



The Christian Link
Firestone Park Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Pastor Rich Ferris
40 East Wilbeth Road, Akron, Ohio 44301-2455
330-724-1370



New Summer Worship Time - 10 a.m.
Starting June 3rd. Pass the word on to everyone!

May 2012

Volume 10 No. 5

Rich Reflections

"Happy Others' Day"

Dear Friends,

I know that knowing me as you do, you will find it hard to believe that over the years there have been many times that I put my foot in my mouth. Not literally, although my father could actually put his foot behind his head until the day he died. No, I have just said stupid things to people without really thinking about what I was saying until it was too late.

Let me give you a couple of examples that are related to the topic of Mothers' Day. Both took place in the first church that I served, when I was a very young, greenhorn pastor. The first involved a hospital visit during the time that I was just getting to know the congregation and I went to see a young woman in the maternity ward (that's what they called the women's health area back then). Without knowing her or anything about her, I asked the question, "So, what did you have, a girl or a boy." She just looked at me with a look I will never forget and answered, "Neither. I had a hysterectomy."

I learned very quickly and painfully that you never assume anything about anybody, no matter where you are or what situation you find yourself in. I spent the next five years turning red and fading into the woodwork every time I encountered this woman.

The next situation in that same church involved a professional woman a few years older than me who taught nursing at a local college and was married to a lawyer. They had no children, and because they were both professionals and led very busy lives, I ass-u-me(d) they chose not to have children. I also assumed that she probably didn't want to have children because of her career.

One day while we were both working in the church kitchen, cleaning up after a luncheon meeting, I said something like this to her: "So, did you both agree to put off having children, or was it your choice." I think you can see where this is going and how stupid I was to broach the situation with her in this way. Her face turned red, not from embarrassment, but from anger, and she said to me, "Everyone thinks it's me. Everyone thinks I don't want to have children. The fact is, I want desperately to have children, but my husband is not capable of producing any. It's him, not me, but everyone thinks it's me because I have this job. I would quit in a heartbeat to raise a child."

Open mouth; insert foot. Fortunately, that conversation did not ruin our relationship. I told her that, yes, I had been totally insensitive and it was really none of my business. But as a pastor I often think I have special privileges to enter into people's lives. Before I left that church, that couple adopted a son, she left her job for a period of time and she was the happiest woman in town.

Mothers' Day is a wonderful to honor and remember our mothers. But it's also a time to be sensitive to others. You see, if we go on-and-on about how blessed we are to have a good marriage, wonderful children, great health, a job that we love, etc., can others interpret that as though they somehow are not blessed? Are we indirectly indicating that God blesses some, but withholds his blessing from others?

It's wonderful to feel truly blessed, and hope I'm not discouraging you from feeling grateful for your blessings. But let's honor all women on this day, married and single, with children or childless, and let each person know that God has blessed them also in very unique ways.

You are a beacon of light! Pastor Rich

Pastor Rich's Office Hours

Tuesday through Friday 9 a.m. - 12 noon Other times by appointment

Church Phone: 330-724-1370 Pastor: 330-733-1735 (home) 330-780-5081 (cell)

2011 Total Budget: \$98,858.00 Needed Weekly: \$1,901.12 Average Worship Attendance for April: 65

<i>Date</i>	<i>General Fund</i>	<i>Basic Missions</i>	<i>Missions Easter</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Worship attendance</i>	<i>Sunday School attendance</i>	<i>S.S. offering</i>
Date							
4-01	\$3,312.00	\$85.00	\$97.00	\$3,494.00	67	16	\$3.00
4-08	\$1,629.00	\$42.00	\$172.00	\$1,843.00	95	18	\$5.00
4-15	\$1,065.00	\$55.00	\$28.00	\$1,148.00	57	17	\$5.00
4-22	\$501.00	\$39.00		\$540.00	52	16	\$4.00
4-29	\$1,065.00	\$60.00		<u>\$1,125.00</u>	54	15	<u>\$4.00</u>
		Total		\$8,150.00	(60 on Maundy Thursday)		
		Net position		- \$1,355.60			

In loving memory of Ed Church from: Doris Young, Diane Pollock, Al & Missy Tebbs, & Linda & Gene Rohrbough.



BOARD MEETING

The next meeting of the Official Board will be held on **May 16 at 7:00 p.m.** The Elders Meeting will be at 6:30 p.m. that same evening. If you are an elder, deacon, deaconess or trustee, you are a member of the official board and should attend this meeting. Anyone in the church may attend and offer information and questions.

Worship - 10:00 am Sundays

Worship Volunteers

Month - May

Deaconess: Pat Miller

Date: May 6

Lay Reader: Nancy Hoskins

Elder: Brenda Sacratini

Deacons: Frank Walker, Matt Church,

Yvonne Siegfert, Lisa Schueller

Sound Tech: Dave Scichilone

Date: May 13

Lay Reader: Reva Newman

Elder: Kathy Walker

Deacons: Dave Wood, Janice Wood, Frank

Walker, Joe Walters

Sound Tech: Gary Morgan

Date: May 20

Lay Reader: Brent Butler

Elder: Nancy Hoskins

Deacons: Carol Radabaugh, Nancy Weber, Joy

Barnett, Nancy Fetty

Sound Tech: Matt Church

Date: May 27

Lay Reader: Nancy Hoskins

Elder: Reva Newman

Deacons: Dave Scichilone, Joe Walters,

Brent Butler, Janice Butler

Sound Tech: Gary Morgan

BIRTHDAYS IN MAY

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01 – Rob Shores

08 – Jimmy Caruso

13 – Gary Morgan

23 – Judy Schueller

26 – Chris Miller

ANNIVERSARIES IN MAY

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16 – Ron & Shirley Black

SUMMER WORSHIP TIME CHANGE

During the months of June, July and August we will meet at **10 a.m. for worship**. As always, more informal, yet respectful, dress is okay for the summer, especially on those hot days. Time change will take effect on **June 3**.

The Membership Committee will not meet in May.

MAY LUNCHEON

May is a time for a picnic lunch! So, please join us after worship on May 20 for hot dogs and all the making's of a picnic: chips, salads, pies, etc. There will be a sign-up sheet in the parlor, so if you are able to bring salads, deviled eggs or pies, please sign the list telling us what you will bring. There will be plenty for all, so join us and have some good food and **great** fellowship.

SUMMER WORSHIP 10 AM

DISCOUNT PRESCRIPTION CARDS

We received some discount prescription cards from The Breast Cancer Research Foundation that are free for the asking. An accompanying letter states that the cards can be used at Rite Aid, CVS, Kmart, Sam's Club and some independent pharmacies and can save you up to 85% on your prescriptions (also covers some pet prescriptions).

There are "no claim forms, no deductibles, no limitations or maximums, no pre-existing conditions, no fine type, no hassles – just savings on your medications." For every single prescription filled using the card, 50 cents is donated to breast cancer research.

For more information and to check on this:

www.findacurexcardsk@gmail.com

If you'd like a card, just let Pastor Rich know and we will pass them out until they are gone.

FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

As we saw recently, our giving is to be done in secret. That kind of giving causes our Heavenly Father, who sees in secret, to reward

us openly. If we draw attention to ourselves and to our giving, we will receive the praise of other people, but unfortunately, that praise then becomes all the reward we will receive.

But the Apostle Paul describes generous giving in 2 Corinthians 9:6-14 as something that will cause other people to praise God for our generosity. They will thank Him for our obedience that causes us to give in such a manner that the gospel is shared with them.

What a difference. On the one hand, if we attract attention to ourselves and our giving, people will praise us, and that's the end of it. On the other, if we give quietly and generously, any attention that action gains will cause people to praise God for us!

The Lord Jesus described a situation like that. Mary anointed Him with a costly perfume. Some criticized her because it seemed like a waste. After all, the perfume could have been sold and the money used for the poor. Was Mary crazy or what?

One writer summed up her actions this way: Generous giving to the Lord may be labeled fanatical by others. But Jesus labeled it "love." In fact, He was so moved by the woman's giving that he vowed "wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her."

So today, centuries later, just as Jesus said, we still remember Mary's devotion and generous giving.

What will people remember you for? Will it be for your accomplishments in life? Will it be for your talents and abilities? Will it be for your work with the poor and needy? Will it be for the ministry you have had for Christ here at Firestone Park Christian Church? Will it be for your efforts to share the gospel with people along life's way? Will it be for your generous giving?

Or stated another way, what do you *want* people to remember you for? You see, your answer to that question to a significant degree becomes a "self-fulfilling prophecy." Do you *want* to be remembered for your generous giving? Then start now where you are ...

FAMILY PROMISE / IHN

Our next hosting week begins May 20 and runs through May 27.

SPAGHETTI DINNER

The spaghetti dinner on Friday the 13th was a success, both in flavor and in raising money for the All-Daughters' Luncheon in May. Almost \$450 profit was raised to treat our woman to a free luncheon and program, with seed money for our next spaghetti dinner (Reva says "Not for a while!").

Winners of the raffle were as follows: the Italian basket – **Tom and Debi Benjamin**; the Mexican basket – **Bud Barnett**; the soup basket – **Betty McCarty**; and the baking basket (cupcakes) – **Pat Miller**.

Thanks to Reva Newman and her Evangelism Committee, as well as others who helped with this. The spaghetti drew rave reviews and believe us, no one went home hungry!

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SUMMER WORSHIP 10 AM
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WORLD OUTREACH

DISCIPLES HOME MISSIONS

Dietrich Bonhoeffer ends his book, *Life Together*, with the pronouncement:

"The fellowship of the Lord's supper is the superlative fulfillment of Christian fellowship. As the members of the congregation are united in body and blood at the table of the Lord so they will be together in eternity. Here the community has reached its goal. Here joy in Christ and his community is complete. The life of Christians together under the Word has reached its perfection in the sacrament."

When we gather at church every week it is a fitting and proper thing that the sacrament of communion is at the pinnacle of our worship experience. It is here that God has the last word. It is also here that our bonds together in this time and place are stretched far beyond ourselves even to eternity.

As I presided at the Communion Table of a local congregation a few weeks back, I sensed anew the power of what Bonhoeffer was saying in his book. I sensed that our fellowship is truly complete whenever we break bread and drink wine together. Our unity is sure because it is guaranteed by the Lord and extends beyond us into the everlasting.

Into the Everlasting-ly yours,
 Ron Degges, President of DHM

WEEK OF COMPASSION

Flooding in the Chaco Region of Paraguay

Three weeks of record-setting rains have caused floods affecting more than 40,000 people in the Chaco region of Paraguay. Week of Compassion supports the Chaco Program of Church World Service, along with Foods Resource Bank, in Paraguay, Bolivia, and Argentina to work with indigenous communities in the region to end hunger and promote sustainable community development.

The majority of those affected by the current floods are those living in indigenous communities, many of whom have seen their livelihoods destroyed due to the loss of animals and crops. Others are facing difficulties because the affected areas are isolated, and accessible roads have been cut off.

The floods have prompted the Paraguayan government to declare a 90-day state of emergency; an official emergency response is being coordinated focusing on urgent evacuation and rescue work, as well as providing emergency assistance to flooded communities. The region most affected is located on the Pilcomayo River, which has burst its banks, flooding communities of more than 5,000 indigenous and non-indigenous families who live and depend on the river for their livelihoods.

These families live in conditions of dire poverty. As a result of the flooding these communities have lost access not only to food sources but also to crops and livestock needed to earn income. Estate, farm and urban workers have also lost their jobs. "It is clear that this flooding will have a serious impact on the livelihoods and food security of indigenous communities for months, if not years, to come," said CWS staff based in the region.

Week of Compassion will direct funds to CWS who is working with several partners, including Mingara and fellow ACT Alliance member, Comité de Iglesias para Ayudas de Emergencia (the Committee of Churches for Emergency Aid), to coordinate a response.

Quote of the Month

*We don't change the message;
 the message changes us.*