



2026 Newsletter

Table of Contents

Page 3 – The Pastor’s Report

Page 4 – The Pastor’s Report (cont.)

Page 5– Thank You & Upcoming Events

Page 6 – Kenyan Connection

Page 7 – What’s the Buzz?

Page 8 – Please Keep in Prayer

Page 9 – Please Keep in Prayer (cont.)

Page 10 – Birthdays and FYI

Page 11 – Church Board Meeting Minutes

Page 12 – Church Board Meeting Minutes (cont.)

Page 13 – Our ONA Covenant Statement

Page 14 – Church Staff and Board Members

The Pastor's Report

*Rows and floes of angel hair
And ice cream castles in the air
And feather canyons everywhere
I've looked at clouds that way*

*But now they only block the sun
They rain and snow on everyone
So many things I would have done
But clouds got in my way*

*I've looked at clouds from both sides now
From up and down, and still somehow
It's cloud illusions I recall
I really don't know clouds at all*

These opening lines from the classic Joni Mitchell song “Both Sides Now” seem quite appropriate as I look out the church window on a late April day. The clouds are both accentuating a brilliant sun and foreshadowing a torrential rainstorm. As the song goes on to remind us, we really don’t know love and life at all. As we grow in wisdom, we live out our faith when we do see both sides and hold the tensions. As theologian Reinhold Neibbur stated, “faith is ambiguity tolerance.”

The wars in Iran, Sudan, Ukraine, Gaza, and within our neighborhoods and cities rage on. Our spirits feel it. The dread is consistent every morning as we open our news feed online or turn on the television. When will the war clouds dissipate? Is there a bigger storm on the horizon? What can we do to prepare for these conditions? Is there another side?

Easter season continues. The light shines in the darkness. Christ is risen. First Church life sees newer groups getting together like the young adults (see Jimmy’s update), the men’s group, and the Sisterhood of Seekers. We give thanks for the established groups that continue to meet like the Guild, the Seniors, Ladies Night Out, and the Choir. Faith breaks through in moments of service at places like

CAIN, Found House, or Washington UCC. Our Kenyan friends give thanks for SONKA's continued support of their students (see note from the principal). Families work hard to evolve and to support in these times. Mothers supporting daughters; friends calling on friends; our welcome to the stranger. There are moments of relief and grace on a wider scale as we learn of heroic, everyday efforts. Grief and isolation are balanced with joy and health. Do we have the courage, the wisdom, and the spirit to see the other side?

I tell myself and I encourage you now, do not let clouds get in the way. There are many things we wish we might have done differently in life. Those days and clouds are part of life. New days, new clouds. Different opportunities and challenges present themselves in this season of life. We have the here and now. There are opportunities to imagine, to create, to connect, to serve, and to love. Our faith proclaims life, death, and resurrection. It is not a linear path but one that forms some amazing landscapes for life. May we live with the ambiguity, paradox, and humility that life presents. The song concludes with these verses:

*Tears and fears and feeling proud
To say "I love you" right out loud
Dreams and schemes and circus crowds
I've looked at life that way*

*But now old friends are acting strange
They shake their heads, they say I've changed
Well something's lost, but something's gained
In living every day
I've looked at life from both sides now
From win and lose and still somehow
It's life's illusions I recall
I really don't know life at all*

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again. Amen!

Pastor

Thank You!

*I want to thank everyone for their concern, calls, cards, and prayers for my husband and myself these past couple of months. We're both improving, and hopefully, will be back to good health before too long. I want to thank Pastor Dan for the time off to take care of Mike and myself, and thank you to Jimmy, Bernie, and Bev Bosse for their work in my absence. Love and prayers to my First Church family! –
Kim & Mike Ogden*

Upcoming Events

Men at Work, Play, and Pray

A new men's group has formed that plans to meet monthly on the third Sundays of the month following worship. The purpose of the group is to connect the men of First UCC with one another for matters of faith, church, and life. At our first meeting in April, several ideas were shared about future topics to discuss, possible church events to organize, and projects to tackle. Our next meeting is May 17th. Come and see what is happening.

Kenyan Connection

For more than 20 years, First UCC has partnered with other SONKA churches to assist the Presbyterian Teacher's College in Rubate, Kenya. It has been a blessed partnership filled with many small and large success stories. Here is a recent note that Pastor Dan received from the school's principal Mr. Matthieu Mukundi:

Receive Easter greetings, my brother. I trust you are well in the Lord and enjoying the grace of this blessed season of the resurrection. I thank God for His continued faithfulness in this ministry. The student population is now over 400. Brethren this is a miracle . The teacher trainees are currently on holiday, while the nursing class that reported in March is progressing well. The other nursing students are in their clinical rotations. We have also started a new course for Nurse Assistants (Caregivers), and it has begun well. The first nursing class has completed their training ,they are now waiting for graduation. From the 8th to the 10th, I will attend the Church General Assembly Committee meeting, where I will give a report on how the college is faring. Thereafter, we shall hold our BOM meeting, and once the date is settled, I will share the notice. Rev. Katie (Peterson) mentioned the possibility of a SONKA team visiting next year, and I affirmed that we will be glad to welcome them—this is truly their home away from home. There was also a proposal for Rev. Peter and I to visit this year, and I am still waiting for further information. Kindly pass my Easter greetings to your family and to all the SONKA brethren.

Yours in Christ,
64 brother, Mukundi S. M.

What's the Buzz? – Church Music, Media, and Faith Formation

And just like that, May has arrived and the choir and handbell choir are heading into their final performances before summer break. We will hear "Guide My Feet, Lord" from the choir on May 3, with Dave Hawkins providing the rest of the music in the service. We always love having you at First UCC, Dave! On Mother's Day, anyone interested in serenading the moms is invited to participate in the choir. I have two easy songs lined up. Rehearsals for that are Wednesday, May 6 at 6:00 p.m. and Sunday, May 10 at 9:30 a.m. Both meet in the sanctuary. Bryce Kessler will be subbing for me on May 17. On the 24th, the choir returns with the anthem, "I Will Be with You." Both groups perform on the final Sunday of the month, with the handbells performing "Colors of Joy" and the chancel choir singing "May a Rainbow Run Beside You."

As I've announced on recent Sunday mornings, I am in the process of collecting bids to replace our broken sound system and install permanent projectors. At the time of this article, I have met with two companies and will meet with a third on April 29. There has been great movement in the fundraising efforts through the capital campaign, and I want to thank everyone who has contributed so far! The church building is showing its age, and I know this upgrade will not only benefit us on Sunday mornings, but it will allow us to host outside groups and events more easily. More to come on that soon!

Young adults, ages 21 and up - this message is for you! We are officially beginning monthly gatherings! Sammi and I have started a group text thread with updates and important information. If you are interested in being 'in the know,' send me a text or email and I will add you to the group. Our first outing is Friday, May 22 at 7:00 p.m. at the Acres in Evendale. Mini golf is only \$9 and there are a restaurant and bar on site. It is sure to be a fun time! Speaking of events: if you have interest in attending the Pride Night with the Cincinnati Reds, it is Friday, May 29 at 6:40 p.m. Tickets are \$33 each and come with a colorful crossbody bag. Please let me know your interest ASAP.

Have a great month!

Jimmy

Please Keep in Prayer

Amanda and family (daughter of Hilda Faulkner)
Barry & Judy Jamison (members)
Beverly & Mike Rose (dear friends of Suwanna Kirkman)
Blake Webb (friend of Jackie Smith)
Bill Mayer (member)
Brian Kirkman (son of Ron Kirkman)
Carol Ann White (member)
Carolyn Bruckmann (friend of the church)
Carolyn Hocker (Kelsey George's Grandmother)
Charlene Jones (sister of Jackie Smith)
Charlie (friend of Herb Brookbank)
Chelsea and Sophia (friends of Pam, Hilda Faulkner's friend)
Christi Simmons (friend of Michelle Richards)
Christine White (friend of Jackie Smith)
Cindy & Mark Wolf (friends of the Colding's)
Daisy (friend of Hannah Steinhard)
Darryl P. and Mickey P. (cousins of Bev Bosse)
David Krebs (member)
Diane Ripley (friend of the Kirkman's)
Dorothy (aunt of Suwanna Kirkman)
Elaine Lewis (Jackie Smith's granddaughter)
Elsie & Bob Biddle (aunt and uncle of the Krebs Family)
Eric Stacy (friend of the Steinhard's and Sehlhorst's)
Family and friends of Jackie Smith
Family of Anna Jean Shock (aunt of Ron Kirkman)
Family of Don Fricke (member)
Family of Gary Smith (husband of Sandy; stepfather of Patty Baldwin)
Family of George Frazer (neighbor and friend of the Kirkman Family)
Family of Jack Parsons (father of Patty Baldwin)
Family of Terrence Stern-Enzi, "Tt" (co-worker of Gina Kern)
Family of William Kirkman (uncle of Ron Kirkman)
Friends from Clovernook (of Carol Ann White)
Haley (friend of the Copenhaver's)
Jessica (friend of Carol Ann White)

Jim & Carol Bitzenhofer (members)
Joan Schmidt (daughter of the late Ollie Helm)
Jody Eversole (friend of Suwanna Kirkman)
Joe (uncle of Suwanna Kirkman)
Joey Miller (grandson of Ron Kirkman)
Katie and family (daughter of Bernice and Terry Morgan, friends of the church)
Kelly Ann Pennington (sister-in-law of Suwanna Kirkman)
Kesha and Family (friends of Ron Kirkman)
Kimberly Morgan (cousin of Ron Kirkman)
Laura Hauck (member)
Lea Pirro (daughter of Lucille Isaacs)
Lucille Isaacs (member)
Lynne (friend of the church)
Marvin Stamper (employee at C.M. Meyer & Assoc.)
MaryJo O'Brien (friend of Michelle Richards)
Michelle M. (cousin of Bev Bosse)
Michelle Richards (dear friend of the Senior Social)
Mike Ogden (husband of Kim Ogden)
Pam and family (friends of Hilda Faulkner)
Pat Froehle (member)
Ramon (grandson of Hilda Faulkner)
Ron Kirkman (member)
Ron Cummins (dear friend of Amanda Faulkner)
Sandy Echols (member)
Sharon Kazee (prayer asked from Sandy Echols)
Su H. (friend of Bev Bosse)
Thomas (nephew of Hilda's friend, Pam)
Tiffany Nelson (friend of Ron Kirkman)
Tina Maxwell (Sue Bilz' best friend)
Vicki Thorner (Sue Bilz' cousin)
Whiting Family (cousins of the Krebs Family)

Birthdays

Birthdays

05/08 – Sharon Rodenbeck
05/12 – J. C. Owens
05/14 – Carol Bitzenhofer
05/25 – Kay Young
05/28 – Debra Stardard
05/29 – Kendra Pressley
05/29 – Bernie Wehman
05/30 – Elizabeth (Lilly) Neumeister

FYI

Reminder that Pizza with the Pastor is the first Sunday of the month. Dan and Amy will host on May 3rd. First-timers always have a seat at the table – simply contact the church office or Pastor Dan or Amy to reserve a spot. Usually there's room for 13, but they can always make room for more.

**First UCC Church Board Meeting Minutes
March 9, 2026 (In-Person & Zoom)**

In attendance: Tom Shelton, Milt Hauck, June Bronert, Bruce Steinhard, Jean Krebs, Gail Bauknecht, Ed Bosse, Bev Smith, Sammi Asplan, Brad Kramer

Treasurer: Christy Meyer (Treasurer)

Pastor: Dan Weyand-Geise

Excused: Bill Henrich

- I. **Call to Order** -- Tom called the meeting to order.

- II. **Devotion** -- Pastor Dan

- III. **Treasurer's Report (Christy):** The February reports were accepted, and approval was given to pay March expenses. Nothing unusual this month.
Motion: Milt Second: Bev Accepted: All in favor
Pay the Bills
Motion: Jean Second: Gail Accepted: All in favor
Change Phil's Place to Annette's Cafe

- IV. **Recording Secretary's Report (Bruce)** – The February report was accepted with 3 corrections.
Motion: Bev Second: Jean Accepted: All in favor

- V. **Financial Secretary's Report (Jean)** –
Jean told the Board that \$6,250 had been given and designated for Audio Visual – Capital Improvements. She reminded the board members that we need “Quotes” for all Capital Improvements. She then suggested that \$11,737.52 left from the renovation and repairs from the flooding be moved to Capital Improvements.
Motion: Gail Second: Bev Accepted: All in favor

Jean also suggested that the Endowment Committee be added as part of the Finance Committee.

Insurance – Suggested that we have photos of all things for the Insurance file.
Motion: Milt Second: Gail Accepted: All in Favor

VI. **Pastor's Report** – Pastor Dan submitted his report to the Church Board Meeting, which included the following updates and reflections:

- **Approve a group meeting on Tuesday night—**

Motion: Bruce Second: Jean Accepted: All in Favor

A member brought up the liability concern and this was covered.

- **Fishes & Loaves** – nothing

- **Annette's Café** - nothing

Motion: Gail Second: Sammi Accepted: All in favor

VII. **Committee Reports**

- **Endowment**

- Ed shared the fund was up by \$100,000.00

- **Garden** – they will start work after the Rummage Sale.

- Sammi asked about the Bulletin Boards in the Fellowship Hall and was asked to work with Kim and Jimmy.

- **Music (Jean)** – nothing to report

- **Budget (Jean)** – already covered

IX. **Old Business**

- **Discussion of Capital Improvements**

- **By-Laws (Bruce and Pastor Dan)** – The Constitution & By-Laws are available by contacting the office, Bruce Steinhard, or Pastor Dan

X. **New Business** –

- **Thank You letter to Mendel and his wife**

- **Ed** – silverware from rummage sale to Camp Washington to be delivered through Larry B.

XI. **Adjournment**

Moved: Jean

Seconded: Gail

Accepted: All in Favor

XII. **Lord's Prayer**

*Submitted by: J. Bruce Steinhard
Recording Secretary*

Open & Affirming (ONA) Covenant of First United Church of Christ

We, the members of First United Church of Christ, 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 attend services every week, once a month, or once a year;
- ♥ 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 UCC. Being fully welcome in our community here at First United Church of Christ 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

phone: 513-541-7302

email: office@firstuccincy.org

website: www.firstunitedchurchofchrist.org

Follow Us on Facebook and Instagram! @firstuccincy

Pastoral Team:

Dan Weyand-Geise, *Pastor*

ext. 17

Jimmy Wiederhold, *Director of Music, Media, and Faith Formation*

email: jimmy@firstuccincy.org

Kim Ogden, *Pastoral Administrator*

ext. 10

Church Board:

Tom Shelton, *President*

Milt Hauck, *Co-Vice President*

June Bronnert, *Co-Vice President*

Bruce Steinhard, *Recording Secretary*

Jean Krebs, *Financial Secretary*

Christy Meyer, *Church Treasurer*

Sammi Asplan

Gail Bauknecht

Ed Bosse

Bill Henrich

Beverly Smith



“God is still speaking.”