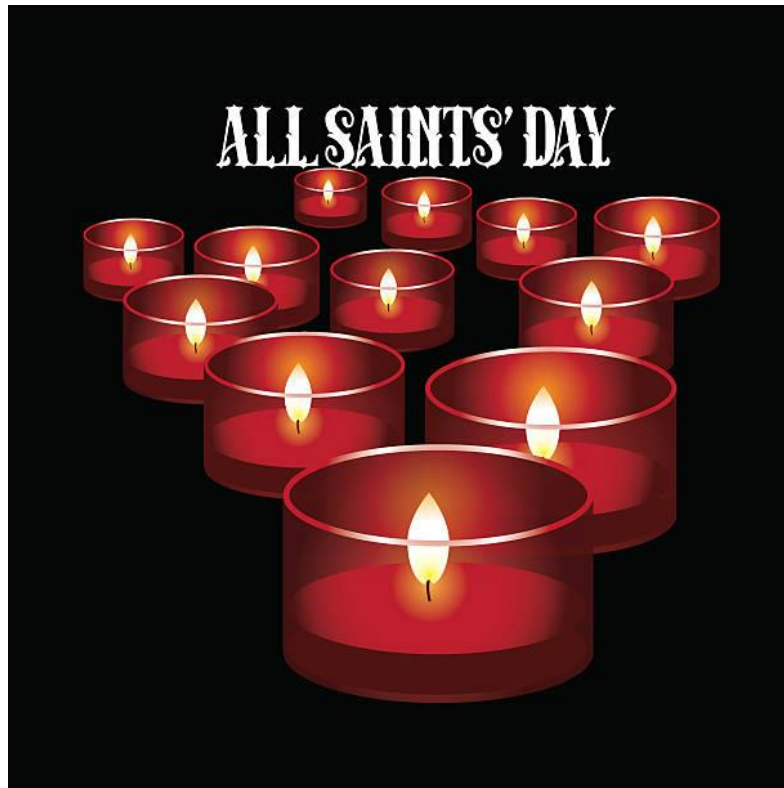




To share faith, hope & love with all
First Congregational Church

United Church of Christ

36363 Center Ridge Rd., North Ridgeville, OH 44039
440-327-2921 ~ www.fccalive.org



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November 3, 2024

**No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey,
you are welcome here.**

If you would like to know more about our church, please contact us at info@fccalive.org

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Liturgy inspiration this week has come from Beth Merrill Neel on her blog "Hold Fast to What Is Good"
and Rev. Lucas Keppel at Ancho Community & Corona United Presbyterian Churches.

**God is still
speaking,** 
COME LISTEN

SERVICE of WORSHIP AND PRAISE

24th Sunday after Pentecost / 31st Sunday of Ordinary Time

**Indicates "All who are comfortable, please rise in body or spirit"*

WE GATHER AS GOD'S PEOPLE

Prelude "Impromptu on Penitentia" – Hugh S. Livingston, Jr.

Ringing of the Bell

Welcome and Announcements

We welcome you to worship this sabbath day. Please sign the red fellowship pad found along the center aisle side of the pew. After signing, please return the book down your row, matching names with faces, and be sure to greet one another after the service.

Stewardship Moment

Choral Introit "We Gather Together" vs. 1

***Call to Worship**

One: In the beginning, God called the world into being, saying,

All: "Let there be light!"

One: In the fullness of time, Jesus came from God to us, saying,

All: "I am the Light of the world."

One: In our everyday life, we see the work of the saints,

All: the ones in whom God's light shines.

One: So let us give thanks for the saints this day,

All: and let us worship God.

One: We gather this morning to remember our call:

All: to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with God.

One: We bring with us the events of the week in the world and in our lives,

All: trying to know how to be just and loving and humble in the midst of it all.

One: We gather here, and see those who are doing justice, who are kind beyond measure, who set the example for humility.

All: With gratitude for living saints, with thankfulness for the purpose of faith,

One: let us worship God.

***Opening Hymn** Spiral Songbook #26 "Holy Ground" (*sing twice*)

***Passing of the Peace**

***Prayer of Confession (*in unison*)**

Beloved God, who was known to our mothers, our fathers, and our spiritual ancestors, have mercy on us. We do not always love as you would have us love. We do not always do as you would have us do. In our stubbornness, we turn from you when we should turn toward you. We praise you

for the grace you shower on us, constantly forgiving our errors, especially the ones that we don't share with any but you.

***Words of Assurance (in unison)**

Though thousands upon thousands of our ancestors did not follow God's ways perfectly, but we have hope in the one who did! Jesus taught through his words and deeds that God has already forgiven us. Thus, we, and all who have come before us, are rightly known as saints – the holy ones of God! Thanks be to God for God's mercy, grace, and love! Amen!

Young Person's Time / Clangy Change Collection to support local first responders

Let us pray. Lord Jesus be with us every day and help us grow in every way. Amen.

Ministry of Music "Come and Find the Quiet Center" – Carol Lynn Mizell

WE CELEBRATE THE SAINTS

Communal Prayer for the Saints (in unison)

Spirit of Living God and the resurrected Christ, your saints have been the light of the world in every generation. Grant us the courage to follow in their footsteps so that we might embody your love in this time and place. Grant us the grace to follow the saints, past and present, in the ways of virtuous and godly living. Amen.

Lighting the Candles and Ringing the Bell in memory of Nancy Long and Skip Spayd

Sacred Readings

John 1:1-4

In the beginning there was the Word; the Word was in God's presence, and the Word was God. The Word was present to God from the beginning. Through the Word all things came into being, and apart from the Word nothing came into being that has come into being. In the Word was life, and that life was humanity's light— a Light that shines in the darkness, a Light that the darkness has never overtaken.

Saint Dorothy Day

People say, what is the sense of our small effort? They cannot see that we must lay one brick at a time, take one step at a time. A pebble cast into a pond causes ripples that spread in all directions. Each one of our thoughts, words, and deeds is like that. No one has a right to sit down and feel hopeless. There is too much work to do.

Matthew 5:1-10

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on the mountainside, and after he sat down and the disciples had gathered around, Jesus began to teach them: "Blessed are those who are poor in spirit: the kingdom of heaven is theirs. Blessed are those who are mourning: they will be consoled. Blessed are those who are gentle: they will inherit the land. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice: they will have their fill. Blessed are those who show mercy to others: they will be shown mercy. Blessed are those whose hearts are clean: they will see God. Blessed are those who work for peace: they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of their struggle for justice: the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

Saint Julian of Norwich

All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well.

One: The Word that is a lamp to our feet and a light unto our path.

All: Thanks be to God who is still speaking.

***Gloria Patri**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, Amen.

Reflection on the Saints

Pastor Kearstin *(she/her)*

Invitation to Light a Candle

***Hymn of the Day** Spiral Songbook #40 "Sanctuary" *(sing twice)*
Deacons will collect prayer request cards during this hymn.

WE RESPOND IN PRAYER AND THANKSGIVING

Prayers of the People & Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

*You are invited to pray in the language & tradition of your choice.
Our Father/Creator, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on Earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts/trespasses.
As we forgive our debtors/those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil,
for Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.*

Prayer Response "Spirit Song"

Words of Offering

The All-Encompassing God has given us responsibility to care for our siblings and for creation. May we respond to the call to glorify God by the work of our hands, the allocation of our resources, and the generosity of our hearts. Let us give joyfully to this sacred work.

Offertory "Spirit Song" – John Wimber, arr. John Carter

***Doxology**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host:
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

***Prayer of Dedication** *(in unison)*

Holy One, we thank you for our abundance and the privilege to share in the flourishing of our community and the world. Bless these gifts and be glorified by our generosity and trust in your renewing power. Amen.

WE GATHER AT GOD'S TABLE OF GRACE

***Communion Hymn** #776 "Let Us Break Bread Together"

The Invitation

One: The invitation is simple: come and eat of the feast.

All: A meal to feed the soul.

One: We receive the bread and juice connected to the ages: to the saints of old who maybe felt unworthy,

All: to the seeker eager to know God,

One: to the teenager who wonders what it's all about,

All: to the child who eats with unburdened faith.

One: Woven into this time, the hopes and tears of generations.

All: There is great joy here.

One: No one is turned away, for God is the host!

Distribution of Elements / Sharing the Meal

As the bread and cup are passed, we ask that you take and hold on to the elements so that we may partake in them together as a community.

Prayer following Communion (in unison)

Thank you, O Christ, for this feast of life. We are fed by your love; we are strengthened by your life. We are sent forth into this world to live into the visions God has laid on our hearts. We are now commissioned to: feed as we have been fed, forgive as we have been forgiven, love as we have been loved. Thanks be to God. Amen.

WE GO TO SERVE

***Sending Hymn** #678 "In the Bulb There Is a Flower"

***Taking the Light into the World**

***Benediction** *Take a posture of openness that feels good for you and receive this blessing.*

May God bless you and keep you, may God make their face to shine upon you and be gracious to you, may God turn their face toward you and give you peace. Go blessed, Beloveds.

Choral Benediction "We Gather Together" vs. 3

Postlude "The Old Hundredth" – J.S. Bach



Announcements

Clangy change collection today will go to support the first responders of North Ridgeville.

November Messenger: Pick up your copy of the November issue of *The Messenger*. Extra copies are available in the front and back of the sanctuary and it is also available for downloading from our website www.fccalive.org.

Fellowship Time: Volunteers are needed to oversee fellowship time after the worship services on **November 24 and December 1, 8, 22 and 29**. Please sign up on the sheet on the table in the front of the sanctuary or in the narthex.

Constitution & Bylaws: Church Council has been working on updating our constitution and bylaws. These proposed changes need to be voted on by active members of the congregation at our Congregational Meeting on Sunday, November 17 after the worship service. The document is available on our website www.fccalive.org under the "Resources" tab and then under the "Documents" section. Paper copies are available on the table at the front of the sanctuary and the narthex. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to anyone listed under Your Church Council on the first page of the document.

Advent Help Needed: Would you be interested in lighting the Advent candles during Advent? We need people to do a short reading and light the candles on December 8, 15 and Christmas Eve. Anyone can sign up. There is a sign-up sheet on the table in the front of the sanctuary.

Minister

Rev. Kearstin Bailey

info@fccalive.org

Christian Ed Director

Mary Karlovec

www.fccalive.org

Music Director

Barb Habecker

<https://www.facebook.com/firstconqucncnr>

This Week's Events

Today	Worship service, 10:30 am / All Saints, Communion & clangy change collection Fellowship hour, after worship service Outreach meeting, after worship service
Nov. 5	Election day Facebook Live prayer service, 7 pm
Nov. 6	Bell choir practice, 6:30 pm / Choir practice, 7:30 pm
Nov. 7	Trustees meeting, 7 pm
Nov. 10	Worship service, 10:30 am (Carla Valles, guest speaker) Pledge cards due Fellowship hour, after worship service



Imagine Together: Vitality

Nicodemus, initially criticized by Jesus, gradually evolves into a vibrant follower. His narrative highlights the importance of spiritual curiosity in maintaining vitality, addressing the tendency for stagnation and fear of change. How could a commitment to curiosity be transformative for us?

The Covid pandemic forced churches to explore new ways of ministry. However, in this post-pandemic moment, many return to familiar patterns of the past. Have we lost our ability to experiment?

The story of Nicodemus serves as a model for gradual transformation, contrasting with more dramatic biblical conversions. As Rev. Dr. S. Chapin Garner notes, "Curiosity led Nicodemus from darkness to light, from ignorance to understanding, from stagnation to vitality. If we want to not only imagine but experience vitality, all we need to do is steward our natural God-given curiosity. Accept invitations. Explore new places. Get to know different people. And when the spirit within us is piqued...trust that prompting is from the Lord, and get excited to not only imagine, but experience, where we will be led!"

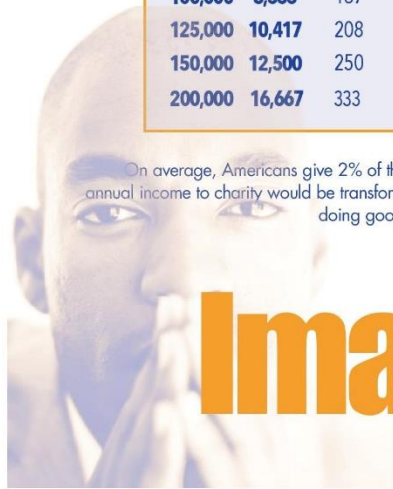
Embracing curiosity can be the key to experiencing and maintaining vitality. How can we steward curiosity in our congregation?

REMINDER: PLEDGE CARDS FOR 2025 ARE DUE BEFORE OR ON NOVEMBER 10.

**CONSIDER YOUR PLEDGE AS A PERCENT
OF YOUR MONTHLY INCOME.**

Annual Income	Monthly Income	2%	3%	4%	5%	10%
20,000	1,667	33	50	67	83	167
25,000	2,083	42	63	83	104	208
30,000	2,500	50	75	100	125	250
35,000	2,917	58	88	117	146	292
40,000	3,333	67	100	133	167	333
45,000	3,750	75	113	150	188	375
50,000	4,167	83	125	167	208	417
60,000	5,000	100	150	200	250	500
75,000	6,250	125	188	250	313	625
100,000	8,333	167	250	333	417	833
125,000	10,417	208	313	417	521	1042
150,000	12,500	250	375	500	625	1250
200,000	16,667	333	500	667	833	1667

On average, Americans give 2% of their income to charity. Giving even 1% more of annual income to charity would be transformative for our congregation and other organizations doing good in our community.



Imagine
Together