

December 2009

Pastor Bruce Strine



## SMILE! YOU'RE ON CANDID CAMERA

Pastors and church leaders today face the unique challenge of providing an open and loving environment in the church without being mistaken for an easy target. It is a fine line we walk between security and friendliness. We often talk about the warmth and love people feel as they walk through our doors. Guests comment on our atmosphere of inclusiveness rather than exclusiveness; friendliness versus cold-heartedness; endearing not judgmental. Those are commendable qualities that don't come easily; nor do they just happen. We have been intentional around Celina First in our efforts to create an environment of acceptance, love, and encouragement.

From the youngest among us to the eldest, security and safety are important even while attending church. Who would have thought? A few years ago we incorporated a beeper system with the nursery/toddler ministry. Parents take their baby/infant to the nursery and sign their child in and receive a beeper that vibrates should there be any issues while the parents are in worship. We do background checks on adults who work in our children's ministries. Moreover, we do extensive background checks on potential employees. All this because we believe your child's safety is of primary concern to us.

Many of you know the church facility has been bro-

ken into several times in recent years. Unfortunately, gone are the days when the church doors remained unlocked 24/7. Some of us grew up with the privilege that anytime we wanted to enter the church building to pray or experience alone time with God it was open and available. Churches in most communities can no longer be so naïve.

And now...and now, we have taken the next step in securing the Celina First facility. In the month of December, a state-of-the-art security system will be installed notifying us who and when someone enters the building. I thought I had heard the last of the security issues...and now this. While I wholeheartedly support the Church Council's decision to purchase such a system, I wonder where all this ends. Is the next step a security fingerprint scanner just outside the entrance doors or perhaps a card swiper (is that a word)?

I know what you're thinking. Pastor, come down from your ivory tower and live in the real world. The times are tough and darkness is all around. The church is no exception. Yada, Yada, Yada. Okay, I'll adjust and go with the flow wondering if you are watching me from your home computer while I scratch my head on the

most recent word study I'm rigorously wrestling over. (Just kidding)

On the bright side of security, perhaps it will help in tracking attendance (be sure to smile when looking at the cameras) or targeting those who fall asleep during my sermons. Better yet, maybe it will identify the person or persons who recently broke into the church and stole my 32 CENTS from the desk drawer. I have been in therapy since that devastating event.

All this to say, aren't you glad you have security in Christ. That is one type of security I love to think about and live in.

His Eye Is Not Only On  
the Sparrow,

Pastor

## CHANCEL CHOIR

Choir practices are held on Wednesday evenings at 7:30 in the sanctuary. All who can make joyful noises are welcome. Commitment includes singing twice monthly, weekly one-hour practices, early Sunday morning sound check on Sundays we sing, and extra opportunities for special seasons, including Christmas and Easter. We sing, laugh, and

occasionally cry together. If you enjoy singing and want to be a part of a dedicated bunch, this is the group for you. No tryouts necessary; just come for a good time and hard work.



## ANGEL TREE EVENT

O.U.R. Home and other Mercer County social services agencies are having an Angel Tree event at our church on Thursday, December 10, and Friday, December 11. This year the number of children in need of Christmas gifts has doubled from last year.

Celina First's Angel Tree is in our foyer. Please consider helping by taking a tag from the tree and signing the book by your number. If you would like to volunteer your time for this event, please call 419-586-1133. Wrappers, elves, sorters are needed on December 10 & 11.



## THANK YOU

The CGWM would like to thank you for the congregation's generosity in providing gloves, mittens, hats, etc. for O.U.R. Home's coat day. In the short time we had, 25 pairs of gloves/mittens, 10 hats, 8 hat/mitten sets, and 1 scarf, hat, glove set were collected. Your help is greatly appreciated.



## PRAYER MEETING

The monthly Prayer Meeting for our church will be held Sunday, December 6 at 6:30 p.m. in the Beacons' classroom. The praying church will be blessed. All prayers are voluntary. Looking forward to seeing you.

*The praying church will be  
blessed*

## ***MEN'S CHORUS***

---

A men's Chorus is being organized just for our December 20 Christmas program. Two practices are scheduled: December 8 and December 15 at 7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. All parts are needed. You need not read music. If you have any questions, please call Linda Linton at 586-5893.



## ***WOMEN'S MINISTRIES***

The December meeting of the CGWM will be held December 1st at 7:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Sara Busacca, Brigette Cron, and Margie Sell will have the devotions. Cheryl Stoner and Deanna Miller will be the hostesses. Angel Tree gifts may be brought to the meeting. New members are welcome.



## ***YOUTH GROUP NEWS***

Recently we have split the youth group into 2 groups: beginners and advanced. Beginners meet at 5:30 to 6:15 (eating downstairs first) then are dismissed to relax and have a good time downstairs in the room between the kitchen and sanctuary. We need some volunteers to relax and have a good time while they watch our junior high youth group Wednesday nights from 6:15-7:30. You will be watching movies and playing games. If you are interested in relaxing and having a good time, please let Matt know ASAP. Thanks.



## Did You Know...

- Sam and Anne Ly had a baby girl - Myah. Proud grandparents Randy and Jill Engel
- Beth Yaney had a baby girl - Addyson. Proud grandparents Rob and Cathy Yaney
- Quiet Communion will be Sunday evening December 20<sup>th</sup> 6:30 – 8:00
- Christmas Eve Candlelight service is at 8:00 December 24<sup>th</sup>
- No Wednesday night programs December 23<sup>rd</sup> or 30<sup>th</sup>
- UPWARD Basketball pre-registrations are ahead of previous years
- Aaron and Kari Kuhn had a baby girl – Wynn.
- Lewis Gray came home from the hospital December 2<sup>nd</sup>
- Guy Schmidt came home from the hospital December 3<sup>rd</sup>
- Andy Cron enjoys climbing ladders and then falling off while changing light bulbs – Kurt trained him well!
- All of the Angel Tree tags for children's Christmas gifts were taken.
- Betsy Rolfes (Hellwarth) and Trent Hellwarth graduate this month from college
- Hannah Fleck is having knee surgery AGAIN! Pastor Matt refuses to give her any more sympathy.



Sunday School—9:00 a.m.

Worship Service—10:00 a.m.