

# The Messenger

The monthly newsletter of First Congregational Church UCC of North Ridgeville

**October 2024**

**Minister**

Rev. Kearstin Bailey  
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**Director, Christian Education**

Mary Karlovec

**Music Director**

Barb Habecker

**Moderator**

Kris Dornan

**Vice-Moderator**

Diana Goode

**Co-Chairs, Christian Education**

Renee Dornan  
Kelsey Styrt

**Acting Chair, Deacons**

Karen Dreger

**Acting Chair, Outreach**

Edie Phillips

**Co-Chairs, Trustees**

Roy Dreger  
Jack Fitts

**Treasurer, Secretary**

Linda Matis

**From the Pastor – Pastor Kearstin (she/her)**

Hello, Beloved Community! Fall is in full swing now — the children are back at school, folks are buying pumpkins, holiday plans are starting to form, and there's a delicious chill in the air. In case you can't tell, it's my favorite time of the year!

As church life gears up for the end of the year, it's also an important time to think about our covenantal relationships. We are in covenant with one another as a congregation, as well as with the Living Water Association (UCC churches in northeast Ohio), the Heartland Conference (associations across Ohio, as well as part of Kentucky and West Virginia), and the National setting of the UCC. Part of the work of a pastor is to continuously tend to these relationships, ensuring that our covenants and partnerships are strong.

On a congregational level, Diana Goode has spearheaded a movement to have small group gatherings each month so we can connect with one another on a deeper level. In August, Marge Baker hosted us and in September it was Mercy McCloskey and Mari Guastella. We will have two more small group gatherings here in October and Diana is already planning into the new year. If you yearn to get to know your church family and build deep relationships, we would love to have you host! You can let me or Diana know if Spirit is calling you to this important work.

On an association level, I will soon gather with others from the Cleveland area for cultural humility training. It will be a day of relationship building with other pastors and thinking creatively about how to shine God's light brightly so our communities can feel it too. As I prepare for a few work trips in the coming months, a pulpit supply pastor who will spend Sunday morning with you comes from our Association, too. One of the joys of this covenantal relationship is knowing that our congregation can be well-supported even when I am on the road or with other settings of the church.

On a conference level, I have the joy of attending the Heartland's annual meeting. This year, we will gather with our siblings in the Disciples of Christ for some ecumenical creativity! In the past, adults and youth, like Matt Karlovec among others, have attended conference-level meetings to forge bonds across the region. Many of our young adults have attended the UCC's National Youth



Event in years past where they could mingle and befriend other youth from across the country. Tending to our conference connections keeps us well-resourced and supported as we explore new ministry opportunities.

On a national level, I am honored to be a member of the UCC Board of Directors and the Common Global Ministries Board. At the end of the month I will gather with the UCCB to help make prayerful decisions about the future of the denomination, and then in November I will gather with DOC colleagues and we will work ecumenically to support our global church partners. Folks who have attended the UCC's big General Synod events in the past have seen first-hand the incredible work that our denomination is doing across the country and the world. It is an honor to be a part of this sacred work.

Though we are just one congregation in North Ridgeville, we are well-connected to all the other settings of our church in the world. First Congregational has a long history of tending to these relationships, and this fall I will do my best to continue that legacy!

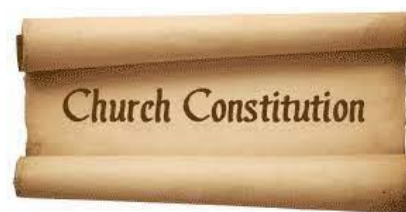
Know that as I travel, I will be bringing you along in spirit when I go to these places. I will tell them of the incredible hospitality and creativity you embodied at my ordination service. I will humbly brag about the extravagant welcome you embody every Sunday morning. I will share with them how many new folks from the community have visited for worship because of the recent newspaper article about us. Though I will be gone some Sundays this fall, we now have live-streaming back on track so I will be able to join for worship even when I'm on the road — which is important to me, personally, because I miss you when I'm gone!

Your care, sweet congregation, is what makes all these covenants and relationships thrum with life. Your creativity and openness allow me to, on your behalf, steward my time well so that our covenants are tended to.

I want you to know that even when I am on the road, I'm here for you. You can always reach

me via email ([pastorFCCNR@gmail.com](mailto:pastorFCCNR@gmail.com)) and text (740-503-8994). None of these other covenants are possible without that foundation of care I have with you. Please don't hesitate to reach out to myself or the deacons if something comes up this fall that you need support with. We are a loving and evolving chosen family, here at FCC, which means that we step-up and care for one another well.

Sending you every blessing,  
Pastor Kearstin



Church Council has been working for several months on updating our Constitution and Bylaws. (The last major update was done in 2016.) Copies of the constitution will be made available for you to review so that you can bring any questions to the **Congregational Meeting on November 17** when we will vote on the amended constitution. We realize it is a *lot* of information to review which is why we will make sure you have the proposed document well in advance of the meeting. *Please*, take the time to review the document and see any Council member to ask questions or get clarification on anything that you are unsure about.

### **Moderator's Moment – Kris Dornan**

Hello, my friends. As we get ready to transition seasons again, I marvel sometimes at our congregation and how I'm constantly amazed by the spiritual gifts that are resident in our fellowship.

We always say that when a need arises at our church, God provides. God absolutely provides, and many of those times those provisions are made possible by the gifts that you all share! I don't want to directly acknowledge one person, because that would be unfair to all of us; and, really, I'd kick myself later because I forgot something or someone who is so

deserving of recognition. But I will say that a few times this month, I was worried or concerned about how a meeting or conversation would go, only to see that I was stressed for nothing, or someone was part of the conversation that had that ability to manage personalities and tough topics in a calm and loving way.

I see God in each one of you, and so happy to be a part of this church family!



### **Christian Education Corner – Mary Karlovec**

Sunday School is back and it is exciting to see how engaged the children/youth have been over the last few weeks! Our new curriculum for fall covers many Old Testament stories starting with Creation. We hope that the first Sunday of each month - Family Sunday - will highlight some of the story concepts the kids have explored through music, art, and word.

A huge thank you to Shirley Sunyak, Linda Matis, Nancy Findlay, Denise Speer, and Millie Gilly for volunteering to work in the **nursery**. We are still in need of **ONE MORE** adult to round out our nursery team. PLEASE consider volunteering!

Four youths - Charlotte Dornan, Lily Dornan, Mikey Feigi, and Dahlia Wolanski - began their journey towards confirmation on September 15. The group met with Pastor Kearstin after church and will continue to meet with her on a monthly basis. They will have an adult mentor with whom they will meet monthly as well as a youth mentor who will support them in many ways too. They will visit other church denominations, a Jewish temple, and a mosque in Parma, and visit two museums - the Museum of Art in Cleveland and the Maltz Museum in Beachwood. They are required to participate in at

least one church fundraiser and one outreach project. Confirmation will take place on Pentecost Sunday, June 8, 2025. Please keep them in your prayers as they start this amazing journey.

**Clangy Change Sunday** is October 6, which is also World Communion Sunday. With that in mind, our clangy change collection will go to the UCC's Global Ministries. Last month's clangy change collection of over \$100 went to Community Care to help refill their shelves with food supplies. Thank you for your support!

On Sunday, October 20, we will be worshiping with the residents at the Independent Village in Avon Lake at 2 pm. The youth are putting together little Halloween cauldrons with candy in them to give to the residents during the social hour afterwards. **We are in**

**need of snack size or mini candy bars** (no nuts or coconut, please) to fill the cauldrons. If you would like to donate a bag of snack size/mini candy bars, please drop them off in my office **by October 13**. Any leftover candy will be used to help fill our Christmas stockings for our shut-ins. Your support is greatly appreciated!



**Sunday, October 27 is Trunk or Treat from 6:30-7:30 pm** and we need trunks with treats! If you are willing to be a trunk with treats,



please sign up outside my office. Decorated trunks are encouraged but not required. Trunks with treats are asked to be set up by 6:00 in the

designated parking spaces. This event is open to family, friends, and neighbors so spread the word!

### **Outreach Committee News – Karen Farmer**

Nature plays no favorites. We may personally prefer one season over another and dread the coming of others, but no season is the king or queen. God, in His infinite wisdom, surely knew that we mortals needed a time to restore

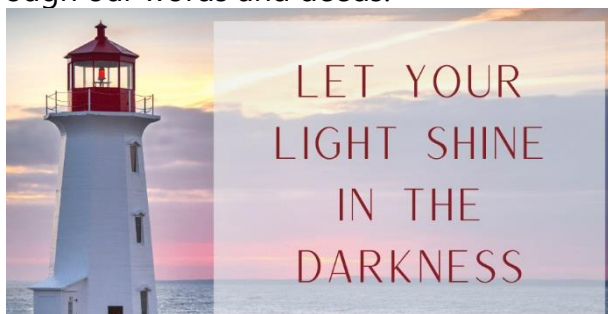


our souls so He gave us Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter. Which is the season that restores your spirit? For me, it's this season of Autumn. Once again, He has divided the light from the darkness and set His world ablaze with autumnal color, perhaps saying, "I play no favorites. I am the light of the world." Even when there is a fanning out of the light at night, He leaves His reflected glory in the moon and in our hearts.

The Board of Outreach strives to reflect God's light in its mission work. In addition to our monthly \$100 donations to both Community Care and Neighborhood Alliance, we voted to send \$200 to the Native American Heritage Association and \$200 to Blessing House this month.

Our Board receives 50% of the profits from the clothing shed in back of the church and that money supports our mission projects. This month we are supporting the UCC Neighbors in Need campaign and hope that you will contribute to this important UCC mission. We are exploring additional mission projects to support members of our congregation, as well.

God has reflected His light in our lives. May we strive to roll back the darkness for others through our words and deeds.



### **Doctor's Notes – Kurt Dornan, MD**

As we are entering into the fall season, it is important to stay immunized against several viruses that can cause significant illness as the weather turns colder. Find me if you have any specific questions!

- 1) Influenza – Especially for children under 6 and adults 60+, but really recommended for everyone
- 2) COVID 19 – Updated for this year (2024)

- 3) Pneumococcal (pneumonia) – Adults >75, or adults with chronic health conditions such as diabetes, heart failure, kidney disease, or COPD
- 4) RSV – Adults >60

### **Trustees' Turn – Roy Dreger**

The good news first: The painting of the wood on the outside of the sanctuary is complete as is the roof replacement over the Sunday school wing and Winckles Room.

Now for the bad news: Our insurance premium is going up by 27%, or a little over \$3,000 per year. Two roof claims in two years was part of the reason, as was the increase in severe storms in our area and the ensuing high cost to repair the damage. The increase in the cost of the supplies necessary to do the repairs also figured in. I was told that there was pretty much an across-the-board increase in those policies that included storm damage coverage.

We recently got an estimate to replace the sidewalk on the east side of the sanctuary. It appears the cost to do the work will be in the \$10,000 to \$12,000 range. The Trustees feel that this work is important due to the sidewalk being uneven and the separation between the sections seems to be getting larger. We feel that all of these issues could impact some of our congregation with mobility issues.

The need for the funds to do the necessary work reminds me that there is a stewardship campaign coming up in October prior to the Congregational Meeting in November. The November meeting is when we present the preliminary budget for the following year. This proposed budget allows us to operate until the Annual Meeting in January when a finalized budget is adopted. Now might be a good time to begin considering your pledge for the coming year and make sure your current pledge is up to date. (Quarterly statements will be available the first week of October.)

Thank you for your continued support of your church!



If we see stewardship as spiritual discipline and view the use of money as a spiritual practice, then it makes sense to make the receiving of personal financial commitments as an act of worship and faithful response. In the same way that our prayers over loaf and cup transform the ordinary elements of bread and wine into an agent of Divine Grace, so too do our prayers over our offerings (and commitments) claim a new and holy use over our money to accomplish new and Realm related causes.

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**Women's Book Club:** All gatherings are at the church at 7 pm unless noted.  
**October 21:** The Maid of Fairbourne Hall by Julie Klassen  
**November 18:** The Last Exchange by Charles Martin  
**December 16:** Twelve Topsy-Turvy Very Messy Days of Christmas by James Patterson and Tad Safran  
**January 20:** The Brighter the Light by Mary Ellen Taylor

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**New Members:** Interested in joining First Congregational Church? Pastor Kearstin is having a new members class on Sunday, October 6 after the worship service. If interested or would like more information, please contact Pastor Kearstin [PastorFCCNR@gmail.com](mailto:PastorFCCNR@gmail.com) or the office.

**Greeters**

If you would like to be added to the greeter rotation, please contact the church office.

September	
29	Millie Gilly, Linda Matis
October	
6	Paul Wolanski,
13	Paula Dudek, Jane Woravka
20	Lynne Petroff, Karen Farmer
27	Millie Gilly, Diana Goode



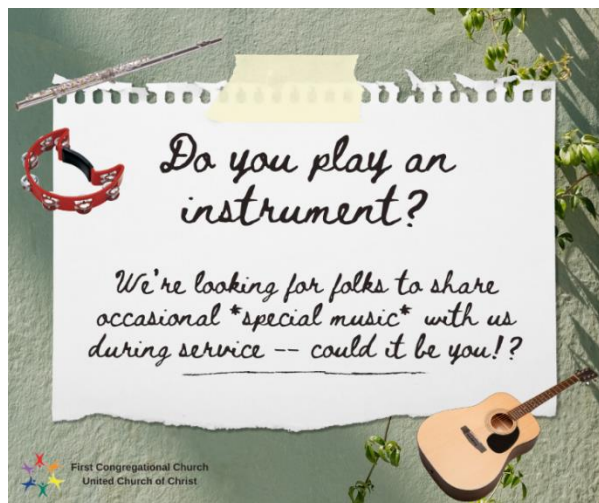
- 10/1 Elizabeth Feigi
- 10/2 Bruce Griswold
- 10/6 Ronda Van Den Bossche
- 10/7 Lynne Lipperman
- 10/8 Pat Kyle
- 10/9 Chase Dornan
- 10/11 Nate Schupbach
- 10/11 Jennie Vulcan
- 10/20 Louise Barker
- 10/26 Matt Karlovac
- 10/2 Kinzer & Barb Habecker
- 10/11 Dean & Lynne Lipperman
- 10/12 Ryan & Holly Hengartner
- 10/18 Mike & Joan Bier
- 10/18 Paul & Liz Wolanski



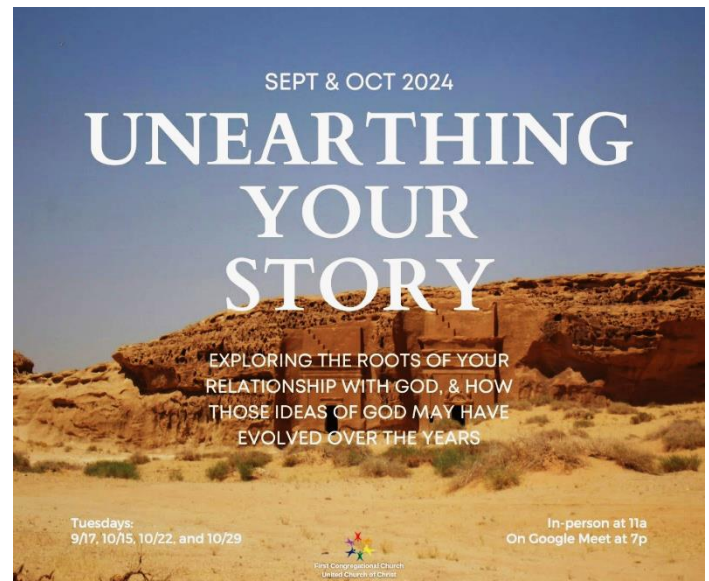
**Sunday, October 27, 2024**  
**6:30-7:30 pm**  
**All kids up to age 12 are welcome!**  
**Invite your family, neighbors and friends!**



**Church Survey:** If you haven't already, please fill out and share our survey widely! (Text it to your friends, share it in local Facebook groups!) We want to hear from anyone who lives, works, worships, or spends a significant amount of time in North Ridgeville. It's totally anonymous and will take less than 8 minutes! (If you would like a paper copy, please contact the church office. [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdVWXU1mgJzJZW5-xV08O3vshgl4BeetpeQcRMk4o7SwnQs0w/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdVWXU1mgJzJZW5-xV08O3vshgl4BeetpeQcRMk4o7SwnQs0w/viewform?usp=sf_link))



Do you play an instrument? We're looking for folks to share occasional \*special music\* with us during service -- could it be you!? Maybe you want to share a new guitar song you're working on? Or maybe you need to practice a piano piece before an upcoming recital? Whatever your musical talents are, we would love to include them in upcoming worship services!



**Bible Study:** Join us on October 15, 22 and 29 for a new Bible study with Pastor Kearstin called "Unearthing Your Story." We'll reflect on our faith stories, what our families and culture taught us about God, and then where our faith is now. There will be two times for this Bible study: in-person at FCC at 11 am, and on Google Meet at 7 pm. If you want to join in person, just show up! If you'd like to join online, you can sign-up here to get the meeting link: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSck5d\\_0s4tnkv6q0irsLjTWfhLA0Xupn0g9pDQIPrEWUlthQ/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSck5d_0s4tnkv6q0irsLjTWfhLA0Xupn0g9pDQIPrEWUlthQ/viewform?usp=sf_link)





Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
		<b>1</b> CE 7 pm Trustees 7 pm  AA 1 <sup>st</sup> Step 8:30p	<b>2</b> Bell choir 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm	<b>3</b>  AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>  AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6p
<b>6</b> Outreach 9 am Worship 10:30 am World Communion Fellowship hour New members class after worship service  AA Men 7:30 pm	<b>7</b>  <div>Pr. Kearstin retreat Texas</div> AA Women 7 pm	<b>8</b>  AA 1 <sup>st</sup> Step 8:30p	<b>9</b> Bell choir 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm  4-H 7 pm	<b>10</b>  AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>  AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6p
<b>13</b> Worship 10:30 am Fellowship hour  AA Men 7:30 pm	<b>14</b> Council 7 pm  AA Women 7 pm	<b>15</b> Bible study 11 am @ church; 7 pm on Google Meet  AA 1 <sup>st</sup> Step 8:30p	<b>16</b> Newsletter articles due “Get to Know You” Group 6:30 pm @ Karen Farmer’s home Bell choir 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm	<b>17</b>  AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	<b>18</b>  <div>Pr. Kearstin UCC board mtg. Cleve.</div>	<b>19</b>  AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6p
<b>20</b> Carla Valles Worship 10:30 am Stewardship kick off Fellowship hour Independent Village svc 2p <div>Pr. Kearstin UCC mtg.</div> AA Men 7:30 pm	<b>21</b> Women’s book club 7 pm  AA Women 7 pm	<b>22</b> Bible study 11 am @ church; 7 pm on Google Meet  AA 1 <sup>st</sup> Step 8:30p	<b>23</b> Advent prep staff meeting 10 am Bell choir 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm	<b>24</b> “Get to Know You” Group 7 pm @ Wolanski’s home  AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>  AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6p
<b>27</b> Worship 10:30 am Reception of new members Fellowship hour Deacons 11:30 am Confirmation mtg. 12-2 pm Trunk or Treat 6:30 pm  AA Men 7:30 pm	<b>28</b>  AA Women 7 pm	<b>29</b> Bible study 11 am @ church; 7 pm on Google Meet  AA 1 <sup>st</sup> Step 8:30p	<b>30</b> Bell choir 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm	<b>31</b>   AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm		