

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

April 2024 Newsletter

The Pastor's Report

Pastor Dan Weyand-Geise

In my theological musings, I can easily imagine that the first words out of the disciples' mouths when the women reported news of the empty tomb being, "Is this a joke?" or "That's a really sick joke Mary!?"

One of the Youth in our church said a longtime ago to his mother something to this effect, "I'm not sure what I believe about God and all those things, but I do know our church loves to be together and loves to laugh. "Wow!! What a great observation and compliment. The beloved community, Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Moslem or whatever, should be a place where a joyful, just, inclusive, and inspirational message is preached and lived by all. Our weeping is turned into laughing. Death does not have a grip on us. We turn to Life and Resurrection in our faith witness. This Good News is not a joke.

We are in a time of great fear, anxiety, and depression. There is no denying these realities. We each have our own set of demons that keep us from restful sleep or even carefree days. Our iPhones alone set us on alert as we learn immediately of the collapsed bridge, on-going wars, unpredictable economy, or the messiness of family life. Into these lives comes the really sick joke – God loves this mess of humanity. God loves all of the Earth. God's mercy and love endure forever. Hope is alive. "Really, pastor?" YES, REALLY!!

One of the endearing qualities of this congregation, the First United Church of Christ, is your sense of humor. I discovered right from the start that there is a wonderful sense of humor in the midst of the bizarre and tragic that seems to resonate throughout the lives of the thousands of individuals who have entered the sanctuary. Yes, we can use humor to deny the pain of life, but I have found in most cases this is not true here. Instead, your sense of humor, sometimes a bit awkward and bordering on inappropriate, carries you through faithfully and lovingly. You laugh in the face of the trials and tribulations. Your trust in an everlasting God carries you.

(continued on next page)



Table of Contents

- Page 1 - The Pastor's Report
- Page 2 - The Pastor's Report (cont.)
Rummage Sale Success!
- Page 3 - What's the Buzz?
- Page 4 - Birthdays/Solar Eclipse
- Page 5 - Prayer Requests
- Page 6 - Life of the Church
- Page 7 - Life of the Church (cont.)
- Page 8 - Board Meeting Minutes
- Page 9 - Meeting Minutes (cont.)
- Page 10 - Meeting Minutes (cont.)
- Page 11 - First UCC Covenant
- Page 12 - Staff and Board Directory

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The Pastor's Report (cont.)

We are in Holy Week as I write this piece. The Gospel stories reassure us that Jesus showed us a way to deal with life's absurdities. The crucifixion was no joke. His death was shocking. His death was unfair. His death made no sense. He was alone in a lot of it. Does that remind you of anything you might be pondering and experiencing these days? Do your dark nights leave you in a place where you call out, "My God, my God, why have you left me?" We might even go to our upper rooms of life to escape the harsh realities. But do we eventually open the door to hear the good news – the tomb has no hold on us? Do we turn to our faith? Do we welcome the good news of the Risen Christ with wonder and joy? With laughter at the marvel of it all? It's no joke. Christ is risen today. And we share in this resurrection from the depths of our despair and deaths in life. Alleluia!! Christ is risen indeed. And we will rise, too. Thanks be to God.

With laughter, tears, and love,
Dan



Rummage Sale Success!

THANK YOU...for whatever part you played in helping make the rummage sale a success. The proceeds from the sale will allow the Guild to continue our work for First Church and our mission partners. Mark your calendars! The next sale is October 12.
- Linda Krebs and Bev Bosse



What's the Buzz?

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

I'm sitting down to write this article just days before the start of Holy Week. With exciting handbell and choir performances, special musical guests Becky Andres and Bryce Kessler, axe throwing, an egg hunt, and so much more taking place throughout the week, I know it will be a wonderful celebration. So, what awaits us in the month of April?

Six years ago on April 1, First UCC became an Open and Affirming congregation. This momentous occasion speaks volumes to me as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community. Born and raised in the Catholic church, I struggled to feel welcomed by the church throughout my teen and young adult years. Truth be told, I drifted away from religion because of it. By being an ONA church, First UCC not only welcomes but embraces those in the LGBTQIA+ community and shows them that we are all beloved children of God. This is an important message for so many queer folks who face unbearable struggles every day. To those who were part of that vote six years ago, I thank you. Happy anniversary!

Musically, the choir will perform a variety of genres from reimagined hymns to a classical anthem and even a little Dolly Parton. April 7, they will perform "What a Friend;" April 14's anthem is titled "All Nature Sings;" April 21 is Dolly's "Light of a Clear Blue Morning," and they close out the month with a song titled "Peace." The handbell choir returns on April 14 with a reflective arrangement of "Fount of Every Blessing."

Dan and I are working on finalizing housing for the youth mission trip to Cleveland this summer. Exact dates are July 8-11 and once housing is in place, I will announce a cost. Like our trip to D.C. two summers ago, we plan on traveling in large vans, departing Monday morning from church and arriving back late on Thursday. We will work with local churches on rehabbing old parking lots into beautiful gardens and learn more about the United Church of Christ in the town where its national ministries are based. More info to come soon!

Two major website updates took place last month. I have finally published a page on the church's history, with pictures of the churches on Apple and Hoffner Streets, as well as brief summaries of the life and happenings while the congregation gathered there. Click on the About tab and go to "Our History." The other change is a revamp to our offering page, tithe.ly. In the dropdown menu, you now have the option to give to different funds: general, event, Fishes and Loaves, youth, IHN, Team for the Need, flowers, music, memorial, SONKA, and others. I am working with congregation member, Sammi, in designing new offering envelopes that will better suit our offering options.

Happy Spring and have a great month!

Jimmy



Jimmy Wiederhold
Director of Music, Media,
and Faith Formation



Birthdays

04/05 – Jennifer Runck

04/06 – Ralph Mueller (91st)

04/06 – Erin Toolis

04/11 – Diane Banker

04/13 – Madeline Krebs

04/16 – Ryker Keller (10th)

04/21 – Jacob Runck

04/22 – Gail Bauknecht

04/23 – Jessica Mandery

04/27 – Jay Jung

04/28 – Ollie Helm (93rd)

04/30 – Travis Mandery

Just a Reminder

The solar eclipse takes place on Monday, April 8th. In fact, we're moving our Board meeting to Tuesday, April 9th that week. If you plan to view the eclipse, be sure you have special eclipse glasses marked "ISO" – if ISO doesn't appear on the glasses, they won't be safe. Also, make sure there are no tears or pinholes in the lenses.

Enjoy this "once in a lifetime" event!



~ Please Keep in Prayer ~

We learned this past week of the sudden death of Ron Hayes. A kind and generous soul, who attended church regularly and was a member of the Senior Social. He is missed greatly already. No services have been set at this time.

Also, our prayers are with the family of the late Doris McKinney. Her brother, Donald Zillich, died March 24. His service will be held on April 7 in the afternoon here at First Church.

Sympathy to the family of Donald Zillich (brother of the late Doris McKinney); sympathy to the family of Ron Hayes (dear friend of the Senior Social); Family and friends of Jackie Smith; Deanna Bilz (Joe's mom); Vicki Thorner (Sue Bilz' cousin); Tina Maxwell (Sue Bilz' best friend); sympathy to the family of Mary L. Brakers (sister of Jackie Smith); sympathy to the family of Brenda Miller (daughter of Ron Kirkman); sympathy to the family of Alicia Deaton (friend of Kim Ogden); prayers for Kay Gutenson (aunt of Kathie Steinhard); sympathy to the family of Janet Burling (friend of Ginny Krebs); Ali Adams (friend of Christine Guillory); Kelley Pennington (friend of Suwanna Kirkman); Irene Krombholz (aunt of Bill Henrich); sympathy to the Faulkner family at the death of Brenda (sister-in-law of Hilda Faulkner); the family of Margie League; Barb Liszniewski (friend of Kim Ogden and First Church); Bill & Margie Spatz and family; Amanda and family (daughter of Hilda Faulkner); Pam and family (friend of Hilda Faulkner); Sharon Dingle (friend of Hilda Faulkner); Beverly & Mike Rose (dear friends of Suwanna Kirkman); Praise Report for Sarah (daughter-in-law of Deb & Bob Neumeister); Mark Buzzard (great-nephew of Ginny Krebs); sympathy to the family of Joyce Lauch (dear friend of Linda Krebs); Michelle Lauch (daughter of Joyce); Ben & Stella Borgemenke (parents of Michelle Lauch); Faith & Dave Martin (friends of Linda Krebs); Jack Parsons (father of Patti Baldwin); Michelle M. (cousin of Bev Bosse); Thomas (nephew of Hilda's friend, Pam); Heather Nichols (niece of Susan Ley); Mark (friend of Sharon, friend of the Senior Social); Kesha and Family (friends of Ron Kirkman); Charlie (friend of Herb Brookbank); Stas Dharikov (Ukrainian friend of Christina Henderson).



Life of the Church

Memorials

Gift to the Senior Social in Memory of Brenda Miller (Ron Kirkman's daughter)

From: Janet Copenhaver

Gift to Fishes & Loaves in Memory of Mary L. Brakers (sister of Jackie Smith)

From: Janet Copenhaver

Gift in Honor of Sean Rose

From: Prital Kaur Ahuwalla

Thank You

Thanking everyone for your cards, calls, prayers, and visits. Miss you and love you all. – Janet Copenhaver

Pizza with the Pastor on April 7

For those who have not attended a Pizza with the Pastor, you are welcome to join Pastor Dan and Amy after service on April 7 at their home. Delicious food, and fun is always had by all!

Church Curiosity and Members on April 21

During our Sunday worship on April 21, we will officially introduce and welcome several individuals who have been attending church. If you would like to take part in this welcome, please contact Pastor Dan at 513-541-7302, Ext. 17.



Life of the Church (cont.)

Holy Humor Sunday on April 7

Pastor Dan usually doesn't need a reason to add some humor to illustrate a story or lesson, but he definitely has reason to mix in some jokes on April 7. Read on: Courtesy of Christine Longhurst's blog and Immanuel UCC's administrative assistant comes this:

Laughter Sunday (also known as Holy Humour Sunday, Hilarity Sunday, God's Laughter Sunday, Bright Sunday or Holy Fools Sunday) has its roots in a number of different Christian traditions.

Churches in 15th century Bavaria used to celebrate the Sunday after Easter as Risus Paschalis ('God's Joke,' or 'the Easter laugh'). Priests would deliberately include amusing stories and jokes in their sermons in an attempt to make the faithful laugh. After the service, people would gather together to play practical jokes on one another and tell funny stories. It was their way of celebrating the resurrection of Christ – the supreme joke God played by raising Jesus from the dead.

The observance of Risus Paschalis was officially outlawed by Pope Clement X in the 17th century. Perhaps people were having too much fun.

Congregational Meeting on April 28

We will hold our Spring Meeting on April 28. There will be updates from our Church Board and some committees as to how the remainder of 2024 looks as well as some long-term plans and hopes. Please join us immediately after worship. We try to keep the meeting to 60 minutes.

February 2024

Board Meeting Minutes

First UCC Church Board Meeting Minutes February 12, 2024 (In-Person & Zoom)

In attendance: June Bronnert, Milt Hauck, Bruce Steinhard, Darrell Copenhaver, Christy Meyer (Treasurer), Ed Bosse, Jean Krebs, Tom Shelton, Pastor Dan Weyand-Geise

BY Zoom: Ruth Beck

Excused: Bill Henrich

- I. **Call to Order** -- June called the meeting to order.
- II. **Devotion** -- Pastor Dan
Pastor Dan talked about Leadership and then asked the Spirit to guide us as leaders in the church.
- III. **Recording Secretary's Report (Bruce)** – The January report was accepted with corrections to the meditation garden fence to be worked on when the weather is warmer. Motion: to accept with corrections: Milt Second: Bill Accepted: with 1 abstain.
Motion: Tom Second: Milt Accepted: All in favor
- IV. **Treasurer's Report (Christy):** The January reports were accepted, and approval was given to pay February expenses.
Motion: Bruce Second: Milt Accepted: All in favor
Christy then presented bills
Motion: Milt Second: Darell Accepted: All in favor
- V. **Financial Secretary's Report (Darrell)** – Darrell reported the income for the month.
Motion: Ruth Second: Milt Accepted: All in favor
- VI. **Pastor's Report** – Pastor Dan reported this week is IHN at church and there was no heat on Sunday night but it is working today. **Big THANKS to Bitzenhofer's for getting it working**, the elevator is working, and other churches helping and we also have some new volunteers.
Ash Wednesday – begins on Wednesday, February 14th with noon and 7 pm services.
On February 18th – Church Curiosity in the parlor after service
March 2 – Conference sponsored seminar “Worship as Faith Formation”
\$200.00 in scholarships
Motion: Ruth Second: Bruce Accepted: All in favor

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February 2024

Board Meeting Minutes (cont.)

KENYA group – the group is talking about next steps for supporting Rubate

- **CAIN -**
- **IHN Hosting – 2/11 week then in April and May**
- **Phil's Place –**
(reminder)
- **Golf Outing – August 24th with Dan Luken in charge**
- **CONCERT – September 14th at church with Linda Neumeier in charge**

COMMITTEES —

VII. Facilities Committee (Ed)

- Big Bill problems
- Water leak problem on hillside
- Elevator problem – the contract does not include the problem we had. The cost is too high. Suggested reworking the contract with them. Also might consider dropping the cost of monitoring. New contract is on the table. Jeff Runk is being asked to help review it. Tom suggested getting a bid from another contractor / company.
- Ed reported a ballast in the hallway outside the parlor is leaking and needs to be replaced.
- June reported the outside signs have mold on them and suggested talking to the cleaning company about it.
- Salt on the walks was discussed and suggest we find a product that would not be as bad as the salt is and possibly getting carpets to keep the product off the new carpeting.
- The Basket Ball hoop got damaged by the tree trimmers and they will replace it. Bruce said he would check and see if it could be fixed and donated.
- Darrell reported on the fence around the new Electrical Box outside
- Ed reported the cleaning company spilled some product on the carpet by the maintenance closet and tried to get it cleaned up.
-

VIII. Youth – Jimmy getting together with 20+ year olds to discuss plans and also getting the word out on social media

IX. Mission and Service

X. Reminder C.A.I.N. will be using the Fellowship Hall on February 18th.

XI. Health Ministries

XII. O.N.A. - nothing

XIII. Music –

XIV. Endowment (Ed) –

February 2024

Board Meeting Minutes (cont.)

XV. Meditation Garden –

XVI. Reminder: PLEASE TALK TO AMY Before you do any work in the gardens.

XVII. Old Business

Darrell – reminded us he is talking with PNC about the new funds left to the church

Constitution and By-Laws (Bruce) – Congregation Meeting was discussed and April 28, 2024 was set for the meeting.

XVIII. New Business –

Given all the problems the Board is encountering with maintenance issues, it was suggested we might want to consider looking into a Property Management Company to contract for watching over our church.

It was brought up that the bathrooms listed as “Handicap Accessible” need to be checked to make sure they are. (after the meeting Bruce checked the bathroom in the Health Ministries office is slightly blocked by the desk in the there.

Next meeting on MARCH 4, 2024 due to setup for Rummage Sale

Doors in the Kitchen to be checked for Fire Regulations as to whether one can be changed to open into the Fellowship Hall or not.

Fire Department Inspection is supposed to be done annually.

Fire Extinguisher Inspection done annually.

XI. Adjournment

Moved: Milt

Second: Darrell

Accepted: All in favor

XII. Lord’s Prayer

*Submitted by: Bruce Steinhard
Recording Secretary*

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:

June Bronnert, President

Milt Hauck, Vice President

Darrell Copenhaver, Financial Secretary

Bruce Steinhard, Recording Secretary

Ruth Beck

Ed Bosse

Bill Henrich

Tom Shelton

Christy Meyer, Church Treasurer

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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