

# The Messenger

The monthly newsletter of First Congregational Church UCC of North Ridgeville

July 2024

## Minister

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Renee Dornan  
Kelsey Styrt

## 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)

Last month the church council and I gathered to think creatively about what kind of church God is calling us to be in this community. We worked together to write up some statements that will help us embody the church we want to be. Here are some examples:

- We spread, live, and radiate love
- We are an enthusiastic family of God, devoted to loving and caring for all beings
- We are a healthy, active, growing community of faith

The work of living into these callings **isn't just the work of the council. *It's all of our work!*** As a UCC church, we are congregation-led and driven — so I'm curious...What else would you add to those "We are" statements? What else do you think God is calling us to grow into?

At our core, Council talked about FCC being a loving and evolving community, where we try to show up as the best chosen family we can be for one another. What a beautiful way to describe our work in the world! We're going to use these three values (being loving, evolving, and chosen family) to guide our programming and life together for the rest of this calendar year; to do that, we've set four goals that we want to accomplish by the end of 2024 — and we'll need your help to make them happen! Here's how we want to live out these values in the next few months:

- ✓ **Start streaming our services online again**
- ✓ **Host one new community event that will be open to all of North Ridgeville**
- ✓ **Have consistent and engaged volunteers for the nursery and fellowship time**
- ✓ **Complete one work project for the wider community of North Ridgeville**

These four goals will help us embody being a loving and evolving chosen family of faith and we'll need your support to tick them off the list.

- ❖ **Do you have a passion for technology and media?**
- ❖ **Are you a social butterfly who knows all the local business owners to invite them to our community event?**



- ❖ **Can you donate your time and talents to volunteer with the kids or to coordinate snacks for fellowship?**
- ❖ **Are you a jack of all trades who's great at one-off jobs?**

Incredible — we need you! I can feel the Spirit moving here at First Congregational and I think many of you can, too!

If you ever want to set up a meeting to talk (about these congregational goals, your own spiritual well-being, what you feel God calling us to, etc.), please reach out to me. I would be honored to chat about all this and more, beloved.

Go Blessed,  
Pastor Kearstin

**Music Notes – Barb Habecker**



Greetings, everyone! This last year with the two choirs has been such an enjoyable nine months. I am constantly amazed at the ability and dedication of those involved in both choirs, and they are a pleasure with which to work! We begin with a bit of a social hour (because, golly, we haven't seen each other in a whole week) then quickly get down to business. I want everyone to know that we are NOT a closed society – just ask anyone from either choir. And **we would love for you to join us**. 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.

The handbell choir meets from September through May on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 p.m. and the chancel choir meets immediately afterward at 7:30 p.m. Both choirs need new members. Please join us!

We will be having a combined picnic on August 28 prior to our first performance on rally Sunday (the Sunday after Labor Day). If God gave 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.

God's peace be with you all!

**Moderator's Moment – Kris Dornan**

Blessings to you, church family! As we navigate through these warmer months in our year, I'd love to share a bit about the wonderful work our church has begun to navigate in regards to our mission and planning for the rest of the year and beyond; work that has been spearheaded by Pastor Kearstin, and heightened by the combined efforts of our council!

Certain key words and phrases were spoken about a lot, one of those being **family**, another being **love**, and another being **accepting**. I know if you had to ask me about what makes our church unique, it's the interconnectivity of those three words. **Family** represents the strong bond we have created and enjoyed with each other, a community that loves and cares for you no matter what is going on. Even though we don't get to choose the family we are born into, we do get a choice in our church, and I know many of us feel that our congregation is more like brothers and sisters...and Praise God for that!

When we turn to **accepting**, this becomes part of our charter moving forward...I think we'd all want to build community and add to our "family". This is why some of the critical actions we've laid out moving forward involve getting out in the community, with a specific focus on one event we can lead that involves North Ridgeville. Perhaps that is a clean-up type event, or a community project. I'd love for you to share any ideas you have for this action with me!

In closing, I am again grateful for each of you and the unique gifts you bring to our congregation. May we continue to walk hand in hand, guided by the light of our faith, as we strive to make a difference in the world.

**Christian Education Corner – Mary Karlovec**

As you read the July Messenger, three of our youth (Ben, Beth and Charlotte) and Kurt Dornan are returning from their mission experiences in Lotts Creek, Kentucky. This year they joined 35 youth and adults from Ohio and

Florida working together to help improve and rebuild the community and the Lotts Creek Community School. The group from Florida was from Coral Gables UCC (the Miami area). Our church has a connection to this church as their current minister is Laurie Hafner, a former interim minister in our church! Kurt and the youth will be sharing their experiences during worship later this summer.

A huge **thank you** to everyone who supported the fundraisers to supply the funds for our youth to go as well as the clanging change. The \$150 from the June clanging change offering provided the funds to help purchase necessary equipment and supplies for the work projects. These mission trips are life changing for our youth and have long lasting effects as well as making many new lifetime friends. I was sad that Kris and I could not be there this year to be a part of the meaningful experience.

Fall will be here before long and **we are in need of Sunday School teachers**. We would like to have two teams of two for each of the classes. The most you would teach is two

Sundays a month. **PLEASE seriously consider volunteering your time and talents**. See anyone on the CE Board if you are interested. We are



also looking for **six adults who are willing to oversee the nursery** once every six weeks. These are some of the sweetest, loving kiddos who are fun to be with! Time commitment is only one hour of your time with no preparation needed!

This year we are going back to a traditional Sunday School curriculum in the fall. We are currently looking at three curriculum options that align with the values of our church. Mark your calendars as the first Sunday of Fall Sunday School is September 8. Blessing of the Backpacks Sunday will be August 25.

Have a safe 4<sup>th</sup> of July and enjoy the summer!

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

I was planting some newly acquired perennials this week, wondering how they would look in the future, knowing they would need fertilizing, weeding, trimming, watering, etc. to continue their growth. The fact that those plants never really finish growing reminded me that we, as humans, are living things whose spiritual life requires us to keep planting in faith, cultivating with prayer, and pruning out that which is unholy in order for it to flourish and never stop growing.

The Outreach Committee continues to help some local organizations grow in their efforts to help those in need. Our June Dine to Donate event at Applebee's was a great success, thanks to the enthusiastic participation of the congregation. Applebee's reported that there were over \$1,700 in receipts using our flyers. Your generosity allowed us to donate around \$255 (final total not available yet) to the youth mission trip to Lotts Creek. We are eternally grateful for your support of this mission.

In addition to our monthly \$100 donation to Community Care, we voted to add an additional \$200 this month for its summer lunch program. We continue to collect items needed for its monthly distribution of food and essential items to those it serves. The list of items needed is located in the Sunday School hallway, along with a bin to collect the items donated.

We decided that going forward we will give \$100 monthly to Neighborhood Alliance, the umbrella organization that provides for Lorain County's homeless shelters, safe houses, and other programs and facilities. We also contributed \$300 to Good Knights, a local organization that builds and delivers beds and bedding to children in need in Lorain County.

Finally, we voted to begin sending flowers to members of our church who experience a death in their immediate families as another way to grow the spiritual life of our church.

How will you grow today? Help someone reach that item on the top shelf in the grocery

store? Yield at an intersection? Read an extra Bible verse? Praise God for the sun-dappled shade in the heat of the day? *And...?*

### **Deacons' Desk – Valerie Arnold**

#### Something to Think About

I am God. Today I will be handling all of your problems. Please remember that I do not need your help. If the devil happens to deliver a situation to you that you cannot handle, DO NOT attempt to resolve it. Kindly put it in the SFJTD (something for Jesus to do) box. It will be addressed in MY time, not yours. Once the matter is placed into the box, do not hold on to it or attempt to remove it. Holding on or removal will delay the resolution of your problem. If it is a situation that you think you are capable of handling, please consult me in prayer to be sure that it is the proper resolution. Because I do not sleep nor do I slumber, there is no need for you to lose any sleep. Rest my child. If you need to contact me, I am only a prayer away.

Have a wonderful July!!

### **Trustees' Turn – Roy Dreger**

Some quotes came in for some of the work we want to try to accomplish. Ross Builders gave us a quote for putting an entry door (back) in on the east side of the narthex. The estimate also includes installation of an enclosed wheelchair lift that would take people from the parking lot level up to the door. The total package would be around \$83,650 if done today. I'm sure you understand that the cost to do this down the road would, in all probability, be different; I suspect it would be higher. Lifeway mobility got back to us with an estimate for a ramp. Understand that until a doorway is created it is a ramp to nowhere. The estimate also does not include the three concrete pads needed to support the ramp. That estimate is \$14,471. Oh, yes, the ramp would not be covered to protect users from the weather, while

the lift would be. (These options are being looked at in an effort to create a second accessible entrance/exit to the sanctuary.)

My contact for an estimate to replace the sidewalk called and said they don't have any work scheduled for North Ridgeville, and they are scheduling work into September at this point. They suggested we find someone more local (they are out of Avon Lake). As of this writing, I have not been in contact with anyone else but plan on doing it this week.

We have received estimates for replacing the roof on the Sunday school wing starting at \$26,000. There has been a lot of weather-related damage to this roof, so much so that one of the company estimators put up a ladder and put shingles on an area where they were missing to prevent more damage. I will update you when the information becomes available.

Thank you to all those who have brought their pledges up to date. As you are aware, the budget is based upon the pledges that are made in the fall and it is as financially reasonable as possible. Any differences between what is pledged and what is received can create budgeting problems, so thanks to everyone for your continued support!



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

**July 15:** The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store by James McBride



# Birthdays & Anniversaries

- 7/6 Joan Bier
- 7/6 Dahlia Wolanski
- 7/14 Bob Karlovec
- 7/15 Jenn Anderson
- 7/15 Edie Phillips
- 7/18 Liam Styrt
- 7/24 Barb Habecker
- 7/25 Diana Goode
- 7/25 Andrea Summer
  
- 7/3 Bob & Nancy Franks
- 7/10 Matt & Cathleen Karlovec
- 7/12 Kurt & Renee Dornan
- 7/18 Bob & Mary Karlovec
- 7/21 Brian & Barb Zinsmeister
- 7/28 Vitaliy & Kelsey Styrt



### Greeters


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

<b>July</b>	
<b>7</b>	Lynne Petroff, Millie Gilly
<b>14</b>	Karen Farmer, Paul Wolanski
<b>21</b>	Vonnie Packard, Paula Dudek
<b>28</b>	Jane Woravka, Diana Goode
<b>August</b>	
<b>4</b>	Lynne Petroff, Millie Gilly
<b>11</b>	Karen Farmer, Paul Wolanski
<b>18</b>	Vonnie Packard, Paula Dudek
<b>25</b>	Jane Woravka, Diana Goode
<b>September</b>	
<b>1</b>	Millie Gilly, Karen Farmer
<b>8</b>	Paul Wolanski, Vonnie Packard
<b>15</b>	Paula Dudek, Jane Woravka
<b>22</b>	Lynne Petroff, Diana Goode
<b>29</b>	Millie Gilly, Linda Matis

# Pride in the CLE parade

It was a beautiful day for nine representatives of First Congregational Church to share in the love and support of the LGBTQ+ community!



Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> Trustees 7 pm	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> Independence Day  OFFICE CLOSED	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
	Linda vacation 7/1 – 7/8      Barb vacation 7/1-7/6					
	AA Women 7 pm	AA 1 <sup>st</sup> Step 8:30 pm		AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm		AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6 pm
<b>7</b> Worship 10:30 am Communion Fellowship hour  AA Men 7:30 pm	<b>8</b> Council 7 pm  Linda vacation  AA Women 7 pm	<b>9</b>  AA 1 <sup>st</sup> Step 8:30 pm	<b>10</b>  4-H 7 pm (rain loca.)	<b>11</b>  AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>  AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6 pm
<b>14</b> Worship 10:30 am Fellowship hour  AA Men 7:30 pm	<b>15</b> Women's book club 7 pm  AA Women 7 pm	<b>16</b> Newsletter articles due  AA 1 <sup>st</sup> Step 8:30 pm	<b>17</b>  4-H 7 pm (rain loca.)	Pastor Kearstin vacation 7/17 – 7/23		<b>20</b>  AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6 pm
<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>21</b> (Carla) Worship 10:30 am Fellowship hour  AA Men 7:30 pm	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>
	Pastor Kearstin on vacation 7/17 – 7/23					
	AA Women 7 pm	AA 1 <sup>st</sup> Step 8:30 pm	4-H 7 pm (rain loca.)	AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm		AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6 pm
<b>28</b> Worship 10:30 am Fellowship hour Deacons 11:30 am  AA Men 7:30 pm	<b>29</b>  AA Women 7 pm	<b>30</b>  AA 1 <sup>st</sup> Step 8:30 pm	<b>31</b>  4-H 7 pm (rain loca.)	