

The Messenger

THE **CONGREGATIONAL MEETING** TO VOTE ON THE PROPOSED EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN & SAFE CONDUCT POLICY, ELECT OFFICERS, & ADOPT A PRELIMINARY BUDGET FOR 2026 WILL BE HELD ON SUNDAY, **NOVEMBER 16** IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE WORSHIP SERVICE. ALL CHURCH MEMBERS ARE ASKED TO ATTEND.

November 2025

The monthly newsletter of First Congregational Church UCC of North Ridgeville

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Roy Dreger

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Linda Matis

From the Pastor – Pastor Kearstin (she/her)

As we head into November, we naturally begin to think of transformation and change. The way the leaves fall to the ground and nourish the soil draws our minds into deeper reflection of the things in our lives that have passed and provided nourishment for who we are today. We might contemplate loved ones who are no longer with us, jobs or relationships that have faded, or even past versions of ourselves that we thought we would have forever. Alas, the only constant in life is change — something that our scripture reminds us of again and again.

As you contemplate the fall days ahead, I encourage you to do so in conversation with the following poem. A mentor of mine shared it with me earlier this year, and it's stuck with me. Read **The Cure** by Alfred Huffstickler on the next page, and then take some intentional time to consider the following questions:

1. What are the two most compelling lines for you in the poem?
2. Journal about a thing that you thought you were over but are not. Where in the ecosystem of your natural body does this thing still reside?
3. What was the shape of your childhood, and how is it still a part of you?
4. When Wisdom (also called the Holy Spirit) reflects on your life, what does She know? What does She say?

As always, I would be honored to converse with you about this poem, your reflections, or anything else that comes up for you. Feel free to email me to set up a time to talk if you would like that.

Every blessing,
Pastor Kearstin



The Cure

by Alfred Huffstickler

We think we get over things.
We don't get over things.
Or say, we get over the measles
but not a broken heart.
We need to make that distinction.
That things that become part of our experience
never become less a part of our experience.
How can I say it?
The way to 'get over' a life is to die.
Short of that, you move with it,
let the pain be pain,
not in the hope that it will vanish
but in the faith that it will fit in,
find its place in the shape of things
and be then not any less pain but true to form.
Because anything natural has an inherent shape
and will flow towards it.
And a life is as natural as a leaf.
That's what we're looking for:
not the end of a thing but the shape of it.
Wisdom is seeing the shape of your life
without obliterating (getting over) a single
instant of it.

Tarot as Christian Discernment: On **Friday November 7 at 7:00 pm** in the fellowship hall. This monthly gathering is for anybody who has ever been curious about tarot, folks who might be interested but hesitant, or those who have a lot of questions! This month, we're going to continue our exploration of the Major Arcana and then read a spread that will help you connect with your deck on a deeper level. All knowledge levels are welcome at this tarot gathering! RSVP here so we know how many tables to set up in the fellowship hall!

<https://partiful.com/e/GdreumgCYJlaKiSTzM4S>

Moderator's Moment – Kris Dornan

Warm Autumn Greetings, Church Family!
As we are still in our stewardship time of year, I wanted to reflect on an opportunity that was presented to us a few months back when we

were enjoying a great presentation from the Living Water Association on Planned Giving.

Have you considered making a planned gift to the church as part of end-of-life planning? What a wonderful way to support our amazing church and ministry. Even for me, I know that talking about end-of-life planning is scary, but I do know that I have a love and passion for what we mean to North Ridgeville; and if there is something that we can do to ensure the future of our community, why not consider it?

If you are interested in planned giving, please reach out to me, and I'll make sure that the process is as easy as possible.

Christian Education Corner – Renee Dornan

It's definitely fall, y'all! We are diving deeper into our Sunday School curriculum and truly enjoying our time with the students. It's a joy to see them each Sunday, growing in faith and enthusiasm through our lessons. This year's theme is "Little Hands and Small Acts Can Change the World." Each Sunday, our Sunday School kids and youth gather together before breaking off into their individual classes. The youth will be focusing on **random acts of kindness** throughout the year — if you have an idea for one, please share it with Mary!

Our **clangy change collection**, held on the first Sunday of every month, will support acts of kindness in our church community. In October, we collected \$104 to donate toward autism research — thank you for your generosity! In November, the collection will go to the **Lake Erie Native American Council**, a Native American-led nonprofit organization that aims to preserve, maintain, and promote Native American culture in Northeast Ohio.



We also want to thank everyone who joined us for our **Annual Trunk or Treat** on

Sunday, October 26. It was a fun-filled event, and we're so grateful to all who participated!

As we move into November, we're in full swing of the "-BER" months — and the holidays are quickly approaching! We know this can be a busy time for everyone, and we're thankful for the time we share together. Here's what's coming up:

- **November 2** – All Saints Sunday
- **November 9** – Veteran's Day Family Game Session (after service)
- **November 16** – Church Congregational Meeting
- **November 30** – First week of Advent

We deeply appreciate everyone's time, talent, and treasures — each of you is a true blessing to our church family.

Happy November, FCC!

Outreach Committee News – Karen Farmer

As THANKS-giving Day approaches, pumpkins are taking over our lives! They're featured in foods, drinks, candles, decor, clothing--you name it! Their overabundance at this time of year is a wonderful symbol of God's bountiful blessings. Serving those less fortunate is a wonderful way to share those blessings and our gratitude.

The Outreach Committee is offering all of us the opportunity to share our blessings through our annual **Thanksgiving Food Drive for Community Care** running through November. This year we are providing "Chicken in a Bag" dinner ingredients as a way for recipients to enjoy an economical holiday meal. Recipe cards will be available in the narthex and sanctuary to include in a gallon Ziploc bag with the ingredients you provide to prepare the dinner casserole (canned chicken, boxed stuffing, instant mashed potatoes, gravy mix, canned green beans and dried cranberries).

We are also contributing \$100 each this month 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 local children at Christmas.

The committee would like to thank all of you for your donations of winter clothing for those in need in Lorain County. Your charity will help many in our community stay warm this winter.

In these ways, we are practicing our THANKS-giving. How else can you practice YOUR THANKS-giving?

Deacons' Desk – Karen Dreger

Not looking to your own interests, but each of you to the interests of the others. – Philippians 2:4 (NIV)

Yesterday (written in October) was such a beautiful fall day, warm and sunny, yellow leaves drifting down to crunch under our feet. "This is our Father's world..."

This morning, while still warm (60's), there is no sun and it is rainy. Soon we will turn the clocks back shortening the daylight hours. I don't mean to sound gloomy but, here's the thing: if you are homebound or mostly homebound, these days can bring on feelings of melancholy or loneliness. Remember our Five Minutes of Kindness? How about getting in touch with someone on our homebound list? Brighten their day with a card, phone call, or visit to let them know we're thinking of them. You don't need to know them to send them a cheery note. Some people on the list are calling each other, so that's a win-win. A list is usually available on the table with the bulletins on Sunday or you can call the office for information.

Also, remember those who have recently lost a loved one. Please take a minute to hold our members up in prayer.

Have a blessed Thanksgiving!

Trustees' Turn – Roy Dreger

There is good news for those who use the elevator. The trustees have approved the installation of an awning over the outside

entrance to the elevator. This project is being paid for by the memorial donations made in honor of and to the memory of Marge Baker. The trustees want to thank her family for making this possible.

The church is changing insurance companies. We are going back to an agency with the UCC Insurance Board, the company we had several years ago. The premiums are lower and they specialize in church insurance. They also offer perks that are of value to some of our church groups.

If you see trustees roaming the church and grounds taking pictures, they are in the process of doing a pictorial inventory. This was done several years ago, but there are things we have purchased that were not around when that inventory was taken. We hope to have it all on one memory card; that will save space and (hopefully) will make access easier should we need to reference it.

Ron Short has been working with the trustees towards replacing the hallway carpeting in the school wing, the hallway leading from the sanctuary to the classroom hall, and down the stairs to the main office. Pastor Chris Nichols made mention of how that was the first thing a visitor sees if they enter from the east entrance. He mentioned that the black spot in the carpeting (by the Winckles Room) was especially noticeable. Trustees would like to thank Ron for his generosity and interest in improving the church's appearance and making it more welcoming to visitors.

Pledge Sunday is fast approaching, so if you haven't made your pledge for 2026, please consider it carefully and turn it in soon. The church budget is based on the pledges made during this period. Thank you for continuing to financially support your church.

From the Treasurer – Linda Matis

We started talking about stewardship earlier than usual this year. We wanted to make

everyone aware that we will not be receiving the little bump of grant money from the Living Water Association after this year. This 3-year grant "for church renewal and development" was negotiated with the Association when we were in the pastoral search process.

Since Pastor Kearstin was hired, the church council has held visioning retreats to determine our goals for the following year. The first year (2024) we had four goals to complete in six months; we completed three of the four. For 2025 we came up with nine goals; we have completed six of them and are working on the other three. On November 1 Council will meet for our third visioning retreat to determine our goals for 2026 and beyond. These goals are not to be completed only by church council members, but by the *whole church community*.

One of our unspoken goals is (always) financial stability. In putting together financial information for a recent meeting with the Living Water Association, I found that we have **lost money eight of the last eleven years**. If we continue this trend, how long will it be until our finances are depleted? Please consider raising your pledge for 2026 so that this trend stops.



	Total Income	Total Expenses	Year End Difference
2014	\$106,575	\$117,023	-\$10,447
2015	\$120,265	\$122,576	-\$2,310
2016	\$123,227	\$130,469	-\$7,241
2017	\$130,964	\$128,704	+\$2,259
2018	\$126,942	\$127,166	-\$233
2019	\$125,696	\$131,456	-\$5,759
2020	\$115,872	\$123,615	-\$7,742
2021	\$128,905	\$123,105	+\$5,800
2022	\$154,822	\$155,454	-\$631
2023	\$161,221	**\$119,322	+\$41,899
2024	\$158,048	\$159,870	-\$1,821

**In 2023 our expenses were so low because we had Pastor Chris Nichols as our part-time bridge interim.

All Saints Sunday: This memorial has roots in the medieval church: All Saints Day was begun by Pope Boniface IV in 609 to remember the virgin Mary and all the martyrs. It was officially designated on the church calendar in 837 to be celebrated on November 1. By the thirteenth century it was a fixture on the church's calendar. Nowadays, it is common for churches to celebrate on the first Sunday in November. During our worship on **November 2** we will lift up the five members of FCC who passed away during the last year. There will be candles for folks to light to remember lost loved ones as well.



Family Game Day: Mark your calendars for Sunday, November 9 for another fun-filled family game day. After everyone grabs snacks, we will gather in the fellowship hall for some **BINGO** — come with your competitive spirits and joyful energy!

Advent Begins: We will transition from the Christian liturgical season of Ordinary Time (green altar cloths) to Advent (purple altar cloths) on Sunday, November 30. Please join us to celebrate the first Sunday of Advent as we light the Hope candle and begin our journey to Christmas!



Decorate the Sanctuary for

Christmas: On Saturday, November 29 beginning at 9 am we will decorate the sanctuary for the holidays. Please come help if you are able. The more people we have, the quicker it will go.



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

November 17: Everyone in My Family has Killed Someone by Benjamin Stevenson (note: book club acknowledges this is not a very nice title; it's a mystery)

December 15: Comfort and Joy by Kristin Hannah



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

GREETERS

November	
2	Millie Gilly, Sara Bowman
9	Paula Dudek, Teri Loy
16	Jane Woravka, George Beers
23	Diana Goode, Karen Farmer
30	Paul Wolanski, Millie Gilly
December	
7	Sara Bowman, Paula Dudek
14	Teri Loy, Jane Woravka
21	George Beers, Diana Goode
24 (7 pm)	
28	Karen Farmer, Paul Wolanski

Feel the joy of helping the church 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

Contact the church office for more information on ways you can **feel the joy** of volunteering!



Copies of the proposed **Emergency Response Plan** and revised **Safe Conduct Policy & Procedures** are available at the church on Sundays or by stopping by the church office for you to **review before the upcoming Congregational Meeting** on November 16. These are important documents that we will vote on at the meeting so please **take the time to read them** and bring any questions to the Congregational Meeting.

A festive poster for a holiday craft fair. The top section has a red background with a green Christmas tree and blue ornaments on the left, and a green background with a white snowflake pattern and a waving Santa Claus on the right. The title "holidaycraft fair" is written in a green cursive font, with "holiday" in green and "craft fair" in red. Below the title, a red banner on the left contains the text "DECEMBER 6 9 AM - 4 PM" in white. To the right of the banner is a penguin wearing a Santa hat and holding a candy cane. Further right, the text "First Congregational Church" is in blue, followed by "36363 Center Ridge Rd. North Ridgeville" in blue. Below this, a red banner contains the text "HOMEMADE GIFTS • JEWELRY • ORNAMENTS • HOME DECOR & MORE!" in white. The bottom section has a blue background with a large white snowflake and smaller white snowflakes on the left, and a yellow background with the text "Stop in our Cafe' for lunch!" in black and a snowman holding a red heart on the right. A small watermark "Made with PosterMyWall.com" is visible at the bottom left of the blue section.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
November 						1 Council Retreat 1-4p AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6pm
2 Outreach 9 am Worship 10:30 am All Saints Sunday Communion Clangy change collection Fellowship hour Pledge cards due AA Men 7:30 pm	AA Women 7 pm	4 CE 7 pm Trustees 7 pm  AA 1 st Step 8 pm	5 Handbells 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm	6 AA Women 6 pm Al Anon 7:30 pm	7 Tarot 7 pm	8 AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6pm
9 Worship 10:30 am Family games BINGO AA Men 7:30 pm	10 Council 7 pm AA Women 7 pm	11 AA 1 st Step 8 pm	12 Handbells 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm	13 AA Women 6 pm Al Anon 7:30 pm	14	15 AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6pm
16 Worship 10:30 am Congregational meeting Newsletter articles due AA Men 7:30 pm	17 Women's book club 7 pm AA Women 7 pm	18 AA 1 st Step 8 pm	19 Handbells 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm	20 AA Women 6 pm Al Anon 7:30 pm	21 Pastor Parish meeting 6 pm @ Matt Karlovec's	22 AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6pm
23 Worship 10:30 am Fellowship hour? AA Men 7:30 pm	24 AA Women 7 pm	25 AA 1 st Step 8 pm	26 Handbells 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm	27 Thanksgiving OFFICE CLOSED AA Women 6 pm Al Anon 7:30 pm	28 OFFICE CLOSED 	29 Decorate sanctuary 9 am AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6pm
30 1 st Sunday of Advent Worship 10:30 am Fellowship hour? Deacons 11:30 am Clear out classrooms AA Men 7:30 pm						