

# Operation Christmas Child



THE VINE FELLOWSHIP CHURCH'S NEWS

# TVE News

Because 2020 was such a mess, we didn't get the opportunity to gather and pack Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes. Instead we packed 50 boxes virtually. In past years our shoeboxes have gone to Bolivia, Columbia, Venezuela and Burma. This year our boxes went to a "Hard to Reach Country". Large swaths of the globe are hard to reach with the Gospel due to cultural or geographic barriers. Many who live in these areas are unreached peoples—ethnic groups who may have never even heard the Name of Jesus Christ! But specially packed shoebox gifts—some of which are assembled through Build a Shoebox Online—provide ease of access through customs and give local believers a culturally-sensitive way to share God's love. Many of these believers do so at great personal cost and despite fierce opposition to their faith. In partnership with these faithful Christian brothers and sisters, Samaritan's Purse has penetrated some of the darkest corners of the globe, distributing shoebox gifts like yours to more than 50 hard-to-reach countries since 1993.

When I sit back and think, if we hadn't sent those boxes even though we didn't physically pack them, there are people who would never hear the good news about Jesus Christ. Hopefully next November we can gather again and physically fill shoeboxes, but know that your donation may change someone's life in a very dark place.



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**All Sunday Morning services will be held via the Youtube channel The Vine Fellowship in Copley.**

## Pastor's Pen

Dear Members and Friends of The Vine Fellowship Church:

What can be said about the year, 2020, we have just experienced? I think I have taken off a few years of my life expectancy due to the stresses and strains that have abound. It is a year, I pray, that none of us ever have to experience again.

I want to thank you all for your support, encouragement, and understanding as it relates to the life and ministry of our church. It broke my heart not being able to be by the bedside of those who passed away in 2020 or visit people in their homes, hospital, nursing homes or senior living residencies. And so, phone calls and the outside gatherings that took place on the side lawn of the church were the best we could offer.

I am grateful to Eastminster Presbytery for providing for our church and any others who desired, a subscription to Zoom. This will continue in 2021. This provided our leadership the opportunity to hold Zoom Session Meetings, along with other Team Meetings, the Thursday Men's Bible Study, and a monthly Congregational Gathering that began in November.

We give thanks that vaccines are being made available and pray that everyone will have the opportunity to be vaccinated. Since my immune system is compromised due to being prediabetic and because of the health issues due to Lyme Arthritis that I battled from October 2018-July 2019, I will be first in line to take the shot when it is available. It is my prayer that you and those you love will have a healthy, happy, and virus-free New Year.

And so, as we begin another year, I leave you with a poem written by Robert Browning entitled *The Year*.

*The Year is closed, the record made,  
The last deed done, the last word said.  
The memory alone remains  
Of all its joys, its griefs, its gains.  
And now with purpose full and clear,  
We turn to meet another year.*

May God bless you and yours in 2021.

Yours in Christ and on the Journey together,

*mark*

# Worship Opportunities

## **Sunday, January 3<sup>rd</sup>    2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Christmas**

**Communion will NOT be Celebrated**

11:00 a.m. Worship Service

Scripture: Acts 9:1-9

Sermon: "Starting Over" Elder Larry Vincent, preaching

## **Sunday, January 10<sup>th</sup>    Communion, Baptism of the Lord**

11:00 a.m. Worship Service

Scripture: Jeremiah 29:11-13

Sermon: "2021 Has to be Better than 2020, Right?"

## **Sunday, January 17<sup>th</sup>    2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany**

11:00 a.m. Worship Service

Scripture: Matthew 6:7-13

Sermon: "Who is this God we Worship?"

(A Sermon Series: Connecting with God in 2021)

## **Sunday, January 24<sup>th</sup>    3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany**

11:00 a.m. Worship Service

Scripture: Psalm 8 & John 14:1-7

Sermon: "Finding God, God Finding Us"

(A Sermon Series: Connecting with God in 2021)

## **Sunday, January 31<sup>st</sup>    4<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany**

11:00 a.m. Worship Service

Scripture: Ephesians 4:4-6 & Matthew 28:19-20

Sermon: "One God in Three Ways of Existence"

(A Sermon Series: Connecting with God in 2021)

**NOTE: Until further notice, all services will be live streamed on YouTube.**

**Search @ The Vine Fellowship in Copley. If you subscribe to the page, it will make it easier each Sunday to log on. Just click on Subscribe and you will be all set.**

## With Sympathy



Sympathy of the congregation is extended to the Smith, Tran and McGill family on the recent death of Nancy Smith. Nancy died on December 17, 2020.

## Offering Envelopes

For those who use or would like to use offering envelopes in 2021 please contact Dick Hillebrand (Stewardship & Finance Chair) or Stew Buchanan, Treasurer. You can also call the church office (330-576-6608) and speak with our Administrative Assistant Audrey Nolte.

## Session Highlights

- Session approved that Communion will be observed the first Sunday of the month in 2021 (including virtual) unless the pastor is away, then that month's Communion will be observed the first Sunday the pastor is back.
- The Personnel and Leadership Team reported that a 90-day review will be conducted in the New Year with our new Administrative Assistant, Audrey Nolte.
- Treasurer Stew Buchanan reported that the financial books for 2018 & 2019 are to be reviewed in the next few weeks.
- The weekly Devotions and monthly Congregational Zoom Gatherings were discussed and will continue in the New Year.
- Session approved the 2021 Zoom Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, February 28, 2021 at 1 p.m. The 2020 Annual Report and Financial Report will be sent to those who have email and to all others hard copies will be mailed.

# Financial News

To date we have received 20 pledges totaling about \$76,000. Thanks to all of you who have responded! If you have not sent in your 2021 pledge yet, we ask you to please do so as soon as possible!

Dick Hillebrand - For the Stewardship and Finance Team



# Prayer Concerns/ Bible Studies

**Pray for our military:** Paul Jones - Air Force

**Please continue to pray for:** Jacob Jaworsky, Kim Smith, Pete & Margaret Jones, Dr. Bud Younkin, JC Crawford, Frank Weaver, Steve Rowland, Pat Lally, Shirley Gibson, Evelyn Bell, David Cook, JoAnn Marcinkoski, Mia Wilson, John & Eileen Baker, Gary Robertson, Stephanie Bankey, Danielle Porter, Marilyn Warner. The distribution of the Coronavirus vaccine, Those who have lost their lives and homes to Hurricanes and wildfires. , All of those who are infected by the Coronavirus, The medical staff treating those infected, Members in Senior Living Facilities, Unrest and killing in our country and around the world, Racial reconciliation, Refugee crisis around the world, Syrian Refugee Educational Initiative, The Middle East, Local Missions: Love Akron, The Well C.D.C., Truly Reaching You, Missionaries Mark Hare - and wife Jenny Bent (Costa Rica) and Elmarie & Scott Parker (Lebanon/Syria), Patras & Naomi Rahmat (Missionaries to Immigrant Students and Refugees in central Ohio), President elect Joe Biden and his cabinet. The Persecuted Church,

**Men's Thursday Morning Bible Study**

Every Thursday morning a group of men of all ages are currently meeting on a Zoom call at 6:45 am for Bible study and fellowship. If you would like to join this study, please contact Keith Morgenstern at [keith.morgenstern@hotmail.com](mailto:keith.morgenstern@hotmail.com)

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**The Women's Bible Review  
Fellowship, Tuesday Club, Af-  
ternoon Circle, WNGS**

The above Bible Studies are not  
meeting currently.

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## Grant Awarded

Once again, our church has been blessed with a grant from the Mills Foundation. Paul and Thora Mills were faithful members of our church and established a memorial foundation. Our church is one of the organizations/institutions that is to be remembered. Each year, since the foundation started to distribute money in 2003, our church has been the beneficiary of a grant. At the Foundation's meeting on December 18<sup>th</sup> we were gifted \$5,000 to be used for the purchase of equipment that we are using each week to live stream our worship services. To date, we have received a total of \$169,200. What blessings we and our ministry have received over the years as a result of Paul and Thora's philanthropy.

## Daily Bible Readings Continued?

Mark has graciously provided for us weekly/daily Bible readings organized around themes over the past year. Have you found these helpful and did you use them? We gave him a bit of a break during Advent by providing on-line daily scriptures and devotionals that we subscribed to from *Christianity Today*. Would you like to continue to receive Mark's devotionals in the new year?

Please respond to [tvfcopley@gmail.com](mailto:tvfcopley@gmail.com) or Pat Franklin to let us know your preferences.

Many followers of Jesus subscribe to a variety of on-line devotionals. You may have one that you like. At the church we have provided *Our Daily Bread*. Some of you find it worthwhile and even have copies mailed to your home. Another biblically faithful resource is [ScriptureUnion.org](http://ScriptureUnion.org) that goes through the Bible in three years. Thousands of Christians have found this resource profitable over time. It offers an entry level daily scripture with commentary called Discovery and a more advanced one called Encounter with God. This ministry is worldwide and in addition to encouraging Bible reading has children's ministries in many countries.

Meeting God daily is a key to discipleship. Make it a habit and you will find inspiration and insight for your walk with God.

## New Year Reassurance

Happy New Year! I don't know about you but I sure am glad to see a new year! I know we have all been touched by the pandemic in some way over the past year. I personally lost three family members. Two to COVID and the other to cancer but all three were in assisted living facilities so I never saw them again after March 9th. I know that 2020 has changed us all in many ways. Our lives will never be the same again. I remember in 1999 when all we heard about was Y2K and how the computers might all shut down at midnight and we had better stock up on supplies and food just in case! Well, that never happened fortunately, but we sure could have used that toilet paper and rice we had stored in our basement this year, right?? :) We certainly never expected what March of 2020 was going to bring us and we don't know what is in store for us this year either but what we DO know is that our Heavenly Father already knows what lies ahead and if we have put our hope and faith in Him, then we don't have to worry. One of my favorite old hymns is I Know Who Holds Tomorrow by Ira Stanphill. The words are: "I don't know about tomorrow, I just live for day to day. I don't borrow from the sunshine for its skies may turn to gray. I don't worry o'er the future for I know what Jesus said. And today I'll walk beside Him for He knows what lies ahead. Many things about tomorrow, I don't seem to understand. But I know who holds tomorrow, and I know who holds my hand." I look forward to this new year. I look forward to seeing all of your faces again in worship on Sunday morning. Until then, I will continue to walk beside my Savior, holding His hand and trusting Him to guide me through each day.

Kay Belser—Director of Music and Ministry

## THE VINE FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

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Phone: 330-576-6608

### ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

**tvfcopley@gmail.com**  
**www.thevinefellowshipcopley.org**

*As a caring Christian community, The Vine Fellowship Church welcomes all people as we proclaim, witness and teach the good news of Jesus Christ through worship, prayer and service.*

## Prayer Meeting



We are inviting the congregation to join in a weekly time of prayer and reading from God's word beginning at 7:30 pm Monday evening. An outline will be available via the prayer chain. If you're not on the prayer chain contact Pat Franklin at  
[pjfranklin.820@gmail.com](mailto:pjfranklin.820@gmail.com).

**PLEASE NOTE: IF  
THOSE OF US WHO  
HAVE BEEN AT THE  
CHURCH ON SUN-  
DAY MORNINGS  
LIVESTREAMING  
THE SERVICE ARE  
NOT PERMITTED TO  
DO SO, PASTOR  
MARK WILL STILL  
LIVE STREAM  
FROM HIS HOME AT  
11 A.M. SUNDAY  
MORNINGS.**

### *The Vine Fellowship Church*

*Worship begins at  
11:00 am.*

Mark T. Ruppert - Pastor  
Kay Belser - Pianist and  
Director of Music Ministry  
Audrey Nolte - Administra-  
tive Assistant

## Plain English

God will let you get away with it until suddenly...