



*Church of  
the Cross*

CHURCH OF THE CROSS  
NEWSLETTER  
MAY 2026

# CROSSWINDS

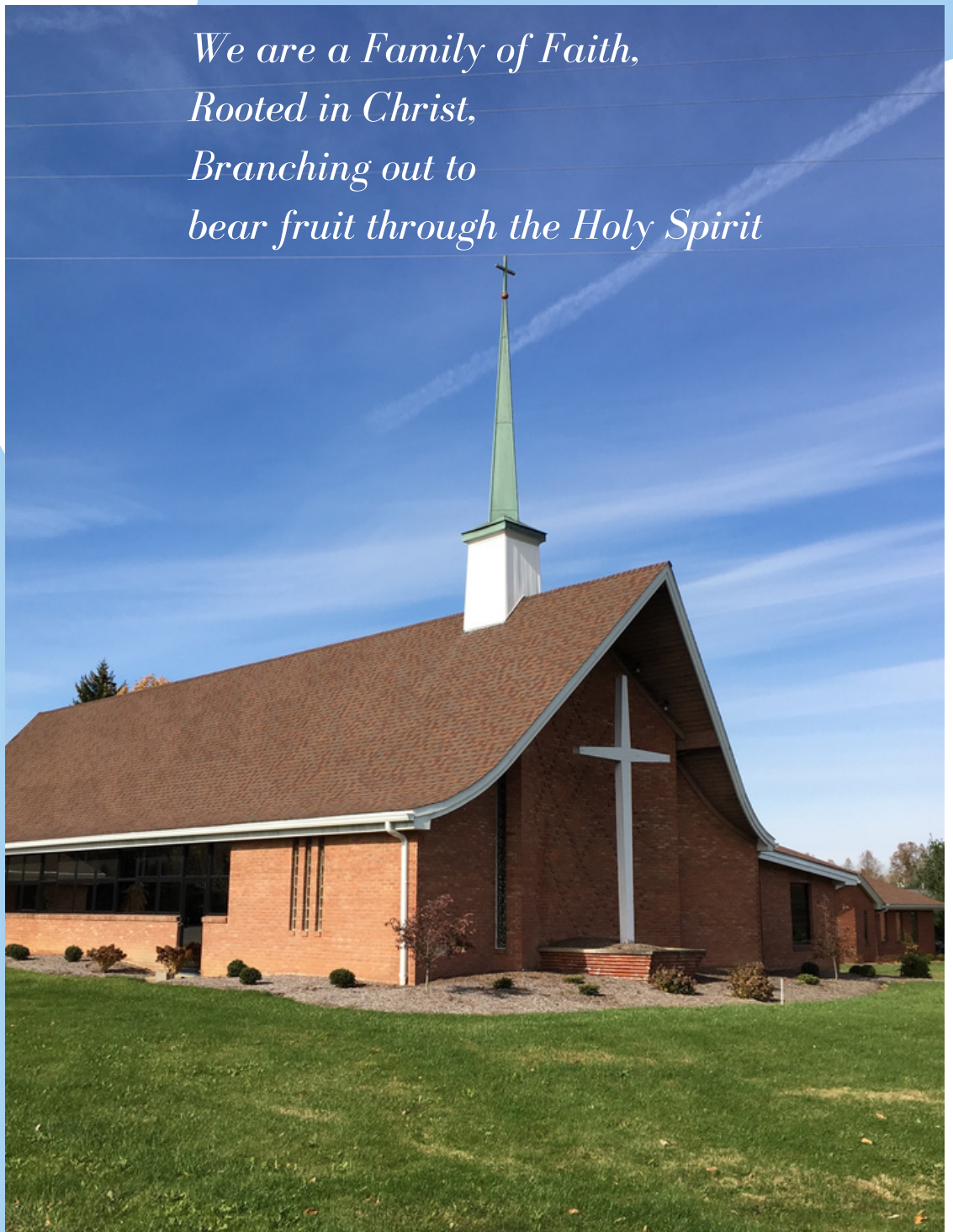
*We are a Family of Faith,  
Rooted in Christ,  
Branching out to  
bear fruit through the Holy Spirit*

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*from the desk of*  
**PASTOR JAMES**



Dear Church of the Cross,

For the months of March and April I went back to the core of our belief. We have been exploring the trinity in these newsletters. Of course, there is no way I can provide a full or filled out explanation in a newsletter. These articles are a few thoughts and reflections I have, and by no means all encompassing. For the month of May, we will be reflecting on the Holy Spirit, as we celebrate Pentecost on Sunday May 24.

As we reflect on the trinity, and in this month the Holy Spirit specifically, it is important to reflect on the covenant. God, came down incarnate and sacrificed on the cross for us, the greatest act of salvation we know. Jesus calls us to follow the commandments to Love the Lord our God and Love our neighbor as ourselves. And, at the end of Matthew 28, if we do this and teach others to do so, Jesus promises to be with us always, to the end of the age. This is where we find the Holy Spirit. The Holy spirit is with us always. The Holy Spirit is with us now as we write and read this article, as we pray, as we go out into the world.

The Holy Spirit is sometimes the hardest of the trinity for us to understand. The Holy Spirit is at work with us and around us always. But the Holy Spirit, as a spirit, does not have as definitive a mortal comparison. We do not compare or call the Holy Spirit Father or Son. This makes it hard for us, as humans, to understand and connect with the Holy Spirit. We often say they will know we are Christians by our love. We make disciples by our actions. While it is by no means all encompassing (nothing I put on paper ever would be). Perhaps for a starting place, we can start to look for and see the Holy Spirit as we look for and see God at work in our world.

When we take the Sacrament of Communion, we know the Holy Spirit is at work as we remember and renew our covenant, our commitment to Jesus Christ and to love the Lord and love our neighbor as ourselves. As we work to connect with God through prayer, through song, through silence, through work, through care, we see and feel the Holy Spirit moving in the world and in us. As we work to love our neighbors, as we serve at the local missions, donate hygiene items, care for others, serve at the food pantry, help with the fundraiser meals. In all these things and so much more, we see the Holy Spirit at work.

As we enter the month of May, as we celebrate Pentecost, where do you see the Holy Spirit at work? Where do you See the Holy Spirit moving in your life? What is the Holy Spirit leading you to, supporting you in, guiding you to next?

*from the desk of*  
**PASTOR AIMEE**



Do you remember the moment you met Jesus? I don't mean the moment you first went to youth group or Sunday school or your first revival meeting. I'm not talking about the first Bible study you remember attending or the church dinner where you realized that carry-ins are the best. I am asking you if you remember the moment when Jesus changed your life forever? If your answer is yes, have you ever shared that life changing moment with others?

The book of John records the meeting of Simon Peter and Jesus. The introduction happens thanks to Simon Peter's brother, Andrew. In the first chapter of John, it is recorded that

**“Looking intently at Simon, Jesus said, “Your name is Simon, son of John – but you will be called Cephas” (which means “Peter”).**

I cannot imagine what that moment was like for Simon Peter. His brother had come to him and told him that “We have found the Messiah” (John 1:41). When Peter went with Andrew to meet Jesus, I would think that it would be Peter who would be “looking intently” at Jesus to see if this guy was really who his brother said he was. Did he “look” Messiah-like? Did he talk like, move like, think like, act like the Messiah should? As Jesus often does, however, he turned the tables on Simon Peter. Instead of being the one examined, he is the one checking out Peter. Can you even imagine what it would feel like to have Jesus look at you “intently?” What is it like to have the eyes of your Savior peering into yours? Did Simon feel like Jesus was looking straight into his soul? Did he feel vulnerable, exposed, “seen?” Did Simon's life flash before Jesus' eyes? I have so many questions! Whatever that moment between Jesus and Simon was like, it was a life changing one for Simon - a life changing moment that started with a name change.

It reminds me of when a couple gets married, We change our last name to show a shift in who we used to be to who we have now become. We were a single person who belonged to our family of birth. Now, as a married person, our name changed to show we now are chosen and belong with our spouse. We have become one with that person. We have, in the eyes of God, an inseparable bond. I think that is the kind of moment Jesus and Simon had here. Jesus looks him in the face and says, “You used to be yours, but now you are mine!” Everything changes for Simon from that moment on. He was no longer His own. He had a connection to Jesus that was going to change him!

You see, that is what Jesus does. He looks us in the heart, and calls us out. He says to us from the beginning that He will make us a new creation. He has the ability to see who we will become because of His great love – and the love of our Savior is a soul saving, heart changing, life altering love. It is a love that we are called to live in and to share. We don't get to decide who is worthy of that love. Christ tells us to “go and make disciples of all nations.” That leaves out no one. It means EVERYONE is loved by God and He wants them to hear the Good News! That is why Jesus looked at Peter and changed his heart. Peter was called by Jesus to love others and spread the Gospel...as are my friends! I know that we have not actually stood in the same room as Jesus and had him come over and look us square in the eyes. Yet the call of Jesus on our hearts is no less real than that of Peter's. Our passion and desire to serve, follow, love, and share Christ with the world we live in should be just as real also! May you always find yourself looking intently into the heart of Jesus!

# sermon CORNER

## COMBINED SUNDAY SERVICES

|                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                              |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>May 3</b><br><b>Apple Creek UMC</b><br>269 W Main St. Apple Creek<br>9 AM<br>Pastor Aimee<br>Gospel of Matthew | <b>August 2</b><br><b>Smithville UMC</b><br>243 N Milton S. Smithville<br>9 AM<br>Pastor Aimee<br>Gospel of Luke             |
| <b>June 28</b><br><b>Moreland UMC</b><br>138 Moreland Rd., Wooster<br>10:30 AM<br>Pastor James<br>Gospel of Mark  | <b>October 4</b><br><b>Church of the Cross UMC</b><br>5100 Cleveland Rd., Wooster<br>11 AM<br>Pastor James<br>Gospel of John |

FELLOWSHIP TIME WILL FOLLOW EACH WORSHIP SERVICE



*Join us!*

**May 3**

**COMBINED SERVICE AT APPLE CREEK UMC**

Pastor Aimee

**May 10 Mother's Day**

Pastor James

You are Called as you Are! (Part 1)

Exodus 3: 1-15 and Exodus 4: 1-17

**May 17**

Pastor James

You are Called as you Are! (Part 2)

Mark 1: 14-20 and Mark 10: 17-31

**May 24 Pentecost Sunday**

Pastor James

How do we share the hope of God?

Philippians 1: 1-11 and Philippians 1: 12-19

**May 31**

Pastor James

Being the Body of Christ Together

Philippians 2: 1-11 and Philippians 2: 12-18

Preaching Schedule for  
Pastor Aimee and Pastor James

April 26- May 31  
Pastor James- SUMC/ COTC  
Pastor Aimee- AC/Moreland

## Meetings

### Meetings:

Covenant: May 5

Trustees: May 12

One Board: May 19



### Food, Fun & Fellowship:

May 2 & 16

### Ministries at Liberty Preparatory High School

Baccalaureate - Wednesday, May 20

Graduation - Thursday, May 28

## Handbells in Ministry at West View

On March 25<sup>th</sup> the Grace Ringers played special music for the chapel service at West View Healthy Living. Before the service each of the ladies sat beside a West View ringer and enjoyed sharing in the songs they all rang for chapel . It was a great opportunity for them to see and hear a different type of bell.



## Nancy Miller Still in Music Ministry

Many years ago Nancy Miller suffered a stroke that left her right hand paralyzed. She always enjoyed playing piano, organ and accordion at Church of the Cross, but her paralysis took that away. Two years ago when Nancy Brooker and I began volunteering at West View working with the residents using small desk bells, she once again could make music. The music that the group rings has the words to a song and if your word is circled you ring, if it's underlined you damp (stop the sound) . Basically the music is making chords so all can sing along to make the melody come alive.

A long time ago my father had a very small keyboard so I shared it with Nancy and because of her ability to play by "ear", she could play the melody. She was back enjoying making music again accompanying the other bell ringers! I shared some "belltree" music with her. Since it is only one note at a time, usually rung by a bell, an accompaniment part can be played on piano.

Now Nancy and I can again play duets. What a joy it is to make music with others and share in their joy of playing it.

If any of you reading this article are interested in learning to ring bells, please contact me.

Janet Borton



## Wayne Co. Christian Community Choir & Orchestra

### "With Liberty and Justice For All"

by Randy Vader, Jay Rouse, and Camp Kirkland

We have been blessed as no other nation on earth.  
 "With Liberty and Justice for All" captures the political and spiritual pilgrimage of our great country.  
 Come join us as we sing of the bountiful blessings that God has bestowed on us.

**Rehearsal dates:**  
**Mondays**  
 May 11, 18, June 1, 8, 15, 22  
 7:00 - 9:00 pm

**Location:** Pleasant Hill Baptist Church  
 7605 Pleasant Home Rd.

**Dress Rehearsal/Performance**  
 Sunday June 28 2:30 pm

**Performance:**  
 Monday, June 29, 2026  
 Fairgrounds Event Center  
 7:00 PM

High School age and above are encouraged to sign up for choir. Use QR code below



# MISSIONS In the Spotlight

## “Jacob” Serving in Central Asia

(For security, name and specific location withheld)

### New Direction

*He has filled them with skill to do all kinds of work as engravers, designers, embroiderers in blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen, and weavers—all of them skilled workers and designers. Exod. 35:35.6*

I am continually thankful for the many years Church of the Cross has joined with me in serving God in Central Asia.

The Central Asia when I first arrived in the 1990's is not the Central Asia of today. The country and the people are changing, and with that, the work needs to change. The culture has moved from being Russian-centric to having a strong Central Asian identity. Moreover, most English students are now young women, leaving me few opportunities to develop appropriate discipleship relationships. Thus, a new direction is needed to further the Good News here.

Business is one of the primary ways that He is now using to provide access to traditionally closed countries. I am currently developing a new “Business as Mission” (BAM) platform where local artists and artisans can gather and sell their work. This “BAM” will enable me to cultivate relationships within the artistic and craft community, reaching them with the good news of Jesus. Many of these artisans are middle-aged people who are exploring new opportunities to create art and become local entrepreneurs. This age group is well-suited to my current stage of life. It also establishes me in a new role in this community as a business owner, providing a natural legitimacy to my continued presence here.

The Vision I am working on now is to:

- Create a platform that connects with local people and opens doors to share the good news with them
- Provide an avenue to build relationships with men through focusing on woodcraft projects, workshops, restoring furniture, etc.
- Create workshops specifically for fathers and sons to reach out to men with families
- Invite local believers to help lead or take part in the workshops or work in the store to connect nonbelievers with local followers
- Provide a place for local believing artists to sell their work and promote Central Asian art
- Set up a tea corner for people to hang out and build relationships to share the good news
- Create a platform to reach out to and support university students via the arts.

***A local believer shared that we don't have many opportunities for fathers and sons, and most outreach to men is sports-related, which leaves out many non-athletic men***

While I am heading in this new direction, I have already started leading some workshops to make inroads into the artist community. I'm continuing to reach out to the people working with the local fellowship and meeting and sharing with former and current students. I'm also co-leading a study based on the The Chosen TV series, helping people look at the life of Jesus. One of the participants, “Norm,” said “You know I am an Atheist, but by the end of the series, I might just be a believer.”

Please pray for this new direction I'm going in, and for the students and friends I continue to meet with.



One of the chairs “Jacob” refurnished



## Home Town Gal Goes to The Moon

Some of you might remember Carrie O'Planick (now Green) as a child in our SS and Youth Group Programs here at the COTC. Carrie grew up on Mel Lane just around the corner from the church. Following her graduation in 1998 from Wooster HS she took advantage of the Rotary Exchange program and spent the next 10 months in Slovakia studying music and English as a HS Senior.

On Carrie's return she enrolled at Virginia Polytechnical to begin her studies as an aeronautical engineer but later switched to mechanical engineering which would provide more possibilities.

*Happy Birthday*  
**MAY**



- 6 Scott Marshall
- 8 Jesse Jolliff
- 9 Bill Fagert  
Teresa Arnold
- 18 Gayle Shultz
- 22 Randy Dye
- 30 Margaret Park

### Contact us:

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Pastor Aimee: aimeejohare@gmail.com  
Church website: cotcwooster.com

Charline Engle, Administrative Assistant  
Janet Borton, Director of Music/ Organist  
Rev. Tom Shaw, Shut-in Minister  
Teresa Arnold, Custodian

Her enthusiasm for space stems from participating in the Girl Scout Space Camp Program. Gaining employment in the field of Space Exploration took her to the NASA Glenn Research Center for 3 years and currently to the Wallops Flight Facility as a NASA Range Safety Engineer the past 15 years.

She just recently assisted in helping to send the Artemis 11 on its manned lunar flyby. We are proud of Carrie, one of our own!

Pictured with Carrie is Commander Reid Wiseman



### Missions

#### International

TMS Global  
CAMO

#### Local

People to People  
Salvation Army  
CCHO  
Pregnancy Care Center  
Wayne United Chaplains

