

BELL TOWER NEWS

College Hill Presbyterian Church – DECEMBER 2024

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

The Preaching Series

ADVENT, WORTH THE WAIT

BY PASTOR DREW SMITH

We enter the Advent season, which provides examples and opportunities to wait upon the Lord. Advent means arrival. We learn from those who waited for God to fulfill his promises at the birth of Jesus. Today, we wait for the second arrival of Jesus, when all will be made right.

Waiting for the Lord is not passive but active obedience, worship, and dependence upon God. We struggle and celebrate; we rejoice and weep as we journey together in the Spirit, seeking to follow Jesus together in a world that constantly tugs and distracts us from him.

Yet, the prophets tell us repeatedly that those who wait on the Lord will renew their strength. God is faithful to his promises. God works in us today as we wait on him in obedience and faith. We are God's testimony to love, joy, and peace as we live according to God's Kingdom and not the world's ways. Let's learn to wait patiently together this Advent. (CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

ADVENT

is a season of waiting, but our whole life is an Advent season, that is, a season of waiting for the last Advent, for the time when there will be a new heaven and a new earth.

DIETRICH BONHOEFFER



YOUR GIFT IS WAITING...OPEN IT NOW

JEANNE SCHNEIDER, MA LPCCS

Caring for Your Grief Through the Holidays and Beyond

The Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons seem to bring joy and sorrow and reminders of people and hopes envisioned that are no longer present. We carry sorrow in our bodies and hearts. Grief encompasses many emotions. Mourning is expressed in a variety of ways. "Grief bursts" may seem to appear out of nowhere, and you might experience times of anxiety or depression.

This year, I offer a different way to notice those parts of you that are experiencing grief and learn how to bring comfort to those parts from your *true self*—the parts made in the image of God.

GET CURIOUS ABOUT YOUR GRIEF EXPERIENCE

1. Take a moment to imagine being with a pet you love. Picture yourself stroking them gently or simply sitting next to them.

2. Now imagine calmly sitting with someone you feel really comfortable with, resting in the awareness that nothing needs to be done or said (this can be with a human or with God).

3. Finally, imagine seeing a child sitting on the curb, crying because they are lost. Picture yourself reassuring them and helping them

find their way home.

4. Did you notice any inner spaciousness, curiosity or peace inside of you?

As you do this exercise, notice the ways in which you are experiencing grief. Welcome the parts of grief inside of you with curiosity and offer them space to be comforted as you would comfort a child.

This may seem like a strange exercise, but so often, we try to stuff grief inside or dismiss it rather than welcoming it with curiosity. The grief gives voice to those people and things you are mourning. Give yourself the gift of curiosity this holiday season as you welcome the grief parts and seek to comfort them.

God is with you in the process. He is the Comforter that helps us, his children, to "find our way home." Jesus really is the reason for the season. His gift is waiting for you. Open it, for he declares, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted" MATTHEW 5:4.

May good tidings of comfort and joy be yours this Christmas!

JEANNE SCHNEIDER IS DIRECTOR OF LIVING HOPE COUNSELING SERVICES which provides individual, couple,

MAKING A LIST, AND CHECKING IT TWICE

BY SHARLYN STARE

My grandmothers annual Christmas greeting was "I hope you like your socks." But when I was 6, she pinned a note on a bathing suit with a check for swim lessons. I dreamed of swimming for months, and the lessons changed my life.

WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN IF YOU GIVE A CHILD A WAY TO KNOW GOD NEXT SUMMER? An IOU, check, cash or a voucher can open the door to 3C's Summer Camp, CHPC *Connections* Camp, a Youth Group Mission Trip, a week of tutoring from a Whiz Kids tutor, a Jesus University ballet clinic (for new dancers or one for more skilled dancers), or 2 weeks of life-saving Swim Ministry lessons? Be creative! Include something symbolic with your gift and pray for God to use "what's coming" in the summer. Or contribute a scholarship to the CHPC Children's Ministry to bless a child or teen in Jesus' name. Ask Nikki at 513-491-5571.

family, and group counseling. The staff is committed to offering affordable, faith-based mental health care and to equipping the next generation of professional counselors. If you or someone you know would benefit from counseling, call 513-371-5135 or go to our website at livinghopecs.com.



LIVING HOPE
COUNSELING SERVICES

SEE THE AD ON PAGE 7 for ways to help Living Hope December 2 to 12.

GIVE THE GIFT OF LIGHT FOR
GOD'S GLORY

POWER UP!

FROM SAMUEL MOCK, ASST. PASTOR

We at CHPC are excited to partner with SonLight Power June 7-14, 2025, to bring the Gospel and solar power to our friends in Honduras.

WHAT IS SONLIGHT POWER?

A wonderful organization founded in 2002 by our long-time friend and church member, Allen Rainey.

WHAT DOES SONLIGHT POWER DO?

It provides people living in "energy poverty" with solar power (the sun) and the love of Jesus (the Son) for transformative, lasting impact.

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO SERVE WITH SONLIGHT POWER?

Most trips include two teams: the *Fiesta* group doing a celebration for the families in the community; and the *Installation* group for solar panels and storage of power.

LEARN MORE/ SEE VIDEOS

<https://www.sonlightpower.org/join-mission-trip>

PRAY AND VISIT THE WEBSITE

If you feel called to go, apply for the Honduras June 7-14, 2025 trip and pay a \$500 non-refundable trip de-



posit within 14 days to reserve your spot on the trip. The deposit will be applied to your \$2500 trip cost, which covers airfare, food, and supplies. Remember to plan for the costs of travel insurance and inoculations. Also, new passports take about two months.

Information you'll need to sign up for SonLight Mission Trip 25:

1. Your name and contact info
2. Email
3. Relationship to College Hill Presbyterian
4. Passport number and expiration date (it must be valid for at least 6 months after the trip begins).

5. Emergency Contact
6. Choice of team (Fiesta/Installation)
7. Age range
8. If you will be raising funds, how much do you plan to raise?

JOIN THE CHPC'S 2025 Trip
Please contact me or my wife Eliza-beth (who has been on several SonLight Power trips to Honduras) if you have questions/concerns.



Your Year-End Gift to SonLight Power Goes Twice As Far

Generous friends, Gary and Jane Booth, have offered to match every year-end gift to SonLight Power, up to \$80,000, now until December 31. Their video tells why.

www.sonlightpower.org/news/give-light-challenge-2024

SEE SOME OF THE EXCITING INSTALLATIONS MADE POSSIBLE BY DONORS AND TRIP PARTICIPANTS IN 2024: 1585 SOLAR PANELS IN 14 LOCATIONS ACROSS 3 COUNTRIES. IN 2025, SONLIGHT POWER WILL UNDERTAKE THE LARGEST INSTALLATION IN OVER 20 YEARS. ASK ABOUT IT.

ADVENT

WORTH THE WAIT

(CONTINUED FROM THE FRONT COVER)

Dec. 1 — THE WAIT IS OVER —

Titus 2, James 5:7-12

We wait for the day that waiting will be no more because Jesus will return in the fullness of glory, authority, and beauty. We who follow him will receive our glorified bodies and live with him without sin. We will enjoy him as we continue to learn and explore God's infinite truth. Our lives anticipate and live for that ultimate revelation of the New Heaven and the New Earth.

We learn from the prophets who waited for God's first coming to help us understand how to wait for his second coming.

Dec. 8—WAITING WELL—Psalm 37

How do we wait? Waiting is not passive. Waiting on the Lord is very active and engaging. The Psalmist gives us many directives on how to wait on the Lord.

Dec. 15—WEIGHTY WAITING—

Isaiah 40, Romans 8:12-30

Waiting has a depth and weight to it. It's not an idle time but a time of exercising our faith, dependence, trust, and patience. We grow in character as we patiently wait for God's provision in God's timing and wisdom.

Dec. 22—TRADING EXPECTATIONS FOR EXPECTANCY—

Matthew 1:18-25, Isaiah 7:10-15

The prophecies of the incarnation reveal God's plan for sending his Son to be the Savior of the world – the Messiah. God's people deeply longed for that day, but God's fulfillment brought much confusion and uncertainty. We must wait for God's plan with the expectancy of God's ultimate fulfillment. Still, we can't wait with specific expectations because God works in mysterious ways that we cannot understand or predict.

So, we wait with expectancy but not expectations – we have sure and certain hope because God fulfills his promises with abundant love and sacrificial mercy. What he promises, he does.

Christmas Eve, Tues. Dec. 24— 5:30 PM (Family Service) and 8:00 PM (Candlelight Service)— THE EVE OF WAITING—Lk 2:1-7

Dec. 29—PRIME DELIVERY—Lk 1:22-38

God's fulfillment comes at just the right time and satisfies our deepest longings.

Jan. 5—WAITING WITHOUT A TRACKING NUMBER—Matthew 2:1-12

ABOUT THE QUOTE ON THE FRONT COVER

The text is from *God Is In The Manger, Reflections on Advent and Christmas* written from his prison cell by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, one of the 20th Century's most beloved theologians (1906-1945).

Bonhoeffer's reflections bring the Christian faith and practice into focus: that Christ expresses strength best through weakness, that faith is more important than the beguiling trappings of religion, and that God is often heard most clearly by those in poverty and distress. Bonhoeffer came from a well-to-do family, but by the time he wrote this book, he knew well both poverty and distress. Two days after Adolf Hitler seized control of Germany in early 1933, Bonhoeffer delivered a radio sermon in which he criticized the new regime and warned Germans that "the Führer concept" was dangerous and wrong. He declared, "Leaders which set themselves up as gods mock God." After 10-years of active resistance, he was imprisoned. Much of the Advent book was written in prison during the 2-years before his execution.

FROM THE BOOK'S FORWARD: "For Bonhoeffer, waiting—one of the central themes of the Advent experience—was a fact of life during the war: waiting to be



released from prison, waiting to be able to spend more than an hour a month in the company of his young fiancée, waiting for the end of the war." (CONTINUED ON PAGE 6)

"THIS CHRISTMAS, YOU HAVE A DECISION TO MAKE. IT'S NOT ABOUT TOYS OR GIFTS OF WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE UNDER THE TREE. IT'S A DECISION ABOUT GOD'S GRACE. WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH THE GOODNESS OF GOD THAT HE BESTOWED ON YOU THIS PAST YEAR, AND THAT YOU LOOK FORWARD TO IN THE YEAR THAT IS TO COME?" —TONY EVANS

A Passion to Remember the Past in the Present and Preserve It for the Future

The Eckstein School... A Unique Gift!

INFORMATION FROM DEBBIE DUNCAN, CHPC DEACON, AND REV. BILL PARISH, ECKSTEIN SCHOOL DIRECTOR

An historic African American Elementary School was at risk of substantial demolition. Then, the Cincinnati Preservation Association purchased the Eckstein School in the village of Glendale, Ohio, as a National Historic Landmark. The current owner is the 42 Washington Ave., LLC. The elementary school was in operation from 1915 to 1958 and served the African American students of Glendale. The purchase will ensure that the historic site is preserved and developed as the Eckstein Cultural Arts Center (ECAC).



ECKSTEIN SCHOOL AND THE LARGE INTERIOR SPACE

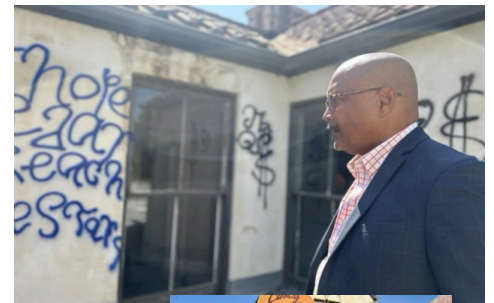
WHY IS THIS STORY IN THE BTN? CHPC Deacon Debbie Duncan (who lives in Fairfield Township) provided this story. She is pictured (RIGHT) with Rev. Bill Parish and the Board of the Eckstein Center (FAR RIGHT). This team is an example of God bringing together a Christian artist and supporters and preservationists to honor Glendale's rich African American history. The Eckstein School's legacy spans themes from segregation in education to the role of community meeting places.



In 1860, Eleanor Eckstein began teaching the African American children coming through the Underground Railroad in a barn behind her home at 45 East Fountain Avenue in Glendale, OH. She wanted the children to be able to read and write in order to help themselves in their move to the North. They were also learning other skills such as sewing and cooking. This was the first school for African American children, and it was known as the Icehouse School.



In 1915, John Burchenal donated the Verdin house on Washington Ave because more room was needed and named the school after Eleanor Eckstein. In 1929, a gymnasium was added. The Eckstein School was the African American Elementary School until 1958, when the school was closed due to Brown versus Board of Education decision to end segregation. Upon the closing, it became part of the Princeton School District and was used for storage.



Throughout 2024, ECAC has had informational meetings with area residents to let them know the significance of preserving the African American history in this historical village instrumental in the Underground Railroad and in saving enslaved people. In September, vandals broke in and did extensive graffiti damage. Ted Karras, Cincinnati Bengal lineman (RIGHT) came to the rescue and pledged his construction company's support.

Now it is time to breathe new life into the Eckstein School and celebrate its rich history. Bring on the cleanup, the plans, and construction to renovate because we know God brought us this far and He is sending us people who have a heart for the work. He will see the project to completion. Glory to God. He is awesome.



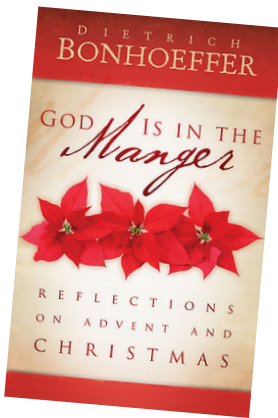
ABOUT THE QUOTE BY BONHOEFFER ON THE FRONT COVER

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

There was a helplessness in his situation that Bonhoeffer recognized as a parallel to Advent, Christians' time of waiting for redemption in Christ. "Life in a prison cell may well be compared to Advent," Bonhoeffer wrote his best friend Eberhard Bethge as the holidays approached in 1943. "One waits, hopes, and does this, that, or the other—things that are really of no consequence—the door is shut, and can only be opened from the outside."

"But the prison door was never opened for Bonhoeffer, not in life at least. As the Third Reich crumbled in April 1945, Hitler ordered the execution of some political prisoners who had conspired to overthrow him. Bonhoeffer was hanged on April 8, 1945, just ten days before German forces began to surrender and less than three weeks before Hitler's own death by suicide. Bonhoeffer was just 39 years old."

His letters and papers from prison movingly display the development of some of the most provocative and fascinating ideas of 20th century theology... and his HOPE.



A GREAT READ WHILE WAITING
AND A CHRISTMAS GIFT, TOO.

COWS LOVE PUMPKINS RECYCLE YOURS!

Bahr Farm Pumpkin Feast
Saturday, December 7th
Time: 9 AM - 12:00 PM

Location: 973 W. North Bend Rd.
Cincinnati, Ohio, 45224



Keep your old jack-o-lanterns and festive gourds out of the landfill and bring them to Bahr Farm instead! We will accept your pumpkins in any condition (as long as they are NOT painted or otherwise treated) and either compost them or feed them to our cows. Families are welcome to stay and watch as the cows gleefully gorge on gourds.



GREAT LAKES PRESBYTERY NEWS

Founded in 1880, New Life At Calvary has served the Cleveland community for 144 years. Known for its stunning architecture by renowned architect, Charles Schweinfurth, the church continues to provide vital services and spiritual guidance.

Aug. 24, 2023, a tornado did major damage (pictured). CHPC was one of the churches to provide immediate repair money. On October 11, the National Fund for Sacred Places (NFSP) and the National Historic Trust provided \$175,000 in matching funds for restoration. New Life is one of only 24 churches nationwide to receive this honor in 2024. Pray for matching funds to be contributed. (216-391-8448 office)

CONGRATULATIONS, CATCH-A-FIRE PIZZA,

next door to the former Hollywood Theater. It celebrated its grand opening in College Hill on Sat., Nov. 9th. Co-owners Jeff and Melissa Ledford say that Catch-a-Fire Pizza is much more than pizza (salads, sandwiches, and wraps) and offers diners a comfortable, casual, and family-friendly setting that brings people together to enjoy artisan food and craft beverages/wines. Open Sun.-Th. 11-9; F.-Sat. 11-10. The deep-dish Sicilian pizza crust is a treat!



CHPC IS
"GROWING
A DIVERSE
COMMUNITY"

WERE YOU SURPRISED

... on Sunday,
Nov. 17, to see
this bevy of
beauties in
Indian attire?
The women
chose to show
solidarity and
respect for



Karoonah (center, in red) and her Indian heritage. Karoonah said, "Thanks to you all, you made me honestly feel so loved." The idea is to consider ways to show honor for the heritage of those in the congregation (Asian, Hispanic, African, Irish, etc.) and to celebrate Christ as Lord of the world.



BY CHRISTY ROEDIGER

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope – the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good — Titus 2:11-14 (NIV).

Christmas teaches us to wait. As children, we could barely stand the long days and nights until Christmas would come. But it came every year bringing sparkle and surprise and sometimes disappointment. Advent is our waiting season as we wait for Christmas. For hundreds of years, the Israelites waited for the promised Messiah – indeed, some still are waiting. But he came on that star-studded night with choirs of angels celebrating his birth to humanity. And still, we wait – for peace on earth, for reconciliation among us, for our savior's promised return.

Almighty God, in this Advent season be so present with us while we wait. We hope, we struggle, we continue to live in the hope of the Christmas miracle— Jesus' return... in our midst. Transform our hearts, grant us your peace and eyes to see your hand in in the waiting. We come hoping in Jesus. Amen.



LIVING HOPE
COUNSELING SERVICES

**HELP US WIN!
DEC. 2-12**

Scan QR code



**Help Living Hope win the
Cincinnati Gives competition !**

- Any amount donated during 12/2-12/12 helps!
- Please help share our QR code!

Living Hope Counseling Services is participating in the *Cincinnati Gives* competition which supports local non-profit organizations by providing a platform for contributions and prizes for organizations that raise the most funds. The competition runs December 2-12. Point your smart phone camera at the black & white

box above. That QR code will take you directly to the website: CincinnatiGives.ORG. Need help? Call the Living Hope office (513-371-5135). They will assist you. Please pray about about this opportunity and share the QR code with others so Living Hope can continue to impact the community and the Kingdom.



COLLEGE HILL
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

6PM - 9PM
PATRICK'S PARK
5923 HAMILTON AVENUE
12-05-2024

CHPC will be sponsoring the Baby Goats!

COMING TO LIGHT UP
COLLEGE HILL

WINTER MARKET
BEHIND BRINK'S BREWERY
12-05-2024
1618 CEDAR AVENUE
GINGINNATI, OHIO | 6PM-9PM

Christmas Eve SERVICES

5:30 PM Christmas Eve Family Service Family friendly Nursery Only	7:00 PM Handbell Prelude	8:00 PM Christmas Eve Communion Service Candlelight Service Nursery Only
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Church offices will be closed Dec. 25 and 26.
Tues., Dec. 31 is the last day for 2024 tax deductible giving.



Join Us for a
Winter Whatchamacallit
DEC. 7th
6-8:30 PM
games, music, food



3C'S
PARENT'S NIGHT OUT
DEC. 19th
6-9 PM

We weren't sure what to call it—hence the title. Join us for the annual CHPC Christmas Party for friends and family on Saturday, December 7th at 6 PM. This fun evening will feature table games and competitions designed to help you get to know others, while having fun. There will be music, food, and lots of laughter! Come and invite someone to share the fun with you. Info: Samuel Mock, smock@chpc.org or register online at chpc.org/events .

Enjoy a child-free evening of shopping, eating, or relaxing Thurs., Dec. 19th, from 6-9 PM. 3Cs' Nursery School Staff will care for and lead activities for infants through age 9 at CHPC. Older children can come as helpers. Cost: \$20/first child and \$10 for each additional child. Full payment due at Registration. Cancellations before Nov. 28 will receive a refund less any processing fees. Info: Shannon Caton, 513-592-1989, 3Cnurseryschool@gmail.com .

5 WINNERS!

TELL US ABOUT YOUR FAVORITE CHRISTMAS TRADITION

Write a brief description. We'd like to use your submission in the January BTN. Photos help your chances to win.

SEND TO StareCVG@aol.com
BY 12/15/24



OUR CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

- buy a real tree
- set the tree on 2 beer boxes on the train board
- deck the tree
- play Christmas music
- shop for gifts
- read Christmas stories
- make tons of cookies
- shop for gifts
- wrap presents...wrap more
- drive to Columbus
- find the pickle
- go to church
- read about Jesus' birth
- leave milk & cookies for dog

Have an idea for Bell Tower News?

Questions? Want to submit an article/ photo of an event? Request an report about ____? Contact the BTN Editor, Sam Stare, 513-382-5902 or email starecvg@aol.com .

LOOKING FOR BACK ISSUES OF BTN?
GO ONLINE TO chpc.org/newsevents/belltower-news

Deadline for BTN submissions is the 15th of each month.