

First United Church of Christ
5808 Glenview Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45224
513-541-7302

May 2024 Newsletter

The Pastor's Report

Pastor Dan Weyand-Geise

"The sun shines bright in the old Kentucky home..." April showers have indeed brought May flowers. Along with the flowers comes a month filled with Mother's Day gatherings, graduations, May festivals, Flying Pig marathons, Hunger Walks, and the Indy 500. But the month begins with Derby Day, which happens to be a really, really big deal for lots of folks, especially those in the Commonwealth.

The Stephen Foster tune "My Old Kentucky Home" is the state song. The melody and lyrics hold a sentimental place in the hearts of millions through the generations. Foster wrote it in 1852. It has a precarious place in our American history. It was used in both the Abolitionist cause to fight for the end to slavery; and at the same time, the song was used to reinforce stereotypes of African-Americans and perpetuate the realities of slavery and white supremacy. Foster's own beliefs aren't quite clear, but it is likely that Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin" had an influence on Foster. It is said that African American abolitionist Frederick Douglass said the song promotes and popularizes the cause of abolishing slavery. "It is a heart song," Douglass said. "It can make the heart sad as well as merry, and can call forth a tear as well as a smile. It awakens the sympathies for the slave in which anti-slavery principles take root and flourish."

As we head into May, it seems to me that this song captures the mood of our country these days. With political candidates who clearly divide many; a war that rages on in Ukraine; Israel's war against Hamas; even discussions on traffic control and bike lanes in College Hill, we long to find a place we can call home. We look for a place where all can be "merry, happy, and bright" as the song anticipates. We dream of a time when there will be no more tears, where the "corn top's ripe and the meadows in the bloom." The song, like our mood today, has a melancholy and longing for something better. It is a song that evokes a vision of beauty, a place to call home.

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The Pastor's Report (cont.)

Just off our Congregational Meeting the last Sunday in April, I know this church is not perfect. But there is a lot to celebrate as we heard that day. Recently, I read of a pastor who said this about her congregation, "We are perhaps getting better, maybe a teensy-weensy bit closer to perfection when we remember to love one another. Some are lucky enough to belong to a community that demonstrates something approaching the love of God. Those that rise above the ordinary are the ones that are generous, open, inclusive, honest and wise." I really see and believe that this describes First UCC. We try to rise above the ordinary. We can be a place of grace, joy, and love. It makes for a family of faith – a spiritual home. I trust that in all of the parties you attend or host, that you will be filled with a love that is expansive and inclusive. May joy be in your heart. And may the Son shine bright in your home and here at First UCC.

Singing one song of faith, hope, and love,
Pastor Dan

Found House IHN a walk in the park...kind of

Our recent hosting of our families who are homeless was quite different. Each one always is, but this one in particular. For the first night we had two families staying with us even though we were expecting three. By Monday, two of the three had found housing. YAY!!! But due to some bumps in the application process, we only had the one family for Monday and Tuesday nights. By Wednesday we were back to three families and it could not have gone any smoother. When they left on Sunday morning, the tears of gratitude flowed. The families were feeling overjoyed with the hospitality and kindness they received from each of our support churches and individuals.

We had tremendous help from our other churches. They were: St. John Unitarian Universalist Church in Clifton; St. Clare Catholic Church in College Hill; the Cincinnati Mennonite Fellowship; St. John UCC in Reading; Truth and Destiny Covenant UCC; Immanuel UCC in St. Bernard; Good News; Bread from Heaven; and St. Paul Old Blue Rock. Each congregation brings a spirit and collaboration that is beautiful to be a part of for all of us. I am thankful that First UCC continues to support this ministry. Our space is ideal and the guests and our support churches marvel all of the time at this.

Finally, I am grateful for those from First UCC who assisted with the guests, the dinners, the overnights, the children, the setup, and so much more. They were: Bonnie Hayes, Samantha Hayes Asplan, Chris Armstrong, Christine Guillory, Larry Bronnert, Amy Weyand-Geise, Jimmy Wiederhold, Dennis Meyer, and Dave and Cyndy Butz (honorary First UCC members from CHPC). We have a quick turnaround and host again beginning May 19. I will need some overnight hosts, especially on Friday and Saturday (May 24 and 25). – Pastor Dan



What's the Buzz?

Updates on Music, Media, and Faith Formation at First UCC

Just like that, May is here and I'm wrapping up my final performances with the choir and handbell choir before they take a well-deserved summer break! You are in for quite the array of musical treats this month. On May 5th, the choir will perform a moving anthem, "We Are One." A very special performance by new member, Sammi, will take place during communion on the 5th. Sammi has been taking piano lessons with me for a few months and I asked her if she'd be willing to show off her skills during a service, and she said yes! On Mother's Day, May 12th, all men, guys, and boys are invited to join me in serenading all the women of the congregation in a piece that is sure to bring smiles and laughter (title to be revealed when we perform). Men's chorus rehearsals will take place on Wednesday, May 8th at 7:00 p.m. as well as at 9:30 a.m. on Mother's Day; both in the sanctuary. See me for more information and the music.

Mason and Bruce take a break on May 19th while the women of the choir sing an energetic spiritual, "Witness." My friends from Wilmington (Jessica, Cece, and Bekah), will be adding their voices to the piece – it's always a joy to have them with us! We close out the month with two choir anthems and two handbell pieces on May 26th. The choir will perform "The Journey" and "Hold On." The handbell choir will perform "Marche Royale" and "Lord of the Dance" – this is a special Sunday that highlights two talented groups, so you don't want to miss it!

As announced at the congregational meeting in April, I am creating videos that tell more of the story of the church by highlighting different aspects. Some highlights will be the pipe organ, stained-glass windows, meditation garden, and Hoffner and Apple Street churches. There may even be a video featuring the church's three staff members... Our online activity has grown tremendously in the last year – over 700 Facebook followers, 260+ Instagram followers, and an average of 800+ visitors to our church webpage every month! For those who are part of our online community, it is a pleasure to communicate with you and keep you up to date on the happenings at church. This is the beauty of social media and I'm happy to see so many folks interacting with us every week.

I'm anticipating May to be the month of answers... Answers to the future of the Family/Nurturing Center (structural capabilities, cost, timeline, etc.). Answers to the decorating of the Youth Room downstairs (youth planning, timeline, painting, etc.). Answers to where the youth and I will be housed in Cleveland this summer, and answers to the overall cost of that trip. One thing I trust is that things will work out, they will get done, and all will be okay in the end. Our timeline may just not always line up with God's timeline. I'm nearing the end of my third year as a full-time employee at First UCC (!), and it has been an honor to witness the excitement and energy flourishing within and beyond these walls.

I'll close out this article with my favorite event that closes out the month – the Hunger Walk! Sadly, I was not able to participate last year, but I look forward to being with all of you again on Monday, May 27 at Smale Riverfront Park! If anyone wants to run with me, I'd love a running buddy!

Have a great month!

Jimmy



Jimmy Wiederhold
Director of Music, Media,
and Faith Formation



Birthdays

- *05/04 – Kyler Mandery
- 05/06 – Tom WG (15 human years!)
- 05/08 – Sharon Rodenbeck
- 05/09 – Ron Mandery
- 05/12 – J.C. Owens
- 05/14 – Carol Bitzenhofer
- 05/25 – Kay Young
- 05/28 – Debra Starrard Pressley
- 05/29 – Kendra Pressley
- 05/29 – Bernie Wehman

Anniversaries

05/22 – Ron & Marilyn Mandery

Apologies to Terilynn Stackhouse, whose birthday was April 7th. I'm so sorry it wasn't listed in the April newsletter. A very happy, (belated) birthday to you, Terilynn!



~ Please Keep in Prayer ~

Kelly Ann Pennington (sister-in-law of Suwanna Kirkman); sympathy to the family of Irene Krombholz (aunt of Bill Henrich); sympathy to the family of Donald Zillich (brother of the late Doris McKinney); sympathy to the family of Ron Hayes (dear friend of the Senior Social); sympathy to the family of Diane Farlow (aunt of Nicole Farlow, Kim Ogden's friend); Family and friends of Jackie Smith; Deanna Bilz (Joe's mom); Vicki Thorner (Sue Bilz' cousin); Tina Maxwell (Sue Bilz' best friend); sympathy to the family of Mary L. Brakers (sister of Jackie Smith); sympathy to the family of Brenda Miller (daughter of Ron Kirkman); sympathy to the family of Alicia Deaton (friend of Kim Ogden); prayers for Kay Gutenson (aunt of Kathie Steinhard); sympathy to the family of Janet Burling (friend of Ginny Krebs); Ali Adams (friend of Christine Guillory);; sympathy to the Faulkner family at the death of Brenda (sister-in-law of Hilda Faulkner); the family of Margie League; Barb Liszniewski (friend of Kim Ogden and First Church); Bill & Margie Spatz and family; Amanda and family (daughter of Hilda Faulkner); Pam and family (friend of Hilda Faulkner); Sharon Dingle (friend of Hilda Faulkner); Beverly & Mike Rose (dear friends of Suwanna Kirkman); Praise Report for Sarah (daughter-in-law of Deb & Bob Neumeister); Mark Buzzard (great-nephew of Ginny Krebs); sympathy to the family of Joyce Lauch (dear friend of Linda Krebs); Michelle Lauch (daughter of Joyce); Ben & Stella Borgemenke (parents of Michelle Lauch); Faith & Dave Martin (friends of Linda Krebs); Jack Parsons (father of Patti Baldwin); Michelle M. (cousin of Bev Bosse); Thomas (nephew of Hilda's friend, Pam); Heather Nichols (niece of Susan Ley); Mark (friend of Sharon, friend of the Senior Social); Kesha and Family (friends of Ron Kirkman); Charlie (friend of Herb Brookbank); Stas Dharikov (Ukrainian friend of Christina Henderson).



Life of the Church

First UCC to the Reds

Tuesday, May 21 vs. San Diego Padres at 6:40 p.m. We have great handicap seating. NO steps from the street to your seat. Other seating is directly below, so we are all together. Cost will be \$24-\$28 depending on number attending. Tuesday is 3-2-1 night...\$1 ice cream, \$2 hot dogs, \$3 beer. Interested? Contact Ed (Bud) Bosse at 513/498-7094 ASAP. GO REDS!

Cincinnati Hunger Walk 2024

For Did you know that one in seven of our neighbors is at risk of hunger? This year's Hunger Walk is Monday, May 27th at 9:00am. Please join us in our annual support of CAIN, our food pantry partner in Northside. We have set a goal of \$3,000 for CAIN this year. There are two ways to help: join the team to walk or run or donate to help us reach our goal. The direct link to First UCC's Hunger Walk Page is:

<https://give.freestorefoodbank.org/team/579029>. There are two options on the page:

Join the Team or Donate. New this year – there is no longer a requirement to make a Hunger Walk Account; only your email address and a credit card are required. Your registration/donation will be sent to your email account. This year the Hunger Walk is 100% paperless and cashless. Walk/run registration is \$30. T-Shirts are an additional \$10 if desired and this year a XXXL shirt is offered. Please see Jean Krebs after church on Sundays to sign up or donate, or both! Ed Bosse will pick up our team shirts on Saturday May 25th. They will be available for pick up on Sunday May 26th. If you sign up on your own but would like to have Ed pick up your shirt, please let Jean know so she can add your name and size to the roster! - Thanks, Jean and Ed





Life of the Church (cont.)

Updated Church Directory

It's time to update the directory of members and friends of the church. This directory is given out only at church. Normally we include name, address, phone number, and email address; however, we can include as much or as little as you would like to share. Please email or text your information to Bev Bosse at 513-477-7463 or bevb@fuse.net.

Letter of Appreciation from Syrian Shrine

We received a lovely letter from the Syrian Shrine in appreciation for our church collecting pop can tabs for their recycle program. This benefits their mission locally by helping to treat burned and orthopedic challenged children in local hospitals. It was signed by Charles C. Jeffers, II, Syrian Shrine 2024 Potentate.

(The bag to collect the tabs is on the bulletin board in the fellowship hall. Thanks to all for your contributions to this very worthy cause – and thanks to Gail Bauknecht for getting this started).

How much of the solar eclipse did you view on April 8?



March 2024

Board Meeting Minutes

First UCC Church Board Meeting Minutes March 4, 2024 (In-Person & Zoom)

In attendance: June Bronnert, Milt Hauck, Bruce Steinhard, Darrell Copenhaver, Christy Meyer (Treasurer), Ed Bosse, Jean Krebs, Tom Shelton, Pastor Dan Weyand-Geise

BY Zoom: Ruth Beck

Excused: Bill Henrich

- I. **Call to Order** – June called the meeting to order.

- II. **Devotion** -- Pastor Dan
Pastor Dan talked about Sunday's Sermon and reflection on Jesus in the Temple. Jesus cleared the Temple of the money changers, but would bless the Rummage Sale as it is not about the money, but the community and the fellowship which are done while there.

- III. **Recording Secretary's Report (Bruce)** – The February report was accepted with one change in the Facility Management section. The word "cover" was changed to "include."
Motion: Tom Second: Darrell Accepted: all approved

- IV. **Treasurer's Report (Christy):** The February reports were accepted. Pastor Dan did clarify the deposit for the Golf Outing in August, as it came from Team For The Need.
Motion: Milt Second: Tom Accepted: All in favor

Christy then presented the BILLS for the month to be paid.
Motion: Ruth Second: Darrell Accepted: All in favor

- V. **Financial Secretary's Report (Darrell)** – Darrell reported the income for the month.
Motion: Milt Second: Tom Pending Question from report and the difference from Treasurer's report

- VI. **Pastor's Report** – Pastor Dan deferred to President June Bronnert so she might share information on the topics pertaining to a Church Board retreat. The topics ranged from Board leadership, communication, mission, and energy of the church.

While the Church Board is elected leadership positions, there are established infrastructures, such as committees, to support the work of the church. It is time to revisit the established infrastructures, especially post-pandemic to continue to evolve and grow.

The church is growing and there is much positive energy.

We are here to create new energy in the church. The affects not only how the meeting goes but how we speak to each other in and out of our meeting. She also emphasized that we are not to carry all the burden of what happens in and around the church. Now, we

March 2024

Board Meeting Minutes (cont.)

find ourselves as the Board spending more time discussing the workings that the committees should be discussing and dealing with. June would like to see us move from that position to being a body that helps energizes the rest of the congregation.

There was then a period of discussion about the committees and how they are both too many committees and now not enough members to deal with all the things from the past. Pastor Dan and Bruce S. then talked briefly about the way the revised Constitution and Bylaws will regroup and downsize this concern. Pastor Dan will send a copy of the updated Constitution and Bylaws within the week.

Jean K. then said she had often volunteered for some committees but was never contacted or followed up on her interest. We need to find out where our members interests are and make sure we follow up. Our structures lie in committees. Jean then shared that when she was President of C.A.I.N. she was able to help implement a program from Microsoft called SHAREPOINT. This program allowed them to put everything online and share among the committee members and officers. Members are given permission only to areas they need to have access to. Jimmy is now in contact with Microsoft to get First U.C.C. a non-profit organization's copy of the programs we will need.

We also discussed how we might promote more of our mission partners and it was suggested that like our "Stand Up" moments, we might have a "Mission Moment" stand and allow a member who volunteers to speak about the mission of our partners. Pastor Dan asked about a MARCC meeting and some did not know about it and would have attended had they know about it. We then suggested that all meeting be promoted more so that all members might be informed of it.

Pastor Dan and June then asked each of us to consider where our interests lie and this would be promoted among all members. We might even find some new interests that need to be explored. Ed was then asked if he will continue to promote the Hunger Walk.

Being a little after 8 pm we felt we were ready to adjourn

XI. **Adjournment**

Moved: Ruth

Second: Darrell

Accepted: All in favor

XII. Before we left, we were updated that Milt, Ed, and Jeff Runck had met with the person from the elevator committee. Lots of Questions were raised and they are trying to work things out with the elevator company.

*Submitted by: Bruce Steinhard
Recording Secretary*

Our Covenant

We, the members of First UCC, welcome you:

If you are Asian, Black, Brown, Hispanic, Native American, or White;

If you are male, female, transgender, or gender non-conforming;

If you are 3 years old, 33 years old, or 103 years old;

If you are from just down the street, from across the country, or from another part of the globe;

If you grew up at Hoffner Church, were confirmed in the Catholic Church, got married in a non-denominational church, worshipped in a synagogue or mosque, or have never attended a religious service;

If you are single, married, widowed, divorced, separated, or partnered;

If you are straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, or unsure of your sexuality;

If you are a Democrat, Independent or Republican, affiliated with another political party or no party at all;

If you have, or have had, addictions, phobias, or a criminal record;

If you own your home, rent, live with your parents, or are homeless;

If you were baptized at First UCC, or are worshipping here for the first time;

If you have typical or atypical skills, no matter your abilities or disabilities.

However the rest of the world describes you, and however you describe yourself: **You are a beloved child of God and are welcome at First United Church of Christ.** Being fully welcome in our community here at First UCC means that as we keep the love of Christ at the center of all

we do, our congregation will:

- Always seek to affirm the person that you are with loving hearts and open minds.
- Follow the way of Christ Jesus with you in loving and being loved by both God and neighbor, with the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit.
- Support and encourage you in your ongoing spiritual and religious journey.
- Love you for the person you are by living out our denomination's promise that "No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome at First United Church of Christ."



FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Milt Hauck, Vice President

Darrell Copenhaver, Financial Secretary

Bruce Steinhard, Recording Secretary

Ruth Beck

Ed Bosse

Bill Henrich

Jean Krebs

Tom Shelton

Christy Meyer, Church Treasurer

Keeping the love of Christ at the center of everything we do so that all members will be empowered to become spirit-led servant leaders.

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