

Hiram Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
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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

May 2021

A Return to What?

It seems that the national conversation is gravitating towards the concept of return. Work, school, community life, worship (see below!), etc... are now within sight for many within the United States. After 15 months of restraint, sacrifice, and plenty of grace, it is understandable that the imagination takes great delight in the idea of return, for what "was" contained an extraordinary amount of goodness and joy. *And*, I have heard wise voices offer a word of mindfulness for us as we prepare for our various returns. Now is a time to discern *what is worthy of returning to, what is in need of transformation upon return, and what is simply not worth returning to at all.*

Some decisions will be easier than others. For instance, *tacos at the Battleground in Kent?* Worthy of returning to! *Play in the parks with neighbors and friends?* Worthy of returning to! But other areas will be more difficult to discern: *Do I want to return to the pace of life prior to the pandemic? Do I value many commitments in many organizations or a limited number of commitments with a smaller number of organizations? What has been revealed to me that I can no longer participate in? And what is requesting my life now?*

These are bigger questions than tacos (*slightly*). And, these are questions that we welcome among this community. Friends and siblings in faith here can be of great aid in helping with discerning what really matters. These are also questions that I welcome in pastoral conversation. And, these are also questions that the Church will be asking of itself now and into the future.

I believe that it is quite likely that this time - all that it has revealed, given, and taken - has impacted us more than we understand. I think it will become more evident as returns take place and our souls respond in various ways. But here is time to use to prayerfully discern what you wish to return to and how you wish to return. The Spirit works wonderfully in times like this. So does the Church.

May we continue to be Christ's Church.

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 May: Rev. Chris has online office hours Thursdays 2:30-4:30 or please connect with him at Chris@HiramChristianChurch.org or 330-977-7834.

COMING EVENTS:

Saturday, May 29th: Garden Work Party

Calling all friends and members who are interested in working in the garden! Let's gather for a work party in the garden on **Saturday, May 29th from 10am-12pm**. Weather permitting, this should give us adequate time to pull some weeds, lay some cardboard/paper, and spread mulch around. This will help create such a beautiful space for us to gather over the summer and into the fall.

Please bring a mask to wear when we are in close proximity. Please also bring any gloves and tools that could be helpful for weeding, pruning, and moving mulch.



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.

Worship:

p. 2

Details about our In-Person Service:

How wonderful it is to be preparing for a return to in-person worship!

Listening to the desires of the congregation, we have heard a longing to worship in-person in the sanctuary of Hiram Christian Church, *and*, we have heard gratitude for such a service strongly tied to a preference to remain worshiping online for the time being. This, we can understand and honor. For even while vaccinated and continuing to mask and practice good social distancing, there are additional factors that any one of us bring into the consideration of entering into public spaces, whether it be a grocery store or a place of worship. Some of us are vaccinated but have children who are not yet; others are vaccinated but work with high-risk persons; and others will be among those with compromised immune systems that are not recommended to be vaccinated, and must continue to abide by best practices. Our plan of return, we believe, honors where we are in this pandemic and honors the good desires of the congregation.

Sunday Mornings with Hiram Christian Church will look like:

- 9:00am-9:30am: In-Person Worship in the Sanctuary*
- 10:00am-10:50am: Online Sunday Schools
- 10:50-11:00am: Online Fellowship
- 11:00am: Online Worship Service

Encouraged with good information and recommendations from the CDC, State of Ohio, and the Region, the Elders have created a worship service that has been revised and re-imagined to remove some high-risk components. And still, we believe that our service will be meaningful.

The in-person service at 9:00am will look a lot like the worship services that we hosted prior to the pandemic, but there are some key distinctions and some logistics and expectations that we'd like to communicate.

Key Distinctions of the In-Person Worship Service:

In many ways, our in-person worship service follows the order of worship that we hosted prior to the pandemic. However, here are some of the distinctions within worship and what they will ask of you:

Music:

The prelude and postlude will run as they always have. Drew Hinkle will return to the Holtkamp organ and the piano to offer the gifts of music that prepare us for worship and prepare us to go forth from the sanctuary.

There will be hymns, but congregational singing will not be able to take place. Understanding what we do about the transmission of Covid-19 (droplets and aerosolized), we know that singing is one of the riskiest activities groups can take part in. Because of this, we are transforming our congregational hymns into hymns led by a cantor. Sydney Shawgo or a guest vocalist will be singing from the chancel (with 20 feet of distance between the congregation) and the congregation is invited to listen and/or hum along to the hymn. Humming can permit us to follow along and it is also quite a soothing activity that may even find a place in worship after the pandemic.

Hospitality (cont.)

p. 11

Prayers of healing and strength (cont.):

* Prayers continue for Peg's dad, Joe. * Jean and Doug Brewer ask for prayers for the health of their family. * Dave asks for continued prayers for health and safety of all of our parents. * Continued prayers for Holly and Andy who just had a baby while both parents had covid (son and daughter-in-law of Steve Bentley.) All are doing well. * Harnar's neighbor is improving from her covid. Prayers for Ailyne. * Susan Schroeder, a neighbor on East Hill in Hiram. Susan has been having bouts with dementia and has been moved to The Atrium in Aurora. Please include her in your prayers. * Continued prayers for John's mom, Mary Ellon, as she is being moved to advanced care at Anna Maria. * Karla Williams, friend of Drew and Karen, did well with her surgery and is moving to a rehab facility. Drew, Karen and, of course, Karla are grateful for our prayers. Prayer for healing. Thank you all.

Prayers for our students, nation and churches:

Blessings and Prayers for Rev Allen Harris who has been called to be our new regional minister, we look forward to what the church can become. * Prayers for Divine Abundance for all peoples at all times. * Prayers for India as they struggle with Covid. * Ann asks for prayers for all affected by gun violence, including not only those who have died or been injured, but also for troubled people who have resorted to using a gun; and indeed, all of us during these turbulent times. * Pray for lives lost in Georgia and Colorado. * Jon asks for prayers for his Asian American friends and for all unnamed. * Grateful for the vaccination endeavor

Blessings and celebrations:

Jean Brewer is thankful to God for answered prayers. * Crystal is grateful for the group. * Blessings for birthdays, Linden, Chris, Giuliana, Lorena, Ella... * Grateful for the beauty of spring. Grateful for "God's canopy". * Harnars give praise for the blessings of spring flowers. * Kristen is grateful that both of her parents have been vaccinated. * Grateful for softball practice. * Grateful for church family.

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).

Covid19 Tests available at Hiram College:

Community members who would like to pick up Covid-19 antigen tests are invited to **call the Julia Church Health Center at (330) 569-5418** in order to make arrangements. Tests will be available for pickup at the health center from 9am-12pm and 1pm-4pm Monday through Friday - by appointment.

Covid Update:

We are now into Phase 2D of Ohio's Vaccination Program, which means that ALL Ohioans 16 years of age and older are now eligible to reserve your vaccine. Scheduling for your appointment can be done at: <https://gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov>

The FDA has approved the Pfizer vaccine for young adults between the ages of 12-15! It is advised for parents/guardians to consult with their child's pediatrician to learn more and schedule an appointment at a suitable location. Trials are currently ongoing for children between 6 months and 11 years of age, with results expected to be published after the summer. Let's keep doing our part until we reach the finish line together.

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

Trish Hoobler's mom, Patricia Cain, passed away. Service was held on May 7. * Roseanne asks for prayers for the families of her cousin. Wife, Penny Spaid and Aunt Lil Vaughn both died this week. * Prayers for friends and family of Michael Stanley who passed- those who knew him from Hiram College, and those who loved his music. * Prayers for Jon Moody as he grieves the loss of his coworker, Lynn Taylor. * Prayers for the family of Judy Taylor who died from Covid. She was a friend and co-worker of Emliss and Cathy. * Joan's friend Jama and her family are having a very hard time with her mom dying from Covid.

Prayers of healing and strength:

Prayers for all who are hurting in any way! May the spirit be with them and comfort them. * Charlene Moss had abdominal surgery and kidney stone zapping. Her surgeries went well. The biopsy was inconclusive. Prayers for her during her recovery. She will be going home from rehab soon. * Kristen asks for prayers for Steve, her youth leader. He has been diagnosed with leukemia. * Prayers for all the Chunks. * Tammy Sprague, niece of Jan O'Bryant and Nancy Schauer, will have a surgical biopsy, as the needle biopsy was inconclusive. * Andy Gall asks for prayers for his mom, Nancy Gall, who is in hospice with a brain tumor. * Dave Peters asks for prayers for all the moms, and especially Damaris, who has brought her children and many in the community strength and peace. * Prayers for Damaris's sister, Penny, who had serious oral surgery. * Continued prayers for Ken and Damaris for health and safety. * Sheryl Coffman Dufey is home recuperating after a successful foot/ankle surgery. Her father-in-law was hospitalized with covid and broken ribs. * Prayers also for Zack Coffman and his family as they have had the flu. * Prayers for Margaret's sister, Trish, as she continues in hospice with congestive heart failure. She will be discontinuing cancer treatment and hopes to gain some strength. Prayers that Margaret's brothers can get things arranged to visit. Prayers of comfort for Trish's daughters and grandchildren, husband and family. Prayers for Trish's husband who had knee replacement surgery. * Prayers, also, for Margaret's sister, Dorothy who had a cochlear implant. Surgery went well. Prayers for learning a new way of hearing. * Margaret's sister-in-law in CA had surgery. Prayers for her uneventful recovery. * Prayers for family of Missy and Dawn. At least 6 of their aunts, uncles, cousins have Covid. * Please include Mrs. Joyce Petri in your prayers. She is 84 and in the final stages of metastatic cancer. Recently, she broke her shoulder n 3 places. Please pray for endurance and the ability to make wise decisions. Strength to her family, especially Sandy, nurse, who is her primary caregiver. * Continued prayers for John Boyle as he deals with sciatica pain in his hip and back. * Chris Fay received a kidney transplant. Prayers for him and his family- and especially for a complete and good recovery. Also, prayers for the family of the kidney donor at their loss and the generosity of organ donation. * John and Joan's neighbor, Pat, is dealing w medical issues. * Prayers for Marianne, grandma of Dawn and Missy. She was hospitalized. * Meghan Harnar's aunt, Janet Gabor, is awaiting surgery which has been delayed because of abnormalities with her bloodwork. * Rachel, daughter of Houston and Mary, will be having cancer surgery. * Prayers for the Sittner family. Illness weighs heavily on this family. * Cindy has finished her chemo for breast cancer. She says thanks for your continued prayers. She also asks for prayers for her brother-in-law Brian, who has been diagnosed with voice box cancer that is treatable with chemo. * * Prayers for Joan's Aunt Wilda in Georgia. She is recovering from a hernia surgery. * Prayers please for Margaret's longtime friend, MaryBeth. She has struggled for many years with health issues and has made decision to use 'do not resuscitate' protocols. She worked for many years for Cleveland Christian Home and NBA. * Prayers for our parents, especially those who are mature in years. * Prayers for Emliss's sister, Shirley, who was in the hospital with cellulitis. She is coming along.

Offering:

While it is now understood that transmission of the virus is less likely through surfaces and touch, we believe that it is responsible to transform how we do particular elements of the service that have relied upon passing of plates.

Instead of passing trays among the congregation, two baskets will be placed near the doors for such purposes. Should you like to make a financial gift to support the life of Hiram Christian Church, you can deposit a gift in either basket on the way out of the sanctuary. These gifts will be secured by the deacons.

Also, please know that financial gifts can be made through your banking institution's Bill Pay or through single or recurring gifts via credit/debit card on our website, HiramChristianChurch.org.

Communion:

Understanding the great worth that we hold for the Lord's Supper and the Lord's Table, we believe that it is appropriate to continue with communion in this revised setting. To do this well, the Deacons will be setting out prefilled communion cups with wafers for each person to pick up when they enter the building. We honor the significance of passing the elements and serving one another, and so welcome your imagination to discern how you can do this within your household. In the meantime, we do encourage everyone to draw upon the many other ways that we can serve one another in this time.

Fellowship:

Rabbi Feinstein once shared a story of a man who talked about his faith and his participation in the life of the Temple.

"I don't believe in all of that stuff" said the man to the Rabbi.

"You don't?" replied the Rabbi. *"That's certainly good and fine. Belief is not required; doubt and questions are encouraged. But why do you come?"*

The man responded, *"I come because my friend believes and he comes. I come to see them."*

So it is.

We understand that fellowship is key to the life of the community and the life of faith (any life). The genuine relationships within this congregation are remarkable and a blessing. We want to continue to encourage fellowship, and to do this well we believe that it is for us to encourage fellowship to take place outdoors. For this purpose, we will be opening the doors of the sanctuary at approximately 8:45am, and then the Deacons will encourage everyone to depart the sanctuary and carry on in the greenspace outdoors, the parking lot, or the memorial garden. We have plenty of space to accommodate fellowship, and we want to utilize the healthiest places to do so.

Following the worship service, please do fellowship, and please fellowship outdoors.

Time of Service:

Because of the many revisions we have needed to make to the worship service, and because of the concern of time in the equations of risk, this worship service will be significantly shorter than our traditional worship service prior to the pandemic. We will be seeking to create a service that is approximately 30-35 minutes for good meaning and good health.

Worship (cont.):

p. 4

Logistics for the In-Person Worship Service:

First, **masks are required** for everyone 5 years old and up. By now, we all know how to wear them - covering the nose and the mouth - so please put your mask on as you approach the sanctuary doors. Masks will also be available at the entrance if you need.

Second, **greetings** will be different. We know and appreciate the value of touch in greetings. Handshakes and hugs for those who appreciate hugs have been a common way of greeting and demonstrating one's love for another. While this is good and encouraged among the vaccinated in small gatherings, we request that you come prepared to utilize a different greeting. We have learned many over the last 15 months: the elbow bump, the foot bump, the nod, the air high-5, and then there is the wave, the hand on the heart, the hands joined together with a small bow, and even hands held in the shape of a heart. Please come prepared with a new form of greeting, and be encouraged to get creative with it!



Third, **bulletins, offering, and communion** will be found in new places. Bulletins will be placed in available seating. Offering can be placed in a basket located near the entrance doors (a financial gift can be made on the way in or on the way out). Communion will be set up on the tables near the entrance door. Please do pick up a single-serving chalice/bread on your way in and take it with you to your seat.

Fourth, the sanctuary will be marked to close off particular pews to encourage appropriate **social distancing**. Worship bulletins will be placed on available seats. Households are welcome to sit together. Although we know that there will be instances when households have “bubbled” together and may wish to sit together in the sanctuary, please refrain from “double-bubbling” and sit with your household and sit next to (6 feet or more) others.

Prophetic Witness:

p. 9

Growing Hope Globally Update:

Our 2019 money from the bulk sale of our syrup \$1,424.00 is being sent to support the Church World Service/Week of Compassion sponsored project in Haiti. Started in 2019, this project reaches 500 farm families in the country's Northwest, a region hard hit by both drought and hurricanes. Due to the lack of paved roads, there are few nonprofits working to support families in that area.

The program focuses on soil conservation education; provides temporary employment for participants in constructing rock walls and canals to control erosion; has established a tree nursery to produce 7,453 seedlings for distribution; provided veterinary services for care of breeding stock; constructed cisterns to capture rainwater and offered seeds (lima beans and corn) to strengthen agricultural production. A portion of the harvested seeds are passed on to benefit other farmers.

Growing Hope Globally and Church World Service work in partnership with a local association in five communities. They are also helping to carry out a COVID -19 response plan in that area.

Maple Syrup for Sale:

Bottles are tagged, labeled, and available for sale at the office. Price is the same as last year \$10 per pint; \$18.00 per quart. If paying by check to Hiram Christian Church, please put “maple syrup” on the memo line. Cash accepted as well. Come by during regular office hours: Tuesday and Thursday 9:30-2:30 and Wednesday 3-6. Just ring the buzzer to come in. If you prefer contactless pickup, you may call 330-569-7697 for the syrup to be left in the blue ice chest outside the office and payment can be dropped in the door mail slot.

Many thanks to the great crew of volunteers who tapped, collected, bottled, tagged and helped in many other ways to bring this worthwhile project to fruition. Now it is your turn, so heat those skilletts, flip those pancakes and enjoy Hiram's best 2021 syrup. Yum!

4C's:

Beginning May 10, the drive-through distribution hours are Mondays 4-6pm, Wednesdays & Fridays 1-3pm. Volunteers are needed – call 330-274-3310 if you can help! Monetary donations can be sent to: The 4C's, P.O. Box 227, Mantua, OH 44255

Spiritual Formation

Christian Education: - 10:15-10:45AM Sundays

Margaret Stehno, our faithful teacher, has departed for her summer camp job in Florida. She will be missed, but will return in the Fall. Safe travels, Margaret!

Sunday school for youth will not meet on Sunday mornings during the summer. We are, however, planning a summer social event.

Adult Summer Sunday School:

The Adult Elective class will continue to meet on Zoom for the summer, Sunday mornings at 10:00. We are currently in the last section of Serene Jones' book, Call It Grace, and have yet to decide what our summer book will be. All are welcome.

Stewardship:

Hiram Christian Church Garden History:

From Richard Masters 8/27/2020 as transcribed (and slightly edited) by Ann Patella

p. 8

I have been planting geraniums in front of the church for 25 years.

The front gardens started in 1994 after a heavy snow on a Sunday night. The following morning, a Martin Luther King service was to be held at our church, with 200 college students attending—but snow and bushes blocked my opening the church up. I did deal with the snow, but the bushes had to be cut out in order for the service to be held inside the church. I did such a bad job of cutting the evergreens in front! They were six to eight feet tall. It was a mess. So as Trustees, Audley Zuver and I developed a new plan for the front (north) of church. He removed every one of the bushes and evergreens!

After her death in 1998, Esther Douglas had left money to the church from the sale of her house. With the aid of Roger Fink, we together developed a plan for a new garden in front of the church. Audley Zuver cut the bank down and removed soil next to Roger Fink's house to the west, so that the area could be landscaped.

Then in spring with aid of Professor Rae Knight, five others, and eighty students, we removed many plantings from Esther Douglas's garden. We moved these new plants (as they would be destroyed in moving of the house) to the front of our church, west, and back of church. Rudy Gall also picked up a load of plants from a nursery.

Each year after that I added bulbs and plants. Some plants died out because of a large tree or lack of water, or weather. The hardest place to keep a garden is the area by the steps/ramp. It was the old coal area. Yes, the ramp is built over a coal storage unit!

Over the years, plants changed or needed replacing. Yes, for some time I tried new plants. [These include beautiful pink Resurrection lilies that bloom in August.]



Worship (cont.):

p. 5

Fifth, **finding your seat**. You will also see that the pews closest to the chancel have been roped off. This is to permit a healthy distance between the congregation and those who will be speaking from the pulpit and singing from the right corner. With the roped pews and the requirement for social distancing, it is *very likely* that "your seat" may not be available. Have no fear. God will meet you elsewhere in the sanctuary! When you enter the sanctuary, please proceed to a seat and prepare yourself for worship.

This has also been a time when friends have proceeded around the sanctuary to welcome and greet everyone. However, at this time, it will be important that when you find your seat, please remain in and ever so near your seat for the service.

Sixth, **movement in worship - in and out of the pews**. Traditionally, we have stood for elements of the service such as the gloria patri and during our hymns. While singing of these hymns is discouraged, humming and standing are welcome. Therefore, if you would like to stand during the gloria patri and hymns, please do. We're not quite sure how it will feel, but let's explore this together.

Traditionally, children have departed the pews to come forward to the chancel for the **children's sermon**, sitting in close proximity. This is one of Rev. Chris' favorite elements of the worship service - the opportunity to speak with children and hear how they are doing and what they know about God, the world, and love. Unfortunately, this is something that will be suspended from the in-person service for the time being. Hopefully, this can be just another instance where children can experience and learn what we do for one another (what love requests of us), and gain from seeing their community lead by example.

Seventh, **the departure**. After our worship service, we will encourage folks to leave from their pew any time after the benediction, but certainly shortly after the postlude concludes. Rev. Chris will process from the chancel outside to greet folks as they exit. The Deacons and Elders will help usher folks outside as well. Outdoors is where fellowship and conversation will be encouraged to take place. Again, consider the porches, the walkway, the parking lot, and the garden as suitable locations for continued conversation.

Eighth and finally, **your health**. If you are not feeling well the day of service, please be encouraged to remain home and join the worship service online. Masks and distance do wonders, vaccination is 94% effective, *and*, let us use good judgment for our health and the health of others.

***Conditions for Return to In-Person Worship:**

For our return to in-person worship, there are considerations that must be made within the Church, and there are conditions that must be met outside of the Church.

Those considerations within the Church include the re-imagining of worship, the preparations to the sanctuary space, the revisions to the responsibilities for Deacons and Elders, and the appropriation of materials and processes to facilitate worship. These, we are taking care of well. Thank you to the staff, the Deacons, and the Elders for their leadership and participation in this endeavor.

Worship (cont.):

The other and more significant condition that must be met is the criteria of lessening transmission as reflected in the Ohio Public Health Advisory System. This system is color coated to reflect data at the county level. It utilizes seven different criteria of information to create seven indicators, giving us a strong image of our local context. Currently, we are in the Red and have a High Incidence of transmission. This is seen in Indicator 1 (New Cases per Capita) that is currently reading with 160 cases per 100,000 residents. To drop out of the Red and into the Orange (from Level 3 to Level 2 of Public Emergency), our county must show two weeks of less than 100 new daily cases per 100,000 residents. There is significant progress to be made, and we are hopeful that with vaccination efforts and more outdoor events, the health of our county will begin to improve.

Our denomination has recommended that we do not gather if/when our county is in the Red of our state system. Our congregation has decided that we will want to see Portage County two weeks outside of the Red before we return to in-person worship. This, we believe, will inform us when it is good and healthy for us to worship together in-person in our sanctuary.

Therefore, we will be ready to worship with preparations made for return. We are hoping - still hoping - to return to in-person worship on Sunday, June 6th @ 9:00am. And, **for this to take place, we will need to see Portage County in the Orange/Level 2 of Public Emergency for two weeks prior (by Sunday, May 23rd).**

The Church will communicate definitively about June 6th early in the week of May 23rd. If Portage County remains in the Red that week, then our return will be postponed another week - and we'll keep assessing and keep communicating with the congregation. If you have not yet signed up for our Church Correspondence, please share your email address with the church office. If you do not utilize email but would like to be updated on the return with a phone call, please contact the church office and let Lisa know or leave a voicemail.

Six pages in, and I'm sure that I've forgotten something (more likely, *many* things). It is quite a task to imagine the way worship can unfold within a pandemic while sustaining the health of the worshipping community, and it is worthwhile. So long as we who are ready to return do so with patience, grace, and the wisdom of our best practices, we will proceed well together. I imagine that the first Sunday back may feel a bit like the first day of school where we go over the processes of *how to be together* before we proceed to the substance of *why* we've gathered in the first place. And that's ok. Here, we know very well that the why of our worship is reflected in how we relate to one another.

Mask up. Keep your distance. Schedule your appointment for your vaccine. Encourage your family, friends, and neighbors to do the same. We will continue to be the church and do our part for the health and well-being of our county, and we'll get back into that sanctuary soon.

If you have any questions, please contact Rev. Chris (Chris@HiramChristianChurch.org or 330.977.7834) or call the church office (330.569.7697). We'll be writing and sharing more to keep us all updated.

Grace and Peace continue to dwell with you.

Rev. Chris McCreight

Worship (cont.):

Deacons' Update:

The role of the Deacons at our in-person worship service will look quite a bit different than in the past! Besides the time change – the service will begin at 9 AM and will last a shorter time, we will not be preparing and passing the communion elements or the collection plates.

Our duties will include unlocking the church building at 8:30 AM and locking the building after the service, setting up the baskets for our offering and the prepackaged communion elements for people to pick up as they enter the church and greeting people as they enter.

Bulletins will be placed on the pews earlier in the week and seating will be designated so that we will be a safe space apart from others. If you would like to help the Deacons by occasionally assuming these tasks, please contact Sue Grajek (330-527-8092, suantgrajek@gmail.com).

Pastoral Visitation:

During the pandemic, Rev. Chris has been utilizing zoom in the place of physical visitation as a way to connect with friends and members of the church for conversation and pastoral care. Now that he is two weeks out from full vaccination, Rev. Chris is now willing to meet in-person (preferably outdoors) with friends and members of the church who would prefer in-person visitation. Whether in-person, on zoom, or over the phone, please connect with Rev. Chris or Lisa in the office to request a visit and we'll schedule the time.

Stewardship:

Stewards' update:

The Board voted to accept Gualtieri Construction Company's option for modifying the wheel chair ramp. The Village Blacksmith was selected to modify the railing.

LaVon has procured a capstone for the chimney and will rent a lift and perform the work of capping the chimney.

A Happy Financial Report:

From Ann Patella, Hiram Christian Church Financial Secretary

A big thank-you goes to all of the generous donors who have faithfully kept up with their pledges and other donations to our church throughout these pandemic months!

As of April 30th, at the one-third mark for 2021, our receipts toward our operating expenses reached almost \$58,000. This included about \$15,000 in a new Paycheck Protection Program loan, which may at some point be "forgiven," thus becoming a grant.

Even without the loan, our operating income stood at about \$43,000. This is about 37% of our predicted operating income for the year. Meanwhile, our operating expenses were about \$37,400, which puts us about \$5600 ahead for the year so far! That is good news indeed! We had been predicting a deficit as high as \$18,000 for the year.

As you enjoy the warmer days and the beauty of God's world, please remember to continue your giving to our dear Hiram Christian Church. Every dollar helps us to reach out, sharing God's love in our community and in the world.