

THE WITNESS

Circleville First Church

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Issue 317

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2026 Chili Cook-Off & Ruth Ann Tener Memorial Dessert Auction

Thank you to all of you who came out to support the 2026 Chili Cook-Off and Ruth Ann Tener Memorial Dessert Auction held on March 1. What an amazing success and another record-breaking year to support missions!

Our total for this year's event including entry fees and auction items sold was \$9029!! This is to support all missions ministries at Circleville First Church - yearly short-term mission teams, long term missionaries serving overseas and the new missionary McGuire Home.



The **Senig Family** was once again our winner in the Spicy Chili category. **Aaron Senig** reports that **Jim**, his father, originally learned to make the "family friendly" version from Aaron's

grandmother. When Aaron was young, he remembers Jim making chili in multiple batches of 5 gallons for Emmett Chapel to sell at the Pumpkin Show booth. **Adam, Jim and Aaron** came together to make up the version that is used at the Chili Cook-off. Aaron states, "I think what makes it special is that the chili cook-off is the only time we make it that spicy, the time we spend together making it and the tears of joy (I mean pain) that it brings to people."

Bradley Neff won once again in the Specialty Chili category. When asked about what brought him to his special recipe for Buffalo Chicken Chili, Bradley states that he likes "all things Buffalo" including wings and especially Buffalo chicken dip. He states that his mom had this recipe for chili, so he borrowed her crockpot, made the chili and brought it to the cook-off!

Mason Spencer was a first-time winner in the Traditional Chili category. He states, "The chili I made was the one I grew up
(continued on page 2)

EASTER

Good Friday Service

April 3 at 7 pm

Prayer Vigil

Good Friday, April 3 at 9 pm til
Easter Sunday, April 5 at 7 am

Easter Sunday

SonRise Service 8 am
Easter Breakfast
Morning Service 10:45 am



*No Growth Group on Easter Sunday
*No Children's Church on Easter Sunday

Membership class

Anyone interested in becoming a member of the church, Pastor Jay Neff and Pastor Andrew Hottinger will be taking the time to explain what biblical membership looks like. Classes will be held on **Wednesday evenings at 7 pm** in the library: **April 15, April 22, April 29, May 6 and May 13.**



2026 Chili Cook-Off (con't from page 1)

eating, with only 3 main ingredients and no surprises: ground beef, beans and tomatoes. However, I seasoned the chili the way I liked to eat it and gave it more of a smoky flavor."



Thank you to **Tim Tener** who served as auctioneer. He auctioned cakes of all types including blueberry cheesecake, pineapple upside down cake, red velvet cake, mini cakes, raspberry lemon cupcakes,

strawberry lemon cupcakes, angel food roll, lemon cake, chocolate cake, peanut butter cake, strawberry cheesecakes and Heath bar cake, as well as pumpkin roll.

Blackberry, rhubarb and triple berry cobblers were up for grabs. Peanut butter chews, peanut butter fudge, brownies with peanut butter frosting, peanut clusters and Oreo truffles were also donated and up for bid.

Bids were made on a variety of cookies including chocolate chip cookies, whoopie pies, peanut butter chocolate chip cookies, peanut butter cookies with dark chocolate chips and oatmeal raisin. Various brownies, gooey blonde brownies, Reese's bars, s'more rice crispy roll, rice crispy treats and Oreo rice crispy treats.

Many pies were baked which included blackberry pie, peach pie, raisin pie, pecan pie, sugar pie, triple berry pie, cherry pie, strawberry pie, burst o berry pie, Reese's peanut butter pie, mini strawberry pies and mixed berry pie.

Dinner rolls, homemade bagels, cinnamon rolls, Oreo cinnamon rolls, banana bread, pumpkin bread and cinnamon strudel bread was also on the list. Also, a gift box which included a gift certificate/t-shirt and handmade puff bag with chocolate chip cookies were on auction block.

Thank you to everyone who entered the cook-off, donated baked goods, ate the chili, set up, served, cleaned up or served in any way to make this year's chili cook-off a success!

*Now for some "Silly Stats"
about the chili cook-off*



*This year, we had 23 different chilis entered. We had prepared spaces (and tasting cups) for 25 chilis.

*The total of cups that were hand-numbered and ready to go for the cookoff was 2,425 individual cups.

*Each chili (numbers 1-22) had 100 numbered cups ready and the spicy chilis (numbers 23-25) had 75 each.

*The cups that are unused each go into a separate gallon-size numbered ziplock bag and are stored away to be used next year.

*This year, we used 1,710 numbered cups for our chilis!

*We are lousy at keeping stats, but we had around 160 people attending the event.

*There were 109 items donated for our auction.

*We prepared 40 pounds of baked potatoes for the evening and used 3 loaves of bread and 2 large jars of peanut butter for the sandwiches.

*Our top fundraiser on desserts donated was **Chris Tener**, who donated 10 pies that were made with his grandmother **Ruth Ann Tener's** recipes. Chris helped us raise over \$1000 with his pies!



submitted by **Joy Atwood**

Sabbath



submitted by **Sue Stonerock**

Kid Power Offering—April 12

Calling all men...

Men's Prayer Meeting

Saturdays 8 am

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

Stories from Elizabeth's Hope

Second Opinion

I took a call from a Mama who had a baby 9 months ago by c-section and found herself pregnant again. She was scared and looking for an abortion because she said she was told she would die if she got pregnant again. Now, I don't know what was actually said to her. It may have been simply the aftercare instructions for a c-section, but she was literally fearful that she would go to bed and not wake up. She was terrified she wouldn't be there to raise her 9-month-old.

We talked briefly about the risk factors of abortion and what that might look like. I also explained that there are risk factors with anything, including pregnancy, yet she had delivered a beautiful, healthy baby. I recommended she get a second opinion and talk to an OB about outcomes and what their experience was with pregnancies soon after having c-sections. I also let her know that I would be glad to reach out to our doctor, Dr. Thompson, and she would be happy to meet with her and answer questions. She said she would make some calls and let me know.

I followed up with her a few days later to find that she did get in with a respected OB with over 30 years of experience who met with her, answered her questions and most importantly calmed her fears. After this meeting, she had decided to go through with this pregnancy! We celebrated together and she told me she was so glad she reached out to Elizabeth's Hope.

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

Hey, you guys!!!

Men's Prayer Breakfast

April 18

8 am FC Hall

speaker: Mark Taylor



Join us for our **SonRise Service** Easter morning at 8 am. Pastor Andrew Hottinger will be bringing the Word.

This is a time to reflect and celebrate the miracle of Christ's resurrection. All are welcome and encouraged to be a part of this service.



April 3

7 pm



Good Friday, April 3 at 9 pm
to
Easter Sunday, April 5 at 7 am

We desire to be praying for our activities during Easter weekend to not only be encouraging for our church, but also that the Lord would move in the lives of our families, friends and community.

The prayer vigil is a way to gather in prayer for God to move in incredible ways! We have time slots for people to sign up to spend 30 minutes in prayer all throughout Easter weekend.

Be sure to sign up!



SonRise Service 8 am
Easter Breakfast
Morning Service 10:45 am

- *No Growth Group
- * No Children's Church

Easter Breakfast

Following the SonRise Service - all are welcome to come and enjoy breakfast in the Ferguson/Clark Hall

Operation Christmas Child

Items for April

Personal Care Items

washcloths, combs, brushes, nail clippers/files



Reminder: Shoeboxes are available all year round. Please contact Brittany Graul for a box(es) and details.

Verse of the month

“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, in the power of the Holy Spirit.”

Romans 15:13 ASV



submitted by **John Adams**

Jokes of the month

 If you hide 48 eggs and tell your kids there are 50, you can get a little nap in.

 “How’s the diet going?”
“Not good, I had eggs for breakfast.”
“Scrambled eggs?”
“No, Cadbury’s.”

 How do you tame a wild hare? Wear an Easter bonnet!

 Why did the Easter egg hide? It was a little chicken.

 What does the Easter Bunny say before he eats? Lettuce pray.

submitted by **Bobby Dollison**

Follow us on Instagram

Like us on Facebook

Community cupboard needs

cereal, cereal bars, powdered milk



a tote is located in the overflow for donations

Kitchen delights

This recipe is from Sara Jones, missionary to Papua, New Guinea

Fried Rice

1/2 cup oil
2 cups rice (not Minute)
1/2 cup chopped onion
2 Tbsp. salt



Put oil in heavy sauce pan. Add onion, salt and rice. Fry until light brown. Add hot water to cover rice (about 1 inch over rice). Cover. Simmer. Stir. Allow to simmer 1/2 hour covered.

Top with spaghetti sauce or 1 can of cream of chicken soup.



The following is from 1982 1st Church 2nd Cookbook by Grayson Ferguson

Pecan Roll

2 cups white sugar
1 cup brown sugar
1/2 cup white syrup
1 cup coffee cream (Half & Half)
1 cup chopped pecans



Boil sugar, syrup and coffee cream to a soft ball stage. Cool to room temperature. Beat until creamy and stiff enough to turn out on board.

Shape into roll and cover outside by rolling in pecan meats. Some of the chopped pecans may be worked into the candy while it is being kneaded.

Put candy in a cool place to harden, then cut with a sharp knife.

submitted by **Nancy Johnson**



Ladies' Retreat

Tuesday, April 7 – Ladies Lunch at Ohio Christian University at 11 am

Saturday, April 25 – Crossroads Ladies Conference: *Joy of the Journey* - registration needed, \$30, T-shirts are available. Information will be found at the Welcome Center.

Thursday, May 21 - Ladies Night at 6:30 pm in the Ferguson/Clark Hall, bring a friend and snack to share. This will be a Make-it-Take-it Night.

Friday, June 19 - Ladies Night at OCU. \$15 for the dessert and speaker/comedian Sally Bauke. Dessert is open from 5 – 7 pm. Service starts at 7:30. Brochures coming soon and available at the Welcome Center.

submitted by **Joellen Byerly & Diana Moore**

The Ladies Lunch at Zanzi's last month was a great time of fellowship. **Joellen Byerly** read devotions, then we took time to share our concerns in prayer.

The next Ladies Lunch will be back to Ohio Christian University (OCU) on **Tuesday, April 7** at 11 am. Please come join us, it is more about being together than the food.



Any questions please call Diana at 740-497-4042.

submitted by **Diana Moore**



June 4, 5 & 6 Rummage Sale for Samaritan's Purse Operation Shoe Box Ministry.

Everyone is welcome to join us for this one. We will start set up on May 31. So, start setting aside all of your "good used" items you no longer want.

We **will not** accept mattresses or large appliances and make sure all clothing is appropriate. We don't want to advertise "things of the world".

Baptism Sunday will be held on **April 19** during the morning worship service at 10:45 am. For anyone wanting to take the next step in their faith to be baptized.



Twenty-one ladies attended the SCD Ladies Retreat at Deer Creek. I am fairly certain that everyone

enjoyed their self, some more than others... As ladies, it is always good to just get away and share with friends and make new ones. If I am correct, I think I heard there were 185 ladies that gathered in the conference room at Deer Creek. The staff was definitely interested in what was going on when a lady, wearing a shiny shield, was hanging out in the hallway. And when the singer Amber Kasper sang so beautifully. (By the way she will be with us in September for our fall revival.) And who could forget the laughs and giggles during the annual auction.



Input from two of our ladies...

*I attended my first ECL Ladies Retreat in March and had such a great time! As a newer member of the church and still establishing roots here in Circleville, it was a way for me to branch out and get to know others. What better way to get to know someone than sharing a room with them for a night?! I was excited when I mentioned going to **Kelsey Leeth** and she wanted to attend.*

There's something to be said when you are witness to women of faith in a room together. It's uplifting, encouraging and so special. It creates a sacred environment where you can be vulnerable with others, share stories, sing together and pray for one another. Time at the retreat included meals, worship, a captivating speaker, an auction and time of prayer at our tables. It was up to you and your roommates if you wanted to get any sleep once back in your room.

*I am so thankful I attended the ECL retreat and blessed that God has surrounded me with a great group of women whom I know I can count on to help fight my battles when Satan tries to enter my life. If you have never been to the retreat or are new to the church, I encourage you to attend next year! ---**Sarah Delozier***

*I really enjoyed the fellowship with my church sisters and friendships I am building. – **Kelly Hendricks***

March 12-13, 2027 – We will be attending the Deer Creek SCD ladies retreat once again. **So, mark your calendars.**

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 **Isaac Bennett, Ryan Dean, Cameron Kilbarger and Tanner Wilson.**

Dinner with friends

Sign up time is here. We will start this back up in April. (Sign up will be in the Welcome Center on a purple paper).



This is a way to meet others from our church and build relationships. If your home is too small don't worry, we will have Host families with larger homes to meet at. Don't let that hold you back. Your group will pick the night or afternoon which is best for you all to meet – these dates are very, very flexible depending on schedules. The last 4 months we have had over 30 people involved with Dinner with Friends, and everyone has enjoyed it. Tom and I have done this for a while, I choose the meat and/or theme and everyone volunteers to bring something to share. It is a time to talk and laugh and eat.

Questions? Joellen Byerly 513-680-6012



Pray for this missions team to Dominican Republic. They will be serving from June 23-30.

"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

Interested in learning more about your walk with Jesus? More about the Bible? More about what we believe and how to pray? If you have any questions please feel free to

contact **Tom Byerly at 614-440-4301** and he can partner you with a mentor that would love to take this journey with you. It is a 10-week study, you and your mentor pick the time and date. Those who have done this in the past are glad they did. Just ask one of 20+ who took the journey last year.



Where were you on March 21?

The JOY Ministry Pizza Challenge/Game Night was held in the Ferguson/Clark Hall. **Pastor Jay Neff** prayed over our meal and shared a devotional.

Table games and cornhole were played while many relaxed and enjoyed a time of fellowship.

There were fifteen (15) pizza entries, salad, desserts, snacks and thirty-nine people to enjoy every bite. **Mark Knece** won for pizza with the most toppings. The most original prize went to **Nancy Neff** for her Half Meat Lover's/Half Supreme pizza. Taking the Judges Choice award was **Patsy Shaeffer** for her Fruit Pizza.



The JOY (Just Older Youth) Ministry is designed for the 50+ age group, but it has been stated, "No one gets carded at the door."

A schedule of future JOY Ministry events is available at the Welcome Center and events will be announced as we near the date of each event.

Coming up in April... PLAY BALL!!!

submitted by **Sue Stonerock**

On March 15, **Vallee Lynn**, daughter of **Isaac and Sierra Payne** was dedicated to the Lord! **Congratulations!!!**

Bible study

Wednesdays at 1 pm Ferguson/Clark Hall

And the

Christian Education Award 2025
Outstanding Sunday School Superintendent & Kids
Ministry Leader

goes to...

Kim Buchanan

Congratulations, Kim!

Annual Business Meeting---May 27

He received 39 stripes because 40 was known to kill a man. They wanted him alive.

They held handfuls of his beard and hair and pulled it out by the roots. They wanted him alive. They kicked, punched and spit on him for hours. Until there wasn't a single spot on his body not covered in blood. They wanted him alive.

They shoved a crown of thorns down on his head so harshly it stuck in his skin. They wanted him alive. After hours of being beaten, mocked, whipped, flogged and tortured they made him walk with a cross. They made him carry it. A rough piece of wood with splinters digging into fresh wounds. They wanted him alive.



They wanted him to feel every ounce of pain they could bring. He had to feel it in order to heal us.



Crucifixion was historically one of the cruelest most tortured deaths a human could face. Hours upon hours of torture. Torture most of us cannot mentally think of because the cruelty isn't normal. It isn't something our minds can comprehend.

We celebrate Easter with pastel colors, happy children hunting eggs and chocolate. But the truth is there was absolutely nothing happy about the day Jesus died. It was cruel, bloody and nasty.

He could have stopped all of it. He could have called every angel in heaven to demolish every person standing and shouting "Crucify Him!" But He didn't.

He knew in order to have a Sunday you have to have a Friday. He knew in order to have joy you have to carry your cross. He felt everything that day.



He felt how your heart broke wide open when you had to watch your baby die. He felt how heavy your life was when you were staring down the barrel of a gun wondering if the man you called husband was going to shoot you.

He carried the weight of the burden you have felt since your spouse died and life just doesn't seem right since. On that cross he held the rapist and murderers, the sinner and the saint. He leveled every playing field and said ALL of you are worth it. He knew he had to carry the cross.

He never promised the cross you carry in this life would not be heavy. His wasn't. His promise is that Sunday is coming. No matter how heavy Friday is.

Financially, emotionally, mentally or physically. Friday is heavy. That cross is weighing you down and you are about to crumble under its weight. His promise was simply this. He won't make you carry it alone. What kind of king would step down from his throne for this? Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God did. For you.

He did every bit of it for you and me. Oh yes, it is heavy. So heavy sometimes you do not think you can take one more step. But look up, because Sunday is coming.



Shared- Author unknown



4 – 1 Happy April Fool's

4 – 3 Good Friday Service at 7 pm

4 – 3 to 4 – 5 Prayer Vigil

4 – 5 Easter Sunday

SonRise Service 8 am
Easter Breakfast
Morning Service 10:45 am
No Growth Group
No Children's Church
Nursery available



4 – 7 Ladies' Lunch 11 am at OCU

4 – 15 Membership Class begins 7 pm
Tax Day—deadline today

4 – 18 Men's Prayer Breakfast 8 am FC Hall
speaker: Mark Taylor



4 – 19 Getting Started class
begins 9:45 am
Baptism Service 10:45 am

4 – 22 Earth Day

4 - 25 – Crossroads Ladies Conference: Joy of the Journey - registration needed. Information will be found at the Welcome Center

He Lives

Please pray for this ministry and as you come across small items that will fit in a shoebox, put them aside. Here are a few suggestions:



pencils, colored pencils, sharpener, pencil case, erasers, pens, crayons, ruler, coloring books, markers, highlighters, note pads, stickers, sticky notes, mini clipboards, paper, construction paper, solar calculators, self-inking stamp, sandals, flip flops, tennis shoes, socks, water shoes, slinky, sunglasses, balls, washcloths, small towels, bracelet, scarves, beanies, bandanas, hair ties, hairbrush, combs, barrettes, small stuffed animals, toy cars, toys that light up, handheld toys, pom poms, puzzles, finger puppets, silly putty, pretend play jewelry, plastic tools, aprons, travel size games, hacky sack, bean bag, watch, harmonica, kazoo, yo-yo, hats, glue sticks, safety scissors, gloves, small blankets, shoelaces, mini dry erase boards / markers, mini etch a sketch, binoculars, kaleidoscope, Legos, solar-powered flashlight, recorder, tambourine, jump rope, paddleball, craft kits, jewelry kits, clip-on earrings, chalk, washable paint sets, play-doh, backpack, purse, wallet, coin purse, cups, straws, glowsticks, toothbrushes, wet wipes, travel pack of tissues, lip gloss, play makeup, band-aids, flashcards, plastic ponchos, balloons, eating utensils, dental floss, emery boards, hand wipes, hammer, screwdriver, wrench, pliers, duct tape, measuring tape, toolbelt, small fishing kit, fishing line, fishing hooks, fishing lures, kaleidoscope, plastic magnifying glass, handkerchief, collapsible water bottle, fanny pack, compass, jewelry, cross stitch kit, sewing kit, yarn, adult coloring books, colored sharpies, friendship bracelets, stamp sets, journal, decorative signs, keychains, project kits, slippers and sleep mask.



The things children ask for the most are washcloths, soap and school supplies, believe it or not.

Please Do Not Include: food, candy, gum, toothpaste, used or damaged items, scary or war-related items such as toy guns, knives or military figures, wearable traditional camouflage items, seeds, organic matter, liquids or lotions, medications or vitamins, breakable items such as snow globes or glass containers; aerosols, matches, fire starters, saws or razor blades.

Friday's Disappointment = Sunday's Empty Tomb

submitted by **Keitha Wilbur**

Getting Started class

The "Getting Started" class is geared towards all that are new to Circleville First Church or for those just starting your walk in faith.

A six-week class to introduce the beliefs of Circleville First Church, our doctrine, ministries of the church and how to get involved.

Classes begin on April 19 at 9:45 am.

One year, my six year old son and twelve year old daughter were in the kitchen helping me boil eggs to color for Easter.

The pot of eggs started to boil and they were making the strange noises that they sometimes do.

My son heard the noise and was walking around the kitchen with his head cocked to one side listening, trying to figure out where the noise was coming from. As he got near the stove and noticed it was coming from the pot of eggs, he asked what was making that sound.

Without missing a beat, his older sister immediately answered....

"It's the baby chicks screaming!"

His eyes nearly popped out of his head!



A young mother was preparing breakfast for her two young sons--a five year-old and a three year-old. They were arguing over who would get the first pancake.

The mother, trying to instill good morals in her sons, asked them to remember WWJD. She said that Jesus would say: "Let my brother have the first pancake."

The 5 yr-old quickly turned to the 3 yr-old and said, "You play Jesus."

submitted by **Jerry Parish**



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