



First
Christian
Church

faith · compassion · community

CALLER

116 E. Boyer St.
Wadsworth, OH 44281
(330) 336-6697
fccwadsworth.org

Revealing Christ by building lives of compassionate faith.

Pastor Sarah West, Senior Pastor

Pastor Shelby Baxter-Andrews, Associate Pastor/Director of Youth Ministries

**February
2024**

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Compassion Silent Auction

Time to bid on the baskets that are on display in the Gathering Area! Bidding will close at 12:00 pm on Sun., Feb. 18. This year you will be assigned a number to use as you bid high and bid often. Numbers will be available Sunday morning or in the office during the week.

Coffee Hour

Sun., Feb. 4. Join your FCC family in the Gathering Area for fellowship and goodies after worship sponsored by Pathways Sunday School Class.

Lenten Service and Lunch

Wednesdays, Feb. 21 through Mar. 20 at Grace Lutheran Church, service at noon with lunch to follow. On Mar. 6, Pastor Shelby will be leading the service with FCC chefs providing the lunch.

If you would like to be on the email Prayer Chain to receive updates on our congregation, contact the office.

**March Caller
Deadline**
- February 10 -

Month of Compassion

(By Amy Benson, Generosity Committee)

February is the time where we, as Disciples, choose to focus on Compassion, a ministry serving communities in need throughout the world. Many may remember an historic tornado outbreak in December of 2021 in western Kentucky, where these outreach dollars went to help. More recently, following the Hamas attacks in Israel in early October, our donations to Week of Compassion (the relief, refugee and development mission fund of the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ) have helped with immediate needs such as food, water, shelter, medical care and sanitation in the Middle East. I invite you all to check out weekofcompassion.org for inspiring stories and more information about where our donations are going to work, from as nearby as our neighboring state to as far as the other side of the world.

This year's theme is "Gifts to Live On." For the second year, we will have a silent auction of gift baskets donated by Sunday School classes, church committees, and individuals. The Silent Auction will begin on Sun., Feb. 4 with bidding closing on Sun., Feb. 18. The baskets will be on display in the Gathering Area and will offer something for everyone! Do you have any creative ideas to put together a basket yourself? Let's all get involved, to meet our goal of \$20,000 or beyond...to reach further and to grow our impact globally!

[Jesus] looked up and saw rich people putting their gifts into the treasury; he also saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. He said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them, for all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on." Luke 21:1-4 (NRSVue)



Ash Wednesday

February 14

Let us start off the season of Lent, which also happens to be Valentine's Day, acknowledging our need to recommit ourselves to God, the source of all Love and Life. A special station will be set up in the Sanctuary and you are welcome to stop by anytime during the day for a time of personal devotion and self-serve ashes OR join us at 7:00 pm for an evening worship service of music and meditation including the imposition of ashes.

Lenten Daily Devotions

We encourage you to find a daily devotional that will deepen your relationship with Christ during this holy season of Lent. There are many online options to choose from. Here are a few recommendations:

Kate Bowler - "Have a beautiful, terrible Lent"

https://katebowler.com/seasonal_devotional/have-a-beautiful-terrible-lent/

Ohio Region is planning on running a daily devotional. Watch for more information.



Homemade Chocolate Fundraiser

Before and after Sunday School and after our Worship Service on Sun., Feb. 11, you will be able to purchase yummy chocolate delectables with the proceeds supporting future Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives. Hint: Valentine's Day will be only a few days away!

Shalom from Shelby

The introduction to the Feasting on the Word Lenten Companion (ed. Bartlett, Brown Taylor, and Bracken Long) begins with the following claim:

“Easter is the highest holy day of the Christian faith, but to celebrate it in a vacuum, without immersion in all that comes before the resurrection—both chronologically and theologically—robs the day of its true significance. Lent can be a hard sell for many worshipers, with its intentional solemnity and encouragement toward self-denial. Others find it to be the most meaningful time of year—the most honest time of year, when we wrestle with the hard things of life and walk with Jesus through the darkest days of his life as well.” (vii.)

In the past, I have found myself among those who dreaded the season of Lent. Though I appreciated the trials and tribulations that Jesus endured, to focus on them for six whole weeks felt pretty gloomy. I’d rather skip to the beauty and power of the resurrection. However, I have struggled with clinical depression since I was in middle school - a difficult mental illness that can be all-consuming. This past year and a half was very difficult for me as I battled a deep depression that seemed to suck the life right out of me. I didn’t feel like myself and struggled to connect with others and with God. Though I am a mental health advocate (for others), it can be challenging to share one’s own struggles. I know I am not alone - everyone faces seasons of difficulty and pain. And this year, as we have begun our preparations for the upcoming Lenten season, I’ve noticed a shift in my perspective. I am grateful to say that the combination of a medication change and the birth of my son brought me out of my depression and into a season of great joy. But I have recently felt the deep despair and loneliness that allows me to re-identify more personally with the journey of Jesus... that which comes before the joy of the resurrection.

What a comfort it is to know that my God experienced the complicated mix of suffering and delight that is being human. What a consolation that God chose solidarity with humankind and understands our pain, our fears, our hopes, and our heartbreak. So if we open ourselves up to the discomfort, we may just find solace in a season that takes an honest look at the hardships of life and faith. There might be relief in letting go of the illusion that we have it all together. If we allow ourselves to explore what it means that Christ suffered and died on the cross, we could discover new depths of our faith and learn something about ourselves in the process. This year, let us see the season of Lent as an opportunity to bring fresh meaning to familiar texts.

As the introduction in the Feasting on the Word Lenten Companion later says, “It is dangerous to meet Jesus in the dark places, to ask the same questions of ourselves that Jesus asks of his disciples, to accept Jesus’ radical touch. In these moments of utter truth and honesty, we find ourselves vulnerable enough to connect with the risen Christ as never before.” (vii.)

May it be so.

Shalom, Shelby

Board News

Sharon Wright, Board Clerk

Next Official Board Meeting

Tuesday, February 13, 7:00 pm

Fellowship Hall & Zoom

Everyone is welcome to attend!

Chairman’s Minute

Acts 20:28 “*Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which He bought with his own blood*”.

It’s February. You, the congregation, have approved our 2024 roster of Elders, Deacons and Trustees and we’ll be orienting new Board members later this month. Acts 20:28 is the scripture I use to set the tone for the Board’s work each year as we discern God’s calling, make decisions and move His mission forward through us all.

The Official Board is responsible for the Strategic Planning, Finances, Staff Performance, Legal Compliance and Board Records. It consists of 25 voting members who represent the congregation in different capacities. Each possesses life or work experience that compliments the rest of the Board; a commitment to the church and to supporting it; a strong prayer life and; a willingness to be prepared for monthly meetings.

As your Board Chair, my message to you is that we’re all in this together and we’re all responsible for the effective governing of this blessed church. To that end, I ask each of you to get to know your Board members and support them with your prayers, thoughtful insights and wise council. Take your queue from 1 Thessalonians and Ephesians: *Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.*

It really feels like this is the year we turn a corner. I expect good things in 2024...I hope you do too.

I invite you to connect with me as you are so called at 330-416-1232 or kkaufman@fccwadsworth.org. Yours in Christ, Kevin Kaufman, Board Chair. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.



The DEI Committee welcomes anyone interested in joining our committee. Our next meeting is on Thurs., Feb. 8, at 7:00 pm in Room 104 and Zoom. We will be continuing our work on hearing accessibility for our services and working out details for our upcoming chocolate fundraiser. Yum! You don’t have to officially join DEI to attend this or any other meeting. Fee free to “sit in” anytime to get a feel for what we do. Questions can be directed to Mary Ellen Huber (216-390-8456 or sharpei5015@gmail.com).

Our Call to Mission

"The only thing that counts is faith working through love." - Galatians 5:6

Treasurer's Report

General Fund as of December 31, 2023
Submitted by Lisa Jones

GENERAL FUND CASH BALANCE		\$253,660.29		
	CURRENT MONTH	YEAR TO DATE	YEAR TO DATE BUDGET	ANNUAL BUDGET
CONTRIBUTIONS				
Offerings	\$65,293.15	\$464,026.00	\$478,065.00	\$478,065.00
EXPENSES				
Personnel	\$24,492.55	\$291,167.86	\$334,713.00	\$334,713.00
Admin/Programs	6,823.01	89,396.45	98,352.00	98,352.00
Outreach	-	50,445.75	45,000.00	45,000.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$31,315.56	\$431,010.06	\$478,065.00	\$478,065.00

Notes About Folks

Congratulations to Bob Heller who received the Wadsworth Firefighter/EMT of the Quarter Award. Bob was off duty when he came across a motorcycle accident. He took care of the victim, assisted in calming the wife of the victim, and helped phone family members to let them know what was going on.

Sympathies to Mike and Amy Benson on the death of his father, Dennis Benson, Jan. 24.

Sympathies to Dawn, David, and Robert on the death of her father-in-law and their grandfather, Richard Holt, Jan. 20.

Dear Church Family

We are so appreciative of the gifts we have received from our church family. The Christmas bag had such a nice variety, we enjoyed it all. The cards through the year are always "warm fuzzies." The notes and gifts from "God's Kids" are precious. They are learning to share God's love - a great lesson. Those that help us with shopping and appointments. The Elders that bring us communion and fellowship. Thank you for such great blessings. George & Lois Garman



Month of
Compassion

Silent Auction

Bidding opens
Feb. 4 & ends
Feb. 18 at Noon!



Child and Family
MINISTRIES

Keyshia Beverly, Director
kbeverly@fccwadsworth.org



God's Kids Club Choir (GKCC)

The GKCC meets Sunday mornings in the Sunday school room during the first 15 minutes of the Sunday School hour to rehearse for upcoming performances.

The GKCC performed during Lessons and Carols on Dec. 17. They sang "Silent Night" with sign language. Huge thanks to Mrs. Mary Ellen Huber!!

Junior Youth Fellowship (JYF)

During this time of fellowship, kids participate in games or other fun activities to build relationships between their church peers.

God's Kids Club (GKC)

If you are in **K- 5th grade** you will want to be part of God's Kids Club! We meet in Room 102 during the Sunday School hour four times this school year (see church calendar). What do we do?? Well, we meet to talk, do craft projects, and write letters to all the Homebound members of our church. We make sure that every month they receive a letter and a small handmade gift. It's a very important ministry and so we need every K-5th grader to join this very important group. If you are interested in joining GKC, please come!!

Parents Day Out



During Parents Day Out, we took a trip to the kitchen to find cookies, played games, made crafts and watched Pokémon. The kids had a blast while their parents had time to finish Christmas shopping and wrapping gifts!

Dates to Remember

February - Month of Compassion
Feb. 11 - Lent Craft



J.O.Y. Fellowship Planning/Brainstorming Meeting

Part of the J.O.Y. Fellowship? Attend a brief (30-45 min.) session in the Courtyard Room immediately after worship on Sun., Feb. 11, to gather ideas for J.O.Y. events for 2024. Your input will assist in planning for a successful year. Can't attend? Contact Jerry Ritzman.

80+ Birthdays

Donna Beal	2/01/32	Carolyn Kiser	2/12/41
Betty Smith	2/02/30	Marilyn Oplinger	2/13/41
Gary Barnard	2/05/38	Chett Workman	2/16/29
Judy Williams	2/08/39	Dona Maxon	2/18/33
Marcia Stubbendieck	2/10/43		

Book Study

Pathways Sunday School Class is offering a book study beginning Sun., Feb. 11, in Room 107, 8:45 am. The study based on the Adam Hamilton book Christianity's Family Tree – what other Christians believe and why. Contact Katie Boarman (330-256-4719) for more information. Everyone is welcome!

Inclement Weather Policy

In the event of inclement weather, the Pastor and the Board Chair shall determine whether Sunday School, Worship, and scheduled activities will be held. The FCC Web Page, the FCC Facebook page, and a notification to those who receive the Weekly Update will have the information no later than 7:00 am if the church is to be closed.



YOUTH SUNDAY

Our annual Youth Sunday is next month! We'll be spending all of February planning, preparing, and practicing for this wonderful service. Make sure to join us on March 3 at 10 am to see all our hard work pay off!



MARCH FELLOWSHIP EVENT

All 6th-12th graders are invited to join us on March 17 from 3-5:30 pm for a rousing round of glow mini-golf! RSVP to Pastor Shelby.



ALL-YOUTH RETREAT

Our all-youth retreat at Camp Christian is coming up in February and it's time to register! We'll carpool from the church parking lot, leaving Saturday morning the 24th and returning in the afternoon on the 25th. During our retreat we'll worship, play, study the Bible, have discussions about faith and life, enjoy meals together, and admire the beauty of camp in the winter! Friends are welcome and the retreat is entirely FREE! Sign up to attend [here:](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10COD49AFAE2FA4FCC25-44520325-fccyouth_)
https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10COD49AFAE2FA4FCC25-44520325-fccyouth_



Donate to Our Youth Ministry!

As we work to enhance our youth ministry experience, you can help! If you'd like to donate to the Youth Program, you can purchase a game or equipment from our Amazon Wishlist! Check it out here: [Wish List](#)

First Men

Men of First Christian Church

Facebook Page: FCC First Men-First Christian Church, Wadsworth, Men's Ministry



Upping Our Game With Derek Maul!

(as Christians, as church members, as human beings)

February 16-18

Christian Author and Journalist, Derek Maul is coming to spend the weekend of February 16-18 with FCC Wadsworth and FCC Medina. Derek has inspired our Men's Forum study group over the past couple of years with his contagious and very genuine faith as we have used his men's ministry study materials and we are excited to bring him in. We are planning a mix of activities to give all a chance to meet and engage with Derek and each other. Net proceeds from the events will benefit local addiction recovery programs, Francis House in Wadsworth and Cathy's House in Medina.

All-Church Evening & Conversation with Derek

I'm Not Sure That Word Means What You Think It Means - a conversation about REAL life

Friday, February 16 from 5:30-8:00 pm

Fellowship Hall

Families of FCC Wadsworth and Medina are invited to meet and Welcome Derek at a casual reception (heavy appetizers served). After food and socializing, Derek will lead us in a conversation about the importance of our Christian faith as church family. Child care will be provided.

Suggested donation: \$10/adult (pay at the event). Sign-up online or in the Gathering Area.



Men's Winter Gathering

Upping Our Game (as Christians, as Church Members, as Human beings)

Saturday, February 17 from 9:30 am to 2:00 pm

@ The Lodge at Allardale

(Allardale Park – 141 Remsen Rd., Medina, OH)



On Saturday morning, we will hold a half day Men's Gathering/Retreat where Derek will lead us in a program designed to explore the question of "How does church fit into our most fundamental and essential needs/aspirations as human beings?" This event will be a mix of large and small group activities. We are also extending an invitation to guys from the Christian Church of Ohio as well other faith communities in the area.

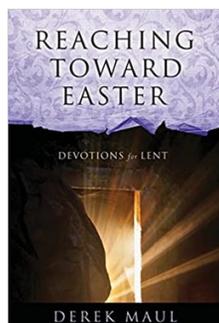
Lunch will be provided. Suggested donation: \$25 (pay at the event). Sign-up online or in the Gathering Area.

Sunday Worship With Derek

Sunday, February 18

Derek is also looking forward to worshipping with us and will deliver the message at our worship service on Sunday morning.

Who is Derek Maul? Derek was raised in England, then became a naturalized American after graduating from Stetson University in Florida (where he studied psychology, played soccer, and met his wife, Rebekah). Derek added a degree in education and became known for his innovative work with emotional disturbed and autistic children. As a Presbyterian pastor's spouse, Derek helped redefine and reinvigorate ministry to men. Eight books, countless articles, and a widely read blog have created a national platform to share his passion for life and for following Jesus. Derek also enjoys photography, cooking, travel with Rebekah, golf, and walking his 105-pound Retriever, Max. You can follow him at www.derekmaul.blog



Men's Forum - Reaching Toward Easter

Mondays, February 19 - April 1, 7:00-8:00 pm

Chalice Room

Join us as we get back together as guys over a cup of coffee to form REAL bonds with each other and God.

In preparation for Easter, we will study the book of John. Our friend, Derek Maul's Lenten devotional book, Reaching Toward Easter, will guide us. Derek's daily devotions are filled with hope and provide us with a great mix of personal stories and in-depth exploration of the scriptures. We will use this material guide us a step closer to the risen Christ.

Join the guys of FCC Wadsworth and Medina.



Thanks to all who joined us for the January 6, Specialty Chili/Soup Challenge. We had 10 Chili/Soup aficionados preparing their best: including two prior chili-champions (Lenora Taylor and Paul Huber), a three generation team (Karen Longfield, Katie and Annabelle Boarman) and Rachel Trease a brand new member of our congregation, preparing their favorites.



All were delighted to give away their specialty to members of our congregation, guests, people who read of our event in Medina Gazette, heard about our event on Wadsworth Community Radio and even our member of Congress came in for chili and conversation. Laurie Beal, Director of Ministry, at The Garage joined us to answer questions and thank our congregation for our support, and see the Free-Will offerings donated by our grateful chili/soup consumers. We received \$591, including Sunday, when the last two dozen plus containers went out the door with exiting worshipers. Everyone enjoyed this opportunity to get together over lunch and vote for their favorite chili/soup. Paul Huber successfully defended his 2023 victory as Chili Champion for 2024.



Thank you for your continued generosity with the suggested food and personal care items brought in Red Bags each month. The Wadsworth Salvation Army's emergency food pantry is so grateful for 1,018 items you donated last year to stock their pantry for the emergency needs in our community. February's suggestion, printed on the bag, is pancake mix & syrup, but all items are appreciated.



Thanks to all who joined us for Feeding Medina County's Wadsworth Food distribution on Jan. 25 at Art Wright Stadium. It turned out to be a mild winter day, but we served nearly two hundred families. We'll be the lead volunteer organization again on Thurs., June 27, if you want to have a good feeling by helping provide food for our neighbors in need.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!



Have an idea for family friendly/weekend Outreach opportunity? We're interested in learning more. Speak to Dan Sondles dansondles@hotmail.com, or any of our Outreach members. You can recognize them by their smiles.

Sunday Morning Worship

Regular Hours
 Sunday School - 8:45 am
 Combined Worship - 10:00 am

YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/user/FCCWadsworthMedia>

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/FirstChristianChurchWadsworthOhio/>

WCTV Channel 17
 Tuesday - 10:30 am, 4:00 pm, 9:00 pm
 Wednesday - 8:00 am

February Dates to Remember

Find updated information regarding church events on the FCC Webpage, Facebook Page, and the Weekly Update sent out every Friday afternoon.

Weekly

Wed. Chancel Choir Rhs 5:30 pm
 " Bells of FCC Rhs 7:00 pm

Daily

Feb. 3	Sewing Sisters	8:30 am
Feb. 4	Red Bag Sunday	
"	Baptism Class	8:45 am
"	Elevate	6:00 pm
Feb. 6	Elders Mtg	7:00 pm
Feb. 11	DEI Chocolate Sale	
"	Baptism Class	8:45 am
"	JYF	8:45 am
"	J.O.Y. Fellowship Mtg	11:00 am
"	Elevate	6:00 pm
Feb. 12	Men's Forum	7:00 pm
Feb. 13	Official Board Mtg	7:00 pm
Feb. 14	Ash Wednesday Service	7:00 pm
Feb. 16	Evening with Derek Maul	5:30 pm
Feb. 17	Men's Retreat	9:30 am
Feb. 18	Baptism Class	8:45 am
"	Elevate	6:00 pm
Feb. 19	Men's Forum	7:00 pm
Feb. 20	Outreach Comm	7:00 pm
Feb. 21	Community Lenten Worship	12:00 pm
Feb. 22	Feeding Medina Cnty Distribution	
Feb. 23	Snow Tubing	5:00 pm
Feb. 24/25	Youth Retreat/Camp Christian	
Feb. 26	Men's Forum	7:00 pm
Feb. 28	Community Lenten Worship	12:00 pm

2023 Year in Review Video

The video that was shown at the Annual Meeting is available for viewing on the FCC Webpage.



Save the Date!
MEN's Pancake Breakfast
 Saturday, March 16
 7:00-9:00 am ~ Fellowship Hall
 (Breakfast service 7:00-7:30 am)

Office Hours

9:00 am - 4:00 pm ~ Monday, Tuesday, Thursday
 Closed Wednesday
 9:00 am - 1:00 pm ~ Friday



Follow Us!
fccwadsworth

FCC CALLER

First Christian Church
 116 E. Boyer Street
 Wadsworth, OH 44281

Address Service Requested

Regional News

Totally Eclipsed! At Camp Christian! April 8 - Camp Christian is holding a retreat whose whole purpose is to share this once in a lifetime experience. Come on Sunday night and share in a campfire complete with s'mores and fellowship. Breakfast and lunch will be provided with crafts and activities. A short workshop will be held before the eclipse. Eyeglasses will be provided. For more information and to register, check out this link:

CCINOH

Community News

Salvation Army Soup Kitchen - Every Tues., 4:00 pm, in the parking lot of Wadsworth Towers, 190 Main St. Stop by for a "Hot Meal to Go!" There is a one meal per person limit.

Salvation Army Food Distribution - Volunteers are needed to help box, load, unload, and bag items for the Salvation Army Pop-Up Food Distributions being held at the Wadsworth Salvation Army on the second Friday of the month. Volunteers please arrive at 10:15 am. Food Distribution runs from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm.

2023 Annual Reports are available at the Welcome Center in the Gathering Area.