

# E-Messenger

## First Church of Christ

**From Bob Russell's Blog:** Joe Schory started school this past fall. Because of the pandemic, all his classes have been exclusively online. The very first day, his mother sat him in front of the computer screen and helped make the connection. As his teacher got into her lesson, Joe's mother tiptoed out of the room to do a brief chore. She was gone for less than five minutes, but when she returned, she discovered her son was watching a movie. "What are you doing?" the mother demanded. "I'm tired of listening to her! She's boring!" the boy retorted.

Most would agree that a six-year-old child has a poor understanding of what school is really about. School isn't always entertaining or exciting. School isn't just about what you want to do at the moment. It is learning to sit still and listen. It is about respecting the teacher's authority, interacting with other kids, and learning people-skills as well as memorizing facts. We instinctively know that online grade school doesn't get the job done. Relationships are a vital part of education.

The same principle applies to the church. Online services have been a tremendous blessing during the Covid shutdown. They have provided expanded opportunities for evangelism and enabled elderly and unhealthy members to stay connected with their church while protecting themselves from the virus. But we deceive our-

selves if we conclude online church is somehow an acceptable substitute for actually attending a worship service. It's not the same. It's not close to being the same.

There's a big difference between visiting with your fiancé on the phone and being together in person. There's a big difference between watching a service on a screen and joining with others in corporate worship. Just humming along or tapping your foot to a praise song, gulping down a small wafer and drinking a spot of juice, and then casually listening to a sermon is not a satisfactory substitute for participating in a worship service.

There's a humorous meme from a satirical website. It shows two images. The first caption reads, "How the preacher imagines us worshipping online." That cartoon portrays a family of four seated on the couch in front of a big-screen television, all totally engaged in the worship service, their hands raised as they join in the singing. The second drawing is captioned, "What actually is happening online." It shows a bedraggled middle-aged woman lying in bed in her pajamas watching her home church live stream on her cell phone while smoking a cigarette.

I know that's not always the case. And I know online services

have been the right choice for those most vulnerable to catching the virus. But it is much too easy to conclude, "I'm tired of listening to that guy," and turn the channel...or glance at text messages.

A huge part of being a member of God's church is having fellowship with others and being accountable to one another. That is why small groups, Sunday school classes, fellowship dinners, choirs, church softball teams, and mission trips are so important. The Apostle Paul compared the church to a body where each member was dependent on the other.

Think of all the "one-another" passages in the Bible. Love one another. Be devoted to one another. Honor one another above yourselves. Live in harmony with one another. Admonish one another. Serve one another. Bear one another's burdens. Forgive one another. Even singing was not intended to be an isolated worship experience. We are told to "*Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, spiritual songs*" (Ephesians 5:19).

Last month a clerk related to me that she became a Christian while going through a bitter divorce. She wandered into a church service as a complete stranger, feeling very much alone. Spotting a vacant seat near the back of the crowded room, she sat down. She felt the presence of the Holy Spirit so strongly during the

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early part of the service that tears streamed down her cheeks. A few minutes later, an older woman seated next to her reached over and patted her on the knee and simply said, "You're in the right place."

The next week she came back and thought, "I hope I see that same woman." It just so happened there was a seat right next to the woman, and the two exchanged a warm greeting. She found herself praying, "I wish I could call this person and talk with her," but she didn't have the nerve to ask the woman for her contact information. After the service, the woman spontaneously handed her a scrap of paper with her phone number and whis-

## Serving in March

### Prayer Warriors:

Marcia Gambler & Brienne Hetrick

### Elder Schedule:

7—Mark Rhodes  
14—Larry Snavely  
21—Dave Beerbower  
28—Ryan Beerbower

### Nursery:

7—1st—Angie & Eric Murphy  
SS—Kelly & Barry Von Deylen  
2nd—Vickie Grimm  
14—1st—Stacie & Ryan Beerbower  
SS—Cody & Ashley Grimm  
2nd—Jane Runyan  
21—1st—Jon & Kristi  
SS—Beth & Terence Clingaman  
2nd—Ashley Knepper  
28—1st—Sandi Oberlin

SS—Kelly & Barry Von Deylen  
2nd—Stacie & Ryan Beerbower

### Children's Church:

7—TBA  
14—TBA  
21—TBA  
28—TBA

## Birthdays & Anniversaries



3 Amy Dominique, Erica McNamara, Sherry Trubey  
5 Gerry Wyrick  
10 Colton Sheline  
13 Janet McCarthy, Phyllis Waldron  
14 Beth Clingaman, Zach McCarthy  
17 Ramon Alpaugh, Parker Von Deylen  
18 Teresa Gambler

19 Dane & Devin Poncsak  
22 Preston Hull  
23 Gary Brown  
26 Ruth Thomas  
27 Austin Bard  
28 Dylan Dominique, Wanda Hug  
29 Sue Smethurst  
30 Brian Criswell



7 Mike & Lexy Robson (1)  
10 John & Mary Garver (58)  
29 Toby & Jane Runyan (13)

*Attention Senior Saints:* Given the current situation with COVID, all Senior Saints activities will be put on hold until April. Hopefully, at that time, we will be able to gather together for Lunch Bunch and Craft Group without the worry of illness. We hope to see you all soon.

## Family News

### SYMPATHY

- ♥ The church family extends her sympathy to Bob Stambaugh, Sandy Gordon and Dan & Deb Nixon and families on the passing of Norma.
- ♥ Doug & Vickie Grimm on the passing of





Vickie's father, Virgil Wyse.

- ♥ Terry & Cheryl Karnes on the passing of Terry's father, Tom Karnes.

Congratulations! The church family rejoices with Jacob & MaKenzie Manges on the safe arri-

val of Marcus Allen who arrived Saturday, January 30th. He weighed in at 7# 11 oz. and 21". He joins big brother, Miles. Maternal grandparents are Rich & Sherry Trubey. Paternal grandparents are Randy & Gigi Manges. Great-grandmother is Karen Manges.

# MARCH

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 5:45 Supper 6:30 Youth Life Groups	4	5 6:30 Prayer Gathering for Children's Ministry 	6
7 8:00 Worship 9:15 Sunday School 10:15 Worship	8	9	10 5:45 Supper 6:30 Youth Life Groups	11	12	13
14 8:00 Worship 9:15 Sunday School 10:15 Worship 	15	16	17 5:45 Supper 6:30 Youth Life Groups	18	19	20
21 8:00 Worship 9:15 Sunday School 10:15 Worship	22	23	24 5:45 Supper 6:30 Youth Life Groups	25	26	27
28 8:00 Worship 9:15 Sunday School 10:15 Worship 	29	30	31 5:45 Supper 6:30 Youth Life Groups			



# FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Love All, Worship One,  
Make Disciples



Connect with us!

Office Hours: Monday—  
Thursday 8:00 AM-5:00  
PM



## Facts & Figures

### February 7

Attendance SS 16      Worship 36/47  
Offering      \$2,707.00

### February 14

Attendance SS 23      Worship 31/73  
Offering      \$5,522.90

### February 21

Attendance SS 28      Worship 32/51  
Offering      \$4,193.00

### February 28

Attendance SS      Worship /  
Offering      \$

Needed for Budget      \$5,008.77



## Love All

*Our Service Personnel:*  
Lindsey Carter (FL), Caleb  
Lloyd (Japan), Josh Severs (S.  
Korea), Braxton Singer (NC),  
Katie Sparks (PA), Jessie Still-  
man (OH), Josh Tonneas  
(TX)

*Cancer:* Gwen Acker-  
Dickinson, Joyce Bailey, Na-  
than Bailey, Sue Bever, Tim  
Bight, Brent, Sherry  
Buchsteiner, Jennie Case, An-  
drew Dell, Adam Farger, Car-  
rie H., Molly Johnston, Kent,  
Chuck Lees, Ron Lewis, Tim  
Mavis, Jim McPeak, Chloe  
Merrilet, Crystal Miller, Aaron

Nartker, Ruth Ordway, Mary  
Pinckley, Anna Pitman, Elaine  
Purdue, Steve Ringer, Bob &  
Sue Secoy, Elizabeth Shetler,  
Terry Shinaberry, Dean Sme-  
thurst, Lyle Snavely, Norma  
Stambaugh, Ron Stark, Amy  
Tobin, Linda Walker, Kathy  
Walton, Drew Wayman. *Oth-  
er Concerns:* Jennifer Mavis,  
Trevor Bailey, Neighborhood,  
Arlene Boyer, Dale Boyer,  
Danielle Strouse, Asher Cra-  
vens, Brenda Ridgway, Cindy  
Wolf, Zach Swisher, Cheryl  
Towers, Keller Gardner, Gene  
Nash, Kim Beek, Joshua Tay-  
lor, Keely Strouse, Carson

Strouse, Gene Crawford, chil-  
dren's ministry, Danny Hull,  
Bryan Tonneas, Cindy Web-  
ber, Curt Bennett, Kevin Ayre,  
Jim Bowman, Dick Blinzler,  
Ramon Alpaugh, Kathy Moog,  
Marsha Fisher; *Shut Ins:*  
*SKLD:* Gloria Wright;  
*Home:* Barb & Ramon  
Alpaugh, Shirley Bard, Annie  
Engel, Linda Lewis, Marilyn  
Lundy, Leona Puff, Esther  
Rosendaul, Edith Wagner;  
Ottawa Riverview: Barbara  
Hake, Hawthorne Glen: Roy  
Koerner.







pered, “Please feel free to call me if I can ever help you.” That led to a deepening relationship, needed encouragement, and an eventual baptism.

I know there are some exciting stories of things happening online, but there is something special about a spirit-filled worship service. There is a good reason why the Bible commands, “*Do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together...*” Good things happen when you ride to church together as a family, listen to a sermon surrounded by other believers, take the Lord’s supper, and sing worship songs together with others. All those activities are enhanced when done corporately.

Pastors, we’re to be shepherds of the flock that is under our care. That means we have a responsibility to try to reclaim the strays because they are vulnerable to all kinds of spiritual dangers when they attempt to survive this hostile culture alone. Let’s not rationalize, “They are part of our online church, and that’s sufficient.” Instead, let’s remind them they need to participate in the body, not just for what they receive but for what they contribute to others. The church needs them!

Every shut-in who worships online will tell you that they wish they could be present in person. So, don’t equate online service with those who attend. Make a distinction between attendance online and in-person. Don’t treat them as equivalencies. When you address those watching online, encourage those who are capable of returning to worship services to do so. God may be using the pandemic to purge the church of complacency. Don’t make His task more difficult by endorsing it.

Let’s be grateful for online services, which are a God-send for those who are incapable of attending. But if you’re healthy and watching church online has become “lazy church” for you, it’s time to muster the courage to get back to church. *He who has ears to hear, let him hear.*

Destined to Win,  
Larry Snavelly

### Inclement Weather Policy

Level 1: All services will proceed as scheduled.

Level 2 at 6 AM Sunday: All services will be cancelled.

Level 3: All services will be cancelled.

Wednesday Nights: If school is closed, we are closed or as we deem necessary.

Please check the following sources for church news: WBCL and our church website ([www.bryanfcc.org](http://www.bryanfcc.org)).

