

The VOICE

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Writings From The Rev - February 2010

In the midst of this hard cold Winter we have a special day that works its way into our thoughts and our hearts. Of course, many will say that it is just another commercialized holiday. In fact, no sooner had the “after Christmas sales” come, the New Year came, and the shelves were cleared away for the Valentine stuff. Red hearts popped up everywhere. And it made you stop to think... it made you stop to think... it made you...

Wait! What is that?!!

I’m sorry, something seems to have distracted my thoughts. Every so often, I get a mental peripheral view of something. It’s large, and yet I somehow subconsciously find ways to walk around it, even ignoring its very presence. Maybe this has happened to you as well. I believe it’s referred to as “**The Elephant In The Room.**”

This term is used to describe a situation or an event that people are trying hard to avoid or dismiss as not important. We do our best to walk around it or talk around it, but every now and then we bump into it. Sometimes it blocks our way, our view, our ability to act or respond as we should. It’s a reality that we are not sure we want to deal with.

For North Eaton Christian Church, the Elephant in the room, has to do with the fact that in just over a year’s time this congregation has lost two ministers. One to retirement, Dr. Paul Durbin after 26 years, and one in death, Judy Ponting, Licensed Lay Minister of 18 years. Both have been valuable assets to this Church Family. In essence, they have been the Patriarch and the Matriarch of care-giving for the Mission and Ministry shared both inside and outside these congregational walls.

Like with any family, this heavy loss demands a time of grieving. It is right, good, and essential.

The experts will point out that there are steps to this grieving process. However, not everyone grieves in the same way, at the same time. You may have noticed that in your own family. The same is true in a church family. And the larger the church family the longer it may take to work through those steps.

For many in this church family, you were close to the end of this process with Paul. But now, with Judy’s passing, it’s as though an old wound reopened. We are hurting once again. It isn’t easy, and it’s not fun to deal with the Elephant in the room. However, once it is pointed out, you’re less likely to be blindsided by it.

The most important thing is that you not go through this grief process alone and silent. It is in communion with our Lord, and in community with one another that this wound can be bound up and begin to heal properly. With love and compassion, sympathy, empathy, and understanding, you as individuals and as a congregation can move forward.

So hold on to the words of our Lord when he said: ***“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.”*** (John 14:27)

The Apostle Paul also adds: ***All this is for your sake so that, as God’s kindness overflows in the lives of many people, it will produce even more thanksgiving to the glory of God. That is why we are not discouraged. Though outwardly we are wearing out, inwardly we are renewed day by day.***

(2 Corinthians 4:15-16)

Let the love of God, the light of Christ, and comfort of the Holy Spirit strengthen and heal us, so that we can continue doing the mission and ministry of the Church.

North Eaton Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
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Grafton, Ohio 44044
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Grafton, OH 44044
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Interim Minister: Rev. Ralph S. Wearstler
Christian Ed. And Youth Director: Polly Tallos
Secretary: Londa Blaine
Interim Co-Worship & Music Directors: Diana Tyler/Lanson Wells
Pianist/Organist: Kim Speiran-Wells
Pathways Counseling and Growth Center: Dr. Ralph Thompson

Serving at the Lord's table in FEBRUARY ...



8:00 Scott White, Maureen Cromling
 9:30 Melissa Folk (TL), Sally Belfi (kitchen), George & Diana Butcher,
 Jerry Mullins, Mark Carpenter, Mike Mott, Polly Tallos, Jackie Haumschild,
 Julie Haumschild
 Elders Bill Cromling, Vern Black

FEBRUARY Birthdays and Anniversaries

2 Loretta St. Andre
 3 Joyce Johnson
 5 Eleanor Smith
 Cody Knorr
 6 Fran Walker
 Linda Ickes
 7 Beth Wilson
 8 Marie Ternes
 9 Linda Johnson
 Susie Naylor
 12 Alan Munn
 John Haupt
 14 Bonnie Hicks
 Tim Tyler
 Mary Bengough
 James Hensley
 15 Kristen Hicks
 Jacob Zawoyski
 17 Glenn Swartz
 Chrissy Baughman
 18 Amanda Klein
 19 Gene Yost
 20 Stu Hicks Sr.
 21 Royce Klein
 22 Madeline Blaine
 23 Breanna Bokar
 24 Jill & Tom Hartness
 John & Karen Vilevac
 25 Jim Bokar
 Laura Carpenter
 Brian Insley
 26 Jeff & Chris Hensley
 28 Taylor Baughman
 29 Edna Carpenter



Membership Class

The Christian Ed. Team and Rev. Ralph are offering a Membership Class for the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade youth of North Eaton Christian Church. The following youth have decided to join the class in an effort to explore the next step in their faith journey.

Each youth will have a Mentor who will help them on their journey. Our thanks to the Mentors for making this a priority in donating their time and sharing their faith to help these young people.

Please keep the youth and mentors in your prayers as they build a relationship with each other and deepen their faith in Jesus Christ.

Candidates

Scott Thompson
 Blake Kyle
 Kevin Wilson
 Paige Bokman
 Maddie Stevanus
 Chase Stevanus
 Carley Petersen

Mentors

Tyler Bokman
 Becky Thompson
 Brian Insley
 Karen Konko
 Julie Haumschild
 Diana Tyler
 Fran Walker

W A N E W Retreat

Feb. 12-14, 2010—Camp Christian

Cost: \$30.00 per person

The CHI RHO and CYF will be meeting with youth from Westlake, Washington Avenue and Franklin Circle Christian Churches for a weekend of study and fun at Camp Christian. Our theme this year is "LOVE and SERVICE." If you have any questions or are interested in attending the Retreat, please see Polly Tallos.

Outreach Programs—Stamps

Two outreach programs have come to my attention using cancelled postage stamps of all kinds: VETERANS and HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

All you need to do is tear off the corner of the envelope with the stamp on it and bring it to church and place them in the box on the fireplace in the fellowship hall or mail them to the church. This is a simple, but valuable way to help two very worthy organizations.



Thank You, Marlene Black

NECC November Roller Skating

Around 25 of us gathered at the Roll Arena in Elyria for an afternoon of roller skating. Young children and adults had a great time. Some people fell down (no names please) often, while others didn't fall at all. (Check out the photos on the bulletin board in the fellowship hall.) This was a great family event enjoyed by all ages and will be on our calendar again in Nov. THANKS to Melissa Folk for taking the photos as the rest of us skated past her. **We hope you will join us this year. You have plenty of time to practice!**

Thank You

Dear Rev. Wearstler and friends,

On behalf of the children and families of the Cleveland Christian Home, thank you so much for keeping us in mind, especially at this time of the year. We truly appreciate your donation of gift cards, coats, games, household items and school supplies to help make this Christmas one of the best ever.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you on behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of the CCH as well. Without you, we would not be able to provide as much support to those we have the privilege to serve. You make it possible through your generosity, for us to continue serving our neighbors in need. Thank you for being our partners in hope!

James D. Runyon
Director of Church Relations

Dear Church family,

I wish to extend my gratitude for your prayers and open acceptance for my frailties. You make me feel "at home" and that is healing. Best wishes to you and prayers of thanks.

Carol Steffen

Dear Church Family of NECC,

Thank you for all your prayers, cards, telephone calls, food, love and concern for Judy, myself and family. I cannot find the right words to express my feelings for what you have done for us.

Thank you to Rev. Ralph and Paul for the wonderful Memorial Service. Thank you to Kim for the special music that meant so much to Judy and me.

Thank you to all who helped and provided the wonderful meal after the service.

God Bless All, Jim Ponting and family

PS Judy's new address is c/o Heaven. Just pray and she will hear you.

THANK YOU to all who continue to support CORNERSTONE through the donation of "pocket change" and the baby bottle blessings. We have been able to send a check of \$20.00 or more at least once a month.

Marie Ternes

THANK YOU to all who continue to bring CANS FOR CODY and drop off your papers in our bin. You are doing your part to recycle and also make a difference in the lives of others. We made \$48.00 for the cans this month. Keep up the good work!

Londa Blaine

Our thanks to all of you who were so generous and willing to serve, clean up and provide food for the dinner after the Memorial Service for Judy Ponting. Thanks also to those who helped during the calling hours on Tuesday and to the Deacons for serving at the service. Your willingness to just "pitch in" where you are needed and getting the job done is something that this congregation is noted for! You are not taken for granted and we want you to know that we are aware of all that you do.

Londa Blaine and Marge Houston

Dear Friends,

*What a blessing you are to me. I send you my sincere **thank you** for the 80+ cards I received for my 80th birthday. You have showered me with your wonderful friendships and generous hearts. I feel like Paul, the apostle, when he sent his thanks to the church for who they were, thoughtful and generous. You are still a love for me, always in my heart.*

God Bless, Roberta

THANK from our YOUTH*Our thanks to all who ordered Super Bowl Hoagies. The money raised will support youth events and MISSION Projects. The youth will spend Sunday morning making the hoagies so they will be fresh and ready for the big game of the day.*

The JYF is thankful for all who donated to their "soup pot" for Souper Bowl of Caring on Sunday, February 7th. The money received will go to Dunham Ave. Christian Church to help support their Free Meal Program. All food donations will go in our own FOOD PANTRY PROGRAM.

BAPTISM — Cameron G. Castro was baptized on January 10, 2010 at the 9:30 worship service. Cameron is a student at Lakeland College. He has attended with his grandmother, Helen Literati, since he was a small boy. Our prayers are with Cameron as he continues to grow in his faith and continues to further his education and sports career in baseball.

Two Opportunities To Celebrate!

Come, eat and fellowship with us . . . YOU “pick your poison!” as the saying goes.



North Eaton Christian Church “Shrove Tuesday Celebration” A Pancake Dinner & Fellowship (February 16th, 5:00—6:30 p.m.)

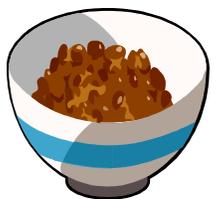
While many may have heard of “Fat Tuesday” or “Mardi Gras”, which is a French tradition, there is also another name to the day before Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the Lenten Season. It is called “**Shrove Tuesday**.” Like the last day of Mardi Gras, Shrove Tuesday always falls 47 days before Easter. The name “shrove” is said to come from the old English word “shrive”, which means to confess. Shrove Tuesday is a day of celebration as well as a time of penitence. In the Middle Ages, people used to confess their sins so that they could be forgiven before the beginning of Lent. For centuries, those in England, Ireland, Scotland, and Canada have celebrated Shrove Tuesday with fun and fellowship, and great quantities of pancakes.

On **February 16th** you, young and old alike, will have an opportunity to share in this church tradition by joining us for a Pancake Dinner. We will be serving pancakes, sausage, applesauce, and beverages from **5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.**, and then share in some fun and games ending at 6:30 p.m.

As we enter into the Season of Lent, preparing our hearts and souls for the coming of Easter, join us for fellowship with food and fun and a few games. Bring A Friend or Family Member!!!

4TH ANNUAL CHILI COOK-OFF—Tues. Feb. 16th First Christian Church in Brunswick

IT'S TIME ONCE AGAIN TO START GETTING YOUR CHILI APPETITE READY FOR ANOTHER FRIENDLY COMPETITION BETWEEN CHURCHES. THIS YEAR THE CHILI COOK-OFF WILL AGAIN TAKE PLACE AT **THE FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN BRUNSWICK**. THE DAY, OF COURSE, WILL BE ‘**FAT TUESDAY**’, **FEBRUARY 16TH** FROM **6:30 UNTIL 9:00**. OTHER AREA CHURCHES WILL BE INVITED AS IN THE PAST THREE YEARS. THE COST IS FREE WITH A GOODWILL OFFERING ACCEPTED.



EVERY CHURCH SHOULD TRY TO PROVIDE AT LEAST ONE POT OF CHILI PER 8 PEOPLE ATTENDING. DIG OUT YOUR FAVORITE RECIPE AND ENTER IT IN THE COMPETITION. A SIGN-UP SHEET WILL BE IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY. PRIZES WILL BE AWARDED FOR THE WINNERS IN SEVERAL CATEGORIES. IF YOU DON'T WANT TO ENTER THE COMPETITION YOU CAN **STILL COME FOR THE FOOD, FUN, AND ENTERTAINMENT**.

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT WILL BE PROVIDED BY **THE OLMSTED FALLS HIGH SCHOOL JAZZ BAND (with our own Tyler Bokman!!)** THEY ARE QUITE A TREAT TO LISTEN TO. WE HOPE TO SEE EVERYONE THERE!

PLEASE COME AND HELP NECC WIN THE COVETED ‘**CHAMPION CHILI FOR CHRIST**’ TROPHY. IT WILL BE GIVEN TO THE CHURCH PROVIDING THE CHILI WHICH IS VOTED **THE BEST IN 2010**.



IF YOU WOULD LIKE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT CAROL BOKMAN (BOKMANS@ATT.NET.).

Week of Compassion—Special Offering for February

February 21-28 you will have the opportunity to offer your gift to **Week of Compassion, empowering Disciples' relief, refugee and development fund, meeting basic needs in Christ's name throughout the world, and sharing resources that strengthen people to improve their own lives and communities. Soon, each of us will decide how to respond to Jesus' question, "Do you love me?" He tells us to 'tend to his sheep' caught in situations of deep need, and with love and energy our Church responds through WEEK OF COMPASSION. Our gifts meet compelling needs, while also bringing the blessing of compassion into our own lives. The current economic situation is challenging for many of us. For many others, it has pushed beyond challenging to be life-threatening. I hope you will heed Jesus' call to feed his sheep with a generous, even sacrificial, gift to.....**



WEEK OF COMPASSION

**Sharing your resources, you will change livesincluding your own.
Grace and Peace, Marlene Black**

Use the special envelopes on the table in the Narthex, mark your gift clearly with your regular offering or mail it to the church.

Week of Compassion Report: Haiti One Week Later

It is during times such as these that we learn what it truly means to live in faith, hope, and love. Week of Compassion's partner agencies on the ground in Haiti and across the border in the Dominican Republic are responding to the crisis. Your generous gifts are making a significant difference in the relief efforts. There are challenges, but there have also been fantastic accomplishments in the immediate aid efforts in Haiti. We will keep you updated in a variety of ways.

Don Tatlock, a Church World Service responder and member of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), reports that much of the initial response has involved searching and identifying survivors. Sanitation and security issues have pushed many people from Port-au-Prince into rural areas, as well as toward the border with the Dominican Republic. Such migration is making it difficult, at times, to verify the survival of some local partners and colleagues.

Our partnership with Church World Service has thus far concentrated its efforts on helping distribute its disaster response kits, so Disciples Churches should keep those donations coming! CWS is also helping to support local partners that meet the needs of children by providing **baby and hygiene kits** and other support.

Hygiene Kits for Haiti.....you can help. We are all hearing the reports, seeing the media coverage, praying and grieving with our brothers and sisters in Haiti. Meanwhile, the Church World Service warehouse in New Windsor, MD has already emptied its store of hygiene and baby kits and is pleading for help. As part of the WANEW Retreat, the youth will be preparing Hygiene Kits that will be sent to Church World Service to be distributed in Haiti. In the face of natural disasters, violence, or grinding poverty, Hygiene Kits can mean the difference between sickness and health for struggling families. All items will be taken with us to the WANEW Retreat where we will spend time assembling the kits. We need your help getting the supplies for the kits. Below is a list of items needed for each kit. Would you please donate what you can to help us and the families in Haiti?

To assemble a Hygiene Kit you will need:

- One hand towel measuring approximately 16" x 28" (**no fingertip or bath towels**)
- One washcloth
- One wide-tooth comb
- One nail clipper
- One bar of soap (**single bath size in wrapper**)
- One toothbrush (**single in original packaging**)
- Six Band-Aids®



No Toothpaste please, it will be added later.

We will also need **one-gallon plastic bags** with a zipper closure to pack the kit in.

ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP
A Gathering of Disciples Churches
at North Eaton Christian Church
February 17th 7:00 P.M.



Ash Wednesday begins our journey through the Lenten Season. It is a time of reflection and repentance.

We will once again join with other Disciples churches and choirs for our 7:00 p.m. Ash Wednesday Worship. This year we are the Host Congregation.

We will ponder our mortality, our weakness to temptation, and our brokenness through prayers and singing. In humility and penance we will receive the mark of ashes, and we will gather at the Lord's Table to share the Bread and Cup of Christ.

Let this be a part of your spiritual journey to the Cross of Christ and a true celebration of the meaning of Easter.

A Fellowship Time will follow our Worship.

Boy Scouts of America Turns "100"

The story of how the Boy Scouts of America came to be is very familiar to most Boy Scouts but is captivating and worth retelling. Please bear with me and enjoy.

One day in 1909 in London, England, and American visitor, William D. Boyce, lost his way in a dense fog. He stopped under a street lamp and tried to figure out where he was. A boy approached and asked him if he could be of help. "You certainly can," Boyce said. He told the boy that he wanted to find a certain business office in the center of the city. "I'll take you there," said the boy. When they got to the destination, Mr. Boyce reached into his pocket for a tip, but the boy stopped him. "No thank you sir. I am a Scout. I won't take anything for helping." "A Scout? And what might that be?" said Boyce. The boy told the American about himself and his brother Scouts. Boyce became very interested.

After finishing his errand, he had the boy take him to the British Scouting office. At the office, Boyce met Lord Robert Baden-Powell, the famous British general who had founded the Scouting movement in Great Britain. Boyce was so impressed with what he learned that he decided to bring Scouting home with him.

On February 8, 1910 Boyce and a group of outstanding leaders founded the Boy Scouts of America. From that day forth, Scouts have celebrated February 8th as the birthday of Scouting in the United States.

What happened to the boy who helped Mr. Boyce find his way in the fog? No one knows. He had neither asked for money nor given his name, but he will never be forgotten. His "good turn" helped bring the Scouting movement to our country.*

While we at North Eaton Christian Church commemorate Scout Sunday on the first Sunday of March, we celebrate that beginning on February 8th, those many years ago in 1910.

We invite anyone who has ever had any association with Boy Scouts to join us Sunday, March 7, 2010 for our commemoration of Scouting in America.

Jeff Brunger, NECC Scout Rep.

*Taken directly from the Boy Scout Handbook, 1990 printing

Looking ahead: Annual CHINESE AUCTION
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 21st 7:00 p.m.

Valentine Messages

Would you like to let your Valentine know how you feel about them? Or express your love and appreciation to your family and friends, or just convey recognition in honor or memory of someone special in your life? It can be one sentence or many. The CE TEAM is offering you the chance to post your Valentine greetings on the sanctuary screens FOR A SMALL DONATION (per greeting). The money donated will be used to help cover the cost of many of the special events offered by the Christian Education Dept.

Greetings will be posted Sunday, Feb. 14th and 21st.

See MELISSA FOLK or POLLY TALLOS.

Transition Team Group Dinners



As part of our Visioning Process to have more opportunities for small group activities, the Transition Team would like to invite all members and friends of the church to participate in a “hosted” potluck dinner during the months of March and April. These dinners can be hosted in your home or at the church. The Host will pick the time and place. We would like to have approximately 10 – 12 people attend each dinner. The purpose of these dinners is to help the Pulpit Search Committee get an accurate idea of what the congregation is looking for in a new minister and also to help the NECC family get to know each other better.



If you are willing to host one of these gatherings, please contact Angie Carter by Saturday, February 20th at 440-748-0108 or CarterE@verizon.net. A letter will be coming with more details.



Prayer Network “P5” for PATHWAYS COUNSELING & GROWTH CENTER

PATHWAY\$ is starting a prayer chain to support the counseling being done at the Center. Our staff and clients know how the power of prayer has helped and is helping our clients reach their goals of healing and health.

You have the opportunity of being included in this new venture. No names of clients will be used and only those clients who agree to give their permission will be included. Each week P5 will send email requests for prayer to Cindy Thompson, who will then forward the message to you. Your email address will go no further than it currently does through our own church prayer chain. I believe you can never have enough prayer. I look forward to your participation.

We are recruiting participants from other churches in our area and hope to have four churches online with us in the next month.

**TO BECOME A “P5” Prayer Partner contact CINDY THOMPSON:
cthompson3@oh.rr.com**

This has nothing to do with the PRAYER CHAIN at NECC. If you want to be on the Pathway; P5 YOU MUST email Cindy to get registered.

Thanks,
Ralph (Thompson)
Executive Director of Pathways



NECC GAME NIGHT———*On Sunday, February 28th*, the family and friends of the North Eaton Christian Church are invited to participate in Game Night in the Church Fellowship Hall. We would like to have several tables with different games being played at each table. The time would be from *5:00 pm – 8:00 pm*. There is no cost for this event, but we would ask that each family participating bring either an appetizer, snack or dessert to share. Beverages will be provided. Please let Carol Bokman know if you plan to attend or if you would like to volunteer to be a game host so we can have enough tables and games set-up. **If you have any questions you can contact me at bokmans@att.net or by calling 440-891-1819.**

ANNUAL Easter Egg Hunt (actually it's a race!)



The NECC Christian Education Dept. will be hosting their annual EASTER EGG HUNT on Palm Sunday, March 28th. We are once again, asking the church family to donate *individually wrapped candy* to stuff in the plastic eggs. NOW is the perfect time to buy up the leftover candy that will be drastically reduced after Valentine's Day. The kids don't care if the candy is red foil hearts or orange pumpkins.

We also needs prizes: new small stuffed animals, kites, play dough, games, etc. for boys and girls. \$5 and \$10.00 gift certificates are also enjoyed by kids of all ages (McDonalds, Dairy Queen, Burger King, etc.) Even a new bike or large item could be a special prize. BRING all donations to the church and give to Polly Tallos, Melissa Folk or leave in the church office.