

BELL TOWER NEWS

College Hill Presbyterian Church – JANUARY 2024

513.541.5676 | 5742 Hamilton Ave. | Cincinnati, OH 45224 | chpc.org

RELAX AND ENJOY LIFE

BY REV. DR. GARY SWEETEN, PHD.
AUTHOR, COUNSELOR, FORMER CHPC
PASTOR OF CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP

EDITOR'S NOTE: The theme of the new CHPC pre-Lent preaching series January 7–February 11 is *A Better Me: Embracing Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* (details on the back cover of this BTN). Having read Gary's new book *Communicate for a Change*, and being a regular visitor to his RelationalPeace.org website, I thought that this article might be excellent for setting the stage for the preaching and for the new year 2024.

As a counselor, I have become well acquainted with people who suffer from feelings of despair. Depression and anxiety are the two conditions that most frequently bring folks to counseling.

Several years ago, I received a call from Jason, a young man who had grown up in our church. He was depressed to the point of suicide. As he talked, I heard Jason say many times that he felt guilty, but when I listened carefully, I heard "shame thinking" rather than "guilt thinking." Jason's mind was filled with thoughts like, "I'm no good," "I'll always be a failure," and "I'm just like my drug-addicted father, and I can never change." I didn't hear things



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like, "I did something I know was wrong" or "I've been thinking about doing things I know are wrong."

There is a big difference between guilt and shame. Guilt is designed to spur us to change from unhealthy/immature behavior to healthy be-

havior habits. Guilt arises when we believe we have violated a rule of law. The solution for guilt is usually simple: confess and repent. Honestly, facing our failures and deciding to act differently leads to peace. We do not have to ever look back. (CONT. PG 2)



COLLEGE HILL
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

RELAX AND ENJOY LIFE (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Shame is completely different. Shame is a very destructive emotional and behavioral pattern. It can be integrated into family or culture. Shame is designed to build unthinking conformity to a family or tribe. Shame comes from a lack of self-respect and self-acceptance, and it leads to feelings of unworthiness. For example, "I'm no longer a child of God, and eternal separation is demanded."

If every time we fail to act with perfection, we believe we are a total failure and deserve to be kicked out of God's family, we will end up depressed and anxious. Sick theology makes sick people!

SHAME-BASED VS. GRACE-BASED LIVING

Jason, the young man who had called, knew he was an imperfect husband and father, and he concluded that his imperfection meant that he was destined to fail just like his dad had failed. He, too, was tempted to do drugs, but he called me first.

When listening to drug addicts, we often discover depression and anxiety at the root of their problems. For Jason, the root of his feelings of shame came from growing up in a shame-based home. When he misbehaved as a child, he heard things like, "Our boys don't act like that," or "You keep that up, and I will give you away," or "I will have the police come and get you!"

Parents who understand true guilt will challenge a child to admit their wrong behavior, and they will offer a correction. They do not try to scare the child with a threat of family rejection. A family or church that uses shame has rigid rules with harsh rejection if those rules are

violated. Such a family or church will turn their backs on a child, and the child will develop a traumatized soul.

The good news is that, through faith in Jesus, we have both forgiveness from punishment and adoption into the eternal family of God. Faith in the finished work of Christ builds inner peace and healthy boundaries despite our failures and imperfections. As Paul said in Romans 8:1 after admitting his failures and sins:

Now therefore there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus!

And in Romans 8:15, Paul wrote:

We have not received the spirit of slavery to revert back into fear, but we have the spirit of sonship that allows us to call out to our Abba Father.

We approach God as our loving, accepting daddy — not as an angry judge ready to reject us. This assurance of eternal rest in the family of God says, "Relax and enjoy life together. We are on vacation from shame."

To learn more about overcoming shame watch the free video by Gary Sweeten

(PICTURED) and Steve Griebing. Type into your web browser—*Re-establishing Connection -*

The 5 Keys to Navigating Shame. Explore how shame keeps us from connecting to healthy, life-giving relationships. You will get practical tips to overcome feelings of shame and self-doubt—to relax and enjoy 2024 and beyond.



BY COLEEN SCHEID—CHPC COORD.

"Tutoring is my favorite part of the week." I've heard that comment from several children over the years, and it's so encouraging. It tells me that God is working in our tutoring ministry because doing schoolwork at 5 PM on a Tuesday isn't what you'd expect a kid to look forward to. I think it's because students have their own tutors who care for them, pray for them, and do their best to teach them about both reading and God's love. Tutors, mostly from CHPC, meet faithfully from October through April with their students, and many continue to tutor the next year. We're also looking for new tutors because the number of volunteer tutors determines how many children we can serve.

WHO WE SERVE AND WHY

Whiz Kids is a CHPC and City Gospel Mission partnership. Our goals are to help children get a good education, provide another caring adult in their lives outside of family, and help them know God through Bible study, prayer, and conversation. We also want to invite their families into our church community.

Most of the children attend Pleasant Hill Academy on North Bend Road in grades 1-6. Some students also come from other schools connected with church members and from Princess Ballet.

Want to help? Able to be a tutor or help prepare materials for tutors, provide student transportation or scholarship funds? Contact Colleen Scheid (whizkids@chpc.org).



ECO 2024 GATHERING METANOIA

JAN. 28 -FEB. 1, 2024
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
GREENVILLE SC

CHPC pastors and lay leaders will be attending the denomination's annual "family reunion." This year the Synod also meets for 1/2 day to conduct needed business.



JOLLY "ELVES" WHO DECKED THE CHPC HALLS FOR THE 12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS: ELI STIPANOVICH, KIP MUELLER, BETH DRYER, DAVID FREAS, BOB FAUL, BARRY STARE. NOT PICTURED: JOHN WENDT, AVRIL WARREN AND SAM STARE.



ON NEW YEAR'S DAY, CHPC'S KELLY HIBBETT (PICTURED BELOW UPPER- LEFT) WAS THE SPOKESPERSON FOR HER WESTWOOD NEIGHBORS ON FOX 19'S STORY ABOUT VANDALISM OF THE HISTORIC GATEWAY.



Metanoia is a Greek word that refers to a complete transformation that calls us back to the heart of God and inspires us to live lives that are aligned with the life and teachings of Jesus— through fellowship, "transformational" speakers, worship and breakout sessions.

PRAY FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT TO USE THIS EVENT TO BRING METANOIA IN AND THROUGH THOSE WHO ATTEND!



CHRISTMAS GREETINGS FROM THE HOWARDS—GABE, SHARLEEN AND THEIR TWINS—GLOBAL WORKERS IN KENYA, WHO WILL HOST PART OF THE CHPC MISSION TRIP IN MAY, 2024.



OLYMPIC GOLD-MEDALIST AND USA OLYMPIC SWIMMING COMMENTATOR ROWDY GAINES STOPPED IN CINCINNATI FOR A PHOTO OP, AND DROPPED OFF A \$4000 GRANT CHECK FOR THE CHPC SWIM MINISTRY. KLIMAT MASTER POOLS OF HIGHLAND HEIGHTS, KY WAS THE DONOR.



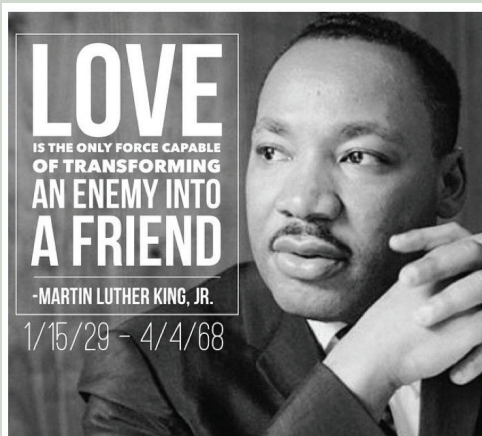
Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. JAMES 5:14-15 (NIV)

When we ask for prayer in our community of faith, we are being "Doer of the Word" and obedient to the way God calls us to live together. God doesn't raise up eloquent prayer people or especially snazzy saints. God works through regular people in our midst who are obedient to him and are available to God. When Jesus sent his disciples out to minister, he promised that "[they] will be given what to say, for it will not be [them] speaking, but the Spirit of [their] Father speaking through [them]." We can trust that it is the Spirit who is at work when we request prayer.

Recently, at the end of a worship service, an individual came forward for prayer for a condition he/she had had for some time. The two elders anointed the person and prayed. While it was nice, there didn't seem to be anything spectacular happening. However, later, the person met with a health professional whose eyes were opened to this condition in an entirely new way—a new vision of the root problem. The prayer in faith had laid the foundation for healing through someone who was already caring for this person. We never know how God chooses to heal. He is always in the business of healing. It is our role to ask and receive.

Almighty God, please grant me the humility to ask for prayer and expect You to meet me in that encounter. Open my heart and eyes to how You desire to minister and bless me and others within our community of faith.

HAVE AN IDEA FOR BTN? Feedback? Something to submit? A photo of an event? Contact the BTN Editor, Sharlyn Stare, 513-382-5902 or email starecvg@aol.com. **Deadline is the 15th of each month.**



COMMUNITY CELEBRATION MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY

SUNDAY, JANUARY 14, 2024
(5 PM reception, 5:30 PM service)

WHERE: House of Joy
3220 Central Parkway, 45225

WHAT: Music, food,
celebration, and community

WHO: College Hill Ministerium —
Participants from Episcopal,
Baptist, Roman Catholic,
Pentecostal, Charismatic,
and Presbyterian churches in
College Hill and the surrounding
neighborhoods.

SCHEDULED SPEAKER:
Honorable Dwight Tillery, founder
of the Center for Closing the Health
Gap in Greater Cincinnati.

MUSICAL PRESENTATIONS by the Jazz
Renaissance Band, the MLK Chorus
led by Bishop Todd Oneal, and
Dave Hawkins.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER:

Dwight Tillery's mission is "to lead the efforts in eliminating racial and ethnic health disparities in Greater Cincinnati through Advocacy, Education, and Community Outreach." Dr. King recognized the discrimination in healthcare and stated: "Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in healthcare is the most shocking and inhumane." Dwight has led the fight for the last fifteen years against racial and ethnic discrimination in healthcare in the greater Cincinnati area. He has received many national and local awards for his courage and vision in regard to this matter. He was featured in *USA Today* for his work and its relationship to the Civil Rights struggle in America.

IN HIS IMAGE

Helping women heal their view of themselves and God



Dates: Weekly Tuesdays, Jan 16, 23, 30; Feb 6, 13, 20
7:00pm -8:30pm

Join Living Hope as we explore the image of ourselves and our image of
God. Resources and tools will be provided as we initiate this journey.

Location: College Hill Presbyterian Church
(5742 Hamilton Ave. Cincinnati, OH 45224)

Cost: \$60 per person (financial assistance available if needed)

There is a maximum number of 10 participants. Register to secure your
spot: www.livinghopecs.com/current-groups

513-371-5135



JANUARY PREACHING

A Better Me: Embracing Healthy Spirituality

SUNDAYS 9 AM AND 10:30 AM
WORSHIP SERVICES

Sun., Jan. 7 **IDENTIFYING THE FALSE SELF** – 1 Samuel 15:7-24.

God gave Israel what the people
thought they needed—an earthly
king. Both God and King Saul knew
Saul was not ready for the task.
Fearing his men rather than trusting
in God, King Saul busied himself
building up his own image. He found
himself a servant to his insecurities,
rather than to the eternal God.

*What insecurities in our lives have
led us away from God and into
disobedience?*

Sun., Jan. 14 **KNOW THY SELF THAT YOU MAY KNOW GOD**

1 Samuel 15:7-24.

David faced many attacks on his
character by his brothers, on his age
and experience by King Saul, and
on his size by Goliath. Yet, David was
confident that his God had uniquely
made him and equipped him for the
tasks ahead.

*How has God uniquely made you to
glorify him? Are you being authen-
tic? How has God equipped you, and
called you to use his gifts for his glory?*

Sun., Jan. 21 **FROM TRAUMA TO TRIUMPH** Genesis 50:15-21.

The life and story of Joseph reminds
us that we are all born into families
we don't choose. As we grow up we
have experiences—good and traumat-
ic ones. God's grace and love in the
difficulties of the past can prepare us
to minister to others.

*Recognizing and lamenting the
past pain is healthy. How might God
enable us to model him, even to
those who have wronged us, and be
"wounded healers" for others?*

Sun., Jan. 28 **THE BREAKING POINT** Genesis 22:1-14.

Trusting God as we face challenges
that feel like they could break us
builds resiliency and confidence
in the love and faithfulness of God
irrespective of the circumstances.



Swimming Ministry 2023

47
YEARS

Delivering the Joy
of Living Water

• CHPC.ORG/SWIM • 5742 HAMILTON AVE • CINCINNATI OH • 513-541-5676 •

- The Summer Swimming Ministry of College Hill Presbyterian Church, Cincinnati OH, has completed its 47th season. The American Red Cross *Learn-To-Swim* program is one of the largest in the Greater Cincinnati area (OH, IN, KY). Staff training was June 15-17; swim lessons were June 26-August 4.
- 527 swimmers, staff, and their families were involved during the three weeks of day lessons, and two weeks of evening lessons for students ages 5 to 75.
- The 85 paid staff ranged in age from a 10-year-old “helper” to an 86-year-old “super supervisor”—*every age equipped and equipping for ministry*. Why pay staff? Because our expectations are high and warrant staff being treated as professionals, even if the pay is nominal for their service.
- The ministry had a budget of \$30,000 fully funded from fees, donations, and major grants (CHPC Endowment Fund, USA Swimming Foundation, and “Step Into Swim” of the Pool & Hot Tub Alliance) and an annual community-service fund-raiser, *Mulch Madness*.
- This past summer, swim scholarships worth over \$8000 were given to 103 “underserved” children and teens and multiple-child families. A special grant provided free lessons to 11 adults.

Staff is the heart of the ministry

The staff is diverse in age, size and personality. Many are “home grown” having been raised up through the Swim Ministry. Their families bring them to the Finneytown area from as far north as Middletown OH, and as far south as Burlington KY. What brings them together is their “boss” Jesus and a shared vision of *Delivering the Joy of Living Water* to others. World-wide, more than 400,000 people drown each year—11 per day in the U.S.A. African-American, Hispanic, and other immigrant children under the age of 14 are at the highest risk of drowning. Swim lessons reduce the risk of American children drowning by 88%. The staff knows they are making an eternal difference in students’ lives and in future generations—and the staff members are formed in the process.

We taught in 2 wonderful pools

Twin Towers Life- Enriching Community’s fully accessible indoor heated pool and hot tub (RIGHT), and North Hills Swim Club (BELOW), a large outdoor pool with a shallow children’s pool, and a deep diving well. We are most grateful for the use of these pools for staff training and swim lessons. They make our vital life-saving service possible.



Classes begin with roll call, thanksgiving, and repeating the “swimming verse,” Philippians 4:13.

The ministry’s Leadership Team matches students with the best staff member to help them learn swimming skills and have fun as they do it. It’s a logistical challenge, but *trusting relationships* are vital to the learning process. They help to develop habits that enable both the teachers and the students succeed in swimming and in life.



The prework matching of swimmers & teachers pays off.

Each swim week there are big group experiences (RIGHT) and small group ones (BELOW). Each novice swimmer has “their own teacher.” This allows for personalized instruction within the American Red Cross standards.



We know that swim students learn more easily from someone they know and can trust. Experienced supervisors lead small groups so teachers and students get to know one another. Staff training in active listening comes alive when attempting to build a relationship with a young, non-verbal, or special-needs student.

Fearless, fun-loving swimmers need teachers who



understand and enjoy them and match their energy levels.

A reluctant swimmer may need a more experienced teacher with a helper, plus an



adult supervisor for oversight. Teachers who have “tough students” may experience dramatic growth in patience, perseverance, and prayer (and

a salary increase). Teachers come in all sizes and ages. We are committed to providing one that is just right for each swimmer. We know that is very important.



Listen & practice well!

Each teacher, swimmer, and family is unique. However, the ability to build warm, caring relationships



— even with young, non-verbal, fearful children—can be learned. Plus, building respectful relation-

ships with “parent partners” can provide valuable clues to how each child learns best.

Our annual June Staff Training focuses on relationship-building tools and prayer. Supervisors expect and individually evaluate each staff person on how well they practice *active listening* and model being a professional teacher—with swimmers, parents and other staff. These evaluations affect the staff person’s paycheck.

Partnering with parents and care-givers to do homework each day builds teacher-swimmer-parent relationships. Homework demonstrations equip parents (even non-swimmers) to help students practice beyond class. Some may take adult lessons “to keep up

with” their kids or to learn about safety around the water.

Some adults, like this grandmother in her 70’s (PICTURED), decide to master what they never had a



chance to learn as children. “Ms M.” and her teacher visualized the fun of being in the starting block at the Olympics. She faithfully did her homework and learned skills she needed. Pray that she and other adults will be inspired to “go for the gold!”

Learning never stops...

To qualify for Swim Ministry Staff, a person must be working at American Red Cross (ARC) Level 4 and be willing to interact with children, teens, and adults. Staff are paid to take lessons until they complete ARC Level 6. The ministry also pays for staff to take extra training as a Life Guard or a Water Safety Instructor. Experienced teachers learn to mentor, manage, train, and coach other staff. Serving swimmers’ needs stirs up everyone’s creative gifts.

The daily staff meetings before and after lessons provide a place to learn from others, share teaching ideas or “secrets of success,” and to pray for various aspects of the lessons. The result is a healthy *interdependence* among the staff and a spirit of joy that is very infectious.



SUPERMAN WATER ENTRY



TEACH THE WHIP KICK ON LAND... THEN ADD WATER.



IT’S NEVER TOO EARLY TO LEARN WATER SAFETY.



A SWIMMER CAN PRACTICE BREATHING AND HUMMING IN A LARGE PASTA DISH FILLED WITH WATER. STUDENTS PRACTICE THIS FOR HOMEWORK.

Fridays are awards days, times to celebrate.

Our Swim Ministry brochure promises: “We seek to *catch students doing something right*. We are committed to affirming the swimmers’ uniqueness and abilities rather than motivating performances by techniques that tend to devalue them in their own eyes and in the eyes of others.”

During the weekly awards ceremonies every swimmer receives a “FROG card”—a historical record of their skill level and their teacher’s name. The staff lines up to present American Red Cross and special Swim Ministry awards and to thank the swimmers and families for their hard work.

What a privilege to love swimmers

for a week (or more). The staff long remembers the patience, perseverance, and answers to prayer they experienced when working with a reluctant 10-year-old or an anxious 5-year-old. Some memories are hard to forget. Others make us smile all winter long.





LOOK...SHE'S REALLY FLOATING!



LAST ROLL CALL OF THE SEASON WITH STAFF IN THE BACKGROUND



(LEFT)
ADULTS
JOIN TEENS
AND
CHILDREN
FOR
EVENING
LESSONS
AND LOTS OF
LAUGHS
AND HUGS.



BEV & PEGGY, OUR FAITHFUL BUSINESS MANAGERS



TRACI, A VITAL PART OF THE LEADERSHIP TEAM,
TEACHES LEVELS 1-6 AND COACHES STAFF.



SUSAN, NANCY, JANINE, AND KATY (NOT
PICTURED) ARE PROS AT LEVELS 3 TO 5.



"SUPER" SUPERVISORS,
CAROL & JANE, CHECK
EVERY NOVICE SWIMMER'S SKILLS.



5 BARRY, ANCHOR AT LEVEL 3, LOGISTICS MANAGER



NICHOLAS, SUPERVISOR
AND STAFF TRAINER



"SWIMMERS PHILIPPIANS 4:13" SAID WITH GUSTO!



June 26-30, 2023, Week #1 Staff: Morning staff meeting weather 66-68°F. Keeping the staff warm was a real challenge—lots of hot lemonade, clothing layers, and dry towels. Everyone worked hard, stayed positive and healthy. Theme song: “Jingle Bells.”



July 17-21, 2023, Week #2 Staff: Weather 63-70°F in the mornings but warmed quickly to 81+. This was a smaller but very experienced staff. Lots of swimmer awards and progress. Theme song reflecting the weather: “You Are My Sunshine.”



July 31-Aug 4, 2023, Week #3 Staff: Weather 60-66°F in the mornings but quickly moved to the mid-80's with bright sunshine. A diverse group of staff—some who worked one, two or three weeks. A time to practice “need to know,” “finishing well,” and “serving with excellence.” On August 3rd, we taught without water since the pool pump was broken. August 4th was our Last Day Pool Party, a “thank you” for staff and their families. Theme song: “I Believe in Miracles!”



swim lessons with an eternal difference

Staff memories:



WK #1 BRRR...THIS STAFF MEETING WAS “COOL” IN MANY WAYS.



WK #1 PARACHUTE FOR LAURA'S STAFF BIBLE STUDY.



THE STAFF KEEPS GOOD RECORDS SO THAT STUDENTS GET THE TEACHER THEY NEED AND THE MINISTRY HAS DATA FOR SCHOLARSHIP REPORTS.



SIGN IN AND OUT. “NO PAPERWORK, NO PAYCHECK”...EASY.

Swim Ministry Flashbacks

