

The Messenger

August 2025

The monthly newsletter of First Congregational Church UCC of North Ridgeville

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Acting Chair, Deacons

Karen Dreger

Acting Chair, Outreach

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Roy Dreger
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Treasurer, Secretary

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From the Pastor – Pastor Kearstin (she/her)

Every three years (it used to be two), the United Church of Christ General Synod gathers. This is the largest gathering of our church life together, with delegates representing every area of the country. This year, Synod was held in Kansas City, Missouri! *(see note at the end of this article)*

In the Kansas City Convention Center, there were pastors and lay church folks. There were men, women, non-binary people, and gender-queer folks. There were children, parents, and elders. There were people on food stamps and folks who have a summer home on Martha's Vineyard. Church members came from across the political spectrum and we had around 20 international guests from partner churches. People used wheelchairs and walkers and canes, fidget toys and hearing aids and Loop earplugs to dim the noise. Some folks were cradle-UCC'ers and others had been a part of a dozen other churches before they made their way to us. Many folks follow Christianity and also find meaning in other religions too.

From the outside looking in, Synod as an event should not have worked. We were "too diverse" of a gathering, with too many folks and too different in our lived experiences to ever come together and do the work of the church. And yet, we did. We joined together to pass about a dozen resolutions. One to call for an end to the genocide in Palestine. Another to call on the US to end violence against religious minorities in India. One to create a new coalition for Small Town And Rural (STAR) churches in the UCC. Another to be in full partnership with the United Evangelical Church of Puerto Rico.

We learned together in workshops about the spirituality of generosity, eco stewardship through responsible investing, ending solitary confinement in US prisons, aging as a justice issue, and so much more. We elected new UCC Board members, celebrated our church partners, collected books for a banned books library in Kansas City, and held prayer vigils for Palestine and our trans siblings and all the immigrants detained by ICE.

Let this be a reminder that, despite what partisan news stations say, we are stronger together in our diversity. When we gather across party lines and



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economic brackets and physical abilities, we are able to experience God more clearly and hear Their call more fully.

If you'd like to learn more about General Synod this year, you can check out the photos I posted to our Facebook page. You can also visit www.generalsynod.org and watch videos from the event, read resolutions in their entirety, and explore news articles about our cooperative work.

Sending you every blessing,
Pastor Kearstin

The UCC is a non-hierarchical church, which means that all of our settings are on equal



footing, and none of them can tell one another what must be done. They are all in covenant with each other, however, and work together for the ministry of the church. Our congregations are the core of

the UCC, and geographic groups of congregations are called Associations. Those Associations are then grouped into Conferences. We also have the National setting of the church based in Cleveland, Ohio. And then the General Synod, which is a large gathering with representatives from across the life of the church, who make macro-level decisions about what God is calling us to do.

Astrology 101 will take place on Friday,

August 1 at 7 pm at the church. If you've ever looked up at the moon, or a meteor shower, or a constellation and felt a sense of awe — this is for you. We'll start with the basics of Hellenistic astrology, learning about how it connects to Christianity, what the signs of the Zodiac mean, and what the planets symbolize. This workshop will help us swim in the cosmic waters of creation with more care and attention. RSVP at <https://partiful.com/e/yAeat3Y6Ma35SOKmXAdk>

Extravagant Welcome Toiletry Donations

Do you have a pile of toothbrushes and toothpaste from the dentist, taking up space in your bathroom storage? Do you have a bag of hotel shampoo samples that you still haven't used? Did you buy mini-toiletries for your kids to take to summer camp, but they didn't use them? Bring them to the church during the month of August and we'll put them out in our bathrooms so that folks can take what they need. There are a lot of folks passing through our space during the week (seven AA groups, a 4-H group, and we'll soon host a non-profit!) and we want to make sure that FCC is a safe space where they feel cared for in practical ways.

Moderator's Moment – Kris Dornan

August brings continued summer days, family vacations, and in North Ridgeville, our annual Corn Festival! When I see our community come together to highlight our history and to celebrate our people, schools, and companies, I get reminded of how critical our church is - and more importantly - can be to North Ridgeville. Yes, there are many churches out there to support faith journeys if you fit into certain categories, but only ours celebrates people no matter where they are in life, who they choose to love, and how they identify themselves. I ask each of us to continue to speak up, to be present, and to be out in our community as a light for our church.

Christian Education Corner – Mary Karlovec

August is a big month for Christian Education. A lot of planning for the '25-'26 school year takes place as well as firming up activities for the Fall and Advent. First up is Sunday School, which will begin on **Sunday, September 14. We need volunteers to team teach Sunday School!** Teachers will alternate weeks teaching so you would teach no more than two times a month depending on the month. The curriculum will be provided to you



so that you can plan your lesson at home. **We need teachers for the PreK-2nd, 3rd-6th, and the youth classes.** We also need **volunteers to oversee the nursery** once a month or every six weeks depending on the number of volunteers. **PLEASE consider volunteering for this very important ministry of our church.**

A teacher's meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 9 at 6:30 pm to go over the new curriculum and ideas for planning the lessons.



The clanging change collection in August will support the purchase of school supplies for Community Care. If you would also like to donate supplies, we will also be accepting donations until August 10 so we can get everything to Community Care for distribution. Keep in mind that the Ohio tax exempt period is from August 1-14 which will give you some savings!

Supplies Needed

- 24 count box CRAYOLA crayons
- Elmers school glue
- Elmers glue sticks
- Fiskars kids' scissors
- 70 page spiral wide notebook
- Pkg. wide rule looseleaf paper
- #2 pencils
- highlighters
- 12 pack colored pencils
- cap top erasers
- 10 pack Crayola markers
- Book bags/backpacks

Save the date!

Sunday, August 24 is

"Blessing of the Backpacks Sunday"!

Everyone, including adults, can bring their backpack or tote to be blessed. Everyone will receive a new backpack/tote tag that day! Come join us for this special Sunday, welcoming in the new school year.

Outreach Committee News

Snack items are needed to supplement the lunches that Community Care provides for its young clients during the summer. Some suggestions are: **fruit cups, pudding or Jello cups, Goldfish crackers, fruit snacks, juice boxes, or any non-perishable individually wrapped snack items.** There is a collection box by the elevator in the Sunday school hallway. We will be collecting through mid-August.

Deacons' Desk – Beth Dornan

Recently there has been a lot of curiosity surrounding the possible causes of autism spectrum disorder, particularly the exposures because of environmental issues. However, it is important to ensure that the information you receive regarding autism always comes from a reliable source, as it can be very harmful to those with autism to spread misinformation regarding a disorder you personally do not possess. Exposure to polluted air, and exposure to pesticides, lead, and mercury have been confirmed by scientists to have effects on autism. It is imperative to remember that autism is not directly caused by the environment but influenced by it. The research is ongoing; but in the meantime, be respectful to any individual you meet with autism and take some time out of your day to research the disorder. Curiosity is never a bad thing; it's just important that your questions are being answered by the professionals.

Trustees' Turn – Roy Dreger

The trustees did not have a meeting in July due to not having enough members attend to conduct business.

When I was young my dad would tell me that if you see something that needs to be done, either take care of it or tell someone about it. I blame this heritage for my being easily distracted from whatever I am doing. But it also makes me notice things. Here are a few things that I have noticed that, in my opinion, the church could benefit from.

1. The first thing is the need for a second means of entry/exit from the sanctuary for those with mobility issues. I know this has been looked at and the cost is an issue, but we need to figure something out that will rectify the problem.
2. How about the carpeting? If you look carefully, you may notice that there are issues where the carpeting is pulling apart or is damaged. One particularly bad area is the area in the hallway between the sanctuary and the Winckles room (choir room). Pastor Chris pointed that out as something a visitor would notice right away. Not a particularly good impression.
3. Keeping in mind the visitor's first impression, what do you think someone would think about the peeling paint in the front entryway? The damage was the result of the brickwork needing to be repaired. The bricks have been repaired, but the damage remains; and it is visible when you first enter at the front doors.
4. I think signs in front of buildings make a statement about that business. What do you think our sign says about this congregation? Do you think an LED sign would make a different impression, a better impression? I know it could provide more up-to-date information while being more noticeable.

These are just some things I have noticed. There are other things that I have thought about, such

as air conditioning in various areas, updated kitchen appliances, improvements to the audio system, and sidewalk repair, just to mention a few. Just one problem...finances. There are many parts that make up a congregation and we all play a part in its life. Please consider what part you can fill.

Change of Address

Vonnie Packard
345 Lear Rd. Rm 314
Avon Lake, OH 44012

John & Lynne Petroff
610 Catawba Dr.
Wadsworth, OH 44281



Women's Book Club: All gatherings are at the church at 7 p.m. unless noted otherwise.

August 18: The Silver Ladies of Penny Lane by Dee MacDonald

September 15: The Devil's Food Cake Murder by Joanne Fluke

October 20: The Thursday Murder Club by Richard Osman



With a heavy heart and great sadness we mourn our wonderful church family member, Nancy Franks, who passed away on July 21, 2025.

Nancy was a pillar of our church teaching Sunday school, serving on boards, organizing and decorating events, and creating her wonderful characters/scenery out of cardboard. May God's presence bring comfort to all who knew and loved her. *(Details about a service, ways to support Bob, etc., to come.)*



Please join us & represent First Congregational Church in celebrating the 50th anniversary of the North Ridgeville Corn Festival!

Grande Parade Sunday, August 10

Step off is 1:30 pm

Arrive by 1:15 pm

Wear your church t-shirts!

Parade route is approx. 1.5 miles from Ranger Way north to Center Ridge, west to Root Road, south to Bainbridge Road, east back to Ranger Way. Parade participants lineup will be on Ranger Way. Parking is at the N.R. Service Center (35010 Bainbridge Rd.) – to access, enter Ranger Way from Bainbridge Rd. *Carpooling from the church would be helpful!!*

PLEASE CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE TO LET US KNOW IF YOU PLAN ON WALKING IN THE PARADE!

Birthdays & Anniversaries

8/7	Sandy Chalkwater	8/9	Mike Bier
8/9	Ann Olesen	8/13	Kelsey Styrt
8/14	Will Schupbach	8/17	Cathy Cornman
8/20	Bob Franks	8/20	Lily Dornan
8/30	Troy Schutz	8/31	Valerie Arnold
8/31	Bert & Jody Millar		
8/31	Brandon Green & Nema Saleem-Green		

GREETERS

August	
3	George Beers, Diana Goode
10	Karen Farmer, Teri Loy
17	Worship at So. Central Park
24	Paul Wolanski, Millie Gilly
31	Paula Dudek, Jane Woravka



Potluck snacks and family games

We'll gather after worship on August 3 for a time of playful fellowship with one another! Bring your favorite snacks to share (chips, cookies, a veggie or fruit tray) and a game that you love. We'll spend about an hour playing together and learning new games!

All ages and abilities are welcome!!

Worship & Picnic in the Park

Sunday, August 17

Worship at 11 am with picnic following until 2 pm

North Ridgeville South Central Park pavilion #1
located at east end of Rt. 83 park entrance parking lot

Hamburgers & hot dogs provided!
Bring a dish to share (salads, sides, fruit, chips & dip, dessert, etc.)


Enjoy a wonderful day of fun, food & fellowship with church family & friends!

Pavilion is handicap accessible & located next to restrooms.

Park amenities:

- ✓ Fishing lake (no license required)
- ✓ Splash pad
- ✓ Playground
- ✓ Walking trail
- ✓ Basketball courts
- ✓ Pickleball/tennis courts

PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOU ARE PLANNING TO ATTEND SO WE KNOW HOW MUCH FOOD TO HAVE!

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Astrology 101 7 pm	2 AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6p
3 Outreach 9 am Worship 10:30 am Communion Clangy change collection Potluck snacks & games after worship AA Men 7:30 pm	4 Emergency Preparedness Task Force 6:30 pm AA Women 7 pm	5 CE 7 pm Trustees 7 pm AA 1 st Step 8 pm	6 4-H 7 pm (rain loc.)	7 AA Women 6 pm Al Anon 7:30 pm	8	9 AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6p
10 Worship 10:30 am Fellowship hour Corn Festival parade 1:30 pm AA Men 7:30 pm	11 Council 7 pm AA Women 7 pm	12 Lorain Co. UCC/DOC clergy luncheon 11:30a-2p AA 1 st Step 8 pm	13 4-H 7 pm (rain loc.)	14 AA Women 6 pm Al Anon 7:30 pm	15	16 Newsletter articles due AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6p
17 Worship & picnic at South Central Park 11 am-2 pm AA Men 7:30 pm	18 Women's book club 7 pm AA Women 7 pm	19 AA 1 st Step 8 pm	20	21 AA Women 6 pm Al Anon 7:30 pm	22	23 AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6p
24 Worship 10:30 am Blessing of the Backpacks Fellowship hour AA Men 7:30 pm	25 AA Women 7 pm	26 AA 1 st Step 8 pm	27 Choir picnic at Barb Habecker's home 6 pm	28 AA Women 6 pm Al Anon 7:30 pm	29	30 AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6p
31 Worship 10:30 am Deacons 11:30 am Fellowship hour AA Men 7:30 pm	