

November



2026 Newsletter

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The Pastor's Pen

Elections at the start of the month; Thanksgiving at the conclusion of the month. The cynic in us might say the two are diametrically opposed. The beleaguered among us might say they are thankful the fussin' and fightin' at both events will be over in 30 days. Both views hold some truth.

Ten years ago, the national election divided the country as never before. At least in my 60 years of life, I do not recall an election that was as corrosive with hate and vengeance, lies and deceit. Politics and personalities brought separation to our Thanksgiving tables. Uncles were uninvited to the gatherings because of whom they voted for. Sisters and brothers fought over the presidential outcome. Churches saw members leave or simply become exhausted with the discussions, actions, or in-action. Some believed the church should remain out of political discussions. Others felt their faith called them to action and wondered where was the church's prophetic voice. Ten years later the discord continues.

Perhaps a third way might prove to be more faithful and wiser. The sage among us points to the opportunity in both cases to come together. Our Election and Thanksgiving Days invite us to celebrate the ideas of life, liberty, and, yes, the pursuit of happiness. Ideas that call forth the better parts of our national character, charm, and commitment. We do well to connect with one another because we are passionate in wanting what is good for all people. Not just my people, or the ones who hold the same beliefs. We are to unite for the common good. Where are we in our treatment of the elderly, women, the poor, the outsider? The playing field is not level. How do we find common ground? How can we remain honest even when we feel distant from one another and disagree. We commit to learn a better way when we break bread together. We unclench our fists and open our hearts so that we can actually find a

better way. It is then that we can be together in conversation and hear one another and listen to each other's truth.

Richard Rohr's stages of love speak to the way our God calls us to be. Rohr describes three levels of love. The first stage is Individual Love in which a person comes to see themselves as a beloved child of God. We feel good about ourselves. Shame is no longer a primary operative. The second stage is Group Love in which we excitedly connect with those who are like us. Perhaps it is cultural, political, or religious. We find acceptance and joy within the particular group. This is common for lots of people. Rohr then invites us to go beyond the comfortable and familiar and act with a Universal Love. This is a rare kind of love, he writes. It is the example in scripture when Peter sees beyond his own group and widens the circle of God's beloved. It is an expansive expression of the godly traits inherent in all people. It is when we are able to be in relationship and see the beloved before us. We no longer allow fear, prejudice, suspicion, and anger to invade our hearts and poison our politics.

Come November 3rd and then again on November 26th, we need to see each other as family. It is less about who wins and loses and more about how do we occupy this space in time with grace, humility, generosity, and kindness to all. This will take courage, honesty, forgiveness, and love. It is this way of Christ that calls us to a universal love in all realms of life.

God bless America, now pass the mashed potatoes and gravy, please.

Dan

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

I devoted last month's article solely to audio-visual updates and while 90% of the system is up and running, we are still waiting on the delivery of two more speakers as well as training on the hearing devices. It is my hope to have the hearing devices ready by the first or second Sunday of November. The new system has already brought excitement to Sunday worship, so I cannot wait to see what more these final touches bring!

I also want to officially introduce the AV team! These five volunteers have been trained on all things livestream, PowerPoint, and sound system (and soon, the hearing devices), and will be the ones responsible for the system's operation every Sunday morning so that I can focus on my music responsibilities. The AV team includes Bernie Wehman, Geralyn Curtis, David Krebs, Gina Kern, and Dani Powley. I will operate the system on special occasions when I am not playing music. Pastor Dan and Amy have been trained as well.

With five volunteers and only one service per week to really learn the system, please understand that we will be in the "learning stages" of this new system for many months. The eight of us have a lot of learning left to do, and we appreciate your patience as we manage the growing pains along the way. Also, more AV volunteers are always welcome! If you have any interest, email or talk with me.

Musically, I'm excited to have the choirs back up and performing regularly. The chancel choir sings "In the Rising and the Setting Sun" on November 1 in honor of All Saints Day. While they sing, a video montage of our loved ones will be playing on the screens. The choir next sings on November 15, performing a dramatic rendition of "How Great Thou Art." After a joyous and successful performance last weekend, the handbell choir is now preparing for their Thanksgiving Sunday performance of "Thank We All Our God" on November 22.

Any LGBTQIA+ person or ally is invited to the Cincinnati chapter of ONA's holiday potluck here at First UCC on Thursday, November 12. We will dine in Fellowship Hall at 6:30 p.m. As many of you know, I started UCC queer gatherings with Rev. Derek Terry last year. Since his passing, I've been at a loss for how to move forward. I'm very grateful to Revs. Melissa Stephens and Anthony Spearhart for their guidance and assistance in rejuvenating the gatherings. For this holiday potluck, BBQ meat will be provided; we are asking folks to bring their favorite side dish or dessert to share. Reach out to me with questions, and I hope to see our many LGBTQIA+ folks there!

Have a great month!

Jimmy

November Events

Good Stewardship

A reminder that the church still collects eye glasses, pill bottles (without labels on them), batteries, and grocery bags. We thank Ed Bosse for his diligence in these areas over the years. We recently learned that there sometimes is a cost to recycle batteries. We have discovered a place in Dayton that will recycle batteries for no cost. Our containers to recycle these items are in the narthex entrance. And, of course, we have the recycling container outdoors for boxes, paper, cans, etc. Please read the instructions on the outdoor container if you are unsure if your item can be recycled. Thank you.

Thanksgiving Collections

Once again, First UCC is collecting green beans for the community Thanksgiving baskets that are distributed. Heartbeat of the City (Christ Community) will distribute around 300 baskets to families the week of Thanksgiving. They also give families a turkey. To offset the cost of the turkeys, First UCC asks that you consider making a cash donation. You may make your check out to First UCC, memo – Turkeys. Our green bean goal is 300 and our turkey cash collection is \$1000.

Community and Conference News

Westside Churches United is sponsoring an Election Eve Prayer Gathering on Monday, November 2, 6:30 - 7:30 PM, at St. James Episcopal Church, 3207 Montana Avenue, Westwood.

Heartland Conference has an upcoming retreat, "Our Spiritual Longing Retreat," November 9 and 10th (Monday and Tuesday) at Camp Christian outside of Columbus. This 24-hour retreat explores our spiritual longings to discern what God may be calling us toward." Go to heartlanducc.org or speak with Pastor Dan for more information.

Goodies on the Green, November 8

Please plan to join us on Sunday, November 8 after the service for "Goodies on the Green." to enjoy music by Jeanne Phillips and Dave Hawkins. We will have a pot luck lunch. All are invited to bring a dish to share. There is always a bounty of good food. Thank you.

Hello, Sisterhood of Seekers

Deb, Geralyn, and I have prepared a discussion on prayer for **Sunday, November 15**. If you have a prayer you would like to read or share, send it to me and I will make a copy for everyone. Feel free to come whether you have a prayer or not, try a few practices, and discuss other practices. I hope to see you there. - Dani

Please Keep in Prayer

Amanda Faulkner (daughter of Hilda Faulkner)
Bill Mayer (member)
Blake Webb (friend of Jackie Smith)
Brian Hawk (friend of Jenna - friend of the Senior Social)
Carolyn Bruckman (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)
Christa Easton (friend of Vicki Schaefer)
Christi Simmons (friend of Michelle Richards)
Christine White (friend of Jackie Smith)
Cindy & Mark Wolf (friends of the Colding's)
Cody (son-in-law of Suwanna Kirkman)
Daisy (friend of Hannah Steinhard)
Darrell & Laura Copenhaver (members)
Darryl P. and Mickey P. (cousins of Bev Bosse)
Dennis & Linda Ernst (cousin of Kim Ogden)
Diane Ripley (friend of the Kirkman's)
Dorothy (aunt of Suwanna Kirkman)
Elaine Lewis (Jackie Smith's granddaughter)
Eric Stacy (friend of the Steinhard's and Sehlhorst's)
Family of George Frazer (neighbor and friend of the Kirkman Family)
Family and friends of Jackie Smith
Family of Marty Villasuso (nephew of Hilda Faulkner)
Family and Congregation of Rev. Derek Terry (Pastor at St. Peter's UCC in Pleasant Ridge and Executive Director of Open & Affirming Coalition)
Family of Robby Villasuso (nephew of Hilda Faulkner)
Family of Terrence Stern-Enzi, "Tt" (co-worker of Gina Kern)
Fisher Family at the loss of their son (friends of the Kirkman's)
Grandma Judy
Haley (friend of the Copenhaver's)
Herb Brookbank (friend of the Senior Social)
Jackie Smith (member)

Jim & Carol Bitzenhofer (members)
John Faulkner (son of Hilda Faulkner)
Juanita Clark (sister-in-law of Lex Weyand)
Karen (friend of Diane Burger)
Katie and family (daughter of Bernice and Terry Morgan, friends of the church)
Kylir Baum (boyfriend of Dani Wiseman)
Laura Hauck (member)
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)
Moe Wells (late husband of Elizabeth Wells)
Nancy Weyand (sister-in-law of Jim Weyand)
Nancy Whitaker (member – in Hospice at Llanfair)
Pam and family (friends of Hilda Faulkner)
Pastor Debbie Gamble (friend of Hilda Faulkner and CAIN)
Pat Froehle (member)
Ramon (grandson of Hilda Faulkner)
Ron Cummins (dear friend of Amanda Faulkner)
Ronald Meister (grandfather of Kelsey George)
Sandy Echols (member)
Sharon Kazee (prayer asked from Sandy Echols)
Stephanie (close friend of Mary Day & family)
Stephanie and family (at the loss of Stephanie's mother)
Su H. (friend of Bev Bosse)
Suwanna Kirkman (daughter-in-law of Ron Kirkman)
Teri Lynn Stackhouse (member)
Thomas (nephew of Hilda's friend, Pam)
Tina Maxwell (Sue Bilz' best friend)
Vicki Thorner (Sue Bilz' cousin)
Walt & Bobbie Roberts (uncle & aunt of Suwanna Kirkman)
Whiting Family (cousins of the Krebs Family)

Gift to the Flower Fund in Memory of our Friends from the Bilz Family

Anniversaries & Birthdays

Anniversaries

- 11/02 – Bob & Tricia Lenhof
- 11/28 – Tom & Lisa Shelton
- 11/29 – Jeff & Angela Rodenbeck

Birthdays

- 11/04 – Bill Mayer
- 11/05 – Jennifer Mutters
- 11/12 – Kegan Mandery (4th)
- 11/12 – Kim Ogden (70th)
- 11/13 – Christine Guillory
- 11/16 – Ron Beckman
- 11/18 – Abigail Beckman
- 11/19 – Raegan Keller
- 11/20 – August Armstrong
- 11/21 – Michelle Richards
- 11/21 – Mary Day
- 11/25 – Laura Hauck
- 11/25 – Bob Lenhof
- 11/26 – Hannah Steinhard
- 11/27 – Jimmy Wiederhold
- 11/29 – Estelle Armstrong

FYI

Reminder that Pizza with the Pastor is the first Sunday of the month. Dan and Amy will host on November 1st. 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 12, but they can always make room for more.

First UCC Church Board Meeting Minutes

September 14, 2026 (In-Person & Zoom)

In attendance: Tom Shelton, Milt Hauck, Jean Krebs, Ed Bosse, Bill Henrich, Bev Smith, Sammi Asplan, June Bronnert, Gail Bauknecht

Treasurer: Christy Meyer (Treasurer)

Pastor: Dan Weyand-Geise

Excused: Bruce Steinhard

Visiting: Dave Krebs

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

Devotion – Dan led the prayer.

Treasurer's Report (Christy):

Motion: Gail Second: Bev Accepted: All in favor

Bills –

Motion: Jean Second: Sammi Accepted: All in favor

Recording Secretary's Report –

Minutes not yet available, will be given to Board when they become available.

Financial Secretary's Report (Jean) –

Motion: Gail Second: Bev Accepted: All in favor

Pastor's Report – Pastor Dan submitted his report to the Church Board Meeting.

CAIN needs a Volunteer Setup Coordinator. New Member introduction possibly in Advent season.

ONA sent check for \$300 to pay Jimmy, suggestion was raised to return the money to ONA as a donation.

Motion: Bev Second: Jean Accepted: All in favor

Committee Reports

- **Endowment**—Ed made the report
- **Meditation Garden** – Nothing to report
- **Pastoral Relations** – . Nothing to report
- **Audit Committee** – Nothing to report
- **Health Ministries** – Nothing to report
- **Facilities (Dave Krebs)** –
 - Need someone to let contractors in the week of the 28th.
 - Water accumulating in electric panel from sprinkler system, this will be addressed later as the system will not be used in the fall and winter.
 - Republic Dumpster being picked up October 31.
 - Record retention, key survey projects continue
 - Monthly and yearly testing logs created for emergency lights and fire extinguishers
 - Dave requested permission to seek bids on gutters, board approved.
 - Burnt out lightbulbs in sanctuary will be replaced while ICB has scaffolding in building
 - EV Charging stations will be installed for no cost
- **Music (Jean)** – Nothing to report
- **Budget (Jean)** – nothing to report

New Business –

- Sean and Erin Rose requested use of the lawn Oct 17
- SONKA being hosted here Oct 24. 100-ish people expected, breakfast will be served
- Pet Blessing Oct 31
- Men's choir singing October 25 and Guild is doing a cancer awareness day.
- Ed is exiting the battery recycling. Dan is looking into alternative recycling locations, Gest street hub will take them.
 - Amendment 10-12: Ed raises concern about wording of battery issue last month. His concern is that the church should not spend money on battery recycling. Dan will be taking over the battery collection and distribution, the church will NOT be paying for

disposal, and Dan and Sammi will be pursuing other options for disposal.

- Jean asks permission to move forward with taking out credit card from Northside Bank for Church expenses

Motion- Gail

Second- Milt

Accepted- All in Favor

- Discussion regarding dropping Fishes and Loaves, Sisterhood of Seekers, and Sunday School from Church budget
 - Substitute F&L with a monthly dinner or IHN/Found House dinners if we still want to fill that need.

Old Business

- **Pastoral Income Increases for Dan, Jimmy, and Kim**
 - Annual review and feedback from committee
 - 3% salary increase
 - Additional 2% for Jimmy for total of 5%
 - Committee has asked to explore options for health insurance for Dan and Amy.

3% raises across the board

Motion: Milt Second: Sammi Accepted: One abstained, motion carried

60/40 split on health insurance for Dan and Amy when and if they need it.

Motion: Gail Seconded: Bev Accepted: 2 abstained, motion carried

Adjournment: Moved: Tom Seconded: Accepted: All in Favor

Submitted by: Sammi Asplan

Finance Committee News

October 2026

As our 2026 capital campaign is winding down, we are grateful to all who made donations. We raised \$43,000 of the \$171,000 needed for our projects. The handicapped accessible doors are a blessing, the audio-visual system is amazing, the parking lot was repaved, and the brick-and-mortar work is almost finished. We used some of the remaining funds to add gutter guards and to replace the two fixtures under the canopy. Money is also set aside for replacing the playset. A big THANK YOU for your donations! Help us keep our building safe; please continue to point out to the facilities team things that may require routine maintenance!

Through September 30, 2026, we are 15% under budget for the year. We attribute that to members contributing to the capital campaign. We normally have higher giving in the last two months of the year, and we expect 2026 to be no different. We are currently fine-tuning the 2027 budget. Thank you for your support.

Member in Prayer

We continue to keep in prayer TeriLynn Stackhouse. She is a First UCC member and is the Regional Minister for SONKA's 513 area. She welcomes cards, calls, texts, or even visits when set up and approved. She currently resides at Hillenbrand Nursing Home.

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

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Church Board:

Tom Shelton, *President*

Milt Hauck, *Co-Vice President*

June Bronnert, *Co-Vice President*

Bruce Steinhard, *Recording Secretary*

Jean Krebs, *Financial Secretary*

Sammi Asplan

Gail Bauknecht

Ed Bosse

Bill Henrich

Beverly Smith

*Christy Meyer (*Treasurer*)



“God is still speaking.”