

The Messenger

The monthly newsletter of First Congregational Church UCC of North Ridgeville, OH

May 2024

Minister

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Linda Matis

From the Pastor – Pastor Kearstin (she/her)

Welcome to May, sweet friend! This month the Christian liturgical seasons will shift and we will move from Eastertide to ordinary time. About half of the calendar year is considered “ordinary” and it’s a time when we focus on the stories of the people of God. For the other half of the year (advent, Christmastide, lent, Easter), we mostly focus on the story of God as incarnate in Jesus. This move from stories about God to stories about God’s people is an important one, because these narratives hold incredible richness as we explore how people across the ages have understood and related to God.

As we move into ordinary time, we’ll slowly and consistently explore how folks through space and time have been in relationship with God — and how that impacts how we understand God. In this vein I wanted to share with you one of my favorite poems. Kaylin Haught’s vision of God is one I resonate with deeply; her words bring me comfort and freedom to imagine a new kind of God than the one our popular culture lifts up. As you read her words, think about your idea of God: What kinds of phrases does He use? What tone does She speak in? How do They make you feel? And if you feel particularly inspired, I would be honored to chat with you about your understanding of God and how it has been carefully crafted over a lifetime!

Sending you every blessing,
Pastor Kearstin

“God Says Yes To Me” by Kaylin Haught

I asked God if it was okay to be
melodramatic
and she said yes

I asked her if it was okay to be short
and she said it sure is

I asked her if I could wear nail
polish

or not wear nail polish
and she said honey
she calls me that sometimes

she said you can do just exactly
what you want to
Thanks God I said

And is it even okay if I don't
paragraph

my letters

Sweetcakes God said

who knows where she picked that up
what I'm telling you is

Yes Yes Yes

Digital Coworking with Pastor Kearstin:

Monday mornings can be rough for everyone, but especially for neurodivergent folks! If you struggle to feel well-resourced, capable, and focused on Mondays, join us for a little boost of digital coworking. We meet every Monday morning, from 10-11a eastern time, on Google Meet and Instagram Live. It's an introvert-friendly gathering of diverse folks trying to wrangle our personal, professional, & spiritual lives. Wild idea: it's much easier to do that when you have supportive community & gentle accountability! ❤️ Email Pastor Kearstin if you'd like the links to join!

PastorFCCNR@gmail.com

New members class! Save the date!! Are you interested in joining First Congregational Church? Pastor Kearstin is having a new members class on Sunday, May 19 after the worship service. If you're interested or would like more information, please contact the office or Pastor Kearstin.

Moderator's Moment – Kris Dornan

Blessings to you, church family! We recently had a wonderful opportunity to view God through nature when we were blessed to be in the path of totality for our recent solar eclipse! An interesting piece described some of the majesty this way: Eclipse Fact: The sun is 400 times larger than the moon, and amazingly, it is also exactly 400 times farther from Earth. This precise ratio makes the sun and the moon appear almost identical in size when viewed from our planet. Such exactitude in the universe isn't a mere coincidence. It speaks to the deliberate workmanship of a Creator.

This was a cool fact especially since a lot of times our first reaction is to experience doom and gloom, and that an eclipse (or insert any event) represents an end to life as we know it.

I believe when we say to each other that "God is still speaking" that God is still a part of

this life and continues to work in it and in us for our benefit.

Blessings to all!

Christian Education Corner – Mary Karlovec

May is a busy month for the Board of Christian Education. First up on May 5 is our **Ladies and They-dies Tea** at Miss Molly's Tea Room in Medina. Approximately 30 people will gather for a luncheon tea. If you are attending and need directions to Miss Molly's, please see me.



On Saturday, May 18 we are sponsoring a **"Junk in Your Trunk"** event in the church parking lot. This is like a flea market and rummage sale all rolled into one. It will be from 9 am to 2 pm. For \$20 you can rent two parking spaces to sell your "junk." We ask that you only use ONE space for a vehicle and the second space to display your overflow of your junk for sale. This will help make things less congested and easier for people to peruse your wares. Our rain date will be June 15. **If you are interested in renting a space, fill out the form (available in this newsletter, and on the table in the sanctuary and narthex) and return by May 15.** There are only 20 spaces to rent as we need space for shoppers to park. The proceeds from this event will support the youth mission trip!

The May clanging change collection on May 5 will also support the youth mission trip in a very different way. This money will be used to help buy supplies needed for the work being done while on the mission trip. Many trips are made to Lowe's and Target during the week we are there to purchase supplies needed being paid for out-of-pocket by the adult chaperones. Our clanging change will support this!

We NEED NURSERY Volunteers!!! Our nursery numbers are growing and we need your help! Please consider volunteering one Sunday a month for the Sundays in May through August. You just need to be in the nursery by 10:15 and are done once the children are picked up at the conclusion of worship. If you don't want to commit to serving on a church board, this is the perfect opportunity to share your time and talents. The sign-up sheet is outside the CE office and on the nursery door.

Finally....many THANK YOU'S from the children and youth! THANK YOU for supporting the Cake Walk to raise money (\$201.00) for the Lotts Creek mission trip! THANK YOU for supporting the April clangy change offering. From this collection \$100 will be delivered to Second Mile Outreach in Berea. THANK YOU for supporting the 40 (birthday) Bags for 40 Days of Lent. We exceeded our goal of 40 bags and 58 bags are being delivered to Community Care! And THANK YOU for supporting the March clangy change offering. With your help we were able to deliver nine Easter baskets to our homebound members. Your support of these projects have truly made a difference in the lives of so many. You are all truly a blessing to our church family!

Outreach Committee News – Karen Farmer

Do you budget your time as well as your money or do you find yourself overwhelmed by life's chaos? A time budget can spread your day, week, or life out efficiently and help avoid over-scheduling, just as a spending budget can help you avoid impulse buying. Most people worry about saving time, but I think God gave us each so much time on earth and that we're meant to spend it, not hoard it!

We hope you will spend some time enjoying the upcoming Outreach Committee activities. We will be sponsoring the One World Shop in fellowship hall on April 28, providing you a chance to do some gift shopping after

church while supporting this wonderful organization, as well. Join us for coffee hour afterwards, hosted by our committee. We have scheduled a "Dine to Donate" event at the Avon Applebee's on Wednesday, June 5. **A flyer to present at the restaurant for a 15% donation to our church is located later in this newsletter.** Extra copies will be made available in church closer to the event.



In addition, the committee has spent some time focusing on other mission projects. We voted to contribute \$100 to Community Care and \$200 to World Central Kitchen in April. Our Strengthen the Church campaign is in May, with May 19 specified as Collection Sunday. We are also considering forming a group to provide flower donations for church members' funerals. We are looking forward to participating in the May 5th "Ladies & They-dies Tea" at Miss Molly's Tea Room and the May 18th "Junk in the Trunk" church events.

Time is our most valuable commodity only when well-spent. Spending time in service to others is time well-spent!

The Strengthen the Church offering supports the expansion of ministry and growth of UCC local



congregations. Your support of this offering will help the UCC fulfill on its commitment to creating a just world for all by investing in new ministries and practices that meet the emerging needs of local communities. As God calls our

congregations to be the church in new ways, your generosity will plant new churches, awaken new ideas in existing churches and develop the spiritual life in our youth and young adults.

Deacons' Desk – Linda Matis

The Deacons have been working on updating our church membership list. This task has not been done for several years and is really needed as there are many people on the list who have not attended and/or donated to the church in quite some time, have moved away, or may have passed away and we are not aware.

As our Constitution says, "Active members are expected to be faithful to all duties essential to the Christian life; to attend regularly the services of the church; to give systematically for its support and its benevolences; to share in its organized work; and to seek diligently the spiritual welfare of the church and the winning of others to Christ. Active members who, because of their own indifference or their non-resident status, have not fulfilled the obligations of active membership for a period of two years, in spite of kindly reminders, may be transferred to inactive or non-resident membership status by action of the Board of Deacons. If a member has been on the inactive or non-resident list for more than one year and repeated efforts of the church have failed to re-establish an active relationship, his/her membership may be terminated by a two-thirds vote of the Board of Deacons."

We will be reaching out to members in question regarding their membership status so that we can keep our records up to date.

Trustees' Turn – Roy Dreger

Several years ago, back when we were getting quotes on rehabilitating the front windows, one of the gentlemen also looked at the east and west side windows. His evaluation both pleased and surprised me. He said that for windows as old as they were, they were in good enough shape that he would recommend not doing anything with them. This is still good news; however, they need to be maintained in order to they stay that way. The trustees have given the go-ahead to a painting company to

paint the wood framing (the painter is also going to repair the ceiling over the organ). If any wood does need to be repaired/replaced that will be an additional cost, but not getting the work done puts the entire window in jeopardy. The trustees decided not to place this item in the capital campaign, but to do it immediately since there is noticeable weathering.

Speaking of the capital campaign, for which we are still gathering cost estimates, the elevator came up during the conversation about installing a ramp. Jon Eaton wondered if we should put a higher priority on a new elevator, as it is constantly needing work. The debate will continue as it is certainly a valid concern. In 2019 we spent \$2,100.00 fixing it. In 2020 and 2021 it needed very few repairs, but these were pandemic years and it was used very little. We spent \$830.00 repairing it in 2022, but in 2023 it required over \$8,000.00 in repairs to keep it operating. Truly something to think about.

Also, while talking capital campaign, the need for replacing the roof over the Sunday school wing came up again. This, we believe, might be covered by insurance. Jack Fitts is working with two roofing companies on this, but they seem to be dragging their feet. Companies have proven to be somewhat reluctant to provide estimates, knowing that we are looking for an estimate on work that is not going to be done right away (any work included in a capital campaign) and it is not certain that they will get the job.

As we trustees attempt to "get our ducks in a row" in regards to the capital campaign, it is a blessing to know that the congregation continues their financial support. As always, thank you!



During this hard time in my life, the church family has given so much love and lots of kindness. The Easter basket brought joy and light to me along with a wonderful visit. All the beautiful cards make me still feel a part of our fellowship. Pastor Kearstin, thanks for helping me through Skip's journey. Thanks to all of you sharing the love of Christ through prayers, calls, cards, and visits. God bless you!
Linda Spayd

Thank you to everyone for their love and support during my recovery from my knee replacement. The many cards and comments on Facebook I received have helped to lift my spirits and keep me moving forward. I couldn't have done this without my family, friends, and church family.
Linda Matis

Birthdays & Anniversaries

- 5/1 Shirley Sunyak
- 5/5 Megan O'Neill
- 5/5 Lily Schutz
- 5/9 Maynard Ickes
- 5/13 Chris Dlugosz
- 5/15 Regenia Comerford
- 5/15 Kate Harrold
- 5/20 Cathleen Karlovec
- 5/21 Bob Olesen
- 5/26 Dean Lipperman

- 5/15 Jack & Betty Fitts
- 5/23 John & Valerie Arnold



Greeters

- 5/5 Regenia Comerford, Diana Goode
- 5/12 Karen Farmer, Paula Dudek
- 5/19 Vonnie Packard, Paul Wolanski
- 5/26 Lynne Petroff, Regenia Comerford

If you would like to be added to the greeter rotation, please contact a Deacon or the church office.

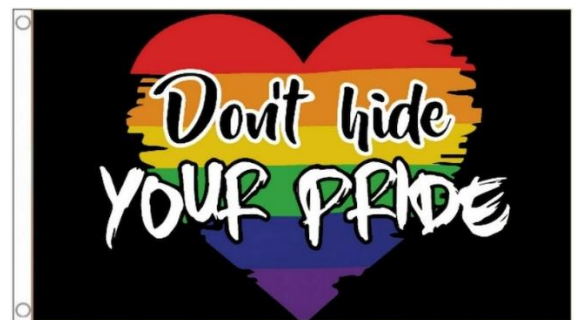


Women's Book Club: All gatherings are at the church at 7 pm unless noted.

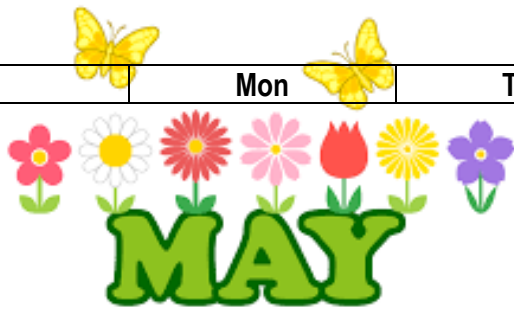
May 20: Daughters of Nantucket by Julie Gerstenblatt


June 17: Hello Beautiful by Ann Napolitano

July 15: The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store by James McBride



Join us in representing our church in the **Pride in the CLE Parade** on June 1 in downtown Cleveland. The parade kicks off at 11 am from Public Square! Mark your calendars now!



Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
			1 Bell choir 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm	2 Bible study 11:30 am AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	3	4 AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6 pm
5 Outreach 9 am Worship 10:30 am Communion Fellowship hour Ladies tea 3-5 pm AA Men 7:30 pm	6 AA Women 7 pm	7 CE 7 pm Trustees 7 pm AA 1 st Step 8:30 pm	8 Bell choir 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm 4-H 7 pm	9 AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	10	11 AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6 pm
12 Mother's Day  Worship 10:30 am Fellowship hour AA Men 7:30 pm	13 Council 7 pm AA Women 7 pm	14 AA 1 st Step 8:30 pm	15 Choir 7:30 pm	16 Newsletter articles due AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	17	18 Junk in the Trunk 9 am – 2 pm AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6 pm
19 Pentecost  Worship 10:30 am Fellowship hour New member class after worship svc. AA Men 7:30 pm	20 Women's book club 7 pm AA Women 7 pm	21 AA 1 st Step 8:30 pm	22 4-H 7 pm	23 AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	24	25 AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6 pm
26 Worship 10:30 am Fellowship hour Deacons 11:30 am AA Men 7:30 pm	27 Memorial Day OFFICE CLOSED  AA Women 7 pm	28 Pastor Parish 7 pm AA 1 st Step 8:30 pm	29	30 AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	31 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> Pastor Kearstin on vacation 5/31 – 6/4 </div>	



Dining to **DONATE**



**APPLEBEE'S WILL DONATE 15%
OF YOUR CHECK TO:**

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC

Date: Wed., June 5, 2024 35916 Detroit Rd.

Time: 11 AM-Close Avon, OH 44011

Present this flyer to your server at time of order

- OR -

Order online at [Applebees.com](https://applebees.com) or through our mobile app and:

- Select location listed above
- Choose your menu items
- At checkout, enter code: **DOINGOOD**
 - A penny will be deducted from your total to allow us to track your order
- Checkout and pickup order at designated time

Looking to add a refreshing cocktail to your To Go order:

- Call-in your order to location listed above
- Present this flyer at pickup (paper copy or digital)



Valid on dine-in and To Go orders, not valid on delivery. Valid at location listed above on scheduled date only. 15% donation excludes tax and gratuity. To Go orders containing alcohol must be called into restaurant, 21 and older.

**Junk in Your Trunk
Flea Market/Rummage Sale
Saturday, May 18
9 am to 2 pm
(No set up before 8 am)**

- Cost is \$20 for two parking spaces -- one space for your vehicle and an adjoining empty space for your "junk".
- You may *not* use more than 3' of the parking lot in front of your vehicle so that people can get around each space safely.
- Rain date is Saturday, June 15.
- Proceeds benefit the youth mission trip.
- Complete reservation form and return with payment by May 15.

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Vehicle: ____ Car/SUV/Minivan ____ Pick up truck

Amount enclosed: _____

Make checks payable to First Congregational Church.