

January 2025

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 27	78	24
November 3	88	22
November 10	90	21
November 17	76	24
November 24	79	25
December 1	86	28
December 8	95	27
December 15	115	32

From the Pastor

Welcome to 2025! It's unbelievable to me that we are 25 years into the 21st century already. I can remember the angst that surrounded the turn of the century and it kind of seems like that this year. There are multiple transitions happening in our country.

As a country, we will be inaugurating a new president and vice president this month along with many new members of congress and other key positions. In the UMC, we will enter the first full year since our General Conference voted to fully welcome our LGBTQ brothers and sisters in Christ into our fellowship and leadership in the church. In the West Ohio Conference, we are learning how our conference will work more

closely with the East Ohio Conference as both conferences will be under the leadership of our new bishop, Bishop Hee-Soo-Jung. And beginning today, we welcome a Great Miami River District Superintendent, Rev. Dr. Suzanne Allen.

With so much change going into the New Year, I want to encourage us to keep our focus on the hope we have in Jesus Christ. Jesus is the head of the church and leading us to and through all that is new. Take heart hearing these words from Isaiah, "*See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?*" *I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland.*" (Isaiah 43:19, NIV)

Again, our focus is on Jesus and his leading, so may we respond well to his leading, here at Faith Community, to bring the hope we have for wisdom and courage as we open ourselves to the Lord's new thing!

Happy New Year!

Pastor Jeff

Meet Victor Hess

Of course you know Victor Hess. He sings in the choir, teaches a youth Sunday school class, provides special music during services from time to time, is active with the Methodist Men, and sometimes even fills the pulpit when Pastor Jeff is away, but what else do you know about him? Among other accomplishments, he is a published author, having written several books, the first three of which are centered around living in Xenia in the 50's and 60's and are Christian based. He had been retired for a while when he decided he would like to write. He attended a conference in Florida which gave basic information and he was "off and running".

Victor and Melva have been married for a little over fifty years. They met on a blind date. Mutual friends encouraged them to meet and he selected a nearby steak house for their first date. Being a thoughtful fellow, he not only took her to dinner but arranged for pizza to be delivered to her two little

girls who stayed at home that evening, and he paid the baby sitter as well. Soon, he enjoyed treating the little girls at the A&W root beer stand. The day after they were married, he said, "I finally have a family. I am so happy I can even go to P.T.A. meetings."

Among other things, he has been an Army Bomb Disposal Instructor but spent much of his career in real estate. Following the 1974 tornado, the real estate business in Xenia was not booming, to say the least, and so he accepted a position in New Orleans selling communications. They immediately found a church home and he joined the choir. The couple taught Sunday school classes and confirmation classes together for many years. They were delighted to add two little boys to the family after a few years. They lived in New Orleans for a number of years, but having to deal with three different very destructive hurricanes encouraged them to return to Xenia. They returned to Xenia and Faith Community became their church home.

Victor's first book *Jesse Sings* is based on his experiences as a young boy growing up in the Midwest. He writes literature based on Christian values and how very young people survive overwhelming conditions. His writing has earned recognition in the William Faulkner – William Wisdom Creative Writing competition in New Orleans for multiple years. *Jesse Sings* was a finalist in the 2018 Best American Books competition. If you would like to read some of his books, especially those which relate to Midwest, Ohio, I am sure he can provide copies, and you won't be disappointed.

–Joan Baxter

A Home for Environmental Stewardship

I just discovered a new book, [The Book of Hope](#), by Jane Goodall, the world's most well known living naturalist. Jane is almost 90 years old and mostly well known for her four decades of working with wild chimpanzees in the rain forests of the Gombe National Park, Tanzania in East Africa.

Dr. Jane Goodall is one of the scientists of her generation and earlier generations, who discovered amazing truths about chimpanzees in the rain forests of the Gombe National Park, Tanzania in East Africa. She is one of the scientists of her generation, and earlier generations, who discovered amazing truths about chimpanzees, observing them, being accepted by them, and establishing interspecies understanding with them, she discovered that they have compassion and empathy, at times much more humane than humans are when we are at Our most barbarious behaviors.

In the last couple of decades, she has spent most of her time tirelessly teaching and speaking to the U.N. adult organizations and groups of young people all over the world, seeking to remind us that we have a unique obligation to all the creatues wth whom we share this planet Earth. To this day, she is bringing the messages of peace and hope, and challenges us to make the world a better place for all living creatures.

In this most recent book, The Book of Hope-A Survival Guide for Trying Times, co-written by Douglas Abrams, with Gail Hudson, she lays out her reasons for hope: The Amazing Human Intellect, The Resilience of Nature, The Power of Young People, and the Idomitable Human Spirit. She delves into the vital questions: How do we stay hopeful when everything seems hopeless? How do we cultivate hope in our children? What is the relationship between hope and action?

Jane believes that we can use our human intellect and respect for the Earth in order to deal with the very real climate crisis which threatens us and all living things. (I believe that can only happen if we minimize our IGNORANCE, GREED and UNCOOPERATIVE POLITICS). In spite of the horrendous things that are happening today: unmitigated global warming and climate change, the inhumanity of what Vladimar Putin is doing to Ukraine and the Ukrainian people and the alarming increase of animal species that are bcoming extinct because of human impact on them. THERE IS HOPE. If we, as God's children take our responsibility to seriously care for this good Earth, using

our amazing intellect and our GOD-GIVEN COMPASSION, we can lessen the impact of our human caused climate change and global warming, For me it is a HUGE SPIRITUAL ISSUE that speaks loud and clear to me about OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

**Rev. Alan D. Barone, B.A. in science education, M.Div,
Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist**

Stephen Ministry

Rethinking Winter

For some, the beginning of a new year is a relief. Challenges of the previous year are behind them as is the exhaustion that often comes during the holidays, even to those who generally consider themselves positive. Others dread the short days and long nights ahead. Most of us fall somewhere in between these extremes.

Recently I read an article that led me to think of winter in a new way. In Ohio, we experience four distinct seasons. Each has a purpose in the rhythm of life. Much of nature takes a pause during winter and in some ways it feels as if the world is hibernating. Instead of dreading winter, think of it as a time of reparation—a time to rest, renew, and rejuvenate. In our hectic lives, the call to rest resonates. In winter we are reminded that rest is not only a physical necessity but also a spiritual one. Jesus extends an invitation: “Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28 NIV. In winter we have a chance to lay aside the burdens of last year. In stillness, we can draw near to God, seek peace in His presence, allow Him to replenish us as we set aside time for rest, reflection, and rejuvenation. Before winter transitions into spring, welcome this opportunity to rest and prepare for what’s ahead.

We are made to be in relationship with others, so seek balance in the midst of this season of rest and renewal. Take time for self care as well as time to reach out to those who mean so much and those who may be feeling isolated. In the midst of

day-to-day demands, remember that spring will come. Sometimes even a slight change in outlook can make a huge difference in how we feel. At best, winter can be challenging. This year, I'm going to be reminded that the days ahead can be an opportunity to slow down and regroup. How about you?

Life continues to happen. If you or someone you know is going through a rough time, our Stephen Ministers are available to walk alongside you for as long as needed.

To learn more, contact Becky Cultice @937-376-5747 or culticer@sbcglobal.net.

United Methodist Women

Women United will not meet the months of January and February. **Dorcas** will not meet the months of January, February, and March.

United Methodist Men of Faith

Exciting Updates for 2025!

***Join the Garden Project!** We're excited to continue the Garden Project in 2025, with plans to expand the garden area. We invite all members, especially families, to lend a hand in this rewarding mission. Volunteering just an hour or two to till, weed, or harvest can make a big difference. Stay tuned for updates on how you can get involved and help us grow!

***Garage Sale Donations Wanted** Our garage sale fundraiser will continue with a focus on selling large items through Facebook Marketplace. If you have furniture or appliances to donate, please contact Bob Whipp at (937)668-3137. Your contributions support our mission and make a real impact!

***Men of Faith Monthly Meeting:** Mark your calendars! The Men will meet on Monday, January 20 at 6 PM in Room 16A and B, Community Center. All men are welcome to join us for: **Delicious dinner featuring Melva Hess's famous meatloaf!**

Fellowship and meaningful connections

***Inspiring Bible Devotional to nourish the spirit.**

Look for more details in your email soon. We can't wait to see you there!

Mary & Martha

We would like to invite you to the first Mary & Martha gathering of 2025, January 13 from 6 to 8 pm at the Community Center, for a "super fun time." Please wear some comfy clothes and shoes for an activity that will be fun for everyone! Also, if you would like to bring a "super fun pie" to share, it can be any type from fruit to meat. If you need childcare, RSVP to 937-694-8114, and if you have any questions, please contact either Laurie Krakowiak at 937-694-8114 or Barbara Mills at 937414-4108.

Passings

Sincere condolences and prayers are extended to Alice Osman and family on the death of her husband **Harry Osman**.

FCUM

November 2024 Financials

Monthly Income	\$ 21,431		YTD Income	\$ 278,651	
Monthly Expenses	\$ 27,917		YTD Expenses	\$ 328,255	
Difference	\$ (6,486)	-30.27%	Difference	\$ (49,604)	-17.80%

Thanks

Thank you to the Faith Community prayer shawl group for whoever made an orange and black hat. I got this hat during a chemo and treatment at Miami Valley South. I have no hair and I love this hat! Thank you for your kindness and God bless you.

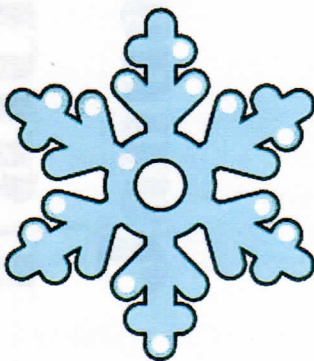
Lori McDonald

Dear Faith Community Benevolence Group,

Thank you so much for all the generous help you provide to our neighbors. Your kindness truly is a gift.

St. Vincent DePaul Society at St. Brigid

**Deadline for Submitting Articles
For February Faith Links: January 20**



Have a safe and happy winter!

January 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 NEW YEAR'S DAY Office Closed	2 11am-12pm-Prayer Shawl-Parlor 2-3:45pm-Women's Club of Xenia-Parlor 6-7:30pm Girls' Volleyball-FCC	3 3:30-5:30pm-XHS Winter Guard Practice-FCC	4
5 9-10am-Sunday School 10-10:30-Hospitality 10:30-11:30-Worship-Sanctuary	6 6:45-8pm-G.C. Spec. Olymp. Basketball-FCC 7-8:45pm-Stephen Ministry-Library 7-8:30pm-Boy Scouts-15C 7-8pm-Cub Scouts-15A	7 10-11:30am-Bible Study-Parlor 3:30-5:30pm-Winter Guard-FCC 6-8:30pm-G. Scouts-15A,B,C&16A-B 6-7:30pm-Girls-FCC 6:30-8:30pm-Trustees-Parlor	8 6:15-7:15pm-Bells Practice-Music Room 7:30-9pm-Choir Practice-Sanctuary/Chapel	9 11am-12pm-Prayer Shawl-Parlor 12:30-1:30pm-Membership Care-Parlor 6-7:30pm Girls Volleyball-FCC	10 3:30-5:30pm-XHS Winter Guard Practice-FCC	11
12 9-10am-Sunday School 10-10:30-Hospitality 10:30-11:30-Worship-Sanctuary	13 6-8pm-Mary & Martha-FCC 7-8pm-Cub Scouts-15C 7-8:30pm-Boy Scouts-15A-B	14 10-11:30am-Bible Study-Parlor 3:30-5:30pm-Winter Guard Practice-FCC 6-7:30pm Girls' Volleyball-FCC 6:15-8:45pm-G.S. Leader Meeting-15C	15 6:15-7:15pm-Bells Practice-Music Room 7:30-9pm-Choir Practice-Sanctuary/Chapel	16 11am-12pm-Prayer Shawl-Parlor 6-7:30pm Girls Volleyball-FCC 6:30-8:30pm-Ad Board-FH-15C	17 3:30-5:30pm-XHS Winter Guard Practice-FCC	18
19 9-10am-Sunday School 10-10:30-Hospitality 10:30-11:30-Worship-Sanctuary	20 Feb. Faith Links Articles Due 6-8:30pm-Men of Faith-16A-B 7-8 pm-Cub Scouts-FH-15A-B	21 10-11:30am-Bible Study-Parlor 3:30-5:30pm-Winter Guard Practice-FCC 6-7:30pm Girls' Volleyball-FCC 6-8:30pm-G. Scouts-15A,B,C&16A-B	22 6:15-7:15pm-Bells Practice-Music Room 7:30-9pm-Choir Practice-Sanctuary/Chapel	23 11am-12pm-Prayer Shawl-Parlor 6-7:30pm Girls Volleyball-FCC	24 3:30-5:30pm-XHS Winter Guard Practice-FCC	25 6-8pm-Double I-15A & kit.
26 9-10am-Sunday School 10-10:30-Hospitality 10:30-11:30-Worship-Sanctuary	27 7-8pm-Cub Scouts-15A-B 7-8:30pm-Boy Scouts-15C	28 10-11:30am-Bible Study-Parlor 3:30-5:30pm-XHS Winter Guard Practice-FCC 6-7:30pm Girls' Volleyball-FCC	29 6:15-7:15pm-Bells Practice-Music Room 7:30-9pm-Choir Practice-Sanctuary/Chapel	30 11am-12pm-Prayer Shawl-Parlor 6-7:30pm Girls Volleyball-FCC	31 3:30-5:30pm XHS Winter Guard Practice-FCC	