

THE CHARLEROI CHRISTIAN

First Christian Church

(Disciples of Christ)

November 2020

61 Walnut Ridge Road
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Rev. Charles Cochran, Senior Pastor

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A Church Is Like A River...



One of my mentors – a kind and wise old friend – once famously said to me, “Charlie, a church is like a river.”

Whereupon I brilliantly replied, “Huh?”

“Yeah, a river,” he said. “Walk along the banks of a river, and every time you visit it you FEEL as though you’re seeing exactly the same place every time and that nothing has ever changed – that somehow, you’re connected with eternity. But really, you never step into the same river twice. It’s always changing.

Pastor Charlie

“The water that cools your feet today will be miles downstream tomorrow. It’ll be replaced by new water that is just as cool and every bit as refreshing. The water is always flowing – always moving – always creating new channels along the river’s banks.”

I successfully resisted the urge to tell my friend that an Ephesian philosopher named Heraclitus had come up with the river analogy first – about 2,500 years ago. Instead, I kept listening.

“Yes, a church is like a river,” my friend said. “You sit in the pew on Sunday mornings, and you just know what to expect from the experience, rooted as it is in two millennia of history and tradition. We Disciples celebrate holy communion every Sunday morning because that’s what they did in the First Century church. We held onto that tradition with all ten claws extended, so you know to expect that.

“Yet, things change. Members join, and they move away. Musicians write and sing new songs. We tinker with projection screens and other new tools that help to make worship better. Programs change. New groups form.

“Yet in the face of all the things that change, we hold onto God’s eternal truth – the one thing that never changes. We hold on tight to the scriptures and to our relationships with God, and those things connect us to eternity.”

Over the past year, I've had more opportunities than I'd care to admit to reflect on this conversation with my old friend.

Because of the pandemic, some days it feels as though we've not been allowed to leave anything unchanged. We wear masks during worship. We space ourselves out. We use double-stacked communion cups for communion instead of our beloved intinction. We use recorded music. We've temporarily abandoned the use of Sunday morning bulletins.

We do these things for very good reasons. Yet when the river is flowing in an unaccustomed way and the current feels like an alien place, it's good to remember that you and I can depend on a few things that never change.

The scripture hasn't changed. Our reliance on God's grace remains the same as ever. Our love for God and for each other remains immutable.

God's love for you remains unshakeable and is thoroughly dependable.

As we make our way through the remainder of this strange year, let us remember that we worship a God who will always be there for us. His love for you weathers any storm – and will never change.

Blessings on the journey,

Pastor Charlie

November Calendar Highlights

- 7 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 5, monthly board meeting for First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
- Sunday, Nov. 8, annual congregational meeting following morning worship. We will vote on a 2021 budget and elect new officers.
- 7 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 22, CAMA Community Thanksgiving Service at First Christian Church (DOC). The Rev. Beverly Gross, serving Speers United Methodist Church, will preach.
- Thursday, Nov. 26, Thanksgiving Day. The Charleroi Area Ministerial Association (CAMA) will distribute meals from the kitchen of First Christian Church (DOC). Please let Pastor Charlie know if you would like to receive a meal or if you can volunteer to help.
- 9 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 28, Decorating the Church for Christmas
- Nov. 29, First Sunday in Advent (with Hanging of the Greens)

In Case You Missed Them: Links to Past Sermons

If you're reading this on your computer or smart phone, click on one of these links to catch up on Pastor Charlie's sermons for the past month or so.

* Oct. 18, 2020, Matthew 22:15-22, Giving Back to God:
<https://youtu.be/AkmuK9flwgs>

* Oct. 11, 2020, Exodus 32:1-14, Becoming Able to Hear:
<https://youtu.be/RcI8ug-mtdg>

* Oct. 4, 2020, Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20, God's Commandments:
<https://youtu.be/ZdZERHjnMaM>

* Sept. 27, 2020, Philippians 2:1-16, Finding Salvation:
<https://youtu.be/8fFuoVNxJr8>

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Nov. 1	Sean Cole Jr.
Nov. 4	Rev. Charles Cochran
Nov. 6	Joe McCurdy
Nov. 13	Michael Tabory
Nov. 16	Lois Buberniak
Nov. 17	Remington Lessman
Nov. 20	Sherry Polinski
Nov. 22	Michael Guappone
Nov. 22	Sherry Erdely
Nov. 24	John Pfile
Nov. 25	Jada Marie Gernot
Nov. 28	Linda Lapinsky
Nov. 28	Betty Jo Matesich
Nov. 29	Mike Cramer
Nov. 29	Diane Rusak



Nov. 1	Ken and Sherry Ballentyne
Nov. 2	Philip and Tracey Hermann
Nov. 4	Jeffrey and Debra Lessman

Our Prayer Letter Ministry Continues

Margie D'Antonio sent out 6 prayer letters in October. The prayer letters are very up-lifting and so enjoyable to get. If you know of anyone in need of a prayer letter, contact Margie at 724-239-2560. She will gladly get one sent out.

Thank you for the stamps. God bless your kindness.

"But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry." 2 Timothy 4:5

CAMA Update

St. After School, the after-school tutoring program for elementary school-aged students sponsored by the Charleroi Area Ministerial Association (CAMA), began another year on Wednesday, Oct. 21.

Due to social distancing, this year we will serve up to 12 students spread throughout three classrooms.

St. After School urgently needs volunteers to help the students with homework and Bible lessons. The program is also seeking a cook, who'd be asked to make simple dinners.

This year, St. After School meets 3-6:30 p.m. on Wednesdays at the First Presbyterian Church of Charleroi. If you can only commit to volunteer for part of that time or if you can only join us on certain Wednesdays, that is perfectly fine. Any help would be very greatly appreciated and needed.

Donations of snacks and dinners are welcome. CAMA is also accepting monetary donations to provide what the students need in order for the program to succeed.

We already have several fund-raisers under way. Ask Pastor Charlie or Cora Russell about Sarris candy bars (available for \$2), as well as a hoagie/ready-made pizza sale.

If you have any questions, please reach out to Heather Gross, St. After School's director, at (412) 527-2257.

Empty Chair Service on Monday, Dec. 7

We are tentatively scheduling this year's Empty Chair Service for 7 p.m. on Monday, Dec. 7, in the First Christian Church sanctuary.

The service is intended to remember friends and family members who've passed away, and whom we're missing.

A final decision on whether the service happens will depend on how things go with the pandemic, but we're hoping to be able to proceed with this year's service. We'll keep you posted as we work out the details.

Elder's Prayer

By Mary Valla

It is my favorite season again... Fall!! I love the beautiful colors of the leaves... I love "Indian Summer".... And two very important holidays occur this time of year – Veteran's Day and Thanksgiving.

We should all remember the sacrifices of all the men and women who have served in our military and continue to serve – to allow us all our "freedom". Everything we have in this country relates to all those who have served and continue to serve in our Armed Forces.

And Thanksgiving – although it may be celebrated differently this year due to the pandemic – it should still be a time to show our appreciation for our families, our extended families, and for all the "gifts" this world offers. Try to stay focused on the positive and the truly "good" in this country... Remember to show thanks to the Lord for all you have.

So, while we enjoy the beauty of Fall – let us all count our many blessings in this wonderful world...

Dear God,

In this crazy, fast-paced world in which we live – help us to remember and reflect on all who have served and sacrificed... to slow down and enjoy our friends and families (whether in person – or virtually).... And to appreciate all of life's blessings.

Amen

Please Join Us for Worship

We have **FOUR options** for you to participate in worship on Sunday mornings. Please take advantage of one of them:

1. In-Person Worship in our Sanctuary

Join us for Sunday morning Worship in our Sanctuary! Please enter at our Main Entrance where we will be waiting to greet you! Masks are required, and we ask that you continue to social distance.

2. Virtual Worship on Facebook LIVE

Join us for Worship from the comfort of your home via Facebook. Log onto the church's Facebook page and click on our LIVE Worship at 10:45 am. People with vulnerable health conditions are strongly encouraged to join us online (or via conference call.)

3. Tele-Worship Conference Call

Join us by telephone conference call on Sunday mornings at 10:45 am by calling 724-203-9348. PIN: 920457#

Pastor will include you in our Worship Service.

4. Outdoor Worship in our Pavilion

Outdoor Worship allows for folks to enjoy Worship in the beautiful outdoors. Seating is setup in the pavilion for folks to social distance with or without masks. Outdoor Worship will be available through the month of October, weather permitting. In inclement weather, the Fellowship Hall will be open for those who cannot wear a mask. We ask that you please enter the Fellowship Hall entrance, and follow social distancing.

FCC Hosts Community Thanksgiving Meal

First Christian Church will host this year's community Thanksgiving meal, sponsored by the Charleroi Area Ministerial Association (CAMA).

Orders are pick-up or delivery only from noon to 2 p.m. on Thanksgiving Day at First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Please let Pastor Charlie know if you'd like to receive a meal – or if you're available as a volunteer.



A STEWARDSHIP REMINDER

PLEASE REMEMBER: JUST BECAUSE YOU MAY NOT BE AT CHURCH ON A GIVEN SUNDAY, THE LIGHTS ARE STILL ON, THE FURNACE AND AIR CONDITIONERS ARE STILL IN USE, THE CUSTODIAN HAS CLEANED THE CHURCH, AND THE BILLS STILL NEED TO BE PAID. SO, IF YOU HAPPEN TO MISS A SUNDAY (OR THREE OR FOUR SUNDAYS) **PLEASE MAKE UP YOUR PLEDGE/OFFERING.** THANK YOU!

Our Joys and Our Concerns

At First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of Charleroi, we are a community of faith rooted in our relationships with God and with each other. Here are some of the folks we're talking to God about right now:

- * **Patty Strychalski**, recovering at home following a surgical procedure. Long-term, Patty is receiving treatment related to a diagnosis of cancer.
- * **Family and friends of Roy "Denny" Johnson**, who passed away on Monday, Oct. 12. Denny was a co-worker of Diane Rusak's. Requested by: Diane
- * **Robert Cowden** (Debbie Colvin's cousin), hospitalized with colitis. Requested by: Debbie

- * **Kevin Abels** (husband of one of Mary Valla's co-workers), scheduled for eye surgery. Prayers that the procedure and recovery go well. Requested by: Mary
- * **Family of Don Zippay** (husband of church custodian, Wendy Zippay), who passed away Wednesday, Oct. 7. Funeral was Monday, Oct. 12, at Journey By Grace. Drop Wendy a card at 53 Eagle Street, Charleroi, PA 15022.
- * **Family and friends of Bud Hudock** (Debbie Lessman's uncle), who passed away Wednesday, Oct. 7, due to complications related to Covid-19.
- * **Jean and Butch** (friends of Marlene Celaschi's), both injured in a traffic accident on PA Route 151.
- * **Family and friends of Jodele Vandernitte.** Jodele passed away on Monday, Sept. 28. We celebrated Jodele's homegoing with a service at Spallino Funeral Home on Friday morning, Oct. 2.
- * **Joy Vince** (co-worker of Mary Valla's), struggling a bit following knee surgery.
- * **A friend of Mary Valla's** who is battling cancer. Prayer especially for good results from medical tests.
- * **Rose Gust** (94-year-old aunt of Sherry Erdely's), health issues.
- * **Merle** (husband of Barbara Restivo's late friend, Laura) is doing better healthwise. He has pulmonary fibrosis; recently, he has received treatment for fluid on the brain. Requested by: Barbara
- * **Family and friends of Karen Hartman.** Karen passed away on Saturday, Sept. 19. We celebrated her homegoing on Thursday, Sept. 24, at Melenzyer Funeral Home. Karen loved this church a lot, and we miss her.
- * **Loretta Jackson** (a friend of Darla White's) of Canton, Ohio. Ms. Jackson was diagnosed with lung cancer, and was scheduled for a medical procedure on Wednesday, Sept. 30.
- * **Katie** (Garnet Krutz's dog), continuing seizures.
- * A joy: **Malinda Griffith** (daughter of Tom and Sharon Griffith) moved into a newly purchased home with her two dogs on Tuesday, Sept. 29. We celebrate with Malinda!

Under Long-Term Prayer Care

Our Leaders *	Marlene Celaschi *	Jarrold Williams*
Our Troops *	Ellis & Darla White *	Betty Jo Matesich *
Richard Evans *	Bill & Garnet Krutz *	Nancy Lessman*
Rose Bird *	Rocky Renk *	Sherry Ballentyne *
Grace Vandernitte *	Father Bob Hanna *	Kristin Delval *
Karin Brightwell *	Missy Pendleton *	Armand Lorenzi *
Justin Sutch *	Young Bruce Pendleton *	Grace Godles *
Jane Odroneic*	Alicia Hruby *	Sarah Matay*
Bertha Zollars *	Ruth LoNigro *	Doug Colvin
Lois Buberniak *	Hannah Simpson*	Cindy Buckley *
Michael Erdely *	Gage Peters*	Dave & Chrissy Zoltun*
Rich & Margie D'Antonio *	Jack & Debe McKita*	Mike Shingleton*
Jessica Beimel*	Terri Brownfield*	Mary Jabbin *
Small Businesses *	Laverne Giordanengo*	Yvonne Orsatti *
Joe & Sarah McCurdy & family		