

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

December 2025 Newsletter

The Pastor's Report

Pastor Dan Weyand-Geise

Recently I pulled out my Army dress greens and reminisced about my two summers as an Army chaplain. My youthfulness served me well as I ministered to men and women who were away from home for the first time in many cases. Most of us were still in our 20s. Hand-written letters were usually the only option of communication (still a little before cell phones and internet service – Yes, I am that old). The reception of a letter made a service person's week or even month. There were deep connections and heartfelt expressions of longing and hope. Most could not wait to get back home.

I learned from service personnel that December is the saddest time of year for many of them. The pain of separation for the holidays is acute. They miss their partner or parents. They miss Sis' or their Brother. Most especially, even the family pooch. In some cases, they fear they might not live to see another holiday with the family. They know they are missing out on family moments. For many of us, I have no doubt December will always carry a strong dose of melancholy and heartache. We feel alone. The holidays are not the same. Grief and loss punch us in the gut. The holidays may never have been good to us nor does the prospect of a Merry Christmas ever seem possible.

Into this world of contradictions comes Christ. Yes, that is the power of the Good News. Christ indeed brings the hope we long to hear and to feel. A hope rooted in the best that this life offers and beyond. Christ brings the love that springs to life our deepest need to be seen. Christ is the real presence of the stranger who extends a heartfelt act of generosity. Christ is the active witness of truth and justice in a world that tramples the poor and forgotten. Christ is alive in our gift giving and thoughtful gestures of

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The Pastor's Report (cont.)

the season. Christ shines in the smile of the long-time friend who visits or calls or writes or texts us at just the right time.

Our hearts break as news of on-going wars rage on. Fear and mistrust fill our communities and nation. We are a country that seems so fragile these days. Economically, socially, and even religiously, we are unsure of what will pull us back together. A military lesson that I learned and tried to share as a chaplain was the notion of the spirit de corps. It was a notion that there was something beyond the men and women that united them. It was the selfless and monumental ways that these young people came together and shared in the efforts to work together for something bigger than themselves. There is a spirit of the season upon us that calls forth some of these same traits. It is the Hope, Faith, Joy, and Love that inspire us to come together. Yes, in our sadness and our grief. In our brokenness and loneliness. December and the holidays are upon us. In my best drill sergeant impersonation: ATTENTION!! It may indeed be a harsh and lonely December or, just maybe, Christ surprises you and arrives in the cold midwinter. Either way, thank you for being a part of the First UCC corps.

With a hope-filled heart,
Pastor Dan

December Dates to Note:

December 7 – Church Photo Day. All are invited to attend Sunday worship and then stay afterward for a group photo in the sanctuary. Always a fun moment in the life of the church. Invite any friend or visitor who has been part of church life throughout the years.

December 7 – 15 – We host our final in-house Interfaith Hospitality Network (now called Found House). Found House is moving to a different model of service in 2026.

December 21 – Church Christmas luncheon. Following the Sunday worship, we will gather in Fellowship Hall for food. All can bring side dishes and desserts. Church will provide the Turkey and Ham.

December 24 – Christmas Eve services are at 6 p.m. and 11 p.m. Pastor Dan and special music from the Bilz sisters will be at the 6 p.m. service. Pastor Dan, Jimmy, and the choirs are here for the 11 p.m.

Learn More!
firstunitedchurchofchrist.org





What's the Buzz?

Updates on Music, Media, and Faith Formation

It's the most wonderfully busy time of the year! No doubt this holds true in our personal lives, but the church calendar is also quite full for the month of December. Speaking of church calendars... we now have a digital one accessible 24/7 on the website! Just go to

www.firstunitedchurchofchrist.org/calendar to view. If you notice a church event, gathering, meeting, etc. missing, please let me know and I will add it. It is a living, breathing document that can be updated in just a couple clicks!

Although this calendar has the church happenings, I still encourage you to buy the physical church calendar when they come around – only here can you find the church events PLUS birthdays and anniversaries, as well as information on local businesses in the area. A huge thanks to the hands that work hard to put it together!

The handbell choir is spending this month preparing for two songs on Christmas Eve – after successfully tackling a hard piece last month, they deserve time to breathe. The choir will still perform weekly, helping to set the mood this Advent season. On December 7th, the choir will perform “Peace, Peace” accompanied by Jean Krebs and Jay Jung on handbells. On the 14th, they perform “O Come to Us, Emmanuel.” The Sunday before Christmas, December 21st, will feature the choir singing a toe-tapping piece, “Prepare the Way.” Christmas Eve is that following Wednesday and I thank Nina Bilz for providing the music at the 6:00 p.m. service.

The choir and handbell choir are slated to play two pieces each at the 11:00 p.m. service. The handbell choir will perform “Largo” from Vivaldi’s Winter as well as the beloved classic, “Coventry Carol.” Both pieces will be played solely on our new hand chimes! The chancel choir will sing two calming anthems, “Bring Us Hope” and “Still.” Of course, the night will also be filled with congregational singing of our favorite carols and end with a candlelit rendition of “Silent Night,” led by the handbells. If you cannot make these services in person, both Christmas Eve gatherings will be livestreamed via Facebook Live. The choir closes out the month by singing “Hurry, Shepherds, Run!” on December 28th.



Jimmy Wiederhold
Director of Music, Media,
and Faith Formation



What's the Buzz? (cont.)

Other dates to note this month include the big church photo taking place after worship on December 7, the housing of Found House IHN families beginning on the 7th, and the church Christmas party on the 21st. There is definitely more happening at church than what I have listed here, so go check out that digital calendar on the website to see it all! :)

Have a great month, and Merry Christmas!

Jimmy

All-Church Group Photo

Mark your calendars for a group church photo following the Sunday service on December 7. Invite anyone who is a part of the church family.

Maybe they attend Senior Social or assist at the rummage sales. Perhaps they are your relative who likes to worship with First UCC when they are in town. No matter the connection, all are welcome to gather in the sanctuary. After the quick photo, we will have December treats in the fellowship hall as we celebrate the second Sunday in Advent.

Two weeks following the photo, on December 21, we will have our Church Christmas party after the service. It is a pot luck luncheon.

More details forthcoming.



Birthdays

12/02 – Dave Carl

12/05 – Emmalyn Beckman

12/09 – Rob Geiger

12/10 – Justin Runck

12/10 – Ashley Runck

12/11 – Brian Kirkman

12/13 – Joshua Mandery

12/14 – Brenda Coffman

12/14 – Evon Tieke

12/15 – Don Mueller

12/19 – Logan Rodenbeck

12/19 – Lucille Isaacs

12/22 – Ken Burger

12/24 – Carol Streitenberger (90th)

12/26 – Michelle Beckman

12/29 – Emily August Kern

Anniversaries

12/03 – Evan & Jennifer Beckman



~ Please Keep in Prayer ~

Jack Parsons (father of Patty Baldwin); David Krebs (member); Pat Froehle (member); Laura Hauck (member); Joan Schmidt (daughter of the late Ollie Helm); Christi Simmons (friend of Michelle Richards); Family of Rosella Jamison (member); Family of Terrence Stern-Enzi – “Tt” (co-worker of Gina Kern); Jody Eversole (friend of Suwanna Kirkman); Don Fricke (member); Sandy Echols (member); Dorothy (aunt of Suwanna Kirkman); Joe (uncle of Suwanna Kirkman); Carolyn Bruckmann (friend of the church); Chelsea and Sophia (mother and baby – friends of Pam, Hilda Faulkner’s friend); Katie and family (daughter of Bernice and Terry Morgan, friends of the church); Bill Mayer (member); Lynne (friend of the church); Ramon (grandson of Hilda Faulkner); Diane Ripley (friend of the Kirkman’s); Elaine Lewis (Jackie Smith’s granddaughter); Family of William Kirkman (uncle of Ron Kirkman); Marvin Stamper (employee at C.M. Meyer & Assoc.); Su H. (friend of Bev Bosse); Darryl P. and Mickey P. (cousins of Bev Bosse); Friends from Clovernook (of Carol Ann White); Family of Anna Jean Shock (aunt of Ron Kirkman); Family of Gary Smith (husband of Sandy; step-father of Patty Baldwin); Sharon Kazee (prayer asked from Sandy Echols); Michelle Richards (dear friend of the Senior Social); Christine White (friend of Jackie Smith); Joey Miller (grandson of Ron Kirkman); Cindy Moeller (friend of Bruce & Kathie Steinhard); Kimberly Morgan (cousin of Ron Kirkman); Brian Kirkman (son of Ron Kirkman); Tiffany Nelson (friend of Ron Kirkman); Pam and family (friends of Hilda Faulkner); Amanda and family (daughter of Hilda Faulkner); Kelly Ann Pennington (sister-in-law of Suwanna Kirkman); Family and friends of Jackie Smith; Vicki Thorner (Sue Bilz’ cousin); Tina Maxwell (Sue Bilz’ best friend); Beverly & Mike Rose (dear friends of Suwanna Kirkman); Michelle M. (cousin of Bev Bosse); Thomas (nephew of Hilda’s friend, Pam); Kesha and Family (friends of Ron Kirkman); Charlie (friend of Herb Brookbank).



Life of the Church

Pizza with the Pastor

December 7 will be our monthly Pizza with the Pastor. Amy and Dan host about 10 people at their house, 5537 Meryton Place, just around the corner from the church. They meet about 20 minutes after the Sunday service. This is an opportunity to have more intentional conversation with them than what is afforded in the quick moments after church. First time guests are always welcomed. Simply show up that day. Check in with Amy at church or call Dan if you would like to reserve a spot. Lunch and conversation usually go until about 1 p.m. but there really is no hurry. Dan and Amy enjoy the fellowship and quality time.

Fishes and Loaves

Fishes and Loaves has resumed, but will be each 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month, rather than every week. Here is the upcoming schedule: December 10th; January 14th and 28th; February 11th and 25th; March 25th (no meals the weeks of the fall and spring rummage sales).

Thank You, Senior Social – from CAIN

Dear Deb, Catie, Ron, and Seniors,

Thank you so much for your generous donation \$50.00 to CAIN! Your support is helping us provide essential nourishment to individuals and families in our community who are facing food insecurity. Because of your kindness, we've been able to stock our shelves with fresh produce, pantry staples, and other vital items. Your contribution helps us serve over 350 families weekly, ensuring they have access to healthy meals during difficult times.

Your generosity is more than a donation – it's a message of hope and compassion. It reminds our neighbors that they are not alone, and that there are people like you who care deeply about their well-being. We are truly grateful to have you as part of our community of supporters. If you'd like to see the impact of your gift in action, we invite you to visit the Market or follow us on social media.

With gratitude, Charyl Mikles, CAIN – Executive Director

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Life of the Church (cont.)

Congregational Meetings Changed

Since the congregation approved going to a calendar year budget, the Church Board voted to move the Congregational meetings to January and July. We will meet on January 18, 2026 (the 25th is the backup date) with July 26, 2026 used to plan for the Fall.

Green Beans and Coat Collections & Help with Feeding Our Families

We are collecting cans of green beans for Heartbeat of the City (formerly Christ's Community). We will also collect new and gently used coats for CAIN. The collections will run through December. In addition to these food drives, Pastor Dan is in conversation with our mission partners. One way church folks can respond to shortages is to purchase gift cards. Kroger cards, Aldi cards, or wherever you happen to shop are quite helpful in these days for our mission partners and their guests. You may purchase and bring to church.

Holidays & Grief: A Free Support Workshop – December 7

Join Living Hope for a free support workshop “Holidays & Grief” on Sunday, December 7, at 2 PM. If you or someone you know is struggling with grief, loss, relationship struggles, financial distress, health challenges, or anything that makes this holiday season feel heavy, you are not alone. Visit livinghopecs.com/groups to register and find support or donate to our mission. Cash or check donations accepted via mail: Living Hope Counseling Services, College Hill Presbyterian Church, 5742 Hamilton Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45224.

Washington UCC Christmas Plans – from Pastor Melissa Stephens

On Saturday, Dec. 13 we will set up our large meeting space to look like the North Pole! Parents and guardians will come by on Sunday, Dec. 14 to pick out toys, clothing, and food for their children ages 0-17. We need churches to sponsor families. We estimate the cost is about \$60 per child and families average 3 children each. More than 300 children from 88 families were served last year. It is an extremely heartwarming experience to see the abundance of God poured out.

October 2025

Board Meeting Minutes

First UCC Church Board Meeting Minutes October 13, 2025 (In-Person & Zoom)

In attendance: Milt Hauck, Tom Shelton, Darrell Copenhaver, Bruce Steinhard, Jean Krebs, Gail Bauknecht, Ed Bosse, Bill Henrich, Bev Smith

Treasurer: Christy Meyer (Treasurer)

Pastor: Dan Weyand-Geise

Excused:

- I. **Call to Order** -- Milt called the meeting to order.
- II. **Devotion** -- Pastor Dan asked us to think about a highlight and hope that happened during the month of September when we celebrated our 170th Anniversary. Most were in agreement that the Anniversary service on Hoffner St. was a highlight.

Request from Jeremy

Pastor Dan told us that years ago a recovery group was proposed. Recently Pastor Dan and Jeremy Filson talked recently. He wants to start a local group at the church for the College Hill area. It would be self-supporting. They would contribute monthly for use of the space. Smoking would be out front most likely only. They have closed meetings and open meetings where family members are allowed to attend. Thursdays would be the day they would meet. There would probably be 12 – 20 people meeting weekly from 7:00 to 8:30 pm. They clean up after the meeting. Any liability would be covered under the church's insurance. They would report numbers to the Health Ministries committee. After some discussion the start date would be November 6th, 2025.

Motion was made to approve the group using the fellowship hall. It was seconded. All were in favor.

- III. **Treasurer's Report (Christy):** The September reports were accepted, and approval was given to pay October expenses.
 Motion: Tom Second: Darrell Accepted: All in favor
- IV. **Recording Secretary's Report (Bruce)** – The September report was accepted with Ed asking for some clarification to the exit signs being checked. Jean then suggested that documentation paperwork be created. Ed then added the Fire Inspection reports were finally done and we now have the 2025 Certificates.
 Motion: Darrell Second: Bev Accepted: All in favor

October 2025

Board Meeting Minutes (cont.)

V. Financial Secretary's Report (Jean) –

Jean reported that September giving was down. The running total has been sent and Giving Report is in the monthly Newsletter.

Motion: Bruce

Second: Gail

Accepted: All in favor

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

- **December 7th Congregational Picture**
- **Pastor Dan reported that several members have been asking about a pictorial directory. Bruce suggested we asked Renae and June about taking pictures and then publish our own directory. He will check with them and report back.**
- **Nov 22nd @ 2:30 pm – Doug will present his second production during the afternoon**
- **IHN Hosting – Found house will not be using churches to host as they have bought a house to host 8 families. Churches will help in other ways. We will still be hosting the week of December 7th**
- **SONKA Annual meeting on November 15th in Dayton**
- **Fishes & Loaves – starting to work again, every 2nd and 4th Wednesday's**
- **Phil's – nothing to report**

Motion:

Second:

Accepted: All in favor

VII. Committee Reports

Health Ministries –

N.A. Group – Keep in Fellowship Hall, smoking outside. There was a question about whether they would meet on Holidays.

Motion: Jean

Second: Gail

Accepted: All in favor

Training on Sunday was good. Others can do on-line training. First Aid kits - Lisa will be monitoring.

Audit Committee

Bill reported the committee consisted of Sue Bilz, Kathie Steinhard, Dave Krebs and himself. They did the past 3 years and 3 months in each year. They had no concerns.

Facilities

- Ed shared – Fire Permit for 2025 displayed, Elevator Permit good thru July 2026

October 2025

Board Meeting Minutes (cont.)

- Insurance items – 8 projects suggested by the insurance agent. The exhaust vents over the stove in the kitchen need to be cleaned and certified by Independence Cleaning Committee – Tom and Paul are working on this project.
- Darrell will be in charge of the Fire Extinguisher checking.
- Ed brought up that sealing the cracks in the parking lot will be \$1,800.00. After some discussion and Jean reminding the board that there is no money in the budget for this project this year, Ed moved that the project be done for \$1,800.00. Gail 2nd. All in favor. Bev then moved the money, \$1,800.00, be taken from the Endowment Fund. Darrell 2nd, All in favor.
- **Budget (Jean)** – report will be discussed later
- **Endowment (Bill)** – nothing to report

IX. Old Business

- **By-Laws (Bruce and Pastor Dan)** – The Constitution & By-Laws are available by contacting the office, Bruce Steinhard, or Pastor Dan.
- Bruce gave a short update on the Conference Meeting he attended at Ohio Wesleyan University in Delaware, Ohio.
- **Nominating (Milt)** – nothing to report now.
- **Jean** – gave us an update on the Budget for 2026.
- **Bruce** – asked if Pastor Dan had gotten any more info from our Washington Rep in Washington, D.C. He has not.

X. New Business -- none

XI. Adjournment

Moved: Gail

Seconded: Tom

Accepted: All in Favor

XII. Lord's Prayer

*Submitted by: J. Bruce Steinhard
Recording Secretary*

Memorials

Gift to Fishes and Loaves in Memory of the Bilz and Stortz Family Members
From: Joe and Sue Bilz

Gift to the Thanksgiving offering in Memory of Bradley Isaacs
From: Lucille Isaacs

Our Covenant

We, the members of First UCC, 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 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 United Church of Christ.** Being fully welcome in our community here at First UCC 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: firstunitedchurchofchrist@gmail.com

Website: www.firstunitedchurchofchrist.org

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:

Milt Hauck, President

Tom Shelton, Vice President

Darrell Copenhaver, Co-Vice President

Bruce Steinhard, Recording Secretary

Jean Krebs, Financial Secretary

Gail Bauknecht

Ed Bosse

Bill Henrich

Beverly Smith

June Bronnert (past president)

Christy Meyer, Church Treasurer

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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.*

