

BELL TOWER NEWS

College Hill Presbyterian Church – March 2022

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

IMAGINE . . .

being with someone who loves you enough to die for you. He speaks: "I love you." You are silent.

"I love you" (louder). You are silent.

"I love you" (even louder). You remain silent.

How might the speaker feel?

Contrast that with this conversation: [After the resurrection] Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." After breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter,

"Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?"

"Yes, Master, you know I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."

He then asked a second time,

"Simon, son of John, do you love me?"

"Yes, Master, you know I love you."

Jesus said, "Shepherd my sheep."

Then he said it a third time:

"Simon, son of John, do you love me?"

Peter was upset that he asked for the third time, "Do you love me?" so he answered, "Master, you know everything there is to know. You've got to know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my sheep.

—JOHN 21:12, 15-17.

CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS

PRAYER: TALKING WITH GOD

Lent is the 40-day period beginning March 2nd during which we Christians remember the events leading up to and including the death of Jesus Christ, whose life and teachings are the foundation of our faith. Throughout the centuries, Lent has been a time of believers growing in prayer—conversations with God. In the left column of this page are two conversations. In the first, God speaks forth his love, but the object of his affection remains silent. In the next dialogue Jesus repeats his priorities and plan to Peter three times so Peter would know how important they were. God is always inviting us to talk with him and respond to his love.

This prayer from Xavier University describes how we can experience Lent fully: "Almighty and ever living God, you invite us deeper into your world, your people, your Lent. May this time be one of outward focus; seeking you in those we often ignore. Help us live a Lent focused on freedom, generosity, and encounter. Give us hearts hungry to serve you and those who need what you have entrusted us to give."

(LENTEN PREACHING AND GROWTH GROUP THEMES ON PAGE 8)



2022 ECO NATIONAL GATHERING

OVERFLOW

ROMANS 15:13 DALLAS, JAN 31-FEB 3, 2022

Like all things Texan, the 2022 ECO Gathering lived up predictions that it would be a BIG time of filling to overflowing! Romans 15:13 says, "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

The Gathering was graciously hosted by Highland Park Presbyterian Church in Dallas, one of the biggest Presbyterian churches in the nation.

The ECO Annual Gathering video highlights can be enjoyed at vimeo.com/showcase/9286919

You will find presentations by "Main Session" Keynote speakers and their teachings in "Breakout Sessions," plus videos of the worship times.

In addition, those who attended the Gathering experienced:

- Three days of wonderful people-to-people "family reunions," updates, and hugs.
- Participating in one of the 8 Pre-Conference events (4 hours on Monday)—Children's / Family Ministry; Church Planting for Existing ECO Church Planters; Communication and Healing in Your Church; Diaspora Mission: Global Engagement in your Local Community (plus a tour of a refugee services facility); Racial Reconciliation; ECO Theology; and Youth Ministry.
- Attending three of the 36 "Breakout Sessions" (1-hour on Tues. and Weds.)—presented by ministry leaders from within the ECO and beyond, including int'l partners.
- Plus wonderful meals and im-

down-home dinner accompanied by a Texas-style band leading line-dancing. "Yee haw!"

THE CHPC TEAM MEMBERS* who attended this year's Gathering shared some of their highlights:



ROSA BRINKMAN — The ECO National Gathering was exciting, enriching, enlightening, encouraging, and engaging.

We entered into the presence of God during worship, and it was overwhelmingly powerful.

I was looking forward to meeting up with the entire ECO Commissioned Lay Pastor group that I studied with online for a year. When I met up with Laura, the facilitator of our group, we embraced each other with a hug and couldn't let go. Wow! It was so exhilarating to see each other face to face. We had studied, prayed and cried with each other. We parted saying, "Until we meet again!"



JENNIFER CRONK I was reminded that there is no "silver bullet" in ministry but that faithful ministry looks like "a long obedience in the same direction."

I'm looking forward to re-investing in deeper relationships (vertically and horizontally). I really enjoyed

promptu gatherings. Due to the ice storm, many headed home early on Feb. 2. They missed the final worship service and a

hearing from Rich Villodas, who is the author of *The Deeply Formed Life*. He spoke about the need to have deeper and fewer relationships in our lives, ones filled with intentionality and being really and truly present. I look forward to reading Rich's book and learning more!

On the lighter side, the CHPC Team went to dinner as a team on Tuesday evening. At one point, I looked over and Samuel Mock wasn't talking to anyone. He had pulled the queso bowl in close, and was clearly experiencing God's goodness in a special way. There's nothing like a bowl of good queso to make you truly thankful.

JANET DUMFORD (PHOTO ON PG.7) — I enjoy every National Gathering immensely. The corporate worship is uplifting and always feels like a taste of Heaven.

The speakers were timely. Walter Kim spoke of missional hospitality and how God is sending the nations to us! One of my favorite moments was the ordination of Keon Abner as our new ECO President. I know him personally (he is originally from New Life at Calvary Church in Cleveland). He is very gifted. It says a lot for the ECO to select a young, African American church planter for a key leadership position.



SAMUEL MOCK— The Gathering was great! I really enjoyed the breakouts, and catching up with many old friends and making new ones. The youth ministers' networking events were fun. I'm looking forward to 2023.



*DARRYL DAVIS, CATHY SMITH AND DAVE SNYDER ALSO ATTENDED.

CHRISTY ROEDIGER —I attended the National Gathering because I'm curious and concerned about how decisions are made both in ECO and our local CHPC congregation. When I arrived, I began hearing the word "EGALITARIAN," repeatedly.

ECO is committed to leadership that is egalitarian both in the denomination and in local congregations. "Egalitarian" means that all people are equal and deserve equal rights and opportunities. Sounds great – one of the reasons we fit with ECO.

I also learned that 2022 is the first year that a woman has been on the executive leadership team of ECO. When I look at the photos on our own Leadership Wall, I see opportunities for our CHPC Trustees to expand into inclusive waters. We've had lots of women in leadership roles but still only a handful of women pastors in our congregation's history. I'm confident we're on the right track, yet I'm challenged to continue pushing into Galatians 3:28 "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you all are one in Christ Jesus." I was also challenged to sign up for ECO's year-long Commissioned Lay Pastor training.

CATHERINE SANDERS— What I found moving was the worship times of singing and praying together. An example for me of the "Overflow" theme was seeing so many people from different nationalities all coming together to worship and work to further God's kingdom.



What was challenging was to not become satisfied with where I am in my relationship with God. God may

want to use me in ways outside of my comfort zone.

When I can't see that God is working, he is working! I was reminded to never give up on what God is doing and what he will do in my personal life and through his church. I want to use the gifts and talents God has blessed me with and encourage others to do the same. People will know that we are Christians by our love for God and each other.

The CHPC Team sat together for worship when possible. Even riding together in cars gave us a chance to get away from our everyday lives and just eat, laugh, and share with one another.



DREW SMITH —Relationships – What a joy to renew connections with sisters and brothers serving Christ all over the world and to deepen relationships with staff, elders, and others from CHPC as we shared meals and great content.

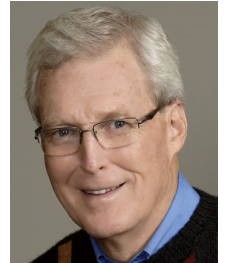
Leadership—A most moving moment was seeing Keon Abner take the gavel as our new Synod Moderator! (See Janet Dumford's comments.)

Spiritual Depth – Rev. Rich Villodas, Pastor of New Life Fellowship in Queens, NY spoke to my soul. Two quotes that still ring true with me, "We are not in the world for God. We are in God for the world." I must make central the continued formation of my character and priorities according to the character of Jesus so that I might truly serve God in the world.

The second quote, "Abiding in Christ shapes me so that I can be present to God, you, and myself in the midst of the anxiety and pain of the world." I must recognize the

natural tendency in anxiety and pain to either fight, freeze, or fly away instead of abiding in Jesus in the moment. My spiritual practices help me keep my heart and mind in Jesus at all times.

BARRY STARE —I am encouraged by learning ways God is working in so many different ways and places. It helps me to look up and not be consumed by the problems and shortcomings that are part of my regular life. I've come away with a renewed Kingdom perspective, knowing that God *IS* bringing his kingdom, regardless of my vision and view of it.



MARY SUE VERHAGEN —ECO strongly encourages all churches toward Global Engagement for the sake of the Gospel. For example, Frontier Fellowship helps churches connect with indigenous ministries for mutual support and learning. The Antioch Partners (through whom we support Greg and Chris Callison in the Middle East) help individuals to discern a calling to cross-cultural ministry and assist churches with training and support. My personal highlight was meeting an Afghan man who confirmed in detail how God is answering our prayers for His people there. Speaking with mission folks from other churches inspired my imagination to keep praying because God is still calling his people to go "across the street and around the world," where Jesus is not yet known.



Thank you for praying for the ECO Gathering. Consider joining the 2023 CHPC Team. Questions? JDumford@chpc.org



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Are you kidding? There's snow on the ground!

SWIM LESSONS DATES

Children / Teens lessons
at North Hills Swim Club.

Mornings —10 AM, 11 AM or 12 Noon

Wk #1 June 27-July 1;

Wk #2 July 18-22; Wk #3 Aug 1-5

Adult lessons

at Twin Towers' Wellness
Connection's warm-water pool

Evenings — 6-7 PM

Wk A July 11-15; Wk B July 25-29

Applications online April 1

Staffing Opportunities

Mature teens ages 11+ who are swimming at American Red Cross Level 4 and adults with a swimming background may apply to serve on the Swim Ministry staff. STAFF TRAINING is June 9-11, Thurs. & Fri. 6-9 PM with dinner, and Sat. June 11, 9 AM-4 PM.

NOTE WELL

INTRODUCING OUR CHOIR SECTION LEADERS

BY PENNY SAUER

Our chancel choir has added four classically-trained singers—a vision of Michael Parker that became a reality this past fall through our current choir director, Cindy Candelaria. This month we begin the bios of one of the four choir section leaders, so that we can get to know them better.

INTRODUCING: JACOB ZHOU (JUNBO) TENOR SECTION LEADER

I'm from Jinan, China and have lived in Beijing. I arrived in the U.S. in 2012 and have lived in Atlanta; San Jose; Queens, NY; Sarasota; and Cincinnati. CCM brought me to Cincinnati. I have a DMA and a MM in voice from CCM and a BA from Renmin University of China.

My grandpa and grandma were Christians when they were alive. My grandpa was a pastor/elder at a Southern Baptist Church in China. Neither I nor my parents were raised as Christians. I wondered, "What did Baptist mean?" when I was a child. When I moved to Atlanta I saw many Baptist Churches. I wanted to tell my grandpa, "I found the origin of your church," but he had long gone from this physical world.

I sang at different churches, studied and socialized in different denominations, and explored other religions. Jobs brought me to different churches. I am curious and want to find the Truth. I believe "seek to find." I'm seeking the common Truth & Law God created for us. I'm trying to see God's whole image in different people, countries, races, and cultures. I'm excited to keep traveling to different places, meeting different people, and keeping this journey "to seek."



ENJOY GIVING GOD GLORY THROUGH MUSIC? Preparations are underway for Easter, so this is the perfect time to join the choir. Rehearsals are on Thursday evenings from 7 - 8:30 in the choir loft of the sanctuary. Contact Cindy Candelaria at ccandelaria@chpc.org for more information.

Woven

In February, as part of Woven, our Women's Discipleship Ministry, 28 women sent Valentine's cards to 200 women of the church. This is a way we chose to show God's love and our care for one another in our church community.

If you would like to help create and/or organize women's events please contact

Janet Dumford at jdumford@chpc.org. This is a good way to use your creativity, develop your leadership skills, and encourage other women.

"Father God, teach us to love unselfishly and to find great joy in giving. May we each bring out the best in each other and may the Holy Spirit bring out his best in us. Grateful to pray in the name of Jesus, Amen."



PRAY FOR YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Last month, we talked about the four buildings in the College Hill business district already under-going development to provide 26 affordable housing units and 5 new businesses. To learn more about exciting changes on “The Avenue” go to <https://chcurc.com>.

This month the spotlight is on a less obvious but major change in the community— The Cincinnati Children’s Medical Center expansion that will bring hundreds of new residents and jobs to the neighborhood, plus restaurants and support businesses.

The \$99 million facility for the treatment of children and teens on an inpatient and outpatient basis will be state-of-the-art. The 68% expansion of the campus will make it one of the largest in the nation.

Children and adolescents are struggling with unprecedented levels of depression, anxiety, mood disorders, post-traumatic stress, and other mental and behavioral health conditions. Mental illness is one of the most pressing health issues of our time, and it has been intensified with the isolation and the stressors associated with COVID.

Dr Michael Sorter, Director of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry said, “One in every 10 children has a disability associated with or due to mental health issues. It’s a tragedy that those needs don’t get addressed. We want to make sure that we do not miss any of those kids.” Suicide is the second leading cause of death of kids between the ages of 10 and 24.

More than a place of treatment, the College Hill campus is part of a mental health system of care that



ABOVE: CINCINNATI CHILDREN’S COLLEGE HILL CAMPUS \$99 MILLION EXPANSION FROM THE AIR. RIGHT: FUTURE ENTRY FROM THE HAMILTON AVE. DRIVEWAY.

seeks to identify and prevent more severe diseases.

In 2000, money raised by the Convalescent Hospital for Children helped Cincinnati Children’s Hospital to buy the College Hill campus. Two years later, Convalescent Hospital for Children helped establish a pediatric mental health facility there with two inpatient psychiatric units and two residential units. In 2014, a \$20 mil-

lion gift from Convalescent Hospital for Children created a dedicated residential facility on the College Hill campus.

For more information, go to [YouTube.com](https://www.youtube.com) and type in Cincinnati Children’s College Hill. What a privilege to have such a facility in our neighborhood, and what an opportunity to pray. The need is great!

SAVE THE DATE FOR
COLLEGE HILL CURC’S
ANNUAL MEETING
MAY 4TH, 2022

LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT’S HAPPENING IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD.

BETTER TOGETHER!

Growing in Christ through Group Experiences

BY JEANNE SCHNEIDER, MA
LPCCS, Director
Living Hope Counseling Services



If you have been around CHPC, you have certainly heard reference to Growth Groups: a place to go deeper with others around biblical teachings, life, and relationships. Let's consider the benefits of such group experiences.

Groups can provide a place of community that help people grow in their faith as well as be seen and known. As humans, we have an innate desire to attach to others and often ask two questions of "Am I worthy of love?" and "Are others capable of loving me?"

Through connecting with others

in a group experience, you begin to experience the answers to those questions. Through effective listening to one another, groups can be a place that help you to know that you are loved and cared for. Through healthy conversations, they also help you know yourself better.

As relationships deepen, groups may also be that place where the next layer of growth of helping each other see the "blind spots" by speaking the truth in love to one another happens. In healthy group dynamics, this is a natural outcome. It does not mean judging one another or shaming. Simply a place where people can grow into who God created

AM I WORTHY OF LOVE?
and
ARE OTHERS CAPABLE OF LOVING ME?

them to be.

Some groups may have a specific focus. Living Hope Counseling Services is offering a 6-week group based on the book *Forgiving What You Can't Forget*. This group study will provide opportunity to experience the teaching of author Lysa Terkeurst (DVD format). Then mental health professionals facilitate the group's discussion related to the material. Group meets on Sundays from 2-3:30 PM, starting Feb. 27. Interested but missed the start date? Check out other groups at www.livinghopecs.com/current-groups.

If you are looking for ways to connect and grow in your faith and in relationships, check out the opportunities through CHPC, Living Hope Counseling Services, or register for a class teaching healthy relationship skills at Equipping Ministries International (EMI). Refer to the next page for upcoming classes.

INTRODUCING LIVING HOPE'S NEW CLINICAL DIRECTOR:

KARLA TOLBERT, MA LPCCS



"The first and best victory is to conquer self." – Plato

My counseling experience includes community mental health, college and private practice with a focus on a variety of mental health issues, such as anxiety, depression, mood disorders, codependency, race and ethnicity, intimate partner relationships, family conflict, parental training, self-esteem, and stress. I work with adults, couples, and older

adolescents.

I received my master's degree in counseling from Cincinnati Christian University and my undergraduate degree in history from the University of Cincinnati. I have a background in teaching and education. I am currently a doctoral student at Northcentral University pursuing a PhD in psychology.

I enjoy reading, writing, teaching, meditation, music, exercising, and spending time with family and friends.

Reach Living Hope at the website livinghopecs.com or call the Counseling Service at 513-371-5135.



LIVING HOPE
COUNSELING SERVICES



YOUTH CAMPING & SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

CHPC's Youth Mission Trip to Louisville, KY: June 6-10. Online registration forms at chpc.org/youth. Cost \$345. For details, scholarships, and to donate to camp scholarships, contact SAMUEL MOCK smock@chpc.org

Cinti Young Life is also offering camps throughout the summer. younglife.org/camping/ Info? Yohannes (614) 843-6371



SESSION UPDATE

BY JANET DUMFORD, Clerk of Session

Session meetings can be times of training for Elders and of addressing issues of faith and practice. For the January meeting, Pastor Drew shared scriptures related to the Sacrament of Communion (The Lord's Supper): 1 Corinthians 11:17-33 and Luke 22:7-23. Drew provided a few questions that led to a discussion about Communion being rooted in community.

Jesus instituted what we know as Communion within the *communal* Passover meal. So, in the early church, Communion was part of a communal meal that brought believers together. Jews with a history and understanding of Old Testa-

ment feasts and covenants dined with Gentiles that came from a pagan worship traditions of drunkenness and over-indulgence. Those that had much dined with those that had little. Their unity in Christ was essential in the "remembrance of Christ."

Did you know the church office of Deacon grew out of such conflicts? Like more information? Ask an elder: Rosa Brinkman, Tom Dryer, or Sam Stare.

Please pray for your Session. The next meeting is March 16 at 7PM. Have questions or want to know ways you can express your support, contact me: Janet Dumford at jdumford@chpc.org. I will respond.



BY CHRISTY ROEDIGER

"...Build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit."
Jude 1:20 (NIV)

People sometimes say they are sending prayers... sort of like sending a note to God through the mail. I was at work when a colleague told me a distressing story about his daughter. Knowing this man to be a Jesus-follower, I stopped our online meeting conversation to pray for his daughter. His eyes filled with tears, and he called what happened between us "going into prayer" – sort of like stepping into a prayer closet together.

A few months later when I mentioned that I'd called hospice for my mother, he stopped the conversation and prayed for my mother and me. We talked about it, and he again talked about "going into prayer." I love that picture of going *into* prayer – like being immersed in the Spirit as we bring our hearts to God. As you pray this month, consider "going into prayer" with Jesus.



Equipping you to touch the World with the transforming love of the Savior.

EMI CLASSES IN CINCINNATI

MARCH 19 Renewing Your Mind (9 AM TO 5:30 PM AT THE MARIEMONT COMMUNITY CHURCH): Learn powerful tools to break out of habitual mental, emotional, and behavioral patterns that rob you of joy and spiritual impact.

APRIL 23 Listening for Heaven's Sake (9 AM TO 5:30 PM) plus,

MAY 20-21 Refresh Your Marriage: Bring a new level of love and respect to your marriage with practical communication skills.

SCHEDULED FOR FALL- International School of Service (SOS) is a 5-day training & coaching experience, many EMI courses and international guests.

EQUIPPINGMINISTRIES.ORG

Questions or to register for classes, contact: Christine Wavle 513-742-1100 or 1-800-EMI-GROW (1-800-364-4769) **COST:** No class fee. Love offering.

Deadline for Bell Tower News submissions is the 15th of each MONTH to Sam Stare starecvg@aol.com.

BE PART OF THE TEAM

Have something you'd like to write about but need help? Have an idea for a future feature? Email us: starecvg@aol.com

THE PRACTICE OF PRAYER

The Greater Cincinnati Prayer Canopy

BY CHRISTY ROEDIGER — PRAYER CANOPY CAPTAIN FOR CHPC

WHAT DO YOU SEE
WHEN YOU LOOK AT THE
PICTURE ON THE RIGHT?

Many see their home city, Greater Cincinnati. Others see a place where they are joining with fellow Christians to “raise a canopy of prayer,” to transform the city to be all that God intends.



PREPARING THE QUEEN CITY FOR THE KING

The Greater Cincinnati Prayer Canopy was started in early 2019 with one phone call and twelve prayers. Since then, individuals, churches and organizations have come together in unity to pray for an hour each month that the Holy Spirit would renew our region.

Denis Beausejour, Senior Pastor at Mariemont Community Church, has led the movement of mainline, African American, Catholic, Protestant and non-denominational churches, church plants, men's/women's groups and other Christians committed to interceding with the Holy Spirit on behalf of Greater Cincinnati.

There is a leadership team that provides a monthly prayer guide based on the *7-P's of Deep Change*. Each person, church or praying group picks one day each month to pray with the goal of covering that 24-hour period with prayer. CHPC prays on the 3rd Tuesday of the month, and shares that day with Hope Church and Convergence Church.

The Prayer Canopy has hosted several city-wide events: a “Prayer Walk” from the Ohio River to Fountain Square with worship at the beginning and end of the walk; and a

“Pentecost worship on the 7 hills of Cincinnati.” Expect more to come.

I have agreed to serve as CHPC's Prayer Canopy Captain. Stay tuned and you'll be hearing more about the Prayer Canopy, how to participate, and ways that you can enhance your own prayer life as you pray with other believers for the transformation of our city.

Look for monthly prayer guides available at CHPC's Atrium desk and in the information kiosk. Watch for the place to sign up for the hour of the day you'll commit to pray. Consider praying with another believer if possible. However, any way that you want to participate in praying for our city is welcomed.

GCPRAYERCANOPIY.NET

is the Prayer Canopy website. It has an excellent 3-minute video, a calendar about who's involved, how to submit a prayer request, and specific prayer needs. Please pray about joining me and others at CHPC and across the city in this exciting endeavor. Be ready to celebrate the changes the Holy Spirit will bring.

INFO? chrisroediger1014@gmail.com

SERMONS FOR LENT

BY REV. DR. DREW SMITH

The last two years have been ones of change, uncertainty, and challenges. God has been faithful throughout. I have mourned several deaths in my family. I have felt great comfort and support from my spouse, family, and friends. They have enabled me to talk openly and honestly and to share and talk through the emotional reactions to life.

Above all, I have found that God provides the most accessible conversation partner to share the depth of my pain, happiness, questions, and anxiety. God is present and active in my life *whenever, wherever, and whatever* the situation.

Our next sermon series will guide us through the breadth of ways we can talk with God through prayer. By looking at Biblical prayers, we will find that God welcomes *whatever* is on our mind, *whenever* we feel the urge to let it out, and *wherever* we may be at the time. Biblical prayers consist of complaints, confessions, outbursts of joy, cries for help, songs of praise, shouts of thanksgiving, and tears of pain. God wants us to bring it all.

Lent is the perfect time for us to deepen our conversations with God and experience the peace that only God can bring. Sermons:

3/6 “This Stinks” Prayers of Lament
3/13 “Thank You” Prayers of Gratitude
3/20 “I’m Sorry” Prayers of Confession
3/27 “You’re Good” Prayers of Praise.



Preaching pastors will provide CHPC Growth Groups with questions for reflection on the sermons and suggestions for prayer.