

# The News of National City

## April Issue XVIII Vol. 4

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## Church Retreat for Renewal this Easter Season

### April 14 and 15

The season of Easter is a thrilling time for all Christians and it's an exciting time in the life of National City Christian Church. We truly long for resurrected faith -- faith in the resurrected Christ and faith in a resurrected church.

The Congregational Board voted unanimously in December to adopt the Epiphany planning process this year, offered by our denomination's Hope Partnership for Missional Transformation. During this one-year, multi-phase process, our congregation's leaders will be led by our congregation "coach," Reverend Rick Morse, to help us shift our focus from "what" we are doing to consider "why." By finding clarity on why we exist, National City will continue to discover innovative ways to do ministry and participate in the transforming of our community.

The first of these phases and one of the most important events is a **congregational retreat, Saturday, April 14, and Sunday, April 15**. Please make every effort possible to attend and participate. This experiential retreat is focused on moving from a "transactional" to a "transformational" leadership model for being church. Together, we will reimagine and re-orient our leadership styles from "managing a church" toward "transforming the community" as guided by God's Spirit. RSVP today by sending an email to [RSVP@nationalcitycc.org](mailto:RSVP@nationalcitycc.org).

Following the congregational retreat on April 14 and 15, all who are interested are also invited to meet on **Wednesday, April 18, for a talk-back session** with the Epiphany team. Space is limited to 30 persons for this gathering at 7 p.m. in the 3rd Floor Conference Room. If you are interested in this evening meeting, please email [sbaines@nationalcitycc.org](mailto:sbaines@nationalcitycc.org) to let us know of your interest. This time will be dedicated to further reflection, sharing of ideas, and critiques of the process and assessments.

Once this cumulative information has been digested and prayerfully examined, a small team of five to six individuals will be enlisted to serve as a "writing team" to develop a transformational National City Christian Church narrative. This narrative will illuminate what life-giving ministries will be possible for our congregation if we choose a certain path forward. Based on our ministry

dilemmas, mission opportunities, relationship-building potential, and financial and membership assets, our congregation can be optimistic for a transformative story for our future.

Many of you remember participating in a strategic planning process nearly seven years ago and perhaps you are asking, "Why are we doing this again? What's the purpose?" The purpose is for our renewal and refocus in ministry and mission. Our last strategic planning process produced a lot of amazing and productive work, including the reorganizing of our congregation, its board and bylaws, clarification of the congregation and NCCC foundation relationships, its roles and responsibilities, the creation of Ministry Partnership, a renewed focus on caring for the community through the food pantry, unique outreach in music and the arts, and a successful capital campaign that raised over \$1 million for facility improvements including new environmentally friendly courtyard pavers, refurbished Sanctuary front doors, a replacement of the portico iron railings, parapet and steeple were caulked and sealed, steeple rose window was reglazed, new lighting in the Sanctuary, new flat roof on the Sanctuary was replaced, a new roof for the Beasley Building, new security system, new carpet and paint throughout the buildings, Undercroft refurbishing removing the wallpaper, skimming and painting the walls, replaced boiler and changed the Beasley Building lights to LED to be more economical and environmentally friendly. Whew! Alleluia! Amen!

It's time to do it again! Easter Season is the perfect time for renewal, bringing Spirit-infused meaning and ministry to this church we all deeply love and cherish. As we live believing in the resurrected Christ, we live believing and proclaiming a resurrected church. Join us on April 14 and 15 and reserve your place today at [RSVP@nationalcitycc.org](mailto:RSVP@nationalcitycc.org).

In Christ's Service,

- Stephen W. Gentle, Senior Pastor
- Steven C. Baines, Senior Strategist
- Jane Campbell, Moderator

### Let's Talk Worship

Each and every week our worship service is *the* most important moment for National City Christian Church. Worship is *the* moment when we come together as a community of faith. Worship is uniquely personal, because each of us has strong feelings about what is important in our worship to God. So "Let's Talk Worship with Mike and Stephen" on Sunday, April 8, at 12:30 p.m. in the Music Suite. All are invited to this one-hour session.

# April Birthdays

- 1 Jane Strotman
- 2 Kathy Burger-Gerada
- 4 Bill Brown
- 6 Gary Lewis
- 7 Chieko Cook  
Charles Hickman
- 8 Kent Woods
- 9 Judy Lotz
- 11 Will Dirickson
- 17 Bill Norton
- 18 Tristan Nowicki
- 21 John Arterberry
- 22 Jude Williams\*
- 23 Darrell Ertzberger
- 27 Harold Magnussen
- 28 Verdia Haywood  
Glen Kruse
- 30 Eric Hedlund

\* Indicates a child

For additions or changes, contact Kathleen Swihart at [kswhart62@gmail.com](mailto:kswhart62@gmail.com)

## Sundays in April

### April 8

*In Defense of Doubt*  
John 20:19-31

Hymn: *Open My Eyes,  
That I May See*

### April 15

*Where In the World is Jesus?*  
Luke 24:36-48

Hymn: *This is My Father's World*

### April 22

*Shepherd Lead Us*  
John 10:11-18

Hymn: *Savior Like a  
Shepherd Lead Us*

### April 29

*Tethered*

John 15:1-8

Hymn: *Draw Us In the  
Spirit's Tether*

*The News of National City* is a monthly publication. Please submit articles for the May Newsletter by April 15 to Diana Morse at [morsediana@comcast.net](mailto:morsediana@comcast.net) and to Colleen Walsh at [cwalsh@nationalcitycc.org](mailto:cwalsh@nationalcitycc.org)

## NCCC Offers Prayer Call on Monday Mornings

All are invited to join the weekly conference prayer line for National City at 6 a.m. on Mondays. Simply dial 712-775-7031 and enter access code 371015. For more information contact Loretta Tate at 202-489-2020.

## Bible Study on April 3

The Tuesday morning Bible Study will meet on April 3 at 11 o'clock in the Music Suite. Steve Baines will lead the discussion on "Freedom or Slavery: Wrestling with the New Testament," 1 Corinthians 7:21-24.

Bring a sandwich and stay for fellowship. Although this is sponsored by Disciples Women everyone is invited.

## YADA Study Scheduled for Friday, April 6

YADA is holding a small-group discussion series about current events from a Biblical perspective. This month, the study will be on April 6 at Shana and Alan Williams's house. RSVP to [cahill.matt@gmail.com](mailto:cahill.matt@gmail.com) by April 4.

## Gospel Choir Rehearsal Schedule for April

The Gospel Choir will rehearse on Tuesdays April 3, 17, and 24<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. in the Music Suite. If you are interested in joining the choir or want more information on the choir, contact Valeria Foster, Gospel Choir director.

## Bible Study on Wednesday, April 11

Even if you missed our March overview of the Gospel of Mark, come and join us for the next installment in our series of Bible studies based on this shortest of the Gospels, which we (along with churches of many denominations) are reading during worship on most Sundays of this year. This month's session will be held in the Music Suite on Wednesday, April 11, from 7 to 8:30 p.m., and will be led by Rev. Miriam Gentle. We will focus on the very beginning of the Gospel, Mark 1:1-17. You won't believe how much "good news" is packed into these seventeen verses!



Dr. Gentle led the overview of the Gospel of Mark at the LGBTQ Bible Study in March.

## Happy Hour on April 19 to Benefit Disciples Alliance Q

Join friends old and new for a happy hour from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 19, at Uproar Lounge and Restaurant, 639 Florida Avenue, NW, located just two blocks from the Shaw Metro station (Green Line).

A minimum donation of \$10 is requested to benefit Disciples LGBTQ+ Alliance, which works with congregations, regions, and the general church "setting a place at the table for persons of all genders, expressions, and sexual orientations." For more information, please contact Rev. Michael McMahon at [mmcmahon@nationalcitycc.org](mailto:mmcmahon@nationalcitycc.org).



**Preschoolers Attend Music at Midday** : Organist Joby Bell demonstrated the organ for some of the sixty preschool students from Thompson Elementary School who attended his Music at Midday recital on Friday, March 9. Many of the enthusiastic future organists offered smiles and positive reviews, such as “I liked the music!”

**Music at Midday:  
All Bach and All Langlais;  
Organists from Switzerland and Germany**

Fasten your seatbelts for four magnificent programs at this month’s Music at Midday concerts. Beginning with a piano performance of the entire Goldberg Variations of J. S. Bach, the month continues with a program entirely drawn from the organ works of Jean Langlais and appearances by visiting organists from Germany and Switzerland. Come for a shower of beautiful music this April!

**April 6**  
Pianist Nathan Carterette, from Iowa City, Iowa, will perform the entire set of *Goldberg Variations* by Johann Sebastian Bach.

**April 13**  
Organist Axel Flierl, from Dillingen an der Donau, Germany, will perform transcriptions and reconstructions of works by Charles Tournemire, Richard Wagner, and Pierre Cochereau.

**April 20**  
David K. Houston, from College Park, Maryland, will present a program entitled “Langlais All Day,” performing four organ works of Jean Langlais composed over the span of three decades, from 1933 to 1961.

**April 27**  
Organist Christian Gautschi, from Zurich, Switzerland, will perform a recital of classical works along with arrangements of traditional, folk, and popular tunes. Works of William Boyce, Iosif Ivanovici, John Williams, Erkki Melartin, and John Miles.

**Blanket Sunday**

Blanket Sunday is your opportunity to give towards buying blankets through Church World Service to provide blankets for those who have been victims of emergencies throughout the world.

We will be collecting money on April 22 and 29 with our regular offering. Just write Blanket Sunday in the memo line on your check to National City Christian Church or put it in an envelope with Blanket Sunday written on it. Thank you for your help.

- Kathleen Swihart  
President, Disciples Women

**Family Movie Night!**

We are inviting our young friends and neighbors with their parents to join us Friday evening April 6 at 6 p.m. to watch Moana in the church fellowship hall. Special guests will include the princess Moana who is looking forward to visiting with the children. The children will have the opportunity to make island-themed crafts and snack on kid-friendly goodies.

We are in need of folks to set up ahead of time, interact with and help children with crafts, serve snacks, supply frozen pizza, popcorn, home-baked cookies, etc. If you can help, contact Teresa Swihart or Steven Baines.

**My Neighbor Ministries Update**

The winter months are waning even though as I write this, snow is falling on Thomas Circle and perhaps a fourth nor’easter is headed our way. My Neighbor Ministries at National City have been busy as we expand outreach to our poor and homeless neighbors providing food through our food pantry and hospitality and assistance during the week.

As we begin transitioning to spring, we could definitely use some donations for our outreach ministries. We are always in need of snacks and canned and non-perishable items for the food pantry. Additional items we are distributing to our neighbors are soap, shampoo, deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrushes, washcloths, socks, gloves, and thermal/long sleeve T-shirts. All of these items can be left in the atrium on Sundays and during the week.

Your Christ-like service and hospitality are warmly appreciated by our neighbors.

- Tony Johnson

**Thank You From Wes Strotman**

Thank you to members and friends at National City Christian Church for your prayers, calls, messages, cards, food, and best wishes extended to me during my recent surgery.

I am healing and progressing in my mobility as I proceed with physical therapy. Hope to be back at worship soon. God bless you all.

- Wes Strotman

## Staff Changes and Updates

National City Christian Church Foundation welcomes **Rev. Steven C. Baines**, long-standing congregation leader for nearly 20 years, as our **Senior Strategist for Outreach, Development, and Spiritual Formation**. Rev. Baines will bring his unique skill set as a dynamic congregational leader and national faith-based organizer to develop innovative strategies and ministries expanding the Foundation's presence and influence within the community and denominational life. Working in partnership with our clergy and leadership team, he will assist in our transition during the Hope Ministry Partnership's Year of Epiphany strategic planning process and in branding National City's renowned hospitality as a place of prayer for all God's people. In the words of Dr. Gentle, "I know that Rev. Baines's passion for pastoral ministry and community touch will bring clarity as we envision "out of the box" futures for our facilities, ministries, and witness for Christ to a new generation."

Additionally, Office Manager **Colleen Walsh** has been promoted to the new position of **Church Administrator**. Ms. Walsh, who has served on the church staff for over 13 years, will oversee day-to-day operations of NCCC. She will serve as the point person for administrative activities of the church, and coordination of building usage and negotiations with current and future building tenants. Ms. Walsh's expanded senior staff duties also include the direction and evaluation of our resources

and vendor relationships with the Foundation and congregation. Affirming this move, Dr. Gentle has said, "Ms. Walsh has been so gracious, patient, and helpful following the untimely death of our beloved Mr. Bill Knight, Facilities Administrator. Her long-term dedication to staff and congregation and her gifts of creativity make her an ideal choice for this new position of Church Administrator."

One additional change to existing position descriptions at National City is with **Building Superintendent Morris (Moe) Jackson**. Mr. Jackson has also taken on additional responsibilities during this time of transition. "Mr. Jackson has done so with a Christ-like servant's heart and with that always recognizable 'Moe Jackson smile,'" remarked Dr. Gentle. Several new responsibilities have been added to Mr. Jackson's position description moving forward, including the oversight of the maintenance budget and the security systems of the facilities.

We are extremely grateful to the **National City Christian Church Foundation** for the generous, additional funding and their continued partnership which supports the congregational life with this new work, without any impact to the congregation's budget. All three begin immediately and position descriptions are available upon request.

Let us all extend words of warmth and congratulations to Steven, Colleen, and Moe as they begin their new (and renewed) positions, and for their dedication to Christ and this congregation.

## Opportunity for Lauren He with D.C. Youth Orchestra

The D.C. Youth Orchestra has been invited to perform at an Italian music festival this year -- and our own **Lauren He** has passed the audition to go and is participating in a fundraiser for the trip. Lauren is the daughter of **Polly He**.

Lauren, 15, has played the violin for 10 years and has posted her story on the website for donors for the orchestra trip -- <https://www.razoo.com/story/Gp633g>. She writes: "I'm fifteen years old and I love music. Playing violin is incredibly important to me, and it has greatly influenced my life. Music is crucial to whom I am, an essential part of me. It has given me so much meaning and passion to my life."

She said the D. C. Youth Orchestra is the first America youth orchestra to be invited to the 11-day festival, where its performances include Tchaikovsky's Romeo and Juliet Suite, Beethoven's 7<sup>th</sup> Symphony, and Dvorak's American Suite.



## Welcome to New Member

We welcomed **Anne-Michele Maher** into membership at National City on March 11. She has been with the Sanctuary Choir for about a year and a half and is alto section leader.

Anne-Michelle is a Board Certified Music Therapist and works as an activities leader at The Virginian Continuing Care Retirement Community in Fairfax, Virginia. She is currently finishing a Masters in Music Therapy at Shenandoah University and hopes to be done by the end of the summer. She comes from a musical family and has been singing all her life.

She is transferring from St. Mark Catholic Church in Vienna, Virginia, where her mom works as Music and Liturgy Director.