

# The Messenger

THE CONGREGATIONAL MEETING TO VOTE ON THE PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS, ELECT OFFICERS, & ADOPT A PRELIMINARY BUDGET FOR 2025 WILL BE HELD ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17 IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE WORSHIP SERVICE. ALL CHURCH MEMBERS ARE ASKED TO ATTEND.

The monthly newsletter of First Congregational Church UCC of North Ridgeville

**November 2024**

**Minister**

Rev. Kearstin Bailey  
[PastorFCCNR@gmail.com](mailto:PastorFCCNR@gmail.com)

**Director, Christian Education**

Mary Karlovec

**Music Director**

Barb Habecker

**Moderator**

Kris Dornan

**Vice-Moderator**

Diana Goode

**Co-Chairs, Christian Education**

Renee Dornan

Kelsey Styr

**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 Beloveds! Over the last month, we've been talking in bible study about our theological stories — what our families and churches taught us about God, as well as how those beliefs have shifted as we've lived our lives. In our online group, I asked folks, "Have you ever been singing a hymn or secular song and had a negative response to the imagery or language? How do you respond when the images and language in a song conflict with your theology?"

It got me thinking about worship a few weeks ago when we sang hymn #436, *Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love*. I chose the hymn because I got the refrain stuck in my head one morning and couldn't stop humming it! But when we began to sing the song as a congregation, I was shocked — this hymn uses some really problematic "master" and "slave" language to describe our relationship to God. The blood drained from my face and I was so embarrassed that I had mistakenly chosen a song so antithetical to my own personal theology! Eek! In the moment, I changed the words to the song as I sang and hoped for the best.

I'll admit, it was not my finest pastoral moment! But this got me thinking — did you know that you can always change the language to a hymn or a reading during our worship together? I mean it! If a hymn says "Lord" and you would rather sing "God", go for it! When we sing the Gloria Patri after the scripture, feel free to change "Father" to "Creator"! The same goes for the Lord's Prayer, the Doxology, and any of the other pieces of liturgy we read on a Sunday morning.

One of the things that I love most about the UCC is that we are a denomination that doesn't use creeds. There is no one set of beliefs that you **have to** agree with in order to be part of this church. Members and visitors at FCC come from a wide variety of religious backgrounds and hold theological beliefs all across the spectrum.

When I write the liturgy and craft each Sunday's worship experience, I try to use expansive and loving language — but it's not always going to resonate with everyone, and that's okay. No matter what words we say, we praise God well by simply joining together in intentional community; if

"When asked if my cup is half-full or half-empty my only response is that I am thankful I have a cup."

SAM LEFKOWITZ



tweaking a few words helps you to feel more settled, empowered, and connected to the worship experience, then please do so! And let me know what changes you make — I would love to hear from you about the words for God that make your soul come alive!

Every blessing,  
Pastor Kearstin

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

Fall Blessings all! As we approach this holiday season, and especially Thanksgiving, it gives me the awesome opportunity to highlight some of the things I'm thankful for this year, and how our church and our church family have been a major part of that!

I'm sure all of you know the year we (the Dornans) had with our Lily and her fight with an eating disorder was something that affected us so deeply. But as we look at Lily now, a full-time school-goer, FCC Confirmand and living her life as close to normal as she is, we are just thankful for prayer, for all of you who supported Susan and I, and just to have you as part of our extended family for us to lean on, cry to, and keep us going!

I'm thankful for our seated pastor, Pastor Kearstin! So much work that we did in preparation, prayer, and consideration has been so richly rewarded through a fresh perspective and wonderful preaching to where we are at as a church and as a community! I'm so excited for what's in store for us!

I'm thankful for our wonderful staff...a group that consistently gives 110% and is the reason why this church has made it through a tough few years of transition and pandemic.

I'm thankful for my wonderful Vice Moderator, Diana Goode, who keeps me focused and does so much for our church that many may not know about!

I'm thankful for the music in our church, and I'm sure we all feel blessed to be led in

music by our amazing do-it-all choir director/organist/music maven Barb!

I know I'm leaving so many others out, but know that you are loved and cherished by me and my family. I'm thankful for a church home that can be a place for my kids and a place for our North Ridgeville community that is Open, Affirming, Loving, and where God is Still Speaking!

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

#### **I am thankful for:**

- The amount of clanging change given each month to support projects and community outreach. The October collection of \$70.75 is going to the UCC's Global Ministries. November's collection will go towards buying supplies for our "Thankful snack baskets for our first responders in North Ridgeville."
- The candy donations to fill the cauldrons that went to the Independence Village for our time with the residents in October. I wish you could have seen their excitement!
- Our youth, who spent two Sundays in October filling the cauldrons with candy one week for the Independence Village and 100 snack bags the next week for an encephalitis conference in Cleveland.
- Everyone who volunteered their cars for Trunk or Treat. This event could not have happened without our members and friends! (pictures are on our website!)
- Our Sunday School teachers who work each Sunday to make their lessons meaningful and relevant.
- Susan Dornan, Renee Dornan and Kelsey Styrt for giving their time to purge, clean, and refresh our nursery/playroom. More changes are coming. We now have a paging system that will be in place so that we can notify parents in worship if their child in the nursery needs them.



- Our adult and teen confirmation mentors who are starting the journey with our confirmands.
- The Board of Christian Education who give so much of their time, talents, and donations for our kids and youth. I could not do it without you!
- And finally, all of your kind words for my recent award. It made it extra special! (Mary was recently inducted into the Elyria City Schools Alumni Hall of Fame.)

### **Blessings and Happy Thanksgiving!**

#### **Wanted for the nursery:**

- ✓ **A gently used Little Tikes dollhouse**
- ✓ **A gently used Little Tikes or Step One play kitchen**

**The ones we have are in need of replacement as they have been "loved" beyond their life span.**

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

As THE BIG DAY - Thanksgiving Day - approaches, the true meaning of the day is often crowded out as our minds are riveted on the monumental decisions and planning required to make the day one we think we can be thankful for.

Thanksgiving is a family day—no doubt about it. For those of us with no close family, it can require a bit of "mood control," a willingness to find the blessings in the day and be grateful for them. Serving those less fortunate is a wonderful way to remind ourselves of our blessings.

The Outreach Committee is offering all of us the opportunity to share our blessings through our annual **Thanksgiving Food Drive for Community Care**, running from now through November 10. The following items are needed: **canned veggies, stuffing mix, instant mashed potatoes, rice, gravy, sweet potatoes or yams, macaroni and cheese.** Drop boxes are located in the narthex, the Sunday school hallway, and fellowship hall.

We contributed \$300 in October to the UCC for Hurricane Helene relief and \$100 each to Community Care and Neighborhood Alliance for their programs for those in need. Details will be coming soon regarding our annual Christmas Giving Tree to benefit those in our community at Christmas.

In these ways, we are sharing our bountiful blessings and practicing "mood control" to recognize that there is a life to be grateful for beyond the Thanksgiving dinner table. How else can you share your bountiful blessings?



#### **Deacons' Desk – Linda Matis**

How??? How is it already November??! Time flies by so quickly. Take the time to do something that makes you happy, even if it's something as little as pausing to look at the beautiful fall colors all around you. The little unimportant things you would love to do (if you ever found the time) can actually be the things that give you the greatest sense of satisfaction and happiness in life. And make sure you take time each day to say, "**Thank you, God, for all the blessings that you have given me!**"

One of the things that makes me happy is volunteering...yes, volunteering. I have been volunteering for organizations – PTA, Band Boosters, high school parent group, church – since my kids were in preschool (and Steven is 32 now!). The ways that I currently volunteer here at the church are by being your treasurer (yep, I am not paid for that position), a deacon, co-chair of the craft show, Diana's "second in command" for the Swiss steak dinner, helping in the nursery, and helping out at many other events.

And you, too, can feel the joy that I feel when volunteering by saying **YES! when asked**

**to serve on one of the church boards and/or help out at an event or on projects at the church or in the community.** Volunteering at our church can have many benefits, including:

- Feeling like part of a community
- Serving Jesus
- Diving deeper into the life of the church
- Satisfying a desire to do for others
- Enabling us to complete our mission
- Recognizing that ministry is all about serving others

And so, along these lines, the Deacons are looking for people who would be willing to do an Advent reading and light the Advent candles one Sunday in December. And we are **always looking for volunteers to be liturgists and oversee fellowship hour** each week.

*<sup>10</sup> God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. <sup>11</sup> Do you have the gift of speaking? Then speak as though God himself were speaking through you. Do you have the gift of helping others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen. 1 Peter 4:10-11 NLT*

### **Trustees' Turn – Roy Dreger**

The trustees met at the beginning of the month; but due to a lack of a quorum, no business was transacted. The **Board of Trustees needs more members**; so if you have an interest in, or want to know more about, how the church budget is handled, please consider becoming a trustee.

The lack of a quorum did not prevent discussion of relevant items. Our custodian, Bruce Griswold, handed in his resignation effective December 31, 2024. Bruce would like to be able to spend more time with his and Jo Ann's (first!) grandchild who lives out of state. Travel time is obviously an issue as is his desire to spoil, I mean spend time with, his granddaughter. The trustees thank him for his

dedication to working for the church and wish him all the best! This turn of events of course means we need to find someone to fill his position. So, if you know someone who might be interested and able to do work around the church, please put us in touch with that person.

There was discussion about the stewardship campaign that began on October 20. A series of short talks have been prepared in addition to weekly bulletin inserts to help you give this challenging issue prayerful consideration when you fill out your pledge card for 2025. And, as always, the trustees are grateful for your financial support of your church.

### **Help Wanted: Custodial position**

5 hours per week with additional 4 hours per week May through October for lawn care & groundskeeping

Regular duties include but are not limited to sweeping & mopping fellowship hall floors; setting up & taking down tables & chairs for coffee hour; keeping entryways and walkways clear of leaves, snow & ice; make repairs as needed; set up & take down and be on-site representative for all non-church member rentals\* (additional pay for rentals).

Must be able to lift 50#.

Contact Roy Dreger, Jack Fitts or church office.





**Women's Book Club:** All gatherings are at the church at 7 pm unless noted.

**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

**Greeters**

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

November	
3	Paul Wolanski, Sara Bowman
10	Lynne Petroff, Jane Woravka
17	Paula Dudek, Karen Farmer
24	Millie Gilly, Diana Goode

**Birthdays & Anniversaries**

- 11/5 Susan Dornan
- 11/11 Denise Speer
- 11/11 Andrew Veliconia
- 11/14 Paul Wolanski
- 11/16 Keith Schoonover
- 11/17 Millie Anderson
- 11/18 Yung Do
- 11/24 Cole Hengartner
- 11/28 Yung & Annie Do



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!



**holiday craft fair**

**First Congregational Church**  
36363 CENTER RIDGE RD.  
NORTH RIDGEVILLE



**DECEMBER 7**  
9 am - 4 pm

**HOMEMADE GIFTS • JEWELRY • ORNAMENTS • HOME DECOR & MORE!**



**Stop in our Cafe for lunch!**



**Craft show volunteer sign up forms will be in the bulletins soon!! Please sign up to help out at this major church fundraiser!**

Head over to our website [www.fccalive.org](http://www.fccalive.org) and click on "Gallery" to see lots of recently added photos!

Church Council has been working for several months on updating our Constitution and Bylaws. (The last major update was done in 2016.) The document with the proposed changes is available on our website [www.fccalive.org](http://www.fccalive.org) under "Resources", or paper copies are available at the church. Please review the document so that you can bring any questions to the **Congregational Meeting on November 17** when church members will vote on the amended constitution.

We realize it is *a lot* of information to review, which is why we making it available well in advance of the meeting. *Please*, take the time to review the proposed amended Constitution and Bylaws and see any Council member to ask questions or get clarification on anything that you are unsure about. *Thank you!*

In this document you will see text that is in ~~bold and has a line through it~~ and text that is in **(bold in parenthesis)**. What this means is:

1. The text that is in ~~bold and has a line through it~~ is the previous text that is to be changed and/or deleted.
2. The text that is in **(bold and in parenthesis)** is the new text that we are proposing to be added.

#### **Your Church Council**

Pastor Kearstin Bailey	Kris Dornan, Moderator	Diana Goode, Vice-Moderator
Krista O'Neill, At-Large	Karen Veliconia, At-Large	Lynne Petroff, Clerk
Linda Matis, Treasurer	Renee Dornan & Kelsey Styr, Co-Chairs, Christian Ed	
Karen Dreger, Acting Chair, Deacons	Edie Phillips, Acting Chair, Outreach	
Roy Dreger & Jack Fitts, Co-Chairs, Trustees	Matt Karlovec, Chair, Pastor Parish	



*Welcome new members,  
Mari Guastella and Mercy McCloskey!*

*From our newest members:*

*The warmth and welcome  
Mari and I have received here in  
this church is remarkable. We are  
delighted to find a community of  
faith dedicated to a better world.  
And here, it's not just nice ideals; so  
many of you are actively--one way  
or another--helping others. It seems  
part of your DNA or culture and  
believe me, you all have not been  
easy to find.*

*Thank you for making room for us,  
Mercy McCloskey & Mari Guastella*

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
 <h1 style="font-family: cursive;">November</h1>					1	2
<b>3</b> <b>All Saints Sunday</b> <b>Worship 10:30 am</b> <b>Communion</b> <b>Clangy change</b> <b>Fellowship hour</b> <b>Outreach mtg. offsite</b> <b>after svc.</b>  AA Men 7:30 pm	<b>4</b> <b>"Get to Know You"</b> <b>Group 7 pm @</b> <b>Lynne Petroff's</b> <b>home</b>  AA Women 7 pm	<b>5</b> <b>Facebook Live prayer</b> <b>service 7 pm</b>    AA 1 <sup>st</sup> Step 8:30 pm	<b>6</b> <b>Bell choir 6:30 pm</b> <b>Choir 7:30 pm</b>    AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	<b>7</b> <b>Trustees 7 pm</b>     AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	<b>8</b>   <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: auto;">           Pr. Kearstin Global Ministries mtg.            Indiana         </div>	<b>9</b>     AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6 pm
<b>10</b> <b>Carla Valles</b> <b>Worship 10:30 am</b> <b>Fellowship hour</b> <b>Pledge cards due</b>  <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: auto;">           Pr. Kearstin Indiana         </div> AA Men 7:30 pm	<b>11</b> <b>Budget mtg. 6:30p</b> <b>Council 7 pm</b>  AA Women 7 pm	<b>12</b> <b>CE 7 pm</b>  AA 1 <sup>st</sup> Step 8:30 pm	<b>13</b> <b>Confirmation</b> <b>class 5-7 pm</b> <b>Bell choir 6:30 pm</b> <b>Choir 7:30 pm</b>  AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	<b>14</b>     AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	<b>15</b>     AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6 pm	<b>16</b> <b>Newsletter articles</b> <b>due</b>  AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6 pm
<b>17</b> <b>Worship 10:30 am</b> <b>Congregational mtg.</b> <b>after worship service</b>  AA Men 7:30 pm	<b>18</b> <b>Women's book club</b> <b>7 pm</b>  AA Women 7 pm	<b>19</b>   AA 1 <sup>st</sup> Step 8:30 pm	<b>20</b> <b>Bell choir 6:30 pm</b> <b>Choir 7:30 pm</b>   AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	<b>21</b>     AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	<b>22</b>     AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6 pm	<b>23</b>     AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6 pm
<b>24</b> <b>Worship 10:30 am</b> <b>Fellowship hour</b> <b>Deacons 11:30 am</b> <b>Council retreat 1-4 pm</b>  AA Men 7:30 pm	<b>25</b>     AA Women 7 pm	<b>26</b>   AA 1 <sup>st</sup> Step 8:30 pm	<b>27</b> <b>Bell choir 6:30 pm</b> <b>Choir 7:30 pm</b>   AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	<b>28</b> <b>Thanksgiving</b> <b>OFFICE CLOSED</b>   AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	<b>29</b> <b>OFFICE CLOSED</b>    AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6 pm	<b>30</b> <b>Decorate sanctuary</b> <b>9 am</b>  AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6 pm