



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



December 2022 Newsletter

The Pastor's Report

Pastor Dan Weyand-Geise

If you need some Advent inspiration, here it is. We are in the middle of our first IHN hosting since January of 2020. We have four families staying with us. We have had several members and friends of the congregation step up to provide set-up, overnight coverage, and meals. There have been lots of food and monetary donations. Adding to these efforts is the fact that we have more support congregations in the rotation. We have St. Clare Catholic Church; College Hill Presbyterian; St. Paul UCC Old Blue Rock; Grace Episcopal; Truth and Destiny UCC; the Cincinnati Mennonite Community Fellowship; St. John UCC Reading; Pilgrim UCC; and St. John Unitarian. In addition, Heartbeat of the City (Christ's Community) and CAIN both help when called upon. This, to me, is the unique quality of our involvement in IHN through the years. We work together with other faith groups. That to me is the meaning of Christmas. Christ is born today! God is with us in the here and now.

At the heart of this Good News are the IHN families. They are the ones dealing with life at its hardest. They find themselves homeless for a variety of reasons. They sincerely and desperately are trying to knit together a safe and fulfilling environment for their families. They are thwarted by several challenges, mostly not of their own doing; yet, our interactions with them are filled with compassion, hope, and tenacity. They are literally living the Advent message of expectant waiting. When they arrive each evening, it is often obvious they have had stressful days in search of permanent housing. The children sometimes arrive restless and uneasy. We pray and wait with them while they are here as guests. We want to give easy answers and platitudes, "It's going to be alright;" "God has a plan;" "Good things come to those who wait." But we cannot, nor should not, go there. There are no road maps sometimes as we wait for a way. We know this in our own lives. Try to imagine what it is like to wait as a mother of children trying to find affordable and livable housing.

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The Pastor's Report (cont.)

The Christmas story is one of the homelessness of Mary and Joseph. This is the unknowing of their situation. They were outcasts. They were refugees. They were strangers in the strange land. Whatever term that might shake your sensibility, that's what the Christmas story is. It is not a Hallmark presentation. It is scary and uncertain. There is no fairy tale ending. In fact, we know how the life of this child Jesus will end. A brutal death. An embarrassment among his friends and family. A religious scandal unlike any other. Illegitimacy. Political gamesmanship. Fear. Doubts. Truly an unknown journey of faith.

I am thankful for First UCC and your decision over a decade ago to become a site for our IHN families. Their week here is just a stop on their pilgrimage. Our IHN guests can identify with Mary and Joseph seeking shelter. We try to make it a stop along their journey that is filled with the Advent values of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. Hospitality and welcome are necessary components. May we keep these values through the coming season and into the New Year. God's inspiration shines through our darkest days and nights. Christ is born this day.

Yours in Christ,
Dan



In the Spotlight



Our Guild Calendar for 2023 is released (pick-up available). In the meantime, we want to acknowledge our final calendar sponsor of 2022 - it is the Square Dance group that our member Jackie Smith organizes: **My Left Foot**. Jackie's secret is out - she stays young because of her love for square dancing. Call her if you have some interest in developing rhythm and having a grand time! We thank Jackie and the group for their sponsorship of the 2022 calendar.



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What's the Buzz?

Updates on Music, Media, and Faith Formation at First UCC

As someone who tries their best to refrain from all things Christmas until after Thanksgiving, I am now in quite the holiday spirit! The final Sunday of November, Gary and I spent the evening Christmas-ing the house with decorations, ornamented trees, and classic tunes of the season. A huge thank you to Susie Cairns for subbing for me while I was away. There are many fun things to share with you regarding music and youth in the life of First UCC during these winter months...

On December 4, the second Sunday of Advent, both the choir and handbell choir will perform pieces that will get your toes tapping and your hearts in the Advent/Christmas spirit. I welcome my friend, Brian Malone, back to First on December 11 as he and I tackle some of Vince Guaraldi's Peanuts classics from "A Charlie Brown Christmas." If you didn't know about my *slight* obsession with everything Peanuts, Snoopy, and the gang, take a glance at the choir room downstairs and you'll see my collection (well, at least the things I keep at church). The choir will do their own rendition of "Christmas Time Is Here" during that service. On December 18, I look forward to Michael Sawzin adding his special touch to the music as he always does.

Once again, we will be offering two services on Christmas Eve: 6pm and 11pm. I am grateful to Jeanne Phillips for her willingness to provide music at the earlier service. Our 11pm service will feature the choir on a couple anthems, reflective congregational hymns, scripture readings, and will end with the traditional candlelit performance of "Silent Night." The final Sunday of December is Christmas morning! I have asked the wonderful members of the handbell choir to ring in (quite literally) the birth of Jesus with bright and exciting music. Kim Ogden will be our featured vocalist for the morning as the choir takes the day off. I enjoy working with Kim in the office setting but find working with her musically to be an extra special experience – try to join us that morning if you can!



Jimmy Wiederhold
Director of Music, Media,
and Faith Formation

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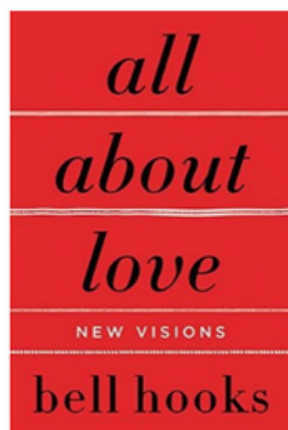


What's the Buzz? (cont.)

I'm excited to be starting a book discussion throughout the winter and early spring months. Focused on overcoming self-sabotage while building self-mastery and positive self-image, meetings are intended for all high school teens and especially those in their 20s and 30s. This discussion, titled "From Winter Woes to Spring Solace", will center around Brianna Wiest's book, "The Mountain Is You." Although the book is central to our meetings, reading the book is not necessary. I plan on facilitating discussions with thought-provoking questions and encouraging everyone to reflect on themselves and the world around them. Interested in participating but unable attend in person? Email me to receive a Zoom link to each meeting. For meeting dates, see our website under the Youth tab or check out our Facebook or Instagram.

Have a great month and Happy Holidays!

Jimmy



First UCC reads All About Love together!

Written by bell hooks, All About Love offers radical new ways to think about love by showing its interconnectedness in our private and public lives. The author explains how our everyday notions of what it means to give and receive love often fail us, and how these ideals are established in early childhood. She offers a rethinking of self-love (without narcissism) that will bring peace and compassion to our personal and professional lives, and asserts the place of love to end struggles between individuals, in communities, and among societies.

As we head into the second half of the book, First UCC members and friends continue to gather to discuss the book. Discussions have been lively, filled with laughter, and great insight. Feel free to join us even if you haven't previously attended. Our intention is simply to examine the many facets of Love and consider ways to practice and incorporate them into our lives.

Our proposed December schedule: (flexible based on needs of group and pace of conversation)

December 4 - Community: Loving Communion; and Mutuality: The Heart of Love

December 11 - Romance: Sweet Love



Anniversaries

12/03 – Evan & Jennifer Beckman



Birthdays

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

~ Please Keep in Prayer ~

Senior Social and the family of Linda Blatt at her passing; Margie & Robert Barnett (neighbors of Linda Krebs); Kathy & Jim Finegan (mother and stepfather of Christine Guillory); Mary Sanker (cousin of Janet Copenhaver); Amber Matson (cousin of Kim Ogden); Dan McClanahan (son of Ollie Helm); Mike Ogden (husband of Kim Ogden); Lee Johnson (friend of Terri Stang); Bryan (son of Susie Cairns); Family of Jackie Smith; Brenda (daughter of Ron Kirkman); Barb Shawn (aunt of Suwanna Kirkman); Danny Wesley (grandson of Margie League); Bill Hinken (brother of Margie League); Patsy Koch; Dave Hawkins' brother; Craig Smith (son of Jackie Smith); Kathy Skinner (friend of Jackie Smith); Mark (friend of Sharon, friend of the Senior Social); Kesha and Family (friends of Ron Kirkman); Michelle Richards (friend of the Senior Social); Faith Martin (friend of Linda Krebs); Sharon (friend of Hilda Faulkner); Pam (friend of Hilda Faulkner); Janet Roland and Cynthia Roland (nieces of Jackie Smith); Judy Henderson (friend of the Senior Social); Wilma (sister of Mary Day); Charlie (friend of Herb Brookbank); Stas Dharikov (Ukrainian friend of Christina Henderson); Family of Linda Johnson (friend of Sharon & Ron Rodenbeck); Glenn Smith (son of Jackie Smith); Jared Weyand (nephew of Jim Weyand); Larry, Carol Ann, and Sandy Brzezinski.

Follow us!



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Life of the Church

Memorials

Gift to the General Fund in Memory of Dorothy Kissel

From: The Kissel Family

Gift to the General Fund in Memory of Howard D. Brown

From: Nancy Whitaker (daughter)

FYI from the Guild

The Guild Christmas party will be on Thursday, December 15 at noon. All are welcome. A meat tray will be provided...please bring a side dish to share and a \$10 wrapped gift for an exchange game if you would like to participate. We will also play Ginny Kissel's famous Bingo game... it's one of a kind! Hope to see you there.

Many Thanks!

Thank you to everyone for the cards and prayers for my husband Mike as he recovers from hip replacement surgery. A special thank you to Laura Hauck for all she did in the office in my absence. Much appreciated! Mike's doing well. God Bless you all for your thoughtfulness.
Love, Kim Ogden

Welcome Friends and Members

At our December 11 service, the congregation invites anyone who has been attending the church or those who would like to officially join the church to be recognized. At the same service, we will also be introducing our Church Board - and, celebrating Ron Kirkman's Renewal of Baptism.



Life of the Church (cont.)

Christ's Community Calls for Cakes!

It's the most wonderful time of the year again... Christmas is upon us. Christ's Community in College Hill (Heartbeat of the City) has begun its food drive collection. As a partner in ministry, First UCC is being asked to provide 200 cake boxes/cookie mixes and \$200 to offset some other costs. Your food and/or cash donations are greatly appreciated. Christ's Community will distribute the goods at its service on December 20. Thank you for our community connection and support of Christ's Community's ministry. We fell a little short of our 200 cake boxes at Thanksgiving. However, we did exceed our financial goal of \$200. Let's exceed both this time around. By the way, the other College Hill Churches that partner with us at CCCH are St. Clare's, College Hill Presbyterian, House of Joy and Bishop Todd O'Neal, Grace Episcopal, Consolation Baptist on Marlowe, New Life, Good News with Pastor Martin (a devout Steelers fan), and Bread from Heaven.

Phil's Place Help Needed

If you are part of a group that would like to prepare about 120 meals on a Monday in 2023, Pastor Dan could use your help for just one or two Mondays for the entire year. That's it. Just ONE. TWO if you want to get on his good side!! Currently our Church serves 3 Mondays a year. We have pledged to do 5 Mondays in 2023. Susie Cairns, Ron Kirkman, Ed and Bev Bosse usually make these work without a problem. Susie is fine with five in 2023.

However, in 2023, CAIN needs more Mondays filled due to some other groups unavailability. Pastor Dan challenges First Church groups to take a Monday or two to prepare a meal. Jimmy and the youth are going to do one, at least. And by meal, we mean it could simply be a sandwich and chips with fruit. We are not talking a 5-star meal, though that is an option. Please talk with Pastor Dan for more information. He is in charge of the Phil's Place schedule. We can do this and we need to do this. Pass on the information to anyone who might be able and willing to help.

October 2022

Board Meeting Minutes

First UCC Church Board Meeting Minutes Oct. 17, 2022 (In-Person & Zoom)

In attendance: Ruth Beck, June Bronnert, Darrell Copenhaver, Christy Dennis (Treasurer), Christine Guillory, Milt Hauck, Bill Henrich, Travis Mandery.

Guest: Ed Bosse (Facilities)

Excused: Kendra Pressley, Margie Spatz, Pastor Dan Weyand-Geise

- I. **Call to Order --** June called the meeting to order.
- II. **Recording Secretary's Report (Christine)** – The September report was accepted with one correction.
Motion: Milt
Second: Bill
Accepted: All in favor
- III. **Facilities Committee (Ed)**
 - Ed shared reported that a number of stumps on church property have been ground. The remaining ones along the fence line with a neighbor will be removed by the neighbor. In addition, the neighbor will remove an existing metal fence and replace with a wood one. Volunteers may be needed to spread dirt in the area to level the ground.
 - The Facilities Committee has reached an agreement with the asphalt company to repair cracks in the parking lot surface.
 - The committee is looking into repairs for missing mortar in the front pillars.
 - Ed brought to the attention of the Board the presence of water in the electrical room. The committee is investigating the cause, and will report back to the Board with recommendations.
 - Darrell shared that the paper towel dispensers in the restrooms have been replaced.

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October 2022

Board Meeting Minutes

IV. Financial Secretary's Report (Darrell) – Darrell reported that he is trying to reconcile a discrepancy related to a Tithely deposit of \$74 (in the church's favor). The September report was accepted:

Motion: Christine

Second: Bill

Accepted: All in favor

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

- **IHN Hosting** – Our first hosting since the pandemic will be the week of November 27, coordinated by Linda Krebs and Pastor Dan. We will host four weeks in 2023. We will support CHPC during their four host weeks.
- **Fishes & Loaves** – After a month's hiatus due to Sauerkraut Supper and the Rummage Sale, Wednesday evening Fishes & Loaves meals have resumed. Pastor Dan reminded the Board that drive-thru meals are available for anyone interested.
- **Phil's Place** – Pastor Dan is coordinating greeting guests and distributing meals at CAIN on Monday afternoons. He welcomes volunteers to help with this ministry. First Church continues to provide meals on the fifth Monday of the month, and as needed. Dan thanked Lynne and Paul Klusener and Susie Cairns for their leadership with meal preparation.
- **Book Study & Pulpit to the Pew Series** – Pastor Dan reported that these Sunday activities take place on alternating Sundays, offering an opportunity for deeper reflection on texts and spiritual conversation. All are welcome to join.

VI. Treasurer's Report (Christy): The September reports were accepted, and approval was given to pay October expenses.

Motion: Milt

Second: Darrell

Accepted: All in favor

October 2022

Board Meeting Minutes

- **Committee Reports Music (June)** – June shared that we continue to receive positive feedback on our music offerings.
- **Budget (June & Darrell)** – June and Darrell reported that the Budget Committee has met. They presented the working budget worksheet, which shows an approximate deficit of \$38,500 at this point.
- **Endowment (Bill)** – Bill reported that the committee will meet the week of October 24. June plans to attend the meeting to discuss needs for the upcoming budget year.

IX. Old Business

- **By-Laws (June)** – After discussion, the Board agreed that a preview of the proposed revisions to the Constitution & By-Laws will be presented at the October 23 Congregational Meeting. The committee's work will continue, with final recommendations to be offered at the Spring 2023 Congregational Meeting.
- **Nominating (June)** – Kendra Pressley's term of service on the Church Board ends in October. Bill and Darrell's terms also are ending, but they have agreed to serve for another three years. At least two other church members have expressed interest in serving on the Church Board. They will be presented at the Congregational Meeting for approval and appointment. Nominations from the floor, if any, also will be accepted.

X. New Business -- none

XI. Adjournment

XII. Lord's Prayer

*Submitted by: Christine Guillory
Recording Secretary*

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."**



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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

Christine Guillory, Vice-President

Christy Meyer, Treasurer

Darrell Copenhaver, Financial Secretary

Bruce Steinhard, Recording Secretary

Ruth Beck

Ed Bosse

Milt Hauck

Bill Henrich

Travis Mandery

Margie Spatz

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*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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