

Hiram Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
6868 Wakefield Rd, PO Box 937
Hiram, OH 44234
330-569-7697

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Hiram, OH 44234



Hiram Christian Church

P.O. Box 937, 6868 Wakefield Rd., Hiram, Ohio 44234

330-569-7697

HiramChristianChurch.org

Ministers: All Who Serve Here

Reverend Chris McCreight

secretary@hiramchristianchurch.org

chris@hiramchristianchurch.org

Hiram Christian Church is a spiritual and social center for the Hiram community.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

December 2021

Into Advent:

Traditionally, the journey into Advent is one of interiority. Scriptures, disciplines, and even the weather and waning light invite us to proceed inward. This is appropriate, for this is about incarnation, and a degree of solitude is necessary to become grounded in the divine reality of our incarnation - the image of God dwelling within us.

But this Advent, we will also proceed outward into the realm of relationship and community, for what the divine image within each and every one of us longs for - is for the carrier to accept and honor who dwells with us, and to connect with, accept, and honor others who carry the same image of God.

From affirmation of incarnation to the co-creation of beloved community.

As you know, they are intertwined, with one always pouring out into the other, so we cannot separate them and focus only on one. But we will be leaning into the realm of relationship and community - to find what incarnation invites us into, what incarnation invites us to co-create, and to find ourselves among beloved community that welcomes and affirms the image of God in every beloved child of God,

As we enter into this season, may we listen for the holy invitation that may come to us, asking us to create new ties, nurture old bonds, and cultivate community in our midst.

Peace,
Rev. Chris McCreight



iALERT...If the weather is bad on Sunday mornings, please remember to check for church cancellations through the iALERT system. Find cancellations on Channel 3, at www.wkyc.com and on news radio WTAM 1100.

The Minister's schedule in December: Rev. Chris has online office hours- schedule an appointment at <https://doodle.com/mm/456575318/book-a-time> or please connect with him at Chris@HiramChristianChurch.org or 330-977-7834.

COMING EVENTS:

Caroling and Pageantry: December 17th @ 6pm on Zoom

Join together as our caroling is transformed for yet another year. Friday, December 17th, we'll sing along at our homes as Drew and Sydney lead us in song. We'll also have the good joy of viewing the Children's pageant that evening, receiving the story of Christmas and celebrating the faithfulness and creativity of our congregation. The zoom link will be available in the weekly correspondence on December 15th.

Chi-Rho/CYF United Tubing Event: Sunday, December 19th

The united youth groups of Hilltop, Hiram, and Mantua Center Christian Churches are planning an outing to Punderson State Park for tubing / hiking on the afternoon of Sunday, December 19th. If your child/grandchild is interested in this youth group and isn't already on the mailing list, please connect with Rev. Chris and we'll be sure to add you to it.

Worship:

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Worship: A Change in the New Year

Since March of 2020, our worship experience has taken place outside of the sanctuary and within the home. Music has been recorded from the homes of Drew and Sydney; worship has been led by Chris from the home office; and it has all met you in your home. During this time, we've realized the limits of the platform (remember our first attempts to play and sing a hymn together live over zoom???), and we've realized the strengths of being connected.

While some congregations were already providing a streaming service of their worship services before 2020, nearly all congregations are doing so now. As we begin to make another change in our worship schedule and service, we will remain committed to continuing to make our worship service available online.

We are now planning to make one more change in our worship schedule, which will result in one hybrid (in-person and online) service on Sundays @ 11am beginning on Sunday, January 2nd, 2022.

Throughout the remainder of the year, we will continue to hold both services.

For those of you who have preferred in-person worship and been attending the 9am service in the sanctuary, this service will continue throughout the remainder of Advent and the beginning of Christmastide (until December 26th). We appreciate your commitment to in-person worship and appreciate the change in your schedules to attend the 11am service by January 2nd, 2022.

For those of you who have been attending the 11am service online, what you will notice (and what you may have already noticed on November 28th) is that the 11am service will take place in the sanctuary. Instead of seeing Rev. Chris in his home office, you'll now see him in the sanctuary with the support from Missy Bookbinder and David Dade. Instead of hearing the pre-recorded music of Sydney and Drew, you'll see them in the sanctuary and hear them play together, live. If you wish to continue attending worship online, this will still be available to you.

And, beginning Sunday, December 12th, the 11am worship service will open the doors to anyone who would like to attend worship in the sanctuary at 11am. We will continue to honor the best practices for the health of everyone: distancing and masking will be required. We will continue to assess the best practices of congregational singing with the awareness of this new Omicron variant. We will have a few windows open and have two air-purifiers running to help move and clean the air during our service.

Our hope is that this hybrid service at 11am (available beginning Sunday, December 12) will edify the congregation by bringing folks together and leaning into the strengths that come from worship in the sanctuary and connecting online.

Our worship schedule will be as follows:

- Sunday, December 5
 - 9am In-Person (Sanctuary)
 - 11am Online (Zoom)
- Sunday, December 12
 - 9am In-Person (Sanctuary)
 - 11am Hybrid (Online and In-Person)

Hospitality (cont.):

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Prayers for Healing and Strength (cont.):

* Thanks that Andy and Alex (son-in-law and grandson of Cathy and Emliss) have recovered from Covid, and that daughter and granddaughter have not caught it. * Ken Pike's daughter, Julie (who lives in Mansfield) has been diagnosed with Covid, even though she has been vaccinated. She struggles with Parkinsons, so really needs prayers. * Margaret's friend, Diane, has been diagnosed with chronic leukemia and is learning of treatment options. Also has some heart issues. * Margaret's friend, Rob and family have covid. Mom taken to ER with low oxygen levels. * Joan's friend Jackie had heart surgery yesterday, followed by stroke and brain bleed. He is in VA hospital in Tennessee. * Prayers for Tammy Sprague, niece of Nancy Schauer and Janet O'Bryant, as she continues treatment for cancer. * Prayers continue for Ayla, great niece of Dale and Nancy Lacan. She has completed 30 rounds of radiation and doctors are optimistic that the tumor is shrinking. Ayla is six. * Continued prayers for Herb Wilson, stepfather of Jamie. He will be released from the hospital and will be spending time at Briar Hill for rehab. * Joan's nephew Troy to find a job in Florida. His company shut down due to Covid.

Prayers for Students, Nations, and Churches

Let us be in solidarity with Pastor CJ Harkness and our friends at People's Community church in Berea. They are having a special prayer vigil through Dec. 15.- praying with concerns about rising youth violence that has impacted their communities and all of us. * Prayers for our government leaders. May they work together to understand needs and seek moral grounding on decisions. * Prayers for the children and teachers in schools. Keep them safe during this epidemic. * Prayers for our overtaxed health system, and our health care workers. * Prayers for students and staff of Hiram. * Prayers for the Schweickert family and the employees of Maggie's Donuts and More. Their accounts were hacked. Sad, as this is such a community service and shop. * Kristen's friend Scott, who was among those who were kicked out of the homeless camp in Kent at the beginning of October. * Missy asks for prayers for her boyfriend David as he moves to Massachusetts. He has accepted a new job. Prayers that he is able to find a home and to make it his own. * Prayers for clarity of vision, courage to speak the truth and devotion to bring love. * Prayers for us- that we may have faithful vision, courage to trust. May we be encouraged to create community. * Prayers for friend, Mikayla, from People's Community Church. May she have courage to finish High school.

Blessings and Celebrations

Blessings that Jessica Bessner made it safely to Japan after waiting for 1 1/2 years. * Thanks and blessings to Jon and Jane Moody. Jon celebrated his 50th anniversary of ordination October 31. Thanks, Jon, for a wonderful message. * Blessings for birthdays- Megan Harnar. * Blessings and thankfulness for Missy Bookbinder's tech help in allowing us to stream the worship service. * Maryann in Sebring is pleased to see Chris with his robe on and standing instead of sitting during worship. * Gratitude for the 95-year-old great uncle who was planting azaleas that he said he would not see bloom, but someone else would (Emliss and Cathy?)

Cards and Caring Team has published a list of names and addresses for our friends who are unable to attend regularly or who " head south" for the winter. Please remember to send cards or call our friends and keep them in your prayers. See the list above.

We Will Pray for You and Yours: Our prayer chain goes out to 40+ people over email. We pray for you and your loved ones. If you have a request, please contact Nancy Schauer (dnssofhiram@gmail.com or 330-569-7416) and let us know of your request. If you'd like to receive emails we'd be happy to add you to the group (also, if you want to discontinue receiving, let us know).

In the Life of the Congregation:**Prayers of comfort:**

Prayers for those who have passed away but are in our hearts. * Prayers for our church secretary, Lisa Wright, and family at the loss of Lisa's father, Richard. * Prayers for family and friends of Chuck Klamer, former Garfield Superintendent, at his passing. * Prayers for Nancy Cline and family at the loss of her husband, Jeff. * Prayers for family and friends of Kenneth Campbell, who passed.

* Karen's friend, Sandy, lost her brother recently. * Prayers continue for Gary and Eric Lawless at the loss of Terri. * A very close friend of Shari Keefe lost his daughter tragically, husband is suspect and there are two small children now without parents, 4yr and under 1yr old. * Prayers for Margaret's family as they grieve the loss of her sister, Trish. * Prayers for the family and friends of Dave Rump, who passed. He will be remembered for his service to the education community. * Prayers for friends of Justin Kelly, Hiram professor at his passing. * Prayers for the family of Richard Hough (from Chardon) who passed.

Prayers for Healing and Strength:

Kim Guy is recovering from a traffic accident. * Prayers for the Harnar family. They are recovering from Covid, and are so thankful they are out of quarantine. * Prayers for Peg's dad, Joe. * Prayers for Margaret. She is home recovering from ankle surgery. * Dave and Hazel give thanks for the "good days" that Damaris and Ken have experienced. Continued health, safety and well-being. * Margaret's friend Linda has been released from hospital after severe covid but now in nursing home with memory/cognitive issues. * Phyllis Brosius, Debbie Moore's sister, Diane Roberts and her husband Al, and her son David. They are all sick with covid. Phyllis is continuing to struggle. Prayers for healing and that she may regain strength. * Charlene's son Bryan needs prayers; he is quite sick with covid virus and her grandson also has it. * Please pray for my Kristen's sister-in-law Donna who had emergency surgery to remove an infection in her arm. * Emliss is recovering from cataract surgery. Prayers for good results and an improvement to his vision. * Prayers for Nancy Lacan, who is still struggling to recover from Covid. Prayers for healing and comfort. * Damaris asks for continue prayers and thankfulness that her sister, Penny Porter, will get a new jaw bone on Wednesday, after a LONG wait. * Prayers for the family of Obie Slotterbeck, a colleague from Hiram College, who has been moved to hospice. * Prayer from Scarlet for her mom, Christina, and baby on-the-way. * Prayers for Maryann as she settles into a new home at Copeland Oaks. Blessings that her family was able to visit and help. * Sandy, friend of Karen Hinkle, is facing the end of life. Comfort for her. * Jean, another friend of Karen, is also facing the end of life. Comfort. * Mary Quigley had heart surgery. * Prayers for Bev Etling and family. Bev (Ron's sister) is in Cleveland Clinic while they run tests. * Prayers for the Cisney family. * Prayers for Deanna Straw's dad, Tom, as he was in the hospital with an infection. Prayers for him as he is also dealing with MS. * Aaron and Megan Harnar's neighbors. The whole family has covid. * Debbie and Bo Anderson have covid. * Prayers for Yvonne Hughes, friend of Joan. She has a blocked carotid artery. * Please keep Benny, a third grader from Garfield Elementary School in your prayers. He had extensive surgery (10 hours) as part of his courageous battle against liver cancer. * Damaris gives thanks that her son, Dave, had a successful surgery. He is healing and is able to travel, with Hazel's help. Dave (Peters) gives thanks for prayers and well-wishes. * Emliss asks for prayers for daughter, Devon, who broke her foot. She will be working from home for a while. * Roberta Zuver is dealing with some medical issues. * Dylan Perkins, son of Rick, will be moving. Prayers for transition. * Robin's neighbor, Pam, is recovering from surgery. May she continue to heal and have the support of those around her as she grows back to driving and working. * Prayers for Apollo and family. Apollo is the grandson of the Ehrlingers. He is 18 months old, has had a recent surgery, and is facing another. Prayers for strength for his family and wisdom for the medical staff. * Aunt Heidi and family (Harnar's relatives) all have Covid. * Prayers for Elena Kristoff as she continues to recover from Covid.

- Sunday, December 19
 - 9am In-Person (Sanctuary)
 - 11am Hybrid (Online and In-Person)
- Friday, December 24
 - 7pm Hybrid (Online and In-Person)
- Sunday, December 26
 - 9am In-Person (Sanctuary)
 - 11am Hybrid (Online and In-Person)
- Sunday, January 2
 - 11am Hybrid (Online and In-Person)

Thank you for your gracious spirit that has accompanied every transition within this time. It is our hope that this upcoming change will serve this congregation and community well.

If and as you have questions, please connect with Rev. Chris: (Chris@HiramChristianChurch.org and/or 330.977.7834)

A New Advent Hymn:

Throughout the Advent Season, we will be singing a new hymn as we prepare to light the Advent wreath. We receive this hymn from our siblings at the United Church of Christ whose ministry, Worship Ways, has commissioned the work. As you will see, the lyrics are new but the melody is old. The song moves to the melody of O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, and the lyrics are below. Whether you are in worship or at home (or both!), you are invited to sing a verse each week and allow this new lyric to carry you further and further into Advent, towards Christmas.

O Come, Advent:

*O come and be the **hope** in all our lives
Though chaos and confusion still
survive
We know the path of hate all too well
We need our God with us, Emmanuel!
Rejoice, rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to us
And all things shall be well*

*O come and bring your **peace** upon the
earth
That even now still longs for its rebirth
We seek to live and move in your ways
Guide us to peace and justice all our
days
Rejoice, rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to us
And all things shall be well*

*O come to us like **joy** of heaven's
dawn,
From Mary's womb a faithful paragon
Brought forth into this world by love's
power
Your Spirit through her labors in that
hour
Rejoice, rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to us
And all things shall be well*

*O come you source of **Love** unto us all
Enlighten us and help us hear your call
To bear your Love out into the wild
And celebrate God's wondrous holy
Child!
Rejoice, rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to us
And all things shall be well*

Stewardship:

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Note from Finance:

At the annual congregational meeting November 14, 2021, the proposed budget for 2022 was approved. A few changes were made based on updated information received after printing of the annual report. Please note these changes in your copies.

Line 28 and line 36. Decrease pastor base salary to \$22,520.00 and increase Housing allowance to \$20,000.00. This does not constitute a change in the voted salary package for the pastor, just a reallocation of the funds to allow for a greater tax benefit.

Line 34. Decrease in HCC share of FICA from \$1987.00 to \$1,970.00

Line 58. Increase budget for Worship Team to \$1,350.00 to allow for Zoom upgrades, two new microphones and other worship resources.

The biggest portion of our budget is salaries which were adjusted for inflation at 5.9%.

It is also important to upgrade our ability to make our hybrid worship experience accessible to all our members. And, of course, our beautiful sanctuary building is not getting any younger and needs our tender loving care.

Bottom line... Income \$121,200.00 Expenses \$134,856.00 Deficit \$13,656.00

Believe me, as Chair of the Finance Committee, I can attest that Hiram Christian Church does not waste a penny!!! Please prayerfully consider increasing your love gift to our beloved church in 2022.

Gratefully,
Jane Moody

Our Financial Outlook:

Thank you to all of you who have made financial contributions to the work of Hiram Christian Church. **YOU** are the church. **YOU** make possible the mission of our church in the community and in the world.

We have managed to operate within our means for 2021 because of your donations and a Payroll Protection grant of \$15,000. Our largest expense for the year was the upgrade of our entrance ramp, which was financed almost entirely by generous donations and a small grant from the Hiram Community Trust.

Right now, our anticipated 2022 income of \$121,200 does not match our projected costs to do ministry--\$134,856. **YOU** can help make up the difference. If each of our 56 donor households can contribute just \$5 more per week in 2022, our budget will balance.

Think about it! Have you wasted \$5 this week—perhaps on a latté or a silly Christmas doo-dad? Could you make a personal pledge to give \$5 more each week to our dear Hiram Christian Church? Your church needs you!

If you have questions or would like a copy of our projected budget, please contact our Financial Secretary Ann Patella. Ann.Patella@gmail.com



Christmas Greetings for Special Friends:

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Every year at Christmas for many years, we have honored special friends who are dear to us but may not be able to be present with us in church. Because of the pandemic, we have had to suspend this custom because of safety issues involving delivery of home baked goodies in-person to these special people. Hopefully next year, we'll be able to resume this custom! In the meantime, mailing Christmas cards to those who are homebound is encouraged and requested! Please contact Sue Grajek or Lisa Wright at the church office if you need other addresses.

HIRAM CHURCH FRIENDS

Lois Andress (please phone)
P.O. Box 2003
Melbourne, FL 32902
321-914-4532

Barb and Dick Brooks
106 Bellingdon Dr
Gallatin, TN 37066

Phyllis Brosius
7575 Hankee Rd
Garrettsville, OH 44231

Dwayne Brown
7116 Camden Ave.
Cleveland, OH 44102

Larry Cates
PO Box 218
Garrettsville, OH 44231

Bob and Hope Cisney
6644 Hankee Rd
Mantua, OH 44255

Lowell and Mary Evans
10498 Elderberry Dr
Plain City, OH 43064

Ken and Yvonne Fox
7818 Wrenwood Dr
Garrettsville, OH 44231

Dennis and Jean Hunt
530-29 Russett Woods Ln
Aurora, OH 44202

Richard Masters
6002 Farnsworth Dr.
Cleveland, OH 44129-4614

Kay McCollum
12015 Alpha Road
Hiram, OH 44234

Charlene Moss
151 Xenia Ct
Monroe, OH 45050

Maryann Pou
800 South 15th St. Apt 4319
Sebring, OH 44672

Jaci Swanda
PO Box 166
Hiram, OH 44234

Don Swift
18060 Fallen Oaks Trail
Hiram, OH 44234

Words of gratitude:

Nancy Lacan wishes to thank everyone for their prayers, kind words, phone calls, cards and food during her recovery. She and Dale are both on the mend and hope to be back in action soon.

Celebrating Together: Tyson Vines Receives Distinction from Forbes

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If you had occasion to read through Forbes magazine recently, you would have come across a familiar face. This is because Tyson Vines and his company, V Financial Partners, was named among the Forbes top 250 financial security professionals in the country! The country!

What a wonderful recognition from the industry, and how good it is to see Tyson's faithful service continue to grow and bring blessing into the world. Let us celebrate with the Vines family!

Stewardship (cont.):

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Stewardship: If you would like to financially support the ministries of Hiram Christian Church, please know that you can donate online from our website (HiramChristianChurch.org) or you can set regular contributions using BillPay from your bank. Thank you for being a part of Hiram Christian Church.

Annual Meeting Notes:

The first of two annual meetings took place on Sunday, November 14th @ 1pm in the sanctuary and online. Kristen Pool graciously stepped in to lead the meeting as our Moderator, Mike Formberg, was recovering from illness. The meeting progressed with reporting and celebration of the ministries that have taken place over the last two years. The generosity of the congregation was celebrated many times throughout the meeting as Jane Moody led the reporting on finances and presentation of the budget for 2022.

The reports and upcoming budget are available online for review. The budget and list of officers for 2022 will be voted on during the next Board/Congregational meeting on Sunday, December 12th @ 1:30pm.

The list of officers for 2022* currently includes:

Moderator:	Houston Bowers
Vice-Moderator:	Missy Bookbinder
Secretary:	Robin Shura
Treasurer:	Ann Patella
Financial Secretary:	

Coaches:	
Hospitality:	Margaret Green-Masters
Prophetic Witness:	
Spiritual Formation:	Nancy Schauer
Stewards:	
Worship:	

Elders:	Marcia Muster
Deacons:	Sue Grajek
At-Large:	Jane Moody
At-Large:	Rick Perkins

* Vacancies currently are awaiting responses from invitations. And, if you are reading this and may consider service in 2022, please connect with Rev. Chris.

The second meeting takes place Sunday, December 12 @ 1:30pm.

Stewardship (cont.):

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It took over a year and a half (and a strange year-plus it was) to complete, but the revitalization of the access ramp to the front entry of the sanctuary is finished and further in ADA compliance! Many thanks to Gualtieri Construction for removing portions of the walls and repairing the remaining bricks, and to Ken Roby of the Village Blacksmith for producing the well-crafted railings and handrails, and to the membership for their generous donations to this project. It is truly gratifying to see vision, cooperative planning and patience come together in such rewarding results.

Plans will soon be made for a re-dedication ceremony, details to be announced.



Spiritual Formation:

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Christian Education:

Sunday morning Children's Church continues on zoom at 10:15 under the leadership of Margaret Stehno. We are excitedly preparing a presentation of the Children's Pageant. It will be shown during the Caroling program on December 17. Thanks to Pastor Chris for leading and organizing this program. If you haven't expressed your interest in adding your talents, please let Chris or Nancy know.

There will be no Sunday school on Sunday, December 26.

Prophetic Witness:

Growing Hope Globally Update:

We recently sent \$1,980.00 from our maple syrup project to support programs of aquaculture (raising tilapia in ponds), improved vegetable gardening, and community tree nurseries in the San Juan and Dajabon region of the Dominican Republic. These western regions near the border with Haiti have some of the highest levels of poverty and hunger in the entire country. Our donation brings hope through self-sufficiency.

The photo below is from the front of the GHG report.

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms."

— 1 Peter 4:10

