

The Messenger

The monthly newsletter of First Congregational Church UCC of North Ridgeville

March 2024

Minister

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Barb Habecker

Moderator

Kris Dornan

Vice-Moderator

Diana Goode

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Renee Dornan
Kelsey Styr

Chair, Deacons

Chair, Outreach

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Roy Dreger
Jack Fitts

Treasurer, Secretary

Linda Matis



From the Pastor – Pastor Kearstin

As I write this greeting to you, sweet First Congregational UCC, I've officially been on the job for over two weeks! Diving into the season of Lent with y'all has been a delight. Getting to know you and hearing your concerns, your griefs, your struggles, and your joys is an honor. I am *honored* to witness you in beloved community and as multifaceted individual humans.

One of the most powerful parts of Lent, for me, is the reminder to reorient ourselves towards God. Towards sacred love. Towards one another. These are the kinds of things that any new pastor would be focusing on when they arrive at a new church, but having the Liturgical season of Lent layered over it makes it feel doubly important.

In the coming weeks and months, know that I am prioritizing getting to know you deeply, First Congregational. I'm keeping intentional space open in my calendar so I can be available for one-on-one meetings with you. If you'd like to reach out and connect, just send me an email at PastorFCCNR@gmail.com and I would be so thrilled to schedule a time. You can also text me at 740-503-8994 if you have a prayer need or you desire some support in a tough moment.

My Lenten practice to reorient towards God and sacred love is deceptively simple this year. I have committed to pray at my altar every day for this community. Whether I'm in the office for the morning or it's a Sabbath and I'm at home, I am committed to hold you in my heart and pray for you every day.

May you always, but this Lent especially, know that you are held tenderly by God, Spirit, and Christ. May you remember that you are prayed for often. May you live your life rooted in the knowledge that you are Beloved, and so is everyone else. And may you always move towards a more loving way of living in the world.

Be Blessed, Beloveds,
Pastor Kearstin

Week Ahead Prep with Pastor Kearstin

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 and cheer you on every Monday morning? If any (or all) of those sound like you, I invite you to 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 through a task that can be super hard for folks. In the past, we've had stay at home moms, small business owners, faith leaders, and folks with flexible office jobs join in. It's like virtual co-working, but with a bit more intention! Click [HERE](#) to join on Google Meet, or click [HERE](#) to join Pastor Kearstin's IG Live on Monday.

Vice-Moderator's Moment – Diana Goode

Council is in the process of updating the Constitution, the Safe Church Policy, and creating a Social Media Policy to better reflect the times and also the future of our congregation. The probability of posting and/or streaming the service is being looked into as well. Council will be hosting a town hall meeting about the church finances to provide information and answer questions so that all are aware of what it takes to run our church and support our missions.

It takes all of us together to keep this congregation able to move forward. Please consider joining one of the church boards. Contact the church office if you have any

questions. Thank you to all who give of their time, talents, and finances.

Pastor Parish Committee

As both we and Pastor Kearstin navigate through the honeymoon phase of her ministry with us, please remember that if you should have any questions or concerns, there is a Pastor Parish Committee that serves as a support group for the Pastor and as a liaison between the Pastor and the congregation. The committee's responsibility is to let the Pastor know what people in the church are thinking and to give a framework for dealing with conflict creatively. Members of the Pastor Parish Committee are: Kris Dornan, Diana Goode, Jack Fitts, Betty Fitts, Matt Karlovec, Vonnie Packard, Liz Wolanski, (and Krista O'Neill in an advisory role only). Please feel free to contact any of them to openly and honestly communicate your feelings and thoughts.

Christian Education Corner – Mary Karlovec

THANK YOU to everyone who supported the Annual Chili Cook-off and Mardi Gras (a little late) celebration! The money raised helps pay for the youth and adults who will travel to Lotts Creek in June on a mission trip. Special thanks to the nine chili entry cooks and Karen Veliconia for the Alleluia cupcakes. John Petroff came in 3rd place this year, Ben Dornan was our 2nd place finisher with his cayenne chili, and in 1st place in a close competition was Kurt Dornan. And...the Keeper of the Alleluias is...Jane Woravka! Congratulations!

There are two upcoming events I want to highlight for this Lenten season. First is the **grief altars workshop** led by Pastor Kearstin on **March 10** after a brown bag

lunch in Fellowship Hall. Please check out the info found later in the *Messenger*. Please make sure you **RSVP by March 3** so we have enough supplies on hand.

The second event is the annual **Easter Egg Hunt** on Saturday, **March 23 from 4-5 pm**. This is open to church members and their families and friends. Again, we ask that you **RSVP by March 16** with your number of participants so we have enough supplies on hand. Kids will be divided into age groups for the hunt. There will be Easter projects to do while groups are waiting for their turn to hunt for eggs.



Speaking of the Easter Egg Hunt...**WE NEED BAGS OF INDIVIDUALLY WRAPPED CANDY TO FILL 400 EGGS!** If you are willing to donate a couple of bags of candy, there is a basket to deposit them inside my office. We need **ALL DONATIONS BY MARCH 17!** Again, **THANK YOU** for your support!

Looking ahead...the Christian Education and Outreach Committees are sponsoring a **“Junk in Your Trunk”** event on Saturday, **May 18 from 9 am to 2 pm** in the church parking lot. Junk in Your Trunk is basically a garage sale out of your car. For \$20 you get a space and a half in the parking lot to sell your “junk” out of your “trunk.” Pre-paid reservations will begin on April 15. On May 1 we will open up any remaining spaces to the community. Reservation forms will be available outside my office starting April 1. We hope to have at least one food truck too! This event will be rain or shine. In the event of rain, we are hoping to give everyone space in Fellowship Hall to sell their wares! Profits from this event will support the youth mission trip costs.

We are still collecting 40 **birthday bags** for the 40 days of Lent for Community Care. We currently have 22 bags completed and have until Palm Sunday to reach our goal. In each birthday bag, please include a cake mix, a can of frosting, birthday plates and napkins, birthday candles, and any other birthday things you want to put in the bag. If you do not have time to get the supplies, put \$10 in an envelope in the offering plate and label it “birthday bag”. Our youth will do the shopping for you! With your Clangy Change support in February we were able to build 12 birthday bags. Thank you! **Clangy Change** collected in **March** will support building Easter baskets for our homebound. This offering will be collected on Sunday, **March 10. (Please note the change in the clangy change collection date for March.)**



FINALLY, an exciting event is happening May 5 from 3-5:30 pm for all ladies of any age! We will be venturing to Medina to Miss Molly’s Tea Room for an afternoon tea. We are still determining the cost but expect it to be approximately \$23 for those over 12 and approximately \$10 for those 12 and under. There will be a special menu for both ages to choose from when you place your reservation as well as gluten free options. This is open to church members as well as family and friends. We will help with finding carpooling for those who are not comfortable driving to Medina. The tea room is handicap accessible. Reservations and menu choices will be available by March 15. The final day we can take reservations is April 10, so start planning now and mark your calendar. If you have never been to Miss Molly’s, it is truly a treat! Come celebrate with us!

Outreach Committee News – Karen Farmer

We live in a “good-bye world,” don’t we? Some good-byes are happily voiced: “Good-bye, Winter!” Others can generate feelings of sorrow, fear, loss, or anxiety as children grow up, loved ones die, neighbors and friends move away, and jobs change. These things can make us feel that a lamp has gone out in this shifting world in which we live. But life is made up of moments—opportunities to exercise faith in new ways and light the way for others.

The Outreach Committee is exercising faith this month through providing \$100 to Community Care and \$200 to Neighborhood Alliance. A sincere thank you to those of you who contributed the many hats, scarves, gloves, and socks collected for Neighborhood Alliance. These items of clothing were gratefully received by many families and individuals in need.

We will brighten the spirits of our Community Care adopted family this month with an Easter basket containing a \$150 Walmart gift card for the family, as well as some fast-food gift cards and candy for the children.

We are also considering a future donation to RIP Medical Debt, which is a non-profit that abolishes medical debt for those living below the poverty level. Medical debt is the largest contributor to bankruptcy in the US.

The One World Shop will be bringing its mobile shop to our church on Sunday, April 28, just in time to do some Mother’s Day gift shopping! The Outreach Committee is also planning to sponsor a Dine to Donate event at Applebee’s during the first week of June. Watch for more details about this in the weeks ahead.

How will you light the way for others? Ask God how your heart can rejoice in this “good-bye world.” Spring will be back (soon!); so will the children. So will Jesus. We eagerly await His return this Easter season.

Deacons’ Desk

Pastor Kearstin will be attending the United Church of Christ Board meeting in Cleveland on March 3; Carla Valles will be joining us as our guest speaker that day.



Holy Week

Palm Sunday – March 24

Service at 10:30 am

Maundy Thursday – March 28

Service at 7:00 pm

Easter Sunday – March 31

Sunrise service at 7:30 am

Followed by continental breakfast

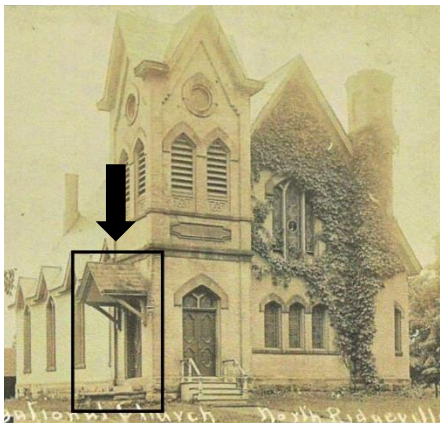
Easter service at 10:30 am

Trustees’ Turn – Roy Dreger

The trustees were busy in February talking about the needs of the church. With the heating and cooling issues solved for the present, we turned to looking at other issues. We looked at the quote for painting Whitcomb (fellowship) Hall and repairing the ceiling above the organ. The issue of the outside of the windows in the older parts of the church needing painting was brought up. Jamie Schupbach is going to ask the painters for a quote on that work.

Linda found a “walk-off” mat for the east (double doors) entry (and she installed it, also). If you haven't noticed, take a look. I think you will be surprised at how much of a difference that makes. Linda(‘s husband) was also able to find a suitable computer for the minister's study as the old one was very out of date. Once again, thank you Linda. Thanks also to her son, Steven, for helping to get it set up. I doubt everyone is aware of how much Linda does for the church, but I am thankful for her dedication and hard work.

We also discussed the need for an accessible second point of entry to the front of the church. A ramp has been mentioned, but the problems associated are many. It will have to be a double ramp, meaning it will need a landing at the midpoint and again at the door. The door is another issue because the front doors swing outward, into the final landing. The landing at the door will cover the existing steps, so the steps will need to be relocated and redone. The idea of reopening the east side entryway to the lobby may be an answer, but the cost could be an issue. It was closed up in 1965 for less than \$400, but I'm sure it will cost many times that to open it back up and put in a new door. (If you were not aware, there was originally an entry on the east side of the lobby that mirrored the front entryway. The east entry shows up in older photos and had



a large stone block at the base so that the ladies could exit their carriage and stay out of the mud or snow in inclement weather. The

older photos also show the stables out back which were removed circa 1920.)

When the trustees get a final list of repairs together with their cost, we plan on starting a capital campaign. Until then, we depend on your support of your church, and as always, we thank you for that!

Birthdays & Anniversaries

- 3/2 Mikey Feigi
- 3/2 Nema Saleem-Green
- 3/4 Vonnie Packard
- 3/7 Jane Woravka
- 3/8 Amy Eaton
- 3/16 Barb vonBenken
- 3/25 Jamie Schupbach
- 3/27 Jim Yost
- 3/7 Larry & Karen Mytnick (60 yrs!)



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

March 18: Someone Else's Shoes by Jojo Moyes

April 15: Horse by Geraldine Brooks



Greeters

- 3/3 Diana Goode, Vonnie Packard
- 3/10 Karen Farmer, Paul Wolanski
- 3/17 Lynne Petroff, Regenia Comerford
- 3/24 Diana Goode, Paula Dudek
- 3/31 Vonnie Packard, Paul Wolanski

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

Congratulations, Pastor Kearstin, on your ordination! You have given your time to the Lord and He has blessed you.

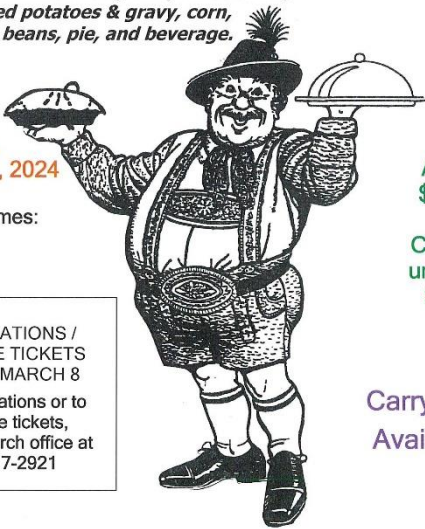


Swiss Steak Dinner

*Treat yourself to a home cooked meal...
Dinner includes salad, rolls, Swiss steak,
mashed potatoes & gravy, corn,
green beans, pie, and beverage.*

Saturday,
March 16, 2024

Serving Times:
4:30 pm
6:00 pm



Adults
\$15.00

Children
under 12
\$7.00

Carry Outs
Available!

RESERVATIONS /
PRE-SALE TICKETS
ONLY by MARCH 8

For reservations or to
purchase tickets,
call the church office at
440-327-2921



Sharing faith, hope, and love for 200 years
First Congregational Church

United Church of Christ

36363 Center Ridge Rd., North Ridgeville, OH 44039
440-327-2921 ~ www.fccolive.org

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
					1 Pastor Kearstin out of office thru 3/3 →	2 AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6 p
3 Outreach 9 am Worship 10:30 am Fellowship hour AA Men 7:30 pm	4 AA Women 7 pm	5 Pastor Kearstin out of office CE 7 pm Trustees 7 pm AA 1 st Step 8:30 pm	6 Bell choir 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm 4-H 7 pm	7 Bible study 11:30 am AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	8	9 AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6 p
10 Worship 10:30 am Communion Clangy Change Grief Altar Lenten workshop 12:15 pm AA Men 7:30 pm	11 Council 7 pm AA Women 7 pm	12 AA 1 st Step 8:30 pm	13 Bell choir 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm 4-H 7 pm	14 Bible study 11:30 am AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	15 Swiss Steak Dinner prep 6 pm	16 Swiss Steak Dinner Newsletter articles due AA Women 9 am (up) Couples Recovery 6 p
17 Worship 10:30 am Fellowship hour AA Men 7:30 pm	18 Women's book club 7 pm AA Women 7 pm	19 AA 1 st Step 8:30 pm	20 Bell choir 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm 4-H 7 pm	21 Bible study 11:30 am AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	22	23 Easter egg hunt 4-5p AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6 p
24 Palm Sunday Worship 10:30 am Fellowship hour Hall rental 1-6pm (McKee) AA Men 7:30 pm	25 AA Women 7 pm	26 AA 1 st Step 8:30 pm	27 Bell choir 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm 4-H 7 pm	28 Bible study 11:30 am Maundy Thursday Service 7 pm AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	29 Good Friday OFFICE CLOSED	30 AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6 p
31 Easter Sunrise svc. 7:30 am Continental breakfast Worship 10:30 am Fellowship hour AA Men 7:30 pm						

MARCH