

The Messenger

The monthly newsletter of First Congregational Church UCC of North Ridgeville

April 2024

Minister

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Chair, Outreach

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From the Pastor – Pastor Kearstin (she/her)

Welcome to April, beloveds! Easter Sunday has passed, but the Liturgical season of Eastertide is here for the whole month. The Christian liturgical year is a Christian way of keeping time that focuses on the stories of Jesus and the stories of the people of God. It is a counter-cultural approach to thinking about time that can help us step out of the Gregorian flow and step into a seasonal and spiritual flow. The liturgical year calls our attention to the great teachings of our faith and celebrates the ongoing presence of God, Christ, and Spirit in our lives.

The Easter season is a time to intentionally celebrate the story of Jesus' resurrection and continued presence with us. Easter is the oldest feast in the history of Christianity and each Sunday that we gather, we celebrate the Easter truth of resurrection — but we are especially intentional about that during this liturgical season. Eastertide reminds us that we are people of the Passion narrative, yes, but that is not all that we are, nor is that the core of who we are. Instead, as Sister Joan Chittister reminds us, "We are an Alleluia people. We are also the followers of the Light that shines beyond the grave. We are not alone."

This month, let the light of the Easter season remind you that death is not the end, and that there is no suffering from which we cannot rise if we live a life centered in Jesus and focused on God. In this spirit, there are a number of things happening in the life of the church throughout April that celebrate the joy of new life! On April 16 there will be an ecumenical faith and climate forum, on the 21st we'll have our Cake Walk, on the 28th there will be a pop-up One World Shop, every Monday I'll be hosting a virtual co-working hour, and much, much more. I encourage you to explore this newsletter with open hearts to what the Spirit might be calling you to.

Additionally, April is also a full month for our Abrahamic siblings in faith; to be good and faithful neighbors at this time of year, the following dates may be helpful for you to know. The Muslim month of Ramadan goes until April 9, with their Eid feast celebration on April 10. Ramadan is a month of intensive focus on God through prayer, fasting, time with family, and community care. You can wish the Muslim community “Ramadan Kareem” (Happy Ramadan). Our Jewish friends will also celebrate Passover from April 22 through April 30. Passover is a major Jewish holiday that celebrates the exodus narrative in the Hebrew Bible. It commemorates the ancient Israelite’s escape from slavery and migration out of Egypt. Temples will hold Seder dinners to commemorate the story of liberation. We hold our fellow People of the Book in our hearts and prayers as they too celebrate the steadfast love of God in different ways this season.

May the month of April bless you in soft and tender ways, and may you feel the presence of the Spirit accompanying you through the arrival of spring.

Sending you every blessing,
Pastor Kearstin

EARTH DAY EVENT with DOC IN ELYRIA

The Washington Avenue Christian Church Disciples of Christ in Elyria has invited us to attend an inspiring and transformational event focused on ecological justice. They will be streaming the National Faith + Climate Forum and have asked us to join them for purposeful discussions, practical workshops, and opportunities for creation care and climate activation. The Forum takes place on April 16, 2024, from 12 pm to 5:15 pm. You can register for FREE by going to

<https://nationalfaithandclimateforum.org>, filling out the registration fields, selecting the “Attend in person at a designated host location” ticket type, then select their location. Pastor Kearstin will be in attendance and would love to have others join! You can email her with any questions at pastorFCCNR@gmail.com.

DIGITAL WEEK AHEAD PREP

Do your Monday’s feel more hectic than you’d like, but no matter what you do it always seems like a whirlwind? Could you use a little support and gentle accountability as you plan for your week ahead? Are you neurodivergent and find that body-doubling is the only way you can reliably get things done? Do you want a low-stress low-investment community to hold you & cheer you on every Monday morning? If any (or all) of those sound like you, you should join Monday morning **Week Ahead Prep with Pastor Kearstin!** Every Monday from 10 am to 11 am we’ll gather on Google Meet and Instagram Live to support one another as we kick off the week. In the past, we’ve had stay-at-home parents, small business owners, faith leaders, and folks with flexible office jobs join in. It’s like co-working, but with a bit more intention! Click [HERE](#) to join on Google Meet, or click [HERE](#) to watch via Pastor Kearstin’s Instagram Live on Monday. You can email her with any questions at pastorFCCNR@gmail.com.

Moderator’s Moment – Kris Dornan

Happy Spring to our church family!! Although Spring in the Cleveland area can evolve between Winter and Summer even on a daily basis, I’m so thankful for the renewal I’m feeling in our church based on

our new seated pastor, and the new energy and optimism that it provides!!

I just want to implore us as a church to really take advantage of this energy not only while we are in church together, but also in our daily lives and in our natural involvement during the week outside of our church! In church, that could mean that it is a welcome to a new visitor to our church (which seems to be happening most Sundays lately!!) with a quick invite to get to know us more during fellowship time. Outside of church, if you feel so inclined to tell others about what's happening at FCC North Ridgeville, please do so! Let us shine the light of our church and the direction of our church, and the firm belief that God is still speaking to our community!

God bless you and keep you all!

Christian Education Corner – Mary Karlovec

Happy Spring! Hopefully winter is behind us and we can start to enjoy the beautiful changes that God gives us in Spring! With the last Sunday of March, the Lenten season is behind us and we are looking forward to Pentecost in May.

March was a very busy month for the Board of Christian Education. However, we could not have done the three major projects - the Easter egg hunt, the 40 birthday bags for 40 days, and the homebound Easter baskets - without your support. As I write my newsletter article, we have 56 birthday bags ready to go to Community Care, eight Easter baskets delivered to homebound members, and over 400 eggs for the Easter egg hunt! Once again, your outpouring of continuing support for our projects is heartfelt. A huge thank you to Sandy Chalkwater for filling all the eggs again this year and everyone who donated to the three Lenten projects.

The excitement is building within the youth for their upcoming mission trip to Lotts Creek which is June 21-28. We have three upcoming fundraisers happening in April and May to help defray the cost of the trip. First up is on **April 21** after worship: we are reviving the **Cake Walk** from many years ago! Basically we ask people to donate cakes that will be on display after worship. People buy tickets to walk the cake walk and win a cake. See the attached flyer and bulletins for more information.



The second event, called “**Junk in the Trunk**”, is on **May 18** from 9 am to 2 pm. You can rent a space and a half in the parking lot for \$20 to sell your “treasures” from your trunk and parking space. It is like a rummage sale and flea market all rolled into one! Registration for your space will open April 5. This is open to anyone interested in having a space so share with your family and friends. We hope to have a food truck here to support the event as well.

Our third event is a “Dine and Donate” at a place and on a date still to be determined. Be looking on our Facebook page and in the Sunday bulletin for date and place very soon!

This year, the cost for each youth and/or adult to attend the mission trip is \$300. There may be anywhere from 7-10 people going so we are hoping to raise enough money to send everyone. If you

would prefer to just donate to the cause, checks can be made out to First Congregational, marked Youth Mission Trip, and put in the offering or mailed to the church. This trip is life changing every year for our youth and adults and we are so fortunate to have the opportunity to participate.

In April, the clanging change will be collected on Sunday, April 7. This month's clanging change will support Second Mile Shop in Berea. The Second Mile Shop was started by the UCC Church in Berea many years ago by Frannie Millard, a very dear friend of many of our young adults who went on UCC trips. She has been retired for many years (near 90 years old) but the shop has moved and evolved since then and is currently on Bagley Road. It is similar to North Ridgeville's Community Care and provides support for the Berea area. They are in need of funding and it was brought to our attention by the Dornan families as their school recently held a food drive to support the program.

Finally....VERY EXCITING NEWS to ALL the women (ladies) and those who identify as women (theydies)! After a 6-year hiatus due to Covid and other things, we are having a "**Ladies and Theydies Tea**" on Sunday, **May 5** from 3-5:00ish pm at Miss Molly's Teas Room in Medina. Please see the reservation form in the



Messenger and on the tables in the sanctuary for more details. The cost is \$25 for adults and \$15 for those 12 and under. Reservations and payments are required and must be submitted by April 15. The tea is open to church members and guests. We have a limit of 65 spaces so don't wait! We are so excited to offer this event. If you

need transportation or are willing to offer transportation to others, please see me.

Outreach Committee News – Karen Farmer

I was thinking recently about how many times I've postponed or let others tackle jobs I dreaded because I felt, much like heavy rocks to move, they would require more strength than I had. When I finally buckled down to do them, I was surprised at how easily I accomplished those tasks. It's frightening to think what might have happened had the angels thought the stone too heavy to lift at Jesus' tomb and waited for others to do it.

The Outreach Committee "moved a few stones" this month. We sent \$100 to Community Care for its mission and donated an additional \$150 to its Easter meals project, as well. Members of the committee also donated candy and gift cards to assemble an Easter basket for our Community Care family. Neighborhood Alliance, Community Care and World Central Kitchen acknowledged our donations and expressed gratitude for our contributions. Applebee's confirmed our "**Dine to Donate**" event to be held on Wednesday, **June 5** at the **Avon Commons Applebee's**. More information and the flyer needed to be presented at the restaurant for the event will be made available closer to the date. Fifteen percent of your dinner cost will be donated to our church to help defray the cost of sending our youth on their mission to Lotts Creek.

Is there a stone that needs removing in your life? Do you walk around it, stumble over it, wait for others to do the job, or ask God to help you move it? There's nothing He can't lift!

Deacons' Desk / Dr. Dornan's Desk – Kurt Dornan

As we prepare for the upcoming spring season, here are some things to think about to stay healthy!

- 1) Stay hydrated! Most men need about a gallon of water per day, women about 2.5 liters per day.
- 2) Get outside, try to do something that breaks a sweat for 15 minutes per day, at least three times a week.
- 3) Remember you can still get sunburned! Make sure you use sunblock with at least SPF 20.
- 4) Schedule your doctor's visits!

Trustees' Turn – Roy Dreger

The trustees have been continuing to gather information and costs for capital projects, highest priority being given to adding a handicap accessible ramp at the front of the church. This is proving to be a particularly thorny project due to the many parts that seem to be dependent on each other.

At the same time, we want to get the wood trim on the outside of the sanctuary painted and replaced where necessary. The wood has been on the building since it was built and we need to make sure it stays solid; perhaps of special concern are the window frames. If the frame should be compromised, any repairs would involve removing the window, and based on what the front windows cost when they were repaired, the cost would be substantial.

One of the boilers has required a few repairs lately. A pump in the boiler room needed to be replaced and an air valve in the hallway near Mary's office was shut off due to leaking. A zone valve in the same area was also leaking hydraulic fluid and needs to be replaced.

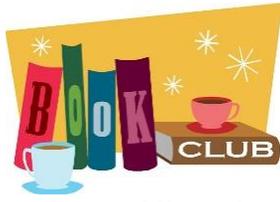
The roof over the school wing needs to be repaired or replaced. Following high winds, pieces of the shingles were found in the parking lot and in the grass. An examination of the roof showed several missing shingles. This needs to be dealt with before the wood becomes damaged and in need of being replaced.

I think everyone understands that the building is old and needs constant attention. Your Board of Trustees is doing its best to keep on top of any problems, and your continued support of your church is appreciated. Thank you!

(Do these projects sound like something you would be interested in helping research and plan? Do you have an interest in the church building, grounds, and finances? Then you are a perfect fit to become a member of the Board of Trustees!! If you might be interested in joining the board or have any questions about what the Board of Trustees does, contact Roy Dreger or Jack Fitts.)

Swiss Steak Dinner: Diana Goode

Another Swiss Steak Dinner is in the books. **THANK YOU** to all who contributed their time, talents, and donations. It was a wonderful event. With all your help, we were able to bring in **\$3,453.59**. Just a reminder that tickets and/or reservations need to be gotten ahead of time as the meat order has to be in by the Monday before the dinner. This year we had only 136 reservations on Monday. Our average number of reservations in the past has been 250-275. I stuck my neck out and ordered 200 steaks hoping that people would call in during the rest of the week. They did. By Friday we had reservations for 198 meals. Unfortunately we had to turn away people at the door. I usually order an additional 25-50 extra steaks to sell at the door but this year we did not have that cushion due to ticket sales being so low and the extreme number of people that waited to the last minute to make reservations. Please help us out in the future by making sure your reservations are in early.



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

***April 22:** Horse by Geraldine Brooks
(*note change in usual date)



- 4/1 Krista O'Neill
- 4/4 Tim O'Neill
- 4/4 Tom Packard
- 4/15 Catherine Craigs
- 4/15 Beckie Schupbach
- 4/15 Heather Smith
- 4/16 John Petroff
- 4/18 Cate Dornan
- 4/18 Matt Dornan
- 4/23 Brian Zinsmeister
- 4/27 Abigail Packard
- 4/30 June Yost
- 4/15 Andy & Shirley Sunyak
- 4/25 Bob & Linda Matis
- 4/28 Jim & June Yost



Greeters

- 4/7 Lynne Petroff, Regenia Comerford
- 4/14 Diana Goode, Karen Farmer
- 4/21 Paula Dudek, Vonnie Packard
- 4/28 Paul Wolanski, Diana Goode

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

Let's eat CAKE!

SUPPORT OUR YOUTH AS THEY SUPPORT LOTTS CREEK

CAKE WALK "FUN"RAISER

APRIL 21ST IN FELLOWSHIP HALL FOLLOWING THE SERVICE

TICKETS CAN BE PURCHASED THE DAY OF THE EVENT FOR \$1 A PIECE OR \$5 FOR 7 TICKETS WITH DISCOUNTS OFFERED TO BAKERS!

**Men's N.F.L. Draft Party
B.Y.O.B
Bring Your Own Beverage**

Please bring a snack to share!

- Sheet Pizza will be Provided
 - Please RSVP by Tuesday, April 23!
- Sign up outside Mary Karlovec's Office!



**When:
Friday
April 26th
7-10 P.M.**

**Where: Jack Fitts
House
Address: 7122
Case Road,
North
Ridgeville , Ohio
44039**



Ladies & They'dies

JOIN US AT MISS MOLLY'S TEA ROOM FOR AN AFTERNOON OF FUN, FOOD, AND FELLOWSHIP!

Sunday, May 5th
 3pm-5pm
 Miss Molly's Tea Room
 140 W. Washington St. Unit 6
 Medina, OH 44256

Adults: \$25 per person
 Kids (12 and under): \$15 per child
 **Includes choice of entree with side, drink, and gratuity

RSVP and Payment Due April 15
Don't Miss Out!

Names of guest(s) _____

MENU

Please choose menu option(s) and return this portion of the form with payment by April 15.

| Choices | Quantity |
|---|----------|
| Vegetable quiche with strawberry pretzel salad | |
| Chicken salad puff with broccoli cheese soup (white meat chicken salad made with red seedless grapes, pineapple, celery, and almonds served chilled on puff pastry) | |
| Kids choice: The Little Cowboy (individual pizza served with applesauce, your choice of pink lemonade, soft drink, or iced tea, and a "decorate it yourself" cookie) | |
| Gluten free chicken divan (tender white meat chicken and fresh broccoli baked in a creamy sauce with a hint of curry. Served without bread crumbs and with gluten free soup) | |

Total adult meals _____ x \$25 ea = _____

Total kid's meals _____ x \$15 ea = _____

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED _____

Please make checks payable to First Congregational Church.

| Sun | Mon | Tues | Weds | Thurs | Fri | Sat |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|---|
| | 1 Endowment Comm. 7 pm AA Women 7 pm | 2 CE 7 pm Trustees 7 pm AA 1 st Step 8:30 pm | 3 Bell choir 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm | 4 Bible Study 11:30 am AA Women 6 pm AI-Anon 7:30 pm | 5 | 6 AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6 pm |
| 7 Outreach 9 am Worship 10:30 am Communion Fellowship hour AA Men 7:30 pm | 8 Pastor Kearstin out of office  AA Women 7 pm | 9 Pastor Kearstin out of office AA 1 st Step 8:30 pm | 10 Pastor Kearstin out of office Bell choir 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm 4-H 7 pm | 11 Pastor Kearstin out of office Bible study 11:30 am AA Women 6 pm AI-Anon 7:30 pm | 12 Pastor Kearstin out of office | 13 AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6 pm |
| 14 Worship 10:30 am Fellowship hour AA Men 7:30 pm | 15 Council 7 pm AA Women 7 pm | 16 Newsletter articles due National Faith & Climate Forum 12-5 pm AA 1 st Step 8:30 pm | 17 Bell choir 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm | 18 Bible study 11:30 am AA Women 6 pm AI-Anon 7:30 pm | 19 | 20 AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6 pm |
| 21 Worship 10:30 am Fellowship hour Cake Walk 11:30 am AA Men 7:30 pm | 22 Women's Book club 7 pm  AA Women 7 pm | 23 AA 1 st Step 8:30 pm | 24 Bell choir 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm 4-H | 25 Bible study 11:30 am AA Women 6 pm AI-Anon 7:30 pm | 26 | 27 AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6 pm |
| 28 Worship 10:30 am Fellowship hour Deacons 11:30 am One World Shop AA Men 7:30 pm | 29 AA Women 7 pm | 30 AA 1 st Step 8:30 pm | 31 Bell choir 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm |  | | |