

February 2024

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

<u>Date</u>	Attendance	
	<u>Worship</u>	<u>Sunday School</u>
December 24	91	No classes
Christmas Eve	137	
December 31	90	23
January 7	89	36
January 14	67	22
January 21	66	25

From the Pastor

It has been just over a month since we cleared the chancel area in the sanctuary of the Christmas trees and poinsettias, and believe it or not, in just a few weeks we will be launching the Lenten season with an Ash Wednesday service on February 14th at 7:00pm. I hope you will be able to join us for this thoughtful service. The Apostle Peter encouraged, *“Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.” (1 Peter 5:6, NIV)*. Lent is a time of reflection, recognizing our misalignment with the Lord, as we prepare for the celebration of Jesus’ rising from the empty tomb lifting up all who believe in him. Unlike the Christmas season, our culture, other than offering fish on the menu, doesn’t walk alongside us for the Lenten journey to the empty tomb. So, it is up to each of us to make a commitment to humble ourselves before the Lord by participating in a spiritual practice of scripture, reading, fasting (giving up something), prayer, service or other practice of our choice

throughout Lent. As we journey together, may we all open ourselves to the work of the Holy Spirit to transform our minds, hearts, and lives to reflect more and more of Jesus to the world around us.

Blessings, Pastor Jeff

Ash Wednesday Worship Service

Please join us for the imposition of ashes on **Wednesday, February 14 at 7:00pm**. If you are not able to attend in person, the service will be live streamed on our YouTube and Facebook pages. Let us observe a holy Lent together

A Voice for Environmental Stewardship

February 2024

To Love the Earth

“In the end, we will conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand. We will understand only what we are taught.” (Dr. Baba Dioum, a Senegalese conservationist, spoken at an environmental conference.)

This is one of the most important quotes that I have ever read related to environmental stewardship and growing our knowledge. As we learn more about the physical world around us, we gain knowledge about our Earth. The more we learn about the Earth, the more we appreciate about our Mother Earth. The more we appreciate about our Earth, the more we will love about the Earth. The more we love the Earth the more we will want to protect her from the things that harm the Earth, our only home. We all want to protect our homes.

All these connections give us food for thought. The more food for thought that we digest, the more energy we have for action. Each action that we take makes us better environmental stewards! When we take action we may do different things:

1. Look up the website <http://www.greenamerica.org> for green living ideas.
2. Google: Find my carbon footprint in order to learn how to reduce the amount of EXCESS CARBON you are adding to our atmosphere.
3. Google: Organizations that address climate change and loss of biodiversity and join one or two of them.
I have joined the Nature Conservancy, the Sierra Club, Ocean Conservancy, and the Union of Concerned Scientists. This organization is for non-scientists too.
Consider living a more earth friendly life and pray about it.
Rev. Alan Barone, B.A. in Science Education,
M.Div., Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist

Mary & Martha

Thank you to all the ladies who attended the January Mary & Martha gathering. The night was FUN with ACTIVITY and you could feel the energy! Please join us for our next gathering, February 12 from 6pm-8pm. We all LOVE a good soup so for our dinner theme (day after Super Bowl) bring a favorite soup and/or dessert to share! If you don't have time to make something, please don't let this stop you from coming. Questions, call Laurie Krakowiak @937-694-8114, or Barbara Mills @937-414-4108.

UMW Circles

Women United – No February meeting; will resume in March.
Dorcas – No February or March meeting; will resume in April.

United Methodist Men

The Men of Faith will meet on Monday, February 19 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 followed by a double devotional from

“God Calls You to More”. We will then discuss the charities we support and future projects. All men are urged to attend.

Life in Old Bones!

Ezekiel 37: 4-5

Then he said to me, “Prophesy to these bones and say to them, ‘Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! 5 This is what the Sovereign LORD says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life.’”

2 Kings 13: 21

21 Once while some Israelites were burying a man, suddenly they saw a band of raiders; so they threw the man’s body into Elisha’s tomb. When the body touched Elisha’s bones, the man came to life and stood up on his feet.

Sometimes we feel like we are not important and that only a few people care about us. We may be getting older and cannot move as quickly or we may be stressed about the situations we are in and think nothing we do will make a difference. We need to remember that God does not consider us useless; He has a plan for us if we are willing to stop being dry bones and “come to life”.

In Ezekiel 37, we see that God caused dry (dead and worthless) bones to come back to life. This is probably an Old Testament parable that was used to point out to Israel that although their situation looked hopeless, God was still there and would lead them back to the land of Israel. It can provide a lesson for us as well. God can use us even if we consider ourselves to be worthless or discarded as were the old dry bones. We can become alive and active if we put our trust in God.

2 Kings 13:21 tells us that there is power in the lives of men and women of God even after they have died. They have set an example for us and have shown us what a belief in God did for them. It provided the strength and courage for them even in difficult circumstances. We can know that God is with us and will help us through whatever situations we are in as he has done for the saints of the past. –Luke Snell

Congratulations to FCUM College Students

Faith Community had two college students graduate this past December – **Sarah Creona** and **Kayla Horney**. Sarah graduated with a Marketing degree from the Ohio State University and Kayla graduated from Bowling Green State University with a degree in Middle Childhood Education. We will celebrate this with them later this spring as we have quite a few other FCUM college students working hard to graduate within the next few months – Ian Ackenhausen, Megan Akenhausen, Jake Fox, Grant Smith, and Wesley Wickline. Best wishes to Sarah and Kayla as they work their way into the post-graduation world and best wishes, too, to these other students who are aiming to earn a diploma within the next few months. Prayers and best wishes for everyone’s continued academic success.

Stephen Ministry



11 Hopefully, by now, you recognize the Stephen Ministry logo which consists of a cross and circle together with a broken person and a whole person. The broken person stands behind the cross, symbolizing the brokenness in our lives. The

whole person stands in front of the cross because it is through the cross of Jesus that we are again made whole. The circle symbolizes both the wholeness we receive through Christ and God’s unending love for us. **0011** Another important image for Stephen Ministers is the Caregiver’s Compass.



While Stephen Ministry focuses on the needs of the care receiver, the Caregiver’s Compass directs the Stephen Minister’s process for caring. A compass points true north. From that we can get our bearings. So, no matter which way we

choose to travel, a compass helps us to stay on our path. We sometimes hear about having a “moral compass” where our core values drive our actions and relationships in all aspects of life—our faith, work, family, and even politics. **0011** The Caregiver’s Compass expresses those core values for the

Stephen Minister and works well for anyone who wants those values infused into his or her life journey as “Christ walks with her or him.”

Christ Centered At the center of the compass is the Chi Rho, the first two letters of “Christos,” Greek for Christ. It is at the center from which all good things pour out for those who are Christ-centered. When Stephen Ministers care, they bring Christ’s care to their care receivers. They never think their care receiver’s well-being depends on what they do, but on what the Spirit does in and through them and the relationship. Stephen Ministers work on staying Christ-centered so they will be able to bring God’s love to others. The Caregiver’s Compass includes the characteristics of a Stephen Minister—**compassionate (N), full of faith (E), skilled (S), and trustworthy (W)**. This directional aid guides the growth of Stephen Ministers as they “chart their course” in their caring relationships. In the coming months we’ll share more about each of these elements and explain how essential they are.

As always, if you or anyone you know could benefit from a Christ-centered, compassionate, faith-filled, skilled, and trustworthy Stephen Minister, please contact our Stephen Ministry Referrals Coordinator, Becky Cultice, at 937-376-5747.

Thank You

We wish to thank all those connected to the church who have reached out in so many ways to help when I was in the hospital: Pastor Jeff Bandy for coming to the hospital; to all of those who cooked food and brought it to the house; and for all the phone calls. Thank you all.

Blessings – Sharon and Mike Booth

Dear Friends.

Words cannot express our gratitude for all the wonderful toys you donated for St Paul's Kids' Santa Shop. It was very successful again this year with over 60 children shopping for their entire families.

We have a 5 minute video on our Facebook page that shows the children shopping.

Blessings –Joan Johnson, Administrator

Christmas Offering

We collected \$6,266 this year and it will be designated to Benevolence. The Benevolence Committee would like to thank everyone for their generous donations so they can help more families this year. They also wanted to share with you the number of people that call in each year and show how rapidly the need in our community is growing: 2018 – 28 cases, 2019 - 32 cases, 2020 – 58 cases, 2021 – 64 cases, 2022 – 96 cases, 2023 – 114 cases.

Closing Due to Inclement Weather

If the church is going to be closed during the week or for Sunday Worship services it will be listed on WHIO (TV7, 1290AM/95.7FM) WDTN (TV2, CW26), WKEF/WRGT (ABC22/FOX45) and our Facebook page www.facebook.com/FCUM.Xenia

Cassrole Care-A-Van

Do you know of someone connected to our church who could benefit from our Casserole Can-a-van providing them with a few meals? If so, contact me so that I can let you know the information needed to get this set up with our amazing Care-a-van volunteers. –Julie Wickline, (937) 207-8289.

Day of Caring Pancake Brunch

Xenia Adult Recreation & Services Center, 338 S. Progress Drive will be offering a Day of Caring Pancake Brunch on Sunday, February 25th from 8 am to 1 pm to focus awareness on the homeless and hungry. All proceeds raised at XARSC this day support the XARSC Meals On Wheels program. Tickets at XARSC: \$7 for 12-59 years of age; \$5 for 11/under and 60/over. For more information call 937-376-4353. We hope to see you there.

Passings

Prayers and sympathy are extended to family and friends of **David Crandall** on his death.

FCUM December 2023 Financials

Monthly Income	\$ 20,371		YTD Income	\$ 312,228	
Monthly Expenses	\$ 26,718		YTD Expenses	\$ 348,567	
Difference	\$ (6,347)	-31.16%	Difference	\$ (36,340)	-11.64%


Manley Proverbs

"Where would we be if Jesus tried to excuse himself from the work of redeeming our souls as we try to excuse ourselves from his work." (Submitted by Charles Manley)

**Deadline for March Faith Links
February 16**



February 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 11-12pm-Prayer Shawl-Parlor 2-3:45pm-Woman's Club of Xenia-Parlor 6-7:45pm-Magic Volleyball Practice-FCC	2 Groundhog Day 4-5:30pm-XHS Winter Guard Practice-FCC	3
4 9-10am-Sunday School 10-10:30am-Hospitality Time-Narthex 10:30-11:30am-Worship-Sanctuary	5 6:30-7:30pm-Cub Scouts-15A,B 7-9pm-Stephen Ministry-Library 7-8:30pm-Boy Scouts-15C	6 10-11:30am-Bible Study-Parlor 4-5:30pm- XHS Winter Guard Practice-FCC 6-8:30-8pm-Girl Scouts-15ABC; 16 A-B 6-7:45pm-Volleyball-FCC 6:30-8:30pm-Trustees-Parlor 7-8:30pm-SPRC-Lib.	7 6:15-7:15-Handbells-Music Room 6:30-8pm-Spec. Olymp. Basketball-FCC 7:30-9:00pm-Choir-Sanctuary	8 11-12pm-Prayer Shawl-Parlor 2-4pm-Grief Support-Parlor 6-7:45pm-Magic Volleyball-FCC 7-8:30pm-Christian Ed. Meeting-Room 8	9 4-6:00pm-XHS Winter Guard Practice-FCC	10 12-3pm-Private Event-FH 15-A.-Kitchen
11 9-10am-Sunday School 10-10:30am-Hospitality Time-Narthex 10:30-11:30am-Worship-Sanctuary	12 6-8pm-Mary & Martha-FCC 6:30-7:30pm-Cub Scouts-15 A-B 7-8:30pm-Boy Scouts-15C	13 8:30-10:30am-MAX Breakfast Mtg.-15C-K 10-11:30a-Bible Study-Parlor 4-5:30pm-XHS Winter Guard-FCC 6-8:45pm-G.S. Leader Mtg.-15A 6-7:45pm-Volleyball-FCC	14 Ash Wednesday Valentines Day 9-11am-Stephen Ministry-.Parlor, Library 6:15-7:15-Bells-MR 6:30-8:30-Spec. Olymp.-FCC 7-8pm-Ash Wednesday-Service-Sanctuary 8-9pm-Choir Prac.-Sanc.	15 11-12pm-Prayer Shawl-Parlor 6-7:45pm-Magic Volleyball-FCC	16 4-6pm pm-XHS Winter Guard Practice-FCC 6pm-9am-Girl Scouts Overnight	17
18 9-10am-Sunday School 10-10:30am-Hospitality Time-Narthex 10:30-11:30am-Worship-Sanctuary	19 Presidents' Day Office Closed 6:30-7:30pm-Cub Scouts-15 A-B 6-8:30-Men of Faith-16A-B 7-8:30pm-Boy Scouts-15C	20 10-11:30am-Bible Study-Parlor 3:30-4:30pm-Mission Outreach-Parlor 4-5:30pm-XHS Winter Guard-FCC 6-8:30pm-Girl Scouts-15A-B-C; 16 A-B 6-7:45-Volleyball-FCC	21 6:15-7:15pm-Bells -M.R 6:30-8pm-Spec. Olymp. Basketball Prac-.FCC 7:30-9-Choir-Sanctuary	22 11-12pm-Prayer Shawl-Parlor 6-7:45pm-Magic Volleyball-FCC	23 3:30-5:15pm-XHS Winter Guard Practice-FCC	24 5-9pm-Double I-15A
25 9-10am-Sunday School 10-10:30am-Hospitality Time-Narthex 10:30-11:30am-Worship-Sanctuary	26 6:30-7:30pm-Cub Scouts-15 A-B 7-8:30pm-Boy Scouts-15C	27 10-11:30am-Bible Study-Parlor 4-5:30pm- XHS Winter Guard Practice-FCC 6-7:45pm- Volleyball-FCC	28 6:15-7:15pm-Bells -M.R 6:30-8pm-Spec. Olymp. Basketball Prac-.FCC 7:30-9-Choir-Sanctuary	29 11-12pm-Prayer Shawl-Parlor 6-7:45pm-Magic Volleyball-FCC		