

New Minister at St. John's UCC returns Home to Licking County

Dr. Stephen Lowell Swisher is the new Pastor of St. John's United Church of Christ, returns home to Licking County. He previously served for 5 years in Etna, Ohio and comes back to us from serving as the Senior Pastor of Fountain Fellowship Church in Columbus. Previously in Licking County, Dr. Swisher was a Coach for Special Olympics, a Coach and Referee for Upward Basketball, and worked closely with Judge David Branstool and others to help rehabilitate and support youth in the at risk community. He also became a leading voice for hope and encouragement for all people throughout the region.

St. John's United Church of Christ on National Road was founded in the Summer of 1841. The Church is known for its dynamic mission and ministry, its multi-media outreach, community involvement, and its famous Bethlehem Marketplace.

Pastor Swisher served for more than 5 years as a Chaplain for the Ohio State Senate. He has also opened the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives in Prayer. In addition, he has been invited to open the following Legislatures in Prayer; New York, Hawaii, California, Maine, Texas and New Mexico.

He holds advanced degrees from New Mexico State University and United Theological Seminary. He has done further Graduate Study at Oxford University and Wesley Seminary in Bristol, England.

Swisher has received numerous National awards including the Ten Outstanding Young Americans Award from the U.S. Jaycees, the Harry Denman Outstanding Evangelism Award from the Board of Discipleship and the Paul Harris Fellow Award from three separate Rotary Clubs.

Dr. Swisher has also served as a Regional Hospice Chaplain with responsibility for more than 250 patients throughout Michigan and Ohio.

Swisher's ministry has a hallmark of significant community involvement. He was elected President, Vice-President and Chaplain for Rotary and voted by his peers President of the Monahans Chamber of Commerce, where he led unprecedented economic growth including a new Hospital partnership with the U.S. Government and the construction of a new grocery store. During his tenure, Swisher appointed the first African American and Hispanic American members of the Chamber's Executive Committee in the history of the Community.

He is the author of "God's Way to Good Health" published by the Martin Luther King, Jr. Press in New York and has been published in numerous Christian periodicals. He also has been a frequent contributor to television, radio and print media in the areas of Religion and Practical Theology. He hosted his own Television program entitled "Positive Living" for more than a decade.

In his free time he enjoys reading historical novels, watching vintage films, swimming and kayaking Ohio's Lakes and serving as a Coach and Referee for Special Olympics and Upward Basketball.

Dr. Swisher is the son of Dr. Lowell and Barbara Swisher and the father of Ms. Emily Swisher. He resides in Newark, Ohio.

St. John's UCC holds Worship service each Sunday at 8:30 and 11:00am. Through October, the early service is held outside with the slogan "Come as you are, Worship in your car" and when the weather turns colder the 8:30am service moves inside to the chapel. The 11:00am option is the Sanctuary service.

St. John's UCC is located at 285 W National Road in Newark. Everyone is invited to attend