***

Thank you for your Blessing Bag Donations. We will be doing more bags in April. We can use Ladies deodorants, Toothpaste, Men's & Ladies' socks, small water bottles and cosmetic bags.

Jean & Carolyn



On Martin Luther King Day, nine University of Mount Union students volunteered their time to help wash the tables and chairs in our Fellowship Hall. We thank them for their efforts!

## **Christian Outreach**

We will be collecting food and cash donations to the Alliance Food Pantry during the month of March. Collection boxes will be in the Lounge area.

The pantry asks for our emphasis on collecting "Canned Meat" and "Paper Products." Of course, any donations will be put to good use!

These specified items are not available through the Food Bank connections that the Pantry maintains.

All donations for this effort will be used for people in need of the Alliance area.

Thank you for your support!!

Christian Outreach Committee of CUMC

# MARCH 2025



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
<b>2</b> Transfiguration Sunday	<b>3</b> 7p Scouts	<b>4</b> 5p Community Dinner 7p Unit Meeting UWIF	<b>5</b> 5:30p Halleluia Bells 6:00p Brass Ensemble 7:00p Ash Wed, Serv, 7:40pish Chancel Vocal	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b> 1st Sunday in Lent  Daylight Savings Time begins	<b>10</b> 7p Scouts	<b>11</b> 5p Community Dinner 6:30 Finance 7p Admin Council.	<b>12</b> 5:30p Halleluia Bells 6:15p Brass Ensemble 6:45p Chancel Bells 7:30p Chancel Vocal	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>16</b> 2nd Sunday in Lent	<b>17</b> <b>St. Patrick Day</b> 1p Peg Williams Circle -Williamsburg 7p Scouts 7p M & M Circle	<b>18</b> 10:30 May Smyth Circle 5p Community Dinner 7p Susie Buckel Circle	<b>19</b> 5:30p Halleluia Bells 6:15p Brass Ensemble 6:30p Chancel Bells 7:30p Chancel Vocal	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>23 3rd</b> Sunday in Lent	<b>24</b> 7p Scouts 7P UWF Executive	<b>25</b> 5p Community Dinner 6:30p Trustees 7:15p Worship	<b>26</b> 5:30p Halleluia Bells 615p Brass Ensemble 6:45p Chancel Bells 7:30p Chancel Vocal	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> 
<b>30</b> 4th Sunday in Lent	<b>31</b> 7p Scouts					