



BELL TOWER NEWS

College Hill Presbyterian Church – MAY 2025

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

...as he passed on, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office, and he said to him "Follow me." And he rose, and followed him. Mark 2:14 RSV

REV. DR. RICHARD E. BURNETT, PH.D.,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND MANAGING
EDITOR OF THEOLOGY MATTERS

We do not know much about this man Levi. We do not know about his background, his personality, or what he was thinking when Jesus walked by. All we are told is that he was a tax collector. Tax collectors were not popular. Apparently, they have never been... Mark's Gospel focuses on the theme of discipleship. From the beginning to the end, it's about what it means to be called by and to follow Jesus Christ. And here at the outset where Jesus calls his first disciple, you would think there would be more details or some sort of explanation as to why Levi follows Jesus. But the text is silent. It offers no explanation. Nothing.

WHAT MATTERS HERE IS NOT SO MUCH THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THOSE WHO ARE CALLED, BUT THE POWER AND AUTHORITY OF THE ONE WHO CALLS. It's not primarily about the moral, spiritual, or psychological conditions of those who are called. It's about the power and authority of Him who calls, the power and authority of Je-

sus Christ. That's what's essential... Once we know Him as the Lord, He gives us all sorts of answers—more than most of us want! But until we know He's Lord, we don't know the

the scribes of the Pharisees were skeptical. They likely felt Levi's life deserved a bit more scrutiny. More attention to his moral and spiritual condition was needed. They wanted to see the audit—some sort of moral and spiritual audit—before they could accept his so-called "conversion."

We ought not be surprised. After all, he had probably ripped some of them off. So, the demand for evidence—at least some credible preliminary signs of repentance—is understandable. It's natural. Indeed, it's not only natural. It is the way of religion. Most religions have a process, a method, or system of rituals or exercises for people to express or demonstrate repentance—a change of heart and mind.

The Protestant Reformers of the sixteenth century—all of them—rejected these penitential exercises, this elaborate process of repentance and declared that we are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. THEY SAID TRUE REPENTANCE IS A CONSEQUENCE OF, NOT A PRE-REQUISITE FOR FAITH. THEY SAID WE ARE SAVED BECAUSE OF WHAT CHRIST

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 5)



right questions – about Him, about ourselves, or just about anything of importance. But knowing He's the Lord changes everything.

The scribes of the Pharisees were upset not only because Jesus ate with Levi and other tax collectors. Levi had not yet shown any signs of repentance—no confession or contrition, no sackcloth or ashes, no rending of garments or outward signs of penance. Nothing. Thus,



COLLEGE HILL
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

FOLLOWING JESUS ... AS A POPE

AN EDITORIAL BY SHARLYN STARE, CHPC ELDER



Since Easter, it's likely that you've seen hundreds of photos of Jorge Bergoglio, who died Easter Monday, April 21st at the age of 88. Most know him as Pope Francis I. The picture above captured my attention—a simple man—bare-headed, and dressed in a plain 33-button cassock.

In 2013, he was chosen Pope on the 5th ballot. That day he greeted huge crowds with, "Good evening." Instead of dispensing papal blessing, he humbly asked people to *pray for him*. The former janitor, high school teacher, and club bouncer continually departed from tradition. No fancy robes or red slippers. for



him. He would have happily worn the shirt of his favorite soccer club and plain black shoes.

He was Argentine, the first non-European Pope for almost 13

centuries. He spoke Italian (his parents' language) and seven others, plus Latin, Biblical Hebrew, and Biblical Greek—the essentials of biblical studies.

But often it was what Francis didn't do that amazed. He didn't live in a "papal cocoon"—the Pope's 12-room Vatican apartment. He chose one room in a Vatican guesthouse. From there he could leave and be with "the people"—especially those in need—the suffering, the grieving, and the poor anywhere.

He used technology to share Christ's love. For example, shortly after he became Pope, he joined more than 3 million in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil World Youth Day. The jumbotrons on the beach enabled him to bring Christ's message of hope to whole new generations — and they loved him for it.



He loved them and it showed. He lived "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for



the kingdom of God belongs to such as these" MARK 10:14.

Many of his colleagues could not

understand his denial of privilege nor his passion to "be with people and *feel* their real needs" even at personal sacrifice.



On the day he died, the Pope rose early

and, in his last moments on earth, FaceTimed with Catholics sheltered in one of the few remaining churches in Gaza. Since 10/7/23 when Hamas invaded Israel, he had phoned them daily at 7 AM to encourage them in their faith and humbly asked for their prayers.

ON EASTER MONDAY, APRIL 21, 2025,
THE VATICAN ANNOUNCED

"Dearest brothers and sisters, with deep sorrow I must announce the death of our Holy Father Francis. At 7.35 AM this morning, the Bishop of Rome, Francis, returned to the house of the Father. His entire life was devoted to service to the Lord and His Church.

He taught us to live the values of the Gospel with fidelity, courage, and universal love, especially in favour of the poorest and most marginalized. With immense gratitude for his example as a true disciple of the Lord Jesus, we commend the soul of Pope Francis to the infinite, merciful love the One and Triune God."

[He followed his Lord to Heaven.]

CHRISTY ROEDIGER RETIRED FROM A CORPORATE CAREER IN HUMAN RESOURCES (HR). SHE PRAYED FOR GOD TO “DIRECT HER STEPS IN HIS SERVICE.” LITTLE DID SHE KNOW THAT WOULD INCLUDE A “FRONT-ROW SEAT” IN THE MEDICAL COMMUNITY AS SHE TRAINS TO BE A HOSPITAL CHAPLAIN. SHARE IN THE DRAMA AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR MINISTRY SHE EXPERIENCES—THE JOYS, LOSSES, LAUGHTER, AND “PRAYER LESSONS” THAT SHOW GOD’S LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS TO ALL GENERATIONS AT ALL TIMES.



2ND IN A SERIES

BY CHRISTY ROEDIGER, CHPC ELDER

A chaplain is to be a calming presence as they meet with those who are suffering. Christ’s disciple Peter taught us to “be clear-minded and self-controlled so that [we] can pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers a multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:7b-8). Somehow that calming presence of God’s Spirit is received by hurting people, and it helps.

I was invited to minister to a woman who had a surgical procedure and was just coming out of anesthesia. She was moaning loudly, crying out, and also shouting at the medical people who were trying to help her. So, I began to pray as I went to her bedside. I introduced myself, ignored her behavior, and began to stroke her arm. I murmured softly to her that God loves her and that He’s with her. I didn’t do anything drastic or say anything

particularly wise. But as my calm and quiet presence was near her, and I invited the Spirit to minister to her, she quieted a bit. She never totally settled, but she seemed to become a bit more comfortable and less miserable.

The medical staff later told me that she had a prescription drug dependence, and they believed that her actions were part of her attempt to get more pain medication.

I don’t know, perhaps God is the only one who really knows, but I do know that person was in pain—even though I am not certain of what kind of pain. God knows and loves her. My job isn’t to judge or really understand—just to be the calming and healing presence of the Divine with people.

And don’t we each have our pain place? A tragedy in our past, a bitter defeat, disappointments, sickness, loss. This world is full of all kinds of opportunities for pain, and it is the Divine within each of us as believers in Jesus who can minister the balm of God Almighty as we “live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28 NIV).

One night as I was meeting with a patient and her husband. A nurse

interrupted us. She asked that I follow her to be with a different family whose their loved one had died very suddenly. The plan had been to move the woman to hospice care the next day. Instead, she died while her family was visiting. They were shocked, disappointed, and angry. Those first moments as they dealt with their new reality after their loved one passed from this life to the next were rough.

It wasn’t eloquence or great wisdom that they needed. Silently, I focused on the peaceful, calm assurance of who I am in Jesus Christ. In a situation that doesn’t seem very peaceful, as a Chaplain I have the privilege of reflecting Christ to those in need. It is his calming presence that makes a difference for people whether or not they know him. I have a “front row seat” as God helps those who mourn breathe a little deeper, relax, and keep going—as he did over 2000 years ago.



A CHAPLAIN IS A CALMING PRESENCE TO THOSE IN NEED.



WHO WILL YOU NOMINATE TO LEAD YOUR CHURCH?

BY ELDER BONNIE MACK

VICE-CHAIR CONGREGATIONAL
NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Presbyterians have both the privilege and responsibility of recommending fellow covenant partners to guide our congregation as we seek to “honor God by growing a diverse community of Jesus followers.” The Church Nominating Com-

mittee (CNC) relies on your input to select candidates for leadership roles who will serve the church at this time in our church history.

Please pray for wisdom and discernment as you consider persons, including yourself, who God might be calling to serve as an Elder, Deacon, Trustee-Administrator, or the 2026 Church Nominating Committee (CNC) at this time. You may propose any covenant partner (member) of CHPC, submitting as many recommendations as you like. The Church Nominating Committee (CNC) covets your help and moreover, your prayers for this process.

The CNC asks the staff and the congregation to recommend individuals to be church officers. The Officer Roles and Responsibilities

and the Officer Nomination form can be found at

chpc.org/nominate/

Paper forms are also available in the literature racks (Sanctuary front door and Atrium entry).

You may contact any of the CNC members: Ann Klusmeier (chair), Jinda Bowerman, Brenda Clark, Greg Fischer, Bonnie Mack (Session rep), **PICTURED**, Ellen Murphy (Deacon rep), Nate Smith, Steve Telecsan.



PLEASE PRAY WITH US FOR THE CHURCH, FOR THE CNC, AND FOR THOSE WHOM GOD CALLS



PREPARE NOW. SAVE THE DATE

**Parent & Youth Mental Health
Retreat: Theme “What IF”**

*Fri., July 18th, 6–9 PM and
Sat., July 19th, 10:30 AM–2 PM*

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. Join the Family Ministries Team who are building on that awareness and prepare for a transformative weekend retreat in July.

This retreat is designed for parents and youth to explore the “What IF” moments of life—our fears, doubts.

Lex Bowerman, the Events Coord. for the CHPC Family Ministry Team, reports on a similar retreat held in April. It was shared

by students, adult leaders, and counselors/interns from Living Hope Counseling Services.

The focus was on “What If?” — *Trusting God with our thoughts & feelings*. The group explored how God helps us navigate big feelings and tough thoughts. The group learned how God’s truth can replace fear and anxiety with courage and peace. The two Key Scripture Verses were “Do not be anxious about anything...” (Philippians 4:6–7) and “We take captive every thought...” (2nd Corinthians 10:5).

Students participated in indoor and outdoor group activities, character-building lessons, and reflect-

ed on their God-given superpowers: the unique gifts God placed in them to serve and shine. Students went home with their very own “character cape,” a powerful reminder of their worth and purpose in Christ!

WHAT STUDENTS SAID ABOUT THE TIME: “I didn’t know I could talk about this stuff with God” and “I liked learning how to stop my mind from racing.”

PARENT FEEDBACK: “Thank you for creating a safe space for my child to talk and grow.” “This was needed more than I knew.”

LEADER INSIGHT: “Watching kids discover God’s truth about themselves was beautiful and powerful.”

Mark Your Calendars! Please pray for the Parent-Youth Mental Health Weekend Retreat July 18–19, 2025. Who know where Christ will lead?

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1.)

DID FOR US on the cross, by Christ's righteousness, which he imputes or reckons to us, and we receive—not by works or merit, or by cooperating with God's grace— BUT PURELY AND SIMPLY AS A GIFT, A GIFT OF GRACE.

I once had a student who was shocked to hear this. He said: "In my church you gotta get folk *lost* before you get 'em *found*. You gotta make 'em feel *bad* before you make 'em feel *good*. You gotta make 'em feel guilty, needy, desperate, or insecure before you can convince 'em they need a Savior. You gotta turn up the heat and make 'em squirm so the Lord can save 'em and then straighten 'em out."

Sure, you and I can change in some ways by conditioning ourselves. We can lay down the law for others and even for ourselves and demand compliance. And I do not suggest circumstances may not require it. We may even get results. We may even be successful in modifying the behavior of others or our own. But such measures will never truly change anyone's heart or mind. They will never yield true repentance because true repentance, the Bible teaches, is a gift of grace.

[The Apostle] Paul says, but only "godly grief" leads to repentance (2 Cor. 7:10f). True repentance comes only as a consequence of knowing, first and last, that we are loved by God. Grace comes first. Love comes first. That is why [John] Calvin says, "Repentance not only follows faith, but is also born of faith." Calvin then adds this remarkable claim: "There are

some, however, who suppose that repentance precedes faith, rather than flows from it or is produced by it as fruit from a tree. Such persons have never known the power of repentance." Thus, for Calvin, the power of repentance is born of grace, flows from grace, and is fueled by grace.

True repentance, Scripture teaches, is a gift. It does not come as a consequence of hitting rock bottom; discovering our true needs or limits, the depths of our misery, despair, or depravity. And it certainly does not occur by being shamed or threatened with punishment. It comes by encountering the love of the Lord Jesus, just as Levi did. It comes by encountering the power and authority of Jesus Christ...[and] takes a miracle—the miracle of God's grace. It comes as a consequence of knowing that we belong to God and are loved by God.

Repentance in the New Testament is not so much a matter of sackcloth and ashes as it is joy and celebration. This is also why repentance so often leads immediately to parties or celebrations. Yes, I said parties! ...Many look at Presbyterians and say we are party-challenged, party-inhibited, lacking



in celebratory spirit. It is not true. It is a caricature. We can have parties—"decently and in order," of course! ...But we celebrate by giving glory to God, by praising God, and by living a life of gratitude. We celebrate "by glorifying God and enjoying him forever," which means the Christian life is not about striving to earn our salvation—or even about our salvation at all! It's about responding in gratitude to God for his grace and mercy! ... Yes, there is still striving. Yes, there is still work. But for those who have experienced "the power of repentance" that Calvin talks about, the motivation is completely different.

So what's the point? The point is parties are appropriate. Parties celebrating God's grace and mercy, the forgiveness of sins, and our callings, the fellowship we have in Christ, God's "Yes" to us in Jesus Christ—such celebrations are entirely in order. In fact, if we don't celebrate such occasions, there likely is something wrong with us and our critics are right to call us smug, dour, or "the frozen chosen."

Yet, the New Testament does not suggest the Christian life is simply a perpetual party. No, the Christian life includes work, plenty of work. Have you noticed how often in the New Testament Jesus gives people something to do immediately after meeting them? Jesus tells the paralytic. "My son, your sins are forgiven. Take up your pallet and go home." He tells Levi, "Follow me." Few people meet Jesus in the New Testament without being given something to do. The Christian life is not just about justification or sanctification. It is also about vocation ... [Following Jesus as LORD!]

EXCERPTS USED BY PERMISSION. For the full text of Dr. Bennett's article, go to www.theologymatters.com/articles/ [Dec.2, 2024]. Founded in 1994, *Theology Matters* equips, encourages, instructs and inspires the Reformed-Presbyterian family and the broader Church. It bears witness to the truth of Jesus Christ and demonstrates that theology does matter. When properly understood it makes a fundamental difference in the way we think and live.



THINK SUMMER FUN AT CHPC



CHPC Connections Camp 2025

June 23-27, 9 AM-12:30 PM

Campers: K to GRADE 6

Apprentice camp staff

7th to GRADE 12

ONLINE REGISTRATION OPEN NOW

<https://chpc.org/CAMP/>



3C's Summer Camp 2025

July 28-31, 9:30 AM-12:00 PM

Age: 2.5 to 9 yrs. Held at 3Cs Nursery School at College Hill Presb. Church.

Cost: \$70/first child, \$10 discount for each additional sibling. All children must have emergency information on file before attending the camp.

FULL PAYMENT IS DUE AT REGISTRATION. Cancellations before May 31st will receive a refund less any processing fees.

ONLINE REGISTRATION NOW

<https://chpc.org/3CS-CAMP/>

TELL ABOUT A 2025 GRAD IN YOUR FAMILY

NURSERY SCHOOL TO COLLEGE

Register your grad. They'll receive a certificate and a gift.

www.chpc.org/graduation

Provide: 1. Graduate's full name.
2. Graduating from (which school, grade and what degree).
3. If going to college or a career, provide basic details—for example, Cincinnati State, Assoc. Degree; P&G Advertising; etc.
Let us know who in your family is staying for lunch.

EVERYTHING IN ONE PLACE: CHPC.ORG/SWIM



Children & Teen Day Lessons:

10-11 AM; 11 AM-12 PM; 12-1 PM

at North Hills Swim Club

WEEK #1: June 23-27

WEEK #2: July 14-18

WEEK #3: July 28-August 1

MINIMUM AGE IS 5 YEARS OLD.

Adult and Evening Lessons:

6:00-7:15 PM

at Twin Towers' Connection Pool

Week A: July 7-11

Week B: July 21-25

CHPC MINISTRY RECEIVES TWO NATIONAL GRANTS

For 49 summers, the CHPC Swimming Ministry has been "saving" children and adults by reducing drownings in Greater Cincinnati. We anticipate teaching nearly 500 swimmers in 5 weeks and equipping 80 staff with Christ-centered relational skills that last a lifetime. We have received over \$7000 from two major foundations for scholarships for underserved and under-represented children and teens. Plus, we hope to receive private donations from those who share our passion for "saving" children. JOIN OUR PRAYER TEAM. Call 513-382-5902 for more information. We need you.



NEWS FLASH: All our American Red Cross adult and children's swim lessons include training in water safety, including what to do (and not do) if someone is in trouble. **Henrietta Goolsby**, a regular CHPC attender and adult swim student, was on the walking trail around Winton Woods Lake. She saw a woman fall off a paddleboard into the water. The woman was a poor swimmer, her companion in a row boat was no help. Henrietta immediately called 911. The Park Police in a speedboat responded and retrieved the woman and her paddleboard. The Fire Dept. came, as well. Henrietta's actions saved at least one life that day. *Alleluia!*



CELEBRATE 50 YEARS OF COLLEGE HILL'S REVITALIZATION

May 31, 2025, 10:30 AM-4 PM

KICK OFF PARADE AT 11:00 AM

It's a full day of celebration for the whole family. Contact hannah.stanchfield@chcurc.com for more details! After the parade, head over to Patrick's Park, where the fun continues with: Face Painting, Balloon Animals, Carnival Games and Prizes, Raffle Items, Rock Climbing Wall, Kona Ice, Streetpops, Business Bingo, Trackless Train, Vendor Market. Stick around for even more community fun, including live music from local artists to keep the energy and fun going.



BY CHRISTY ROEDIGER

At the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, the Levites were sought out from where they lived and were brought to Jerusalem to celebrate joyfully the dedication with songs of thanksgiving and with the music of cymbals, harps and lyres. Nehemiah 12:27 (NIV)

At one point in history, the Israelites were conquered and taken to Babylon. After 70 years, they began to return to Jerusalem, and upon arriving they found their city wall had gone into terrible disrepair. The book of Nehemiah tells about how they rebuilt the wall. This was an important way that they demonstrated their reclamation of Jerusalem and showed their neighbors they

were home, once again ruling Israel. They planned and had a huge celebration of this success for everyone in Jerusalem.

In this season, many of us are planning graduation celebrations, birthday or anniversary parties, perhaps welcoming a new child into the family – we have all sorts of things to celebrate in this life! A celebration might be a phone call to tell what's happened or something you include in a lunch with a friend. Celebrating is part of what God does, and he even promises a celebration with us in heaven. God loves when we celebrate the lives that he's given us. Celebrate well and exuberantly!

Almighty God, sometimes I don't take the time to celebrate the steps in my life or joyful happenings. Grant me the eyes to see what you are doing in my life and help me invite my friends to celebrate with me – even a small victory. Grant me joy in the moments and creativity to celebrate well for God's our glory in Jesus. Amen.



Thursdays, 10 AM at CHPC

June Elwood (513) 205-7991
or Gwyn Spindel (513) 761-7185
for weekly details

A caring fellowship group of social knitters and fabric arts women who use their talents for the benefit of others. In its 18th year. Open to the community. "A great place to go and unwind."

Have an idea for Bell Tower News?

Questions? Want to submit an article/ photo of an event? Request an update 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/BTN

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



COLLEGE HILL
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

JESUS ANSWERED,

"I AM
THE WAY
AND
THE TRUTH
AND
THE LIFE."

JOHN 14:6

PRACTICING THE WAY

BE WITH JESUS • BECOME LIKE JESUS • DO AS HE DID

REV. DREW SMITH & SAMUEL MOCK

EASTERTIDE PREACHING SERIES

Before those who followed Jesus were called Christians, they were called *followers of the Way*. This is because Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." In this series we will focus on what it means to truly follow Jesus and how to cultivate a life centered on Jesus and the Kingdom of God.

April 27—Apprentice to Jesus

Matthew 4:18-20; 16:21-27; 13:44-52

Being an apprentice to Jesus may be more than you signed up for, but it's the only way to grow in your personal relationship with Christ. An apprentice is someone who has committed to following Jesus by willingly giving everything to God for his kingdom purposes. In fact, Jesus makes a distinct difference from those who claim him and those who follow him (Matthew 7:21-23).

May 4—COMMUNION

Being/Abiding with Jesus

John 15:4-11

Abiding with Jesus is easier said than done. In a world of distraction, entertainment, and pleasure, it is far easier to run to the meaningless things in life. Yet Jesus calls us to

abide in him. So what does that mean, and what are the practical ways to do it? What are the benefits of abiding?

May 11—Becoming Like Jesus

Romans 12:1-2 and Eph 4:17-32

The disciples' lives were changed by abiding with Jesus—some instantly, some over time. God the Holy Spirit produces the fruits of the Spirit in the transformation process.

May 18—Doing as Jesus Did— UP, IN, and OUT **ONE SERVICE**

GRADUATION SUNDAY, Luke 6:12-19

Overwhelmed? Learn from the life of Jesus—his relationship with God, the Father (UP); his 12 disciples (IN); and with the crowds he told about the Kingdom of God (OUT). How can you deepen your relationship with God, and with an inner circle whom you equip to be disciples. Build them up in Christ. Join together to discover the needs of your community.

May 25—Doing as Jesus Did— More than Food —**PENTECOST**

and **REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY**

Luke 15:1-2; Mark 2:15-22; Luke 19:1-10
Jesus regularly ate with sinners. The Pharisees hated it, but sinners came to know the Lord in the midst of it. What things are you already doing, like eating, that are opportunities to meet those who don't know Jesus?



JESUS UNIV. DANCERS OF ALL AGES

YOU ARE INVITED TO THE CITY
GOSPEL MISSION's 2025

PRINCESSES BALLET RECITAL

May 10th at 4:00 PM

at **Landmark Baptist Church**
1600 GLENDALE MILFORD RD.

Anyone may attend.

Come cheer the dancers on!



ONE SERVICE SUNDAY,
MAY 18, 10:30 AM

Graduation Sunday

Outdoor Worship at the CHPC
parking lot (weather permitting).

LUNCH- Grilled burgers & hot dogs.

Bring a side dish. Let us know who
will attend at chpc.org/graduation.

