



Who Is My NEIGHBOR?

Lent 2017

March 1
Ash Wednesday

-

April 16
Easter Sunday



Middletown
CHRISTIAN CHURCH

500 N. Watterson Trail
Louisville KY 40243
502.245.9793
MiddletownChristian.org



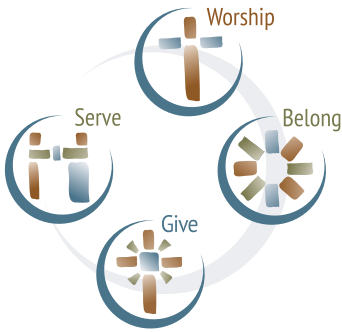
Middletown

CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Mission

Living out the love of Christ by embracing people where they are!

Strategy



Tagline

Live it out!

Our Values

Radical Love

sharing the unconditional love, grace, and forgiveness that God offers to all people

Freedom of Belief

creating a space that encourages questions and faith exploration through prayer and study of Scripture

Sacrificial Service

reflecting the life of Christ in the way we live, the places we go, and the choices we make

Real Conversations

growing together with openness, honesty, and transparency

Infectious Community

sharing life together in grace-filled relationships

Marks of a Disciple

Intimacy with God

"Have I met with Christ today?"

Crossing Boundaries

"Have I embraced someone different from me?"

Good News to the Poor

"Where am I good news?"

Outrageous Generosity

"What am I giving up?"

Accountable Relationships

"Who's on my speed dial?"

Christ Likeness

"Who saw Christ in me today?"

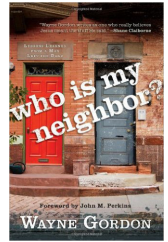
Observing Lent

Lent is the season in the church year during which we prepare ourselves for Easter, typically through prayer, repentance, and some kind of sacrifice. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, March 1 and lasts about six weeks, culminating on Easter Sunday. The church has traditionally taught that Lent is to be marked by giving up something close to us in order to give ourselves more fully to God.

Here at Middletown Christian Church, we recognize the tremendous value that comes from participating in long-standing church practices that bind us together with Christians around the world. As you might expect, however, we're going to put our own spin on the observation of Lent to maximize the impact it has on each of us.

We'll do this in three ways:

1. For Lent, our theme is "Who Is My Neighbor?" This will be the focus of David's sermon series as well as for some new group offerings (pages 8-9). Read the book and find a group!
2. In addition to a focused sermon series, we'll also encourage everyone to follow the daily readings for each day of Lent. A reading guide for "Who Is My Neighbor?" by Wayne Gordon and daily Bible readings is provided (pages 4-6) to help you spend more intentional time with scripture and with God.
3. We invite our youth and adults to attend the Hear My Story Forums (page 10) where you can learn more about the people you attend church with and possibly expand your understanding of your neighborhood.



Who Is My Neighbor?

A Sermon Series for Lent ... March 12-April 9

This Lent, David will be preaching a series of messages about our neighbors and how Jesus is always enlarging our neighborhood. We'll discover that God will never be any bigger than the size of our neighborhood. "Who Is My Neighbor?" is a series about crossing boundaries to discover God in some surprising places.

A Daily Devotional for Lent

During the 40 days of Lent, we encourage you to start each morning by spending some time alone with God. The process centers around scripture and a corresponding chapter in Wayne Gordon's book *Who is My Neighbor?* As we journey through Lent together, talk about neighbors, and hear people's stories, these morning devotions will help you prepare for your call by making space for God's voice.

About the Book:

Who Is My Neighbor? Lessons Learned From a Man Left for Dead by Wayne Gordon (ISBN-13 #978-0830757657) is a good resource for conversation. It expands the idea of "neighbor" into 40 easy-to-read chapters, each with a different focus. Chances are, you'll find things you agree with and things you disagree with in this book, and that's great! Enjoy it, wrestle with it, ask questions of it, and let it inform your role as "neighbor" with the people in your life.

How to Use This Guide:

The questions will be the same for each day, but your answers will change based on the subject of the chapter and the scripture. The list of suggested readings is on pages 5-6 of this guide. You may find it helpful to use a notebook alongside this guide so you can record your answers and observations as you go. You may also want to write or highlight key ideas directly in your book.

Listen

- Read the chapter for today. It's short, so take your time. You may even consider reading with a notebook, pen, and highlighter handy.
- Read the scripture passage for today, then consider the following questions.
- In the context of "neighbors," what stands out to you from this passage?
- What is God saying to you about being a neighbor?

Reflect

- What stood out to you in this chapter?
- What questions arose for you as you read?
- How does this chapter connect to today's scripture?
- Where have you seen this kind of need before? What did you do?
- Have you ever been the person with this kind of need? How did that change your perspective?
- How can you be open to this type of neighbor?

Respond

- What action can you take today?
- Take a few minutes to pray. Ask God to open your heart to your neighbors. Offer thanks to God for faithfulness, grace, and love for everyone.
- Be sure to share your story at MiddletownChristian.org/hearmystory or by using #MCCHearMyStory. (See page 11 for more information.)

List of suggested daily readings from *Who Is My Neighbor?* and from the Bible

Date	Chapter	Scripture
Wed. March 1	1	Luke 10:25-37
Thurs. March 2	2	Matthew 8:14-17
Fri. March 3	3	Mark 10:46-52
Sat. March 4	4	Luke 8:43-48
Sun. March 5		Luke 10:25-37
Mon. March 6	5	Genesis 27:30-38
Tues. March 7	6	Mark 5:21-24, 35-43
Wed. March 8	7	Luke 8:26-37
Thurs. March 9	8	Mark 7:31-37
Fri. March 10	9	John 4:1-42
Sat. March 11	10	Luke 24:13-35
Sun. March 12		John 4:1-42
Mon. March 13	11	Matthew 27:28-30
Tues. March 14	12	Mark 15:21-24
Wed. March 15	13	Mark 9:14-29
Thurs. March 16	14	Luke 5:18-25
Fri. March 17	15	John 5:1-8
Sat. March 18	16	Matthew 8:1-4
Sunday, March 19		Luke 5:18-25
Mon. March 20	17	Acts 17:16-34
Tues. March 21	18	Mark 12:41-44

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Date	Chapter	Scripture
Wed. March 22	19	John 8:1-11
Thurs. March 23	20	Luke 16:19-31
Fri. March 24	21	Luke 17:11-19
Sat. March 25	22	Luke 7:11-17
Sunday, March 26		Acts 17:16-34
Mon. March 27	23	Matthew 15:21-28
Tues. March 28	24	Luke 14:1-6
Wed. March 29	25	Mark 10:17-27
Thurs. March 30	26	Luke 19:1-10
Fri. March 31	27	Luke 7:36-50
Sat. April 1	28	Matthew 12:9-14
Sun. April 2		Luke 7:36-50
Mon. April 3	29	Matthew 19:13-15
Tues. April 4	30	Matthew 25:31-46
Wed. April 5	31	Luke 13:10-17
Thurs. April 6	32	Mark 4:35-41
Fri. April 7	33	Luke 14:15-24
Sat. April 8	34	John 3:1-21
Sun. April 9		Matthew 25:31-46
Mon. April 10	35	Matthew 8:5-13
Tues. April 11	36	Luke 22:54-62
Wed. April 12	37	John 6:1-14
Thurs. April 13	38	Acts 8:26-40
Fri. April 14	39	Luke 23:39-43
Sat. April 15	40	Matthew 16:24-26
Sunday, April 16	Happy Easter! Jesus is Risen!	

Notes

Find a Group

In conjunction with David's sermon series "Who is My Neighbor?", we are encouraging everyone to read the book of the same name by Wayne Gordon. New groups are forming now that will read and discuss the book together, and some existing groups will do the same. Consider joining a group for this 6-week series and join in the conversation!

To register ...

- Visit MiddletownChristian.org/Lent and fill out a simple form, or
- Contact Tracey Spann, 245.9793 or tspann@middletownchristian.org.

New Groups Forming

These groups are forming now and will meet for six weeks beginning on the date given. Unless a specific age or other factor is indicated, all are welcome.

Sunday Morning • 9:50 a.m.

Beginning March 5

Facilitators: Ed and Nancy Staton, statons5@twc.com

Location: Room 223

Sunday Morning • 11:10 a.m.

Beginning March 5

Facilitator: Jeff Wellkamp, jwellkamp@yahoo.com

Location: Room 104

Sunday Morning (Young Couples) • 11:10 a.m.

Beginning March 5

Group Contact: Chris Cherry, ccherry@middletownchristian.org

Location: Room 223

Sunday Evening • 6:30 p.m.

Beginning March 5

Facilitator: Charles Love, crlvskmw@att.net

Location: Room 223

Monday Evenings (Empty Nesters) • 6:30 p.m.

Beginning March 6

Facilitators: Jim and Janet Sims, janet.sims@twc.com

Location: 708 Park Creek Circle (Sims Home)

Wednesday Evening (High School Students) • 7 p.m.

Beginning March 8

Facilitator: Corey & Jessica Miller, cmiller@middletownchristian.org

Location: 10514 Hite Creek Road (Miller Home)

Featured Groups

These are existing groups that are reading “Who is My Neighbor?” and inviting others to join them this spring.

Sunday Morning • 9:50 (The Tribe)

Beginning March 5

Facilitator: John Willen, jwillen3@aol.com

Location: Room 103

Sunday Morning • 11:10 (Reckless Christians)

Beginning March 5

Facilitator: Eric Hitzelberger, erik.hitzelberger@gmail.com

Location: Room 110

Wednesday Morning • 7:30 a.m.

Beginning March 8

Contact: Dave Seely, dseely@middletownchristian.org

Location: Heitzman’s Bakery Middletown

Thursday Mornings (Women’s Group) • 9:00 a.m.

Beginning March 2

Facilitator: Jean Kellett, jean@jkellett.com

Location: 350 Evergreen Road Suite #103 (Kellett Office)

For assistance in finding a group, visit MiddletownChristian.org/groups or contact Tracey Spann, 245.9793 or tspann@middletownchristian.org.

Hear My Story Forums

Stories are all around us. But we never seem to have the time to hear them in our day to day lives. During the Lenten season we are asking you to stop and listen. Listen at work. At the store. In your church.

Each Thursday at 7:00 p.m. from March 9 through April 13, we will host a 90-minute forum on a topic of interest. In an atmosphere of radical love, you'll have the opportunity to hear personal stories from people in our church community.

Race • March 9

Moderators: Bill Wilson, Engagement Coordinator and Elder, Middletown Christian Church and George Irvin, Stephen Minister and Elder, Middletown Christian Church

Addiction • March 16

Moderator: Joseph Pusateri, Senior Minister, Simpsonville Christian Church

Sexual Orientation • March 23

Moderator: David Emery, Senior Minister, Middletown Christian Church

Families & Special Needs • March 30

Moderator: Janet Sims, Principal at Strategic HR Consulting and Chairman of the Board, Middletown Christian Church

Refugees • April 6

Moderator: Marissa Mason, Volunteer Coordinator, Kentucky Refugee Ministries, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing resettlement services to refugees through faith- and agency-based co-sponsorship.

Violence • April 13

Moderator: Dr. Eddie Woods, CEO of LIFE Hope Center, Inc., which works for safer schools and communities through gang, drug, and violence intervention.

Share Your Story

Our church-wide goal this year is 1,000 people crossing boundaries to be the message! We hope to hear stories of inspiration throughout the year from everyone that calls Middletown their home. We're called to be the message wherever we live, work, and play and are called out of our comfort zones to embrace people wherever they are.

Already this year we've collected stories of significant impact. Even small stories are big in God's eyes!

- Two church members with very different world views coming together over lunch and finding common ground.
- A longtime friendship with a co-worker who practices a different faith tradition and what that has meant to both of them.
- A young woman crossing the political divide to talk with a family member about why they hold differing beliefs.
- A professor talking to a student of a different faith tradition about her hopes and fears related to recent developments related to immigration.

And we'd like to hear from you! Throughout this series you're challenged to think and learn about your neighbors, either through the lunch challenge or the forums.

How to Share Your Story

- Email David Emery directly at demery@middletownchristian.org if you wish to remain completely anonymous.
- Visit MiddletownChristian.org/hearmystory and fill out a simple form. You may opt to remain anonymous or give permission to share your name with your story.
- Tell your story on social media and use the hashtag #MCCHeardMyStory.



Ash Wednesday ... A Meditative Worship Experience

Wednesday, March 1 • 6:00 p.m. • Sanctuary

Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent, a season of preparation for Christians leading up to Easter. This year, we're celebrating Ash Wednesday as a church through a special worship experience planned and led by our Youth Ministry. With a short, meditative service that includes the imposition of ashes, participants will be encouraged to prepare themselves for Lent and Easter by worshipping together as a family.

Easter FamJam

Saturday, March 26 • 3:00 p.m.

Bring the whole family for a fun, interactive, silly worship experience. It's a new way to hear the story of Easter. There will be music, refreshments, the Easter bunny, and an Easter Egg Hunt. No reservations needed. Donations of candy for eggs appreciated. Contact Amanda O'Mahoney (aomahoney@middletownchristian.org) with questions or to volunteer at the event.

Good Friday Worship Service

Friday, April 14 • 7:00 p.m.

Using the seven last words of Jesus and simple crosses for each participant, this solemn service will dramatically challenge each of us to experience the violent reality of Christ's crucifixion.

Join us for Easter Worship!

Saturday, April 15

5:30 p.m.

Sunday, April 16

8:30 a.m. • 9:50 a.m. • 11:10 a.m. • 12:30 p.m.

Youth Worship (Gr. 6-12) • 9:50 a.m. • ARISE Youth Center

Kids Worship (Gr. K-5) • 9:50 a.m. & 11:10 a.m. • Gym

Child care is available for all Easter services.