

The Messenger

August 2026

The monthly newsletter of First Congregational Church UCC of North Ridgeville

Minister

Rev. Kearstin Bailey
PastorFCCNR@gmail.com

Director, Christian Education

Mary Karlovec

Music Director

Barb Habecker

Moderator

Kris Dornan

Vice-Moderator

Diana Goode

Chair, Christian Education

Kelsey Styrt

Chair, Deacons**Chair, Outreach**

Edie Phillips

Co-Chairs, Trustees

Roy Dreger
Jack Fitts

Treasurer, Secretary

Linda Matis

From the Pastor – Pastor Kearstin (she/her)

Last month I preached on the importance of caring for creation, and how one way to do this was to treat the land around us as an altar. This sermon was inspired by the story of Jacob dreaming of a stairway to heaven, and then when he wakes, he builds an altar and pours oil on the stones to bless the ground that allowed him to connect with God in the dream realm. This is a continuation of what I encouraged our community to do in the spring — paying attention to a particular plant and being attentive to its growth.

Thinking of the world around us as an altar is a way to expand on our intentionality from the spring. After all, altars include many different components, not just one. The altar in the sanctuary holds an altar cloth, candles, flowers, a bible, and other seasonal things. In the same way, thinking about the Earth as an altar invites us to widen our scope — to look at the plant we paid attention to in the spring, and to also notice what grows near it, or what might have roots linked with it deep underground.

If you'd like more ideas for connecting with the sacred in the mundane, I encourage you to check out Barbara Brown Taylor's book, An Altar in the World. It's a wonderful exploration of how we can connect with God beyond the church walls and outside of Sunday services; it's an invitation to orient our whole lives towards God, not just one hour a week. In the book, Taylor shares meaningful ways to discover the sacredness within the small things like walking, working, and prayer. She also shows how ordinary tasks can be a chance to meditate if you take time to notice the sights, smells, and sounds around you. Her work is accessible, comforting, and supportive no matter where you find yourself on your spiritual journey.

As always, if you'd like to discuss altars, the magic in the mundane, or where you notice God in everyday life, I would love to set up a time to chat and connect.

Every blessing,
Pastor Kearstin



Moderator's Moment – Kris Dornan

Happy August, Church Family!

A theme I've taken from some of the last few Sundays, as well as our trip to Lotts Creek, was the idea of how we may be the only Christ that others may see. For background, I grew up in many protestant churches that, in reality, forced a type of witnessing on its parishioners, sometimes to a point that it could feel forced. As I've grown up, and as I've listened to God "still speaking" to me, I feel that sharing the light in us doesn't have to be a forced conversation, it could be a moment in time, it could be a smile at the right time to the right person, it could be a random act of kindness that we've highlighted this year. Think about this today. Instead of worrying how you can share your faith with someone, be aware of every moment that you can use to share your light with someone else!

Christian Education Corner – Mary Karlovec

August is here and that means it is time to start gearing up for the 2026-2027 Sunday School year! **This year we are going back to Sunday School every Sunday** so the Board of Christian Education needs your help in order to make this a successful year. **We need the following help:**

1. **Four adults who are willing to work on a rotation basis once a month in the nursery.** We currently have three little ones who on any given Sunday are in the nursery. You will need to have a background check on file or get one, which is easy to do and the Board of CE will pay for the cost if needed.
2. **TWO Sunday School teachers for each of the following classes who are willing to rotate on an every other week basis.**
 - a. Preschool-Kindergarten: there are currently 5-6 kiddos for this class
 - b. Grades 1-3: there are currently 3 kiddos for this class

- c. Grades 4-6: there are currently 6 kiddos for this class
- d. Grades 7 and above: there are currently 5 youth for this class

Curriculum, supplies and training will be provided. A **teacher information session** will be held on Tuesday, **September 8 at 6:30 pm** in the church school wing. It will last no more than an hour.

This is an important ministry in our church so PLEASE consider volunteering for this important ministry. You can contact me at cedirector@fccalive.org or talk to me on any Sunday.

Sunday School will start on Sunday, September 13 with a fun "Welcome Back-Getting to Know You Sunday". Sunday School information forms will be sent via mail and email to parents around August 15. Please fill out the form and return to me before September 13. We must have these forms on file for each child for their safety.

On **Sunday, August 23** we will be worshiping at South Central Park with a picnic to follow (see info at end of newsletter). There will be activities/crafts for the kids to do during the worship so plan on attending!

One of the many things I love about our congregation is your support of the clangy change collection on the first Sunday of each month. In June, I delivered peanut butter and jelly to Community Care for their summer lunch program. They were very grateful for the donation. In July, our clangy change was used to purchase snacks for N.R. police and fire departments. They were beyond thrilled to get the overflowing bags of snacks. I cannot begin to share with you their thanks. In fact, the fire department took the time to make a Facebook post on their page. Please read it and you will understand why clangy change is an important mission for our church.

From the North Ridgeville Fire Department Facebook page: "A huge THANK YOU to the

wonderful kids and youth from First Congregational Church UCC for stopping by and delivering an incredible assortment of snacks to our firefighters! Your kindness, generosity, and thoughtfulness truly mean a great deal to all of us. Gestures like yours remind us how fortunate we are to serve such a caring and supportive community. We know the time and effort that went into putting everything together, and we sincerely appreciate your generosity. These snacks will definitely keep our crews fueled during long shifts and emergency calls! From everyone at the North Ridgeville Fire Department, thank you for your support and for thinking of us. We are honored to serve a community with such amazing young people.



**Sunday, August 16 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 – Karen Farmer

Did you know that, on average, according to the Trivial Pursuit game, we speak 4800 words daily? As I type this article, my thoughts have wandered from the written words to my spoken ones. Have they been kind? Have they been loving? Have I comforted someone...reassured another...encouraged...or coaxed a smile?

The Outreach Committee spoke its support through words and deeds to Community Care as it shared the bounty provided by the congregation for its summer lunch program and donated \$100 each to Community Care and Neighborhood Alliance, as well. We were overwhelmed with your generosity to the summer lunch mission.

Thanks to your participation, the Dine to Donate event at the Avon Commons Red Robin restaurant netted \$251.49. Some people, who were unable to go to the restaurant that day, donated additional funds at a later time. We are deeply grateful for your support of that event. The proceeds were used to defray the cost of sending Mary and Kris on the Lotts Creek mission. We also wish to express words of thankfulness for your contributions to the UCC Strengthen the Church campaign (\$129).

God's Word has much to say about words: how we are to comfort one another with them, and that we are accountable for every idle word. Let our 4800 words today count for something that spreads God's message of love.

Deacons' Desk – Ben Dornan

As we enjoy the warmth of summer, it's a wonderful reminder that faith, like golf, isn't about having a perfect swing. It's about getting back up after the ball lands in the rough! Thankfully, God doesn't keep scorecards the way golfers do. He offers grace, encouragement, and new opportunities each day. As a church family, may we continue to support one another, celebrate life's blessings. And remember that while we don't hit every shot perfectly, God is always walking the course with us.

Wishing everyone a joyful and blessed summer!

Trustees' Turn – Roy Dreger

The Trustees did not meet in July but there have been some recent developments that are newsworthy. The church received some generous donations as "seed money" towards the purchase of a new digital sign for the front of the church. While the donations were sizable enough to start a drive for a new sign, they are not enough for the entire project; the rest of the funds need to come from the congregation. These donations represent about one-half to one-third of the total price. I am in the process

of getting estimates, but I have questions about what options to include in the sign, and there are many. These include the size of the message part of the sign, what style base would be the best, etc. Since the options might change after consulting with the trustees and others in the congregation, the quotes are not set in stone and can be changed up or down depending on the options. If you have an idea of what you would like to see in a new sign, please write it down and give it to a trustee or put it in the offering plate.

I want to add a caution here. Our yearly budget is behind significantly, and it covers the day-to-day operations. So please do not short your pledge by giving pledge money to a project, whether it be the sign, project uplift or any other separate item. Your donations of any kind are appreciated; but, as I've heard it said, please do not rob Peter to pay Paul!



Handbell & Chancel Choirs Return in September

Do you love music? Did God give you that special gift of music and you want to let it out in some way? Sharing that gift with the congregation is a perfect way to do just that! Don't worry if you are not a trained musician or singer; none of us are. We simply enjoy sharing the gift of music that God has given us. We are welcoming, patient, and willing to help if you need it.

Practices are on Wednesday evenings (**beginning on Sept. 2**) with the handbells at 6:30 p.m. and the chancel choir immediately afterward at 7:30 p.m. Both choirs need new members. We would love for you to join us!

On Wednesday, August 26 there will be a combined choir picnic at 6 p.m. at Barb Habecker's home. (See Barb for directions.)

GREETERS

August	
2	Sara Bowman, Paul Wolanski
9	George Beers, Diana Goode
16	Millie Gilly, Teri Loy
23	Karen Farmer, Jane Woravka
30	Paula Dudek, Sara Bowman



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

August 17: Theo of Golden by Allen Levi

September 21: Dinosaurs by Lydia Millet



8/7	Sandy Chalkwater	8/9	Mike Bier
8/13	Kelsey Styr	8/17	Teri Loy
8/20	Bob Franks	8/20	Lily Dornan
8/30	Troy Schutz	8/31	Valerie Arnold
8/31	Jody & Bert Millar		
8/31	Nema Saleem-Green & Brandon Green		

Baptism of
Hallie Marie
Uhl
July 19, 2026





Join us at South Central Park for Sunday worship and a picnic following on August 23.

We will be in **pavilion #5** this time – not pavilion #1 where we have been for the last worship services and picnics.

Pavilion #5 is located right next to the Splash Pad so parents can watch over their children playing and still enjoy being with church family and friends.

Pavilion #5 is still accessible from the parking lot off of Route 83 and close to the restrooms.



The freezer is packed with meals ready to go to those in need!

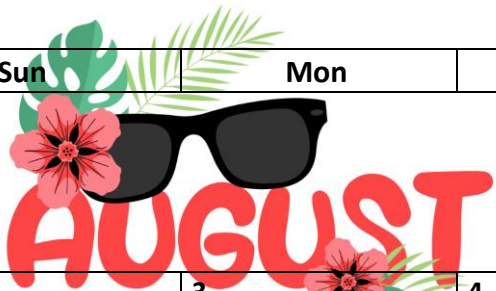


Meal Ministry

In a letter to the congregation Pastor Kearstin said, “We can’t do everything for one another, but we can show up meaningfully where it is most needed”. And show up, you have!

When asked for help to create a “meal ministry” for some church families in need, you all stepped up to the plate! We received monetary donations, people to deliver meals, donations of meals, and volunteers to help package up the prepared meals. So far, we have been able to provide meals for Jack and Betty Fitts and Nancy Findlay’s son and sister for the past three weeks. And a group gathered at the church on July 27 and packed up 83 meals to be taken to those in need in the coming weeks!

“Just as we work for love, justice, mercy, and wholeness in the wider world, we do this same work on a micro level here in our community. We are a resurrection people, deeply grounded in the steady love of a God who cares for us abundantly. The work of caring for one another is incredibly sacred and important.” Thank you to all who have helped so far and to those who will help in the future when we need you!!

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 AA Women 9 am
2 Outreach 9 am Worship 10:30 am Communion / clagy change Fellowship hour? AA Men 7:30 pm	3  AA Women 7 pm	4 CE 7 pm Trustees 7 pm AA 1 st Step 8 pm	5 4-H 7 pm (rain loc.)	6 AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	7 	8  AA Women 9 am
9 Worship 10:30 am Fellowship hour?  AA Men 7:30 pm	10 Council 6 pm AA Women 7 pm	11 AA 1 st Step 8 pm	12 4-H 7 pm (rain loc.)	13 AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	14	15 AA Women 9 am
16 Worship 10:30 am Blessing of the Backpacks Fellowship hour? Newsletter articles due AA Men 7:30 pm	17 Women's book club 7 pm AA Women 7 pm	18 Pr. Kearstin off AA 1 st Step 8 pm	19	20 AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	21	22 AA Women 9 am
23 Worship & picnic at So. Central Park 10:30 am AA Men 7:30 pm	24 AA Women 7 pm	25 AA 1 st Step 8 pm	26 Choir picnic 6 pm @ Barb Habecker's home	27 AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	28	29 AA Women 9 am
30 Worship 10:30 am Deacons 11:30 am Fellowship hour AA Men 7:30 pm	31 Worship planning mtg. 10 am AA Women 7 pm	Handbell choir (6:30 pm) & chancel choir (7:30 pm) practices begin on Wednesday, September 2. Sunday school begins on September 13. Pastor Kearstin will be off that Sunday on vacation so we're hoping Carla Valles will be available to preach for us! Handbell choir skit to be performed during worship on Sunday, September 20. Also on September 20, worship at Independence Village at 2 pm.				