

The Messenger

The monthly newsletter of First Congregational Church UCC of North Ridgeville

April 2021

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

Chair, Deacons

Kathy Pero

Chair, Outreach

Nancy Franks

Chair, Trustees

Jack Fitts

Treasurer, Secretary

Linda Matis

From the Pastor's Pen

It has been a year since we have entered the isolation of the tomb, surrounded by the darkness and uncertainty of what was to come. Now, as Easter morning breaks, we are rolling back the stone to emerge alive once again.

To say we have been anxious for this day to come is a colossal understatement. It was only during this year of quarantine that I truly came to appreciate the stability and comfort that a weekly worship service brings. Being able to see everyone, to share in one another's joys and concerns – it was something I had taken for granted until suddenly it was gone.

To be sure, coming back to worship in person is what we have been working toward this past year, putting plans in place that care for the most vulnerable members of our congregation while also trying to accommodate the needs for those who are feeling most lonely. Now that we are transitioning back to in person services, you will notice (at least for the time being) that things will still not feel *quite* like the church services you once knew; but I promise that, too, will return in due time.

Starting on Easter Sunday our two-service schedule will continue until further notice with identical services taking place at 9:00 am and 10:30 am. The 10:30 am service will be livestreamed to our Facebook page and the archive of that video will be uploaded to the website by Monday evening of every week. We are asking that everyone come to the service with your masks (yes, even if you have your vaccine) and refrain from physical interaction (such as handshakes and hugs) for the time being. We will return to our warm and loving interactions soon enough, but for now we must remain vigilant as we enter the final stretch of this pandemic.

Friends, Easter is the promise that death does not have the final word in life. The cross is part of our story, but it does not end there. The hope that springs forth from the empty tomb is the hope that can spur us on as we emerge into a new and different world. There will be challenges we must face and trials we will overcome. However, knowing that we have made it this far with your continued love and support gives us the strength we need to make it through this next part of our journey together. So let us celebrate the hope and new life that comes from Easter morning as we give thanks and celebrate the new life that has taken root in our own church as well.

Blessings and Peace,
Pastor Arik



Moderator's Moment – Roy Dreger

"Do not abandon yourselves to despair. We are the Easter people and hallelujah is our song." Pope John Paul II

Easter is here and with it comes the joy of spring with its new growth and symbols of rebirth. It is a joyous day, and, for Christians, the most meaningful of our Christian holidays. There is the return of warmth after a long winter of cold and isolation (especially during a pandemic). We here in North Ridgeville are in the beginning of spring at Easter; what about those in the southern hemisphere where the seasons are reversed? For them our Spring Equinox is, paradoxically, the start of their autumn.

Easter in Australia, for example, is celebrated when many growing things start to die back or go dormant. Easter has a more solemn feeling in Australia for the most part. However, since it and Good Friday are public holidays it creates a four-day weekend. And since most stores and businesses are closed on these days there is an opportunity for some to take a "mini vacation", a four-day version of our spring break. There are chocolate eggs (as well as real ones) and pancake meals for charities, things that we are familiar with. But you won't see an Easter Bunny. Instead, there is an Easter Bilby. A Bilby is an endangered, small, nocturnal marsupial with soft fur and long ears. It was chosen to represent endangered species. Not having a rabbit is also because of all the damage rabbits have done since their introduction to the continent by early colonists.

Easter in Brazil would, for the most part, be familiar to us. There are Easter eggs, the Easter Bunny, and because Brazil is overwhelmingly Catholic, the tradition of eating fish on Fridays. However, the Easter eggs are different. They are oversized and filled with candy or toys. Most supermarkets have an aisle filled with Easter eggs fastened overhead to form a tunnel. In some places in the south of Brazil dogs and cats are painted pink or blue to remind children that Easter is coming. Easter itself is a day for attending church and spending the rest of the day with family and friends.

No matter where Christians are in the world, Easter is a devoutly religious time with a solemn meaning. It may be celebrated in different ways, it may be more joyous or more solemn, but it remains the most significant of all Christian holidays.

No matter how you celebrate it in this pandemic world, have a blessed Easter!

Christian Education Corner – Mary Karlovec

April is finally here and with it brings (hopefully) more sunshine, fresh air, and (unlike seasons in the past) many changes! As we begin this month, we are transitioning back into the church for worship and Sunday School. There is much planning that has to go into this. For me, it is a totally different mindset as to how to safely service our families on Sunday morning as well as future events. You would think it would be easier to do than the total switch we have down over the last year, but many things **HAVE NOT** changed yet and protocols are still in place to keep us safe. That being said, two **important updates**: First, for the foreseeable future, there will be **NO** nursery care on Sunday mornings for worship time. Our wee ones will be most welcomed in church! We want to make sure that the nursery is thoroughly cleaned and sanitized and a major purge of toys is about to take place! Second, we had thought about returning to in person Sunday School on Sunday, April 11. As I started to think about this and talking with the CE Board, **we have decided to wait tentatively one week, until April 18 to bring in person Sunday School back**. I am in the process of sending a survey to parents asking for their input concerning Sunday School. Again, we have to clean and sanitize the rooms and really develop a safe environment for the kids which includes masks and social distancing. As we get past Easter, I will inform the congregation of our tentative plan to return. In the meantime, kids will have their own personal pencil pouches with supplies and activities to do in worship. Thanks for understanding!

Just a reminder...we are collecting school supplies for Lotts Creek as our Lenten outreach

project. There will be a container at both doors to the sanctuary to drop off any supplies on Easter Sunday as well as on April 11 and 18. Please help us in supporting this amazing school!



Finally...a HUGE, ENORMOUS THANK YOU to everyone who donated candy for the Easter Egg Hunt. I filled over 600 eggs for this event! Look for pictures on the church website from this event. Happy Easter!

Outreach Committee News – Nancy Franks

We're hoping these past few months have been rewarding for you and yours. With the dawn of the Covid vaccine and so many people actively taking advantage of it, it seems many feel the release of some of the tensions of the past and a new outlook is emerging, just like the little green plant shoots emerging after a long winter's sleep. Thank you, God for some relief, but in spite of this we cannot let our guard down, not even for one minute. Be vigilant, as the Bible tells us, for one knows not what yet might be around the corner.

Thank you, Diane Feigi, our representative to Community Care, for the informative report she presented in last month's newsletter. It's important that the congregation keep in touch with our constituents through a yearly report. Then we can give our congregational comments, should there be any, to our rep to take back to Community Care. Please contact Diane if you wish to be heard. Thank you.

Our One Great Hour of Sharing collection has begun and will be available for gifting through April 18. As you have in the past,



please be generous sharing monetary gifts so persons across our lands with no voice can finally be heard on subject of justice for the oppressed, land misuse, character basking, agricultural and animal entanglements, etc. The list is endless. As the representative of the people, through our church affiliation we must do our part in finding

a way to press these issues into the forefront to be addressed and hopefully resolved. With God at our side and your donations to foster programs that bring closure to the unrest, we will affectively give voice to those who, until now, have had none. Please be generous. Use your offering envelope to send your gift in to the office earmarked for OGHS.

Easter blessings arrived at our special Community Care family's home. A large basket filled with fresh fruit, assorted candies, cheese and crackers, stuffed animals for the little ones, games, puzzles, cards and Easter blessings from all of you to all of them. Thank you for making this possible.

We are searching for restaurants to share 15-20% of the proceeds of our dining experience at their establishment back to our church. If you know of a business in our general area who would be open to this idea, please let one of the Outreach board members know about it.

"Be strong and of good courage; be not afraid, neither be dismayed: For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." Copied from Wings of Silver

Deacons' Desk – Kris Dornan

As we reach the one year marker of this global pandemic, I first want to wish all of you peace, good health, and pray for healing for you and our extended community that is still dealing with the impact COVID has had on our families, our friends, and our lifestyle. There will be a time, and that time is coming, that we will be past this chapter in our life, and the excitement that will occur when we again can be in the fellowship of each other in person! Easter worship will be a start! Hallelujah!

I sincerely believe that God doesn't make bad things happen but uses those things that do happen to bring us closer to him. I want to share a few things that I will appreciate about this past year:

- As a full time worker but able to work from home, I had the blessing of being able to be with my kids much more than I could have before this pandemic. I will never

regret that added time I got to spend with them.

- I will much more appreciate face to face time with family and friends....this pandemic sure made me realize how important that is. I believe it is important for us as a church family as well. Too often there are things based on our upbringings, our experiences, or are secular lives that work to put a wedge between people, i.e., this past election, our thoughts on separation of church and state, and how we may judge people on who they voted for and why. Those wedges can only fully be discussed and healed in person. I think we need to do that, and I look forward to doing so. Regardless of political beliefs that work to put us against each other, I firmly believe that as a nation we need to work as one and begin to heal the great divide between us, and I do have faith that our political leaders have the skills and the want to make that happen.

Our time in life is short and seeing people who have been healthy for their whole life, only to be cut down by a virus, urges me and should urge us to live every day to the fullest. Let's do that together, and together as a church family.

God bless you all and keep you my friends.

Trustees' Turn – Chris Dlugosz

Is that the sun I see? It is, and with it the entire mood of the city has seemed to turn. Those little birds I love to hear signaling spring are back, and that groundhog needs to stay away! It has been great seeing more people getting outside and walking throughout their neighborhoods. Every day seems to bring a little more good news and with the vaccine starting to open up to everyone, I am hopeful that the momentum continues to increase. The time change we usually dread losing an hour of sleep was actually great this year! I am typing this at 6:43 pm and it's still daylight!!

We actually did some semi-trustee business and upgraded Linda's computer! I am

hearing it no longer takes a sundial to measure its loading time! Little by little we keep getting good news, hopefully we all see each other again soon!!

- 4/1 Krista O'Neill
- 4/2 Matthew Hogue-Smith
- 4/4 Tim O'Neill
- 4/4 Tom Packard
- 4/15 Beckie Schupbach
- 4/15 Heather Smith
- 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 Brenda & Craig Schutz
- 4/25 Dave & Mary Ireland
- 4/25 Bob & Linda Matis
- 4/28 Jim & June Yost



ONLINE FACEBOOK SILENT AUCTION UPDATE!

A total of \$2897.19 was made at the auction and thru monetary donations! Thank you to all who provided the auction items and monetary donations, who bid on items and shared the auction, and for all the support from beginning to end. Thank you to those that took on the challenge of learning a new skill of online auction. Some have expressed an interest to do this again in the fall, so it is being considered. Start thinking of what you could donate as an auction item!

(Thank you, Diana Goode, for all your time and effort that you put into organizing & executing the auction!)

Item	Donor	Winner
Family fun night basket	Krista O'Neill	Arik Borstad
Indians Mickey Mouse blanket	Shirley Sunyak	Renee Sanders
Unplugged Brewery basket	Unplugged Brewery/Tim O'Neill	Carol Scharmann
Scripture coaster set	Arik Borstad	Jane Woravka
Hymn coaster set	Arik Borstad	Karen Dreger
Matriarch of the Meadow pillow	Bob & Nancy Franks	Ronda Van Den Bossche
Eton emergency radio	Bob & Nancy Franks	Karen Dreger
Keyboard	Bob & Nancy Franks	Pat Kyle
Keyboard & stand	Carol Scharmann	Shirley Sunyak
Patio firepit	Bob & Nancy Franks	Jenn Anderson
Children's book bundle	Kathy Pero	Destiney Marie
Carlos Santana bobblehead	Roy Dreger	Kathy Bly
Mike Clevinger jersey	Roy Dreger	Kathy Bly
Welcome porch sign	Linda Matis	Marge Baker
Wood star	Roy Dreger	Pat Kyle
Wooden tree wreath red/green	Roy Dreger	Pat Kyle
Cabin fever basket	Diane Perry	Carol Scharmann
Crocheted scarf	Shirley Sunyak	Pat Kyle
Tote bag	Shirley Sunyak	Amy Eaton
Box of 30 buckeyes	Barb Habecker	Kathy Pero, Barb Zinsmeister, Ronda Van Den Bossche, Krista O'Neill, Diana Goode
Wine & Girl Scout cookies	Mary Karlovec	Carol Scharmann
Lasagna dinner	Diana Goode	Linda Spayd
Dragon lover's basket	Ron & Colleen Borstad	Arik Borstad
Wooden tree wreaths natural	Roy Dreger	Diane Perry, Krista O'Neill
Home basket	Ron & Colleen Borstad	Diane Perry
Tech savvy basket	Ron & Colleen Borstad	Arik Borstad
Whiskey basket	Ron & Colleen Borstad	Arik Borstad
Dozen cupcakes	Karen Veliconia	Barb Zinsmeister
Potholder sets w/recipes	Karen Dreger	Becky Williams, Edie Phillips, Karen Veliconia, Pat Kyle, Barb Zinsmeister
Furnace filters	Roy Dreger	---
Suet feeders	Roy Dreger	Pat Kyle, Shirley Sunyak
Kitchen necessities baskets	Pat Kyle, Mary Karlovec, Diana Goode	Destiney Marie, Ronda Van Den Bossche, Krista O'Neill
Kid's play set	Renee Dornan	Karen Dreger
Lottery ticket tree	Linda Matis	Pat Kyle
Italian food basket	Deb Arrigo	Pat Kyle
Breast cancer basket	Mary Karlovec	Barb Zinsmeister
Crocheted Hello Kitty	Shirley Sunyak	Karen Veliconia