# BELL TOWER NEWS

College Hill Presbyterian Church – JUNE/JULY 2026

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


# Plan Summer Time with God or Not

*God never takes a vacation. He always wants to spend quality time with us. Growth in Christ doesn't happen naturally: it happens intentionally. Consider the possibilities if this summer you plan time with God.*

*By Lisa Watson, New Life Magazine*

In 1972, Gordon Dahl declared in his book Work, Play and Worship in a Leisure-Oriented Society:

*"Most middle-class Americans tend to worship their work, to work at their play, and to play at their worship. As a result, their meanings and values are distorted. Their relationships disintegrate faster than they can keep them in repair, and their lifestyles resemble a cast of characters in search of a plot."*

Ouch! Those words may have been primarily written with American readers in mind, but we know they apply to a far greater audience than that. Many years ago, I copied this quote onto a page in the back of my Bible along with other notes and thoughts that have challenged and impacted me over the years. This one continues to be a great reality check in the midst of all the comforts, distractions and society-driven priorities that surround us.

God has given us 24 hours each day to use. If you are into time management skills you may well have, at some stage, tried to track where your time is spent on a daily, weekly, monthly or even yearly basis. So, what was the first activity you subtracted from your time? I'm guessing it was the large block dedicated to work or education which, for most, consumes the greatest single percentage of our waking hours. Where do we go from there? We may factor in holidays, sports and other extracurricular activities, family time, nurturing friendships, and somewhere down the list we may or may not mention church, ministry, mission and our dedicated time alone with the Lord.

I wonder, do we have the same diligence, commitment and attention to detail in our worship and service for the Lord that we do in meeting our boss or teacher's demands and expectations? What about holidays? Do we ever consider the possibility of a quiet retreat away from distractions to dig deeper into God's word and listen for the Spirit's leading and guiding in decisions and direction for our lives? When our work demands, we find ourselves staying late, starting early and going the extra mile for special projects and important events with other things taking a back seat. We may even skip meals and sleep less but do we also, consciously or unconsciously, put our time spent with the Lord and in His word on hold? In the assessment of our days it is good to ...

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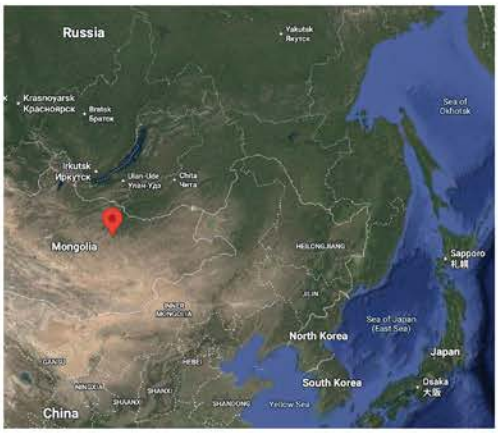
# "HOW I SPENT MY SUMMER VACATION"




## JUNE 8-JULY 13, 2026

**CINDY CARLSON,** who teaches teaches English as a second language to internationals, is going to equip and certify other teachers to

do the same thing. The only difference is that she's doing it as part of a team in the capital of Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar, 6400 miles from Cincinnati, OH. She flies Delta to Incheon, South Korea and then Korean Air to her destination.

Ulaanbaatar has many facets of a modern city about the size of Singapore or Monaco (1.67 million). It is one of 100 cities with the youngest population— about 63 % of its residents are younger than 35 years old. [No wonder that qualified teachers are needed.]

The city was founded in 1639 as a nomadic Buddhist monastic center and has been in its current location in the Mountains of the Gobi Desert since 1778. 46.3% of those over age 15 identify as "irreligious." 89.1%; Buddhist, 5.4% Shamanist, 3.3%; Christian, and 0.9% Islamist.

Cindy will have friends on the ground to welcome her and she'll be in the city for the annual Naadam Festival of wrestling, horseback riding, and archery. She plans to watch, not participate, and to enjoy the wonderful countryside!

SOME TRAVEL. OTHERS AT HOME. THE CALL IS THE SAME: LOVE ONE ANOTHER & GLORIFY GOD.

## JUNE 11-20, 2026

**CHPC's KENYA TEAM** heads to Africa to distribute "Delivering Dignity" feminine-care kits to school girls; provide motorcycles to pastors to help them travel to and from the communities where they minister; visit orphans and providing female goats to them for milk and breeding; and provide Bibles to the congregations visited.

This trip builds on multi-year relationship with with Pastor Moses and brothers and sisters in Christ in rural parts of Kenya. We share God's love and grace with them as they share it with others around them.

**Rev. Samual Mock,** the Team leader (pictured with his wife Elizabeth, a CHPC Deacon) said, "As we prepare to leave, we hope that readers join us as prayer partners. Many have asked me about the new Ebola strain and if it will keep us from going on our trip. No. Kenya has no confirmed cases. We covet your prayers for God's continued provision for our Kenyan brothers and sisters and our team, that we may stay healthy on this trip. Pray for our team to seek God's glory more than comfort, pursue love over ease, and grow from our interactions with one another and with our brothers and sisters in Kenya. I hope for memories that last many years, new visions of what God is doing around the world, and to connect with a part of my heritage I've not known. Enough from me hear from my amazing teammates for this trip. Here are their requested prayers and hopes."

**Elizabeth Mock—**Pray for our team's safety, cohesiveness, openness to what God will do through us, for us, and for the people of Kenya.

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COLLEGE HILL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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**Elizabeth Mock** (continued) I'm hoping for continuing faith growth, learning, appreciation of other cultures, and resting in the goodness of God.

**Ondari Nyakundi**—(CHPC Deacon) Please pray for our safety and for the impact we and those we meet would have: that we would have open hearts, that we would give freely, receive deeply, and return changed. My hope for our time in Kenya is for real connection, real change, and real joy for everyone we meet.

**Susan Johnson**—(Digital disciple of CHPC and Samual Mock's mother) My hope is that others will feel the Love of Jesus Christ through me. May the Team change lives for the better... our lives as well. I ask for prayer that I develop a clear, confident voice to speak and share the Gospel. May our Team know God's protection and well-being during our travels and stay in Kenya.

**YOU ARE INVITED!**

**SUNDAY, JUNE 28, 11:45 AM**

**KENYA TEAM LUNCH, DEBRIEF & PHOTOS**

**CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP AREA**

## College Hill Gardeners Bloomin' Good Sale.

The first Saturday in May was CHG's Annual Plant Sale on the patio of Brinks Brewing Co. Plants grown from seed and dug from members' gardens were sold at good prices. Christ Community in College Hill provided the truck and helping hands. Over $5000 in profits, plus new members joined. C.H.G. meets the first Tues. 7PM most months *at C.H. Presbyterian.* Come have fun beautifying and "growing" the community. Take garden tours, learn secrets of success, celebrate God's Creation & host Wee Patch Festival Oct.10 (11-3). INFO: CollegeHillGardeners@gmail.com

# QUIZ: HOW MANY CHURCHES ARE THERE AT 5742 HAMILTON AVENUE?

*BY NIKKI MCKENNA, CHPC FAMILY MINISTRIES DIRECTOR*

IT'S A TRICK QUESTION. There is only one Church—Jesus Christ's Church . However, as of MAY 31, 2026 there are two congregations using portions of the CHPC campus on Sundays.

We welcome the Pillar of Truth Congregation, who began using the Sanctuary space for its worship service on Sunday afternoon.

Pillar of Truth's Family Ministries team will also be utilizing portions of CHPC's Learning Center (originally called the Barnabas Center) each Sunday beginning at 12:00 noon: the 3Cs Nursery School wing and the second floor rooms 201, 202, 203 and 204.

After initial discussions, it became clear that the details of sharing the space needed careful consideration by Family Ministry Teams of both congregations. They met to plan well for transitions since the departures & arrivals and classroom setup times overlaped at noontime.

RESPECTFUL SHARING—Because the two congregations' departures, arrivals and classroom setup time overlap at noontime, it is important that CHPC's Family Ministries dismiss children in a timely manner so that they can be safely picked up by parents.

As classrooms are vacated, Pillar of Truth class leaders will enter to prepare them for students range in age from nursery through high-school—approximately 90–100 students a week. Students and families will wait in the main Learning Center lobby until spaces are prepared.

Scripture counsels Christ's Church,

> *Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.* — Romans 15:7

As the Body of Christ, this sharing is a beautiful opportunity for all of us to extend hospitality, love, and partnership in ministry. We warmly welcome the Pillar of Truth congregation, its leaders, and its families into the CHPC community. We pray that this season will glorify the Lord and strengthen his Kingdom work.

We are praying for much grace, patience, flexibility, forbearance and unity from everyone involved as we work together to transition with excellence. Thank you in advance for your servant hearts, cooperation, and willingness to help create a welcoming and peaceful environment for another church family entering God's space.

Thank you again for your continued commitment to serving children and families well each week year-around. Please pray for smooth coordination, healthy communication, and a joyful partnership between ministries as we move forward together.

With gratitude and appreciation, *Nikki, Lex, Kenya, Elijah & Cora* —CHPC *Family Ministries Team*

# CHURCH STAFF CHANGES AND NEWS

THE GAINES FAMILY WITH JILL & MICHAEL IN THE CENTER

## FROM MICHAEL GAINES—CHPC'S NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It is amazing to see how God moves in our lives. For over twenty-five years, I have had the privilege of serving the Lord in various leadership positions in K-12, higher education, non-profit, and public service. Managing operations, leading teams, developing programs, and community partnerships, have all been rooted in my desire to have a living faith, a faith that moves from my head, to my heart, to my feet.

For over forty years, I have been serving God in the Church in various capacities, including preaching, teaching, and other leadership positions. Since being here at CHPC, I have been able to start my Masters of Divinity at our denomination's Flourish Institute of Theology (FIT). I look forward to seeing how God will continue to bring more growth and service for God's glory.

Joining the CHPC staff in 2023 as Property Manager gave me the opportunity to further put my faith into action while working alongside my brothers and sisters in Christ, each of whom were committed to advancing the mission and vision of the Kingdom of God. Over the last three years, I have come to realize that this is more than a job. I am blessed to work and worship at the same place!

As I move into the new role as Executive Director, I am looking forward to seeing how God will continue to lead and grow our fellowship. I am so grateful to Heather Lethander, who is passing the baton as of June 1st. She has been a mentor and a friend. She continues to pour into me and ensure that I and the church have what is need for a smooth transition. We joke with each other, saying that we both wake up in the middle of night realizing that there is something else we need to add to my transition training list. I wish her well as she moves from serving as staff to serving alongside staff.

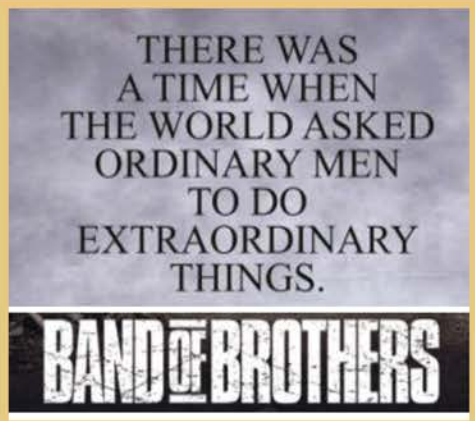
As Executive Director, I realize that I will be responsible for more than just managing an organization, I am responsible for ensuring that our operations continue to support CHPC's calling from God: *We seek to honor God as a growing, diverse community of Jesus Followers.*

I am grateful for this new staff opportunity. I look forward to growing and navigating the ups and downs of ministry.

I could not do this on my own. My wife, Jill is a Licensed Social Worker. She continues to help me pursue a healthy balance in life. My five children, including two daughters, Amia and Alexia, who also worship here at CHPC, my loving son-in-law, my five grandchildren, as well as a bonus daughter and grandchildren are all special and outstanding to me.

Please pray for me and for the whole family of faith at CHPC as we move forward together into all that God has for us, our surrounding community, and God's Kingdom. Let us all rejoice and give God the Glory for the amazing things he has done.

In His Grip, *Michael Gaines.*




That time is now! Exciting men's fellowship, Bible study and discipleship. 1st & 3rd Thursdays, 6:15 AM. Worth getting up for! CHPC's Fireside Room. Info? Barry Stare, bzuthr@me.com

# CHURCH STAFF CHANGES AND NEWS

## REV. SAMUEL MOCK— SABBATICAL 7/1-8/24

In the May *Bell Tower News,* Rev. Mock announced: "By God's grace, I've served six consecutive years on CHPC's staff. In the seventh year, CHPC's Sabbatical Policy encourages staff to take time for rest, renewal, and reflection. I will be away July 1 through August 24, 2026.

### The Background

College Hill Presbyterian Church recognizes that all staff members require time away from work to be refreshed in mind, body, and soul. Generally, time away is taken as vacation, but for our ministry staff, it may also be in the form of a sabbatical. Sabbatical is a mutual commitment in the long-term ministry of both the staff team member and the congregation. It is a time set aside for the spiritual renewal of both. The staff member benefits from the opportunity to disengage from his/her regular tasks and the rigors of twenty-four-hour-a-day responsibility. It's a time for rest, reflection, and re-creation; a time for personal spiritual growth; an opportunity for renewed vision and commitment to ministry.

### CHPC's Sabbatical Policy

A full-time ministerial staff team member who has served for a period of six consecutive years at CHPC is eligible to apply for a sabbatical to be taken in their seventh year. Circumstances such as a change in ministry focus, a building program, or other particularly demanding issues will influence the timing and frequency of leaves. By taking a sabbatical leave, the employee agrees to return to their responsibilities at CHPC for at least one year after completing the leave. Part of the approval process includes an agreement to reimburse the church for the paid sabbatical if the employee leaves prior to one year after completing the leave.

### Sabbaticals at CHPC

In our recent history, Jeanne Scheider took a sabbatical in 2015, and Drew Smith took one in 2018. Both were well-received and significant to the continuation of their ministry. With Spirit-filled anticipation, we will send Samuel Mock on sabbatical leave this summer.

### The Congregation's Role During Sabbatical

To begin the sabbatical, we will set aside a time during Sunday worship to "send out" Samuel and his wife Liz from the congregation with encouragement and blessings. We will recognize the value of allowing Samuel to be completely "unplugged" from the church while he is away. We won't call him with our feedback about the church events. If we happen to see him at the grocery store, we will be friendly and kind, as always, but will not use that opportunity to fill him in on everything that is happening at the church. We will continue to pray for him and Liz during this time of renewal in the Lord. When They return, they report in writing and in person about how they experienced the Lord's love and wisdom during this sabbatical. With excitement, we anticipate celebrating God's work in Samuel & Liz during this time of rest.

## GET HIGH ON THE HILL!

**Happenings in College Hill and how you can be involved.**

The streetscape of "The Avenue" of College Hill is changing. It's a walkable designated *Entertainment Zone.* There are new businesses, restaurants, and lots of special events and evenings of free music. Buildings like the Hollywood Theater are being renewed. Pray for and support these groups making a big difference in the community.

• **CHCURC** is a volunteer organization with oversight for the Hamilton Avenue corridor development. For details go online to chcurc.org .

• **College Hill Forum** keeps residents up to date on changes in the community, relations with police/fire and public safety, new businesses, upcoming fun events etc. It also advocates for C.H. needs with the County and City. Meetings are at 7 PM on the 4th Tuesday of each month at the CH Recreation Center on 5545 Belmont Ave. Anyone is welcome to attend.

• **CH Gardeners** meets the first Tuesday of the month at 7 PM in The Parlor of College Hill Presbyterian. Help beautify the community and get help with your own garden. email collegehillgardeners@gmail.com .

# SUMMER TIME WITH GOD OR NOT

*(CONT. FROM THE FRONT COVER)*

be reminded that the things of this world will pass away but God and His 'business' are eternal.

Though Gordon Dahl's quote was written 52 years ago, nothing has really changed - indeed, it may now be on steroids! I find it quite easy to identify this problem in the world at large or in those around me. My greatest challenge is taking stock of my own life and honestly answering the question,

"Is there anything in that statement that is true of me?"

We, as Christians, are not immune to getting our priorities wrong. Certainly, work is necessary and important. In fact, II Thess 3:10 says, "...if a man will not work, he shall not eat." We also know that exercise, holidays and downtime are worthwhile and valuable for our bodies, minds and spirits. I Tim. 6:17 tells us that "...God richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment," but reminds us in I Tim 4:8 that "physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come." Paul underlines this important truth in Col. 3:17: "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks to God the Father through Him" and again in his letter to the Corinthians, "So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God"—I Cor 10:31.

By God's grace, the pages of the calendar of this summer are waiting to be written on. What will they hold? What story will they tell of how we used our time, energy, money and resources? Will they reveal that our work, our play, and our worship have all been lived out for the glory of God? May our prayer be one of desire to live each day we are given as a sacrifice of praise that channels all the glory to God. It belongs to Him alone!

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LISA WATSON writes for *New Life Magazine* – nlife.com.au. The original title of the article is *A LINE FROM LISA ON HOW WE USE OUR TIME.*

FOR IDEAS - Go to Google.com and type "Spend time with God this summer."

**The Bell Tower News article deadline is the 15th of the Month.**
Submit an article or photo of an event. Request more information?
Contact Editor Sam Stare (513-382-5902) or email starecvg@aol.com .

*BY CHRISTY ROEDIGER, ELDER*

"Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."

—Matthew 22-21b (NIV)

Many of us are familiar with this passage where the religious leaders were trying to trick Jesus, but Jesus answers brilliantly and confounds them. So, what about us? Do we know what goes to Caesar (our government) and what goes to God? Perhaps the government is easier to figure out. They collect tax when we purchase stuff and send us very serious notices about taxes that are owed. But what about God? Do we owe God? Does God expect a certain amount? How do we truly give to God what is rightly to go to God?

Almighty God—You alone own the cattle on a thousand hills. In the end, all Creation is by you and of you and for you. Would you please direct each of us to be the giving people you created us to be? Would you please guide us to honestly and cheerfully give what is yours in a way that will glorify your name and accomplish your purpose in our world. We thank you for Jesus's teaching and pray always in his name. AMEN

*BY PASTOR DREW SMITH*

In the study of the Book of Mark, God brings big changes through Jesus' ministry. Let's explore how we need to prepare for the transformation he brings.

**June 7 - Mark 8:27-9:50 - The GOAT**

Jesus is the Greatest of All Time! He is worthy of the entirety of our lives. He shows us what it means to be great, and he transforms us to be great, like him.

**June 14 - Mark 10 - The Servant**

Jesus's view of the world differs greatly from human aspirations. We like to hang out with the popular people, but Jesus hung out with the lowly. Jesus lifts up the servant as the pinnacle of human life. We tend to lift up the rich and the famous. Let's learn how to live according to Jesus's values.

**June 21 - Mark 11 - Jesus Cleans Things Up**

When Jesus visited the holy place in Jerusalem for the last time, he made some challenging comments about how much it needed cleaning. The religious leaders and organizations were not doing what God wanted done. May we be open to Jesus cleaning us up as a church so that we are doing what God wants us to do, how God wants us to do it.

**June 28 - Mark 12 - All In**

It's been said that Jesus is Lord of all, or he is not Lord at all. Jesus is not just our Savior. He is our Lord – our leader. We are wise when we give every aspect of life to his control.

**July 5 - Mark 13 - How to Prepare for Jesus's Return**

Jesus is coming back and he wants all his people to be prepared. He tells us what to look for and how to be ready for his return.

**July 12 - Mark 14:1-50 - Priceless Devotion**

We don't waste anything when we are devoted to Jesus. It is always worth it to live totally for him.

**July 19 Mark 14:51-15:41 Costly Salvation**

Jesus is the only one who pays the full price for the rescue of the world. Marvel at his total dependence on the Father as he descends into the depths of death.

**July 26 Mark15:42 -16:8 Jesus is Lord – So What?**

Jesus's resurrection is more than a precious moment or inspiring story. Jesus has conquered death and demonstrated that he is Lord of all. How does this earth-shattering truth change our lives?

## SONLIGHT POWER FUND-RAISER SERVES IN MANY WAYS

The SonLight Power mission returned to its College Hill roots with a social event for friends old and new at Brink on Hamilton Avenue on May 21. What an evening of connection, conversation, and community!

"Friend-Raising" events are great ways for SonLight Power supporters and trip alumni to gather and introduce new friends to the mission. Meaningful conversations and new connections form around shared stories of equipping communities with the light of Jesus (the Son) and the light of the sun (solar power). Attendees were able to catch a vision of future trips and projects.

*THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO CAME OUT AND MADE IT A FUN NIGHT!*