

THE WITNESS

Circleville First Church

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Issue 314

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Phillip teaches



Phillip Evans has recently taken on the task of teaching a growth group class (Sunday School). He serves teaching the Pre-K/Kindergarten class.

Phillip and his wife, **Crystal** have been married for 20 years and are the parents of **Nicholas, Alex, Cody, Nathaniel, Gabriel and Isaac**. The couple have 20

grandchildren: **Aiden, Lili, Eli, Kinley, DJ, Gracie, Wyatt, Emma, Bradlee, Henry, Willow, Aubrey, Kodi, Clayton, Bentley, Dakota, Maddox, Camilla, Brady and Junie**.

"I'm a stay-at-home Papaw and watch my babies," said Phillip whose birthday is March 3.

He said that he has been attending Circleville First Church for five years, "but I grew up here as a kid." He returned to CFC through Second Chance.

Phillip's favorite color is blue. He said, "My favorite food? All of it," and enjoys eating at Fish Market. Psalm 23 is his Bible chapter of choice and the parable of the farmer and his seeds tops his list for favorite biblical story.

The hymn, "I'll Fly Away" is his favorite song and likes Phil Wickham's music. "Any cookbook," he replied as his favorite book. Phillip enjoys, "Fishing, mushroom hunting and being with my family."

February 1, 2023, a date that is etched in Phillip's heart and mind, the day he was saved. He continued, "In **Pastor Jay's** office when my grandson was in the NICU and my aunt was passing away."

(continued on page 3)

Our focus for 2026 is "Sabbath"

What does it mean to keep the Sabbath holy?

"Blessed is the man who does this, and the son of man who lays hold on it; Who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, and keeps his hand from doing any evil." - Isaiah 56:2

Looking forward...

Circleville First Church as we look at the year behind and look forward to the year ahead there is much to Thank God for. He has helped us in many ways and brought us to a wonderful place in His grace.

Starting January 6, one of the ministries that we as a church will step into this year is the partnership with Crossroads Christian Academy (CCA). We will be housing and participating in the Middle school, High school at our church. I want to address the first thing that I believe has been circulating that somehow this is just ministry Pastor Jay wants to do. That is wrong this is something I am involved in but very much believe is what God would have US to do. These are students who live right around our church area who need an education but also need to know that Jesus loves them. One young man from near the church lives with his grandparents and simply needs a dose of confidence and character of Christ. Another wants to know that adults love him without those adults being told to do so. I had one student, a young lady, who wants to be a mother, a fine Godly pursuit. She desperately needs Godly women to show the right sequence of events in pursuing that calling. You can be a light house in these young lives. You say pastor, "how can I help"? Maybe it's helping serve lunch which will be needed on daily basis, maybe it's coming to chapel and worshipping and being apart.

(continued on page 3)

Encouragement that builds

Have you ever regretted not taking the time to speak life or truth over someone? Maybe they were going through a hard time and you weren't sure what to say, but you felt like you could have- and should have-said something.

When Paul, the author of 1 Thessalonians, is writing to the church in Thessalonika, he gives them some practical advice...

Paul tells the church to continue to encourage one another and keep building each other up. This was something they were already doing, but Paul felt it necessary to remind them to keep doing this.

Encouragement can change someone's attitude. It can lift someone out of a dark place. It can remind them of what's true when the truth feels foggy. Speaking life and truth over someone can give them the hope and determination they need to push through a hard season.

Maybe you can remember a time when someone encouraged you during a challenging season of life and the difference it made for you. Paul is encouraging us to do that for others.

The Church is meant to be a place of encouragement. We should never leave any encouragement unspoken, but should generously life each other up.

Spend some time today thinking about someone in your life who you can encourage. It might be someone who's going through a hard time or someone who simply needs to be reminded that others care about them. Never let encouragement go unspoken. Take a moment to speak life.

Share your faith:

Be intentional to speak life and truth over someone today. You never know how God might use your words for HIs glory!

1 Thessalonians 5:11 "Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing."

This is a devotional that I recently read...
I hope it encourages you.

submitted by **Bob Dollison**

Operation Christmas Child

Items for January

TOYS & STUFFED ANIMALS

Calling all men...

Men's Prayer Meeting

Saturdays 8 am

Hey, you guys!!!

Men's Prayer Breakfast

January 17

8 am

FC Hall

speaker: Abraham Heimbach



Bible study

Wednesdays at 1 pm Ferguson/Clark Hall

Verse of the month

"With all my heart I praise the Lord, and with all that I am I praise his holy name." Psalm 103:1 CEV

submitted by **John Adams**

Community cupboard needs

CANNED GOODS



a tote is located in the overflow for donations

Phillip... (con't from page 1)

He stated, "I can fix just about anything and I like to make up funny songs for my grandkids."

Phillip testified, "I went from 100 proof to Living proof. I just want to serve the Lord every day in any way that I can."

Looking forward... (con't from page 1)

I would like to see Growth groups who take classes and pray for them by name each week and take opportunities to let the students know you are caring. Maybe it's by sponsoring a student so they can go to Creation Museum and learn more of God's design for them. I would love to have men and women who go down and pray through the hall and lockers each day for the students before the day begins asking for His touch on their lives spiritually.

What I don't want to hear is talk about CCA ministry and negative talk about the kids or their involvement at our church. If you have concern, speak to me or a board member, but never negative to the students. They have enough against them we won't be another negative voice.

There will be some logistics that will need to change for us to have this ministry in our building.

- One, you will no longer Mon-Fri be able to just come in the back double doors whether you have key or not, EVERYONE will come to the front double doors during the week. This is for safety of all.
- Second, you will need to park on the street when you come or by the fellowship hall if it's during drop off and pick up times. Drop off 8:30-8:40 am, Pick-up 3:00-3:15 pm.
- Please make sure, as ministry leaders, you check the church calendar before planning and promoting church functions.

I am excited for us to invest in the next generation this way and look forward to many exciting updates together.

***Dedication of Prayer** will be held on January 4 at the 10:45 am service.

*** Classes begin January 6.**

*** Help is needed to serve lunch. Lunch will be served from 11:45-12:15.** If interested in serving lunch and building relationships, contact the church office.

submitted by **Pastor Jay Neff**

Growth groups/CFC kids



The Growth Groups will be holding a silent auction. The participating classes: the children's classes and the young adult class will be decorating a wreath.

Bidding began on December 7 and bids taken until December 21. A total of \$175 was raised! **Thank you for participating in this auction and for your bids!**

The **Children's Christmas program**, "The Sounding Joy", was held on December 21.

CFC Kids will have a Christmas party on December 28.

submitted by **Kim Buchanan**

Thank you for serving our country...

Please pray for our country, our leaders and all of our military and their families as they serve but especially **Sean Baldwin, Bob Byerly, Ryan Dean, Zachary Haddox, Oscar Knece, Brittany Mazingo, Tim Sauers, Andrew Williams and Tanner Wilson.**



Summit

March 13, 14 & 15

speaker: Ryan VanArsdalen

Lunch provided by youth group



Coming...February 2026

Annual Chili Cook-Off

Youth Missions Trip

Dominican Republic

June 23-30



The work team will be building a house. Contact Seth George for more information.

Church extension

This was an update from November 2024 and hoping there will be a more current update soon.

I wanted to share with you some CCCU church extension churches and ways you can keep them in prayer.

Trinidad, West Indies: The Shekinah Church planted a Hispanic church 4 years ago, hosted by their church. This one church has now multiplied to 4 Hispanic churches. Shekinah church has also helped a new church start in the Congo, Africa and now has established a primary school in the community.

Pierrepont Manor, NY: A church that affiliated with us a few years ago as a very small congregation but has now started a new children and adult ministry in Sunday School that is helping the church begin to grow.

Elim Church, NJ: Pastor Bowles Taitt has established a new church that is unique. It is an online church with attenders from across the country, but also a local church that is meeting in another church. They are currently looking for a building of their own to call home.

Sharptown, NJ: A church that is transitioning out of the United Methodist Church has now affiliated with our denomination. This is an exciting new church for the Northeast District. The pastor of the new church is Dr Doug Smith who is the brother of our former OCU President, Dr Ron Smith.

Columbus, OH: River of Blessings Church: (A Hispanic Church hosted by our valley View CCCU on the west side of Columbus). They are now starting a new Hispanic church in the Joan Heights Church also on the west side of Columbus named River of Blessings Church #2! Cap City donated over 70 chairs to the new River Blessings Church #2 and they are currently remodeling the building and preparing to launch.

New Holland, OH: Heritage CCCU in Washington CH has now entered into an agreement with the church to make it a satellite congregation Pastor Crystal Spriggs is the campus pastor the church recently baptized three new converts and began a children's ministry; the church is beginning to grow.

McArthur, OH Otterbein Chapel CCCU: The church recently returned to the denomination. They are growing and expanding their services and outreach.

Chillicothe, OH Mingo Road CCCU: A new church started in 2023. This church remains small but is growing.

Portsmouth, OH Iglesia Luz Admirable: A brand-new Hispanic Church just organized and supported by the Cedar Street CCCU and the South Central District.

Metairie, LA Amistad y Vida-Iglesia Santidad: A new Hispanic

church that has outgrown its building and is seeking to find a more suitable location that can hold the new people that are coming.

Avon Park, FL Iglesia de Dios Mi Refugio Y Torre Fuerte: A new Hispanic Church planted 5 years ago and now has its own building and is growing spiritually and numerically.

Bell, FI Foundations 1:29 Church A revitalization project has just paid off their mortgage. The church is healthy and growing.

Thank you for your prayers! Hoping for an update on these churches next month! Peace!

submitted by **Cathy Marck**, Church Extension President

McGuire Home

The McGuire Home, a home purchased by Circleville First Church in March 2025 to provide housing for missionaries on furlough, raising funds to continue their ministry is undergoing renovations and updates.

Seth George oversees this project.

A generous donation has recently been made to complete these renovations of the McGuire Home. **Thank you for this donation!!**

Thank you to all who has given to this project: monetarily, labor, time and prayer!

Plumbing	7500.	--finished
Electrical	7600.	--finished
Drywall	4800.	--finished
Paint	500.	
Flooring	2000.	
Doors & trim	2000.	
Cabinets	2000.	
Fixtures	2000.	
Miscellaneous	1600.	

Financial funds for the McGuire Home have been met! Praise the Lord!!!

Sabbath

"Blessed is the man who does this, and the son of man who lays hold on it; Who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, and keeps his hand from doing any evil." - Isaiah 56:2

Stories from Elizabeth's Hope

Rewarding Work

Recently I had a day that reminded me why I love this work. A lady wanting to be a labor and delivery nurse joined me and we surprised a few expecting couples with impromptu ultrasounds. One couple we scanned are expecting twins. Together we witnessed pure joy as both parents saw their twin babies — a boy and a girl — moving, stretching, and showing off for all of us. Being able to point out everything we were seeing from the four-chambered heart to their knees and elbows, fingers and toes made everything feel so real for them. The expecting parents were thrilled by the surprise ultrasound, being able to peek at their babies again, and experience the wonder of watching all those tiny details come to life on the screen. It was a blessing to share in their delight, and a reminder that every heartbeat is a miracle.

Moments like these are special, not only being able to share what I do every day, but also to witness the awe of new life. The lady shadowing me was inspired by being able to see firsthand how much joy and connection this work brings.

Kristie Steck BSN, RN
Mobile Nurse Manager
Elizabeth's Hope

Ladies' lunch



Ladies' lunch will be **Tuesday, January 6** in the Pizza Cottage party room at 11 am.

Our December lunch was a great success with 14 ladies attending, everyone enjoys the OCU cafeteria. The foul weather plan worked well.

Remember if school is closed, lunch moves to next Tuesday. For more information, contact Diana Moore 740.497.4042

submitted by **Diana Moore**

Crossroads Christian Academy

January 5 – Open House 6:30 pm

January 6 - First Day of Class



Penny March – January 4

Jokes of the month

I read that cinnamon is good for weight control. So, I started eating 5 cinnamon rolls every morning.



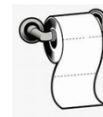
Knowledge isn't free! You have to pay attention!

Why was the broom late to work? It over swept.

Me: Do you know the difference between a shower curtain and a roll of toilet paper?

You: No, what?

Me: So, you're the ONE!!



submitted by **Bobby Dollison**

December 31--**Bible Study**—dismissed

Church Office-closed

December 31
January 1

Getting Started class begins January 4



Thank you so much to everyone who helped bring up the Christmas decorations from the basement and those who came and helped decorate the church. Your support is deeply appreciated.

ECL fundraising lunch

Sunday, January 25

Chicken noodle soup, beans & cornbread, cookies, drink. Cost is \$5. per person / \$20. for family. Donations are always appreciated.

Sunday, February 22

TBD (I will take suggestions)



Follow us on Instagram

Like us on Facebook



Mark your calendars

Tuesday, January 6 – Ladies' Lunch in the Pizza Cottage party room at 11 am.

Thursday, January 22 - Ladies Night at 6:30 pm in the FC Hall, bring a friend and snack to share.

Sunday, January 25 – ECL Fundraising Lunch - chicken noodle soup, beans & cornbread, cookies, drink.
Cost is \$5. per person / \$20. for family.
Donations are always appreciated.

Tuesday, February 17 - Ladies Night at 6:30 pm in the FC Hall, bring a friend and snack to share.

Sunday, February 22 - ECL Fundraising Lunch - TBD
I will take suggestions.

March 20-21 – Ladies SCD – I Am - Conference held at Deer Creek – registration and cost involved. Information, brochure and forms found in Welcome Center. Let's get at least 30 ladies to attend this year, we had an awesome time last year.

Registrations and \$75. must be turned into Joellen Byerly before January 13, so I can get them sent in. Final payment - due March 3. Ladies ECL will pay for most of this one, depending on how much we raise during our fundraisers.

Saturday, April 25 – Crossroads Ladies Conference – Joy of the Journey - registration needed - \$25. if early bird registration is met - T-shirts will be available.

submitted by **Joellen Byerly** and **Diana Moore**

Crossroads Christian Academy needs help serving lunch.
Lunch is served from 11:45-12:15. If you are interested in serving lunch and building relationships, contact the church office.

Dedication of Prayer for Crossroads Christian Academy

January 4 at 10:45 am

Kitchen delights

Here's a perfect recipe for game day.

Crock Pot Buffalo Chicken Dip

4 cups of shredded cooked chicken
8 oz. shredded sharp cheddar cheese
8 oz. shredded pepper jack cheese
2 (8 oz.) packages cream cheese, softened
1 cup buffalo sauce, plus more for topping
2/3 cup ranch dressing
1/2 cup blue cheese crumbles, plus more for topping
Chopped chives, for topping

In a 6-quart slow-cooker, stir together the chicken, cheddar cheese, pepper jack cheese, cream cheese, buffalo sauce, ranch dressing and blue cheese. Cover and cook on low for 2 to 4 hours, stirring occasionally.



To serve, garnish the dip with blue cheese crumbles, buffalo sauce and a sprinkle of chives. Hold on warm for up to 2 hours. Serve with carrots, celery sticks & tortilla chips. **YUM!!**

submitted by **Nancy Johnson**

12 – 31 Bible Study—dismissed
Church Office-closed

1 -1 Happy New Year!!!
Church Office-closed

1 – 4 Penny March
Getting Started Class begins

1 -5 Crossroads Christian Academy
Open House 6:30 – 8:30 pm

1 -6 First day of Crossroads Christian Academy
Ladies' Lunch 11 am at Pizza Cottage party room

1 – 17 Men's Prayer Breakfast 8 am FC Hall

1 – 19 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

1 - 22 - Ladies' Night at 6:30 pm FC Hall

1 – 25 Ladies' ECL Fundraising Lunch



Try a Growth Group class at 9:45 am,
stay where you fit in and feel comfortable