



LOVE

bears all things,
believes all things,
hopes all things,
endures all things.
Love never fails.

- 1 Corinthians 13:7 -

FEBRUARY 2026

FROM THE PREACHER'S PEN

I once walked into a Starbucks coffee shop trying to decide if it was warm enough out for iced coffee. My wife, who is much more steady than I am, always wanted it hot. I was getting ready to order when a job description for Starbucks caught my eye. The part of the advertisement that especially got me was when they compared being part of the Starbucks team as "being involved in something bigger than yourself." Now I have heard countless preachers trying to get people to volunteer for the ministry's at the church, say this exact phrase. Starbucks was the first secular company that I have seen to employ such language.

Yet the use of it is genius. Everyone wants to be part of something that is bigger than themselves. Proverbs 29:18 says where there is no vision the people perish, or the people are unrestrained. I take this unrestrained to mean they are as sheep without a shepherd. Any group of people, when they do not have a vision for where they are going, aren't usually going anywhere, or at least they are all headed in different directions. What if we could get everyone in an organization or a team to be all headed in the same direction. Think about what that business, group, or Church could accomplish if this were the case.

As Christians, everyone of us want to be involved somehow in furthering the kingdom of God on the earth. We think about ways we can do so. We form committees or create ministries to impact a certain area of our world for the Kingdom. This year we have launched at Minerva First Christian Church a collected vision of what we want the church at MFCC to be about. Our direction, our focus, our vision. Because of the One! When you look back upon your life and realize how good God has been to us, how He has come thru when all seemed to be lost, how He has provided more than we could ever ask or imagine, and to think all of this is because of Jesus.

Not only the physical, answered prayers that God has answered but what He has done on our behalf because of the One! He has blessed us with, Ephesians says, every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Because of the One, we have been forgiven by God, adopted by Him, received and welcomed into a fellowship relationship with Him both now and for eternity. This isn't a mere string of platitudes but is the reality for all of those who are in Christ.

So for the foreseeable future, we exist as a church because of the One. We want to learn what it means to truly be a disciple of Jesus Christ and live pleasing to Him, because of the One. We want to see many come to saving faith in Christ and know Him as Lord and Savior because of the One. We as a church want to take as many people as we can to heaven with us, because of the One

The HEART of the MATTER (Mark 7:1-23)

In my own personal Bible reading, I have been going through the Gospel of Mark recently. Today, I came to chapter seven. The first 23 verses there really made me think of our church. Don't get excited—it's not in a good way. At this time, I encourage you to pull out your Bible and read that passage, Mark 7:1–23. The rest of this article deals directly with Jesus' encounter there with the Pharisees.

All done reading? Great! Let's get into it.

In the first five verses, the Pharisees are concerned that Jesus' disciples don't ceremonially wash their hands before they eat. Let's put this more into context. Up to this point in Mark, the Pharisees have seen Jesus teach like no other, with the authority of God Himself. They have witnessed miracles that only God can do, such as casting out demons, healing sick people, feeding the 5,000, etc. They have also witnessed Him putting them in their place on several occasions—two of the most notable being when He displays that He is Lord over the Sabbath, as well as His authority to forgive sins.

Now, instead of the Pharisees coming to the correct conclusion that this must be the Messiah—the One they have been waiting for—they ask stupid questions. Imagine seeing all the Pharisees had seen and then saying something in a whiny voice like this: "We noticed that your disciples don't wash their hands and follow all the man-made traditions that we have set in place over the years..."

What is Jesus' response? He shows them how the prophet Isaiah foretold this would happen. These Pharisees are far too concerned with the commands of men rather than the commands of God, and His response in the following verses is summed up in verse 15: "Nothing outside a person can defile them by going into them. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that Now, instead of the Pharisees coming to the correct conclusion that this must be the Messiah—the One they have been waiting for—they ask stupid questions. Imagine seeing all the Pharisees had seen and then saying something in a whiny voice like this: "We noticed that your disciples don't wash their hands and follow all the man-made traditions that we have set in place over the years..." What is Jesus' response? He shows them how the prophet Isaiah foretold this would happen. These Pharisees are far too concerned with the commands of men rather than the commands of God, and His response in the following verses is summed up in verse 15: "Nothing outside a person can defile them by going into them. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles them."

In Matthew 12:34, Jesus would put it like this: "Out of the heart the mouth speaks." Jesus explains that the Pharisees are dealing with a heart issue. They don't recognize the power of God before them. Instead, they choose to cling to their worthless man-made rules and traditions. They miss the point. This type of thinking would lead Jesus to call the Pharisees hypocrites on multiple occasions, and even "whitewashed tombs" in Matthew 23.

The HEART of the MATTER (Mark 7:1-23) (CON'T.)

The outside looks great—they follow all the rules, they look good and clean. But on the inside, they are as nasty as the next tomb: dead.

Now imagine this with me. Pastor Chris gives a powerful sermon one Sunday morning. He has worked tirelessly all week to prepare this message for his congregation. The worship goes well, and he approaches the pulpit with confidence that people are attuned to what God wants for them. And so he preaches. He boldly preaches the truth God has laid on his heart. He doesn't hold back about the vision God has given him for the Church and for our future. He finishes preaching and walks to the lobby to shake hands, pray with those in need of prayer, and encourage those who need encouragement.

Then it happens. Someone approaches Chris about what? Pews. Music volume. Not enough hymns. "When are we going to do something about these torn-up pews in the sanctuary?" Sadly, this scenario is not too hard to imagine. It happens far too often. This man—our pastor —has just laid down truth. He has preached about God's Kingdom, and some people's eternity in Heaven may hang in the balance. And what are some of us worried about? What Jesus would call "things that are outside of a person." Things that cannot defile us spiritually.

When we are more concerned with our traditions that we have done for 65 years than with supporting the spiritual growth of our congregation, we become just like those Pharisees of old—fake, hypocritical, whitewashed tombs, and dead inside.

Don't get me wrong—this is not a plea to let the building run down or to neglect the material possessions God has blessed us with. That is in no way what I am saying. However, when we let man-made rules and our own traditions become what matters most instead of issues of eternity—issues that would be on the heart of Jesus—we fail.

Let us ask ourselves: Am I like the Pharisees? Do I care too much about the outside of a person rather than the inside? What is the condition of my own heart in relationship to Jesus?

Church, we must start focusing on the right things. Why are we giving up our man-made concerns and setting our eyes on Jesus' eternal perspective?

Because of The One.

In Christ's Love,
Pastor Zach
BeRomans12
"Because of The One"

SHUT INS

Miss Kassadee Archer
25841 Quaker Church Rd.
East Rochester, OH 44625

Mrs. Betsy McIntosh
16621 Lisbon St. NE
Minerva, OH 44657

Mrs. Barbara Palmer
16415 Freed St. SE
Minerva, OH 44657



Mr. Scott Logan
11972 Lynchburg Rd.
Kensington, OH 44657

Mrs. Pat Lowery
23127 US Rt. 30
Minerva, OH 44657

Mr. David Dennis
602 Elizabeth St.
Minerva, OH 44657

FAMILY MATTERS

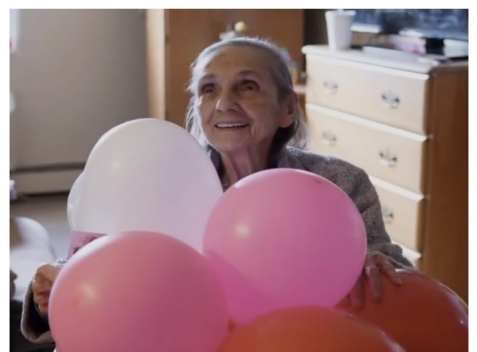
We celebrate with the baptisms of . . . Donna Cline and Kyle McCune. Donna and Kyle came forward and were baptized on Sunday Jan. 11th.

Donna lives at 222 S. Reed St., PO Box 751, Malvern, OH 44644.

Kyle lives at 1200 Valley St., Apt. A42, Minerva, OH 44657.

Let us lift our new brother and sister in Christ up in prayer and welcome them to the fold.

We send our sympathies to . . . John & Cindy Pilati and their family with the passing of John's Father, Bill Pilati. Mr. Pilati passed away on Fri., Jan. 23 at the age of 100. His services were Jan. 30th. *"He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."* Rev. 21:4



Thursday, February 5th, 2026 is Delivery Day!

Sign up at the link below to deliver balloons to Arbors in Minerva from **1:50pm-2:30pm** and/or Minerva Health Care from **2:40pm-3:10pm**. Click on "DELIVERY VOLUNTEERS" and scroll all the way to the bottom of the page. There you will find the sign ups for Arbors and Minerva Health Care. **DELIVERY VOLUNTEERS ARE TO MEET AT THE FACILITY BALLOONS ARE BEING DELIVERED TO.**



<https://linktr.ee/blessingballoons>



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8TH

5:30PM- CONCLUSION OF GAME

FREE PIZZA, CHIPS, COOKIES, & DRINKS!

JOHN & JILL LONG'S HOUSE

3023 DEUBLE AVE. SE EAST CANTON

TRANSPORTATION PROVIDED FROM MFCC IF NEEDED, LEAVING AT 5:30PM, WILL RETURN AFTER THE CONCLUSION OF THE GAME

NIGHT OF WORSHIP

February 22nd, 2026 @ 6pm

Minerva First Christian Church

Join us as we worship with Perry Christian Church's
Worship band!

TO REDEEM THE WHOLE CREATION
YOU DID NOT DESPISE THE CROSS

MINERVA AREA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL



February is shaping up to be an exciting month at MACS, and we can't wait to share what's ahead! As we look toward the 2026–2027 school year, enrollment officially opens this month. If you know families searching for a nurturing, Christ-centered environment for children in **Pre-K through 8th Grade**, we would love to meet them. MACS is a place where students grow academically, spiritually, and personally—and we're eager to welcome new families into our community.

Winter Open House – Thursday, February 12th

We invite all current and prospective families to join us for our **Winter Open House on Thursday, February 12th, from 6:30–8:00 PM**. Guests will have the chance to tour our campus, meet our dedicated staff, and experience firsthand what makes MACS such a special place for children to learn and grow.

More details can be found at minervafcc.com/open-house. Help us spread the word to friends, neighbors, and anyone who may be looking for a Christ-centered school home.

February Events You Won't Want to Miss

Our students and families have a full month of fun and learning ahead:

Science Fair – February 5: Students have been hard at work preparing creative and engaging projects. It's always a highlight to see their curiosity and innovation on display.

Rigatoni Dinner Fundraiser – February 20: Join us for a delicious evening that supports upcoming student trips and events. Good food, great fellowship, and a wonderful cause—what could be better? Donation only! 6:00 - 7:30 pm

Spelling Bee – February 27: Our annual school-wide Spelling Bee is right around the corner. Come cheer on our students as they showcase their hard work and language skills.

February is full of opportunities to celebrate learning, connect with families, and welcome new students into the MACS community. Thank you for your continued support and for helping us share the mission of MACS with others. We're excited for all that God has in store in the months ahead!

Upcoming Events

No School: President's Day Monday, February 16th
Board Meeting Tuesday, February 17th, 5:15 pm

FEBRUARY CALENDAR

Feb. 1 - Balloon Production Day 2:00 pm
Feb. 1 - AWANA 5:00 - 6:30 pm
Feb. 1 - Evening Bible Study 5:30 pm
Feb. 4 - FLIP (grades 4-6) 6:30 - 7:30 pm
Feb. 4 - Upper Room 6:30 - 7:30 pm
Feb. 5 - Balloon Delivery Day
Feb. 5 - ASX 3:15 - 5:00 pm
Feb. 6 - Blood Mobile 11 am - 5 pm
Feb. 8 - AWANA 5:00 - 6:30 pm
Feb. 8 - Evening Bible Study 5:30 pm
Feb. 8 - Super Bowl Party (grds. 6-12) 5:30
Feb. 9 - General Board Meeting 7:30 pm
Feb. 10 - Home Dept. Meeting 1:00 pm
Feb. 11 - FLIP (grades 4-6) 6:30 - 7:30 pm
Feb. 11 - Upper Room 6:30 - 7:30 pm
Feb. 12 - ASX 3:15 - 5:00
Feb. 15 - AWANA 5:00 - 6:30 pm
Feb. 15 - Evening Bible Study 5:30 pm
Feb. 16 - No School
Feb. 18 - FLIP (grades 4-6) 6:30 - 7:30 pm
Feb. 18 - Upper Room 6:30 - 7:30 pm
Feb. 19 - Deacons Pantry 9:00 - 10:30 pm
Feb. 19 - ASX 3:15 - 5:00 pm
Feb. 20 - MACS Rigatoni Dinner 6-7:30 pm
Feb. 22 - AWANA 5:00 - 6:30 pm
Feb. 22 - Night of Worship - 7:00 pm
Feb. 25 - FLIP (grades 4-6) 6:30 - 7:30 pm
Feb. 25 - Upper Room 6:30 - 7:30 pm
Feb. 26 - ASX 3:15 - 5:00 pm
Feb. 28 - Men's Breakfast 8:00 am

GENERAL BOARD MEETING

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9th
7:30 PM**

Please have reports to the office by
Thursday, Feb. 5th.

WE'RE COLLECTING GLASSES

We are collecting old eyeglasses to donate to "Cross Eyed Mission". This is a mission founded by Dr. Brady Kail of Waynesburg Vision. There is a basket on the information table to place any glasses.



MEN'S BREAKFAST

SATURDAY, FEB. 28th

8:00 AM @ MFCC



Join us for
Donuts & Devotion

DEACONS PANTRY

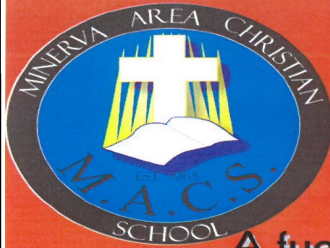


Each month our Deacon's Pantry distributes food and some paper products to 12 - 15 families. If you are able to pick up a few non-perishable items to donate it would be greatly appreciated. Some of the items we need are: tuna, soups, canned vegetables, fruit, ramen, peanut butter, mac & cheese, pasta & sauce, saltine crackers. Monetary donations are always welcome. We will be making our distribution on **Thurs., Feb. 19th**, if you are able to help see Jay Harsh.

PRAYER LIST

Reagan Abner
 Jennifer Allen
 Mike Amatantelo
 Alice Archer
 Kassadee Archer
 Shawn Archer
 Linda (Keller) &
 Charlie Augsbach
 Bill Becknell
 Dorothy Birney
 Arlene Brown
 Shirley Catlett
 Don Clapper
 Lora Crabtree
 David Dennis
 Donna Long Dyer
 Barbara Dunlevy
 John George
 Mary Jo Hardman
 Larry Hartshorn
 Todd Hetherington
 Dave Hoopes
 Evelyn Hopkins
 Grace Hopson
 George Horvath
 Lee Iden
 Rory & Nancy King
 Herb & Pat Lowery
 Scoo & Dolores
 M^cCully

Jean Miller
 Shea Mitchell
 Lynn Morgan
 Connie Morris
 Sheila Murray
 Barbara Palmer
 Tim Parker
 Eric Prowe
 John & Sandy
 Russell
 Gene Schmucker
 Kathy Schmucker
 Gary Schotts
 Kathy Shaw

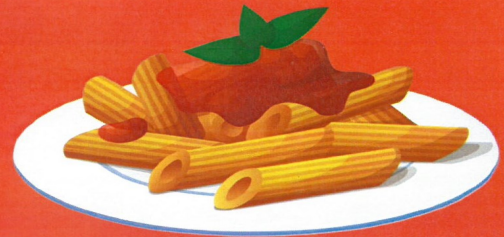


A fundraiser for student Activities

RIGATONI DINNER

Friday, Feb 20th
 6 pm to 7:30 pm
 Donation only!

Join us for
 delicious rigatoni!



Minerva Area Christian School
 300 W Lincolnway

minervaareachristianschool.org

ATTENDANCE

	<u>Jan. 4</u>	<u>Jan. 11</u>	<u>Jan. 18</u>	<u>Jan. 25</u>
Worship	131	140	122	no service
Bible School	66	70	53	no service

Sally Shaw
 Joan Shotwell
 Allie Swank
 Carol Thomas
 Marge Warrick
 Vicki Welsh



MILITARY

Military: CSS Jesse Clark; Sgt. Kurt Warrick, Staff Sgt. E6 Michael Derrick, Sgt. David Moore, John William Mozz.
Please let us know about Military updates/corrections.



FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

300 West Lincoln Way
Minerva, Ohio 44657

January 30, 2026

Church Services

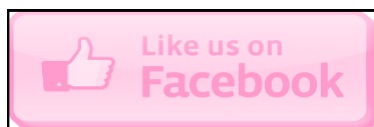
minervafcc@hotmail.com

Celebration 10:15 am
Sunday School 9:00 am

OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday
8:00 am- 4:00 pm

Minerva First Christian Church
MinervaFCC.com



Staff

Mr. Chris Sanford

Lead Minister

502-218-9081
csanford155@gmail.com

Zach Long

Associate/Youth Minister

330-417-4834
zlong7@yahoo.com

MFCC Office

330-868-4151
minervafcc@hotmail.com

Minerva Area Christian School

330-868-5728
fccmacs@hotmail.com

MACS Administrator

Mr. Chris Stoffer
330-936-5723
cstoffer@minervaareachristianschool.org

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

- 2 Lisa George
Malachi Sanford
- 3 Sam Sanford
Dorothy Thomas
Mike Weekly
- 4 Marilyn Humphries
- 6 Evelyn Hopkins
Hosanna Sanford
- 9 Debbie Costea
- 10 Lucinda Hoopes
- 14 Carolyn Kandel
Frank & Maureen
DeSantis 45 years
- 16 Kyle Lowe
- 19 Sandy Doppelheuer
- 23 Alice Archer
- 24 Cindy Pilati
- 25 Kathy Syme

SERVE THE LORD WITH GLADNESS!

	Feb. 1	Feb. 8	Feb. 15	Feb. 22
Comm. Meditation	Nate Oberly	Jordan Vert	Dave Bush	Zach Long
Ushers	Chip Syme	John Bowman	Bill Shaw	Brandon Keen
Deaconess	Mary Ann Dowell	Mary Ann Dowell	Mary Ann Dowell	Mary Ann Dowell
Shut-In Teams	Bob Palmer & Jordan Vert	Kenny Hoopes & Chris Sanford	Mike Fountain & Nate Oberly	John Long & Bruce Doppelheuer