

June 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

Attendance

Date	Worship	Sunday School
April 28	91	26
May 5	79	22
May 12	95	38
May 19	99	26

From the Pastor

Greetings church! I have been back from my spiritual formation and renewal leave for a month now. My heart is filled with gratitude and I thank the church for granting me this opportunity to be renewed. After being away for several weeks in the mountains of North Carolina, Suzanne and I both were ready to be home and reconnected with our church family. While we were still in North Carolina, the postponed 2020 General Conference convened on April 23rd and concluded May 3rd.

During the General Conference there were a couple of major decisions made that I wanted to highlight. I would also like to add that a large majority approved these actions. All language that has restricted the full inclusion of homosexual persons in the mission and ministry of the United Methodist Church was removed. The number of bishops in the United States has been reduced to 32 from 39. This change will result in some annual conferences to share a bishop and in September our conference, West Ohio, will begin to share a bishop with East Ohio. Our new bishop will be named sometime in July. The overall budget for the General Conference was reduced by 40% from the 2016 budget which was largely impacted by the disaffiliations but also a general reduction in the apportionment base percentage from 3.29% to 2.6% for 2025-26 and 2.9% for 2027-28. The last major action I want to mention is regarding what is known as "Regionalism". This is con-

stitutional change related to or connectional structure across the globe. This change would designate regions where the United States would be one of the regions along with regions in Africa, Europe, and Asia. Each region would have more freedom to contextualize the governance and ministries of their region while maintaining our connection in the mission and essentials of the faith. Regionalization will need to be ratified by all annual conferences of the UMC when they meet this year. The West Ohio Annual Conference is May 29-June 1 and we will be voting on this legislation at that time. With all this information that highlights change; the one thing that will never change is our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ. Let us continue to be a church that works towards this mission in all the ways we can, both locally and globally.

Grace & Peace, Pastor Jeff

Grief Support Ministry Update

As it says in Ecclesiastes, “There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under heaven.” After 27 years, the time for the Grief Support group at Faith Community UMC to phase out has come.

Our community has several grief support offerings available. We will still offer assistance and support for those who are on a grief journey. Please contact the pastor or church office to access such support.

Thank you Lord for allowing me the opportunity to serve.

—Sandy Pramer

Meet the Historian

When Faith Community celebrated the 50th anniversary of the merger of First Methodist and Trinity Methodist, there was a great deal of information about both previous churches placed in the Narthex. No doubt you read some, and perhaps glanced at other information on display. The history of both churches, as well as Faith Community, was well displayed.

If you wondered how all this got assembled for your benefit, meet the church historian, Marlene Gifford. She is certainly well qualified to be the church historian because she is a longtime member of the church and served as church secretary for 27 and ½ years. In addition, she was one of the first women to serve as Trustee in the late 1970’s and early 80’s. She first served as secre-

tary and then became chairman of the board. She was well qualified for this position since she had previous experience in both real estate and insurance and served on the board again a few years later. One of the responsibilities of the historian is to maintain files on the history of the church, keep track of members who have passed away and of course, collect history “as it happens” for future historians. Marlene has held this position for about the last five years.

She is a long time member of the Double I Sunday School class and she and her husband raised their daughter, Dawn, along with their grandchildren in this church. Dawn sang in the choir for many years before Covid.

One of Marlene’s favorite activities is to travel to Pennsylvania and to Blacklick, Ohio, as often as possible to visit her grandchildren. She has two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. She also serves as a volunteer at Greene Memorial Hospital where you will find her at the information desk greeting all who enter the building.

—Joan Baxter

Stephen Ministry

Frequently Asked Questions

Although Faith Community UMC has been a Stephen Ministry church since the early 1990’s, it’s not unusual that we have questions about the program. In the next few months, we’ll revisit the most frequently asked questions: About Stephen Ministers, Receiving a Stephen Minister, Working with a Stephen Minister and Other questions. This month we’ll concentrate on Frequently Asked Questions about Stephen Ministers.

Who are Stephen Ministers? Stephen Ministers are members of a congregation who are specially trained to provide emotional and spiritual care to individuals facing a crisis or difficult situation. They demonstrate God’s love by coming alongside care receivers who need a little extra support.

How are Stephen Ministers trained? After submitting an application, being interviewed and receiving a favorable recommendation, potential Stephen Ministers must complete 50 hours of initial training. Topics include the art of listening, Christian care and prayer. Confidentiality, assertiveness, boundaries, depression, grief and loss, and divorce. Stephen Ministers then participate in monthly

continuing education to help them grow as Christians and care givers.

How are Stephen Ministers supervised? All Stephen Ministers participate in monthly supervision. This supervision provides support, encouragement and accountability for each other so they can provide the highest quality care. During supervision, Stephen Ministers may discuss issues their care receivers are facing but they never discuss care receivers by name or give other identifying information. Only the Stephen Leader who handles referrals knows who is receiving care.

Who are Stephen Leaders? Stephen Leaders are Stephen Ministers who have undergone extensive additional training and who oversee the Stephen Ministry program. They recruit, select, train, organize, and supervise Stephen Ministry. They also help identify people in need of care and match them with a trained Stephen Minister. Longtime Stephen Minister Judy Mahan has recently completed Stephen Minister training and will be commissioned in June. She will join current Stephen Leaders Lynn Engle, Mike Engle, and Becky Cultice.

Why do Stephen Ministers volunteer? Stephen Ministers are Christians who have discovered that they have gifts of caring, encouragement, listening, faith, mercy, and compassion. They feel called to serve others through this ministry and participate because they know that in Christ alone is their hope.

What kinds of problems are Stephen Ministers equipped to deal with? Stephen Ministers support care receivers who are dealing with all sorts of problems. They include but are not limited to: the loss of a loved one, divorce or separation, failed relationships, family stress, hospitalization, serious or chronic illness, aging and dying, recovery after an accident or disaster, birth, adoption, miscarriage, infertility, unemployment or job crisis, financial concerns, relocation.

Are any areas off-limits? Stephen Ministers are not equipped to work with minors, those who are at risk of hurting themselves or others, or those who need mental health treatment, therapy, or medication. When appropriate, Stephen Ministers may refer care receivers to health professionals or counselors. For additional information about these and other Stephen Ministry-related questions contact Becky Cultice at 376-5747 or culticer@sbcglobal.net.

A Voice for Environmental Stewardship

June 2024

The Gulf of Mexico

In June of 2018 our family went on vacation to Port St. Joe on the panhandle of Florida. When I went into the water for a swim I could not believe how warm the water was. It was like stepping into a warm bathtub with water of at least 80 degrees F. Close to Port St. Joe was the resort town of Mexico Beach. On October 10, 2018 hurricane Michael made landfall at Mexico Beach with wind speeds of at least 160 mph with nearly 11 inches of rain. It had grown into a category 5 hurricane. It created a storm surge of 14 feet above sea level, devastating Mexico Beach, destroying hundreds of homes and almost all of the businesses. Since then I have seen on the news that the Southern states especially have been hard hit with extreme rainfall, flooding and frequent powerful tornadoes that have destroyed whole communities and left much human suffering in their wake.

As we have learned, the excess of heat in our atmosphere is coming from the excess of CO₂ which holds heat close to the ground. When this excess heat is absorbed by the oceans and the Gulf of Mexico, more evaporation happens which carries more water vapor into the air, combined with the excess heat, creates a more unstable atmosphere. This creates conditions for more hurricanes and stronger ones. Even Ohio has had a significant increase in the number of tornadoes in the first six months of 2024. As we have learned from the vast majority of climate scientists from around the world, the human activity of burning fossil fuels for energy dramatically increases the amount of CO₂ in our atmosphere. We have to find a more sustainable source of energy. Solar energy from solar panels does not add CO₂ to our atmosphere. Cedarville University and Antioch University have acres of solar panels in order to supply energy to their campuses. More homes in Ohio are getting solar panels in order to reduce the rising costs of electricity from their utilities. Getting solar panels for our homes makes good sense if we want to be good environmental stewards. Climate change must be a major concern for all of us if we want to protect our Mother Earth from burning fossil fuels. –Alan Barone

Special Summer Sunday Class

This summer we will be offering a special adult Sunday morning group during the Sunday School hour, 9-10am in CC 16 A-B. The group will be using materials from Renovare called *From the Inside Out: Discovering a Deeper and More Transformative Life with God*. A six-part course written by Carolyn Arends that presents big questions on our journey of Spiritual Formation—the process of growing in freedom and wholeness and becoming more like Jesus from the inside out. For more information about the group, find the fliers on the tables in the Narthex. Please sign up on the sheet provided on that table as well. The group will start Sunday, June 9 and continue through Sunday, July 14.

Mary & Martha

Thanks to all the ladies who came out to the Greene County FISH Pantry in May! We were educated on the need of food for so many people in Greene County and the need of volunteers to help keep this non-profit organization running smoothly. The next Mary & Martha gathering will be held Monday, June 10, 6-8 PM in the Community Center. We will not be meeting in July. In recognition of summer our food theme will be “picnic foods”. 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.

Kroger Community Rewards Program

Kroger distributes one million dollars to the community each quarter. The amount awarded is based on the number of households and the amount of purchases made each month. Faith UMC received \$104.72 with 40 households this last quarter. If you shop at Kroger’s be sure to use a Kroger rewards card and check to be sure that you are participating in the Community Rewards Program. Once a charity has been designated, it won’t have to be done again. You can go online to sign up or call Kroger customer service at 1-800-576-4377. Contact Carol Shaw if you have any questions.

UMW Circles

Women United – Monday, June 17, 1:30PM- Parlor
Dorcas – Tuesday, June 18, 1-3pm-FH 15 A-B

United Methodist Men of Faith

The Men of Faith will meet on Monday, June 17 at 6 PM in Room 16A&B Community Center. All men are invited to join us. Pizza will be served. We will have social time during the meal followed by a devotional from “God Calls You to More”. We will then discuss our annual garden and garage sale projects as well as review the multiple charities we support financially. Please Note: We have decided to scale down our garden project this year. It will be conducted at the Bridges of Hope garden plots, 1087 W. 2nd St., Xenia. We will limit the produce to tomatoes, peppers, zucchini, and maybe melons. These require little weeding, most with a hoe. If you (men, women, or youth) would be interested in helping with planting, seeding, (when the time comes), please call John Sherer, coordinator at 937-372-2204. All produce will go to Xenia Fish Food Pantry. Thanks for your consideration.

Love Packages

A report from Steven Schmidt, Director

Since Love Packages started over 46 years ago, we have been sending gospel materials to feed hungry souls. I received a report not long ago about a man who walked 15 days to come and get a Bible from one of the distributors. This year is the best ever. We began the year with a goal to send 101 containers; that is 2,021 tons of literature-enough for over 500 million people to read. It looks like we will exceed that goal and reach 110 containers.

All of us who work at Love Packages express our sincere thanks to you for all you have done.

(Keep bringing Christian materials, S.S. lesson books, hymnals, Christian books, CD’s, Billy Graham magazines, bibles, etc. to the FCUM collection tube at the entrance of the Education wing. If you have questions, call Debbie in the church office at 937-372-7601.)

Save-The-Date

Vacation Bible School: Monday, July 15-Friday, Jul 19

Shoes 4 the Shoeless: August 3 Measuring Day & August 17

Pick Up Day

Men of Faith Garage Sale: Friday, September 6 & Saturday,
September 7

Thanks

Dear Faith UMM,

Thank you for your recent donation to 4 Paws for Ability. Your donation will be used to train and place life-changing service dogs. The families who receive these dogs value your contribution. Service dog recipients have access to a life changing support system, increased communication, more independence and safety, among other valuable outcomes.

With your help, over 100 families will meet their service dogs this year and experience the safety and security that having a service dog provides.

Gratefully,

Jennifer Lutes

Manley Proverbs

“Goodness is about character – integrity, honesty, kindness, generosity, moral courage and the like. More than any of these, it is all about how we treat other people.”

**Deadline for submitting articles for
July Faith Links: June 17**

May 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 6:15-7:15pm-Bells-Music Room 7:30-9pm-Choir Practice Sanctuary/Chapel	2 11am-12pm-Prayer Shawl-Parlor 2-3:45pm-Woman's Club of Xenia-Parlor 6-7:45pm- Magic Volleyball Practice-FCC	3	4
5 9-10am-Sunday School 10-10:30pm--Hospitality Time-Narthex 10:30-11:30am-Worship-Sanctuary	6 6-7:30pm-SPRC-Room 8 6:30-7:30pm-Cub Scouts-15 A-B 7-8:30pm-Boy Scouts-15C 7-9pm-Stephen Ministry-Library	7 10-11:30am-Bible Study-Parlor 6-8:30pm-Girl Scouts-15A,B,C, 16A-B 6:30-8:30pm-Trustees-Parlor	8 6:15-7:15pm-Bells-Music Room 7:30-9pm-Choir Practice Sanctuary/Chapel	9 11am-12pm-Prayer Shawl-Parlor 12:30-1:30pm-Membership Care-Parlor 2-4pm-Grief Support-Parlor 6-7:45pm-Magic Volleyball Practice-FCC	10 4-5pm-Private Event-Sanctuary	11
12 MOTHERS' DAY 9-10am-Sunday School 10-10:30am--Hospitality Time-Narthex 10:30-11:30am-Worship-Sanctuary	13 9am-4pm-Lifeline Screening-Comm. Center 6-8pm-Mary & Martha at FISH FOOD PANTRY 6:30-7:30pm-Cub Scouts-15 A-B 7-8:30pm-Boy Scouts-15C	14 10-11:30am-Bible Study-Parlor 6-7:45pm-Magic Volleyball Practice-FCC	15 6:15-7:15pm-Bells-Music Room 6-8:30pm-Volleyball Banquet-FCC 7:30-9pm-Choir Practice Sanctuary/Chapel	16 11am-12pm-Prayer Shawl-Parlor 6-7:45pm-Magic Volleyball -FCC 6:30-8:pm-Ad Board-15C	17	18
19 9-10am-Sunday School 10-10:30am--Hospitality Time-Narthex 10:30-11:30am-Worship-Sanctuary 1-2pm-New Member Orientation-Parlor	20 1:30-3pm-Women United-Parlor 6-8:30pm-Men of Faith-16 A-B 6:30-7:30pm-Cub Scouts 7-8:30pm-Boy Scouts-15C	21 10-11:30am-Bible Study-Parlor 1-3pm-Dorcas Circle-15A-B 6-8:30pm-Girl Scouts-15A,B,C, 16A-B	22 6:15-7:15pm-Bells-Music Room 7:30-9pm-Choir Practice Sanctuary/Chapel	23 11am-12pm-Prayer Shawl-Parlor 6-7:45pm-Magic Volleyball Practice-FCC	24	25 4-6pm-Private Event-FCC 6-8pm-Double I-15A
26 9-10am-Sunday School 10-10:30am--Hospitality Time-Narthex 10:30-11:30am-Worship-Sanctuary	27 MEMORIAL DAY 6:30-7:30pm-Cub Scouts-15 A-B 7-8:30pm-Boy Scouts-15C	28 10-11:30am-Bible Study-Parlor	29 9am-5pm-55th Session of West Ohio Annual Conference 6:15-7:15pm-Bells-Music Room 7:30-9pm-Choir Practice Sanctuary/Chapel	30 9am-5pm-55th Session of West Ohio Annual Conference 11am-12pm-Prayer Shawl-Parlor	31 9am-5pm-55th Session of West Ohio Annual Conference	