



*To
share
Faith,
Hope
and
Love
with*

The Messenger

December 2012

**First Congregational United Church of Christ,
36363 Center Ridge Rd., North Ridgeville, OH 44039
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Mary Karlovec
Music Director/Organist
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Regenia Comerford
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June Yost
Chair, Christian Ed
Karen Veliconia
Chair, Deacons
Keith Schoonover
Co-Chair Deacons
Diana Goode
Chair, Outreach
Edie Phillips
Chair, Trustees
Roy Dreger
Chair, Visionary Team
Nancy Franks
Secretary
Rose Luzniak
Treasurer
Linda Matis

Merry 
Christmas 



Wesołych Świąt Bożego Narodzenia

*Celebrate Christmas with us...
All are Welcome!*

Christmas Eve

Candlelight & Communion Service 7:00 p.m.

Sunday Schedule:

10:00 am

Worship Service

Children's Sunday School

Following Worship Service

**Refreshments &
Fellowship**

Moderator's Moment – Regenia Comerford

We have an exciting New Year ahead of us at North Ridgeville First Congregational United Church of Christ. Everyone working together to make it everything that God wants it to be. On behalf of Officers and Council, I would like to wish you a very Happy & Peaceful Christmas. JOY TO THE WORLD!

Christian Education Corner – Mary Karlovec

Advent is a special time in the life of a church. It is a time of waiting...yet we tend to go into fast forward mode and before we know it, Christmas is here. This year, give yourself permission to "wait" each day. Each Sunday during Advent, visit the prayer stations in the Christian Education office. They will be open from 9:00AM to 9:50AM each Sunday and after church until 11:45AM. (You can get a cup of coffee and return to the room if you want.)

You can visit any of the stations on any given Sunday. Then during the week, use the Daily Prayer Devotional (available the first Sunday of Advent) to continue your daily "wait" time. To support our families of young children and our youth, special Advent activities will also be available for promoting family "wait" time.

Over the weekend of November 16-18th, I traveled with Megan O'Neill and Andrew Veliconia to the Ohio Conference Fall Youth Event at Pilgrim Hills (our UCC camp). It was a great weekend with great weather and little cell service! The weekend centered on the parables and included a scavenger hunt (ask Andrew about that!). There was much laughing, learning and friendship that weekend and I thank Megan and Andrew for giving time from their busy schedule to attend!

The youth will do their annual shopping for Community Care this Christmas as well as picking out books at the local book warehouse to send to the elementary school in West Lafayette, Indiana. Thanks to all who bought comma cookies. We raised \$200 and it will be used to purchase many books.

Just a reminder: There will be **no** Sunday School on Sunday, December 30th!

Reflections of New York

Sometimes we do not think that we have an impact on the lives of others or do not have the opportunity see that impact first hand. Through a grassroots effort led by Brian Burke, UCC minister in Wellington and Bob Gross, Lake Ave. UCC, Elyria, over \$5,000 was raised by 5 congregations and friends to help directly support the Hurricane Sandy relief efforts in East Rockaway, New York. Our congregation and support from our Outreach board gave over \$500 towards this effort.

Below are Brian Burke's reflections as he flew home from the site after delivering the supplies with Bob Gross. I wanted to share it with you and say THANK YOU!

"Some two weeks after Hurricane Sandy came ashore on the coasts of Long Island and New Jersey, much of life is getting back to normal. However, there are many for whom normal now has no meaning.

The bulk of the damage was from flood waters from the Atlantic Ocean and the various bays, inlets and canals that mark the shorelines of the most densely populated area of our nation. On the curbsides were furniture, flooring, carpeting, drywall, personal items, mattresses, toys, toilets, and in a few places even the proverbial kitchen sink. Many homes were in the process of being gutted in order to rebuild which, as we remember from the ongoing reconstruction on the Gulf Coast after Hurricane Katrina, will take a long time. Most people had to throw away all of their clothing, all of their food, virtually all that they had.

This week, I spent 13 hours at a sister UCC congregation that was one of three churches serving as distribution points for relief supplies in East Rockaway NY, a village in the south shore area of Long Island. Their multipurpose room that was converted into a supply center could best be described as one of our congregation's rummage sales on massive doses of steroids.

Clothes, blankets, coats, sweaters and other items of apparel were piled on tables running from one end of their room to the other. At one end of the room were personal toiletries and infant care supplies of all

types. One corner at the other end of the room was filled with cases and cases of water, canned goods, boxes of meals ready to eat (MREs), snack items, and other foods. The stage area at that end housed desperately needed cleaning supplies that went out as fast as they came in. And we didn't touch the semi-trailer filled with clothing that FEMA parked in the church parking lot. The day after I left, the church was expecting a semi-trailer half-filled with desperately needed cleaning supplies ... but they had to take the half-trailer of more clothes as part of the deal.

The people who came to get relief were from all walks of life. In this melting pot of humanity, flood waters did not discriminate based on economic status, race, age, language, sex, orientation, country of origin, or anything else. Some came to the center focused on specific needs. Others entered the room with a shell-shocked look on their face and when asked what they needed said simply, "Everything." More than a few were embarrassed or unwilling to take much because they knew there were people that needed it more than they did - even though these folks had nothing left.

In many cases we had to suggest to people what they would need, and in some cases actually "force" people to take things that would be needed. We had to assure a few who had donated to various causes in the past that they were not being "takers" but were "givers" who now needed the help that they were used to giving. And yes, there were some who were trying to take advantage of the circumstance, which is why East Rockaway placed an auxiliary policeman on the site.

This was an eye-opening experience beyond anything I have ever seen in my almost sixty-one years of life. As such, I want to celebrate with you your ministry to people that you have never met but you have loved as your neighbors. When I was offered thanks for coming from Ohio to help, I accepted that thanks on behalf of all the congregations and persons who contributed to our mission outreach. Two days and a van load of supplies were but tiny mustard seeds in the

entire relief effort. But for the people who were able to use mops, contractor trash bags, cleaning products, and the other items that were in that van, those seeds were life-giving gifts of the Kingdom of God at work on earth, as in heaven ... given by loving disciples of Christ acting as agents of God's grace and providence. Thanks be to God for who you are and what you do.

-Brian Burke Wellington UCC

Trustees Turn – Roy Dreger

Writing an article for the Messenger a month before it comes out has its drawbacks. The Stewardship campaign starting in October is over in November while this column is being published in December but written in November! The outcome of the campaign is unknown at this time as is the condition of the budget. Even though I don't know what the pledges will turn out to be, I want to thank everyone for the consideration they gave to their new pledge and for keeping their current pledge up to date.

The Trustees have been trying to gather bids for some work around the church. While I have yet to hear from one contractor about the repairs to the wood around the roof of the bell tower and sanctuary, and from another about his bid on the painting of the sanctuary ceiling (all this after six or seven calls where I was told the bid was finished and I would be getting a copy within a day or two), one painting contractor has given his bid. I have met with him and his suppliers several times and have been given a bid of between \$7,500 and \$9,000. He said he would provide labor and material at cost, but he does not have any idea what might lie under the plaster. If what is visible is all there is then the cost should be at the low end of his bid. Given the age of the building, what you cannot see is what will make the difference. He said if he bid it on a fixed price he would have to base it on the high end just in case there were hidden problems. He is going to have to remove all the pews on one half of the sanctuary, work on that side of the ceiling, and then switch sides. He anticipates a two week time frame.

A contract has been approved for a new website to be developed. We will be able to keep the same domain name, but the new site should be easier to maintain. It will also be more accessible to mobile users. Anyone willing and able to train for using and maintaining the new website should contact Karen Veliconia. This has been discussed for a long time (as has the sanctuary ceiling) and it will be nice to get it off the ground and running.

As always, thank you for continuing your support of the Church and may you and yours have a blessed Christmas!
Respectfully submitted, Roy Dreger

Outreach Committee News- Edie Phillips

The Outreach committee wants to once again thank everyone for their generosity, contributing to the Book Fair, donating to Hospitality Meals and bringing in food for Community Care so people who may not otherwise have a happy Thanksgiving. One hundred sixty dollars(\$160.00) was raised from the Book Fair and will be put to good use purchasing turkeys and other food items.

Soon it will be Christmas and the giving tree will be going up in the fellowship hall. Please take a name and purchase a gift for a child. They have asked for something special, sometimes boots, hats, shoes, toys, games and even gift cards. I know it will help make Christmas special to a child in our community.

Hospitality With a Heart

I attended a meeting at Community Care with members from other churches who are also involved with the end of the month meals. We worked together to plan meals for 2013. It is good to find out how other churches do things. This month we will have Rotini, salad, garlic toast, fruit and desert. We have been blessed with so many people volunteering their help. We always have fun, and work goes quickly.

A giving statement for January 2012 through September 2012 from Ohio Conference United Church of Christ as follows:

WRA-OCWM-Basic Support	\$2,635.62
WRA-One Great Hour of Sharing	\$670.00
WRA-Christmas Fund	\$289.00
Total	\$3,594.62
This does not show NIN	\$502.00

I hope everyone has a great holiday from the Outreach committee: Barb Zinsmeister, Nancy Franks, Ann Olesen, Peg Hopkins, Jean Griffith and Edie Phillips.
II Corinthians 9:7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

Submitted by: Edie Phillips

Deacon's Desk – Keith Schoonover

Don't look now but winter is here. Like anything else, though, it has its good and bad.

Let's start with bad. Most people agree that they don't like cold weather, makes there bones ache and the body stiff. Then comes the sleet and slushy driving conditions, shoveling, salting, snow blowing, you get the picture.

But then comes the good stuff, like our church gets an overhaul. The beautiful decorations that make our sanctuary sparkle with all the bell's and whistle's. Our tree with lights, our wreaths and candles that glow.

All these things make our hearts happy and warm, so let's look forward to an awesome Advent Season and give each other lots of hugs and Best Wishes for the Holiday Season!

NOTEWORTHY



Celebrate Christmas with us...
All are Welcome!

Christmas Eve

Candlelight & Communion Service 7:00 p.m.

Birthdays for December



Dec 1	Collin Nestelle
Dec 2	David Mytnick
Dec. 2	Rebecca Stamper
Dec 4	Roy Dreger
Dec 6	Larry Mytnick
Dec 8	Jack Fitts
Dec 15	Carol Schubert
Dec 20	Betty Fitts
Dec 26	Lori Comerford
Dec 31	Pat Chapman

Ushers & Greeters for December

Dec. 2	Youth Sunday
Dec. 9	Shirley Sunyak, Lynne Petroff, Ric Sasse, Edie Phillips
Dec. 16	Millie Gilly, Vonnie Packard, Tom Packard, Barb Zinsmeister
Dec. 23	June Yost, Edie Phillips, Bill Meehan, Ed Connolly
Dec. 24	Lynne Petroff, Joe Pesch, Bob Franks, Barb Zinsmeister

Christmas Facts

Each year, 30-35 million real Christmas trees are sold in the United States alone. There are 21,000 Christmas tree growers in the United States, and trees usually grow for about 15 years before they are sold.

Today, in the Greek and Russian orthodox churches, Christmas is celebrated 13 days after the 25th, which is also referred to as the Epiphany or Three Kings Day. This is the day it is believed that the three wise men finally found Jesus in the manger.

In the **Middle Ages**, Christmas celebrations were rowdy and raucous—a lot like today's Mardi Gras parties.

From 1659 to 1681, the celebration of Christmas was outlawed in Boston, and law-breakers were fined five shillings.

Christmas was declared a federal holiday in the United States on June 26, 1870.

The first eggnog made in the United States was consumed in Captain John Smith's 1607 **Jamestown** settlement.

Poinsettia plants are named after Joel R. Poinsett, an American minister to **Mexico**, who brought the red-and-green plant from Mexico to America in 1828.

The Salvation Army has been sending **Santa Claus**-clad donation collectors into the streets since the 1890s.

Rudolph, "the most famous reindeer of all," was the product of Robert L. May's imagination in 1939. The copywriter wrote a poem about the reindeer to help lure customers into the Montgomery Ward department store.

Construction workers started the Rockefeller Center Christmas tree tradition in 1931.

Green Holiday Gift Guide

If you strive to live a green lifestyle, you may be looking for ways to make your holidays more eco-friendly this year while shopping for gifts for family and friends. As you stroll the mall or surf the web, it's a bit easier this year to find unique gifts made with reused or recycled plastics that can help you put a bit of "green" under the tree. Here are some ideas:

For Mom

Fashion- and eco-conscious moms may like a chic, sophisticated handbag; consider one made with repurposed truck and tractor tire inner tubes (often made using plastics) for a unique gift. A simpler but stylish tote bag made with recycled plastics could be useful for the busy mom. Active moms may appreciate a new pair of athletic shoes made with recycled plastics. For the environmentally minded mom (or dad) who enjoys cooking, there's an ever growing selection of distinctive, colorful kitchenware made with recycled plastics.

For Dad

Give Dad a stylish, recycled-plastics messenger bag to carry his essentials; choose from a variety of types to suit his style, from sporty to sophisticated. For the tech-savvy dad, a colorful, durable computer tablet case made with repurposed neoprene plastic (the same material used to make wetsuits!) could make a great gift. Or tell Dad it's time to toss the old, worn-out wallet for a simple, classic wallet that looks like leather but actually is made with recycled-plastic bags.

For the Kids

Got a toy truck lover at home? Recycled-plastic trucks come in several different types and colors to please most kids. Is a small someone looking to host princess tea parties? Construct

the next Empire State Building? Bake the world's best pizza? A recycled-plastic tea set, tool set, or pizza parlor set can encourage kids to be imaginative while also benefiting the environment. If your child is looking for a new "best friend" this holiday season, a cuddly stuffed animal made with recycled-plastic fabric and stuffing may be a good little buddy to snuggle with under the covers.

For The Home

There are many options out there to help spruce up a home with a dash of green. Recycled plastic picture frames and decorative boxes can add character to many rooms. A decorative, recycled-plastic rug can liven up a dull space and add a bit of warmth. And for creative types, check out a recycled-plastic lamp with a shade that can be molded into varying shapes: it's really a custom sculpture that can shed light in a personalized, eco-savvy way. What about the pets? Perhaps pamper your furry friends with a mat, blanket or cushion that is both comfy and made with soft recycled plastics.



Nurse Parish Health Notes: - Karen Dreger
EAT TO BEAT STRESS..... The holidays are coming-along with food-filled parties and family gatherings. An abundance of rich food and drink. Along with the assortment of holiday commitments, can tempt you to overeat. However eating poorly can make you feel tired, irritable and stressed. How can you eat to lower your holiday stress? ***Here are some tips from the American Dietetic Association:***

1. Start with a nutritious breakfast of whole grains, fruit, dairy and good sources of protein such as an egg, lean meat or nut butter.
2. Have a healthy snack before a party or holiday dinner. This will ease your hunger and make it easier to eat sensible portions.

3. Skip alcohol and enjoy sparkling water with a twist of lemon or lime.
4. While shopping, bring snacks such as fruit, and drink plenty of water.
5. Eat slowly. Take time to enjoy good conversation too.
6. Take healthy treats to parties, such as nuts or a fruit plate.
7. Allow yourself special treats. Just try to balance your calorie intake with physical activity to prevent weight gain.

Final thought: Aim for a realistic number of events and responsibilities during the holidays—stress and exhaustion can lead to overeating. Keep in mind that your main goal is to enjoy the company of family and friends.

BREADS & BREAKFAST DISHES

Strawberry & Cream Cheese Coffee Cake

(Serves 16 – 1 piece per serving)

Cooking Spray

3 ounces light cream cheese, softened

2 tablespoons sugar

1 large egg white

¼ cup uncooked quick-cooking oatmeal

1 tablespoon light brown sugar

½ tablespoon light tub margarine

1-1/4 cups all-purpose flour

½ cup uncooked quick-cooking oatmeal

1/3 cup sugar

2-1/2 teaspoon baking soda

½ cup fat-free milk

¼ cup unsweetened applesauce

¼ cup egg substitute

1 tablespoon canola or corn oil

1 cup fresh strawberries, chopped

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Lightly spray an 8-inch square baking pan with cooking spray.

In a small bowl, whisk together the cream cheese, 2 tablespoons sugar, and egg white until smooth.

In a separate small bowl, stir together ¼ cup oatmeal and brown sugar.

Using a fork, cut in the margarine until it is distributed evenly throughout the oatmeal mixture. The mixture will be crumbly.

In medium bowl, stir together the flour, ½ cup oatmeal, 1/3 cup sugar, and baking soda. Make a well in the center. Pour the remaining ingredients except the strawberries into the well. Stir until just combined; the batter will be somewhat lumpy. Do not over stir or the coffee cake may be tough. Pour into the baking pan, smoothing the surface.

Lightly spread the cream cheese mixture over the batter. Arrange the strawberries on top. Sprinkle with the oatmeal crumb mixture. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes, or until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean.

Transfer to a cooling rack. Let cool for a least 10 minutes before cutting.

Nutrients per Serving: Calories 108, Total Fat 2.5 g, Saturated Fat 1.0g, Trans Fat 0.0g, Polyunsaturated Fat 0.5g, Monounsaturated Fat 1.0g, Cholesterol 4 mg, Sodium 237mg, Carbohydrates 18g, Fiber 1g, Sugars 8g, Protein 3g.

Dietary Exchanges: 1 other carbohydrate, ½ fat

GOOD NUTRITION READING LIST

- The New American Heart Association Cookbook, Seventh Edition
- American Heart Association Low-Fat, Low Cholesterol Cookbook, Third Edition
- American Heart Association One-Dish Meals
- 365 days of Healthy Eating from the American Dietetic Association by Roberta Larson Duyff, MS, RD, FADA, CFS
- American Dietetic Association Cooking Healthy Across America by American Dietetic Association Food & Culinary Professionals Dietetic Practice Group. Wiley 2005

These books are available at the library, local bookstores or on line.

www.americanheart.org (American Heart Association web site)

www.eatright.org (American Dietetic Association web site)

Web Sites for Heart healthy Recipes

www.centralbean.com

www.kraftfoods.com

www.mrsdash.com

www.butterbuds.com

www.butterball.com

www.mardiweb.com/lowfat



Ladies Book Fellowship Group

December 10th at 7 pm. Book is "When in Doubt, Add Butter" by Beth Harbison. On the New York Times bestselling list. Its about the search for true love and all the ingredients that go into it.

PLEASE NOTE: All contributions for 2012 must be turned in by December 31 to be applied toward your 2012 giving statement.

Let's Remember What "Christmas is All About" through Linus, of "A Charlie Brown Christmas".....

Sure, I can tell you what Christmas is all about. "And there were in the same country Shepards abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid.

And the angel said unto them, 'fear not, for behold, I bring you tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a savior, which is Christ the Lord.

And this shall be a sign unto you. Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in the manger.' And suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, 'glory to God in the highest, and on Earth peace, good will toward men.'"

That's what Christmas is all about, Charlie Brown.

HAVE A BLESSED CHRISTMAS



DECEMBER 2012

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
CRAFT SHOW, DECEMBER 1ST – 9 AM TO 4 PM *Jazzercise, AA, & Scout Meetings are subject to change. If I do not receive info regarding cancellations, they will be printed.*						1 Craft Show 9am – 4 pm M.Couple 7p
2 Communion First Sunday of Advent	3 Trustees 7:30p Jazz 9:30a/6p W/AA 7:30p	4 CE 7P Jazz 6:30p Open/AA 8:30p	5 Choir 7 pm Boy Scouts 6:30p Jazz 9:30a/6p	6 Deacons 7:30pm Boy Scouts 6:30p Jazz 6:30p Al-Anon 8pm	7 Jazz 9:30a	8 Jazz 9a M.Couple 7p
9 Birthdays Outreach 9am	10 Book Club 7 pm Jazz 9:30a/6p W/AA 7:30p	11 Jazz 6:30p Open/AA 8:30p	12 Choir 7 pm Daisy Troop 6 p Jazz 9:30a/6p	13 Jazz 6:30p Al-Anon 8pm	14 Jazz 9:30a	15 Hall Rental 12-4pm Cunningham B-day Jazz 9a M.Couple 7p
16 Communion Newsletter Articles Due	17 Jazz 9:30a/6p W/AA 7:30p	18 Jazz 6:30p Open/AA 8:30p	19 Choir 7 pm Boy Scouts 6:30p Jazz 9:30a/6p	20 Council 7p Boy Scouts 6:30p Jazz 6:30p Al-Anon 8pm	21 First Day of Winter Jazz 9:30a	22 Jazz 9a M.Couple 7p
23	24 Christmas Eve Worship 7pm OFFICE CLOSED Jazz 9:30am W/AA 7:30p	25 CHRISTMAS OFFICE CLOSED 	26 Choir 7 pm Daisy Troop 6 p	27 Jazz 6:30p Al-Anon 8pm	28 Hospitality w/a Heart Meal Jazz 9:30a	29 Jazz 9a M.Couple 7p
30	31 New Year's Eve Jazz 9:30a/6p W/AA 7:30p					

