

# The Messenger

The monthly newsletter of First Congregational Church UCC of North Ridgeville

**July 2020**

**Pastor**

Rev. Arik Borstad

**Director, Christian Education**

Mary Karlovec

**Music Director**

Barb Habecker

**Moderator**

Roy Dreger

**Vice-Moderator**

Nancy Franks

**Co-Chairs, Christian Education**

Kelsey Veliconia

Renee Dornan

**Co-Chairs, Deacons**

Diana Goode

**Chair, Outreach**

Nancy Franks

**Chair, Trustees**

Jack Fitts

**Treasurer, Secretary**

Linda Matis

**From the Pastor's Pen**

As we enter July we find ourselves over halfway through this tumultuous year. I'm not sure if that is a cause for celebration or not, but at this point I'll take even the smallest victories. Sometimes survival is an accomplishment in itself so take a moment to celebrate that we are over halfway through this year that has already felt as long as entire decades in the past.

As we make our way through the month of July we will be continuing to worship online as a faith community. In light of COVID cases being on the rise once more, we are focused on keeping our congregation safe and healthy. While we miss everyone and wish to see one another soon, the most important thing to us is that we have everyone still with us when the time comes for us to reconvene. That is why we will be continuing to worship online over the next month and we invite you to reach out to those around you to join us as well. If you happen to know of friends or family members (anywhere in the country!) who would like to see what we are all about, there has not been a better time for joining together in worship from the safety and comfort of our respective homes.

If there is a silver lining to any of this, maybe that's a big part of it. It has been wonderful to be able to worship with Vi Elrod down south, or with family members across the country. We've had people join us for worship from St. Louis, Boston, Iowa, and even out in California. So if you know of someone who could use the support of a faith community during this difficult time, invite them to come worship with us and make those connections that have become so important to all of us.

As we make our way into the second half of the year I want to encourage everyone to remain safe and healthy. Most importantly, I want to encourage everyone to not lose hope. Sometimes we need to focus on the little things around us in order to get the strength we need to get through another day.

As for me, I count my blessings by reading and re-reading the congratulatory cards, emails, and text messages you all sent me on the birth of our son, Leo. While we have had my parents and Allison's parents rotating through the house to help out how they can, I am reminded how blessed



We are the Church  
No matter where we meet.



I am to have a faith family nearby that continues to show their love and support even during this difficult time.

I know things seem dire these days but most importantly of all, I want you to know how incredible and wonderful you really are. We are going to get through this, together. Just continue to have faith, choose to see the blessings around you, and never lose hope.

Blessings and Peace,  
Pastor Arik

### **Moderator's Moment – Roy Dreger**

It was one of those hot, muggy summer Sundays that we get in Ohio, and I was the only patrol officer working. I noticed a car off the road with an elderly gentleman in a suit and tie looking into the opened hood of his car. I stopped and asked "was something wrong?". He told me that they were on their way from out of state to a church revival in Cleveland when the car overheated. I looked and saw the fan belt was broken. He did not have AAA or any roadside assistance so I told him if I could find a fan belt I would install it after I got off work in a couple of hours. This being Avon in the 1970's there were no repair shops open, and the car parts store was closed. I had the dispatcher call Jim, the operator of the parts store, and ask him if it would be possible to get him to open just long enough to buy a fan belt.

After asking me some questions about the car via the dispatcher (1970's, no cell phones), Jim said there were three possible sizes and rather than me stopping at the store, he would bring them to me. When Jim arrived he checked the car and set to putting a new belt on. I told him that I would do it after work, but he said it would only take a minute. He put it on, ran the car to make sure it was on right and went to leave. The gentleman tried to pay, but Jim wouldn't take his money. The next time I saw Jim I thanked him again for coming out to help on his only day off. He told me he did it because he hoped that if his family needed help some day that someone would help them. I suppose this is the time to tell you that the elderly couple were people of color. It was not

important what they looked like, they needed help. The color of their skin didn't matter then, and it shouldn't matter now.



### **Christian Education Corner – Mary Karlovec**

Thank you! Words cannot express my appreciation to all who took the time to send messages/cards and called to support Matt after he did his sermon a few weeks back. It was six weeks of hard work on his part to put his thoughts together (he had his idea from the get go), dictate his sermon for me to write and rewrite AND rewrite, practice all the hard words he had to formulate with his mouth and then the many times of videotaping. For those who were not aware, encephalitis took away Matt's short term memory as well as his ability to read and write all but the simplest of words. So it was a matter of him reading my lips as I sat across from him mouthing his script. But if I have learned anything in the last seven years of this journey, Matt has strong perseverance! So thank you for being the wonderful church family that you are by embracing him with love and support. A special thanks to Arik for giving Matt the opportunity to do it. I am forever grateful.

As we continue into summer and social distancing, the Board of Christian Education is looking at several ideas for outdoor events that we might be able to do. One of these would be a night at the Auto Rama drive-in theater where families could be parked together to share the experience of watching the movies. We are still exploring this idea. We have other ideas for online Zoom family events but are trying to come up with some events that would get us outdoors.

As we continue to move through the challenges of COVID 19, we know that fall programming will look very different. But for now, join our Sunday School lesson each Sunday morning. I try to have them posted to our Facebook page on Saturday nights so feel free to join us. If you or someone you know in

the congregation does not have access to hear the worship service, please reach out to Linda, our church secretary, as we have Kindles available that someone can get to you with the service on it for you to listen to!

Stay safe and healthy and Happy Fourth of July!

### **Outreach Committee News – Nancy Franks**

The Outreach members say hello and wish everyone a great summer full of activities and family gatherings. Our board hasn't formally met since Eastertime but this will be changing soon, we hope.

The search is continuing for a new responsible leader for the Hospitality with a Heart community outreach meals program which represents our church in the rotation of free dinners for those in need of meals at the end of the month. We have come to a point where so many of our past service folks are now unable to continue in their capacity due to health issues, etc. We hope a younger generation will step forward and keep the pace going. If interested, please call Edie Phillips at 935-4115 or the church at 327-2921. Thank you in advance!! If no one steps forward, we will be removing our church from the monthly community meals list.

The Community Care summer lunch program lasts from June through August. Due to the pandemic, monetary donations will only be accepted. Please mark your church offering "lunch program"; or, if you prefer, "food drive" for the food assistance for the regular customers.

Save your blood for our yearly blood drive. We expect to continue this tradition of saving lives through our life sharing gift of blood. More information available closer to the date. (dependent upon pandemic)

Another tradition in our church is the annual Giving Tree in December. By taking an ornament from the tree, filling the request and returning the item wrapped and marked appropriately, you will help make a family's Christmas the best ever. Look forward to it!

Thank you for continuing to support Outreach on your offering envelope so we can continue to reach out to the community and

more. During the past few months Outreach has donated \$700.00 to Community Care for food products to fill needy customer boxes. Thank you.

"Hear my cry, O God; hear my prayer. From the ends of the earth I call to you. I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I."

Psalms 61:1-2

### **Deacons' Desk – Kathy Pero**

Matt said it all! In case you missed it, Matt Karlovec was the guest preacher on June 14 during the online worship. Matt's message was clear and heartfelt. He is right. The people make up our UCC family. As much as we miss seeing each other, our love and kindness pouring out into the world is practicing what we "preach" inside of the building. As we hold doors for strangers, wave hello to our front line workers, deliver a meal to someone in need, or send a letter-- we are "the church" in action! When we get back together, we will have so much to tell each other! The "JOYS and CONCERNS" section of worship will likely be 20 minutes long! (Get ready Pastor Arik!) Rest assured that as you are at home with your family, the church boards are working behind the scenes to make coming back to church a safe and peaceful transition!

All of the deacons send their love to you! Have a restful and peaceful July.

### **Trustees' Turn – Chris Dlugosz**

Summer is here and with it the Trustees have started making progress again! The back doors to the fellowship hall have been replaced! With the crazy year we have had, it has been nice to look back at all of the small victories we have had this year. Moving the gigantic piano out of the church, the continuous work on the elevator, the new back entrance, the new back doors, not to mention the amazing brand new stove (weighing over 800 lbs!) that we somehow moved into the kitchen!

All of these things along with the monthly activities that are always ongoing at our church have made me reflect on how amazing people can be in the face of adversity. We have all had

a very different and challenging year, but time marches on and things need to get accomplished. It has been great to have so many tremendous people to lean on as we pushed forward with our goals.

On a side note, if you have not watched Pastor Arik work online, whether that be a service or the many videos he creates (I recently watched his Powtoon presentation on what church will look like when we return), I recommend checking them out. Being somewhat of a tech nerd myself (definitely not at his skill level) we are truly blessed to have a Pastor who works so hard but also has the technical skills to get his message out online. All of this along with the responsibility of being a newly minted father of two!

Until next month, thank you everyone, and congratulations Pastor Arik!

### **Parish Nurse's Notes – Karen Dreger**

I would like to share an experience with you. I will set the stage: I've been going to a small family owned farmer's market in Avon for decades. They have quality produce and are very friendly. They have the best asparagus in May, so I went there to check it out and hopefully get some asparagus. They were following Covid 19 protocol; one way in, one way out, markers for 6 foot social distancing, plastic to protect the cashier who had a mask on. There were only a couple of other people there and I had my mask on, was practicing social distancing and felt pretty calm. I got my asparagus and left. When I got in the car I used hand sanitizer and when I got home I used a Clorox wipe to clean parts of the car that I had touched and washed my hands.

Fast forward to June and strawberry season. They had very good strawberries so I was going back for more. As I approached the market I could see lots of cars parked everywhere--it was pick your own strawberry time. There were two people directing you where to park and I almost turned around. I was parked near the entrance, so I put my mask on and went to the entrance. I looked inside just as two families went in the exit only doors to pay for the berries they had picked. There

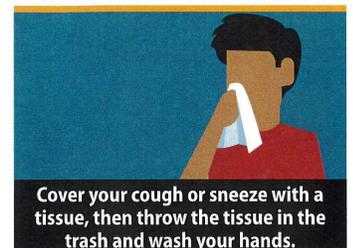
were two adults and 6-7 children, none of whom were wearing masks. The children were wandering all over. I left. No strawberries today. I could feel my heart beat faster and felt the anxiety come over me.

When people don't wear masks they are saying, "I don't care if I give you Covid 19." Even with a mask on you have a 70% probability for transmission from a Covid 19 carrier without a mask on. Because we don't know who's a carrier and who's not, we should all wear masks. If you are an unknown carrier and wear a mask, the probability of transmission to a healthy person with a mask on is only 1.5%, so please consider the golden rule.

In the June Messenger, under Deacon's Desk, Dr. Kurt Dornan has a very good illustration of the importance of wearing a mask. Remember social distancing and wear a mask to stay safe and protect others, our brothers and sisters.

## Stop the Spread of Germs

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.



7/6 Joan Bier  
 7/6 Dahlia Wolanski  
 7/14 Sage Borstad  
 7/14 Bob Karlovec  
 7/15 Jenn Anderson  
 7/15 Edie Phillips  
 7/22 Anita Packard  
 7/25 Diana Goode  
 7/25 Andrea Summer



7/3 Bob & Nancy Franks  
 7/12 Kurt & Renee Dornan  
 7/18 Bob & Mary Karlovec  
 7/21 Brian & Barb Zinsmeister  
 7/24 Mark & Jen Murphy  
 7/25 Arik & Allison Borstad  
 7/28 Vitaliy & Kelsey Styr



"In light of everything that is taking place, our church has found itself in financial distress (as with many businesses and households) as our offering is down significantly. This is to be

expected to some degree with the lack of in-person worship services and with many people losing their jobs and sources of income. While we do know how uncertain these times may be, we are still trying to preserve our congregation's future and ensure we get through this time without having to close our doors. Currently our staff, myself included, is taking pay cuts to try to limit expenses; but depending on how long this takes, we will find ourselves eating away at what little resources we have. So if you are able to give any amount, even if it is at a reduced level, please consider doing so. **You can mail your offering to the church or you can give online ([pushpay.com/g/fccalive](https://pushpay.com/g/fccalive)).** Every little bit helps as we try to weather this storm together. We are so grateful for everyone's generosity, especially at a time when there is so much fear in the world, and we know we will get through this, somehow." *Excerpt from pastoral letter dated April 21, 2020*

My name is Kathleen S. Pero, and I am the proud author of [Miss Molly Learns Responsibility](#). I grew up in Toledo, Ohio and currently live in Elyria with my fiancé and two children.

The main character, Molly, is a spunky five-year old girl who lives with her two moms. While she is at the park, Molly encounters a small kitten. Before she can take it home, her moms explain what it means to be responsible for a pet. I also include some wondering questions for parents and caregivers to have a guiding conversation after the read aloud is finished

My goal for writing the series is two fold. First, I want to introduce a character that happens to have same sex parents. I want the fact that Molly has two moms to be normal, okay, and just a part of her life. Second, I want to teach a social skill or life lesson during each book. I want parents to have a story that represents how children can handle different situations in life.

The unique black and white illustrations are the backdrop to the main action that is in color. I purposely created my book like this in order to draw attention to the main idea on each page.

[Miss Molly Learns Responsibility](#) is available online via Amazon, Halo Publishing company, or Barnes and Noble.

If you have any questions or would like to schedule a story time read aloud, please e-mail me! [kperobooks@gmail.com](mailto:kperobooks@gmail.com)  
 facebook page : kperobooks

