

December 2023

Rev. Jeff Bandy
937-372-7601 office@fcum.org www.fcum.org.

9:00am-Sunday School

10:00am-Hospitality Time-Narthex

10:30am-Worship-Sanctuary

We are a Stephen Ministry Congregation

Attendance

<u>Date</u>	<u>Worship</u>	<u>S.S.</u>
October 29	100	24
November 5	100	34
November 12	93	30
November 19	100	30

From the Pastor

Dear Faith Community,

We have finished the last of the turkey leftovers and can't believe Advent, Christmas and the New Year are upon us. Our days are short and nights are long. We are sensing the busyness of the season, which for some is exciting, while others become anxious. Much of the craziness that comes this time of year is brought on by the commercialization of Christmas. Even though so much can be lost in the frenzy, there are many good things that can be enjoyed. I encourage everyone to be joyful and to be the bright spot in people's lives while you are at work, out shopping, gathering with friends and family, serving your community, or running errands. So many people we run into don't know the Lord who loved us so much to come and be with us. Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us! John the Baptist's father Zechariah prophesied, "*Because of our God's deep compassion, the dawn of heaven will break upon us, to give light to those who are sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide us on the path of peace.*" Luke 1:78-79, CEB). The light of Christ is in each of us. Let us show compassion to the world and guide them to the true light who is Jesus Christ. Jesus is

our peace and the peace of all who come to know him. May the joy we have in the Lord invite others to find the same joy!

Merry Christmas, Pastor Jeff

Stephen Ministry

In Everything Give Thanks!

Yes, Thanksgiving is over for another year, and we are entering Advent and the Christmas season. Let's face it. In some seasons of life, being grateful and celebrating is just plain hard, and especially so at holiday times. We find ourselves overwhelmed with circumstances and underwhelmed with relationships. With pre-occupied minds and aching hearts, it goes against our nature to give thanks anyway. But that is exactly what the Lord asks of us. *Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 5:18).*

But...How can we give thanks and celebrate if we have lost our job, been diagnosed with a disease, can't conceive, have a friend who refuses to talk to us? How can we give thanks if we are spending the holidays alone...again, our marriage is falling apart, our child is suffering, we've lost a loved one? How can we give thanks if we don't know what the future holds? We can give thanks because even though we are struggling, our God is still with us. In each situation our Creator gives us glimpses of hope in a sacred silver lining. How do we do that? It's the place where God is working all things together for good. It's where the hidden blessings are stored. They aren't always easy to find, but they are always there. The secret to giving thanks in all circumstances is to find His sacred lining. How do we do that?

We will find His sacred lining when we give thanks for what we do have, instead of complaining about what we don't have. (Philippians 4:11-13)

As we enter the season of Advent and Christmas, let's be intentional about giving thanks no matter what.

Yes, circumstances can be challenging. Yes, relationships can be broken, but we serve a God who is for us, not against us. Let's look for His sacred lining and give thanks to God when we find it.

Know someone who may be having a difficult time? Send them a handwritten card, invite them to share a holiday event, spend time with them and listen if they need to talk. Our Stephen Ministers are available not only at holiday times, but throughout the year to provide that nonjudgmental one-on-one listening ear of a Christian friend who is available to walk alongside those dealing with life's challenges. For more information, contact Pastor Jeff or Becky Cultice @376-5747.

For those who know that "this Christmas will be a hard one" there will be a Blue Christmas Service sponsored by Stephen Ministry on Sunday, December 3 at 2:30pm in the chapel. At that time we will acknowledge the pain and sadness many people experience as the holidays approach, as well as encourage people to move toward hope.

A Voice for Environmental Stewardship

The Problem with a Greedy Relationship with Mother Earth

In my studies related to environmental stewardship I have often encountered the phrase "our relationship with the Earth." The range of relationships runs the gamut of 1. Devotion to the health and well being of Mother Earth and 2. The attitude that humanity should use the resources of Earth for the benefit of human businesses and nothing else.

The first is the major concern of environmental stewardship and the maintaining of a healthy balance with the Earth's ecosystems in which humanity is an integral part. As you remember a natural ecosystem is the complex interaction of all living things with each other in a specific physical environment, whether it is on land or in the oceans. The current crises of global warming and cli-

mate change is in large part the result of the human activity of businesses exploiting the Earth's resources for their own profit without concern for our healthy relationship with Mother Earth. Fossil fuel companies which exploit the coal, oil and natural gas resources of the Earth bear the major responsibility for global warming and climate change because when these products are burned, astronomical amounts of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gasses are released into our atmosphere (gig metric tones every year) and heat up our atmosphere. CBS Evening News reported that 2023 has been the hottest year on record worldwide since temperature records have been kept. In addition, the research of climate scientists from around the world have reported that Earth's global temperature now is higher than it has been for 100,000 years, due to the burning of fossil fuels in our modern society.

It is true that the burning of fossil fuels has provided the energy to power our industries, transportation that has made modern way of life possible, but the CONSEQUENCES of using this source of energy have "come home to roost!" We must change to renewable energy: solar wind, safe nuclear, geothermal and hydroelectric energy. These are already in use and are becoming more efficient rapidly! There is hope but we all must improve our relationship with Mother Earth as God would want us to do. The sooner the better.

Alan Barone, Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist

United Methodist Women

Women United Circle will meet on Monday, December 18 at 1:30PM in the parlor. All women are welcome to attend. Our circle will not meet during the months of January and February but will begin again in March, 2024.

Dorcas Circle will meet on Tuesday, December 19 at 1:00PM in FH 15A. We will not meet January, February and March. Next meeting will be on April 16, 2024.

United Methodist Men of Faith

The Men of Faith will meet on Monday, December 18 at 6 PM in room 16A&B (Community Center). All men are invited to join us. Pizza will be served. We will have a social time during the meal. There will be a Christmas focused study followed by a meeting celebrating the year's activities. All men are urged to attend.

Mary & Martha

Thank you to all the ladies who attended the kick-off of Mary & Martha. The night was full of FOOD, FAITH & FUN. Please join us for our next gathering, Monday, December 11 from 6 pm – 8pm. We all know how busy this time of year can get, so let's all share a dish that is quick and easy to make! We are calling it the Holiday Hustle!. If you don't have time to make something, grab something from the store and bring it in– chips and salsa, veggies, and hummus, etc.) Again, for questions, call Laurie Krakowiak @ 937-694-8114 or Barbara Mills @ 937-414-4108.

Do Good People Have Accidents?

Luke 13:1-3

Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. Jesus answered, *“Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell you, No! but unless you repent, you too will all perish. Of those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem?” I tell you no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.*”

One of the problems many Christians have is thinking that accidents are a result of sin or a lack of faith. After all, God loves us as children and should always pro-

tect us from harm. Thus, we tend to judge our Christian experiences by how we remain “*accident free.*” Jesus took this concept on by reminding us that we should not judge those that are involved in an accident as evil people or deserving of the mess they are in. Our Christian experience is much more personal. It is based on repentance. It is not whether we are “*accident free.*” Many people tend to think that accidents are a result of doing stupid things and it is the fault of a person that was hurt or killed. They like to think good people are spared from these problems. Unfortunately, sometimes we are just in the wrong place or have become complacent about safety issues. Statics show that on construction projects accidents are caused by inexperience (less than 6 years on the job) and people with years of experience that think the safety rules no longer apply to them.

This same concept can apply to our Christian experience as well. Young Christians are apt to have a lot of zeal and can put themselves into a dangerous situation. They judge their Christian experience by feelings and whether they are “*accident free.*” When things go wrong or they feel bad they look for sin in their lives, thinking this is a result of God’s judgment on what they are doing. Experienced Christians can also fall into the trap of thinking we are “*bullet-proof*” and the rules no longer apply to us. We do not show love to others and think we are the only ones with all the answers. Afterall, we have lived a long time, not had any significant accidents and thus this is proof that God approves what we are doing. Jesus pointed out that just because you are “*accident free*” or if you have an accident does not prove you are a good or bad person.

Your Christian experience is based on whether you repented.

(A devotional shared by Luke Snell at Legacy Assisted Living)



The Community Christmas

Concert Band under the direction of Glen Shaw will present its annual concert on Sunday, December 10 at 3pm in the Sanctuary, featuring both sacred

and secular music. The concert will last about one hour. Admission is free. Please join us for an opportunity to celebrate the birth of our Savior.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
Music 8:30 pm Service 9:00 pm

Fuller Center Bicycle Adventures

As many of you may remember, Faith Community UMC hosted the Fuller Center Bicycle Adventures (FCA) for a week in August. There were 50 cyclists from 16 states and one from Bristol, England. These cyclists typically do various rides from October through August to raise money for the Fuller Center for Housing, a non-profit like Habitat for Humanity. These rides cover thousands of miles in a year, and each ride is accompanied by support crews with vans and trailers. The Bicycle Adventures began in 2008; therefore, the vans have many miles on them and need to be replaced. The Adventurers here in August were doing just that; their cost to ride was going toward the purchase of new vans.

Your generosity in hosting this event was so greatly appreciated that the FCBA presented a plaque to Faith Community. The plaque is hanging between the Narthex doors to the office on the right side. You will notice it because of the OYEE! at the top. Oyee! is shouted with a raised fist as an expression of thanks, joy and gratitude. You are encouraged to look for this plaque and read it for yourself; and so to you, the members of Faith Community Methodist Church, OYEE.

All Church Christmas Party

Sunday, December 3 from 5-7pm. There will be a meal, Chrismon decorating and other crafts, Christmas trivia, and caroling for all to enjoy. Hope to see you there.

Thanks

The Mission Committee is so excited to announce that we are able to donate over \$1800 to Fish Food Pantry. The Fall Bazaar was very successful due to so many people giving of their time, talents, donations of baked goods and gift baskets, as well as members of Faith Community and our surrounding areas supporting our event on Friday & Saturday.

Thanks to those who provided gifts for the St. Paul's Christmas Tree after after school outreach program.

Dear Office Staff of Faith Community,

Thank you so much for all you do for the church. Everyone truly appreciates you.

Passings

Prayers and condolences are extended to family and friends of Glenn Harner on his death.

FCUM October 2023 Financials


Monthly Income	\$ 27,504		YTD Income	\$ 269,690	
Monthly Expenses	\$ 29,725		YTD Expenses	\$ 295,431	
Difference	\$ (2,222)	-8.08%	Difference	\$ (25,741)	-9.54%

Manley Proverbs

The only way to have a friend is to be one.

Have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

December 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
 3 9:00-10:00am-Sunday School 10-10:30am-Hospitality Time 10:30-11:30am-Worship 2-5pm-Blue Christmas 5-7 pm-All Church Christmas Party-15A-B	4 6:30-7:30pm-Cub Scouts-15 A-B 7-8:30pm-Boy Scouts-15C 7-9pm-Stephen Ministry-Library	5 10-11:30am-Bible Study-Parlor 3:3-5:30-XHS-Winter Guard Practice-FCC 6-8:45pm-Girl Scouts-FH15-ABC & 16A-B 6:30-8:30pm-Truistees-Parlor 7-8:30pm-SPRC-Lib.	6 6:15-7:15pm-Bells Practice-Music Rm. 7:30-9pm-Choir Practice Sanctuary	7 11-12pm-Prayer Shawl-Parlor 1:30-4pm-Women's Club of Xenia-Parlor	1 3:3-5:30-XHS-Winter Guard Practice-FCC	2 9am-12:30pm-Community Christmas Concert Band Rehearsal-FH
10 9:00-10:00am-Sunday School 10-10:30am-Hospitality Time- Narthex 10:30-11:30am-Worship Christmas Band Concert-3pm	11 6-8pm-Mary & Martha Gathering-FCC 6:30-8:30pm- Cub Scouts-15 A-B 7-8:30pm-Boy Scouts-15C	12 10-11:30am-Bible Study-Parlor 6-8:45pm-Girl Scout Leader Meeting-15A 3:3-5:30-XHS-Winter Guard Practice-FCC	13 6:15-7:15-Bells Practice-Music Room 7:30-9pm-Choir Practice-Sanctuary	14 11am-12-Prayer Shawl-Parlor 2-4pm-Grief Support-Parlor 5:45-7:30pm-Magic Volleyball practice-FCC 7-8:30pm-Christian Ed.-Room 8	15 3:3-5:30-XHS-Winter Guard Practice-FCC	16
17 9:00-10:00am-Sunday School 10-10:30am-Hospitality Time- Narthex 10:30-11:30am-Worship	18 1-30-3pm-Women United-Parlor 6:30-7:30pm- Cub Scouts-15A-B 8:30pm-Men of Faith-16 A-B 7-8:30pm-Boy Scouts-15C 2-6pm-Blood Drive	19 10-11:30am-Bible Study-Parlor 1-3pm-Dorcas Circle-15 A-B 3:3-5:30-XHS-Winter Guard Practice-FCC 3:30-4:30pm-Mission Outreach-Parlor 6-8:30pm-Girl Scouts	20 6:15-7:15-Bells Practice-Music Room 7:30-9pm-Choir Practice-Sanctuary	21 11am-12pm-Prayer Shawl-Parlor 6-8pm-Staff Christmas Party 5:45-7:30pm-Magic Volleyball practice-FCC	22 3:3-5:30-XHS-Winter Guard Practice-FCC	23 6-8pm-Double I-15A
24 9:00-10:00am-Sunday School 10-10:30am-Hospitality Time-Narthex 10:30-11:30am-Worship 8:30pm-Candlelight Service. 31 Regular Services	25 Christmas Day Office Closed	26 10am-11:30am-Bible Study-Parlor	27 6:15-7:15-Bells Practice-Music Room 7:30-9pm-Choir Practice-Sanctuary	28 11am-12pm-Prayer Shawl-Parlor 5:45-7:30pm-Magic Volleyball practice-FCC	29	30