

Pastor's Message
1st Quarter 2019 Newsletter
St James UCC

In Mark's Gospel we read about a paralyzed man who was carried on a stretcher by four friends in the hope that Jesus might pray for him:

¹A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. ²So many gathered that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. ³Some men came, bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four of them. ⁴Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus and, after digging through it, lowered the mat the paralyzed man was lying on. ⁵When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven..." ¹¹I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." ¹²He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!" (Mark 2:1-5, 11-12, NIV)

*As Adam Hamilton points out in his book, **Unafraid**, Matthew also tells the story (Matt. 9:1-4). Interestingly, neither account of the story mentions that the paralyzed man asked for help. But clearly his friends cared enough to make sure he got in front of the healer from Nazareth. Because of their faith, Jesus said not the man's faith, but that of his friends—the man was healed. We all need friends like that. At [our church], we call them 'stretcher bearers.' Stretcher bearers are the handful of people who love you so much they will be there for you, carry you when you can't walk, and stand with you through thick and thin. But in some ways, though it sounds trite or cliché, the only way to have a friend (or stretcher bearer) is to be one.*

***This is what church is supposed to look like:** not just people worshipping together, but people **in relationships** who are:*

- ***volunteering together,***
- ***growing together,***
- ***studying together,***
- ***and playing together doing life together in a vibrant web of community.***

*In a very real sense, the entire New Testament can be read as an instruction manual for how to live together in Christian community. (Emphasis added, Hamilton, *Unafraid*, p. 127)*

As we enter another New Year celebrating the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ, what better way to honor him than to resolve to truly be His Church? This shouldn't be confused with the silly, folksy resolutions that we pretend to make, but rather an honest, heartfelt commitment.

Relationships are essential for a church to thrive – not just with family or our friends, but **everyone, unconditionally**. Our volunteering must be truly **selfless**, without the need to be noticed or recognized, but done for Christ. Our growing may be difficult, but should be seen as **crucial**. Studying together should best be viewed as **necessary part** of our growth, and never an "option." Our playing together needs to reflect our Christ-commitment as well.

I invite you to rediscover the true church with me in 2019!

Blessings,
Rick

Important Future Dates at Ridgeville

Tuesday, 1/1/2019 – Happy New Year

Sunday, 1/6 – Holy Communion, 9am

Monday, 1/14 – Consistory, 7pm

Sunday, 1/27 – Covered Dish & Annual Congregational Meeting, noon

Monday, 2/11 – Consistory, 7pm (Tentative; Emergency only)

Wednesday, 3/6 – Ash Wednesday; Lent begins

Monday, 3/11 – Consistory, 7pm

Sunday, 3/31 – One Great Hour of Sharing special mission offering

Monday, 4/11 – Consistory, 7pm

Thursday, 4/18 – Maundy Thursday/Last Supper Communion, 6:30pm

Friday, 4/19 – Good Friday; Egg coloring at church, time TBA

Saturday, 4/20 – Holy Saturday; Egg Hunt, 1pm

Sunday, 4/21 – Easter; Holy Communion, 9am

1st Quarter 2019 Helpers, Birthdays & Anniversaries at Ridgeville

1/6 – **Acolyte:** Alaina McDonough

Liturgist: Eric Sees

Greeter: Julie Sees

1/13 – **Acolyte:** Eric Sees

Liturgist: Keith Gibson

Greeters: Charlie & Cindy Gerst

1/20 – **Acolyte:** Alaina McDonough

Liturgist: Alaina McDonough

Greeter: TBA

1/27 – **Acolyte:** Eric Sees

Liturgist: Craig Reinaker

Greeter: Julie Sees

2/3 – **Acolyte:** Alaina McDonough

Liturgist: Eric Sees

Greeters: Brian & Sherri Witmer

2/10 – **Acolyte:** Eric Sees

Liturgist: Keith Gibson

Greeters: Fred & Martie Geringer

2/17 – **Acolyte:** Alaina McDonough

Liturgist: Alaina McDonough

Greeters: Keith & Brenda Gibson

2/24 – **Acolyte:** Eric Sees

Liturgist: Craig Reinaker

Greeters: John & Andrea Stine

3/3 – **Acolyte:** Alaina McDonough

Liturgist: Eric Sees

Greeter: Cindy Cavanaugh

3/10 – **Acolyte:** Eric Sees

Liturgist: Keith Gibson

Greeter: Craig Reinaker

3/17 – **Acolyte:** Alaina McDonough

Liturgist: Alaina McDonough

Greeters: Jack & Nancy Sees

3/24 – **Acolyte:** Eric Sees

Liturgist: Craig Reinaker

Greeters: Charlie & Cindy Gerst

3/31 – **Acolyte:** Alaina McDonough

Liturgist: Eric Sees

Greeter: TBA