



# The HARVESTER Newsletter

A Publication of Southwest Church of Christ

January 2024

Dear Southwest Family,

Let me tell you about Larry Walters. Larry was a truck driver, but he always wanted to be a pilot. In fact, Larry joined the Air Force hoping to learn to pilot a jet fighter. However, that dream never came to fruition. His eyesight kept him grounded.

One day a stroke of genius came to Larry. He obtained forty-five weather balloons from an Army-Navy surplus store. Under false pretenses, he secured some helium gas from an industrial balloon supply company. And lastly, he procured some heavy-duty straps from a local hardware store.

At home, Larry used the straps to attach the weather balloons to a lawn chair he had laying around his garage. He then anchored the chair to the bumper of his truck, so that it wouldn't fly away as he filled the weather balloons with the helium. Having grabbed a parachute, a CB radio, a camera, a small cooler packed with a few sandwiches and drinks, and a loaded BB gun, Larry mounted his "rocket" to the stars.

On Friday, July 2, 1982, Larry Walters left the terra firma of 1633 West 7<sup>th</sup> Street in San Pedro, California aboard his flying lawn chair. He rose to an altitude of 16,000 feet as he slowly drifted over the residences of Long Beach.

Forty-five minutes into the flight, Larry began to shoot the weather balloons to begin his descent. He slowly returned to the earth, but not without incident. On the way down, one of the straps from a deflated balloon caught hold of a powerline, breaking it, causing an outage in the area.

Upon landing Larry was met by the friendly faces of Long Beach's finest. The end result was a \$1,500 fine and a whole lot of publicity. Larry appeared on Late Night with David Letterman and was in a Timex watch commercial. The lawn chair that he used is on display at the Smithsonian in Virginia.

Larry may have been certifiably crazy, but what amazes me the most about him, is that *he was passionate and prepared*. The man literally packed a lunch before liftoff!

*"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:11-13 ESV).*

In these few verses, Paul passionately encourages Titus, and us, to be prepared for the return of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Church, are we passionate about seeing Jesus? Are we prepared for His return?

For 2,000 years God has delayed the return of His Son. Will 2024 be the year? Jesus says we won't expect it (Matthew 24:36; 24:42; 24:44), so doesn't that mean we should be living like it could happen any minute? And as we wait, will it be in dread? Or will we wait with passion? Anticipating that if it does happen in our lifetime, it will be the greatest event of our lives.

As with the dawning of every new year, there are a lot of unknowns. But the unknown should motivate us to be passionate about, and prepared for, seeing our Savior return in glory!

I hope 2024 is your best year yet!

With love, Mike Hawkins

## Events & Information

### Monthly Figures

#### In- Service Attendance:

11/26	12/3	12/10	12/17	12/24
89	90	94	86	104

*“And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers”* (Acts 2:42). Thank you for your faithfulness, church! We continue to have several folks watching online each week. Please continue to pray for our church family – both those in corporate worship and those being reached by our online ministry.

We are continually blessed by the generosity of God’s people. Thank you for your continued financial support so that we may meet the needs of our ministry staff, missionaries, benevolence ministry, and the general ministry of the church. For your convenience, we would like to remind you that online giving is available through our secure internet portal at <https://swccbarberton.com/giving>.

Thank you, church family, for your ongoing support of Southwest Church of Christ!

**Weekly Need:**            **Weekly Need:**  
General: \$3,600            Missions: \$442

Welcome to 2024. It is hard to believe 2023 is gone, but what a year it was. The Elders want you to know, as we reflect on the past year, many things have changed. Southwest welcomed a new senior minister, a new youth minister, an upgraded parking lot and new members. WOW! But let us not forget what hasn’t changed, and that is the LOVE we have for God our Father and the friendliness we show everyone who walks through our doors.

In regards to looking back, Isaiah 43:18 (NLT) says, *“But forget all that- it is nothing compared to what I am going to do.”* The Elders know in their hearts that God has great things in store for Southwest in 2024. We ask that you continue to pray for the entire congregation; that we will all be open to what God has planned for us. Change is hard, but we never want our church to become stagnate. The only exception: we will never stop preaching from the bible and praising God. -The Elders

**Akron Pregnancy Services (APS) Giving Tree:** Thank you again, to those who donated gifts for the APS "Giving Tree". We were able to bless 50 individuals this Christmas season.

**B.A.C.M. Food Pantry item:** Soups (dried or canned). Place items in the BACM box in the kitchen.

**Soup Kitchen:** Southwest members will be serving on Tuesday, 1/30. Please see Terry Trump for details.

**Scrapbooking & Crafters:** Saturday, 1/06 from 9 am-10 pm in the fellowship hall. Open to anyone who likes to scrapbook, craft and fellowship with others. Bring a snack and beverage to share. Questions? Call the church office.

**“Senior Moment” Group:** We will meet for lunch at Dee’s 50’s Place Diner on Norton Ave. at noon on Tuesday, 1/16. RSVP by 1/14 to Karen Rummer.

**Wednesday Night Live:** Refreshments start at 6 pm. Then at 6:30 pm, a combined class of adults and teenagers meet in the Fellowship Hall, and a Kindergarten through 5th grade class meets in the basement. Meeting resumes January 3.

**Men’s Bible Study:** Monday evenings at 6:30 pm. Discussions focus on different books of the bible, by chapter, until completed. Hebrews is the current book being studied. All men are welcome to join.

**Tuesday Morning Ladies Study at 10 am:** We are doing a study of Philippians 4:4-8 using Max Lucado’s book, *Anxious for Nothing- Finding Calm in a Chaotic World*. Let Karen R. know if you would like a book for \$15.

**Rahab Ministries:** They are a faith-based ministry devoted to rescuing and restoring victims of human trafficking. Please consider supporting this ministry financially. Checks may be sent to: Rahab Ministries, 3480 W. Market Street, Suite 303, Fairlawn, OH 44333.

#### **Deacon’s List:**

Chair: Open  
Audio/Visual: Jared Friedrichsen  
Secretary: Mike Bunn  
Parsonage: Open  
Maintenance: Lynn Hounshel  
Special Projects: TBD, Lynn, and Phil Friedrichsen  
Benevolence: Tony Storad  
Church (Building): Lynn Hounshel

**Connect with your church leaders:** Mike Hawkins [seniorministerswcc@gmail.com](mailto:seniorministerswcc@gmail.com);  
Eli Blackford [youthministerswcc@gmail.com](mailto:youthministerswcc@gmail.com); and the Church Office [swccbarberton@gmail.com](mailto:swccbarberton@gmail.com)

# January

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<i>"Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths." Psalm 25:4</i>	<b>1</b> New Year's Day	<b>2</b> Women's Bible Study	<b>3</b> WNL	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> Scrapbooking
<b>7</b> Elder's Mtg.  Jr. & Sr. High Youth Group	<b>8</b> Men's Study	<b>9</b> Women's Bible Study	<b>10</b> WNL	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>14</b> Deacon's Mtg.  Jr. & Sr. High Youth Group	<b>15</b> Martin Luther King Jr. Day  Men's Study	<b>16</b> Women's Bible Study  "Senior Moment"	<b>17</b> WNL	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>21</b> Jr. & Sr. High Youth Group	<b>22</b> Men's Study	<b>23</b> Women's Bible Study	<b>24</b> WNL	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b> Jr. & Sr. High Youth Group	<b>29</b> Men's Study	<b>30</b> Women's Bible Study  Soup Kitchen	<b>31</b> WNL	<i>"He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear the Lord and put their trust in him." Psalm 40:3</i>		

## BIRTHDAYS:

1/04	Sarah Hawkins
1/05	Carla Friedrichsen
1/09	Cathy Ross
1/16	Bob Klein
1/17	Barbara Hughey
1/19	Linda Sechler
1/21	Alice Gerbig
1/22	Adelyn Kriston
1/24	Debbie Martin
1/25	Mike Hawkins
1/25	Joel Martin
1/30	Dick Smith

## ANNIVERSARIES:

1/07	Dave & Chris Hodge
1/17	Phil & Carla Friedrichsen

Did you have a birthday or anniversary this month that we missed? Would you like to have your special day added to our calendar? Write your name, the occasion, and the date on the prayer tab in the bulletin. Place the tab in the offering plate on any Sunday. Or you may send an email to: [kdbusch15@gmail.com](mailto:kdbusch15@gmail.com), and I will gladly include your information.

**Do you know someone who would positively benefit from reading The HARVESTER? Our newsletter is available on the Southwest Church of Christ webpage under the Ministries tab.**

## Growing Your Faith

*"We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life."*

*Romans 6:4*

The readings for 2024 will guide you through the whole bible this year. As you read each day, meditate on God's words and His promises to us.

JAN 1: Genesis 1-2  
JAN 2: Genesis 3-5  
JAN 3: Genesis 6-9  
JAN 4: Genesis 10-11  
JAN 5: Genesis 12-15  
JAN 6: Genesis 16-19  
JAN 7: Genesis 20-22  
JAN 8: Genesis 23-26  
JAN 9: Genesis 27-29  
JAN 10: Genesis 30-32

JAN 11: Genesis 33-36  
JAN 12: Genesis 37-39  
JAN 13: Genesis 40-42  
JAN 14: Genesis 43-46  
JAN 15: Genesis 47-50  
JAN 16: Exodus 1-4  
JAN 17: Exodus 5-7  
JAN 18: Exodus 8-10  
JAN 19: Exodus 11-13  
JAN 20: Exodus 14-17

JAN 21: Exodus 18-20  
JAN 22: Exodus 21-24  
JAN 23: Exodus 25-27  
JAN 24: Exodus 28-31  
JAN 25: Exodus 32-34  
JAN 26: Exodus 35-37  
JAN 27: Exodus 38-40  
JAN 28: Leviticus 1-4  
JAN 29: Leviticus 5-7  
JAN 30: Leviticus 8-10  
JAN 31: Leviticus 11-13

Scripture list courtesy of  
[www.biblestudytools.com/  
bible-reading-plan/chronological.html](http://www.biblestudytools.com/bible-reading-plan/chronological.html)

## Kids Korner



"... says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."  
Isaiah 1:18

Find the underlined words from the verse above in the word-search below.

T	W	A	S	B	D	F	8	8	1	G	I
K	H	L	M	C	R	I	M	S	O	N	O
Q	I	O	S	U	A	W	Y	A	B	D	F
H	T	R	U	I	K	R	M	Y	O	U	R
O	E	D	P	G	R	T	L	S	U	W	Y
S	Z	A	8	C	H	E	G	E	I	K	M
I	O	Q	1	S	A	R	E	U	T	W	I
N	Y	T	8	B	D	F	E	H	J	L	S
S	S	H	A	L	L	N	P	D	R	T	A
V	N	E	Z	A	I	C	E	G	I	K	I
M	O	Y	O	Q	K	S	W	O	O	L	A
T	W	V	Y	A	E	C	1	1	8	E	H

For you to color:

*He washed us white as snow...*

*Isaiah 1:18*



## Connect with Us



*Love God Love People Lead People to Jesus*

Michael Hawkins, Senior Minister  
Eli Blackford, Youth Minister  
Jared Friedrichsen, Worship Minister  
Cindy Weaver, Secretary  
(330) 825-7263  
[www.swccbarberton.com](http://www.swccbarberton.com)  
[www.facebook.com/swccbarberton](http://www.facebook.com/swccbarberton)

### WEEKLY WORSHIP TIMES:

Sunday Morning:  
Sunday School 9:30 am  
Morning Worship 10:30 am

## Youth Ministry

### Message from Eli:

Happy New Year!

Around this time, we tend to look backward and forward. We look back at the previous year, assessing our achievements, recalling the highlights, and ultimately deciding whether it qualifies as a “good” or “bad” year. And, we also look forward into the next year. Forecasting our experiences, setting goals, and planning to ensure that this will be recorded into the annals of our life as a “good” year. The New Year tends to heighten our human tendency to focus everywhere, except on the present moment.

Often, we get stuck on the traumatic events of our past; bearing the guilt, shame, and pain they brought into today. Or, we look back, wistfully longing for the good old days when everything seemed better and we achieved our greatest accomplishments. Our past, good or bad, may take our focus away from being fully present in the current moment.

Yet, some of us are more forward thinkers. We have a long list of things we want to achieve in our lifetime. We are visionaries who can see our desired futures and who make our daily decisions in light of the long-term vision. We are striving, running up the ladder, never easing up for fear of losing our progress.

Backward or forward thinking is not a bad thing. But what we dwell on, or look to, has profound power to define us in our present situation. I think Peter understood this significance when he wrote these words (1 Peter 1:3-4 ESV):

*“<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope (our present) through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (our past), <sup>4</sup> to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you (our future).”*

This is how those of us in Christ ought to see things. Looking to the past, we dwell on the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Looking to the future, we have an eternal inheritance awaiting us in heaven. And how do these define us right now? We are people of living hope!

So, whether 2024 turns out to be a good or bad year, I pray that we will be people of living hope every day. That there are plenty of moments spent fully present with our Lord, and that our pasts and futures would come together under the gracious authority of Jesus.

Blessed to serve with you!

### Upcoming Kids and Teen Ministry events:

**Teens (6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade):** Regular Jr. & Sr. High Youth Group resumes on Sunday, 1/07 at 6pm.

**Ohio Teens for Christ:** March 29-30. More information will be available as we get closer to the event.