

The Messenger

The monthly newsletter of First Congregational Church UCC of North Ridgeville

September 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



From the Bridge Minister

I had an unusual experience several years ago. I went to a UCC Conference meeting, got there on time (an achievement), and promptly became stuck in a parking garage elevator with eight other people. Being the closest one to the phone, I made the calls – every ten minutes for the next 40 minutes. There was a man named Skip on the other end who assured me we would be set free soon. We were all looking at our phones and watches, especially the man who was one of the keynote speakers at this event. Forty minutes is a long time to stand in one place, in a box, with no way out. We were keeping it light, but it was becoming less funny with each passing minute. Then just as the humor of the situation had passed and the air grown stale, the elevator moved and the doors opened. I don't think anyone was about to crack, but it was becoming a possibility! Skip kept assuring me that everything would be okay.

On the way out of the building we met Skip, in a security guard uniform, who didn't look anything like the Skip I'd imagined. He shook our hands as we walked past, survivors of the ordeal. There wasn't anything he could do to fix the elevator, but he could answer our calls and use his own cell phone to get help.

Having company was definitely a plus in that situation! The elevator is a great thing when it works, and now I believe one of its best features is the phone on the wall. Every ten minutes or so, we needed to hear a voice from the outside saying, "You will be okay."

There is so much in life to be concerned about – okay, worried and overwhelmed. If you are keeping your own life balanced spiritually, socially, physically, etc., maybe you can be the assurance on the "other end of the phone" for someone. As believers, we are God's lifeline to others, and I believe God puts us in those situations regularly.

From a distance, from prison, the Apostle Paul wrote to the Church in Philippi in northern Greece: *“I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying in joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.”* *Philippians 1:3-6*

Like any church in any time, I’m sure the Greeks in Philippi must have had anxieties of some kind, together and individually. Paul prayed for them and they prayed for each other. They shared “in the gospel” (ministry of the church) together. And God continued the good work in them, as God will in us. That is most fulfilling – to know God is working in us. I see it happening, clearly.

Upcoming Sermons: The Adventures of Jesus!

September 3: “Jesus at Work” Bringing Jesus into your real world. Ethical issues, relational issues with co-workers, etc. Our relationship with Jesus helps us know how to think about work and purpose. Based on 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13

September 10: “Jesus on the Farm” Planting seeds; growing a life of faith. Based on Psalm 65; Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

September 17: “Jesus on the Mountain - Dr. Jesus” We have many hurts and needs. God brings us closer through healing and gives that ministry to the church. Based on Mark 1:29-34, 40-45, Isaiah 40:21-31

September 24: Pastor Chris on Vacation; Carla Valles guest speaker

Moderator’s Moment – Kris Dornan

What a blessing we have in Jesus! In turn, what a blessing we have to share Jesus in our church! I’m amazed - but shouldn’t be - by how Christ moves among us here at First Congregational UCC. No matter the obstacle, or the crisis of the day,

or the need that arises....we find a way together! “With God, all things are possible!”

With those thoughts in mind, my ask for us as a congregation as we start looking towards the fall is to thoughtfully pray about the next year and to thoughtfully consider how we have supported the church this year and what that may mean for how we support the church in 2024! From a stewardship perspective, we will be starting those tasks to review budgets and to carefully lay out a plan for our church for 2024, a year with unlimited possibilities, and we hope with a new settled pastor to lead us through!

By our Congregational roots, that means we, the congregation, are critical to those plans. I will pray for you, as I ask prayer from you, to help us discern God’s spirit in how we plan and budget for 2024!

Christian Education Corner – Mary Karlovec

Welcome to September and Fall programming! On Sunday, September 3, there will be NO SUNDAY SCHOOL for any ages. There will be packets available for children to use during worship.

On September 10, Sunday School programming will begin after the children’s time in worship. Children and youth will be gathering together for some fun activities outside and in fellowship hall. We are still in **need of Sunday School teachers for all levels - preschool through 1st grade, grades 2-4, grades 5-8, and our high**

school youth. Adults need to be willing to volunteer on a bi-weekly rotation in the classrooms. There is a sign-up sheet outside the Christian Education office. We are also



in need of four adults who are willing to oversee the nursery one Sunday a month.

If there are no children in the nursery on your Sunday, you are welcome to be a part of the worship service.

After worship on September 10 Christian Education and the Deacons are hosting a **Welcome Back Picnic Potluck**. CE will provide drinks, hot dogs, hamburgers, and paper products. **Please bring a dish to share based on the first letter of your last name: A - K: side dish, L - Z: dessert.** All are welcome to attend! Bring a friend or two to join the picnic!

The United Church of Christ is continuing to address ways that each congregation in the UCC can be more welcoming to people/families looking for a church home. We are all familiar with ONA (Open and Affirming), which our church has been since 2011. This year the Board of Christian Education is beginning to explore ways to be more “neurodiverse” when welcoming children/youth who may be autistic, dyslexic, hyperlexic, ADHD and/or have dyspraxia. We feel that there is already a need within our congregation but want to also be welcoming and provide a safe place to be for families visiting with children with possible neurodiverse characteristics. As we begin this journey, we will be making small changes in our Sunday School programming as well as materials that will be available to meet the needs of ALL children. We are starting with the preschool through 4th grade rooms by providing flexible seating (not always having to sit in a chair in Sunday School but sitting on carpet squares, wobble chairs, bean bag chairs, etc.) as well as an area in the room for children to have time to refocus/calm down when they are on sensory overload.

We will be painting the rooms and covering the overhead lights with a blue filter to make the rooms a warmer, more soothing environment. This will be a work in progress this year and we will continue to update you. We are blessed to have many members of our congregation who have backgrounds in areas of neurodiversity and have already given input in ways to help make this a positive experience for all of our children and visitors with children.

Are you interested in adult bible study? We are looking at offering a lunch time adult bible study.

Everyone can bring a bagged lunch and it would be approximately an hour in length. Day and time will depend on interest. If interested, sign up outside the CE office.



Finally, a huge THANK YOU to everyone in the congregation who provided Clangy Change to buy school supplies and/or donated school supplies for Community Care. All of the supplies have been delivered to Community Care and they were very grateful for our donations!

Save the date!!! Sunday, October 22 is **TRUNK OR TREAT!** More information in the October newsletter.

Outreach Committee News – Pat Kyle

Well, here we are in the Dog Days of summer! Outreach receives many invitations to donate from all kinds of organizations, but we want to be sure we are good stewards of our money. Many thanks to Karen Farmer who researched some organizations for us to make sure our donations go to good causes. We are always mindful of the needs of Community Care, and this month we added Blessing House in

Elyria to our list of donations. We are also giving money to the Women's Fund Initiative or "Change the Cycle."

We are collecting items for **Genesis House** in Lorain, a shelter for abused women and children who sometimes come with only the clothing on their backs, and the need is great. If you are out shopping, please pick up an extra **toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, or feminine hygiene product** for them. We will have a marked container bin outside the elevator in the hallway to hold your donations which will be picked up by Genesis House later. Let's fill the bin!

BEHOLD! Our next big collection is October 1 and you will be hearing about "Neighbors in Need" during September in our Mission Moments.

Deacons' Desk – Kris Dornan

As I write to you this month, we are already seeing our youth travel back to school, and the movement of our calendar seems to press on; and as I'm sure you are as well wondering where the summer - and 2023 itself - has gone!

The movement back to school also signifies a return for our church to Christian Education for our kiddos and our youth. Recently, parents of our youth as well as our new confirmands were sent details of some of the plans we have for this fall's programming. Critical to those details are our hope to include our young members and our young attendees in more activities vital to our Sunday worship. Believe me, as a father of three of those youngsters, the world is much different than it was when I was their age! One thing that I do glean from my own kids is their want and need to be included, and to be part of something,

with the biggest change being that the kids themselves want to be part of that creative process!

Even though we have detailed some of our thoughts for how kids can be present and participating in worship, I do ask that those of you who either have kids or have kids in our church that you are close to...reach out and ask them what Sunday worship means to them, and also inquire how they would like to be more present there. And in turn, please, if you are comfortable, share those thoughts with the Deacon and/or Christian Education teams!

God bless you all, and keep you, my friends.

Trustees' Turn – Paul Wolanski

Hello, my family in Christ. Trustees have been busy since taking a much-needed month off. We are currently working on pricing out floor stripping and waxing in Fellowship Hall, repairing and painting the peeling plaster over the choir loft, painting Fellowship Hall, and replacing the mobile sign out front. We have also spoken to Church Council about changing the language in the Congregational Bylaws from Annual "Audit" to "Financial Review." This would give us more flexibility to conduct the annual review of the financial records in house and save immensely on accountant fees. Please look to vote in November's full membership congregational meeting.

Until next month, please stay safe!

Women's Book Club: All gatherings are at the church at 7 pm unless noted.
September 18: The Wedding Dress Sewing Circle by Jennifer Ryan

Greeters

Sept. 3	Regenia Comerford, Lynne Petroff
Sept. 10	Diana Goode, Vonnie Packard
Sept. 17	Karen Farmer, Linda Matis
Sept. 24	Paul Wolanski, Paula Dudek
Oct. 1	Regenia Comerford, Lynne Petroff

Acolytes

Sept. 3	Chase Dornan
Sept. 10	Cate Dornan
Sept. 17	Matt Dornan
Sept. 24	
Oct. 1	

Communion Servers

Sept. 3	Lily Dornan, Charlotte Dornan
Oct. 1	

Scripture Readers

Sept. 3	Ben Dornan
Oct. 1	Beth Dornan
Nov. 5	Abby Anderson
Dec. 3	Abby Anderson

Birthdays & Anniversaries

9/6	Deb Arrigo	9/23	Mary Ireland
9/7	Ella Eaton	9/24	Holly Hengartner
9/7	Becky Williams	9/26	Kris Dornan
9/10	Jody Millar	9/26	Kurt Dornan
9/17	Vi Elrod	9/26	Brenda Schutz
9/17	Linda Matis	9/29	Karen Mytnick
9/21	Kari Dlugosz		
	9/28	Daryl & Barb vonBenken	



Cabbage

Roll Sale

NR First Congregational

Church UCC

\$20 per dozen uncooked

Orders starting Aug 20 - Oct 20

Pick Up Oct 22 10am - 2pm

Name: _____
 Contact number: _____
 Quantity (per dozen): _____
 Total \$ amount: _____

Contact: (440) 327-2921



Having a fun time at the Lake Erie Crushers game outing!



School supplies donated and purchased (using Clangy Change donations) for Community Care. Thank you!!



FOOD TRUCKS FUN DAY
 at First Congregational Church
 Saturday, September 30
 11 am to 3 pm

Food trucks attending:
 Kel N Mel's Dirty Dogs
 Triple S Food Truck
 Bombers Snow Cups & Lemonade

Bubbles, face painting, craft,
 games, balloons and more!



UNITED CHURCH
 OF CHRIST
 NEIGHBORS IN NEED 2023
 ucc.org/nin

Behold!
 "God saw everything that God had
 made and behold, it was very good."
 Genesis 1:31

Artist: Alexis
 Age: 15
 Congregation: Trinity United Church of Christ, St. Louis MO

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<h1>September</h1>					1	2 AA Women 9 am AA Couples 6 pm
3 Worship 10:30 am Communion Fellowship hour AA Men 7:30 pm	4 Labor Day OFFICE CLOSED AA Women 7 pm	5 CE 7 pm Trustees 7 pm AA 1 st Step 8:30 pm	6 Bell choir 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm	7 AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	8	9 AA Women 9 am AA Couples 6 pm
10 Outreach 9 am Worship 10:30 am Sunday School begins Clangy Change Church picnic potluck AA Men 7:30 pm	11 Council 7 pm AA Women 7 pm	12 AA 1 st Step 8:30 pm	13 Bell choir 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm 4-H 7 pm	14 AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	15	16 Newsletter articles due AA Women 9 am AA Couples 6 pm
17 Worship 10:30 am Fellowship hour AA Men 7:30 pm	18 Women's book club 7 pm AA Women 7 pm	19 AA 1 st Step 8:30 pm	20 Bell choir 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm	21 AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	22	23 AA Women 9 am AA Couples 6 pm
24 Pastor Chris off (Carla Valles guest speaker) Worship 10:30 am Fellowship hour Deacons 11:30 am AA Men 7:30 pm	25 AA Women 7 pm	26 AA 1 st Step 8:30 pm	27 Bell choir 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm	28 AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	29	30 Food Trucks Event 11 am – 3 pm AA Women 9 am AA Couples 6 pm

GREETERS

Sept. 3 Regenia Comerford, Lynne Petroff
 Sept. 10 Diana Goode, Vonnice Packard
 Sept. 17 Karen Farmer, Linda Matis
 Sept. 24 Paul Wolanski, Paula Dudek
 Oct. 1 Regenia Comerford, Lynne Petroff

ACOLYTES

Chase Dornan
 Cate Dornan
 Matt Dornan

COMMUNION SERVERS

Charlotte Dornan, Lily Dornan

SCRIPTURE READERS

Ben Dornan

Beth Dornan