

August 2008 Edition

First Christian Church  
620 N. Main St.  
Findlay, OH 45840



# The Lamplighter



*"You are the light of the world...no one after lighting a lamp puts it under a bushel basket...let your light shine before others..."*

*Matthew 5:14-16, NRSV*

## Notes Along the Journey...

When I first arrived at First, I was hopeful by the strides that this church was trying to make in a political, social and religious conservative town. I was proud to serve as pastor to a congregation who faced a particularly difficult challenge that resulted in a large membership loss; yet felt committed to the call to be socially relevant in an ambiguous time.

I felt quickly accepted and embraced by a congregation whom I would say was hungry for someone to love them and treat them like family. And I did that. I celebrated with many of you great joys that were happening with your families and friends. I witnessed births, presided over dedications, performed ceremonies that resulted in the merging of families, performed weddings (and even multiple ones for the same family), and celebrated milestones, promotions, jobs and school acceptances with various members of the congregation. Rob and I were blessed to bring Isabella home to a church family who loved her from day one.

But these past four years have also brought some heartache. I sat with members of this church as they took their last breath on this earth, I grieved with family members as we planned funeral services for their loved one who had either passed recently or were slipping from this world during our planning time, I sat for days with a family in this congregation as a young life was lost to suicide, I sat with families as their loved ones were diagnosed with cancer or chronic illnesses that were going to require reoccurring medical care. And I also counseled numerous individuals battling the gamut of situations from crisis control, addiction, domestic

and family situations, and many others.

Throughout this time, I have challenged you to address the future, seek God's will and to have the courage to make a plan for the congregation. It has taken time, but you have done that. At each step of the way you have considered all options, and when the time came to decide, you acted boldly.

But it is not secret that this last year has been extremely difficult for the church and for me personally. The August flood sent my adrenaline in crisis management, and I worked relentlessly to make sure insurance measures smoothed out, the debris and water was removed from our building and that the basement was sanitized. I worked very hard getting work crews in of young adults that I counseled over the years at Camp Christian and colleagues that I worked with through the region to come help us at our darkest hour. Once we regrouped, we flooded again in February that resulted in myself and two others manually pumping, dumping and cleaning out the space we had just spent five months before doing the same thing to.

Not only was the flood a huge hurdle this church this past year and me as well, but at a pastoral care level, I was confronted with situations in our immediate church family that required pastoral care for some very serious situations that I had never encountered before.

Now if you add on to that a husband who was involved in a serious work accident that could have resulted in his death and then a subsequent termination upon his return to work, and no real time away

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from work for me during this time – it has taken a toll on my health. Soon after the second flood, I was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress that I continue to struggle with. This has also resulted in a toll taken to me spiritually as well.

I say this all to you because I have served this congregation to the best of my ability.

Other situations have recently arisen as well that have resulted in some wondering about my leadership ability and my future here at FCC, and that has resulted in me questioning as to whether I am effective for you any longer.

I do not think it will benefit any of us to further discuss what was said, why it was said and what interpretation is right. However, what I can and will address to you is that my basic integrity as a pastor, my ability to counsel, and the basic precepts that define my call have been questioned which I feel has rendered any further ability to complete effective ministry here unattainable.

The counseling and pastoral care that I have done the past few weeks has not been the best that I can do and has not been effective, in my professional opinion, for those coming to me for direction, for an ear, or just to vent. These last weeks have made my ability to counsel with parishioners who come to me futile. That is not fair to the individual, and it is not fair to me.

I was and still am very much honored that you trusted me enough to help you through a time of discernment and leadership. I also understand that when the Discernment Team's findings were handed out, we covenanted with each other to "stick it out together." And while I so much wanted to keep my end to that agreement, the current events make it impossible for me to do so.

With much pain and a lot of regret, I am asking you to understand that I can no longer serve in the capacity as your pastor at the level that I was called to do.

I did the best job that I could here. And the journey that has to happen now is about the grieving process as well as a time to look ahead to both of our futures –

And as your pastor, the best way I know to do this

is to encourage you to look to Scripture. Romans 8:31-39 is a beautiful reminder that God is for us no matter what our situation is. We are okay because Christ did all of the sacrificing for us so that we might have right relationship with him.

Scripture tells us that there are many things that we may do that separates the relationships we have with one another, but the promises of the gospel writers are the promises that will never happen in our relationship with the Lord. Nothing will ever keep us from the love of God.

Our paths are separating now, but that does not mean that they paths can't be beautifully paved. This discernment process was NEVER my agenda. It was always and needs to continue to be your journey and your answer to God's call. Have faith and confidence in yourselves. I do.

When we began the prayer groups and learning about what conversation to God is, we also understood that the formation of these groups provided an accountability piece that this congregation lost sight of many years ago. You set forth vigorously to build relationships with one another and to get to know one another on a level that was not attempted before. This is the time that those relationships need to be fostered and utilized.

I understand that it is going to be difficult. This is the hardest decision I have made in my life thus far. But I believe in all of you – making those votes in early October to fight for your church, to listen to the small voice of God, to be relevant to a longing portion of your community that does not have a voice, and to loving let me go. Trust in yourselves – trust in each other and trust that God is speaking to all of you.

I am praying that we can say good bye lovingly and with well wishes on both sides this next month. I will miss you all very much, but I rest assure in knowing that you have been equipped with the tools to see this journey through – just step out in faith.

In the Peace of our Lord,

## From your Board Moderator

Well I'm still reeling, as I'm sure many of you are, from Pastor Nikki's decision to depart. I am saddened to lose such a valued member of our staff as well as a personal friend. On behalf of this congregation, I want to wish Nikki and her family well on their future endeavors.

With Pastor Nikki leaving, we have much to do as a congregation. First and foremost we need to secure an interim pastor to steady our rocking ship. I am in the process of creating a search committee for that effort and securing resumes through the Regional office. Secondly, I am meeting with the Elders to establish a leadership structure within that group to help guide us spiritually forward. We are also discussing the ongoing role of the Eldership as well as addressing communication issues to prevent misunderstandings and inappropriate conversations. And third, but not last, I will be working with Nikki to create a short term plan to keep our discernment processes moving forward. We have come a long way on our journey and are at the cusp of translating that into actionable items. We will need to lean heavily on each other to complete these important plans.

To that end, I am calling on each of you to step forward and help me propel this ship to its destination. Through our prayers the Lord will calm the seas. And through the resurrection we are given all the strength necessary for the tasks at hand. But it is our job as Disciples to provide the muscle (physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually) and implement the vision of our mission statement. This work is on our shoulders and we need to begin the heavy lifting. We have been guided into the phase by Pastor Nikki, and the responsibility for the rest of this work belongs to the congregants of First Christian Church - not the interim pastor, or even a new permanent one

Please step forward and let me know you want to help. I don't know exactly what all needs to be done, but I can assure you it is more than what I can handle. The church needs your efforts more now than ever before. From Esther 6:14 ..."*For if you remain silent now, then relief and deliverance will come to the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Who knows if you haven't come to the kingdom for such a time as this?*"

Let's rise up together and fulfill the promise of our mission statement.

May peace and blessings be with each of you on this day,

## August

### BIRTHDAYS

3—Heather Kretzinger  
3—Margaret Truman  
3—Pat Riker  
8—Terry Fancher  
10—Karol Smith  
12—David England  
12—James Brown  
14—Tiffany Scherf  
17—Marilyn Hobbs  
20—Jan Aldrich  
24—Tim Wolfe

### ANNIVERSARIES

4—Gene & Erma Weist  
5—Fred & Ann Kretzinger  
9—Andre & Colleen Hawks  
14—Ben & Sarah Feller  
15—Allen & Pat Sharninghouse  
19—Lenny & Marilyn Hobbs

### IMMEDIATE PRAYER CONCERNS:

- ◆ Welcome back Anna!
- ◆ For First Christian Church as we go through our Sabbathical time together.
- ◆ For us as a community of believers as we journey together through our worship time.
- ◆ For all our service men and women who are defending our safety here and abroad.
- ◆ For Bill Pitkin as he continues to recover.
- ◆ For Kathy Brinkman as she has surgery this month.

### ONGOING PRAYER CONCERNS:

Harriette Ritz, Margaret Truman, Phyllis Kennedy, Tony Haley, Joe & Jessica Forest

### Fox Run Elder Schedule for August

Bob Thompson will be serving Communion at Fox Run on August 17th at 2:30 p.m.



## August 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>JULY 27</b> 9:30 am-Sunday School 10:30 am--Worship 4:30 pm-ODCC	<b>JULY 28</b>	<b>JULY 29</b>	<b>JULY 30</b> 9:00 am—Taize Prayer Group	<b>JULY 31</b>	<b>August 1</b>	<b>August 2</b>
<b>3</b> 9:30 am-Sunday School 10:30 am--Worship 4:30 pm—ODCC	<b>4</b> 6:00 pm—Prayer Group 7:00 pm—Prayer Group	<b>5</b> 12:00 pm—Prayer Group	<b>6</b> 9:00 am—Taize Prayer Group 9:30 am—Hannah Circle Meeting	<b>7</b>  Pastor	<b>8</b>  Nikki on	<b>9</b>  Vacation
<b>10</b> 9:30 am-Sunday School 10:30 am--Worship 4:30 pm-ODCC	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>  Pastor Nikki	<b>13</b> 9:00 am—Taize Prayer Group  On Vacation	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>17</b> 9:30 am-Sunday School 10:30 am--Worship 2:30 pm-Fox Run 4:30 pm-ODCC	<b>18</b> 6:00 pm-Prayer Group 7:00 pm-Prayer Group	<b>19</b> 12:00 pm-Prayer Group	<b>20</b> 9:00 am—Taize Prayer Group  6:00 pm—Worship Team Meeting	<b>21</b> DEADLINE FOR LAMPLIGHTER	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b> 9:30 am-Sunday School 10:30 am--Worship 4:30 pm-ODCC	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b> 10:30 am—Litzenberg Woods 4:30 pm-ODCC	<b>SEPTEMBER 1</b>	<b>SEPTEMBER 2</b>	<b>SEPTEMBER 3</b>	<b>SEPTEMBER 4</b>	<b>SEPTEMBER 5</b>	<b>SEPTEMBER 6</b>

## SERVING SCHEDULE

### August 3

**Minister:** Rev. Nichole Mazza-Fredley  
**Guest Preacher:** Rev. Jim Schimmel  
**Children's Sermon:** Patty Koehler  
**Organist:** Anna Stembler-Smith  
**Music Minister:** Carrie Norris  
**Greeters:** Carole Cleary, Martha Stoner, Micheale-Lynn Jackson, David England, John Snyder, Heather Kretzinger  
**Pre-School Nursery:** Melissa Brown  
**Infant Nursery:** Angie Wagner & Dale Yoder  
**Sound:** Ben Feller  
**Elders:** Tom Thompson & Linda Pitkin  
**Deacons:** Shawn Linhart\*, Rob Mazza-Fredley\*, Nancy Peters, Barb Brown, Sarah Clevidence  
**Coffee Hour:** Team #3: Mary & Terry Fancher, Nick & Sarah Clevidence, Kathy Marquart  
**Counter:** Bill Peters & Colleen Hawks  
**Flowers:** Heather Kretzinger's Birthday from her family

### August 10

**Minister:** Rev. Nichole Mazza-Fredley  
**Guest Preacher:** Rev. Dr. LaTuanya Bynum  
**Worship Leader:**  
**Children's Sermon:** TBA  
**Organist:** Anna Stembler-Smith  
**Music Minister:** Carrie Norris  
**Greeters:** Barb England, Sandy Frantz, Dale Yoder, David England, Robin Kretzinger, Heather Kretzinger  
**Pre-School Nursery:** Jenny Williamson  
**Infant Nursery:** Pat Riker & Zack Stahl  
**Sound:** TBA  
**Elders:** Bob Thompson & Robin Kretzinger  
**Deacons:** Deb Kirk\*, TBA\*, Karol Smith, Tim Wolfe\*, Angie Wagner  
**Coffee Hour:** Team #4: Bill & Nancy Peters, Fred & Ann Kretzinger, Karol Smith, Dale & Pat Yoder  
**Counter:** Bill Peters & Bill Pitkin

### August 17

**Minister:** Rev. Nichole Mazza-Fredley  
**Worship Leader:**  
**Children's Sermon:** Pastor Nikki  
**Organist:** Anna Stembler-Smith  
**Music Minister:** Carrie Norris  
**Greeters:** Tammy Thompson, Martha Stoner, Lyt Wells, David England, John Snyder, Heather Kretzinger  
**Pre-School Nursery:** Linda Pitkin  
**Infant Nursery:** Sarah Feller & Mary Byal  
**Sound System:** Justin Thompson  
**Elders:** Terry Fancher & Colleen Hawks  
**Deacons:** Ben Feller\*, Mary Fancher\*, Kathy Marquart, Ryan Norris, John Snyder  
**Coffee Hour:** Team #5: Barb Brown, Melissa Brown, Patty Koehler, Sandy Frantz  
**Counter:** Bill Peters & Dan Scherf

### August 24

**Minister:** Rev. Nichole Mazza-Fredley  
**Worship Leader:**  
**Children's Sermon:** Beth Linhart  
**Organist:** Anna Stembler-Smith  
**Music Minister:** Carrie Norris  
**Greeters:** Barb England, Tom Thompson, Micheale-Lynn Jackson, David England, Robin Kretzinger, Heather Kretzinger  
**Pre-School Nursery:** Pat Sharninghouse  
**Infant Nursery:**  
**Sound System:** TBA  
**Elders:** TBA & Robin Kretzinger  
**Deacons:** Dale Yoder\*, Melissa Brown\*, Sarah Feller, Shawn Linhart, Rob Mazza-Fredley  
**Coffee Hour:** Team #6: Bill & Linda Pitkin, Deb Kirk, Angela Wagner  
**Counter:** Bill Peters & Terry Fancher

### August 31

**This service will be held at Litzenberg Woods**

**Minister:** Rev. Nichole Mazza-Fredley  
**Elders:** Kathy Brinkmman & Tiffany Scherf  
**Deacons:** Nancy Peters\*, Barb Brown\*, Sarah Clevidence, Patty Koehler, Heather Kretzinger  
**Counter:** Bill Peters & Terry Fancher



Serve the Lord with Gladness!

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Sunday Schedule  
 9:30am Sunday School  
 10:30am Worship Service  
 Followed by Fellowship-Coffee Hour

**Sundays at FCC for July**

	July 6	July 13	July 20	July 27
Worship	64	66	72	57
Sunday School	22	22	18	19
Sunday School Offer-	_____	_____	_____	\$7.00
Loose	\$23.00	\$32.00	\$50.00	\$33.00
Envelopes	\$1,743.00	\$650.00	\$1,348.00	\$1,116.00
Interest	\$272.50	_____	\$31.04	\$31.04
Other	\$24.00	\$250.00	\$50.00	\$25.00
Total Operating Fund	\$2,062.50	\$932.00	\$1,479.04	\$1,212.04
Other	\$15.00	_____	_____	_____
Total All Funds	\$2,077.50	\$932.00	\$1,479.04	\$1,212.04