



## **SCIENCE HILL COMMUNITY CHURCH**

Pastor Jonathan Truax

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## **2024 ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**

Sunday, January 28, 2024

After Worship

### **REPORTS FOR 2023**

We encourage all members of Science Hill Community Church to attend this Annual Meeting. Please bring this report of last year's activities and ministries of 2023 with you for reference. Questions about specific items should be directed in advance to the person or committee that has submitted the report. The reports are in no particular order.

### **AGENDA**

- Call to Order: 2023 Consistory President Gary Casto
- Invocation: Pastor Jonathan Truax
- Science Hill Community Church Statement of Faith: Congregation  
*"Science Hill Community Church exists to joyfully share the good news of Jesus Christ and lovingly care for others."*
- Minutes of the Previous Meeting: Secretary/Treasurer Theresa Marks
- Financial Report
- Report of the Audit
- Announce new Consistory President and Vice President
- Corporation Business: 2024 Consistory President  
(The church's corporation status was last renewed May 2021 and due in 2026.)
- Unfinished Business
- New Business
- Adjournment
- Benediction

# IN 2023

## **STAFF**

Pastor: Jonathan Truax  
Secretary/Treasurer: Theresa Marks  
Pianist: Becky Dixon / Interim Nancy Springer  
Custodian: J & D Cleaning / Josh Hornyak  
Director of Children's Ministry: Nancy Harsh  
Director of Youth Ministry: Nicole Harsh

## **CONSISTORY**

2<sup>nd</sup> Mondays at 7:00pm

Elder ('24) Gary Casto (term 2)  
Elder ('24) Mark Haidet (term 2)  
Elder ('23) Derek Swegheimer (term 2)  
Elder ('23) Jim Hornyak (term 1)  
Deacon ('24) Jan Raber (term 1)  
Deacon ('24) Mike Wilks (term 2)  
Deacon ('23) Craig Reay (term 1)  
Deacon ('23) Richard Berube (term 1)  
Jr. Deacon ('23) Becky Hornyak

## **BUILDING AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE**

Meeting when needed.

Chairperson: Rose Wade  
Custodian and/or Building Supervisor  
Josh Hornyak, Jim Hornyak  
Housekeeping: Charlene Boyce  
Ray Boyce  
Gary Casto  
Ray Courtwright

## **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays at 7:30pm

Chairperson: Holly Swegheimer  
Nancy Harsh           Lynn Penturf  
Nicole Harsh           Peggy Hawkins  
Jenn Wilks             Blanche Moore  
Mike Wilks

## **CHURCH FAMILY COMMITTEE**

Meetings as needed.

Chairperson: Lori Reay  
Cindy Casto  
Janna Gowen  
Keely Snode  
Holly Swegheimer

## **OUTREACH COMMITTEE**

4<sup>th</sup> Mondays at 6:30pm

Chairperson: Laura Courtwright  
Jan Berube, Richard Berube  
Ben Favazzo  
Craig Reay  
Cherise Kennel  
Tami Theisler

## **PASTOR/PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

Quarterly meetings as needed  
Chairperson: Marsha Graham  
Mark Haidet  
Tami Theisler

## **TRUST FUND COMMITTEE**

Quarterly meetings as needed  
( '23) Mary Steckel  
( '24) Theresa Marks  
( '25) Tami Theisler  
( '26 ) Debbie Haidet

## **WORSHIP COMMITTEE**

3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays at 6:30pm  
Chairperson: Marsha Graham  
Charlene Boyce  
Gary Casto  
Connie Poto  
Jan Raber  
Debbie Truax

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Bob Poto  
Marsha Graham  
Debbie Haidet  
Theresa Marks

## **CHURCH HISTORIAN**

Tami Theisler

The Pastor and Consistory President are automatically included in each committee.

# **PASTOR'S REPORT**

## **2023 Review**

**By Pastor Jonathan Truax**

What will you remember about 2023? In the world's headlines, Artificial Intelligence (AI) became a household word. Taylor Swift was named Time's Person of the Year. Hamas invaded Israel, unleashing horrific attacks which led to a punishing retaliatory war against Gaza. A wave of antisemitism subsequently spread through the western world. Russia continued its war against, while political dysfunction in D.C. continued to vex our nation. Abortion rights and recreational marijuana were enshrined in Ohio's constitution. The Cleveland Browns had a winning season and made the playoffs.

Personally, my family's life was marked by transitions in 2023. My brother-in-law Jim passed away in the fall due to brain cancer. My parents moved into a skilled nursing facility and my dad suffered a stroke on the last day of the year. My wife Debbie healed from her breast cancer surgery and underwent radiation. We both dealt with Covid and other illnesses. I published a new book providing commentary on every chapter in the New Testament. In the community, I was elected to be co-President of the Alliance of Churches and helped bring direction to that organization.

Science Hill Community Church celebrated its 190<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2023 and experienced both victories and losses throughout the year. We said good-bye to some faithful saints who had been spiritual leaders of our congregation for decades. We confirmed new teen members through confession of faith. A long-standing need of grounds maintenance was accomplished as a major project in the fall. 190 "random acts of kindness" cards were distributed throughout the congregation to help mark our anniversary in a positive way. For as much as we ended 2022 in the red, we finished 2023 in the black after a fiscally responsible 10% budget cut.

In my pastoral leadership of the church, I completed my preaching series through the Book of Romans in the spring and began the Believe series in the fall. We said good-bye to church pianist Becky Dixon Dickerhoof and welcomed Nancy Springer to that role. We worshiped outdoors on several Sundays over the summer. The Sunday School of Science Hill studied cults, other denominations, and church history. A new initiative to connect with spiritually-curious members of our region through texting was begun through a partnership with Gloop/"He Gets Us." Meanwhile, major upgrades to our church web page and greater social media engagement were pursued, and some new technology was purchased to improve our worship services. You can read through the other reports in this annual report to see what projects were undertaken by various committees.

As one year ends and another begins, we realize once again that God is faithful through it all. Whether in good times or bad, in times of trouble or ease, the words of this prayer chorus we sing at Science Hill always remains true: "Through it all, through it all, I've learned to trust in Jesus, I've learned to trust in God. Through it all, through it all, I've learned to depend upon His word."

*- Pastor Jon*

## CHURCH SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR 2023

Enrollment for January 1, 2023: 168

New Members: By confirmation: Gavan Harsh, Cason Gowen, Jessica Hornyak; by transfer: Jeff Hahn

Deaths: Bill Hoover, Donna Hoover, Betty Montgomery

Withdrawals / Removals: none

Enrollment for December 31, 2023: 169

Baptisms: none

Confirmed: Gavin Harsh, Cason Gowen, Jessica Hornyak

Attendance: Science Hill offered in-person Sunday worship at 10:10am as well as live-stream worship weekly. The average Sunday in-person attendance was 52 and live-stream was 23.

### Meetings – Consistory

- \* Eleven regular meetings held on the second Monday of each month at 7:00pm
- \* One meeting cancelled (June 12 – no quorum)
- \* Three special meetings held
  1. March 5 regarding volunteer custodial duties
  2. June 25 to pay bills after no meeting on June 12
  3. October 30 to prepare slate of officers after the congregational vote on October 29

### Meetings - Congregational

- \* The Annual Congregational Meeting was held on Sunday, January 29, 2023.
- \* A special Congregational meeting was called for Sunday, October 29, 2023 for the purpose of amending the church constitution regarding nominees of church officers.
- \* The Congregational meeting held on Sunday, November 19, 2023 was to vote on church officers for next year and the proposed 2024 church budget.

Mailings: Annual Reports: 16 mailed at 84 cents = \$13.44

Newsletters: 141 at 63 cents = \$88.83

136 at 66 cents = \$89.76

3 large envelopes Kindness Club = \$4.08

*-Submitted by Theresa Marks, Secretary/Treasurer*

## Sunday School End Report for 2023

Enrollment on January 8, 2023 ..... 17

Enrollment on December 10, 2023 ..... 17

Highest Sunday attendance ..... 27

(February 5, 2023)

Lowest Sunday attendance ..... 11

(February 12, 2022)

Average attendance ..... 18

Sunday School was held 45 Sundays

Total offering collected ..... \$519.25

*-Submitted by Jenn Wilks, Sunday School Secretary*

**ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**  
**SUNDAY, JANUARY 29, 2023 Following Worship**

Members Present: 36

Begin Time: 11:45am and End time: 12:16pm

Derek Swegheimer, the 2022 Consistory President, called the meeting to order and asked Pastor Jon Truax for prayer.

The minutes of the previous Annual Meeting held January 30, 2022 were read by secretary/treasurer Theresa Marks. Derek asked for any comments or questions. There were none. Minutes stand as written.

The financial report ending December 2022 were addressed as printed in the Annual Report. Derek asked for any comments or questions. There were none. The financial report stands as written.

Jim Hornyak did an internal audit of the church financial records and found them all accounted for. He is highly satisfied and thanked Theresa for her detailed work.

At this time 2023 Consistory President Gary Casto continued the meeting. He thanked Derek for his last two years as president of Consistory.

The first order of business was to open the meeting in the name of the corporation. It was so moved by Derek Swegheimer and Craig Reay. If needed, this is where the renewal of the corporation would take place. The next time for renewal will be in 2026. Hearing no other business, the meeting in the name of the corporation was closed with motions by Rose Wade and Holly Swegheimer. Motions carried.

Unfinished Business: None addressed.

New Business: None addressed.

Pastor's Comments:

\*Pastor Jon handed out a list to all of upcoming church and church-related events for our calendars for 2023.

He addressed these events in further detail centering around the following: The Outreach Committee, Mission Marlinton, Youth, Worship opportunities, Christian Education, and Alliance of Churches.

\*He encouraged everyone to consider serving on a committee or an event they are interested in.

\*For our 190<sup>th</sup> church anniversary, each committee will try something new, such as the Worship Committee will open the Bible on the altar each Sunday to that day's Scripture. A new altar Bible will be dedicated on February 26<sup>th</sup> that was donated by Beverly Karlen.

\*Mission Marlinton is fairly new to the community which unites pastors in the Marlinton School district for projects, missions and events. It is led by Rev. Ed Carter of the Marlboro Christian Church. They are looking to complete mission projects this year at each of the school buildings in Marlinton. They also offer food assistance for children through the Blessing Bags, and food baskets for families in this area, as well as offering upcoming community worship opportunities.

\*Pastor Jon asked Laura Courtwright of the Outreach Committee to offer some insight from her committee for the upcoming year. She said their goal is to make our Lord accessible to everyone through activities. They pray about each event and how it will bring people together for the Lord and to our church. She highlighted several upcoming events such as Life Skills with gardening, canning, and budgeting. Science Hill will once again participate in two local parades with a float; offer the 2<sup>nd</sup> Food and Flea event; have another cookie walk; and discussing other possible extra events such as Christmas in July, a prayer booth at Carnation Days in the Park, and a Christmas light show. She said that anyone can help on her committee, or just offer ideas, or help on specific events.

\*There will not be a regular Vacation Bible School event this year, however, they plan to expand on the three movie nights scheduled that center around the theme of games. There will be ministry and crafts for the children at each one.

Gary asked if there were any other items to be discussed at this time. None presented. He thanked everyone for staying for this annual meeting stating, "This is our church family!" Pastor Jon offered a closing prayer. The meeting was adjourned with motions by Craig Reay and Susan Thomas. Motions carried.

Gary Casto, 2023 President  
Theresa Marks, Secretary/Treasurer

**To the 2023 Consistory Members:** Thank you all for your time, work and support this past year. We had many things to address and you all had great ideas on how to accomplish those goals. It has been a pleasure to work with you.

*-Gary Casto, 2023 Consistory President*

### **SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**

Sunday, October 29, 2023 after worship

\*38 members present

\*Called to order by Consistory President Gary Casto at 11:30am

\*Purpose: To consider proposed amendments to the church constitution:

Article XII Elections, section 1,2,5,5a, 5b, 5c (nominations)

Article VII.c section 3

Article XI section 2

\*Proposed: Consistory would nominate candidates to be considered for office with an up or down vote.

Minimum required number of Elders/Deacons to serve on Consistory will decrease from 4 to 3.

No questions or comments offered. Ballots passed out, counted, results: Passed with 35 yes votes, 3 no.

Meeting adjourned at 11:40am.

### **CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**

Sunday, November 19, 2023 after worship

PURPOSE: Vote on the proposed church 2024 budget; election of Elders, Deacons, Jr. Deacon, and Trust Fund member

MEETING BEGAN: 12 noon with 30 members present

#### **Results:**

Elders elected: Jim Hornyak, Craig Reay

Deacons elected: Richard Berube, Ray Courtwright

Trust Fund member elected: Lori Reay

Jr. Deacon elected: Liz McDonald

2024 church budget: passed unanimously

### **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

A decision was made to reestablished the Finance Committee at the February 2023 Consistory meeting since the interest rates have increased for savings and other accounts. The committee included Bob Poto chairperson, Marsha Graham and Debbie Haidet as financial secretaries, Theresa Marks as secretary/treasurer, Gary Casto as president of Consistory. They prepared recommendations to Consistory for CD's established with Stifel and with Citizens Bank. They also made recommendations for the church budget operating expenses that does not include employees.

*-Submitted by Theresa Marks*

## OUTREACH COMMITTEE

This year's members included Laura Courtwright (chairperson), Richard Berube, Janice Berube (secretary), Craig Reay, Ben Favazzo, Cherise Kennell, Tami Theisler, Gary Casto (Consistory President), and Jon Truax (Pastor). Laura and Janice were nominated to keep their positions for next year as chairperson and secretary, and they agreed to do so.

The Outreach Committee sponsored a mission of the month program. The first figure represents donations from the congregation. In 2023, \$100 is added monthly from the budget.

**January-** 4 Smiths on a Mission \$644 + \$100

**February-** Akron/Canton Food Bank \$418 + \$100

**March-** Mission Marlinton \$360 + \$100

**April-** Mount Union CRU \$403 + \$100

**May-** Alliance Pregnancy Center \$272 + \$100 + Baby Bottle Challenge \$453

**June-** Men's Challenge \$345 + \$100

**July-** N.A.M.I. \$385 + \$100

**August-** Feed My Sheep \$435 + \$100

**September-** Community Families in Need \$350 + \$100

**October-** Christmas Mission to our Shut-ins \$303 & \$100

**November-** S.A.M. Center / Legacy of Honor \$385 + \$100

**December-** Samaritan's Purse \$350 + \$100

### 2024 missions were recommended by the committee and approved by consistory:

January – 4 Smiths on a Mission

February – Alliance Community Pantry

March – N.A.M.I.

April -Alliance Visiting Nurses/Hospice

May – Alliance Pregnancy Center

June – Men's Challenge

July – Marlin & Minnie Snyder Foundation

August – Mission Marlinton

September – Mount Union CRU

October – Feed My Sheep/Clothed in Righteousness

November - Sam Center / Legacy of Honor

December -Asst. Living/Nursing Facilities/Shut-Ins Christmas

The Outreach Committee also sponsored the following events: Game Night in March; a float in the Marlboro Township Parade in May; Food and Flea event in June; a float in the Carnation Day Parade in Alliance in August; Dinners before Marlinton home football games in August, September, and October; Trunk or Treat with Barcus Acres in October; and in December we had a Cookie Walk, Caroling, and Delivering Christmas Gifts to our shut-ins, to Brookdale and St. Luke's nursing homes.

Also, throughout the year, members of the committee taught Life Skill classes, sent cards to individuals when prayer was requested by members of the congregation, as well as created and sold Science Hill t-shirts and hoodies, and sponsored the Random Acts of Kindness cards.

*-Respectfully submitted, Janice Berube, Secretary of 2023 Outreach Committee*

## **PASTOR-PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

The PPR committee meets quarterly or more often as needed to discuss concerns that may affect the harmony within our congregation. Pastor Jon often bounces ideas to the group about upcoming topics and sermons to get feedback. If you have a concern, please contact Marsha Graham, Mark Haidet, Tami Theisler or Pastor Jon.

*- Respectfully submitted, Marsha Graham, chairperson*

## **HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE**

- \*We held a farewell to Becky Dixon Dickerhoof on May 28<sup>th</sup> for her years as the church pianist.
- \*We had a Graduation Celebration for Josh Hornyak (Lake Center), Madison Hammel (Marlington), and Katie Davis (Colorado State University) on June 11<sup>th</sup>.
- \*We had Confirmation on Sunday, September 10<sup>th</sup> at the same time as our Christian Education kick-off picnic. We welcomed Cason Gowen, Jessica Hornyak, and Gavan Harsh into membership.
- \*Our 50<sup>th</sup> Year Celebration was held for Patty Szekely, Theresa Marks, and Clara Blake who became Science Hill members in 1973.
- \*We had a New Members gathering on Sunday, November 12<sup>th</sup>, welcoming Jeff Hahn to our church body.
- \*Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup> we had a Science Hill Christmas family breakfast. It was a good time of fellowship and good food.

*-Submitted by Holly Swegheimer*

## **WORSHIP COMMITTEE**

The Worship Committee met 10 times in 2023 to plan, discuss and work out details for all things pertaining to worship. Each meeting allows time to review past services and give Pastor Jon the opportunity to present upcoming events and ask for input.

Here are some topics discussed in 2023: new acolyte wand was purchased and a stand was made by Bob Poto; instructional info sheets were made for worship jobs and filed in the policy book; a new (old) altar Bible was dedicated for the 190<sup>th</sup> church celebration and a new leather page marker was purchased; continued tweaking the sound and tech issues; the resignation of Becky Dixon as pianist and welcomed Nancy Springer as our interim pianist; adorning the cross with flowers on Easter; considered the "Believe" series for worship and accepted it to begin in the fall; purchased new microphones and cables for the sound system; welcomed 3 youth by confirmation; started considering renovations for the sanctuary; planned the 50 year recognition; remembered Pastor Jon and Debbie for Paster Appreciation month; discussed the Christmas Memorial tree deciding to use angels; and aid Pastor Jon in special services throughout the year.

Marsha Graham remained chairperson, Charlene Boyce became the secretary and Connie Poto organized the ushers, greeters, acolytes, and bell ringers.

*-Submitted by Charlene Boyce*



## HISTORIAN'S REPORT FOR 2023

**Births:** Parker Samuel Crum was born to Garrett and Emily Crum.

Tabitha Baxter gave birth to a baby boy, Michael Barker.

Madison Hammel gave birth to a baby girl, Novamae.

Ivy Adelaide was born to Steven and Elizabeth Courtwright

**Membership Deaths:** Bill Hoover, Donna Hoover, Betty Montgomery

**New Members:** Cason Gowen, Gavan Harsh, Jessie Hornyak by Confirmation; Jeff Hahn by transfer

**January** - Ringing in the New Year... first service of 2023 was held on January 1<sup>st</sup>. New church leaders were commissioned the following week and Community Connection started back up with three new offerings: Gospel Gang for Children, Financial Peace University for Adults & the Basic Series (Questions) for Adults & Youth. Inclement weather cancelled the January 25<sup>th</sup> Community Connection sessions, and rounding out the month the Youth Group warmed our bellies with their soup sale.

**February** - Pastor Jon continued his "Roaming Through Romans" Sermon Series. Our 190<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (1833) as a congregation was discussed and it was noted we are now the oldest church in Lexington Township. Ash Wednesday Service was held. Pastor Jon and the Worship Committee dedicated the new altar Bible and decommissioned the previous Bible that had been on the altar since 1978. The new Bible was donated by Beverly Karlen and family. A new Caregiver Support Group series facilitated by Marsha Graham was started toward the end of the month.

**March** – Jim Hornyak led a couple of worship services in Pastor Jon's absence. Charlene Boyce was honored for 20 years of service as Church Historian. She was gifted with a "This is Your Life" binder with memories of her many years here at Science Hill. There was a new Lenten Study for the Community Connection group to explore the "He Gets Us" marketing campaign. The church held a "Luck of the Irish" Family Game Night where pizza was provided and church members brought dishes and desserts to share. New directories for 2023 were also distributed.

**April** - "JESUS is my best friend - No Foolin'!!" Children's Easter Event was held. Smiles and God's Love were felt all around the event! To honor Palm Sunday, Cason Gowen had his first time as acolyte and the youth brought palms to the front of the church. Josh Hornyak thanked the church for supporting him on his mission trip to the Dominican Republic and Blanche Moore sent palm crosses to be distributed to the congregation. On Good Friday, a community worship service was held at First Christian Church that featured special music from Marsha Graham. A cross was adorned with silk flowers by the congregation to celebrate Easter Sunday. A new study of Christian Denominations was started during the Sunday School hour and Derek Swegheimer provided a sermon. Parker Samuel Crum was born to Garrett and Emily Crum. "The Basics of Vegetable Gardening" was led by Nicole Harsh as part of our Outreach Lifeskills Academy. A surprise 80th Birthday Party was celebrated for Craig Datz. The church began sending out prayer cards to those people outside of our congregation that we add to the prayer list each week.

**May** - A "Dine to Donate" fundraiser at Texas Roadhouse occurred and the National Day of Prayer was held at the Firehouse Theater. The normal election day processes were facilitated and an all-church spring cleaning and painting work day (with doughnuts) happened on location at Science Hill. The youth of the church held a lock-in event and Science Hill "Left the Building" as our first outdoor service of the 2023 season was met with 62 degree weather on a beautiful, sun shining day. Baby bottles were returned for the Alliance Pregnancy Center mission. After 6 years as our church pianist, Becky Dixon's last day at Science Hill was followed with a farewell reception in her honor. Science Hill also had a float in the Marlboro Memorial Day Parade.

**June** - Outdoor service was held. Youth going through Confirmation were given their dedication Bibles. Classes began and continued throughout the summer. The church recognized this year's graduates: High School - Madison Hammel & Josh Hornyak & College - Katie Davis. The church office was painted, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Food & Flea Event occurred. There was also an Outdoor Family movie (Jumanji) that included a children's event involving board and card games.

**July** - The Social Media Committee was formed and met to discuss ways to promote services and activities of

the church. There was another Children's Event including video games and the Family Outdoor Movie – Wreck-It-Ralph. There was a Church Picnic “Beach Party” at Sevekeen Lake, and a celebration for Dave & Becky (Dixon) Dickerhoof was held with an open invitation to the congregation at their place. Nancy Springer was guest pianist, as we continued to look for a replacement for Becky. The congregation was saddened that Bill Hoover, Donna Hoover and Betty Montgomery passed on to be with the Lord. They were long-standing members of Science Hill Church.

**August** – Another Children's Event was held including sports themed activities and Outdoor Movie - The Sandlot. Sunday Services were held outdoors. Guest pianist, Nicole Scafidi, played the keyboard as we continued to look for a permanent replacement for Becky. The “Fishers of Men” parade float was a highlight of the Carnation Parade. Granny Nanny introduced “Rudy the Rooster” during the Children's Sermon. The first and second “Duke Dinners” were provided serving food to the community on the night of the Marlinton home football games. Also, during the month the youth of the congregation provided one of the Sunday Services and Pastor Jon also facilitated the yearly open forum. Books for the new BELIEVE series were also made available. Long-time friend of Science Hill, Joesph Peters went home to be with the Lord.

**September** – The youth group had a retreat and there was a beautiful day for outdoor service that same weekend. Rally Day brought the introduction of our new sermon series titled BELIEVE and this year's confirmation class members were recognized as new members during the service: Cason Gowen, Gavan Harsh & Jessie Hornyak. Pastor Jon passed out “Random Acts of Kindness” cards and as part of the 190th Anniversary, we will work to provide 190 random acts of kindness before the end of the year. A church picnic was held in the pavilion after the Rally Day service and another “Duke Dinner” was provided to the community.

**October** - The congregation participated in World Communion Day. Becky Hornyak spoke about her mission trip to Uganda and there was a commissioning and prayer time held to send her off before the trip. The Housekeeping & Worship Committees gave Pastor Jon a gift for Pastor Appreciation Week which included a new painting for the Science Hill Room. There was another “Duke Dinner” featuring soups and a Christmas Budgeting Lifeskills Class provided by Laura Courtwright. Our 50 Year Members, Clara Blake, Theresa Marks & Patty Szekely were celebrated. Madison Hammel gave birth to a baby girl, Novamae. Tabitha Baxter gave birth to a baby boy, Michael Barker. For the Barcus Acres Trick or Treat tradition... Science Hill passed out over 200 hot dogs!

**November** - Harvest of Blessing donations were donated throughout the month from the congregation, which included 42 jars of PB & J! The children of the church brought them to the front of the sanctuary before Sunday services. The Youth Cookie Sale made approximately \$600 selling baked goods donated by the congregation during voting day. Jeff Hahn was welcomed into membership of the church. Becky Hornyak told about her mission to Africa and showed a picture show of the trip. A congregational meeting was held to affirm nominees for leadership positions next year and a vote was taken on next year's budget. The Youth Group also sold soup as a fundraiser. Derek Swegheimer led a morning service in Pastor Jon's absence and “The Hanging of the Greens” event was held to decorate for Christmas. Several men from the congregation attended a Men's Retreat at Silver Park.

**December** - Angel Tree Ornaments were offered in memory of loved ones for Advent through Marsha Graham. This year's new members lit the Advent candles throughout the month. A Cookie Walk was held for the community and carolers delivered gifts and songs to our shut-ins. Mid-way through the month, breakfast was served during the Sunday School hour and Marsha Graham and Gary Casto helped facilitate the Sunday service, as Pastor Jon was recovering from illness and provided the sermon only. Garrett, Emily and Parker Crum portrayed Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus. The tradition of ringing the church bell all day on Christmas Eve was observed and the 7pm candlelight service included the lighting of the 5<sup>th</sup> Advent candle – The Christ Candle. To close out the year Outreach held a game night including finger foods and pizza. Ivy Adelaide Courtwright was born December 8<sup>th</sup> to Steven and Elizabeth Courtwright. Big brother is Bailey.

*-Submitted by Tami Theisler, 2023 Historian*

## **BUILDING AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE**

This year has been a busy and productive year for the Building and Grounds Committee.

- \*Two work days were held this year. Part of the church office received a fresh coat of primer and paint to brighten it up. The front doors of the church were sanded and resealed. The cushions on the chairs in the chancel area have been recovered.
- \*DeHoff's Landscaping brought in topsoil and regraded and reseeded the church grounds and areas at the parsonage.
- \*The gable ends of the pavilion were vinyl sided.
- \*Roof repairs were made to the Sunday School wing after high winds blew off some of the shingles.
- \*Repairs to the exhaust vent at the parsonage were made after a heavy rain caused water damage in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor bathroom. Repairs to the drywall and priming and repainting of the ceiling and one wall are complete.
- \*The stove hood and some lighting were also replaced at the parsonage.
- \*A variety of plumbing repairs and the replacement of a toilet in the women's restroom in the Sunday school wing were done.
- \*One of the furnaces is having issues which are continuing to be addressed.
- \*We are also continuing to pursue a solution for the issues with the basement floor.

As a result of a business safety initiative by the Stark County Health Department, we received over \$5700 in equipment and supplies (free). This included no-touch soap dispensers, hand sanitizer dispensers and hand towel dispensers for all 6 restrooms, as well as the initial supplies and refills needed to fill them. Additionally we received 2 free-standing sanitizer dispensers, Lysol wipes and Lysol spray all at NO cost to the church.

A Redbud tree was planted in the back church yard by the Building and Grounds Committee on coronation day in May in honor and celebration of our 190<sup>th</sup> church anniversary.

*-Respectfully submitted by Rose Wade, chairperson*

**Thanks to all** who took part in the beautification of our church grounds this past year, whether it was mowing, weeding, trimming, spreading mulch, staining doors, or power washing. Your willingness to give of your time is greatly appreciated. With new grass planted and the yard smoothed out, it should be much easier on the body during mowing.

*-Thanks again to all, Gary Casto*

## **TRUST FUND**

In 2023 members of the Trust Fund included Mary Steckel – chairperson, Theresa Marks, Tami Theisler and Debbie Haidet. Pastor Jon Truax and Gary Casto as Consistory President, are also included in this committee. The Trust Fund met 3 times during the year and provided funds for the following: Confirmation Bibles; camperships for Gavan Harsh, Mya & Emma Harsh; mission trip for Becky Hornyak; youth van rental for a retreat; Men's retreat.

*-Submitted by Theresa Marks*

## **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

- \*The nursery has been staffed by Lynette, Becky, and Jessie Hornyak, Lynn Penturf, Liz McDonald, and Priscilla Swegheimer when needed. The nursery is open to receive little ones three years and under.
- \*Junior Church has been blessed with volunteers sharing the teaching: Cindy Casto, Janet Favazzo, Holly Swegheimer and Sheryl Dean in the spring to summer, and in the fall it has been Cindy Casto, Becky Hornyak, Lynn Penturf, Holly Swegheimer, and Derek Swegheimer. We finished the curriculum about God and started a new curriculum called Believe.
- \*The adult/youth Sunday School finished up at the beginning of the year on “The Kingdom of the Cults” taught on rotation by Pastor Jon, Jan Raber, Marsha Graham, Derek Swegheimer, and Jim Hornyak. We then went into Church Denominations. The kick-off for the fall started us with the History of the Church taught on rotation by Pastor Jon, Jan Raber, Marsha Graham, Derek Swegheimer, and Mike Wilks.
- \*Nancy Harsh (AKA Granny Nanny) has been “zooming” along with our kids in Kindness Club. They took a short break in July and started back in August. The Zoom days are Tuesdays at 7pm and are well attended. The members enjoy materials from Right Now Media, varied monthly themes, special guests each month, Granny Nanny’s puppetry, and other curriculums. Besides tuning in on their fun Zoom meetings each week, they receive all kinds of mailings of activities and encouragements. Granny Nanny also maintains a fantastic puppet ministry with “Jenny” during Sunday morning worship services.
- \*Our Wednesday night children’s ministry is called Gospel Gang. It runs alongside Community Connection and Youth Group. Our volunteers are Lynn Penturf and Derek Swegheimer. This fall has not had any children, but the volunteers are ready and willing.
- \*Our Youth Group, under the capable direction of Nicole Harsh, has wonderful helpers in Gary Casto, Mike Wilks, and Phoebe Swegheimer. Their activities have included a locally organized mission trip (Mission Marlinton), a Camping trip in Wadsworth, the church's movie nights, the Flea Market day, and many other activities. They can finance these fantastic activities with a series of great fundraisers: soups, subs, and bake sales.
- \*The Science Hill Library Committee has been going through and organizing the books. Pastor Jon and a couple of Elders are evaluating the material and recourses before more organizing takes place. Lynn Penturf has joined the committee. Jenn Wilks is the librarian.
- \*We have also added a Life Vac for the safety of our church. Lynn Penturf and Jan Raber have done a fantastic job of teaching us how to use it.
- \*We also planned summer movie nights again this year, which included VBS before each movie. We also had a Children’s Easter Event on Saturday, April 1<sup>st</sup> called Jesus Is My Best Friend ... NO FOOLIN’!
- \*Our Community Connection is meeting at 6:00pm for dinner and then starts at 6:30 for discussion. We are working through the Believe series.

2023 has been a busy year. May God richly bless you and keep you.

*-Submitted by Holly Swegheimer*

## **HOUSEKEEPING COMMITTEE**

Just like in your own home, the job of sorting and ridding the building of unused or unneeded things is an ongoing task. Decisions must be made to determine if items are suitable for use here. Other things that were done this year include cleaning the kitchen refrigerator and organizing the kitchen counter, helping paint the secretary’s office, purchasing new artwork for the 190<sup>th</sup> celebration (which was in honor of Pastor Jon and Debbie Truax), being present for work days, decorating for Christmas and undecorating.

*-Submitted by Charlene Boyce, chairman*

## **CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES 2023**

**JANUARY** – The month of January held many challenges for me, as my husband was just getting home from the hospital and 3 weeks of Rehab following a raging infection that necessitated the amputation of his right leg. It was a very challenging and emotional time, and everyone's prayers for both of us during that time were so very much appreciated! I was excited to welcome some new members to Kindness Club in January... Lexi, Mikayla, and Austin (siblings, and "distant cousins" of Morgan and Weston). We enjoyed some wonderful lessons from a Max Lucado devotion book, and celebrated "National Belly Laugh Day" by sharing some great jokes with lots of LAUGHTER (which I really needed, after feeling like I'd been through a "war" with my husband's heartbreaking health issues!).

**FEBRUARY** – We started a new book about character-building at Kindness Club, based on the book of Proverbs. For "Send a Card to a Friend Day," everyone was encouraged to give or mail a card to a friend! We had lots of prayer requests and prayed for MANY people! Puppet pal Jenny's dog "Barky" was introduced, and we watched a Douglas Talks video entitled "Choose Love" in recognition of Valentine's Day. Some "silly face" valentines were mailed to the kids, and they got to show their friends for a good laugh! Our buddy Sterling and his little sister Tori were VERY excited to introduce us all to their adorable new baby brother, Robert, who looks a lot like both of them! My grandson Gavan was our SURPRISE GUEST, joining us from Florida! We saw some great pictures and learned a LOT about manatees! Thanks so much Gavan-you ROCK!

**MARCH** – Our SURPRISE GUEST for Kindness Club during the month of March was Pastor Jon, who talked to the kids about CAMP WANAKE and all the wonderful things it offers there. Our very own Sterling, who's been in Kindness Club for years, spent three days there and absolutely LOVED it!! Everyone is encouraged to get to Camp Wanake at some point! Pastor Jon's daughter Bethany, who had been a camp counselor there for quite a few years, also spoke to the "KC kids" about it, which was great!

**APRIL** – Our big Easter event was held on April Fool's Day, April 1<sup>st</sup>, entitled: "Jesus Is My Best Friend... No Foolin'" and kids traveled to various stations (crafts, snack, games, story time) and had opportunities to earn "Bible Bucks," which they used to purchase items at a little market place filled with small toys and treats. Thanks so much to all the wonderful helpers who made that event possible! The kids and their friends who attended all had a BLAST, and left knowing without a doubt that JESUS IS THEIR BEST FRIEND!!

**MAY** – During the month of May, our SURPRISE GUEST for Kindness Club was Charlie Hoopes, who played songs for us on the piano, as well as the violin. We love having our members share their talents with us! Along with our lessons from the "Believe" series, we also enjoyed celebrating some theme days each week, and during the month of May we had fun with a "Star Wars theme" lesson ("May the FAITH be with you!") and "Turtle Day," as well as everyone being encouraged to do something KIND for their Moms for Mothers' Day!

**JUNE** – Rather than the usual VBS in the summer, there were 3 "Activity Nights" for kids, held on the same night as the outdoor movies. The theme for June was BOARD GAMES, and kids enjoyed playing Candyland, Trouble, and other games. There was a prize drawing for several things, including a giant checker game! Everyone got to make a special picture frame to take home featuring the words: "Jesus Guides My Every Move"! Our June movie was JUMANJI.

**JULY** – Our July theme was: VIDEO GAMES NIGHT and kids had a blast playing some really cool video games my son Andy provided (he owns a video game store in Salem!). He also donated some great items for the kids to take home, and "Sonic the Hedgehog" made a surprise appearance, which was a big hit with the kids! The outdoor movie that night was WRECK IT RALPH, enjoyed by all in attendance!

**AUGUST** – The theme for our children's activity night for August was SPORTS, and kids enjoyed playing Nerf basketball, baseball, and soccer. Some youth group members also helped with a basketball game of COW! We met new friends, Jack and Emily, and Jack was the lucky winner of the GIANT inflatable soccer ball he got to take home! Baseball cookies were enjoyed by all for a snack, and THE SANDLOT was the movie that night. Big thanks to all those who assisted with our fun summer activity nights! The fun "activity nights" were such a hit, we plan to do it again in 2024!

**SEPTEMBER** – For RALLY DAY in September, we were thrilled to have Cindy Casto and Sue and Sabrina Thomas put on a very fun skit at the Sunday School opening for us in keeping with the “Kicking Off Our Year With Jesus” theme, featuring Sabrina going out for a pass and catching a GIANT inflatable football! Great job Sabrina! Children in attendance received bags containing inflatable footballs and some treats, as well as a 3x5 card with a BELIEVE acronym on it to go along with the new series! The kids enjoyed playing with the footballs after the church picnic, and Caleb Hornyak was the lucky guy who got to take home the GIANT football! We started the new “Believe” series in Jr. Church and Kindness Club, along with the adults and youth. It is a wonderful study, and great way to grow in our faith together!

**OCTOBER** – In recognition of “Do Something Nice Day,” the Kindness Club kids shared some things they had done for others, which were wonderful to hear! They also completed some big KINDNESS posters, writing down some ideas of things they can do to be kind to others, which they shared with the group. In recognition of “Dictionary Day,” we enjoyed a fun game of BALDERDASH, with kids trying to guess which words were real and which were made up... they did an AWESOME job at that! We celebrated with Lincoln, who earned his green belt in Tae Kwon Do, and our SURPRISE GUEST was Lucian’s new adorable little puppy named Skippy, along with his bearded dragon, Porky.

**NOVEMBER** – During the month of November, the kids (along with help from youth group members) brought the food items that were donated to the front of the church. Kindness Club kids learned an important lesson about “The Good Samaritan,” and our SURPRISE GUEST was Becky Hornyak, who shared some stories and pictures about her amazing mission trip to Africa! She encouraged the younger kids to consider going on a mission trip when they get older, because it was an amazing experience! It was so wonderful hearing how she shared God’s love with all the children she met there!

**DECEMBER** – The Kindness Club kids had lessons in Advent and Christmas during December, and then took a short break for the holidays. Children received gift bags during Advent that contained supplies to make a “stand-up nativity scene,” along with some treats.

During 2023, there were lots of puppet skits featuring “puppet pal Jenny” during Children’s Messages in worship. Look for more of those in 2024!

Huge thanks goes to all those who supported our Children’s Ministries in any way during the past year! Your help is VERY MUCH APPRECIATED!!

*-Respectfully submitted, Nancy Harsh (AKA “Granny Nanny”), Director of Children’s Ministries*

## **WITNESS YOUTH GROUP**

Throughout the year in Sunday school, we studied topics such as Kingdom of the Cults, Church Denominations and History of Christianity. Typically, we have at least 2 youth attend and sometimes up to 6. Right now, this is the one Sunday School class option for all ages and a great way to meet and get to know people you might not otherwise cross paths with.

We had a few different studies on Wednesday nights. I have Pheobe Swegheimer, Mike Wilkes and Gary Casto as youth counselors that come and help at meetings. We started the year with a video series called “Basics” by Francis Chan. After dinner the youth stayed with the adults to watch the short video and then went to the youth room for discussion. This series covered the basics on the topics of fearing God, following Jesus, Holy Spirit, Holy Trinity, fellowship, teaching, prayer, and communion. We did this through the winter along with a book club that we tried for the first time. This didn’t really take off like I had planned but it did give a few of us a chance once a week to touch base and catch up. Winter is hard with a lot of the youth involved in spring musicals, plays and winter sports that conflict with our meeting time. This book club was my attempt to offer

another way for them to stay connected. We will try this again sometime. In the spring we started “The Case for Christ” book series by Lee Strobel. We followed along with Lee, an atheist, as he set out as an investigative journalist to disprove Christianity after his wife became a Christian. This is also a popular movie that was based on his book. This was a great series and really pushed them outside their comfort zones. Each week they had to break into small groups and do different activities and projects. Some of the things were interviewing each other following a script, acting out a scene in the Bible, create things out of clay and answer some difficult historical questions about Jesus and who He really is. At the end of the series, we watched the movie that it was based on. This is also what we based our Youth Group Church Service on. Currently we are doing the “Believe” series along with the rest of the church. The curriculum will take us on an exploration into ten key beliefs, ten practices, and ten key virtues of Christianity. Believe is a spiritual growth experience that takes you on a journey to think, act, and become more like Jesus.

Of course, a big part of our group is fundraising to do all the fun camps, activities and volunteer work. This year we had our usual homemade soup, Superbowl subs, voting day bake sale, and summer workdays. This year we added a Game Day Community Dinner and Dine to Donate bake sale at Texas Roadhouse. These fundraisers would not be possible without all the help we get from our church, family and friends. We have so many great cooks and bakers and lots of people who love to eat. LOL! For that I am grateful to you all and say a huge THANK YOU for all your support.

Some of the activities we had were game nights during the winter with food, games and ice breakers put on by Derek and Holly Swegheimer. We also had a lock-in at the church and a trip to Cedar Point.

Over the summer we had 3 youth that attended camp Wanake. We also participated in a local mission with some other youth groups called Mission Marlinton. We had about 9 that came and worked building benches, painting, and working on landscaping around the Marlinton schools. The youth group helped with the Children’s Easter Event doing things like games, timekeeper, and snacks. They also helped with the Halloween trick-or-treating hot dog giveaway.

We had Gavan Harsh, Jessie Hornyak, and Casen Gowen complete Confirmation classes over the summer and joined our church officially.

The Youth Group Camping Retreat went great. This is something they always really look forward to each year. We had 9 youth and 4 adults. I rented a van and picked the kids up on Saturday, September 2nd and then brought them back on Monday, September 4th. They were divided into 3 groups of 3, to do meals, fire, or clean-up for the day and each day that group did something different. They spent most of the time in the water swimming, boating, and fishing, but also did some crafting, volleyball and golf. We had great conversations around the fire at night and ate s’mores and some new waffle cone thing which was so good. The Fall event was attended by 9 youth. We went to Salem for a visit to “Stoneage Gamer” and Thrift Store shopping along with lunch at “Kast Iron Soda Works” and then finished it off with some games and roller skating at “Salem Fun Center”. It was a big day and I think everyone had a great time.

We try to encourage the youth and their families to come to our church-wide events such as all the outreach events, outdoor movies and community dinners. We do have a few that usually come to the movie nights and some of the outreach events. We also have Liz McDonald as our Jr. Deacon coming up for 2024 and Becky just finished serving. Gavan and Priscilla, along with Josh, help a lot with the church service streaming, and A/V stuff. Becky teaches Jr. Church for the kids, Jessie and Priscilla help in the nursery, and we have several that help in various ways for the service such as acolytes and greeters.

*-Submitted by Nicole Harsh, Director of Youth Ministries*

**SCIENCE HILL COMMUNITY CHURCH**

12316 Beeson Street NE

Alliance, OH 44601

*(Address Correction Requested)*

ANNUAL MEETING:

JANUARY 28, 2024

ANNUAL REPORTS FOR 2023



*“Science Hill Community Church exists  
to joyfully share the good news of Jesus Christ  
and lovingly care for others.”*