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HOW TO BE A CHRISTIAN

What does it mean to be a Christian? I think of all the questions we as Christians can ask and try to answer, this is debatably one of the most critical questions of all. I say this because how we answer this question directly affects what we do, say, think, and are. I have no doubt that we

all have an answer in our minds of what it means to be a Christian. I know I certainly do. However, we (myself included) don't always think about that answer and, more

100% true, at least to us. In that case, contemplating this question might give us a hard but necessary wake-up call to what we can and must do better.

The difficulty with this question, though, is that there is no one

FROM THE PASTOR'S PEN

answer to it. As I said, we all have an answer to this question, but none of our answers are the same. I believe John Fea put it best in his book *Was America Founded as a*

Christian Nation?

His main argument in answering the titular question is to answer it with three other questions, one of which is, "What do we mean by the word

'Christian'?" He then proceeds to argue that there isn't any one answer; that our answers, while almost never exactly the same, fall somewhere on a spectrum from complete orthodoxy (i.e. we believe all the right things, but we don't practice what we believe in any capacity) to complete orthopraxy (i.e. we do all the things that *(Christian continued on pg. 2)*

In our striving day to day to be the best Christians we can be, to live up to what God wants and needs Christians to be and do in the world, what ground have we to stand on?

importantly, whether our definition has, in fact, disqualified our being a Christian (i.e. we're not meeting our own requirements for being a "Christian"). Then again, perhaps the opposite is true, in that we have shaped our definition of what a Christian says and does around what we already say and do, simply so our statement that "I am a Christian" is

Happy Easter

(Christian continued on pg. 1) Jesus would have us do, but we don't believe anything Jesus or the Bible has to tell us). However, this still doesn't give us a solid answer. All this does is confirm that one of the most important questions of our faith is truly a loaded question.

So, what hope is there for us then? In our striving day to day to be the best Christians we can be, to live up to what God wants and needs Christians to be and do in the world, what ground have we to stand on? Thankfully, there is an answer. A few years ago, I started talking with one of my congregants at the time about how political parties and special interest groups have at times eschewed the Christian message to fit their beliefs and agendas rather than shape their beliefs and agendas around what the Bible calls us to do. This led me to asking her how she defines this word "Christian," and her response was to recommend to me a book by Martin Thielen entitled *What's the Least I Can Believe and Still Be a Christian?: A Guide to What Matters Most*. Intrigued by the title, I read the summary and reviews on it, thought it worth buying a copy, and for lack of a better verb, I devoured this book. I simply couldn't put it down. The main topics it highlights are the flaws in "that good, old-time religion" along with six different core beliefs centered around what Jesus did, said, and was. In other words, this book argues that a Christian is one who embodies today who Jesus was in life, death, and resurrection; one who puts Jesus' teachings first rather than using them to justify our own beliefs and actions. That being said, there is more to this argument than this very brief summation, but I don't want to spoil those details too much, as I've decided to make this book the topic of my annual "summer sermon series." For the moment, though, what I would invite you all to do is to begin to ask yourselves this question, to examine who your answer benefits, and to consider how well we (individually and collectively) fit what answer comes to mind.

-Pastor Brad

WELCOME
WE ARE GLAD YOU ARE HERE

Westminster Presbyterian Church will host monthly "Welcome Luncheons" and invite Eastminster Presbytery Churches to attend. The gatherings will address the question, "What does Welcome Look Like?" On Sunday, April 28, Rev. Brad Rito will talk about what welcome looks like for Millennials. On May 19, Charles Gracie, Bainard Rustin LBGTO+ Resource Center, will talk about what welcome looks like for the LBGTO+ community.

The Welcome Luncheons begin at 11:45 a.m., but you are also invited to attend their 10:30 a.m. worship service beforehand. If you plan to attend, please contact the church office at 330.836.2226 or westminsterakron@gmail.com with your intent to attend to assist with food preparation.

**HOSTING A
HEAVENLY
EVENT**



Bring your lawn chair, viewing glasses and a snack to the church on Monday, April 8, to enjoy the solar eclipse with heavenly-minded friends. The office even has several eclipse glasses if you need them. Please call 330.253.6989 or email office@covenantakron.org to reserve them.

MINUTE FOR MISSION



PORTAGE PATH CLC BOOK FAIR

The Portage Path CLC Book Fair was held on Tuesday, March 26 in the school LRC (library to us old folks)! Twelve volunteers were on hand to greet the children and put a label with their name in each of their books. There are 261 students at Portage Path (kindergarten through fifth grade) and each student received a book of their choosing, free of charge. Many of the children promptly sat down on the LRC floor and began reading their new books. It was a wonderful sight to see! The book fairs are supported by your mission dollars and donations. Thank you for your generosity and support of the children at Portage Path CLC.



FIT

The next meeting of the FIT Committee is
Thursday, April 4
1:30 p.m.
Fellowship Hall.
Please join us if you are able.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

April 7
Following Sunday Service

Fellowship Committee

After a successful Easter breakfast, we turn our attention a late spring and summer activity. Help us plan by attending our meeting on

Thursday, April 11
10:30 a.m.
Fellowship Hall.

OUT OF THE OFFICE

April 17-18
Pastor Brad will be out of the office, in order to attend the Pastors' Retreat at Villa Maria Spirituality Conference Center

CASE CLC BOOK FAIR

Thursday, April 25
9:30 a.m.
Watch the lobby for a sign-up sheet!
Donations always welcome

Governing Board Meeting

April 22
6:00 p.m.
All are welcome

F. I. T.

I wanted to thank you and all the other volunteers from the New Covenant Community Church who took time out of their busy schedules to help us with our Hop Along Storybook Bunny Trail event. You all did a fantastic job and truly appreciate all your help and willingness to do whatever was needed. There were 128 children and about 115 adults that attended this Saturday's event. Thank you, Tom, for braving the cold weather to hand out candy along the storybook walk. Unfortunately, many of the participants weren't as brave as you!

Shelley, the children's librarian Mindy Enderle wanted me to let you and Betsey know how much she appreciated your help with the potting project. I can't thank you enough for all your help and the generous candy donations. Our event would not have been as a success without you two and all your wonderful volunteers.

Sincerely,

Christie

Christie U. Walsh

Supervisor II

City of Akron Recreation & Parks

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