

The Messenger

The monthly newsletter of First Congregational Church UCC of North Ridgeville

April 2020

Pastor

Rev. Arik Borstad

Director, Christian Education

Mary Karlovec

Music Director

Barb Habecker

Moderator

Roy Dreger

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Nancy Franks

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Kelsey Veliconia

Renee Dornan

Chair, Deacons

Diana Goode

Chair, Outreach

Nancy Franks

Chair, Trustees

Jack Fitts

Treasurer, Secretary

Linda Matis

From the Pastor's Pen

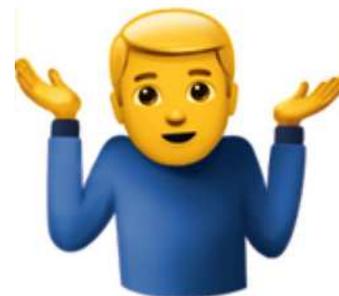
When asked what should be in the newsletter for the month of April, I quite liked Linda's suggestion of just putting a picture of someone shrugging their shoulders with their hands in the air, because, quite frankly, we have no idea what this month is going to look like for any of us. That's where we are as a faith family and as a world – wracked with anxiety over the uncertainty of what is to come; we can't make any promises or make any plans. All we can do is roll with the punches and adapt the best that we can.

To be sure, we've never faced anything like this before, nor have we had to find ways to remain connected as a faith family in the midst of such a crisis. However, what I can tell you is that we promise to continue to do what we can to support you and offer you a haven every week where you can move away from the chaos of the world and ground yourself in God's healing love. To ensure that we remain here for you, we are doing a handful of things in order to provide opportunities for healing and connection during this time of isolation.

First and foremost, until we are told otherwise by the CDC and by the conference, we will continue to hold our services online for the foreseeable future. That includes Palm Sunday (10 am), Maundy Thursday (7 pm), and Easter morning (10 am). You can join us for those live broadcasts on our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/firstconguccnr>) or watch the videos on our website at <http://www.fccalive.org/resources/church-online>.

In addition to the worship services, following each Sunday service we will be going live on our Facebook page for a time of fellowship during our makeshift "coffee hour." This will be a time to chat in the comments of the livestream as we gather to check in with one another and join together as a community of faith.

Additionally, on Saturday evenings Matthew is hosting a prayer time that he is streaming live from our Facebook page as well. Drop by for a bit during these streams to submit prayer requests, which he will then draw/doodle and eventually hang in the church once we are able to rejoin together in person.



**Effective 3/25/2020
the church office is
only open Mondays,
Wednesdays and
Fridays from 9 am to
noon until further
notice.**

I know this is a scary time for a lot of us, but remember that we are navigating these uncharted waters together. We cannot control what is happening around us, but how we choose to respond is entirely up to us. I encourage us to keep the faith and hold on to hope as we support one another, now more than ever. Let us not forget that we are an Easter people – a resurrection people – and no matter what happens to us, no matter how bad things may seem... we will rise again.

Be safe and be well, everyone.

Pastor Arik

Moderator's Moment – Roy Dreger

There are memories that just kind of “hang around” the edges of my mind. They are not necessarily about meaningful things, but they connect me with things that sometimes are. Sometimes they just remind me of a moment in time I had forgotten. And the things that bring those memories forward can be rather...well, odd.

When I was (much) younger I read a book titled The Gospel According to Peanuts. I can't say that I remember much about the specifics of that book, but I remember that the cartoons of Charles Schultz that were used to illustrate a point somehow spoke to me. The art spoke to me in a language I could understand, but not necessarily put into my own words. In a previous article I mentioned how I had heard that music is emotion you can hear. Perhaps visual art is emotion you can see?

Anyhow, recently I came across the following cartoon that reminded me of that book:



To be fair, I think the quote is a paraphrase of what Charles Schultz originally wrote: “Some day, we will all die, Snoopy. True, but on all the other days, we will not.” As much as I understand the sentiment, with Easter approaching it made me think that the wording of Snoopy's reply could perhaps be restated: "Wrong! We only die once. We live twice!"

Be safe, stay healthy and have a Joyous Easter!

Christian Education Corner – Mary Karlovec

Spring is a time for new beginnings but the new beginnings for 2020 were not what we were expecting or planning for this Lenten season. We are in uncharted territory and trying to adjust to the new normal. With that in mind, we have had to change how we do Christian Education for the time being. So what does that look like?

First, the children/youth received a packet from me in the mail last week that had blank cards and stamps in it. They also had the addresses of our home bound members and were asked to share some encouraging words and art with them, letting them know we were thinking about them. I encourage EVERYONE to join in and send cards, notes, Facebook messages, emails, phone calls, and even Facetime to **ALL** of our congregation/friends to check in as well as provide words of hope and encouragement during this time of social distancing. This is hard on everyone so this is a simple way to do our part. My goal is to check in with 4-5 Facebook friends daily and write one or two notes to congregation members.

Second, we had to cancel our “Journey through Holy Week” event scheduled for April 4. I had already started making and purchasing supplies so I decided to change it to “**Journey through Holy Week in a Bag.**” Those families that reached out and requested



one received a large grocery bag filled with many activities to do to prepare for Easter at home. Many thanks to Heather Smith and Millie

Gilly for helping with the final push to get the bags together. (Directions for the bags can be found on our website www.fccalive.org on the home page.) Be looking on my Facebook page as well as the church website for pictures of what the families are doing! Since we will not be together for Easter, Mikey Feigi continues to be the "Keeper of the Alleluias" and we will bring them back as soon as we are able to worship together again!

Third, I am preparing some weekly Facebook lessons to do with the kids, sort of like a Children's Time/Sunday School lesson rolled into one. I hope to be able to use Facebook and another platform to share these lessons. Be looking on Facebook and emails for upcoming lessons. My first lesson is about "Prayer Doodling" which is something that comes from the book "Praying in Color." It is a great fun way to pray. It is part of the "Journey through Holy Week" activities.

As of right now our night at Clague Playhouse (May 9) is up in the air. The playhouse is currently closed and if we continue to be in a shelter-in-place mode for a continued period of time, we will have to cancel. I will keep you informed as to the status.

Please continue to stay safe and healthy and do not hesitate to reach out and ask for suggestions/ideas of things to do at home. This is a challenging time for all of us and supporting each other and sharing our faith is important.



Outreach Committee News – Nancy Franks

Hospitality with a Heart—does anyone know how many years we've been doing this outreach program?? It's been very successful for a number of churches in our community and neighboring communities. We are thankful to all participants involved, whether working it or have a meal at it. God is at work here. Amen. *This*

program will resume when the "all clear" is sounded.

Our thanks to the Trustees for arranging the purchase of the new industrial stove for fundraiser dinners, Hospitality with a Heart meals, church coffee hours, church meals, and special events. A large undertaking—our thanks to the strong-armed men who muscled the old behemoth out and the new one in. Special thanks to Bruce, Roy, Pete, Jack and Chris and other heroes who go on and beyond the call.

One Great Hour of Sharing: the serious business of daily living goes on, not only by us but by those caught in the fringes of life. Prayer makes a huge difference for those hard to reach so remember them in prayer and thank you for your generosity during the March donation campaign. *And because worship service cancellations due to the COVID-19 virus, we are continuing this collection through April and May if you wish to donate.*

Providing we are back at church, One World Shop will be here in April 26 to delight you with one-of-a-kind handmade items by third-world artisans eager to please you with their handiworks for sale. Be sure to stay after church until 1:00 on this day to purchase items for yourself, friends and moms for Mother's Day in May.

Remember our troops with travel size donations for our Boxes from Home. Food items, bagged and canned, are always appreciated for Community Care. Collection boxes for both are in the narthex and fellowship hall. *Save your items till we reopen!* Thank you and God bless you!

Wishing everyone a blessed Easter from our Outreach committee members: Jane, Becky, Edie, Barb, Jerry, Skip, Linda, Ann & Nancy.

Stay well!

We'll get through this with God's help!

Deacons' Desk – Karen Dreger

Happy Spring, Happy Memories
God's miracle of spring is quite dramatic in this part of the country. Signs of life are popping out. A tree that appears dead starts to bud, then tiny leaves start to show, then some of the

trees put forth flowers. Daffodils push up through the dead leaves. The sun feels warmer on our face.

I remember Easter when I was a young girl. I had five brothers and sisters and the Saturday night before Easter Sunday all our shoes were lined up to be polished. We had black and brown polish for my dad and brothers, and white polish for baby shoes. The girls usually had patent leather shoes. Sunday morning before we left for church mom or dad would take a picture of us on the steps with our spring coats. All the girls had on Easter hats. The church would be crowded and joyful, singing alleluias with the organ.

The anniversary committee wants your church memories. Every church memory is important and needed to paint a picture of our church. Long or short, it doesn't matter. We would like to put them in a binder to share. Please share a recent memory or a long ago one. Encourage your children to write their church story also. You can even write more than one.

Happy Easter! Please check on fellow members, especially those that live alone. This is even more important at this time.

The Baker children on Easter approx. 1968



Back row: Jeff, Diana
Front row: Linda, Grace, Gail

Trustees' Turn – Chris Dlugosz

I usually do the write up for newsletter right after our meetings the first week of the month. Whether it was being too busy or too lazy, I decided to do my write up March 16, the day it is due to Linda. Wow how things have changed in a few days.

I am a teacher. Last Thursday (March 12) at 2:00 our staff had a meeting to discuss all the field trips and activities we had just cancelled. Then 20 minutes later we were informed that we were going to be down for at least three weeks if not more.

Last night, like all of you, I found out that restaurants and bars were being shut down besides takeout orders at 9 pm. I immediately thought of my friends and family members that are in the industry and the impact this will have on their day to day lives.

I love to work out. I try to get to the gym 3-4 days a week and work out at my house the rest of the week. As of tonight it was announced that gyms, movie theaters, bowling alleys, indoor water parks, public rec centers, trampoline parks and voting will also be shut down.

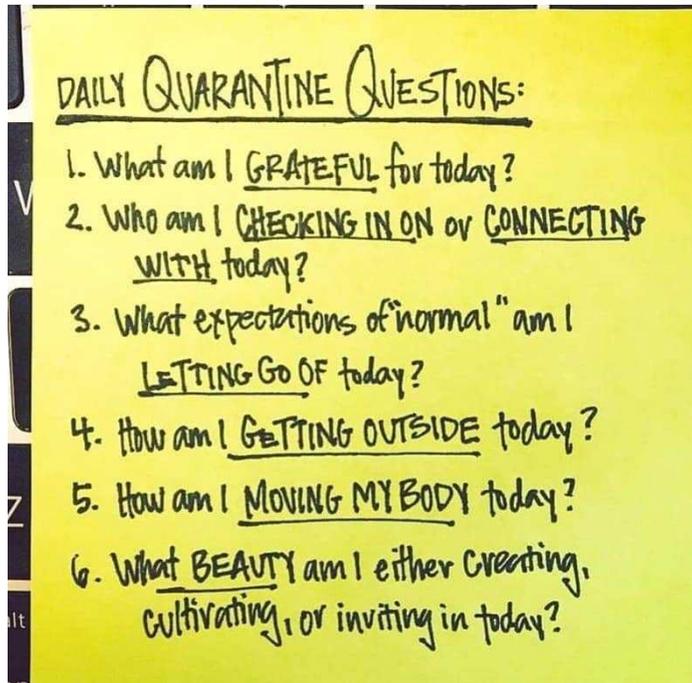
A lot has changed since then. This is something I have never seen in my lifetime as I am sure it is the same for many of you. My daughter and all of the kids in our church and community will be telling stories about Coronavirus of 2020 when she is a parent and grandparent.

In times like these, please take care of each other. Whether it is delivering goods to someone who can't be out and about or giving someone a phone call just to let them know they are not alone, do what is in your power. These are scary times for all of us and we should not feel the burden of fighting this thing all by ourselves.

#AloneTogether

#AloneTogether

Following the March 22nd online worship service: "Thanks for joining us today for the live stream service and coffee hour. As we move forward towards this week I would like us to ask ourselves these questions. Peace, Blessings and Hope." ~Matthew Hogue-Smith



- 4/1 Krista O'Neill
- 4/2 Matthew Hogue-Smith
- 4/4 Tim O'Neill
- 4/4 Tom Packard
- 4/15 Heather Smith
- 4/15 Catherine Craigs
- 4/15 Beckie Schupbach
- 4/16 John Petroff
- 4/18 Cate Dornan
- 4/18 Matt Dornan
- 4/23 Brian Zinsmeister
- 4/27 Abigail Packard
- 4/30 Dolores Pesch
- 4/30 June Yost



- 4/3 Ric & Sallie Sasse
- 4/15 Andy & Shirley Sunyak
- 4/16 Craig & Brenda Schutz
- 4/25 Dave & Mary Ireland
- 4/25 Bob & Linda Matis
- 4/28 Jim & June Yost

St. Pauly Used Clothing Drop Off Shed

Sponsored By:
First Congregational Church UCC

Location:
16363 Center Ridge Rd.
North Ridgeville, OH 44039

Benefits:

- Send Clothing to people who can use it all over the United States and the world.
- Help the environment by keeping your clothing out of a landfill.
- Receive a tax deduction for your donation. Receipts are available on the shed.

Dear Friends,

Thank you for continuing to partner with us on the clothing drop-off shed program! In 2019 roughly 4,211 garments of clothing were donated to your shed. This was enough to clothe an estimated 510 people all over the world.

Based on this volume of clothing, your organization received \$1,226 in 2019.

Thank you for continuing to spread the word about the clothing shed to other community members. We truly appreciate all the support you've given this program!

Sincerely,
The Team at St. Paul Textile, Inc.

All proceeds from clothing donations go toward funding the Hospitality with a Heart monthly community outreach meals!

You may be isolated but
you are not forgotten!!

Love grows here