



“Are you saved?” When I was a student at Kent State, it seemed that I couldn’t get across campus without someone asking me that question. Everywhere you went, there were members from one campus ministry or another or members of some church somewhere asking everyone, “Are you saved?” Sometimes I would engage with them; more often I would just try to get out of there as quickly as I could.

Once, while talking with a friend of mine, another person with them heard me mention church camp. “Oh! You’re a Christian?” they asked me. “Oh, no, no, no,” I replied defensively. “I mean, I go to church and stuff, but I’m not, like a ‘Christian’ exactly.”

What I meant was that I wasn’t one of these people accosting everyone and getting up in their business about whether they were saved or not. I wasn’t one of those who spent their time condemning passers-by for sins that they assumed might apply to them. If those people were “Christians” then I certainly wasn’t.

Only, I was a Christian. I wasn’t like those folks who came to our campus. I didn’t feel any interest or responsibility in condemning other people. I didn’t feel the urge to ask every person I met about their personal spiritual life. I didn’t walk with a “holier-than-thou” attitude. In my desire to distance myself from folks like that, I let them rob me of my name, my identity. “No, I’m not a Christian.”

I say they robbed me, but really I allowed myself to have my identity taken from me.

I allowed these other people to define my faith for me. Since then, I have spent years reclaiming it for myself. I have read Scripture and sought out new understandings and it’s been amazing and rewarding. I used to think I hate the gospel of John and I had little use for Paul. But really, what I didn’t like was what some people TOLD me those passages meant. I allowed others to dictate what the word of God was saying and I didn’t even realize I was doing it.

Part of our defining characteristics as members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is that we believe in each person’s individual right and responsibility to interpret the scriptures faithfully. No one gets to tell you what it means, absolutely. They can (and should) let you know their take on things, but ultimately it is your job to define for yourself what you believe. That’s who we are. That’s our responsibility. And if we don’t do it, there are many, many people who are too happy to do it for us.

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An essential part of fulfilling this calling is through prayer and study. That's why I am so thankful for our Tuesday Night Bible Study on Zoom. Ask any of the participants and I think they will tell you that we have had some fundamental insights that have shaped and changed our faith. It has been absolutely amazing!

For example, we just finished Galatians. Galatians is the earliest book in the New Testament to be written, the expression of those very first believers. Here in the very beginning of the very first book of the New Testament, Paul lays out the manner of salvation: "We know that a person is justified not by the works of the law but through the faith of Jesus Christ," (Galatians 2: 16). Here, justification means to be reckoned as righteous, as morally good, included among the holy family of God.

We don't earn it. We can't work to get it. We have no way of claiming it for ourselves. It is given to us not by our own worthiness, our own faithfulness, but the faithfulness of Jesus Christ. That is earth-shaking. Before we do anything, before we confess anything, we have justification by the faithfulness of Jesus Christ.

"Are you saved?" Yes I am, by the faithfulness of Christ and the grace of God. That's where we start. The only question left for us is, what do we want to do about it now that we know?

Study. Pray. Read. Listen. Think. Imagine. Connect. Rejoice. This is the path of faith not so that we can be saved, but because we already are. Claim your faith for yourself. Don't let others tell you who you are. Express your faith in the world and let others see a different picture of what a Christian is.

--Pastor Ben

ELDERS' SERVING SCHEDULE

July

4 Rodger Shuback
11 Jan Pumphrey
18 Diana Secaur
25 Sally Ifill

August

1 Rodger Shuback
8 Jan Pumphrey
15 Diana Secaur
22 Sally Ifill
29 Rodger Shuback

Church Announcements



I am excited about my coming ministry with Perry Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) beginning on [August 1](#). Part of what appealed to me about them were similarities they shared with Canfield.

I will still be as involved as possible because I love you all. I also want to thank you for the ways you have supported me as I have prepared to reenter congregational ministry. I could not have done it without your support.

Thank you all so much.

— Rev. Kristin Wickless



Can you finish this sentence?

You might be a Disciple if ...

...your pastor owns a pair of waders and doesn't fish.

...when asked what Disciples believe, you say, "Which ones?"

Please keep in your prayers –

✝ the family of Jim Swartz, husband of Carol Swartz. He died on June 6. Carol died on December 12, 2019.

✝ the family of Helen “Jean” Dishong who died on July 2.

AS YOU CONTINUE YOUR PRAYERS FOR OTHERS

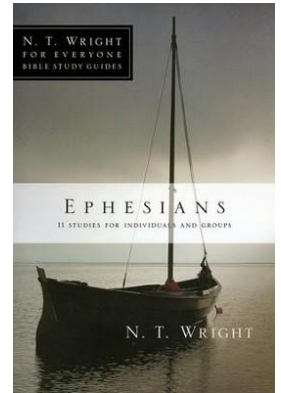
The following individuals and families do appreciate your continued prayers on their behalf:

June Barnes	Debbie Tunison	David Metzger
Jeff Nape	David Dishong	Nancy Minkler
Margaret Clark	Carol Payne	
Colt Schmidt (Great Grandson of Pat Wiant)	Jack Harris (Nephew of Jerry & Dolores Hanna)	
Rosa and Maria Arcenio (Sisters of Trinidad)	Scott Chepke (Received a transplant)	
Margrit Galano (Mother of Cindy Stackhouse)	J. Edward Baker (Littleton, Colorado)	
Denise Kover (Cousin of Anita Powell)	John Siciliano (Brother of Anita Powell)	
Sandra Jeffries, Dedra Theoret, Don Robertson and John and Carol Beales (Friends of Dorris Baringer)		

It is important to remember our service members in your daily prayers.

Tuesday Night Bible Study on Zoom

Our Tuesday Night Bible Study is continuing on with a look at Ephesians. N.T. Wright explains that the letter was originally intended as a circular to various churches in the Ephesus area. In many ways it provides a bird's-eye view of one theme after another within early Christian reflection: God, the world, Jesus, the church, the means of salvation, Christian behavior, marriage and family, and spiritual warfare.



One of the best things about the way our study is set up is that there is NO PREPARATION NECESSARY! The study book asks questions that draw on personal experience and direct observation that not only teach, but provide practical insights for our daily living. We continue to learn new things and gain new insights from these ancient passages.

We do the study on Zoom at 6:30 every Tuesday night. Members can drop in and out as they have need. You can either follow the same link we use for everything here at church. If you would like a link emailed or texted to you or if you have any questions about getting Zoom set up on your computer, tablet or smartphone, just let Pastor Ben know. We would love to have you join us for an hour of study and insight.

UPDATED GUIDELINES FOR IN-PERSON WORSHIP

We are so thankful for the opportunity to welcome more and more people back to in-person worship on Sunday mornings. The covid vaccines have been an answer to prayer and have allowed us to accelerate our plan to return to life as normal here at church.

That being said, we know the danger is still present for many in our community. If you have been fully vaccinated, you are welcome to go without a mask in worship. If you have not been vaccinated for any reason, please continue to wear a mask at all times while you are in the building for your own safety as well as the safety of others.

There are many reasons why people may not be vaccinated at this point. We want to assure each person that comes to worship that they will not only be welcomed but will be safe, as well. Assuring the safety of everyone is part of our mission as followers of Jesus Christ.

We will never turn anyone away because of their vaccination status nor will anyone be required to prove their vaccination status. We are the church and we trust each other. That also means that we will go out of our way to accommodate one another's needs. Whatever your particular situation is, please consider how you can best extend love and care to others with faithful integrity.

CANFIELD CHRISTIAN CHURCH

123 S. Broad St.

Canfield, Ohio 44406

330-533-2246

Email: canfield.christian.church@zoominternet.net

Website: canfieldchristianchurch.org

Secretary, Joann Detwiler

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Touching Lives with Compassion, Understanding and Hope
while Modeling the Love of Christ since 1829