

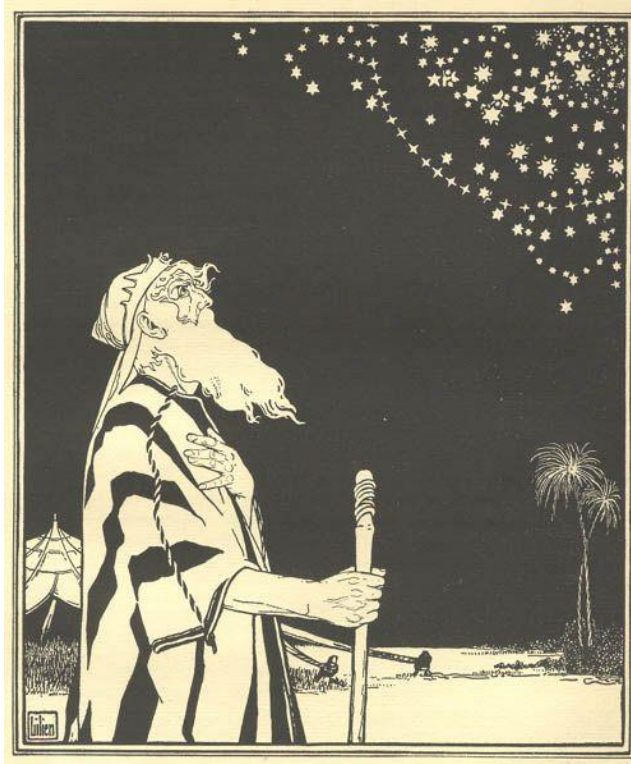


To share faith, hope & love with all
First Congregational Church

United Church of Christ

36363 Center Ridge Rd., North Ridgeville, OH 44039

440-327-2921 ~ www.fccalive.org



March 16, 2025

**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 *Enfleshed's Liturgy that Matters* project and the *UCC's Worship Ways*.

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**SERVICE of WORSHIP AND PRAISE**

**Second Sunday in Lent**

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

***WE GATHER AS GOD'S PEOPLE***

**Prelude** "The Cross" arr. Linda M. Lamb ("Near the Cross" by Wm. H Doane) Handbell Choir

**Ringling of the Bell**

**Welcome and Announcements** We welcome you to worship this sabbath day.

**Choral Introit** "Lord of the Dance" vs. 2

**Five Minutes of Kindness**

**One Great Hour of Sharing Mission Moment**

**\*Call to Worship**

One: Gather us in, Creator of All!

**All: Protect us under your wings!**

One: Sunlight, rest, open-air, stargazing, peace—

**All: these are our dreams!**

One: Keep a watchful eye on us Mothering, Protecting God.

**All: Your children long to be free.**

One: Your creations long for safety and stability.

**All: Protect us under your skies!**

**\*Opening Hymn** #53 vs. 1 "Let All Things Now Living"

**\*Passing of the Peace**

**\*Prayer of Transformation and New Life** (*in unison*)

Loving Protector, forgive us when we wander away from you. Forgive us, when our own fears draw our attention away from you. Help us to act, not from anxiety, but from faith in your certain presence, like the stars in the sky. Help us to slow down and recognize you within and around us.

**\*Words of Grace** (*in unison*)

This is the good news! No matter how far from God our questions or anxieties take us, God wishes to draw us back, all His creations under His night sky. Receive God's embrace and trust in the sacred assurance that we are forgiven. Amen.

**Ministry of Music** "God So Loved the World" – John Stainer

***WE HEAR GOD'S WORD***

**Scripture Reading** Genesis 15:1-6

1 After these events, the word of God came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram! I am your shield; I will make your reward very great." 2 Abram said, "But my Sovereign, My God, what good are these blessings to me, so long as Sarai and I will die in disgrace? My only heir is a foreigner who lives in my household, Eliezer of Damascus." 3 Since you have given me no offspring," Abram continued, "an attendant in my house will be my heir." 4 Then the word of God came to Abram and said, "This person will not be your heir. Your heir will be of your own flesh and blood." 5 Then God took Abram outside and said, "Look up at the sky and count the stars, if you can! As many as that, you will have for descendants." 6 Abram believed God, and God accounted it to Abram as righteousness.

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.



**Sermon** *Visio Divina* with Pastor Kearstin (she/her)

**\*Hymn of the Day** #57 vs. 1 & 2 "All Things Bright and Beautiful"

*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** "Come and Find the Quiet Center"

**Words of Offering**

We gather our shared resources today, co-creating networks of care. Together our simple and soulful acts have the power to reverberate love. Come and give joyfully and generously.

**Offertory** "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" – Lowell Mason

Handbell Choir

**\*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)*

This Lenten season, tune us to your wisdom, O God. Unroot within us individualism. Plant us in love for the Wonderful Whole. Bolster our spiritual fortitude. Connect us to pleasure and play.

Bless our offerings to these dreams and this work in the world. Amen.

***WE GO TO SERVE***

**\*Sending Hymn** #45 vs. 1 & 3 "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing"

## \*Taking the Light into the World

### \*Benediction

Go in the faith of Abraham, who connected with God through the cosmic creations. Go in the footsteps of Jesus, devoted to the work of love. Go in the mystery of the Spirit, delighted by creativity and connection. Go protected by God—our Hope, our Creator, our Connector. Go blessed, Beloveds.

**Choral Benediction** "Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross"

**Postlude** "Rondeau" – Jean-Joseph Mouret



Orfelina Portillo is an agricultural technician working with families in northern Honduras. She teaches sustainable approaches to growing crops; monitors water projects; shows women in the community how to prepare more nutritious meals for their families; and leads workshops for things like creating organic fertilizers and sprays. Your contributions to One Great Hour of Sharing connect those who are doing ministry—leaders who are empowered to form partnerships to create programs like Project Green, where Orfelina shares her knowledge and skills to address food security, thanks to

Church World Service (CWS) and the Mennonite Social Action Commission (CASM). Orfelina has been light for communities in the Santa Bárbara region for 16 years—sharing her skills side-by-side with over 750 families. As a hands-on leader, Orfelina is often seen carrying sacks of food, delivering supplies, checking on crops and animals. Orfelina supports and encourages her communities—bringing God-colors to those seeking to improve their lives and support their families. Order Additional OGHS Materials at Orfelina proclaims, "This is what I am passionate about: teaching. My profession is a very important part of my everyday life. My work is my joy...I am part of the strong hand that feeds the world." Through your gift to One Great Hour of Sharing, Orfelina is empowered to be the light for her region. She is making a difference, transforming communities, and spreading God's light and love.

**One Great  
HOUR  
OF SHARING**

For over 75 years, the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering (OGHS) has been helping American and Canadian Christians bring God's hope and healing to hurting people domestically and around the world.

### Announcements

**Deathcare Conversation:** 'Tis the season (of Lent) to join us during fellowship time for a conversation on deathcare TODAY. Lent reminds us that we are made of dust, and to dust we shall return. Pastor Kearstin will have copies of her Holistic Deathcare Planning Guide available and we'll take some time to think about end-of-life wishes and memorial plans. It's never too early to start thinking about the end. This conversation will be casual and nourishing, not scary and depressing.

**Potluck and Family Game Day:** Since our potluck was cancelled in February due to the weather, we've rescheduled it for Sunday, March 23. We'll gather after the service in fellowship hall to share a meal then head upstairs to the Sunday school wing for family-friendly games. Feel free to bring your favorite game or an extra deck of cards with you. **BRING A DISH TO SHARE BASED ON THE FIRST LETTER OF YOUR LAST NAME: A–F: salads/sides G–O: main dishes P–Z: desserts**

**Seeking Donations of Picture Frames:** Pastor Kearstin is slowly but surely working on a gallery wall in her office and in the hallway of the education wing. If you have any unused frames sitting around your house, or if you see some funky ones on sale at Goodwill, we would love to use them to show off a variety of art!

**SAVE THE DATE!** Easter Egg Hunt - Saturday, April 12 from 3-4:30 pm. Donations of wrapped candy to fill the (approx.. 900) eggs are needed by April 1.

**NR Community Care Soup for the Spirit** - April 26, 2025, Doors open at 6 pm. Ticket includes dinner & 2 drink tickets. VFW – 6805 Lear Nagle, N.R. Visit [www.nrcommcare.org](http://www.nrcommcare.org) to purchase tickets.

**Cake Walk:** Join us for a fun and delicious CAKE WALK to benefit our youth! April 6 in fellowship hall following worship. Cake baker sign-up sheet located outside of Mary's office. Tickets are \$1.00 each, \$5.00 for 7 for participants, \$5.00 for 10 for bakers/donors (available for purchase on day of event). Proceeds will benefit our youth on their mission trip to Lotts Creek this summer.

**Pastor**

Rev. Kearstin Bailey

[info@fccalive.org](mailto:info@fccalive.org)

**Christian Ed Director**

Mary Karlovec

[www.fccalive.org](http://www.fccalive.org)

**Music Director**

Barb Habecker

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

**This Week's Events**

|          |                                                                                                                                                         |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Today    | Worship service, 10:30 am<br>Fellowship hour, after worship service<br>Holistic deathcare discussion, during fellowship hour<br>Newsletter articles due |
| March 17 | Women's book club, 7 pm                                                                                                                                 |
| March 19 | Handbell choir practice, 6:30 pm / Choir practice, 7:30 pm                                                                                              |
| March 23 | Worship service, 10:30 am<br>Church potluck and family game day, after worship service                                                                  |



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