



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



December 2021 Newsletter

The Pastor's Report

Pastor Dan Weyand-Geise

Did you begin your Christmas shopping on Black Friday? Did you have the tree in place by the end of Thanksgiving weekend? Or do you wait for the first snowfall? Maybe you follow another tradition of waiting until Christmas Eve night to decorate the tree. Have you already started listening to Christmas music? The most celebrated season for secular and Christians of all ilk is upon us. Are you ready? Or not?

When we find ourselves passionate about an idea, a cause, or even the simple habit of Christmas traditions, we are tempted to look at anyone who does not share the same enthusiasm as somehow missing out or, even worse, wrong about their choices. We think everyone should share the same joy and excitement about "It's a Wonderful Life," Charles Dickens's tale, Christmas cards, outside lights, or midnight service. You can extend this scenario to numerous ones involving real-life issues of personal choice. How do you feel about our educational system - the practices of private or public schools? What about community-police relations, healthcare, abortion, the infrastructure bill, and the list goes on and on. Where is God in all of this? How do we arrive at ethical, just, and compassionate decisions? When do we say it is time to begin or to end a certain practice? How do we uphold ethics of personal choice, freedom, and responsibility? What are the community standards? It has to be one way, not the other. Right?

Our Christian message especially on display at this time of year is one in which Christ enters for all of the world. To witness to the variety of God's expressions of love – in our joys, our sorrows, our heartaches, our play, our loves, our loneliness. Christ is for all, in all, and with all. That is the message of Christmas. God becomes incarnate to teach us an ethic and practice rooted in Love.

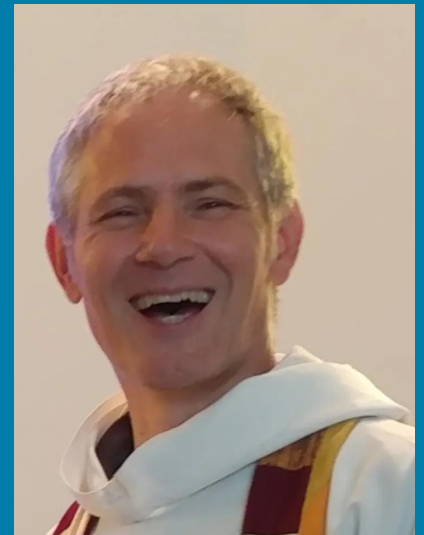


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The Pastor's Report (continued)

If a person's actions are directed by condescension, judgement, envy, bitterness, or hate, then of course we would say the meaning of Christmas is absent. These kinds of behavior are not consistent with the love of God. However, in most cases the opposite is true. Most people genuinely try to discern right from wrong. Most people operate in the gray areas of life. They do their best to bring about what is most loving and generous. Christmas joy is simply waiting to be opened. It is the heart of little ones, young and old; it is the love and generosity among the poor and rich revealed in the most surprising circumstances; it is the humility and welcome from perfect strangers.

December is a holy month for us. There is a sacredness to this month that comes into view. Even in the most sorrowful of situations, our vocation as people of faith is to witness to God's liberating love. May you create the time and space you need to receive God's gifts of blessing, grace, abundance, and life. They are there for us when we are ready.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Dan

Holiday Schedule

We have some special music planned for the entire month of December. Our second Sunday in Advent on December 5th will feature Jimmy Wiederhold and Tricia Lenhof. Then on the 12th, Jeanne Phillips will be here. On the 19th violinist Maxwell Fairman will be here along with Jimmy and the choir. Finally, our Christmas Eve services will be held at 6 p.m. and 11 p.m. Jeanne is here for the early service while Jimmy, the choir, handbell choir, and a special guest will be here at 11 p.m. On Sunday the 26th we will sing Christmas carols and celebrate the season together. Joyful sounds of faith and love are promised the entire month. Please invite your family and friends to join you.



Music Moments

There has been a lot of musical greatness happening at First UCC! The choir has performed challenging pieces of music each week since September - some works even calling for a cappella sections, allowing the congregation to hear that although we are small, we are mighty! Most recently, the choir anthem included American Sign Language; all members participated in signing and singing, "Let There Be Peace on Earth." The handbell choir started rehearsals in October and have been hard at work learning Advent music. They made their first public performance (in what may have been since Hoffner Street!) on November 28, performing, "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence." Considering some members came to the first rehearsal without a speck of musical knowledge, these five dedicated individuals gave an absolutely outstanding performance! I suggest you see and hear for yourself by watching the service on our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/FirstUCCincy).

Our sanctuary was blessed with many special guests, both in person and virtually, while Pastor Dan was away on sabbatical. The ones I proudly mention first are the teens we have had the joy of watching grow up: Mason B., Anna B., and Katie R. These young adults play the clarinet very well and were willing to collaborate with me for a couple Sundays. I am so pleased with how our pieces turned out! Another familiar face, whose musical talents we are lucky to still have once a month, is the lovely Tricia Lenhof. Our (nearly) six-year friendship shines when we are playing duets, though we are sure to bust out laughing when we mess up and will always find a way to make a Broadway tune (or two) work in the service.

The other artists with whom I invited to perform come from all over southern Ohio. First was a good friend from Wilmington, Jessica Fair, who is an elementary school teacher in Hillsboro and has a beautiful soprano voice. Jessica may have looked familiar to some of you, as she made a virtual appearance during Advent 2020, performing Jason Robert Brown's, "Christmas Lullaby." Bryce Kessler, a frequent guest musician at First UCC, returned (virtually) a few times with his cello. He contributed to my arrangement of "This Is Me," which featured my husband, Gary, as the soloist. Bryce most recently appeared in our Thanksgiving service, playing for the choir's performance of "For Everyone Born" - a piece he introduced to me years ago. I've been fortunate to become good friends with Ursuline Academy's new Director of Performing Arts (my previous job), Michael Sawzin, who is a classically-trained saxophonist. Michael helped me record a quartet arrangement of "What a Wonderful World," which featured digital artwork by our own Mason B.!

I can't begin express how thankful I am to the groups and everyone mentioned above - for their time, talents, commitment, and friendship. I always look forward to the choir's next song, the handbell's perfect run-through, or planning a Sunday with a good friend or the youth. And to you, the church: I give my thanks for allowing me to do a job that I wholeheartedly love. I look forward to work every day, whether I drive into church or just walk over to my computer at home. Thank you for this opportunity and I look forward to many more great things as your Director of Music, Media, and Faith Formation. Blessings to you all and Merry Christmas! - Jimmy



Jimmy Wiederhold
Director of Music, Media,
and Faith Formation



Anniversaries

12/03 – Evan & Jennifer Beckman



FYI

If anyone would like their birthday or anniversary listed in the monthly newsletter, and it's not listed on the church calendar, please contact Kim Ogden (541-7302, ext. 10). She gets all the dates from the church calendar, and if yours is not listed, it won't be in the newsletter. We don't want to leave anyone out! Thank you.

Birthdays

12/02 – Dave Carl
 12/05 – Emmalyn Beckman
 12/06 – Brad Monti
 12/07 – Don Mueller
 12/10 – Justin Runck
 12/10 – Ashley Brater
 12/13 – Joshua Mandery (40th)
 12/14 – Brenda Coffman
 12/19 – Lucille Isaacs
 12/19 – Logan Rodenbeck
 12/21 – Larry Brzezinski
 12/22 – Ken Burger
 12/26 – Michelle Beckman

~Please Keep in Prayer~

Teri Lynn Stackhouse and Family at the death of Will; Christina Henderson (daughter of Judy Henderson); Ginny Krebs; Laura Hauck; Stephanie Johnson (cousin of the Krebs' family); Jackie Smith; Ron Kirkman and family; Agnes Patterson (friend of Jackie Smith); Maxine Day (friend of Jackie Smith); Kameron Schuler (grandson of Bruce and Kathie Steinhard); Brenda (daughter of Ron Kirkman); Kaitlin (granddaughter of Ron Kirkman); Cindy (friend of Ron Hayes); Jim (brother of Ron Hayes); Elizabeth and Lauren (granddaughters of Ron Kirkman); Nadine (niece of Kathie Steinhard); Larry, Carol Ann and Sandy Brzezinski; Patsy Koch; Shirley Henrich; Marilyn Blau; The Baldwin Family at the death of Ceil Fink (sister-in-law of Patty (Matt's sister) and aunt of Anna, Chris and Mason); Brian Kirkman (son of Ron Kirkman); Jeremy Richards (son of Michelle Richards); Tim Williams (friend of Jackie Smith); continued prayers for Deanna Bilz (Joe's mother) and cousins Linda, Vicki and Randall; Dan S. (friend of the Bilz'); Chuck Parmenter (friend of First Church); Dan Stevens (friend of The Kirkman's); Trista Manigault (neighbor of Christine Guillory); Sarah M. Stinebuck (great-granddaughter of Jackie Smith); The Family of Vera Fleshman (Steve Copenhaver's mother-in-law); Rob Rabalais (uncle of Christine Guillory); Mary Tires (friend of the Kirkman's); Chrissy (friend of the Kirkman's); Jackie Smith and Family at the death of her son, Gary; John Buelsing (son-in-law of Jackie Smith); Charlene Jones (sister of Jackie Smith); Donald Jones (brother of Jackie Smith); Janet Roland (niece of Jackie Smith).

Follow us!



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Life of the Church

Memorial Gifts

Gift to IHN in Memory of Ester Roth from: Ron and Sharon Rodenbeck

Gift to The Ladies Guild in Memory of Ester Roth from: Ron and Cindy Beckman

Gifts to Fishes & Loaves in Memory of Madison Trushell
from: Ron and Sharon Rodenbeck; Darrell and Laura Copenhaver; Ladies Night Out

Guild Christmas Party

The Guild will have their Christmas party on Thursday, December 16. Lunch will be a covered dish. There will be a \$10.00 gift exchange.

ChoirFest Postponed

Because of health and safety precautions due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the event goals of collaborative advent celebration and mission fundraising, the Mission Priority Board has voted to postpone ChoirFest until spring 2022. We look forward to safely gather and celebrate then!

Sunrise Salutations

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, Pastor Dan and his wife, Amy, decided to use social media as a means of bringing the beauty and history of Cincinnati to those of us stuck at home. Since September 2020, they have explored many gorgeous parks and landmarks within the city limits, and have even ventured outside of the Ohio Valley region to Colorado, Washington D.C., and Hawaii! Though our church doors have reopened for in-person services, we continue our Sunrise Salutations every week and invite you to join us via Facebook live! This quiet time of peace, prayer, and scripture, while experiencing nature as it awakens, is the best way to begin your Wednesday at 7:00 a.m., or later on the Facebook page.

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Life of the Church (cont.)

Holy Blessings and Sacred Moments for First UCC families

Blessings be upon Steve and Mary Susong on the baptism of Cameron Matthew Weiner on November 27 at church. Cameron is their first grandchild. He is the son of Lynn and Matthew Weiner, who live in Columbus.

Blessings also to Linda Bruno on the birth of two great-grandchildren recently. Her granddaughter Brittany had a daughter, Vivian Hayes. Linda's grandson Austin is the proud papa of Graham Anthony.

Our prayers and love to Teri Lynn Stackhouse at the death of her husband Will Stackhouse on November 30. Will was one of the kindest and gentlest souls anyone would ever meet. He will be missed. More information will be forthcoming.

Thank you to Susie Cairns for her meal that she prepared for Phil's Place on November 29. More than 100 meals were served at CAIN. Thanks also to Ron Kirkman, Bev and Ed Bosse for their assistance. First UCC is again responsible for Phil's Place meals on December 13. Financial donations are needed to put together the menu.

Thank you to the congregation for your wonderful welcome back to Amy and my family on November 28. It is great to be back with you in person. I appreciate your kindness, faithfulness, and love. Absence does make the heart grow fonder. Finally, thank you to both Jimmy Wiederhold and Kim Ogden for keeping the ministry and mission of the church moving forward while we were away. Some beautiful expressions of faith are happening because of the two of you. – Yours in Christ, Pastor Dan

CAIN Blessing Bags

We will be distributing Blessing Bags to all guests during pantry sessions in December. This is one way to help make the holidays joyful for CAIN guests and your help will be very much appreciated! If you have any friends or relatives who would like to participate that would be great!

Donations may be dropped off Monday through Friday between 10am and 2pm or any Monday evening between 5-7pm. For further information, contact Ron Kirkman, Pastor Dan, or CAIN.

Judy Radina, Volunteer Coordinator
 CAIN, 4230 Hamilton Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45223
 Phone 513-591-2246
volunteers@caiministry.org; www.cainministry.org

October 2021

Council Meeting Minutes

First United Church of Christ Meeting

Date: October 11, 2021—Zoom & In Person

Attendees: Kathie Steinhard, Bill Henrich, Christine Guillory, Travis Mandery, June Bronnert, Darrell Copenhaver, and Barry Jamison

Excused: Pastor Dan, Dave Krebs, Dan Luken, Margie Spatz and Sarah Bilz

Guest: n/a

- I. Call to Order: Christine called meeting to order online.
- II. Devotions: June lead the group in prayer.
- III. Acceptance/Approval of minutes from last meeting, financial secretary report, and treasurer reports
 - a. Review of August minutes:
 - i. Motion to accept: Bill
 - ii. Second to accept: Darrell
 - iii. All accepted: All in favor
 - b. Financial secretary report:
 - i. Motion to accept: Darrell
 - ii. Second to accept: Christine
 - iii. All accepted: All in favor
 - c. Treasurer report:
 - i. Motion to accept: Bill
 - ii. Second to accept: Travis
 - iii. All accepted: All in favor
- IV. Pastor's report:
 - a. On Sabbatical
- V. Committee Reports:
 - a. Facilities management:
 - i. Estimate for Mt. Airy Tree and Landscape
 1. Drove parking lot to determine which trees need trimmed
 2. One dead tree along driveway that needs to be removed
 3. wo that will need removed but can wait
 4. Motion to accept current bid: Darrell with a second by Kathy. All in favor: yes and no opposed.
 - ii. Leaking urinal upstairs that was repaired
 - iii. Stove: Duke came out and said all was fine as no leaks were found; Hobart came to clean the stove pilots and said is in good shape with nothing wrong with stove.

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October 2021

Council Meeting Minutes

- b. Youth ministry: No update
- c. Mission and service:
 - i. CAIN: continue to appreciate our involvement
 - ii. Camp Washington: Homework has started
 - iii. Christ Community: continue to appreciate our involvement
 - iv. IHN: continue with hotels but we host diners. Fishes and Loaves deliver food on Wednesday's
- d. Health ministry: n/a
- e. Open and affirming team: n/a
- f. Music: n/a
- g. Nominating committee: Nominating committee has recruited two additional members. A couple of other members are considering the nomination.
- h. Endowment: Still awaiting committee meeting to be scheduled.
- i. Social media and communication committee: n/a
- j. Others: n/a

VI. Old business:

- a. Property transfer. Section of driveway by the neighbors to maintain. Still need to reach out to Hank M to draft a letter for gifting the property. Going to wait until Pastor Dan is back from Sabbatical.
- b. Soup and Share series underway.
 - i. * **Tuesday, Sept. 28 – Present** – How are you? How has the isolation and disruption of Covid been for you? What do we celebrate? What are we anxious about?
 * **Tuesday, Oct. 26 – Past** – What do we remember and celebrate about our history as a congregation? What defines us?
 * **Tuesday, Nov. 16 – Future** – First Church will celebrate 200 years as a congregation in 35 years. What will that look like? Where is the Spirit calling us?
 - ii. September session was well attended and feedback on session has been positive.
- c. Still waiting on information from Hummel to provide recommendations on church foundation. The project will continue to be monitored by the facility committee.
- d. Parking lot update: Still awaiting actual invoice from contractor and will forward to Endowment committee.
- e. Congregation meeting is scheduled for October 17th. Reports are due to Kim by Wednesday this week.

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October 2021

Council Meeting Minutes

- f. Constitution and Bylaws review and suggested updates still on hold until November meeting. As new council members will be voted in October a subgroup will be formed in November. Motion made by Christine to table the formation of a group until the November meeting. Darrell second the motion. All accepted: All in favor
- VII. New business:
 - a. Budget 2022:
 - i. Committee needs to meet in November. Darrell is on committee.
 - ii. Initial proposed budget spreadsheet prepared using prior year's figures.
- VIII. Election site plans reviewed as voting occurs in November.
- IX. Approval to pay current bills
 - a. Motion to pay bills: Bill
 - b. Second to pay bills: Barry
 - c. All accepted: All in favor
- X. Adjournment-prayer:
 - a. Motion to adjourn: Bill
 - b. Second to adjourn: Barry
 - c. All accepted: All in favor
- XI. Closed in Prayer

Our Covenant

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 Church, or are worshipping here for the first time;

If you attend services every week, once a month, or once 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 Church. 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

513-541-7302 | www.firstunitedchurchofchrist.org

firstunitedchurchofchrist@gmail.com



Pastoral Team:

Dan Weyand-Geise - Pastor, Ext. 17

Jimmy Wiederhold - Director of Music, Media, and Faith Formation, Ext. 11

Kim Ogden - Pastoral Administrator, Ext. 10

Church Board:

June Bronnert, President

Travis Mandery, Vice-President

Treasurer – Open (Kathie Steinhard serving in interim)

Darrell Copenhaver, Financial Secretary

Christine Guillory, Recording Secretary

Ruth Beck

Milt Hauck

Bill Henrich

Kendra Pressley

Margie Spatz



*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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