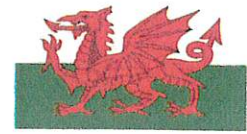


# THE ASSISTANT PASTOR

May 2024



Volume 66 Number 5



FROM THE  
PASTOR

## God's Secret Agenda

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Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God. (2 Corinthians 7:1)

The month of May brings us Mother's Day, Pentecost, graduation, and Memorial Day. All four subjects would make a worthy theme for a newsletter article. I love my mother and appreciate the devotion and love of mothers. We are all proud of our Elida High School graduates, Lexi Crider and Bryce Ballard. Gomer Church has a strong connection to its posterity, including everyone that we remember on Memorial Day. But I usually gravitate toward Pentecost, however, and I wonder why this is the case. I think it might be from an ongoing agenda, but it's okay because it's also one of God's special agendas.

That agenda is a great reason for Pentecost – meaning our holiness and sanctification. God is holy, so we must be holy (1 Peter 1:16). God wants a holiness of the heart and life which is superior to mere legalism and taboo. It is a holiness of Christian love. It is a holiness of Christ-likeness. It is a holiness of sanctification (being set apart for God's use). It is a holiness that is only possible from the workings of the Holy Spirit. We might contemplate that the Holy Spirit is first of all a "Holy" Spirit. It's the Holy Spirit - including the power and the fruits of the Spirit, that enable us to live the Christian life.

It can be frustrating to deal with someone that has their own agenda, especially if it is different than what our agenda might be. I think we will all be happier though, if we embrace God's secret agenda of holiness. Of course, it is not supposed to be a secret, but it seems that way at times, because so many people are on guard for anything said that might come across as "holier than thou." We've all learned to say "no one is perfect," and we do so rather quickly. But thanks to Pentecost, we can cooperate with God in the perfecting of holiness. Sometimes people wonder who all has the Holy Spirit. But maybe the primary concern should be "does the Holy Spirit have us?"

In Christ's Love  
Pastor Mo Dunn



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 6:30pm Bells 7:30pm Choir	2 National Day of Prayer	3	4
5 9:00am Sunday School 10:15am Worship 3-4:30pm Tea	6 7:00pm 4-H meeting	7 7:30pm Deacon & Deaconess meeting	8 6:30pm Bells 7:30pm Choir	9 6:00pm Shalom mulching 7:00pm Bible Study Ascension Day	10	11
12 9:00am Sunday School 10:15am Worship Mother's Day	13 7:00pm Trustee meeting	14	15 7:30pm Choir	16 7:00pm Bible Study	17	18 9 to Noon Recycling at Uncle Al's
19 9:00am Sunday School 10:15am Worship 11:30am Luncheon Pentecost	20 7:00pm 4-H meeting	21	22	23	24	25
26 10:15am Worship Trinity Sunday	27 9:00am Memorial Day Service Memorial Day	28	29	30	31	



## *It's a Girl!*

and weighed 7lb. 1oz and was 20 3/4 long. Proud grandmother is Carol Sunderland. Correction from last month.

Congratulations to Micah and Ellen Brentlinger on the birth of their daughter, Roberta Lou. She was born March 21, 2024



APRIL 2024

Members present: Matt Nusbaum, Jim Siefker, Bob Ritchey, Travis Watkins, Deb Thomas.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman, Matt Nusbaum. Pastor Dunn provided a prayer as well as an inspiration, stating that "A heart at peace gives spirit to the body and that peace in the heart comes from God."

The April financial report was provided by treasurer, Dina Tadana. A motion to accept the report was made and approved.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Bob Ritchey reported that the back door providing access to the kitchen had been repaired and works nicely. Matt reported that he had received a quote from Willet Houser and Associated Crafts in regards to the maintenance on the stain glass windows. A minimum repair of vent and touch up paint to the coins was given at \$54,400.00. A maximum repair quote was \$99,440.00. Since this was not deemed as a necessary form of upkeep, it was tabled.

Work day will take place this coming Saturday. Travis volunteered to get bags of mulch for around parsonage. Deb asked that the steps to the parsonage side door be repaired or replaced. It was agreed to address this as well as repair of sliding door that had been previously noted. Repair for electric sign in front of church was discussed. It was

decided to begin a fund open for contributions by congregation.

Matt will contact Aaron Crider in regards to seasonal mowing at parsonage and church.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

A motion was made to purchase 12 padded folding chairs for use in both the library and other areas of the church. Motion was seconded and approved.

A discussion was held in regards to removal of Bradford Pear trees on North side of church parking area. Bob Ritchie will check into finding someone to do this. A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. Motion approved.

Respectfully submitted, Deb Thomas-Secretary

**MEMORIAL DAY**



A Memorial Day Service will be held Monday, May 27 at the Tawelfan Cemetery at 9am. If it's raining it will be held in the sanctuary.

### **The language of lament**

Unlike nonbelievers, Christians can grieve with hope (see 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). On Memorial Day and at Christian funerals and burials, our lament is real — and it's a uniquely Christian concept, according to Pastor Mark Vroegop. "It takes faith to pray when you are in pain," he writes in *Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy*. "Belief in God creates challenging questions, and lament provides the opportunity to reorient your hurting heart toward what is true. But in order for that to happen, you have to turn to prayer. The silent treatment must end."

Vroegop, who had a stillborn daughter, says lament opens a door that leads to trust. Heartfelt lament, he says, can be brief or messy and can feel forced or uncomfortable. But the important thing is to "keep talking to God."

"Don't allow your fear, your despair or your track record of silence to cut off the flow of grace," he urges. "Your pain can be a path toward God if you'll allow lament to be your new language."



The Welsh Society of Northwest Ohio will hold a Ladies Tea on Sunday May 5th from 3-4:30 PM in the fellowship hall of Gomer Congregational Church. LuAnn Everett, a long-time collector of vintage clothing will present "The Secret World of Ladies Unmentionables." Everett will have samples of the types of undergarments worn by women in the past. She will also explain the "multi-layered" and lengthy process involved in a lady's attire. Bring a tea cup and join us for the traditional Welsh Tea. Cost is \$10.00 and reservations can be made by contacting Deb Thomas at 419-230-4344 or Sue Grusenmeyer at 419-236-0289.

You can now give to Gomer CC online through



Tithe.ly! Simply visit our website – [gomercc.org](http://gomercc.org) – and click on "Give Online" on the menu bar. You will be directed to the online giving page where you can click the link to begin your

transaction. You can make a one-time gift using the simple form at the link, or, by clicking "Sign Up" in the top right corner, you can register an account to track your giving or set up recurring transactions. You can also give by installing the Tithe.ly app on your mobile device. The "cover fees" check box will add the associated processing fees to your transaction. If you can, please consider contributing the processing fees also. You can save yourself and the church some money by utilizing a bank transfer (instead of a credit card) as these types of transactions have lower fees.

### You are my witnesses

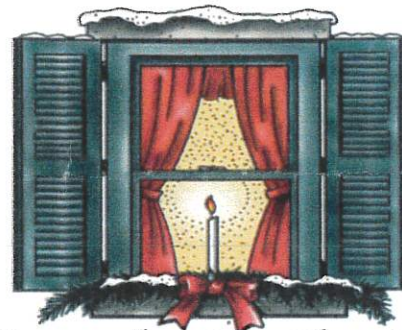
John White (1924-2002) was a medical missionary, psychiatry professor, church planter and prolific author who wrote about faith and outreach. He refuted the notion that being an effective witness for Christ is akin to being a salesperson. Christians are representing and sharing a person, he said, not touting a product.

"A good witness is like a signpost," he added. "It does not matter whether it is old, young, pretty, ugly. It has to point the right direction and be able

to be understood. We are witnesses to Christ; we point to him."



May 4	Dave & Pam Smith	Rayna Ogle
May 12	Larry & Deb Stewart	Kennedy Larimore
May 19	Brooks Flinn & Martha Britt	Beckett Sunderland
May 26	Willard & Betty Metzger	Beth Ogle
June 2	Bruce & Vi Lloyd	Norah Baker
June 9	Steve & Dina Tadena	Zoey Diller
June 16	Bill Askins and Lori Crider	Emma Larimore
June 23	Cheyenn & Dian Ridley	Carson Sunderland
June 30	Ron & Denise Meyers	Morgan Thomas



### Remember Our Shut-ins

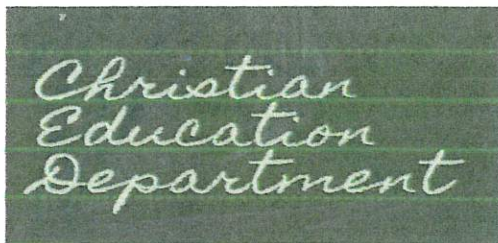
**Joan Thomas** – The Meadows of Kalida, 755 Ottawa St., Kalida, OH 45853

**Bob Jones** – Primrose Retirement Community, 3500 W. Elm St. Room 120, Lima, OH 45807

**Linda Alger** – Wingate, 1070 Gloria Ave. Room 133, Lima, OH 45805



The electric sign in front of the church needs to be replaced. The cost is over \$25,000. The trustees voted to start a fund to get the sign back in working condition. If you would like to contribute, mark your envelope Sign Fund. Thank you!



Our last day of Sunday School for the year will be Sunday May 19th. The kids will be singing a song for the congregation as well as our graduates will be presented a gift and 3rd graders their bibles. Christian Ed will be hosting a luncheon on May 19th.

VBS planning is underway! The dates will be Sunday July 14th thru Thursday July 18th. We are looking for volunteers to help with various tasks. If you are interested, please email Emily at [emilycdiller@gmail.com](mailto:emilycdiller@gmail.com).

Thank you to the volunteers who brought food and helped during the Easter Breakfast! We had a great turn out!

Next meeting set for Sunday May 5th.



**MONETTA L. LLOYD**

**April 23, 1929 – March 7, 2024**

**Organ Fund:**

Martha Britt, Richard & Cathi Lloyd, Denny & Janna Thompson, Bill & Lois Stober, Betty Fogt, Brent Adam Jr., Bill Foulkes, Kris Malsan, Kim Verhoff, Mary & Tom Doerter & Family, Andrea Traunero, Matthew & Heather Nusbaum, Rick & Vicki Askins, Lynn & Suzanne Metzger, Jim & Susan Siefker, Don & Lee Thomas, Diana Barnt, Jim & Sandy Schwartzengraber, Sue Grusenmeyer, Betty Rager, Brenda Kattman, Steve & Dina Tadana, Bill Morris

**HELEN (ROBERTS) JOHN**

**May 26, 1927 – January 7, 2022**

**Memorial Fund:** Lindsay & Becky Foust



The most important resource a child needs in order to learn how to read and learn a love for reading is BOOKS!! Elementary students are at the age where they begin LOVING books and cannot get enough. Many teachers send home scholastic book orders every month. However, many students come from families that cannot afford to purchase books each month. The sad look on students' faces who did not get a book when the others did break many teacher's hearts.

This is an idea to get books into students hands. Scholastic has books every month that are around \$2. We would LOVE for students to be able to bring home one new book each month during the school year. It costs around \$18 per child (for a FULL school year). Last year the money was used to purchase books for all Elida Elementary student in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Grade who were receiving Meals to Monday bags. The staff expressed how excited and grateful the students were to receive their books.

If you are interested in "sponsoring" a child you can give any amount that will go towards purchasing new books for students to take home and KEEP each month! Envelopes are available by the offering plates.

**A prayer for roots**

O God, we thirst for you, as dry tree roots thirst for water in hot, dusty soil. Help us send spiritual roots down deep into the grace and knowledge of the One who is the same yesterday and today and forever, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who gives us stability when the earth shakes and the storms of life swirl about us.

Rooted and grounded in your love, and strengthened and comforted by your grace and your Spirit who gives us hope, may we be steadfast and immovable in the work Christ gives us to do, until he comes again. Amen.

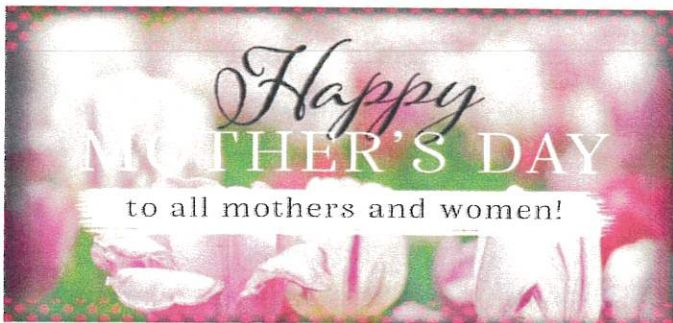
## Open hands



Liturgical scholar Balthasar Fischer (1912-2001) shared an “a-ha” realization about the significance of

praying with open, outstretched hands, an ancient practice. The opposite gesture, a closed fist, is used to threaten others or even inflict violence. We also grasp things in closed fists, refusing to let go, to share, to hold gently or loosely.

When we pray with open hands, Fischer explained, we’re saying before God that we renounce “all highhandedness, all pride in [our] own sufficiency, all violence.” We hold up our empty hands to God, saying, “I have nothing that I have not received from you, nothing that you have not placed in my empty hands. Therefore I do not keep a frantic hold on anything you have given me; therefore, too, I desire not to strike and hurt but only to give and to spread happiness and joy.”



### Mother — and more

Though I’ve primarily known God as Father — along with metaphors such as rock, eagle, shepherd, potter — I also learned of Scripture passages portraying God as mother. For example (all NIV):

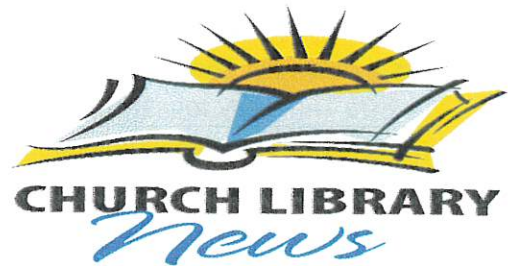
\*“For a long time I have kept silent. ... But now, like a woman in childbirth, I cry out, I gasp and pant” (Isaiah 42:14).

\*“As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you” (Isaiah 66:13).

\*“Like a bear robbed of her cubs, I will attack them” (Hosea 13:8).

\*In others, God is pictured doing traditional “women’s work”: making clothes (Genesis 3:21),

sweeping (Isaiah 14:23), preparing and hosting a meal (Proverbs 9:1-6), baking bread (Luke 13:21). One of my favorite images of God is tucked in Hosea. While many modern dads nurture their toddlers this way, the tender words surely call to mind a mama’s care: “It was I who taught [Israel] to walk. ... To them I was like one who lifts a little child to the cheek, and I bent down to feed them” (Hosea 11:3-4). Most importantly, God — however known — is loving and good. —Heidi Hyland Mann



I Lucille the Librarian would like to invite you to stop in and browse in our newly renovated library. A lot of thought and effort has gone into the update. I thank the members and memorials for this lovely space. The variety available in the books range from infant stories, to hundreds of years old Bibles (English and Welsh), to inspirational, to documentaries and novels.

You may take items home from the library and return them when you are finished with them. We have two new sets of books 1) the Cape Light series by Thomas Kinkade - a 21 book series and 2) Mitford series by Jan Karon - a 14 book series. I’ve read them and found them very enjoyable. There will be a sign out sheet for these so that we can keep the sets intact and give a reminder to return it if someone else is waiting on it.

If you are looking for something specific (title or topic) please let me know and I will assist you. I hope you enjoy our new library area, will visit it often and read a book from it this year!

Turn the page,  
Lucille

The library renovation is being completed and a memorial dedication will be held during the church service on May 5. View the newly decorated space if you have not already done so.



## BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Jeanine (Martin) Dredge
- 2 Shelby Crider  
Miranda Flores
- 3 Jacqueline Martz
- 4 Kaylin Wreede
- 5 Kate Clevenger
- 6 Joe Studer
- 10 William Askins
- 12 Abby May
- 15 Rachel Roberts Baker  
Jordan Martin
- 16 Jeremiah Price
- 17 Angie Siefker
- 21 Barbara Cerne
- 23 Mike Kohn  
Doug Siefker  
Nancy Watkins

24 Angie Walsh  
30 Jeff Evans  
Donna Martin

Penblwydd Hapus i chwil!  
(Happy Birthday to you in Welsh)

## ANNIVERSARIES

- 11 Eric & Anna Ogle
- 18 Bob & Peg Grandbois

## SPECIAL DATES

National Day of Prayer, May 2, 2024  
Ascension Day, May 9, 2024  
Mother's Day, May 12, 2024  
Armed Forces Day, May 18, 2024  
Pentecost, May 19, 2024  
Victoria Day (Canada), May 20, 2024  
Trinity Sunday, May 26, 2024  
Memorial Day, May 27, 2024

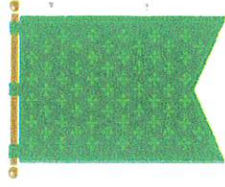
## Bible Quiz

What two rivers that we still know today are named in the Creation account in Genesis 2?

- A. Nile
- B. Yangtze
- C. Jordan
- D. Tigris
- E. Ganges
- F. Euphrates



## Christian symbol



**GREEN** — Green is the traditional liturgical color for the weeks after Pentecost (as well as the season of

Epiphany). The Pentecost season largely overlaps with spring and summer, which is fitting because green symbolizes growth: growth of plant life and crops, and growth of the church in discipleship and faith.  
Bible Quiz Answer: D & F (Genesis 2:10-14.)

## First-team followers

Jesus' ascension into heaven shortly after his resurrection was "one of God's most audacious ploys," according to Pastor Frank Ramirez. "Jesus, resurrected, is Master of space and time, yet he passes on the work of spreading the Good News to his imperfect disciples, who ultimately pass it on to us (who are also imperfect disciples)."

By contrast, most Old Testament patriarchs often stayed on the throne until they died. Many of them could have benefited from a timely "exit strategy," Ramirez notes.

"As a child, I always felt that the world would have been a better place if the resurrected Lord had just taken over everything," Ramirez continues. "But though Jesus is active with us ('For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them' — Matthew 18:20, NRSV), we're part of the first team now."

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## Aflame with faith

In the Old Testament, fire often symbolizes the presence of God's Spirit. For example, God called to Moses from a burning bush (Exodus 3:2-6) and defeated the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:30-39). In the New Testament, tongues of fire rested atop the believers gathered on Pentecost (Acts 2:3).

Some Christians have described a burning or current-like sensation when they encounter God. Methodism founder John Wesley said his heart was "strangely warmed" during worship. After such an encounter, people often feel compelled to share the Good News of Jesus. The flame of faith inside one believer can spark a revival of faith in others. As Charles Spurgeon said, "A burning heart will soon find for itself a flaming tongue."

