

The Messenger

The monthly newsletter of First Congregational Church UCC of North Ridgeville

November 2023

Bridge Interim Minister
Rev. Chris Nichols

Director, Christian Education
Mary Karlovec

Music Director
Barb Habecker

Moderator
Kris Dornan

Vice-Moderator
Diana Goode

Co-Chairs, Christian Education
Renee Dornan
Kelsey Styrt

Chair, Deacons

Chair, Outreach

Chair, Trustees
Paul Wolanski

Treasurer, Secretary
Linda Matis



We're looking for people to serve on the church boards for 2024.

*Say **YES!** when asked to serve your church!*

From the Bridge Minister

Friends, as I wrap up my ministry as your bridge pastor, I've been looking back over many things and reliving some memories. I'm grateful to have met so many wonderful people and to have lived this little slice of life together – a collection of joys and challenges. I feel especially grateful to have worshiped with you, to have had the opportunity to dive into God's Word every week. And I was not expecting to include my banjo on Sunday mornings! The staff is talented and hard-working and I'm thankful to know them. The leadership is very dedicated.

During the announcement time on Sunday mornings, it seemed we were regularly talking about food. Every healthy church eats together and is planning the next big meal. If I had one piece of advice, it would be to keep this up. It's scriptural! Hungry people need to eat. In Genesis, God sends manna and quail. In the New Testament book of Acts (chapter 10), God reveals inclusive food to Peter – he shouldn't be afraid to be around the people he previously considered unclean. I'll confess that I have a favorite food story: Jesus feeding 5,000 people is mentioned in all the gospels. In my imagination we're there with that crowd of thousands by the Sea of Galilee. We are hungry or "hangry," with no markets or convenience stores nearby. Jesus tells his worried disciples take their two fish and five loaves and... "You give them something to eat." It was a faith

"Give thanks not just on Thanksgiving Day but every day of your life. Appreciate and never take for granted all that you have."

—Catherine Pulsifer

exercise, to say the least! Of course, the presence of Jesus made all the difference.

I believe that's when we are most connected to God, when we simply trust Jesus to take our resources and multiply them, when we love God and look for neighbors who need love. Like Jesus, we look around us and see a great crowd with many needs. Like him, we have "compassion for them, because they [are] like sheep without a shepherd." The difference we can make together in our community and our world is exciting, and it is clearly happening. Be generous with God's gifts and keep up the good work! **You give them something to eat!**

Blessings and Peace,
Pastor Chris

Moderator's Moment – Kris Dornan

A good friend in faith, Pastor Andy Call, shared this recently, and I thought it would be great to send to you (original post by Belgian-American Esther Perel). This was shared upon the events that have shaken the Middle East in the past few weeks:

- >Be careful to separate people from the policies of their governments.
- >Be careful to separate people from the actions of terrorists who live among them.
- >Be careful not to collapse history and context into narrow interpretation.
- >Be careful not to eschew complexity and nuance for the sake of memeification.
- >Be careful to recognize that grief for one side does not mean hate for the other.
- >Be careful to understand that support for one side does not mean hate for the other.
- >Be careful of gaslighting on a mass level: disinformation and denial of loss.

>Be careful not to dismiss the excruciating and real pain of others. Do not make it worse.

>Be careful not to say online things that you would not say to someone in real life.

>Be careful not to add hatred on top of hatred; we are all being crushed underneath its compounding weight.

>Be careful not to lose empathy for those with whom you disagree. Be careful not to dehumanize others. Doing so dehumanizes you.

>Do not lose touch with the parts of you needed most: Your compassion. Your humanity. Your care.

That strikes me as solid and helpful advice. I would add the reminder to keep the faith, especially amid challenging times. Christ said we should be known not for our rightness, but by the way we love one another.

Christian Education Corner – Mary Karlovec

November is the month that we are reminded of THANKFULNESS. I would be remiss if I did not add my thanks to Pastor Chris for all of his support the last 10 months, Milly Gilly as she leaves the Board of Christian Education, and the Board of Christian Education as a whole for their support and willingness to volunteer to not only being on the board but volunteering to teach Sunday School, work with our youth, and support the projects and fundraisers we do. I am grateful for all that you do on behalf of the children, youth, and adults in our congregation. And a big thank you to those who brought their decorated car trunks for Trunk or Treat!



Thank you to everyone who has supported the Clangy Change offering the

first Sunday of each month. For November, the Clangy Change will be used to buy supplies to fill stockings for our homebound and other members for Christmas. Our December Clangy Change offering will help our Outreach Board purchase socks, gloves, hats, and scarves for those in need. Your support is much appreciated.

By the time you read this, some of our youth and adults will have returned from a lock-in at St. John's Elmore. They will be gathering with their friends from the Lotts Creek trip to renew acquaintances and worship with singer/songwriter Andra Moran from Nashville. This is always an amazing gathering and the first one we have done since Covid.

Did you know that we are putting together a lending library in Fellowship Hall? Currently most of the books are in my office but with the acquisition of bookshelves (thank you Kris and Susan Dornan), they are being relocated to Fellowship Hall after the craft fair.

We will be starting our adult Bible Study this month. Date and time will be available soon. Thanks to Alan Willcox for getting us started on this venture. If you have a book of the Bible or a theme you would like to be considered for discussion, please bring it to the first brown bag lunch Bible Study. Watch for information in the next few weeks in the weekly bulletin.

Finally, we still have KETTLE CORN, CARAMEL AND CHOCOLATE DRIZZLE POPCORN we need to sell. The popcorn we have left are our profits! We are selling the drizzle popcorn for \$8 and the Kettle corn for \$6. We will sell it after church in the back and during coffee hour. Please consider buying some! We appreciate your support.



Outreach Committee News – Karen Farmer

Colored leaves, crisp temperatures, wood smoke mixed with heavenly scents from the kitchen, the warm glow of togetherness and the linking of prayerful hands are images that conjure memories of Thanksgiving for most of us. Look all around you at the autumn beauty and you will find so many other things to thank Him for every day.

In this season of Thanksgiving, the Outreach Committee is thankful for your support to enable us to carry on our mission work. Genesis House expressed its gratefulness for our donations to its shelter. Community Care has requested monetary contributions for Thanksgiving in lieu of food so we have donated \$100 for food, in addition to our usual monthly \$100 gift. We should have the names for the Giving Tree soon and you will be able to purchase those gifts before the December 12th deadline for delivery to Community Care.

Were you aware that the committee members send cards in care of our church to those members who cannot attend church? We have recently reviewed the shut-in list and welcome any additions that you might suggest to us. Our shut-ins are always thankful for these reminders that our church family cares and remembers them.

As you celebrate this Thanksgiving, may I suggest that you take time out for little prayers of praise, following Jesus' example to thank God at EVERY meal?

Deacons' Desk – Valerie Arnold

November is the time for Thanksgiving, time to reflect on all we have to be grateful for. It is so easy to want more and pray for things we think we need;

but it's time to praise God with thankfulness for all that we do have. Do your praises equal your prayers? Is your scale balanced? Don't wait to offer praise and thanksgiving to God until things are just as you like them to be—praise Him in every situation. Praise Him for who He is and what He's done in your life. There is so much to be thankful for! Take time to thank Him each and every day, then watch as power is released into your circumstances in a way that scared and begging prayers can never accomplish.

Here is a prayer we can use for our Thanksgiving dinner this year: Thank You, God, for the food we are about to eat, for those who are here to share these blessings, for the generosity of our hosts that make this possible. Bless those who are here and those who are in our hearts, and all those who are not as fortunate on this day. Amen.

Trustees' Turn – Paul Wolanski

Hello, my Family in Christ. The Trustees have entered into an agreement with our snow removal company for an additional three years. We have approved the sorely needed stripping and waxing of Fellowship Hall floors. We have given approval for a new outdoor mobile sign. We are getting prepared for Stewardship. Thank you, congregation, for all your support!



Women's Book Club: All gatherings are at the church at 7 pm unless noted.
November 20: The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart by Holly Ringland
December 18: The Christmas Bookshop by Jenny Colgan



**PLEDGE CARDS FOR 2024
ARE DUE BEFORE OR ON
NOVEMBER 12.**

FAQ about Pledging

Q: What does it mean to make a financial pledge?

A: Making a financial pledge is promising to give a specific dollar amount of your financial resources.

Q: Why is pledging important?

A: Pledging is important because it allows you to reflect on the gifts God has given you and show your thanks for those gifts by giving back to the church. There is also a very practical reason: Each year we create a budget based on the total income we expect to receive the next year (pledges). The budget is the foundation for planning for the next year's events.

Q: What are the areas I can pledge to?

A: We have three pledging accounts – **operating, outreach and capital**. Pledges to the operating fund help to pay for the day-to-day expenses of the church including utilities and salaries. Outreach pledges are used to help support outreach efforts in the wider community and world. Pledges to the capital fund are used for to buy, maintain, or improve the church's fixed assets, such as buildings, vehicles, equipment, or land and when money is used towards extending the useful life of an existing asset.

Q: Who should make a financial pledge to the church?

A: Everyone! Even if you are not a member of First Congregational Church, you can still pledge. It takes the help of everyone in the church to allow us to function and do God's work.

If you have any questions about pledging or the church's financial reports, please contact Linda Matis, treasurer, or a member of the Board of Trustees.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

- 11/5 Susan Dornan
- 11/11 Andrew Veliconia
- 11/14 Paul Wolanski
- 11/16 Keith Schoonover
- 11/17 Millie Anderson
- 11/18 Yung Do
- 11/24 Cole Hengartner
- 11/28 Yung & Annie Do

Greeters

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



On November 5 we will take time to remember all those church members and other loved ones we have lost over the past year. Church members who have passed away:

- Sallie Sasse 11/14/22
- Melissa Wysocky 4/8/23
- Ed Connolly 4/9/23
- Bob Stamper 6/10/23
- Florence Garner 6/27/23
- Bob Elliott 7/6/23
- Ric Sasse 7/23/23
- Joe Pesch 7/29/23
- Dolores Pesch 9/22/23
- Sue Mays 9/24/23



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**The Congregational Meeting to elect officers and adopt the budget for 2024 will be held in the sanctuary on Sunday, November 19 following the worship service. Please plan on attending.**

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SAVE THE DATE: Holiday Music Festival – Sunday, December 10 at 7 pm

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Bell choir 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm	2 AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	3	4 AA Women 9 am AA Couples 6 pm
5 Outreach 9 am All Saints Sunday Worship 10:30 am Communion Fellowship hour Deacons 11:30 am AA Men 7:30 pm	6 AA Women 7 pm	7 CE 7 pm AA 1 st Step 8:30 pm	8 Bell choir 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm	9 AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	10	11 AA Women 9 am AA Couples 6 pm
12 Worship 10:30 am Fellowship hour Pledge cards due AA Men 7:30 pm	13 Council 7 pm AA Women 7 pm	14 Trustees 7 pm AA 1 st Step 8:30 pm	15 Bell choir 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm	16 Newsletter articles due AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	17	18 AA Women 9 am AA Couples 6 pm
19 Worship 10:30 am Congregational meeting 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 Bell choir 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm	23 Thanksgiving OFFICE CLOSED AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	24 OFFICE CLOSED	25 Decorate sanctuary 9 am AA Women 9 am AA Couples 6 pm
26 Worship 10:30 am Fellowship hour Clean out classrooms AA Men 7:30 pm	27 AA Women 7 pm	28 AA 1 st Step 8:30 pm	29 Bell choir 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm	30 AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm		