



The Messenger



First Congregational Church

United Church of Christ

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June 2013

Pastor's Pen – Pastor Dave

It's not the length of life, but the depth. – Ralph Waldo Emerson

The great twentieth century religious thinker Henri Nouwen, in the book entitled Aging: the Fulfillment of Life co-authored with Walter Gaffney, presents an image of an old wagon wheel leaning against a tree. They use it to create a good visual for the cycle and the continuity of life:

“The restful accomplishment of the old wheel tells us the story of life. Entering into the world we are what we are given, and for many years thereafter parents and grandparents, brothers and sisters, friends and lovers keep giving to us, some more, some less, some hesitantly, some generously. When we can finally stand on our own feet, speak our own words, and express our own unique self in work and love, we realize how much is given to us. But while reaching the height of our cycle, and saying with a great sense of confidence, ‘I really am,’ we sense that to fulfill our life we are now called to become parents and grandparents, brothers and sisters, teachers, friends, and lovers ourselves, and to give to others so that, when we leave this world, we can be what we have given.”

Although he is speaking about individuals, his image and ideas apply equally, I believe, to the life cycles of institutions including individual churches. I call attention to the last part of his comment in which he speaks about the individual – his comments sound very much like those of Paul in the Letter to the Ephesians. Paul seems to talk about faith's life cycle for the individual Christian and faith community when he says:

“Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied when each part is working properly makes bodily growth and up builds itself in love.”

I believe Paul suggests that the evolving Christian goes through stages of faith development in his or her lifespan until he or she “grows up in every way into him who is the head.”

Ronald Olson suggests it this way in describing the development of the church itself:

*To
Share
Faith,
Hope
and
Love
with
all.*

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“The church, gifted, equipped, and built up, moves toward, and has momentum for the unity of faith, the knowledge of God’s Son, and the measure of the full stature of Christ. No one is left out. All members play their part in the church’s attainment of the unity and maturity that rightly belong to it. The church is the context in which believers live out their calling.”

Paul goes on to describe the church as “being knit together by every joint with which it is supplied when each part is working properly makes bodily growth and up builds itself in love.” One could make a similar inference to the cycle of development in Christian congregations. Like individual Christians, churches evolve and develop through their life cycles. Nouwen’s description of the wheel suggests that this image can apply to the life and ministry of an individual congregation as it lives out its life in ministry.

The above is the opening of my doctoral thesis...but I think it is a good way to look at the church and its life. First Congregational North Ridgeville is evolving as a church. It has grown in its understanding of itself and now it is building on that understanding. May we be open to God’s leading at this very pivotal time in the church’s life.

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Would anyone like to join me for the following ride on the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad? It would give us some information on a possible church outing. - Pastor Dave

Area Religious Group Leaders Invited to Ride the Train – Brecksville, Ohio

“Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP) and Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad (CVSR) invite area religious group leaders to join us...Wednesday, June 19, 9 a.m. at Rockside Station for a **FREE train ride** through CVNP. Along the route we’ll share information on experiencing the national park with a focus on health and wellness. After all, the path to wellness is as easy as a walk or a train ride in the park. Join us to explore how your religious group can take part in activities that are good for mind, body and spirit.”

Christian Education Corner – Mary Karlovec

It is hard to believe that June is here and school will be officially over in the coming week for our children and youth. For me, it will be the end of 36 years of teaching and the the beginning of a new chapter in my life. I must admit that I am somewhat reluctant to retire but I know that there are other challenges ahead of me including helping Matt in his recovery. One of the good things about retirement is that I can now attend the meetings and conferences that I miss doing with my fellow CE leaders from the WRA/EOA. I am excited about being able to share and learn from them!

For three of our high school youth, Taylor Comerford, Laura Petroff and Jenna Yost, new beginnings also await them as they graduate from high school this year. At the college level, Gwen Poe has graduated from Hiram College. Congratulations to all of these young ladies. We will be honoring them on Sunday, June 2 during church and at coffee hour. If I have missed any graduates, please let me know as soon as possible so we can honor them too!

Hot News!! We will be doing Vacation Bible School again this year! We are trying a new format and this will be an INTERGENERATIONAL VBS (that means everybody, regardless of age). It will be for 3 nights starting Sunday, July 28 through Tuesday, July 30. It will begin each evening at 6:00 p.m. for dinner and last until 8:30 p.m. Our theme is “Hay Day” which involves farm animals (a perfect theme for North Ridgeville!). There will be a Bible study, crafts, music and worship each evening. It is open to everyone so mark your calendar and even plan on bringing the grandchildren! Registration materials will be on our website as well as available at the church after June 5. If you are interested in attending but cannot drive at night, do not worry! We have people willing to be your driver!

Sunday School is officially over for this school year. Children 3 years old through 2nd grade will still have children’s time each Sunday. We will begin each Sunday in church and leave as we normally do. If you are willing

to oversee this class for one or two Sundays during the summer, please let me know.

Finally, we have almost finalized our plans for the 2nd Women's Retreat in November! Information packets will be mailed to all women of the church in mid-June. If you went last time, spread the word about the great time we had! It is open to all women of the church as well as family and friends. We must have a minimum of 25 women (anyone high school age and older) to make this event happen.

From the Deacons' Desk

During the choir's summer hiatus we are seeking out individuals and/or groups who would be interested in sharing their musical/singing talents with the congregation during a worship service. If you would like more information, contact Pastor Dave or Kathleen Bosl, our music director. Sign up sheets are available in the Winckle's Room and Fellowship Hall.



"Praise the Lord!

***How good it is to sing praises to our God;
for he is gracious, and a song of praise is fitting."***

Psalm 147:1

Outreach Committee News – Edie Phillips

Community Care: We are still collecting food items for the summer pack lunches program, plus food for clients' general use. Items needed are:

- ✓ Peanut butter
- ✓ Jelly
- ✓ Macaroni & cheese
- ✓ Cereals & other breakfast foods
- ✓ Cans of soups, ravioli, SpaghettiOs, etc.
- ✓ Any nonperishable food items

Community Care helps many families who are struggling to put food on their tables. This church is always ready to help and we are sure it is appreciated.

Mother's Day: We had a good response to our breakfast on Mother's Day. It is nice to visit with each other while sharing a meal.

Hospitality with a Heart: Thank you for the donations to the hospitality meals. This is an outreach program the whole church is involved in and it is so great to know we can always count on you (our church family). I always feel the love and I know the people who come to dine with us feel it too. Our June menu is soft taco with lettuce and cheese, black beans and rice, corn, and dessert.

We, in Outreach, wish to welcome the new members to our church family. I know you must already feel a part of our church but it gets even better as time goes on.

Prayer

"God, today this very day show me a way in which I can play the role of a servant, perhaps in a way that surprises even me."

Outreach Committee members: Barb Zinsmeister, Nancy Franks, Ann Olesen, Peg Hopkins, Jean Griffith, Edie Phillips

Trustees' Turn – Roy Dreger

Just a little humor for those of you that have grandchildren, your own children, or just plain like children: A grandfather was taking his young granddaughter for a walk around the block when they spied the little girl's lost cat lying dead in the street. Wanting to keep his granddaughter from hurting, he tells her, "It's okay, your kitty is with God now." The little girl, with the beginning of tears in her eyes, replies, "What does God want with a dead cat?" (I warned you it was just a little humor.)

Back to the business at hand...It has been another work and still no work has been done on the outside of the church or the sanctuary ceiling (as of the writing of this column). Weather has been an issue when the roofers have scheduled. The painters were ready to go in March, but that would have interfered with our Lenten programs so it was put off until they could work it into their schedule. The painters were hopeful about doing the work in May, but did not promise it would be done then. In fact, they indicated that if not done during the winter months, the painting might not get done until the following fall or winter since there are some jobs they

are committed to that have to be done outside and in good weather. I guess we will have to be patient, and it is good to know that we can afford to have the necessary work done.

Speaking of affording things, there will be a capital campaign to provide for unknown items that might arise due to the age of the building and the widening of Center Ridge Road. Trustees are currently getting estimates on some things that might come up, but these are only possibilities. Some examples are the moving of the front sign, replacing the sidewalk, and replacing lost parking due to the roadway widening. When the sign is moved we might want to consider a different sign, especially if the location is such that it has to be oriented differently. Some of the pipes in the basement are looking as if they might fail, and they will cause an awful mess if they do. It would be nice to get the old boiler working if it can be done cheaply enough, just to have as backup.

I want to invite everyone to the clean up day on Saturday, June 8 from 9 am until noon. There are always things that need to be done and "many hands make light work"!

Finally, with vacation time on us again the Trustees would like to remind you that the bills don't seem to take a vacation. Please keep your pledges current as you enjoy the summer. The Trustees thank you for all you have done so far this year to keep your church running, and ask your continued support.

Ushers & Greeters

June 2	Youth members
June 9	Bob Elliott, Joe Pesch, Barb Zinsmeister, Ed Connolly
June 16	Shirley Sunyak, Edie Phillips, Ric Sasse, Millie Gilly
June 23	Tom & Vonnie Packard, Bill & Charis Meehan
June 30	Lynne Petroff, Gayle Hannold, Ric Sasse, Joe Pesch



**ATTN: All Church Members!!
Major fundraiser coming in September!
Past to Present Car Show
September 8, 2013**

Mark your calendars and help make this event a success by your participation. It takes people like YOU supporting this event by doing a special task from 12:30-4:00 p.m. on the day of the event. A list of tasks will be provided closer to the show. In the meantime, think about what you can donate for the drawings that take place every 5 minutes during the show. The door prizes are for the car guys who attend and pay an entry fee to get in.

Let's get our engines started early this year so we're not the last one to the starting line. We had 10 folks attend our car show meeting on May 9. Alex and Jane Woravka will be co-chairs for the fundraiser...a definite green light!

Ladies Book Discussion Group: On June 10 at 7 p.m. we will be meeting on Krista O'Neill's patio to discuss Saul Bellow's Seize the Day. (Bring munchies and beverage of your choice.)

Thank you to Pastor Dave and the Deacons for the colorful, coordinated service on Sunday, May 19. We welcome new members into our church and celebrated Pentecost with special music by the choir members including a solo by Pat Kyle. Over the top, church family!!

To our church family,

We just want to give special thanks to all who helped out with the spaghetti dinner. We feel so blessed to be part of this wonderful church family. I want to especially thank Mary and Karen for everything they did for the dinner. All the baskets that were auctioned off were beautiful. Thank you to all the people who put them together. We are going to use the money that was donated for our hotel cost. We also want to thank Pastor Dave for all of his help too! Diana was in charge in the kitchen and did a great job. If we forgot anyone, we are sorry. Thank you to all who helped!! This baby is already part of this wonderful church family!

Bill, Jenn and Abby



UCC lifts up prayers for Oklahomans in aftermath of deadly tornados (Written by Anthony Moujaes)

With the eyes of the nation looking toward Oklahoma in the wake of a deadly and devastating tornado Monday night, the United Church of Christ is offering prayers and support, beginning to coordinate relief efforts in the affected areas of Oklahoma City and Moore, OK. Edith Guffey, Conference Minister for the UCC Kansas-Oklahoma Conference, said none of the UCC buildings in the area have been damaged, and "to our knowledge none of our members or families have lost their lives," she said.

The disaster response team of UCC's Wider Church Ministries issued an appeal for donations to be used toward supplies and relief in the region. Guffey, Oklahoma City pastors, and Florence Coppola of the UCC's National Disaster Ministries are communicating and coordinating the denomination's response to assist those affected by the storm. Disaster Ministries will partner with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in developing a cooperative response.

Guffey sent a note out May 21 to UCC Conference Ministers indicating that she has been in contact with the five UCC churches in the Oklahoma City and Moore area. The congregations are Mayflower Congregational Church, Church of the Open Arms, Cathedral of Hope, Church of the Savior, and

United Church of Norman. Guffey said some UCC members have lost personal property, with the home of one family leveled.

"Thanks to everyone for their words, Facebook posts, texts and calls, and especially to Florence for her immediate actions and response," Guffey said. "It is in times like these that we understand best what it is to be supported, cared and prayed for by our sisters and brothers across the country. We can never turn the clock back to the minutes before all of this happened, but we can walk together through the difficult days ahead." Coppola has already spoken with volunteer networks and ecumenical partners to begin coordinating a response, and she will join Guffey in Oklahoma City next week "to offer support in any we can, and to begin conversation with pastors and ecumenical partners about long term strategies and support" as they begin the road to recovery, Guffey said.

The May 20 tornado was about two miles wide, and wiped out a wide area, twisting along the ground in a 22-mile stretch for about 40 minutes. So far, dozens of people have been killed, though an exact number is undetermined. The death toll as of Tuesday morning was 24. Hundreds have been injured, with more being pulled out alive from the rubble. There are about 40,000 people without power, and other utilities are spotty. The tornado has leveled two schools and a hospital building. In addition to the storm on Monday, there were tornados on the ground in Oklahoma on Sunday night, and weather experts said several more could pop up in the area as the storm moves through the central part of the country.

"Generosity is a hallmark of UCC members and friends," Coppola said. "Their gifts now will help the UCC respond to these devastating storms and those yet to come this spring and summer." Disaster Ministries is asking UCC members for their prayers, and is encouraging anyone who wishes to make a donation to do so through the Emergency USA Fund. There could be volunteer opportunities in Oklahoma in the future through Disaster ministries, but for now first responders are on the ground searching for missing persons and providing aid.

For more information or to learn how to help, visit: <http://www.ucc.org/disaster/>

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 Jazzercise 9 am Married Couples Recovery 7 pm
2 Communion Outreach 9 am	3 Trustees 7:30 pm Jazz 9:30am/6pm AA Women 7:30 pm	4 CE 7 pm Jazzercise 6:30 pm AA 1 st Step 8:30 pm	5 Jazz 9:30 am/6pm	6 Deacons 7:30 pm 4-H 6:30 pm Jazzercise 6:30 pm AI-Anon 7-7:45 (up) AI-Anon 8 pm (down)	7 Jazzercise 9:30 am	8 Spring clean up 9am Jazzercise 9 am Married Couples Recovery 7 pm
9 Search Comm. 9 am June birthdays	10 Book Club 7 pm @ Krista O'Neill's home Jazz 9:30am/6pm AA Women 7:30 pm	11 Jazzercise 6:30 pm AA 1 st Step 8:30 pm	12 Jazz 9:30 am/6pm	13 4-H 6:30 pm Jazzercise 6:30 pm AI-Anon 8 pm	14  Jazzercise 9:30 am	15 Jazzercise 9 am Married Couples Recovery 7 pm
16 Communion Newsletter articles due 	17 Jazz 9:30am/6pm AA Women 7:30 pm	18 Jazzercise 6:30 pm AA 1 st Step 8:30 pm	19 Jazz 9:30 am/6pm	20 Council 7 pm 4-H 6:30 pm Jazzercise 6:30 pm AI-Anon 8 pm	21 Jazzercise 9:30 am	22 Jazzercise 9 am Married Couples Recovery 7 pm
23 Search Comm. 9 am	24 Jazz 9:30am/6pm AA Women 7:30 pm	25 56th Anniversary of the United Church of Christ Jazzercise 6:30 pm AA 1 st Step 8:30 pm	26 Jazz 9:30 am/6pm	27 4-H 6:30 pm Jazzercise 6:30 pm AI-Anon 8 pm	28 Hospitality w/a Heart meal 4-6 prep, 6-7 serve, 7-? clean up Jazzercise 9:30 am	29 Jazzercise 9 am Married Couples Recovery 7 pm
30						