

Appendix D  
New Minister Information

FAITH STATEMENT  
by Rev. John F. Kirkham

My beliefs are from a ‘cloud of witnesses’ or my family, pastors, friends, teachers and life experiences. I believe that God is able to communicate through others in the written words and through the spoken word. The words have come from Prophets, Priests, and Kings and from Jesus “The Word Incarnate.” The Lord used Moses to give us the Law and Jesus to make it clear to our understanding. Many life lessons are taught in the stories of the scriptures and the testimonies of believers. There we learn about our sins and God’s forgiveness and the failures of living for ourselves and the value of faithfulness to God. There we learn that God loves each one of us and his desire is for our welfare and happiness. The scriptures teach us that sin causes death because it requires a price to be paid. The Prophets and Priest told us that God had a plan for our salvation. The Apostle John wrote that Jesus was the light of the world and that “God so loved the whole world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” Jn 3:16

We are taught miraculous things in scripture about how God’s Spirit and Son were with him in the beginning and formed our world and the heavens and every one and thing in it. But sin entered the world and its corruption; animosity toward God and our brothers and sisters; envy and greed which challenges industry and generosity; sexual abuse distorts family and human affection; hatred and lies destroy community and brotherly love; hence we live in a world controlled by threat and fear rather than by Love and Hope. The scriptures tell us that God never gives up and that He never fails. Jesus was crucified on a cruel cross and buried in a tomb. He arose on the third day and was seen by many witnesses and His disciples. He then ascended to His Father where he reigns in Heaven until He will come again. When He returns there will be a new earth and a new heaven where we will be with Him as he reigns forever.

MY JOURNEY  
by Rev. John F. Kirkham

Born: October 7, 1942  
Alliance, Ohio

Present Address: 3558 Sandy Branch Court  
Middleburg, Florida 32068

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email: [jkirkhamjr@att.net](mailto:jkirkhamjr@att.net)

Wife: Esther M. Seawell Kirkham

Married: Jan. 25<sup>th</sup>, 1964

Children: Marwin Russell b. Aug. 20, 1968 two sons, one daughter

Elaine Marie (Thomas) b. July 11, 1972 one son, two daughters

Education: High School Diploma, Southeast High School

B.A. Biology option in Medical Technology  
Aultman Hospital 1964 Malone College, Canton, Ohio

Registered: MT(ASCP) 1964 National

M.Div. Pittsburgh Theological Seminary 1969 Pittsburgh Pa.

Trainee-ship in Microbiology and Epidemiology Graduate School of Public Health  
University of Pittsburgh, Pa.

Candidate for Ministry: Wooster Presbytery Ohio 1963

Church: North Benton Presbyterian, North Benton, Ohio Member joined 1954

Calvary Presbyterian Church, Canton, Ohio Member joined 1961

Ordained to The Ministry at Bloomingdale, Ohio by the Steubenville Presbytery for the Wooster Presbytery August 1969.

Installed as a called Pastor after Ordination August 1969.

Served the Bloomingdale Presbyterian Church until November 1972.

Programs: Vacation Bible School  
Saturday night Youth  
Youth retreats at Beaver Creek Camp

Programs cont.: Junior Summer Camp at Beaver Creek  
Senior Lunches with Music for 7 rural denominations

Second Church: Jewett Presbyterian Church, Jewett, Ohio 1969

Taught classes in science at Jefferson County Technical Institute til fall of 1972

Esther finished the M.M in Organ Performance from Duquesne in Pittsburgh.

Reflection: After I gave up the Jewett church I felt that I was not fitted for small rural ministry. I felt very lonely and wanted to be near good mentors like Rev. Bill Evans. I searched for new positions but the only interested churches were even less appealing. I became depressed and just wanted to move on. A member of the Bloomingdale church and the son of the one of the elders was moving to Florida to open a new facility and offered me a position. He thought the position would last a year or two and that would allow me to search for a church. The position lasted about a year til the recession started. I had not found a call but was able to get a hospital position. The hospital was a midnight job and I worked it til Boca Raton hospital called me and offered a day time job. Shortly after that a part-time assistant Minister position was offered to me at Cason United Methodist in Delray Beach just two mile from my home. I worked with them for a year with the church school and the youth until the leadership was changing. My responsibilities at the hospital then expanded significantly with implementing new technologies and expanded Toxicology services. I stayed with the Hospital until I retired October 31, 2001. During those years I also taught Clinical chemistry and Toxicology to Medical Technology students at Florida Atlantic University. I was active in the Presbytery of Tropical Florida by supply preaching and serving on presbytery committees and commissions. My alternate ministry was validated in health care and religious services. Before I retired from the hospital I had been asked if I would consider taking on a church that was struggling for leadership. I interviewed and was offered a stated supply position. When I started I found that they still had leaders they had been doing the jobs so long they were exhausted. So working with the session to find and enable new leaders to bring some freshness to study, worship and fellowship. We acquired newer and better musical instruments and added Video technology and a better sound system. We found a fellow to scrape, pressure wash and paint the church. A new piano player and a new choir director. We paid the piano player but we got an added benefit when her husband brought his tractor to mow the yard of about 4 acres. A landscaper friend planted royal palm trees and some gumbo limbo trees to help the appearance of the grounds. They were free because they came from homes being expanded and they wanted them removed. Active life returned to the church and we received a few bequests which helped to burn the mortgage. I got a grant to pay some staff to built up the summer and Saturday youth program. We bought a 15 passenger handicap van in fare condition which we used for outings. That went well for a couple of years, but keeping effective staff is difficult and when the program closed we gave the van to another church in our presbytery. I loved the people of Faith Presbyterian Church in Palm Springs Florida. They often challenged me to impress and lead them. They were humble people they were not rich but they loved God. The offerings small but consistent and if an AC needed replaced the funds would appear. I served them for nine years and would have stayed on but the COM said I stayed beyond 5 years which they thought should be the limit. The congregation and session were never asked. The COM said I should not worship there but the people often asked me to provide funeral services. It was sad to see so many of my friends pass. I still have phone conversations with some members and receive pictures and cards. I moved to the Middleburg area at the beginning first of February 2010 and my wife joined me in August. She has worked for churches since until this year.

She is still the accompanist for the Jacksonville Masterworks Chorus. I worship at St. Giles and heard about the needs at Camp Montgomery and worked with Lydia's team to fix Cabin 5. I have also sought help to continue working on the camp and joined with Gregg Walwick to plan and lead the first Gala for the camp. I have worked on plumbing in Williams, Live Oak, and Eppert Pavilion. David Huh and I repaired the eaves and roof and applied the under materials for a new roof on Sugar Pine. I am now planning to clean and repair the small sail boats for summer camp. I had two pianos tuned and have Andy scheduled to tune them again after Easter. I just try to fit in the cracks wherever I fit.