

The Messenger

The monthly newsletter of First Congregational Church UCC of North Ridgeville

December 2019

Pastor

Rev. Arik Borstad

Director, Christian

Education

Mary Karlovec

Music Director

Kerry Davis

Moderator

Roy Dreger

Vice-Moderator

Nancy Franks

Co-Chairs, Christian

Education

Kelsey Veliconia

Renee Dornan

Co-Chairs, Deacons

Diana Goode

Lynne Petroff

Chair, Outreach

Nancy Franks

Chair, Trustees

Pete Veliconia

Treasurer, Secretary

Linda Matis

From the Pastor's Pen

December is upon us, which means we find ourselves in the thrall of the Christmas season. In the midst of the cold nights and snowy days, we find solace remembering that Christmas draws closer with each passing day, reminding us the importance of what this season is all about.

To help get us in the Christmas spirit, we have some important events you should make sure you have on your calendar this month. First and foremost, on December 1 we kick off our Advent Season which will last us until Christmas Eve! On December 22 we will have a single service at 10:30 **am** which will be our Nativity Service that is fun for the whole family. On December 24 we will have a Christmas Eve service at 10:00 **pm** as we welcome the birth of Christ into our lives once more. Following Christmas Eve we will have single service on December 29 at 10:30 **am** for those who are still in town and the following week we will return to our two service schedule as we celebrate Epiphany as a congregation.

In the midst of the holiday season, we also recognize this is a tough time of year for those of us who are feeling lost and lonely. To make space for those who need time away from the holiday festivities and cheer, we will be holding a Blue Christmas service on December 21 at 7 **pm**. It will be a service of candlelight and prayer as we know how difficult the holidays can be.

As Christmas morning draws closer each and every day, let us not forget what this season is truly about. Let us remember how a child, born on the margins of society, grew up and challenged an empire, changing the world as we know it, forever. As we move forward into this time of festivity, let us continue to celebrate the birth of Christ into our lives, once more.



Blessings and Peace,
Pastor Arik

Safe Church Update – Pastor Arik

As we continue to grow as a congregation, one of the most important issues as a faith community is ensuring the safety and wellbeing of every person that walks through our doors. From the youngest child to the oldest member, every single person deserves to have a sense of safety and security when they join us for worship.

In light of this goal, and to best adapt to the changing times we live in today, our Safe Church Committee is in the process of updating some of our practices to faithfully live in to this covenant. As a result, you will notice some changes in the coming weeks and so we wanted to take the opportunity to point out what is happening and why it is taking place.

First and foremost, you will be encouraged to complete and turn in an emergency contact form which will *safely secured* in the church office and won't be touched unless an emergency takes place. This form has information that would be helpful to first responders or medical staff if you were to collapse and be unresponsive and not accompanied with someone who knows your medical history, allergies, etc. Filling out this form is voluntary *unless* you are under 18 or work with any of our youth; in those cases, submission of the form is mandatory.

In addition, you will notice that the Sunday school teachers and nursery care workers will be wearing photo ID's in their classrooms. This is in case of an evacuation or an unsafe situation so police and first responders can quickly identify who is in charge of the children. On the back side of these ID's is a list of codes to quickly inform one another if a situation is taking place. These codes are given colors to communicate information and to not scare the youth and will serve as a shorthand in emergencies.

To pair with these color codes, the Sunday School rooms, nursery, and the narthex will be outfitted with walkie-talkies which will only be used to communicate quickly if any situations develop. In addition, evacuation routes have been posted in each of the Sunday school rooms for easy access.

To ensure understanding and compliance with these changes, we will be practicing a drill sometime after the beginning of this next year to practice what an evacuation of the Christian Ed wing would look like in case of a fire.

Sunday school teachers, nursery workers, and youth leaders will also be given special training to ensure these changes are adapted without any issues.

It may seem like overkill, but in the world we live in today, we would much rather be overly careful than be caught unprepared. The safety of our faith family is our first priority and we will continue to do what we can to ensure a safe and welcoming atmosphere for all.

Moderator's Moment – Roy Dreger

"Christmas my child is love in action. Every time we love, every time we give, it is Christmas." Dale Evans Rogers

Christmas is almost here...again. It seems as if we just celebrated Christmas. I know that it has been almost a year, but it seems as if time somehow sped up. Maybe that's something that comes with age. I don't know if it's really what happens, but it seems that as I have aged, time speeds up.

Some stores had Christmas items out prior to Halloween. (I know I'm old and grumpy, but that seems just plain wrong.) Be that as it may, I think it's time to get out the lights, decorate the trees and buy gifts. Gifts are the hardest thing to deal with for me (Christmas tree lights being a close second). I have read that you should buy someone something that you yourself would like; but somehow I don't see Karen being thrilled with a new sliding compound miter saw. I would, of course, be able to borrow it. Oh, well.

I do try to help find something, just the right thing, to gift to people at Christmas. It is certainly easier to buy for our 1 year old granddaughter than it is for our 17 year old granddaughter, but no matter. I try to help get something they like and, hopefully, want. Perhaps as it has been said, the thought is more important than the gift. Maybe it is all right if the gift isn't perfect.

Perhaps, as the Dalai Lama has said, "People were created to be loved. Things were created to be used. The reason the world is in chaos is because things are being loved and people are being used." Maybe I should concentrate more on the love, and less on the gifts. Merry Christmas (with love in our hearts)!



Christian Education Corner – Mary Karlovec

Advent greetings! If you attended our Advent workshop, you know that we have already started to prepare for Christmas Day! I hope that everyone who attended this event will utilize the supplies given to them to celebrate this amazing time of year. The biggest take away I hope everyone got from the event was "don't over extend and take the time each day (even if it is only 5 minutes) to remind yourselves what the season is all about.

We have added a new event to the calendar! On **Sunday, December 15 at 1:00** the youth and hopefully some of our

congregation who love to sing carols will travel to Northridge Independent Living (where we trunk or treated) to sing Christmas carols with the residents and enjoy some decorated cookies and punch. We will be taking all of the stockings we made and filled to spread a little cheer. There is a sign-up sheet outside of Mary's office. So bring a bagged lunch for after worship and travel with us to share the spirit of the season!

As I am writing this Pastor Arik and I are trying to pull together a special treat for our Facebook page during Advent. Each day of Advent we will share a 1-2 minute video of someone reading that day's story from the book Advent Storybook-24 Stories to Share Before Christmas by Antonie Schneider. If you are interested in being a guest reader for one night, please see me and we will hook you up with one of the daily stories to read. We will video tape you after worship on either December 1 or the 8th. Then share our Facebook page far and wide so others can enjoy the stories, too.



The Sunday School schedule has changed for December. Sundays, **December 1, December 8 and December 15** - there **WILL** be Sunday School! **Sunday, December 22** will be ALL FAMILY worship as the children will be a part of the Christmas story. **Sunday, December 29** there **is NO Sunday School** - children will be in worship.

Finally, a special thanks to the parents of our youth who scrambled at the last minute to make sure their kids were available to help at Community Care on November 21. A huge thank you to the parents who volunteered to stay and help the kids, too. This is one event the youth love to do and I was really pleased we had such a great turnout. Thank you, June Yost for making this happen! We will miss your support of our kids helping at Community Care! So many of our young adults got their first experiences with outreach through Community Care and the experiences through this program have greatly contributed to who they are today. Thank you, June for being the inspiring role model for even us oldies from long ago.

Outreach Committee News – Nancy Franks

Greetings to all believers in Jesus Christ! We are preparing the way for His appearance in December. Thanks be to God. Are you ready?

Together we have touched many lives through Outreach. Thank you for helping us touch so many in different ways: providing food, clothes, shelter, prayers, cards, visitation, financial assistance, blood supplements, consolation for the weary and broken, housing for the homeless, boxes from home for the military...the list goes on and on.

The Christmas giving tree is up! Twenty-five ornaments adorn the tree this year just waiting to be plucked, the request filled, then wrapped and returned by December 8 so that our Christmas elves can deliver them all at one time to Community Care. Be a blessing by sharing a Christmas present with a complete stranger, one who might not be receiving any others. It is in giving that we also receive. Thank you, and thank you, Barb,



for getting our tree ready. (As of 11/25, only 2 ornaments remain!!)

The Christmas Fund offering this year and every year helps to supplement retired clergy and staff members' retirement income as some of them are quite meager and really not enough to get by on. Inserts will be in your Sunday bulletins along with a special envelope for your contribution. Please be generous, as you always are. God bless your giving heart that reaches out with love for this special request.

Thank you for answering the call for coats for the Nepalese children. I'm sure they appreciate being a lot warmer on these cold mornings. We are arranging to have a speaker from the school tell us more about the children and their families in January.

The Outreach helping hands reach out to you in fellowship and with words of Merry Christmas and Happy Healthy New Year!! Let me say thank you to all the board members for a job well done: Becky, Tess, Ann, Jane, Skip, Linda, Barb, Edie and Jerry.

While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. Luke 2:6-7

Trustees' Turn – Pete Veliconia

We have four projects that we are trying to finish by the end of 2019. 1) The rear doors are ordered and will be replaced to finish the back entrance project. 2) The front doors will be taken down and sanded, the hardware will all be polished and the front doors will be painted (stained if possible) and rehung. 3) A drain will be put outside of the elevator entrance to alleviate the flooding in the bottom of the shaft, and try to smooth out the cement/asphalt to make it easier to get in and out. 4) Because our gutters are so high and not easy to clean, we will be having gutter guards installed to keep them clean and hopefully take care of the flooding issue in the basement. We are hoping all can be done by Christmas.

We want to thank the congregation for passing the budget for the upcoming year and

for their timely pledging. The planning that Linda Matis does can only be done with the cooperation of all members. We try to present a realistic plan for the upcoming year and use the budget as a guide for prudent spending in 2020. We did a tweak this year to give more time to plan... this will be continued in the upcoming years.

Deacons' Desk – Karen Dreger

The church looks beautiful, dressed for Christmas and ready to welcome baby Jesus! The children are excited. We have many opportunities to show the joy of giving to our children: Community Care, Christmas giving tree, warm clothes for kids, Toys for Tots, Salvation Army...the list is long.

Those who have lost a loved one this year need our compassion. I'm sure our home bound members would appreciate a card or phone call. Children could make a card to send. Some home bound members:

Pat Chapman
223 Cornell Ave.
Elyria, OH 44035
440-322-2379

Florence Garner
37800 French Creek
Room 405
Avon, OH 44011

Peg Hopkins
6110 Wallace Blvd.
N. Ridgeville, OH 44039
440-327-6215

Matt Karlovec
105 Windbrook Ct.
Elyria, OH 44035
440-365-0922

Sue Mays
4823 White Pine Way
N. Ridgeville, OH 44039
440-327-8714

Carol Schubert
14959 S. Island Rd.
Columbia Station, OH
44028
440-748-3474

Dreama Stamper
5373 Barton Rd.
N. Ridgeville, OH 44039
440-327-6685

May all of you experience the joy of Christmas!
"Joy is not in things, it is in us" -Richard Wagner



Women's Book Club: All book club gatherings are at 7 pm unless otherwise noted.

Dec. 16: Shopping for a Baby's First Christmas by Julia Kent

January 20: Reading to Jane by Carol Marshall

February 17: The Whole Town's Talking by Fannie Flagg

March 16: The Winemaker's Secret by Cynthia Ellingsen

Parish Nurse's Notes – Karen Dreger

12 Ways to Have a Healthy Holiday Season

1. Wash hands often to prevent the spread of germs. It's flu season. Wash you hands with soap and running water for at least 20 seconds.
2. Bundle up to stay dry and warm. Wear appropriate outdoor clothing: light, warm layers, gloves, hats, scarves and waterproof boots.
3. Manage stress. Give yourself a break if you feel stressed out and overwhelmed. Some of the best ways to manage stress are to find support, connect socially, and get plenty of sleep (and don't forget the 5 senses exercise).
4. Don't drink and drive and don't let others drink and drive.
5. Be smoke free. Avoid smoking and second hand smoke. Both put your health at risk.
6. Fasten seat belts while driving and riding in a motor vehicle. Always put your children and grandchildren in the appropriate seat. Buckle up every time, no matter how short the ride.
7. Get exams and screenings. Ask your health care provider what exams you need. Update your personal and family history.
8. Get your vaccinations. Vaccinations help prevent diseases and save lives. Everyone 6 months old and older should get a flu vaccine each year.
9. Monitor children. Keep potentially dangerous toys, food, drinks, household items, plants, batteries, medicines and other objects out of the reach of children. (Poison Control Phone number 1-800-222-1222)
10. Practice fire safety. Most residential fires occur during the winter months, so don't leave fireplaces, space heaters, food cooking on stoves or candles unattended. Have an emergency plan and practice it regularly.

11. Prepare food safely. Remember these simple steps: wash hands and surfaces often, avoid cross-contamination, cook food to proper temperatures, and refrigerate foods promptly.

12. Eat healthy, stay active. Eat fruits and vegetables which pack nutrients and help lower the risk of certain diseases. Limit your portion sizes and foods high in fat, salt and sugar. Be active for at least 2 1/2 hours a week and help kids and teens be active 1 hour a day.

You can hear this as a song to the tune of "The Twelve Days of Christmas" at the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

Ushers & Greeters

Dec. 1	Shirley Sunyak, Becky Williams, Krista O'Neill
Dec. 8	Nancy Findlay, Lynne Petroff, Millie Gilly
Dec. 15	Tess Anderson, Pete Veliconia
Dec. 22	Vonnie Packard, Ann Olesen, Regenia Comerford
Dec. 29	Joe Pesch, Ric Sasse, Edie Phillips

Acolytes

Dec. 1	Cady Kyser
Dec. 8	Will Schupbach
Dec. 15	Mackenzie Pero-Luter
Dec. 22	Jillian Smoker
Dec. 29	Abigail Packard

Nursery

Dec. 1	Allison Borstad
Dec. 8	Shirley Sunyak
Dec. 15	Amy Eaton
Dec. 22	Ann Olesen
Dec. 29	Linda Matis

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|-------|----------------------|
| 12/4 | Roy Dreger |
| 12/6 | Larry Mytnick |
| 12/8 | Jack Fitts |
| 12/15 | Carol Schubert |
| 12/19 | Avery Truskott |
| 12/20 | Betty Fitts |
| 12/22 | Jerry Henson |
| 12/24 | Diane Feigi |
| 12/31 | Pat Chapman |
| 12/28 | Chris & Kari Dlugosz |



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 1st Sunday of Advent Outreach 9 am Communion Coffee Shop Svc. 9:00 Traditional Svc. 10:30 Clear classrooms	2 AA Women 7 pm	3 Trustees 7 pm AA 1 st Step 8:30 pm	4 Choir practice 6:30 pm	5 AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 8 pm	6 Craft Show set up 6-8 pm	7 Craft Show 9 am-4 pm Couples Recovery 6 pm
8 2nd Sunday of Advent Coffee Shop Svc. 9:00 Traditional Svc. 10:30 December birthdays' celebration	9 AA Women 7 pm	10 CE 7 pm AA 1 st Step 8:30 pm	11 Choir practice 6:30 pm	12 AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 8 pm	13	14 Yoga 11 am Couples Recovery 6 pm
15 3rd Sunday of Advent Communion Coffee Shop Svc. 9:00 Traditional Svc. 10:30 Caroling at The Northridge 1 pm	16 Newsletter articles due Book Club 7 pm AA Women 7 pm	17 AA 1 st Step 8:30 pm	18 Choir practice 6:30 pm	19 Council 7 pm AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 8 pm	20	21 Blue Christmas Svc. 7 pm Yoga 11 am Couples Recovery 6 pm
22 4th Sunday of Advent Nativity service 10:30	23 AA Women 7 pm	24 Christmas Eve Candlelight service 10 pm AA 1 st Step 8:30 pm	25 Christmas OFFICE CLOSED	26 OFFICE CLOSED AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 8 pm	27 Hospitality with a Heart LCAS 6:30 pm	28 Couples Recovery 6 pm
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> Linda & Pastor Arik on vacation through 1/1 </div>						
29 1 service 10:30 Deacons 11:30 am	30 AA Women 7 pm	31 AA 1 st Step 8:30 pm				
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> Linda & Pastor Arik on vacation through 1/1 </div>						
	AA Women 7 pm	AA 1 st Step 8:30 pm				

