

The Messenger

The monthly newsletter of First Congregational Church UCC of North Ridgeville

August 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 Styr

Renee Dornan

Chair, Deacons

Kathy Pero

Chair, Outreach

Nancy Franks

Chair, Trustees

Paul Wolanski

Treasurer, Secretary

Linda Matis

From the Pastor's Pen

Greetings, friends! This month I wanted to spend some time reflecting upon the work that took place at the 33rd General Synod on behalf of our denomination, the United Church of Christ. Both Matthew Hogue-Smith and I were delegates for our Heartland Conference. On August 1 during our worship service, I will be going over the resolutions that were discussed and voted upon by our denomination's governing body to give everyone a better understanding of where we stand as a denomination. However, in addition to the resolutions there were also a variety of workshops made available to attendees and there might be some that interest you! If you find that any of the workshops below pique your interest, please reach out and let me know! Have a great August, everyone!

- Dismantling Barriers, Building Bridges: Stories from around the world
- A General Synod Polity Primer for Delegates, Visitors, and Local Congregations
- Extravagant Welcome at God's Table: Queering Worship Practices
- Communications Justice: How to Get Affordable Quality Broadband for All Locally & Nationally
- Case Studies in Faith: Cornerstone Fund presents lessons in lending, building and community
- Community Safety for All: White Congregations Engaging in Abolition Work
- Manual on Church: Summer 2021 Snapshot
- Creating Healthy Conflict
- Beyond Potlucks and Panels: Interfaith Dialogue for a Digital Era with Sofa Spirituality
- Beyond Binary
- When Privilege Enters the Room
- Cultural Immersion into New Encounters with the Bible
- Trauma: How the Church Can Support Healing
- Serving Money or Serving God?: Radical Justice and Practical Church Finances
- Suicide Awareness
- Welcoming Transgender Persons In Our Congregation
- Sustainable Investing for Churches and Non-Profits: Using Financial Resources to Help Create a Just World
- What Now? Creating a New and Vibrant Vision for the Church
- Bounce Forward: Churches Face Post-Pandemic Realities



- Transformational UCC Ministries for a Just World
- Ministering in a Closing Church: A Discussion with Pastors
- Decolonizing Faith
- Wellness Ministries: A Foundation for Addressing Health Disparity
- #ChurchSoWhite: the role of white leaders to cultivate anti-racist churches and giving practices that are representative and inclusive of the communities and cultures they serve
- Urgency and Challenges of Bible Literacy
- Transforming the Overdose Crisis: Creating Communities and Congregations of Care
- COVID-19 Liability Considerations for Ministries
- The Student Debt Crisis: Walking on the Ground with People in Pain
- Be An Advocate! Raise Your Voice on Capitol Hill
- Towards Creating a Sustainable Life, a Sustainable Congregation, a Sustainable Future
- Faithful Innovation
- Building Cultures of Call in the UCC
- Multiple Religious Belonging: A Conversation
- Developing Leaders in the Church
- Trauma Informed Pastoral Care Response to Sexual & Domestic Violence
- Raising Funds in Hard Times
- "You Believe What?!" Conspiracies and Cults Intro and Practical Guide
- The State of UCC Rural Congregations Post Covid
- Lift Every Voice: UCC Churches Lift their Voices to Proclaim, "Know Justice, Know Peace"
- Ministry Burnout and Self-Care
- Small But Mighty: Money that Makes a Difference
- Hands-On Mission: Get Involved with Global Ministries
- Ecumenical Responses to the Pandemic of Racial Injustice in the United States
- Empowered Ministry of the Laity in Times of Congregational Transitions
- Multicultural Interfaith Couples and Social Change Agency
- Global Stories and the Climate Crisis
- Modern Mind Control: QAnon, Conspiracy Theories, and Cults
- Reparations: Concrete Steps Your Congregation Can Take
- Faith-based reasons to fight for universal health care
- Intersections of Racial Justice, Immigration and the Criminalization of People of Color

Moderator's Moment – Roy Dreger

"For the times they are a-changin'" - Bob Dylan
 I know that as we work on recovering from the pandemic things are still not quite

"normal". As a matter of fact, I don't think any of us really know what "normal" is going to ultimately look like. Have we lost members because of not being open? Have we gained members? How are we to know if someone is comfortable with a hug or handshake? Just because we may be open to contact, it does not follow that others are. (Perhaps it would be best to find out someone's level of comfort before trying to hug them or shake their hand.) I think it is safe to say that parts of the old "normal" are not going to return.

From reports I'm reading the pandemic isn't really over; so just to add fuel to the pandemic fire, we have variants of the original that are more communicable than the original. Variants are possible, if not likely, with many viruses as the large number of people infected provides fertile grounds for mutations. As one example, the problem with getting a handle on the AIDS virus was its rapid mutation rate. Another example: virologists were holding their breath during the Ebola outbreak for fear that it would mutate into something that would spread via the air instead of by contact.

However things work out, it will be by God's grace and we have to be ready to adapt. Variants may die out, the economy, businesses, even our congregation may end up back to where they were, or even better than they were. In 1964 when Bob Dylan wrote *The Times They are a-Changin'* there was great upheaval in the country - political, societal, and generational. And while it may not seem that way at first, if you listen carefully to the lyrics, they speak not of despair but of hope for a better future. I think that is what we should aim for - hope for the future, no matter the changes life

and living throw at us, because you ain't seen nothing yet.



Christian Education Corner – Mary Karlovec

Summer seems to be flying by and fall programming is just around the corner. But before I get to that, I want to share a couple of experiences from our mission trip to Lotts Creek.

Living in northeastern Ohio, you forget how beautiful, peaceful, and calming the mountains can be. Each morning began with “Morning Watch.” This was a time for each of us to be quietly outdoors alone, listening to the sounds of nature and reflecting on our purpose for being in this beautiful place. After Morning Watch, the business at hand began each day. Twenty-eight people, the youngest age 12 and the oldest 83 years young, scattered in all directions to provide help where needed. (We will share some of those experiences in an upcoming worship service.) But job sites ranged from building trenches to working in the food pantry to cleaning in the school and lots of other jobs in between. After a late afternoon swim at a local state park and dinner, evening programming followed each night and ended with Vespers. We hope to share the Vespers we did with all of you! Added to the experience was a trip to Natural Bridge, a hoedown, a night square dancing, and Sunday morning worship at a Baptist Church 45 minutes away! Lotts Creek is truly a life changing experience. I can't thank Kris Dornan enough for his

support on this trip as well as Beth and Ben Dornan for all their hard work that week.

So now looking forward to upcoming programming. Fall Sunday School programming will begin on Sunday, September 12. We will not have any Sunday School programming on Sunday, September 5, Labor Day weekend. The Blessings of the Backpacks during worship and Back to School Celebration will be on Sunday, August 29. Everyone is encouraged to bring their backpacks/briefcases/computer bags to be blessed for the coming year!

With the start of Sunday School, we are in **need of Sunday School teachers** to



cover the K-2nd grade and the 3rd-6th graders. Both rooms will need two teachers each Sunday. If you are willing to team

teach, please send me an email at cedirector@fccalive.org or give me a call. I am hoping that there are four adults willing to do each of these grades so that a team only has to cover two Sundays a month. Curriculum will be provided for all classrooms.

This fall also begins our first confirmation class in eight years! All students in grades 7-12 will be receiving in the mail an invitation/explanation of what confirmation is and the requirements and expectations. A kick-off of confirmation will be hosted by some of our former confirmands at a date yet to be determined sometime in early September.

Finally, a HUGE THANK YOU to our church family for all the prayers, good wishes, hugs, texts, and phone calls this past month. It has definitely been a roller coaster ride of emotions at the Karlovec house. A special THANK YOU to Pastor Arik

for being there through it all! His messages at both Matt and Cathleen's wedding and my sister's funeral were truly beautiful and made each of those days even more heartfelt.

Enjoy the rest of summer but please be safe! It is fleeting by quickly!

Outreach Committee News – Nancy Franks

August has arrived and there is more heat on the way...so bring it on! On Monday, August 2 from 3 to 10 p.m. join us as we celebrate the new business that has been started by Tim O'Neill (Krista's son) and his partners José and Carlos. Help celebrate this start-up called Unplugged Brewing Company located in Elyria. Check it out, bring a friend or two, your family, and view the brew production in house, pick up a quick supper at the food truck. Enjoy the view of the Black River and let your kids play some games while you enjoy your food and beverages. And be sure to let the owners know how much you enjoyed the experience! Twenty percent of the beer sales will come back to the church to help fund the youth community room. Thank you to everyone who plans to attend and make it a success.

The Community Care board is seeking an additional member from our church for this year and next. Perhaps you might be interested in volunteering some of your time

and talent to this endeavor. Please contact Pastor Arik or me (327-9647) for more information.

The summer lunch program at Community Care continues through this month. Mark your offering envelope with "summer lunch program", insert check



or cash, and drop it in the offering plate on Sunday or send it to the church. Thank you.

Genesis House, a domestic violence safe house in Lorain County, could use extra funds at this time for gas cards for clients to get back and forth to jobs, child care, grocery shopping, doctor appointments, etc. If you are able, mark your offering envelope with "Genesis House".

Save your blood for our **blood drive** at the church on **September 12** from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Plan to give the gift of life!

Thank you to Carla Valles for the uplifting, informative, and entertaining talk you shared with a handful of enthused members of our church on July 11 while Pastor Arik was out of town at Matt and Cathleen Karlovec's wedding. It's too bad more were not in attendance to reap a blessing or two from what she had to tell us. And thank you, Kathy Pero, for inviting her to speak. I, for one, enjoyed her very much.

Proverbs 3:5 "Trust in and rely confidently on the Lord with all your heart and do not rely on your own insight or understanding."

Deacons' Desk – Kathy Pero

Happy August! As I write this article, I am preparing for my wedding. I can relate to all of the emotions that the Karlovec family just went through. I want to stay calm and relaxed, but it's hard when I'm in charge of this event that I want people to enjoy. I'm also very excited to see my family and friends all together in one space. On July 25 Heidi and I will make a commitment to each other and to Mackenzie and Grayson. I will take this vow very seriously in my relationship and in my church life. I committed to being a faithful Deacon, a council member, and Sunday school teacher. As we start back in

September, my commitments to our church need to be as strong as ever. This is the time for our leaders to shine. It will not be easy, but with time, our “family” church will be full again with people staying after for coffee/tea/snacks and laughter! I look forward to our future! There are awesome events being planned!

If you are interested in joining our Deacon’s team, please contact Kris, Kurt, Diane, Deb, Karen, or myself. We would love to have you!

Trustees’ Turn – Chris Dlugosz

It is August and the rain is almost over! Here are some updates from behind the scenes with the Trustees! The renovation of the front doors is almost complete. The rain has really slowed the process down, but we should be finishing them up shortly! Our back doors are being painted to match our church a little better. Discussion with CE has determined that the large Sunday school room will be the new youth room instead of trying to update/upgrade the undercroft. The new space will be cleaner, safer, and easier and less expensive to renovate. Finally, we have had people come and evaluate the big maple tree in front of the east parking area. Upon their suggestions, we will be taking it down because it sustained damage from the road widening and is dying. In the future we will also be looking at upgrading our air conditioning system for the sanctuary. That could be pricey, but Jon Eaton said he would pay for everything so we should be good (kidding Jon!).

Hold on to those last few weeks of summer!

Music Notes – Barb Habecker



Greetings everyone! I hope you are all staying well (and dry). I am thinking about the fall season and the choir’s reforming. If you would like to be in the chancel choir, just let me know. Everyone will be pleased to have you join us, and I will be truly blessed to have everyone back again. (It gets really lonely up in the choir loft.) I also would like to invite you to be a part of our bell choir. We will be meeting on Wednesday nights an hour before chancel choir. So, bells at 6:30 and chancel choir at 7:30. I will put a sign-up sheet on the wall outside the chancel choir room for you to write your name, phone number, and email if you would like to join the bells. We need you in both choirs. You know, when you sing - or play - you pray twice. Yep, you do.

I want to thank everyone who has volunteered to help our worship service by singing during Ministry of Music. You are a dedicated group and I love you dearly. Please give participation in one or both of our choirs your prayerful thoughts. We’d love for you to join us!



Men’s Quartet – Jack Fitts, Roy Dreger, Alan Willcox, Pastor Arik

Parish Nurse's Notes – Karen Dreger

Ticks - What you should know

Ohio has three medically important species of ticks: the American dog tick, the blacklegged tick, and the lone star tick. All three have the potential to carry and transmit diseases to humans and pets. The American dog tick is the most common tick in Ohio. It is found in grassy areas and is most active in the summer. It is the primary transmitter of Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever. Blacklegged tick populations have increased in Ohio since 2010. This species can carry Lyme disease and is active throughout the year, including during the winter.

Precautions: Outer clothing should be sprayed with a permethrin-based repellent according to label directions. Pants should be tucked into socks or boots, and shirts into pants. Don't forget to check pets and gear, too. Attached ticks should be removed as quickly as possible and pulled straight out with steady, even pressure. DO NOT use alcohol, petroleum jelly, fingernail polish, cigarettes or matches. More information, as well as photos, can be found on the Ohio Department of Health webpage.

- 8/7 Sandy Chalkwater
- 8/9 Mike Bier
- 8/9 Ann Olesen
- 8/13 Kelsey Styrt
- 8/14 Will Schupbach
- 8/16 Peggy Poe
- 8/17 Cathy Cornman
- 8/18 Kathy Pero
- 8/20 Lily Dornan
- 8/20 Bob Franks
- 8/21 Gayle Hannold
- 8/31 Valerie Arnold

- 8/31 Brandon & Nema Green



**SWISS STEAK
DINNER**

Saturday,
October 9
4 – 6:30 p.m.
Drive through
pick up only



This short note of gratitude is my form of thanks for signing your names on the three birthday cards for my 95th birthday.

Ed Connolly

We missed it last year because of the pandemic but one of our favorite fundraisers is back this fall! Mark your calendar for the Swiss Steak Dinner on October 9. More information to come regarding volunteers, tickets, and how the drive through pick up will work.



Meet Liam Frederick Styr born on 7/18/21,
5 pounds 1 ounce, 18.5 in.
Congratulations, Kelsey & Vitaliy!!



Organ Pipe Sponsorships

The organ repair sponsorship plaques are now in place in the choir loft and look wonderful. Thank you, Pastor Arik, for your hard work making and mounting them. The choir loft is open before and after worship services for a short time if you would like to see them. (The sponsorships were a fundraiser for organ repairs done in 2018. Thank you to all for your support.)



Congratulations, Cathleen and Matt Karlovec
on your wedding 7/10/21!



Church Fundraiser

Join in the fun with the Outreach Committee at
Unplugged Brewing Company,
the new venture of Tim O'Neill, one of our own,
and his partners Carlos and José.

On Monday, August 2 from 3-10 p.m. you are invited to the Unplugged Brewing Company located at 201 E. Bridge St. in Elyria (just past the Elyria post office and on the left after the overpass, going west).

Come see a microbrewery in action, and taste some of nine special brews, hard seltzers, and beer slushies. Take your Unplugged beverages to one of the tables overlooking the Black River and enjoy some munchies you can purchase from the food truck onsite.

This is a fundraiser for our church youth room and 20% of the beer sales from this event come back to our church.

Invite your family, friends, and neighbors.

The event is kid-friendly with kid games, fish crackers, and juice boxes. Soft drinks, water, and chips/pretzels are also available.

No cover charge!


First Congregational Church
 United Church of Christ
 36363 Center Ridge Road
 North Ridgeville, OH 44039
 440.327.2921 ~ www.fccalive.org