June 2023 Newsletter

The Pastor's Report

Pastor Dan Weyand-Geise

What are your big questions in life? What keeps you up at night? Do you feel like you are going around in circles, repeating the same lines every day? As we enter summer, I find myself asking the big questions for church life these days: what does it mean to be a person of faith? What difference does it make to be Christian? What is meaningful and relevant for First UCC to be for the world, for this community, for individuals? What changes are for the better? What traditions and practices are worth keeping?

In a recent Sunrise Salutation, I came across this poem from Wendell Barry:

When despair for the world grows in me and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things who do not tax their lives with forethought of grief. I come into the presence of still water. And I feel above me the day-blind stars waiting with their light. For a time, I rest in the grace of the world, and I am free.

Life's tough questions strike us in the middle of the night and the reality might hang over us throughout the day. As Berry suggests, we need to go into the world among the peace of wild things. At our Hunger Walk this past weekend, I came into the peace of wild things again as Amy and I biked down to the river. Downtown was alive with lots of laughter, smiles, and joy as people gathered for a common cause.

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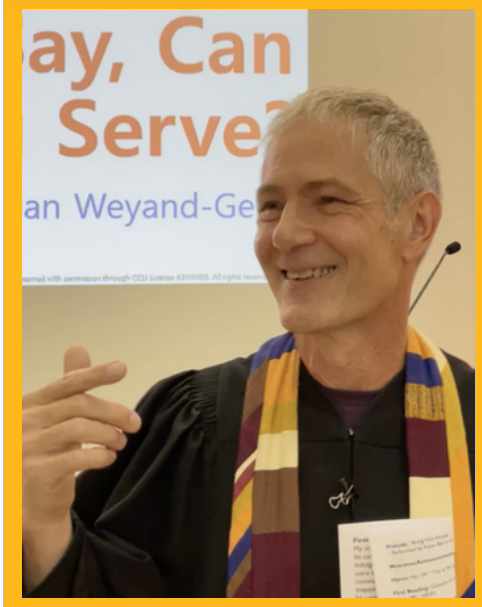

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The Pastor's Report (cont.)

I come into the peace of wild things each evening. I take a stroll up our street with the dogs that inevitably attracts conversations with neighbors, family, friends, or church members. The walk and conversations are life-giving; they assist me in dealing with the day's questions and encounters. The nights still might be long and worrisome, but I am able to move to a place of calm meditation much faster because of the practices during the day.

What are we doing with this gift of life we have been granted? There are moments we need to escape from the world and retreat into our array of social media and technology; but our true vocation, our calling as people of faith, is to be in the world. First UCC cannot remain inside our own four walls. Collectively, we participate in Hunger Walks, Pride events, or community meals. Individually, we can go for a walk; meet our neighbors; renew our spirit and attend church. Be in the wild things of life. Our Pentecost Sunday blessing is the reminder that God gives us Peace. We receive a Spirit that renews, heals, loves, and inspires us. This is Grace. Trust it and share this Good News with the world.

Peace be with you,
Pastor Dan

Welcome, New Members!

On Sunday, May 21, we welcomed our newest members to First UCC:

Diane & Bruce Banker
Jim & Kathy Gorsler
Dave & Wendy Hawkins
Lynn Kluesener
Bill Mayer
Tom & Lisa Shelton
Tracie Tays

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What's the Buzz?

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

Jimmy Wiederhold
Director of Music, Media, and Faith Formation

Please forgive my brevity in this month's music, media, and faith formation update but as we close out Mental Health Awareness month, I want to remind everyone that life happens, it throws curveballs along the way, and it's okay to not always be okay. The sudden news of my cousin's entrance into hospice care (after three years' battle with stage 4 cancer) has turned my world and mental health upside down. I visited her and the family on Memorial Day and although I know she is at peace, I am still heartbroken and numb. Ali is 32 years of age, only four months younger than me. Prayers of comfort to her husband, Kris, her parents, Tom and Lori, and the rest of the family.

Our Sundays together this month will bring me comfort and I'm looking forward to some wonderful musical guests:

- June 4 – Bryce Kessler on cello
- June 11 – Dave Hawkins
- June 18 – Susie Cairns, subbing for me when I am on vacation
- June 25 – ONA Sunday with vocalists Jessica Fair and Cece Hunt

There remains a handful of summer events for you and the family to take part in:

- June 3 – FC Cincinnati Pride Night game
  - The church's group tickets have been purchased, but there are still tickets available for the game; they start at $47 each
- June 19 – Youth volunteer night at Phil's Place
- July 21 – Cincinnati Reds Pride game (let me know interest by July 9)
- TBD – Concert on the Green.
  - I am working on details for this event. Musicians of the church, no matter your age or experience, please let me know if you have any interest in performing a song or two.

Thanks for your continued support and encouragement in all that I do. Say "I love you" to the ones you love.

Blessings, Jimmy

Anniversaries

06/13 – Paul & Lynn Kluesener
06/13 – Bob & Ruth Beck
06/18 – Ron & Cindy Beckman
06/22 – Jim & Lex Weyand
06/22 – Bruce & Diane Banker
06/26 – Bob & Deb Neumeister
06/27 – Mike & Kim Ogden

Birthdays

06/01 – Misti Cornish
06/05 – Jeff Rodenbeck
06/05 – Jim Bitzenhofer
06/06 – Luke Rodenbeck
06/08 – Moses Ben Weise
06/08 – Millie Mae, sister of Moses
06/10 – Emily Mayer
06/11 – Susie Cairns
06/14 – Ron Kirkman
06/15 – Bev Bosse
06/17 – Marilyn Mandery
06/26 – Vicki Schaefer
06/28 – Margie Spatz

~ Please Keep in Prayer ~

Connie (sister-in-law of Hilda Faulkner); Thomas (nephew of Hilda's friend, Pam); Danae Brenner (acquaintance of the church); Bill and Margie Spatz and family; Carol Gittints (friend of Ron Kirkman); Deanie and Sharon (mother and daughter – cousins of Ron Kirkman); Hannah Steinhard (daughter of Bruce and Kathie); Suwanna Kirkman's Aunt Barb and Uncle Larry; Praise report for Pam (friend of Hilda Faulkner); Lee Briggs (friend of Wendy Hawkins); Dennis Godsey (nephew of Ginny Krebs); Dawn (friend of Dani Powley); Nicara W. (dear friend of Ed and Bev Bosse); Jim Kissel and the entire Kissel family at the passing of Ginny; Stephanie (friend of Mary Day); Sharon Godsey (niece of Ginny Krebs); Heather Nichols (niece of Susan Ley); Margie & Robert Barnett (neighbors of Linda Krebs); Kathy Guillory Finegan (Christine's Mom) at the death of Kathy's husband, Jim; Mary Sanker (cousin of Janet Copenhaver); Lee Johnson (friend of Terri Stang); Family of Jackie Smith; Brenda (daughter of Ron 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); 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); Mary B. (friend of Jackie Smith); Charlie (friend of Herb Brookbank); Stas Dharikov (Ukrainian friend of Christina Henderson); Family of Linda Johnson (friend of Sharon and Ron Rodenbeck); Glenn Smith (son of Jackie Smith); Found House (IHN) families and all who are homeless.

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Life of the Church

Goodies on the Green - Great!

Our Goodies on the Green event on May 21 to celebrate graduates and welcome new members was a success. The weather made it ideal for everyone to sit at tables spread out on the green space that was created for such events. The luncheon with food from Tortelleria Garcia in College Hill provided a terrific variety. Sarah Bilz sang and played guitar throughout the time on the lawn. Immediately after the day's success, Jimmy told Pastor Dan he has some ideas cooking about a music event on the lawn – possibly in the Fall. Stay tuned for details. Thank you to all who came out and shared in the fellowship; and thank you to all who set-up or tore down the chairs and tables.

The early summer weather we are experiencing in Cincinnati has put some of our planting for the Green Space on hold. We are quite appreciative of donations to the space that will be used to purchase plants. Special thanks to the Carl family and the Krebs family for their generosity. If any group or individual would like to purchase a soaker- hose for the green space, it would be a great contribution to the space. Neighbors and members alike have enjoyed the grounds this Spring. Micky Heiob's yellow peony was especially magnificent as have been the day lilies, lamb's ears, and irises.

Hunger Walk

First UCC stepped up on Memorial Day for the Hunger Walk and raised a little more than $2,000 for CAIN. Great thanks to Jean Krebs and Ed Bosse who led the charge to the congregation to step up for this worthy event. We had 29 people sign up for the team; twenty walkers/runners participated in the 5K that started at the Freedom Center downtown and made its way across the River into Covington and back across the Clay Wade Bailey Bridge to Smale Park along the River. Nate Weyand-Geise paced the way for First UCC and finished in the top 35 overall, taking home a medal. Donations for our Hunger Walk go until the end of June. Contact the church or Jean Krebs if you would still like to donate. Checks can be made out to the FreeStore Foodbank. Thank you to everyone for your support of all our mission partners.

Guild Meeting

The next meeting of the Guild is Thursday, June 22. Lunch will begin at noon. We have a special guest to teach us "Laughter Yoga." All are welcome!

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Life of the Church (cont.)

Pizza with the Pastor

Our May gathering of Pizza with the Pastor was a success. All the spots were filled. June is likewise filled with 12 for the meal. July 9th and August 6th still have some openings. Sign-up sheets are available, or simply reserve with Dan at church. This is an opportunity for Amy and Dan to welcome people to their home after church for conversation and pizza that Dan makes. This allows for more time than the usual 30 seconds to a minute after church for Dan and Amy to spend with others. It is also a chance to invite friends to get to know each other.

Phil's Place Update

First UCC will serve on June 19 with our youth leading the charge. We will gather at 1:00 p.m. at First UCC to make the turkey wraps and put together dinner bags. More than 125 people are served each week. We also serve on July 31 with Susie Cairns in charge of the dinner. Financial donations are welcomed to offset the costs.

IHN at Knox

Knox Presbyterian Church in Hyde Park again has graciously allowed First UCC and our IHN partner churches serve the families the week of June 4. Linda Krebs and Pastor Dan organize the groups. We have nine different congregations who will assist that week. Blessings and prayers with our families and our hosts.

Period Packs

At the UCC General Synod at the end of June/beginning of July, we are asked to support the efforts to collect kits for 1000 Period Packs. These are menstrual hygiene kits that will help individuals living in period poverty. You can go UCC.com or speak with our health ministry at First UCC and Teri Lynn Stackhouse to learn more about this worthwhile project.

Cincinnati Pride Game and Parade

First UCC has a group attending the FC Cincinnati match on June 3 in honor of Pride Month. In addition, on June 24th the Cincinnati Pride parade takes place. Contact Pastor Dan or Jimmy if you are interested in attending the parade. Check out Facebook or our web page for photos of these events and more.

April 2023

Board Meeting Minutes

First UCC Church Board Meeting Minutes
April 11, 2023 (In-Person & Zoom)

In attendance: Ed Bosse, Darrell Copenhaver, Christy Meyer (Treasurer), Christine Guillory, Milt Hauck, Bill Henrich, Travis Mandery, Margie Spatz, Bruce Steinhard, Pastor Dan Weyand-Geise
BY Zoom: Ruth Beck, June Bronnert
Excused: none

I. **Call to Order --** June called the meeting to order.

II. Ed went over recent events with regards to Insurance Company and getting check from them.

III. **Treasurer's Report** (Christy Meyer) – Christy shared the treasurer's reports with all and then the bills.
Motion: Travis Second: Milt Accepted: All in Favor

IV. **Devotion** -- Pastor Dan
Pastor Dan asked all to share what Easter Blessing that had experienced. After that he closed with prayer.

V. **Recording Secretary's Report (Bruce)** – The March report was accepted with one correction.
Motion: Ruth Second: Darrell Accepted: All in favor

VI. **Financial Secretary's Report (Darrell)** – Darrell reported the income for the month.
Motion: Bruce Second: Travis Accepted: All in favor

VII. **Pastor's Report** – Pastor Dan asked that we see the Pastor's Report. He also reported on plans for Lenten Season, Marriage Enrichment, Pizza with the Pastor, New Members, Mission outreach – IHN will be at Knox Presbyterian Church on the East side helping First UCC host. Pastor Dan then reported that there are several summer programs being looked at.

- **IHN Hosting** –
- **CAIN**
- **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.

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April 2023

Board Meeting Minutes (cont.)

VIII. **Jimmy's Report on Media, Music and Faith Formation**
See Jimmy's Report for information. May 7th Jeanne Phillips will be playing for church on that day.

COMMITTEES ---

IX. Facilities Committee (Darrell)

- Darrell shared that faucets in all bathrooms in the church are in possible need of repair as some of them are not working right now.

X. Youth – No report.

XI. Mission and Service
In Pastor Dan's report. Bruce asked a question about Christ Community and the reason they are still using that name since they merged with another group in 2019. Dan suggested that Bruce talk with Ralph and Lisa concerning this.

XII. **O.N.A.** – No report.
Bruce commented that the ONA Statement will be added to the Constitution and Bylaws as an appendix.

XIII. Music – No report.

XIV. Endowment (Ed) – the Endowment is doing well. No report yet.

XV. **Meditation Garden** – Pastor Dan reported there is a list of plants to be put in the green space along the edge of the parking lot and other places. Pathways are being looked at and were already in the plans. Nate is checking on getting the seeding done as agreed upon in the initial contract.

IX. Old Business
Margie Spatz's position – Pastor Dan has several names he will send to June so she might contact those individuals.

X. New Business
Sean brought to Pastor Dan's attention the spraying of the lawn with chemicals. Sean, Amy, and Pastor Dan are all opposed to the use of chemicals to treat the lawn as it kills the insects which help pollinate the flowers and other plants. Bruce will check with Kathie and/or Christy to see who the contract is through. Then we can find out what is being sprayed.

Bruce brought up to the Board the possibility of placing a "Collection Box" from Matthew 25 Ministries like he and Kathie saw at Westwood First Presbyterian Church. The Board asked Bruce to get more information from Matthew 25, so we can discuss it at next month's meeting.

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April 2023

Board Meeting Minutes (cont.)

Ruth Beck – asked if she could contact the group who wants to put reproductive rights on the ballot so they could sign up those members who would like it on the ballot in the fall.
Motion: Ruth Second: Christine Accepted: with 1 objection

XI. **Adjournment**
Moved: Milt Second: Travis Accepted: All in favor

XII. **Lord's Prayer**

Submitted by: Bruce Steinhard, Recording Secretary

Welcome to *Anna Baldwin*, our newest Board member. So good to have you aboard!

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 Administrator, Ext. 10

Church Board:

June Bronnert, President
Christine Guillory, Vice-President
Christy Meyer, Treasurer
Darrell Copenhaver, Financial Secretary
Bruce Steinhard, Recording Secretary
Anna Baldwin
Ruth Beck
Ed Bosse
Milt Hauck
Bill Henrich
Travis Mandery

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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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