

# The Epistle

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St. John UCC; 409 Park Ave., P.O. Box 156; Bolivar, Ohio 44612

FRIENDSHIP•MISSION•SPIRITUALITY March 2017

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*I found the following article online and was very impressed by the clarity of the author's writing. Benjamin Corey's concepts closely parallel those of Robin Meyers, who reminds us that Jesus never taught us what to believe, but rather showed us how to behave.*



**Pastor David+**

## **There's Only Two Types of "Christian" (And You Should Be Able to Tell the Difference)**

"As one who studies culture for a living – most specifically, religious culture, I will tell you that technically there are over 40,000 Christian sects in the world. But realistically? There's only two kinds of Christian– and honestly, *I'm tired of pretending there's not.* It doesn't matter what *kind* (denomination) of Christian you are; there are still only two types: one is the member of a Christian religion, and the other is someone who is *actively living like Jesus.*

"I don't believe the word 'Christian' was ever intended to be used the way we use it in America. When it was first used, the term wasn't in reference to a well-crafted religion with a long list of tenets, but instead was simply used to describe people who actively did what Jesus said to do. Essentially, the word meant 'little Christs.'

"Christian, as the word was intended, was measurable– or at least *observable.* You could tell who was and who wasn't, and that wasn't a 'judgment' about the state of their heart, either. Being able to tell who was Christian, and who wasn't, was something one could do by simply observing their *outward* behavior. Do they follow the teachings of Jesus, or not?

"But that's not what the term has come to mean in Americanized Christianity. For many of us growing up, if you said a simple prayer at the end of a sermon and 'asked Jesus into your heart' you were automatically a Christian. Becoming a Christian was something done in secret, in the most quiet place in your heart. You repeat the words given to you and signify your transition into the group by quietly lifting your hand with 'every head bowed, every eye closed,' and at the end you're part of the group. Since becoming a Christian was internal and not external, there was really no way to know who was a Christian and who wasn't.

"It strikes me that American Evangelicalism invented an entirely new version of the Christian religion with its own concept of 'salvation,' and the consequences of this religion are dire. It has taken the message of Jesus and the biblical mandate to pattern our lives after Jesus, and in so many ways reduced it to the near-effortless act of 'accepting Christ into your heart.' In fact, it's become a bizarre religion where one can actually refer to themselves as a Christian *while simultaneously disagreeing with what Jesus taught.* That's not how this thing

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was originally supposed to work. If one disagrees with Jesus, the word Christian ought not apply.

“In Americanized Christianity we use Christian as a noun when originally, Christian was more of an *adjective*. It wasn’t so much about something you were, but was more about something you were *doing*. You were actively living out the teachings of Jesus, and this was easily observable— either you agreed with Jesus and did what he taught, or you didn’t.

“The confusion of having two types of Christian and a totally different use of the word, creates all sorts of problems. Mainly, it has the ability to lull people into the idea that they’re Christian when often they’re not— at least, not in the original sense. It also complicates things for those of us who want to teach others to be Christian, because we’re no longer able to easily do what was done 2,000 years ago— we’re not able to walk with new disciples and show them, ‘*Here is an example of Christian. Here is an example of not Christian.*’

“But to me, there are only two types of Christian, and the second one— an adjective instead of a noun, is *observable*. It doesn’t require the ability to judge the individual heart. It is not something that can only be done by a gate-keeper as if they have any power anyway. It is simply the act of returning Christian to an *adjective*, and being honest in that *it does not apply to people who don’t want to do what Jesus said to do*.

“For all the damage that Americanized Christianity has done, the foundational damage is that it has distorted the word that was first used to describe the disciples of Jesus: Christian. Instead of describing members of a religion, the word used to mean something so much more. It used to describe what people were doing, and who they were following. It used to be so loaded with meaning that the act of being Christian was totally observable and obvious to anyone around you. The reality in Americanized Christianity is that you can be ‘a Christian’ without actually being ‘Christian.’ They are two, totally distinct identities. That’s not how it’s supposed to work. Christian *used* to actually mean something, and I don’t think we should be afraid to say it.”

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Benjamin L. Corey is an author and speaker with a passion for dissecting the overlap between faith and culture, and exploring the mission of the Church. He holds a Master of Arts in Theology from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, Massachusetts, a Master of Arts in World Missions (*Cum Laude*), also from Gordon-Conwell, and holds his doctorate in Intercultural Studies (DIS) from Fuller Theological Seminary.

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March 2017						
◀ February 2017						▶ April 2017
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Ash Wednesday at <b>Zoar UCC</b> , 7pm  No choir practice	2	3 World Day of Prayer	4
5 First Sunday in Lent  <b>FareWell Dinner for Stucky's</b>	6	7 Study Group 7pm	8 Lent Service, <b>Bolivar UMC</b> , 11:30, lunch following  Choir 6:30pm	9	10	11
12 Second Sunday in Lent  Day Light Saving Time begins	13 Clothes Closet Pastor's Pantry 9:00-Noon 5:30-7:30pm	14	15 Lent Service, <b>St. John UCC</b> , 11:30, lunch following  Choir 6:30pm	16 St. Paul's Dinner 5:00-6:30pm  Consistory 7pm	17  St. Patrick's Day	18
19 Third Sunday in Lent	20 Ladies Lunch, Wendy's, 11:30am	21 Study Group 7pm	22 Lent Service, <b>Zoar UCC</b> , 11:30, lunch following  Choir 6:30pm	23	24	25
26 Fourth Sunday In Lent  <b>Bring in I'm So Lucky cups</b>	27 <b>Deadline for Easter flowers</b>  Clothes Closet Pastor's Pantry 9:00-Noon 5:30-7:30pm	28 Homeless Shelter Meal	29 Lent Service, <b>Holy Trinity RCC</b> , 11:30, Lunch following  Choir 6:30pm	30	31	Notes:

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**Communion Servers for March: Chris Carpenter**



## March Birthdays

Cathy Fenstermaker (Mar 3)	Forrest Holdsworth (Mar 19)
Paula Goudy (Mar 13)	Clare Stevenson (Mar 19)
Steffani McCoy (Mar. 16)	Josh Felgenhauer (Mar 20)
Nika Mase (Mar 16)	Dr. Darrell Filler (Mar 21)
Kyle Mizer (Mar 17)	

## Serving in March

### Liturgist

Mar 5 Ron Gauding  
Mar 12 Arline Mase  
Mar 19 Chris Berens  
Mar 26 Dale Duerr

### Acolyte

Mar 5 Hallie Carpenter  
Mar 12 Deisy Felgenhauer  
Mar 19 Max McCoy  
Mar 26 Julia Felgenhauer

### Coffee Hour

Mar 5 – Farewell Dinner  
Mar 12  
Mar 19  
Mar 26

### Greeters

Mar 5 John and Janet Stewart  
Mar 12 Bonnie McFeeders & Kathy Mizer  
Mar 19 Chris Stevenson & Ann Scott  
Mar 26 Beth & Hallie Carpenter

### Bell Ringer

Mar 5 Camden & Luke McCoy  
Mar 12 Hallie Carpenter  
Mar 19 Julia Felgenhauer  
Mar 26 Max McCoy

(Please try to find a replacement if you are unable to serve.)

Esther Simon	Scotty Trambaugh
Helen Hall	Crystal Weaver
Russell Ross	Family of Robert Vandall
Bill & Lucile Lebold	Fred Miller
Clare Stevenson	Lynn Rootring
Bob & Joyclin Ely	Barb Goldsmith (Hennis)
Linda Levengood &	John Stevenson (Clare's
brother and sister)	Jean Baker (Hennis)



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## FAREWELL DINNER

Mark your calendars for March 5, 2017 as we bid a fond farewell to **John and Wanda Stucky**. Join us for a fare-well dinner to honor their years of friendship, service, and membership at St. John. We will miss you and wish you only the best.

## NEW CHURCH DIRECTORY

### New Directory Coming – Save the Date!

On April 16 the sign up for pictures begins either on-line, or at St. John. The deadline for signing up is May 8, 2017.

On May 15 and 16 Lifetouch Studio will be taking portrait pictures for our new directory. There is no charge to our church for this service. Each family or individual who makes an appointment and has pictures taken for the directory will receive a free 8x10 photograph, a free directory and a coupon for ten dollars toward the purchase of additional pictures.

***There is no cost to the church for this service. Lifetouch earns their money through the sale of additional pictures. You are under no obligation to buy photographs.***

## CHRISTMAS 2017

Thank you to all who supported our Valentine Cookie Sale. The profit was \$108 and we are pleased. Remember **our goal is \$1700.**



In March we always hear about the Lucky Leprechauns, so we decided to focus on how “lucky” we really are. You were given a green cup with the words, **“I’m So Lucky...”** Each time you think about how lucky you are, throw a coin, or two, in the cup. On the last Sunday in march, bring your filled up to church and set it on the railing up front. Together, as a church, let’s remind ourselves how lucky we are, and then share our coins with others for Christmas 2017.

Deadline to turn in your green “I’m So Lucky Cups” is Sunday, March 26, 2017

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## “Thank You” L, H, M, J and C

I love walking into the sanctuary and looking at the seasonal window displays. Luke, Hallie, Max, Julia and Cam, thanks for decorating the window sills. We do notice what you do for us.

Looking forward to seeing the new ones! Chris Berens

## MEMBERSHIP LIST

The church office is updating all names, addresses, telephone numbers (cell and home), and email addresses. If you haven't turned your paperwork into the office kindly do so.



Congratulations to Noah Carpenter – he has been accepted into Wright State University – School of Music. He will be majoring in Music Performance.



## The Season of Lent

Lent begins on March 1, 2017 with a service at Zoar UCC at 7pm with the distribution of ashes. Weekly services on Wednesday's during Lent at 11:30am followed by lunch are as follows:

March 8 Bolivar UMC

March 15 St. John UCC in Bolivar

March 22 Zoar UCC

March 29 Holy Trinity Catholic Church

April 5 St. Paul Lutheran church

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Don't forget to set your clocks ahead one hour before you go to bed Saturday night, March 11, 2017 – the first sign of spring. Daylight Savings Time Begins on March 12, 2017!

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**EASTER FLOWER ORDERS:** The deadline for ordering Easter flowers is March 27<sup>th</sup>. We are again using Baker Florist for our Tulips, Lilies, Hyacinths, and Daffodils. 6” pots are \$10 each. Submit your payment and order form to the office as soon as possible.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Tulip \_\_\_\_\_

Daffodi \_\_\_\_\_

Hyacinth \_\_\_\_\_

Lily \_\_\_\_\_

In memory of... \_\_\_\_\_

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## St John United Church Of Christ ~ Treasurer's Report ~ January 2017

12/31/2016 Balance on hand - Checking Account	\$ 1,396.12		
General Fund Deposits	\$ 7,576.00	YTD \$	7,576.00
Other Deposits	\$138.00	YTD \$	138.00
Transfer from Money Market Acct	\$ 1,500.00	YTD \$	1,500.00
Balance and Receipts	\$ 10,610.12	YTD \$	<b>9,214.00</b>
Disbursements	\$ (7,859.42)	YTD \$	(7,859.42)
1/31/2017 Balance on hand - Checking Account	\$ <b>2,750.70</b>		

Envelope Offering	\$ 7,530.00		
Plate Offering	\$ 46.00	Anonymous Donations	
Sunday School		Miscellaneous	\$ 138.00
Total General Fund	\$ 7,576.00	Total Other Deposits	\$ 138.00

### Money Market Account Fund

<b>Memorial Fund</b> - Balance beginning of month:	\$ 43,132.55	
Check #		
Check #		
Transferred to Checking	\$ (1,500.00)	To cover funds
End of month balance	\$ <b>41,632.55</b>	
Funeral Lunch Donations	\$ 688.42	
Contribution/Check #		
End of month balance	\$ <b>688.42</b>	
Mrs. Floyd Burris Mission	\$ 750.68	
Check #		
Check #		
End of Month Balance	\$ <b>750.68</b>	
Clothes Closet Fund	\$ 753.55	
Check #		
Contribution		
End of Month Balance	\$ <b>753.55</b>	
<b>Capital Fund</b> - Balance beginning of month:	\$ 348.29	
Contribution	\$ 5.00	
End of month balance	\$ <b>353.29</b>	
<b>Savings Fund</b> - Balance at beginning of month:	\$ 63.57	
Contribution		
Interest	\$ 14.25	
End of month balance	\$ <b>77.82</b>	
<b>The Fund</b> - Balance at beginning of month:	\$ <b>40,970.29</b>	
<b>Fidelity</b> - Balance of beginning of month:	\$ <b>78,926.72</b>	

**TOTAL MONEY MARKET ACCOUNT FUND** \$ 164,153.32

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## Financial Secretary Report 2017

	January	Year-To-Date
Pledges	\$ 7,530.00	\$ 7,530.00
Plate	\$ 46.00	\$ 46.00
Sunday School		
<b>Total Offering</b>	<b>\$ 7,576.00</b>	<b>\$ 7,576.00</b>
<b>Special Offerings</b>		
Initial Offering	\$ 133.00	\$ 133.00
OCWM	\$ 5.00	\$ 5.00
Food Pantry		
One Hour of Sharing		
Neighbors In Need		
Christmas Fund		
Breakfast		
Recycling		
Rent		
School Supplies		
Donation		
Misc:		
Boiler Inspection Refund		
Funeral		
Easter Flowers		
Refund		
<b>Total Other Deposits</b>	<b>\$ 138.00</b>	<b>\$ 138.00</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 7,714.00</b>	<b>\$ 7,714.00</b>

Submitted by Financial Secretary - Paula Goudy