

BELL TOWER NEWS

College Hill Presbyterian Church – MARCH 2023

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

DISCIPLESHIP IN DIFFICULT PLACES: LEARNING FROM OUR GLOBAL PARTNERS

Discipleship is inherently a local thing. But people are learning to follow Jesus all over the world. And, of course, Jesus said, “Make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19). Discipleship is a space where the local and global witness of our churches can experience transforming synergy through our fellowship and partnership in the gospel. As one participant in the global engagement events at the National Gathering expressed, “It makes me want to grow as a resilient follower of Jesus when I see how our sisters and brothers in Ukraine are responding...”

[PICTURED]

Ivan Rusyn, President of Ukrainian Evangelical Theological Seminary, offered a powerful testimony of

how the war has brought the church literally out into the streets. Discipleship is now about living out the love of God in tangible expressions. Remaining with the people in this war-torn country has been a testimony to the strangers who need a warm meal served at the seminary. It is also a witness recognized by the government and military leaders who can now see



the power of the gospel in action. We were challenged to pray for the church in Ukraine to persevere in

our witness and be encouraged to consider how such service for Christ is visible to the world.

This year's global guests at the ECO National Gathering provided very insightful witness of how they are making disciples in challenging contexts. Though our context for discipleship in ECO churches does not include life-threatening persecution or war, we do make disciples in places where people have experienced trauma and are increasingly coming from non-Christian backgrounds. As we listened to the witness of these partners, we were encouraged and challenged to consider how their disciple-making initiatives can sharpen our models for discipleship.

From the Gulf region, we heard a challenge to make discipleship about life-on-life transformational relationships, where both the disciple and disciple-maker are being transformed into the likeness of Christ. These faithful friends (who must remain anonymous for security) are now developing disciple-makers among people from a Muslim faith background. As these disciples are set free in Christ,

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 5)



COLLEGE HILL
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

ECO ANNUAL GATHERING, A LIFE-CHANGER

OUR DENOMINATION'S ANNUAL GATHERING IS SIMPLY THE BEST INVESTMENT EVER



WORSHIP



FELLOWSHIP



SPEAKERS



BREAKOUTS

What makes the ECO Gathering a life-priority for lay people and pastors alike? What prompts them to commit vacation days and money to attend? Pictured are four features many cite for going:

WORSHIP—This is often everyone's highlight, a glimpse of heaven.

FELLOWSHIP—ECO pastors, laity, and leaders from around the world find the "family reunion" a place to grow and flourish in their walk with Christ.

SPEAKERS—The best of the best (Presbyterian or not) inspire, encourage, challenge, and form those who attend. Plus, videos from eight past year's speakers are online at <https://www.econationalgathering.org/past-gatherings>. Try this treasure trove of videos from awesome Christian speakers.

FOUR BREAKOUT TIMES—These provide a wide variety of equipping from leading practitioners, theologians, church leaders, researchers, and global partners. The presenters help individuals and churches take the next steps to flourish in life and ministry. For example, sought-after leader John Mark Comer, one of this year's speakers, followed up with an

hour-long breakout on "how to."

CHPC has fielded a team of pastoral staff and lay people for 10 years. Not only are people personally changed, but the church is changed in the process. For example:

Janet Dumford —"I left the ECO National Gathering so very encouraged. It filled me to overflowing with amazing worship, inspiring speakers, updates from around the globe, and time to connect with my friends in our Presbytery and others. In one of the breakout sessions there was a discussion about discipleship and encouraging covenant partners to share their stories as testimony to God's continued presence and power. This gave me an idea for our Lenten Church-wide Growth Group Experience."

Chris Dumford —It was wonderful to gather and worship with hundreds of fellow believers, to personally meet ECO leaders, and to connect with other churches in our Presbytery. The main presenters and breakout sessions were varied and interesting. I personally picked up several nuggets that I am using moving forward. It was a blessed time.

Catherine Sanders — Last year was her first Gathering. A speaker encouraged her to apply for the ECO Certified Lay Pastors' training. She did. Catherine said, "I feel refreshed and renewed in my spiritual journey. The Gathering seemed more personal because I knew more people and I met some that I didn't know before. Kelli Wong [PICTURED] from Honolulu has been in my online ECO Certified Lay Pastors' (CLP) classes for the past year. I took a lot of notes. For me, nothing else is more important than what we do to further Jesus' kingdom!" Catherine regularly uses facets of the CLP training as CHPC's Connections Coordinator.



Rosa Brinkman—Catherine's roommate and fellow traveler noted, "The ECO National Gathering was so spiritually refreshing, enriching, and encouraging for my good and for God's glory!"

John Hancock— A new member and deacon, he took vacation to experience his first Gathering. He said, "CHPC does well to engage the ECO philosophy, but being there with the global community was different in a way. I saw different people who understood each other. I didn't feel like a stranger there. The main and breakout sessions all had something to take away. Worship was amazing and lifted my spirit. I am intentional about setting time aside for these events because I see other believers like me willing to learn; be forerunners of faith, encouraging everyone; and pour into others." It was John's first time in California: "Food and gas were expensive, but it was made up for by the pre-Gathering sightseeing."

(CONTINUED IN THE NEXT COLUMN)



Jennifer Cronk—Gatherings are held in many parts of the country. This one was in Newport Beach, CA. It's just super encouraging to make new connections, foster old ones, and be together with God's people—

dinner with my Pastors' Covenant Group (who live as far from me as California and Washington state) and breakfast with a friend I met at the Womens Pastors' Conference last fall. I also got some unexpected chat time with Megan Marshman,



JENNIFER, MEGAN, AND FRIENDS

[PICTURED] the guest speaker for the Children's & Families Pre-Conference on Monday. She is the most down-to-earth, genuine woman, who has suffered greatly but still loves and trusts Jesus. She encourages others to do the same. This year, I met a gal from an ECO church in Juneau, Alaska. It definitely made me thankful that I don't have to drive a snowmobile to church in the winter! There was also time to relax. Some of us got to go on a whale-watching trip (though equipment failed and we had to turn around before we really saw anything). Jinda Bowerman and I drove the coast and saw an amazing bunch of sea lions—they were were fascinating to watch.

Samuel Mock— Being on the ECO ordination track, he experienced the 2023 Gathering in some new ways: "I am thankful for the opportunity to go to such a soul-renewing conference. I value catching up with friends in ministry and hearing how God is moving not just in College Hill but all over the country. I was reminded that I am part of a movement that God is doing throughout the ECO. I'm excited about where

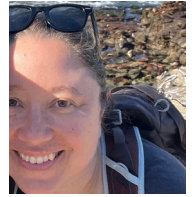
we will be as a denomination in the next few years." Some take aways for Samuel were: "The best we can give our congregation and families is our transforming selves in Christ Jesus. We are called to equip others to seek God not simply tell them about him. I look forward to how God will evolve our leadership and ministries as we keep these things in mind. It was a special treat to have gotten to go to California and spend some time with my wife Liz gazing at the beauty that God has created on the other side of the country."

Jinda Bowerman— "This was my first national gathering. I learned a lot from the speakers and came away with a sense that we at CHPC need to be MUCH more intentional about how we disciple. I was also affirmed to continue working with Alpha as one of our gateway ministries to share Jesus with the world. I returned home overflowing with gratitude at being able spend the week enjoying the



JOHN HANCOCK GETS BOLDER & BOULDER

beauty of Southern California with a really wonderful group of human beings . . .(and some amazing sea lions)."



HEAVENLY WORSHIP WITH 1000+



PRE-GATHERING WHALE WATCHING, BUT NOT SEEING!



THE CHPC TEAM FINAL NIGHT DINNER INCLUDED FAMILY AND FRIENDS

FRONT ROW: Rev. Brenda Reibson (PA), Rosa Brinkman, Jinda Bowerman, Beth Miller (OH), Catherine and A'jalee Jackson-Sanders.
 2nd ROW: Samuel Mock, Cathy and Rev. Drew Smith, Sam and Barry Stare, Janet and Chris Dumford, Rev. Nancy Dumford, Courtney Walton of Living Undivided Ministry, Lori and Charlie Jones (PA), and Rev. Jennifer Cronk.
 TOP ROW: Troy Jackson of Living Undivided Ministry.

MAKE THE WORLD FEEL AT HOME BECOME A CONVERSATION PARTNER

BY CINDY CARLSON, CHPC

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Without leaving Cincinnati, you can have a world-changing relationship with an international student. Those experiences can equip you to be an "ambassador" across the street and around the world. (Read on...)*

In 1980, College Hill Presbyterian hosted a small welcome dinner for University of Cincinnati international students in cooperation with U.C.'s International Student Services Office. From 1982 until the present, there have been welcome dinners for newly arriving international students, hosted by American friends from a number of churches.

Typically, over two hundred people are in attendance at the welcome dinners. Entertainment has included musical numbers from CCM musicians such as Michael Chertock, now our Cincinnati Symphony pianist.

The goal of these events is for the American church community to welcome new international students to our city and to give an opportunity for friendships to form and grow during the students' stay in Cincinnati. In recent years, the International Friendships, Inc. (IFI Cincy) ministry has continued to welcome international students through events, groups, and programs, including dinners, picnics, and furniture giveaways.

STUDENTS NEED U.S. PARTNERS

IFI also organizes a special program called "Conversation Partners" (CP) designed to address felt needs of new students from overseas—to continue to improve their English skills, make meaningful personal

connections, and to gain an understanding of and adaptation to American culture.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Do you qualify to help?

IFI Cincy offers online and in-person training to equip you to be the best friend and advocate you can be.

The role of a Conversation Partner is to be a consistent, compassionate, and hospitable friend. To do so:

- *Contact your assigned student weekly*, in person, by phone, or virtually (online).
- *Once a month* try to meet in person.
- Commit to serving as a CP for *two semesters*.

TWO-WAY PARTNERSHIP

Share cultures with one another. Enjoy activities together, as time permits.



The majority of students IFI Cincy interacts with currently are from India. Formerly, there were

many Chinese students but the numbers decreased when visas were limited. Other students involved in IFI activities come from Ghana, Nigeria, Ecuador, Japan, Vietnam, Indonesia, Iran, and a few other countries.

If you are open to helping to "Make the World Feel at Home" as a Conversation Partner, please check out the details at IFI's website: cincy.ifipartners.org. First, apply to be a volunteer to join student for a

fun IFI event. Then sign up as a CP.

WANT TO TALK WITH SOMEONE YOU KNOW?

Contact Cindy Carlson between services (she sings in the CHPC choir) or Sam or Barry Stare -(513)542-2442.

BE AN AMBASSADOR FOR CHRIST!

HAVE FUN CELEBRATING A BIG LIFE EVENT OF YOUR NEW INTERNATIONAL FRIEND.



SHARE AN AMERICAN OR CHURCH HOLIDAY. . .



SOME LIKE HALLOWEEN MAKE NO SENSE WHATSOEVER. BUT PUMPKIN-CARVING OR EASTER EGG DYEING

CREATE GREAT MEMORIES.



MEALS CAN BRING TOGETHER A NUMBER OF STUDENTS AND CONVERSATION PARTNERS.



The Great Commission: Not the Great Suggestion

PRAYER FOR CHPC MISSIONARIES
Sunday, March 12 (10:05 AM) in the
Fireside Room.

GLOBAL OUTREACH GATHERING
on Sunday March 19 (11:45 AM-1 PM)
in the Fireside Room. Be inspired
by a potpourri of people at CHPC
involved in cross-cultural missions
as they tell about it.

MISSION COMPLETE!



FORMER PASTOR DAVID BLISS

Joins the Church Triumphant
January 22, 1946 - December 31, 2022

David and his family were mission-
aries to South Africa from 1979-2015.
During a multi-year sabbatical in the
1990's, he served as CHPC's Mission
Pastor. At an early age, David
learned to love Jesus Christ and
his lifelong desire was to share the
gospel with others. He was a natural
leader, a strong athlete, a handsome,
funny, outgoing, and an enthusiastic
person who infected others with
a passion for God's mission from
Genesis to Revelation.

DISCIPLESHIP IN DIFFICULT PLACES

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

they face the risk of persecution,
which makes building a trusting
community a key challenge. Their
model for developing an authentic
Christian community is a witness to
our efforts in ECO to be a covenant
order of leaders. How are we
building trust and accountability
into our leadership teams?

From the Iranian context, Shadi
Fatehi from PARS*
shared about the
need to take seri-
ously the mental
and emotional
health challenges
for both the lead-
er and disciple.
Trauma-informed
discipleship means
that they offer
not just spiritu-
al formation but
trained counseling
services to accom-
pany a disciple's
transformation in



VEDA GILL, PRESBYTERIAN EDUCATOR
FROM PAKISTAN, WITH TOM BOONE
OF THE OUTREACH FOUNDATION

Christ. How are our leadership de-
velopment initiatives in our church-
es caring for whole-person trans-
formation and taking seriously the
mental and emotional health needs
of our people?

From Pakistan, Veda Gill [PICTURED]
told about the incredible witness of

*PARS was founded in 2010 by an interdenominational team of Iranian pastors and theologians who dreamed of a hub for deep, holistic, and contextual leadership training for Iran. Today, PARS is home to a blended Persian-language School of Theology and Leadership, the Iranian Leaders Forum, a Counseling Center, Publishing House and multiple online platforms devoted to leader development.

the Presbyterian Education Board
in Pakistan, who provide quality ed-
ucation for both Christian and Mus-
lim students. Bringing boys and
girls together from these different
religious backgrounds in class-
rooms is a witness of peace-build-
ing. We heard incredible stories
of how the children's experience
of Christian values in the schools
is impacting whole families and
neighborhoods. We were inspired
to ask ourselves, how are we bring-

ing a gospel mes-
sage of peace to
our communities
that experience
racial, ethnic, or
religious tensions?
Even as we pro-
vide prayer, en-
couragement, and
needed financial
support to these
global partners,
they have much
to offer us as we
seek to strength-
en our local dis-
cipleship efforts.
If you would like

to connect further with any of
these global partners, please email
globalengagement@eco-pres.org
for more information.

ALSO ASK TO BE ON THE CHPC'S
GLOBAL OUTREACH EMAIL LIST
(VERHAGENMS@GMAIL.COM)

**THIS ARTICLE USED WITH PERMISSION FROM JEN HADDOX,
ECO DIRECTOR OF GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT**



<TRANSITIONS>



REV. JENNIFER CRONK – ASSISTANT PASTOR OF CHILDREN & FAMILIES

“It is with a heavy heart that I share with you that God has called me out of CHPC and to Bethel Presbyterian Church in Columbus. Bethel is a sister ECO church in our Presbytery, and I have gotten to know them over the years through Presbytery meetings and while serving on our Presbytery’s ordination committee. . . [Bethel] has been wanting to develop their ministry to young families and has purposely positioned the Associate Pastor position to focus on Next-Generation ministries. I feel confident that what we’ve seen God do in our midst here at CHPC, like growing our kids and family ministries and better integrating our non-Sunday children’s ministries (3C’s, Jesus University, and Whiz Kids), can now benefit and grow the congregation at Bethel. I will finish out the Lenten Season at CHPC, and Easter will be my last day on staff. I cannot thank you enough for the ways you have prayed for, cared for, loved, supported and celebrated me over the years. I entered CHPC as someone who had been deeply hurt by a previous church. God used CHPC to bring deep healing and to affirm His call on my life. . . *Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.*” HEBREWS 10:23



REV. DARRYLL DAVIS – ASSISTANT PASTOR OF WORSHIP & OUTREACH

Excerpts from Pastor Drew Smith’s Feb. 2, 2023 Letter to CHPC— After prayerfully seeking God’s leading and many Spirit-led conversations among the CHPC session, denominational leaders, and trusted counselors, we have concluded that the health and wholeness of Darryll Davis and the congregation would best be served by ending Darryll’s employment at CHPC. Darryll has begun an extremely challenging journey of restoration and healing, a pathway that many would not choose because it requires emotional effort and spiritual fortitude. Embarking on such a significant life-restoring experience must take priority in this situation. We believe the burden and weight of Christian leadership at CHPC at this time would be too much to carry while dealing with such significant life changes. Returning to work at CHPC at this time would hinder the healing that has begun in the last several months.

Throughout this process, we have tried to uphold God’s high value of Christian marriage. We recognize that the covenants made to God and one another are broken when we divorce. We join with Darryll and Bernice Harvey in lamenting their impending divorce. We have also

tried to uphold God’s high value of repentance, grace, forgiveness, and healing. We know that divorce is not the unforgivable sin. Darryll and Bernice are both covenant partners at CHPC, and we will continue to support and encourage them in their lives in Christ Jesus. Four session members plus an additional covenant partner have joined with them individually in prayer, support, encouragement, and help during this entire process and will continue. As their pastor, I will continue to accompany them on this journey. They each may choose to find their spiritual community elsewhere, but we will always welcome their participation in this community of grace and truth.

In addition, CHPC and the denomination have provided resources necessary for Darryll to continue in healing and restoration by eventually providing some less demanding ministry roles in other churches. Darryll’s calling and gifts are not in question. Through our Presbytery, Darryll will have opportunities to continue in temporary avenues of ministry – pulpit supply and short-term ministries. We believe this plan of healing and restoration will lead to even greater effectiveness in the ministry of God’s Good News through Jesus. . .

Let us lament before God so that, in the end, we will grow in our complete dependence upon Jesus.

Please feel free to connect with Darryll to share your support on this journey. His mailing address is 6710 Savannah Ave #1, Cinti, OH 45239.

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

PRAY FOR YOUR COLLEGE HILL ' NEIGHBORHOOD

CH COFFEE CO. NOW LA TERZA

CHPCer Mindy Nagel, President of College Hill Business Assoc., shared this announcement: Beloved community members and patrons of College Hill Coffee Co., it is our honor to join Tina Stoeberl and share the news of the transition of the historic Hamilton Ave at North Bend Rd. corner in College Hill.

Thank you, Tina for the past 17 years of serving us (literally). Now we are introducing the new owners:

“La Terza has been a signature roaster in the specialty coffee community in Cincinnati. Our passion has always been to empower ‘the third place’ — not our home, not our work, but a community gathering space where we can connect with others. We have taken pride in providing our wholesale customers with amazing coffee, and today, we are excited to announce that we are expanding our offerings to include a dedicated La Terza coffee shop.”

Robert Gatesi and his wife Kirsten [PICTURED], David Gaines, and College Hill resident Michael Gaines are coming together to carry the torch of College Hill Coffee Co. and to create “a third place” in this thriving neighborhood. In addition to an extensive coffee and beverage menu, we plan to serve limited food and spirits as we get to know the community and evolve our offerings.



KIRSTEN, TINA, ROBERT GATESI



DINE IN COLLEGE HILL

People are flocking to College Hill for diverse food choices and great chefs. Hideki and Yuko Harada, chef/owners of Kiki College Hill, are semifinalists, Great Lake Region, for Best Chef in the 2023 James Beard Restaurant and Chef Awards. The finalist will be announced on March 29. Winners are celebrated at the James Beard Restaurant and Chef Awards Ceremony on Monday, June 5, 2023, at the Lyric Opera of Chicago. Facebook post: “This is a huge deal. One of the best restaurants in the country is right here in our neighborhood.”



FIRE AT HAMMOND NORTH

Early Tuesday morning, Feb. 21st, the high-rise condominium at 5300 Hamilton Ave. south of Twin Towers experienced a three-alarm blaze. Nine people were hospitalized (two firefighters). The first floor fire was quickly extinguished, but smoke damage was extensive. The building needed to be checked and residents from 180 apartments were temporarily evacuated. Overall, more than 100 firefighters were involved, according to WCPO.

At the February 28th College Hill Forum meeting, firefighters and key Hammond North residents pledged to work together to develop clear fire procedures for high-rise residences like theirs.



HAMILTON AVENUE

CHOSEN FOR METRO STUDY

At the CH Forum meeting representatives of Cincinnati Metro described the multi-year study underway for Bus Rapid Transit stations. Along with Reading Road, Bus Route #17 has been chosen to have two new “Rapid Transit” stations in College Hill on the Avenue. Unlike the current bus system, BRT will be more like European ones with express buses and well-lit stations.

More than words

responding to the life & teachings of Jesus

BY THE CHPC PREACHING TEAM

LENT provides a time of focus and meditation upon the sacrificial love of Jesus. It includes five Sundays and flows into Holy Week: Palm Sunday (April 2), Holy Thursday (April 6), and Good Friday (April 7). The season culminates with the celebration of the resurrection on Easter Sunday, April 9.

Feb. 26 **It's Not a Suggestion**—Matthew 4:18-4:22 (calling first disciples) Matthew 28:16-20 (The Great Commission)—a call to evangelism is not an option but a way of life that Jesus calls us to. Jesus started and ended his ministry with a call to go make disciples.

Mar. 5 **Kingdom Come**—Matthew 8:18-22 (“Let the dead bury their own dead”)—a call to put Kingdom above even family. God demands that we prioritize him so that all of our life is a response to him being priority number one. How does this text challenge us to put Kingdom first?

Mar. 12 **This Changes Everything**—John 3:1-2, John 7:45-52, John 19:38-42 (Nicodemus changes over time)—our lives with Jesus are to be marked by growth and change as we learn to trust him more. Nicodemus

went from secretly meeting Jesus to defending him at work at the cost of his own reputation and finally risking his life to prepare Jesus' body for burial. Jesus cannot be compartmentalized in our lives because our belief in him changes everything.

Mar. 19 **Overcoming Temptation**—Matthew 4: 1-11 (Jesus tempted in the desert)—learning to follow Jesus as we are tempted. Jesus is tempted in every way after 40 days and nights of fasting. Jesus' body would have been weak and hungry, yet his spirit was strong. We must lean on God to be strengthened in the face of temptation and overcome temptation.

Mar. 26 **One Kingdom Under God**—John 17:1-26 (high priestly prayer) called to unity under Jesus. Some of Jesus' last words were to call us to be one as he and the Father are one. We must be united under Christ to have kingdom impact.

GROWTH GROUPS SERVING DURING LENT

BY JANET DUMFORD

For the Lenten sermon series, “More Than Words,” leading to Easter, April 9, Growth Groups are encouraged to do a service project together AND then share about that experience. Groups have seven weeks to do one act of service – you can volunteer together at Matthew 25 Ministries, organize a garden clean-up day at CHPC or in the College Hill community, visit some of our home-bound covenant partners, share the Good News and even invite someone to try out a Growth Group.

My Thursday night group is planning a prayer service. Then we'll share about it with the congregation—record a video, share from the pulpit, write an article and then read it aloud, etc. We want others to hear about how God met us/our group in the service experience, how the scriptures prompted someone to action, or if there was an answered prayer.

EMAIL janet3747@gmail.com. Let me know if you have questions about the act of service your Growth Group will do together. It's not too later to join a group! Let me know you're interested .



Make time this Lenten season to read through the Gospel of Matthew with me. Read one chapter a day Monday through

Friday of each week (Feb 26-April 9) and you will be finished by the Wednesday before Easter. Attached you will find a simple reading plan with some questions for you to con-

PASTOR DREW'S LENTEN CHALLENGE

sider as you read God's word. Start reading today: Matthew Chapter 1.

The Bible Project presents a brief overview on how to read the New Testament Gospels. I have found their resources to be informative and understandable. Check it out online: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/how-to-read-gospel/>. It's only 5 minutes long and a mod-

ern format. If you are intrigued by the video, you can find many other helpful presentations by scrolling down the page.

I'm looking forward to how God's Spirit might change us this season as we focus together on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

Grace and Peace,
Rev. Dr. Drew Smith

