

# The Messenger

The monthly newsletter of First Congregational Church UCC of North Ridgeville

**November 2021**

**Director, Christian Education**

Mary Karlovec

**Music Director**

Barb Habecker

**Moderator**

Roy Dreger

**Vice-Moderator**

Nancy Franks

**Co-Chairs, Christian Education**

Kelsey Styrt

Renee Dornan

**Chair, Deacons**

Kathy Pero

**Chair, Outreach**

Nancy Franks

**Chair, Trustees**

Paul Wolanski

**Treasurer, Secretary**

Linda Matis

## *From The Pastor's Pen:*

The Pastor's Pen is out of ink this month, so here are excerpts of an "oldie but a goodie" from the pen of Rev. Ralph Chapman to the congregation written in 1948:

"Through the war years thinking men and women again regarded service and sacrifice as virtues to be practiced...in this challenge to the church today...there is opportunity for its people to exercise these virtues, service and sacrifice, resurrected during the war years , i.e. to practice Christian Stewardship.

Every church supporter, by exercise of service and sacrifice is rewarded with enhanced spiritual stamina, with a happier heart, with a more buoyant conscience, with a sweeter security of the soul. ...the practice of the stewardship ideal implies that the Church shall be supported by its fellowship on a broad democratic base. Our church stakes its existence and its growth on its ability to win and hold its fellowship to the practice of this Christian stewardship.

Therefore, each one of us must become Christian Stewards in our Church. Stewards of our time, efforts, leadership, money. This means...working for the welfare and advancement of the Church and the Kingdom; sharing the responsibilities of the Church program; and supporting the Church with consistent financial gifts. Christian stewardship in all things.

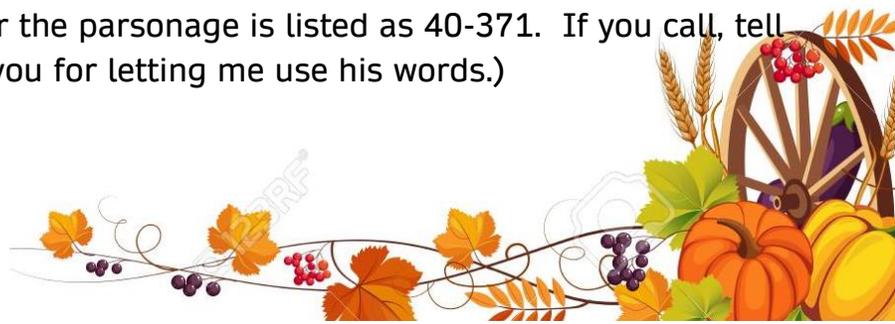
May God's richest blessing rest upon you and our Church and its work among our people and the community."

The echoes of a voice from our Church's past that speaks to us about needs that are still here in the present day. (By the way, the phone number for the parsonage is listed as 40-371. If you call, tell "Chappie" thank you for letting me use his words.)

"All Christians are but  
God's stewards.

*Everything* we  
have is on loan from  
the Lord, *entrusted*  
to us for a  
while to use in  
*servi*ng Him."

- John MacArthur





**Welcome to our Interim Minister, Rev. Tony Clark!** Rev. Clark comes to us from Lakewood, Ohio. With a Master of Divinity from Eden Theological Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri, he currently works at the UCC National Ministries (MESA) to train and support Committees on Ministry. He teaches Theology, has worked with many congregations to develop relationships, modernize worship, transition Open & Affirming into the church environment, helped to bring peace and understanding to members in strained relationships, worked to develop youth leadership and much more, as we will see. Rev. Clark has been a full-time minister in Kensington, CA, a full-time interim minister in St. Paul and Minneapolis, MN, a full-time Associate Minister in Duluth, MN. He is a hard worker and promises to bring new ideas to the table as well as comfort and well-being to our souls through his Bible-based sermons to enlighten us on Sunday mornings.

Let's get to know each other by giving him our warm, friendly, First Congregational North Ridgeville "Hello! I'm so glad to meet you!" right hand of fellowship.

## *Welcome Reception*

There will be an informal "**getting to know you**" reception for Pastor Tony right after the Sunday service on **November 14** in fellowship hall. Light refreshments will be provided. \*\*Please wear your nametag so Pastor Tony can put a face with your name.

### Moderator's Moment – Roy Dreger

I was showing pictures of our house to a cousin from southern Arizona, and she said, "Oh! How do you deal with it?" Huh? What do you mean? Deal with what? "All that green!" She was right about that; there was a lot of green in the picture. The picture was taken as you were coming up the street toward our house; and there, along the street and on the side and back of the house, were trees. Tall trees in full leaf with grass in front of the house. I never thought about it, but it was very green, which has never bothered me. After all, it changes with the seasons. But to someone from the desert part of Arizona where green is not a predominant color, I guess it could be a little unsettling. I, on the other hand thought her part of the world was lacking something. That something was *green*. Not too much of it in her locale, but to both of us, home looked a certain way and we had gotten used to that look. Had we switched houses I'm sure that the respective locations would eventually look and feel like home, given enough time.

And that is true of our church home, although for us the change is inside, not outside. It may not seem like the old "home" but give it a chance and it will. Someone different in the pulpit only changes the look and feel for a short time. Who knows, it may be that the new voice in the pulpit is what you have needed and you didn't know you did. And besides, *it is the family that makes the house of worship a home for worship*, and our family is still here, still in this, our worship home.

This is a chance to expand our understanding of God's grace and love, with new opportunities to share that love with others. So, invite a friend to church and

share our faith home with them. Even better, invite someone you **don't** like and find a way to show that love does, indeed, grow here.

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

Are you a **Bucket Filler** or a **Bucket Dipper**? Over the last few weeks many people have asked me what this means. In Sunday School this fall we have been working on the characteristics of kindness and empathy. In the younger class, this is all about being a “Bucket Filler,” a person who fills their heart as well as others with kind thoughts, words, and deeds. A “Bucket Dipper” does just the opposite, taking away all of the positive and replacing it with the negative. Our focus has been acts of kindness and “filling our buckets with joy and happiness” by filling other’s buckets. In the 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grades, our focus has been on kindness and empathy and how our words and actions **DO** make a difference!



A huge shout out and **THANK YOU** to all the adults who supported Trunk or Treat this year! The weather did not cooperate so a last-minute change moved it indoors but that did not stop everyone from decorating their space indoors! A great time was had by everyone and as the ‘littles’ said **“LOOK Miss Mary, all the big people were “BUCKET FILLERS!”** And they were right! So much love, kindness, and happiness on a cold, rainy night!

On Sunday, November 14 the Confirmation class will be on the road to worship at Holy Name Church in Cleveland. This is the first of many visits the youth will be making to experience other denominations/faith beliefs. Youth are

asked to be at the church at 10 a.m. to leave. Permission slips will be coming via email. I am so blessed to have Kris and Kurt Dornan and Heather Smith leading these young people on this journey!

Just a reminder that the first Sunday of each month is “All church Sunday” for everyone including the children. I will be providing packets for the children to do in worship.

Finally, looking ahead to Advent and the month of December. On Sunday, **December 12** we will have our annual



**gingerbread house building event** immediately after church. Bring a bagged lunch to eat and the building will begin at about noon. To help defray the cost of this event, I will have a list of candy/edible supplies to donate for this event. I would need your donation by December 1 so I know what still needs to be purchased. **The sign-up sheet for donations as well as for participation will be outside my office. Registrations must be made by December 5. No late registrations will be accepted.**

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

Many local churches, area schools, and generous community families supported the Lions Club food drive for Community Care in September. The drive brought in over 7,400 pounds of food items to fill the empty shelves at Community Care!!! Thank you for doing your part to help reach that total.

The **Neighbors in Need** collection isn't completely over. If you forgot to donate a gift to this justice and compassion ministry, to bring witness to harmful acts to those whose voices are seldom heard,

there's still time. Be generous and mark your offering "NIN" and place it in the offering plate or send it to the church. Your gift will help a victim who has suffered needlessly because of someone's thoughtless act. We care, and it shows in our giving.

School is in session and all the kids thank you for the lunches you helped provide during the summer months by donating to the summer lunch program through Community Care. Summer was so much better with a full stomach!

Please remember our homebound members and friends with a card, phone call, or visit. A friendly voice and/or face at the door is usually a nice way to make a bad day so much brighter. Be generous with your smiles...and with your outreach.

The dine and donate fundraiser at Texas Roadhouse was an uplifting experience and netted us \$107.00 toward our 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration in 2022.

The **giving tree** will be full of ornaments and ready for you to choose and honor the wish on it soon. Blessings, love in action, and happy faces on both sides of the giving event.

### **Deacons' Desk – Diane Perry**

As we move into this month of giving thanks, many of us will be making donations to food banks. Instead of the usual staples, some things that are much needed and always appreciated: salt, pepper, flour, and sugar. Cake mixes, frosting, and oil will make a child's birthday cake. Dishwashing detergent and hygiene products also are a good choice. Give what you can so others don't go without.

I hope everyone has a safe and enjoyable Thanksgiving.

### **Trustees' Turn – Paul Wolanski**

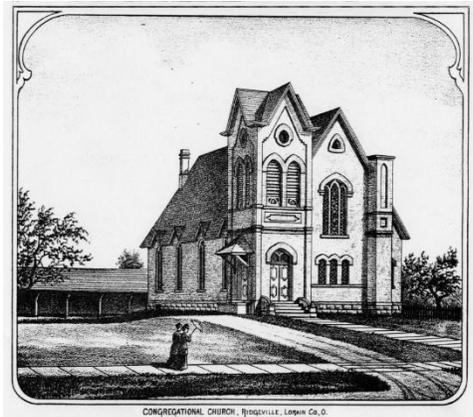
Hello again my family in spirit! Our once beautiful, aged, maple tree east of the church building is gone. Over the last several years it has become unsafe and unfortunately needed to be removed. Hopefully sometime soon we will be planting two trees to take its place.

At our next Trustees meeting we will be talking to a representative from Geisel. The church will be needing new furnaces and air conditioners for the sanctuary as the existing units are 20 plus years old. The consensus of the Trustees was to take care of this sooner rather than later. There is no telling how long the units will last, and we do not want to be broken down on the coldest day of the year with the potential for water pipes and such to burst. We will be learning more about specific costs, however it will be in the \$20,000 to \$30,000 range.

Which leads us to the very serious topic of Stewardship. Trustees will be speaking to this over the next several weeks. Since the Covid pandemic began, it has been a struggle financially. We have been running a few thousand dollars in the red (in debt). We need to keep fixing things as they break, and we need to recruit and retain a Pastor who fits the needs of our congregation and church. Obviously running in debt month after month is not sustainable. So please consider what you can give. If you are able, increase your pledge as much as you feel you and your family can. Please do not become frustrated if you do not feel you are giving enough. Every little bit helps!

I ask you to look at First Congregational United Church of Christ of North Ridgeville not as a place you come to one hour a week on Sundays, but more as

an institution that needs to be supported 168 hours every week, 365 days every year, to be there for us when we need it. Thank you, and God bless!



**From the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee:**  
**Design a banner to celebrate our upcoming anniversary!** We are looking for those imaginative people in our congregation who want to get creative and design a banner for our 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2022! We have someone willing to make the banner, we just need a design! So, get your creativity flowing and sketch your idea on an 8 ½ x 11” piece of paper in color and submit it to Mary Karlovec by November 15! The winning design will be featured in the sanctuary and throughout the anniversary year!



**Women's Book Club**

Upcoming books: All meetings at church at 7:00 pm  
 November 15: The Daughters of Erietown: A Novel by Connie Schultz  
 December 20: Still Life by Louise Penny  
 January 17: Origin by Dan Brown  
 February 21: Space Between Us by Thrity Umrigar



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|-------|------------------|-------|-----------------|
| 11/5  | Susan Dorman     | 11/28 | Yung & Annie Do |
| 11/6  | Ric Sasse        |       |                 |
| 11/8  | Dave Ireland     |       |                 |
| 11/11 | Andrew Veliconia |       |                 |
| 11/14 | Paul Wolanski    |       |                 |
| 11/16 | Keith Schoonover |       |                 |
| 11/17 | Millie Anderson  |       |                 |
| 11/17 | Diane Perry      |       |                 |
| 11/18 | Yung Do          |       |                 |
| 11/24 | Cole Hengartner  |       |                 |

**Stewardship: Rooted in Love**

Our stewardship campaign this year is themed “Rooted in Love” and based on the words in Psalm 1:3 “They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season.” As we think about this verse, it reminds us of all the ways our congregation roots our lives: worship, friendship, service, justice, and prayer. Our congregation is that stream of water which nourishes our soul.

This is an extremely important time for us to remain rooted in the love of our congregation which nourishes all our souls. And now, just as in 1822, our church and our congregation need our support.

The work of our church can happen because of the generous financial and volunteer support of our community. *Because of you*, our congregation shares God’s love. Pledges of financial support provide over 78% of our budget as a congregation. Without your gifts to the annual stewardship campaign, we would not be able to engage in the programs, projects, ministry, and worship experiences that define our community life.

During this time of transition, we ask that you consider what value the church has in your life and how this stream of water has nourished your soul. We hope that as you consider your giving for the coming year, you will remember where First Congregational Church North Ridgeville has come from and where we are going.

Please complete the pledge card for 2022 that was mailed to you and return to the church by November 14. All pledges and gifts to our congregation help strengthen who we are and what we can do together. Because of you, our church shares God's love.



**Swiss steak dinner:** Thank you to everyone who helped out with our rescheduled, modified for the pandemic, carry-out only Swiss steak dinner in October. When all was said and done and the extras were sold, we netted \$2,201.84. Considering the circumstances and that we were honoring tickets sold for the March 2020 dinner, this is AMAZING! We had approximately 165 dinners boxed up, bagged, and delivered to hungry patrons in the parking lot. It worked out really well, and a **big thank you** to Diana Goode for her forethought and planning on how to make this event work smoothly and successfully!!

### Family Game Night

Saturday, November 13, 6-7 pm

Cost: \$5.00 per person (all proceeds will go to the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary events)

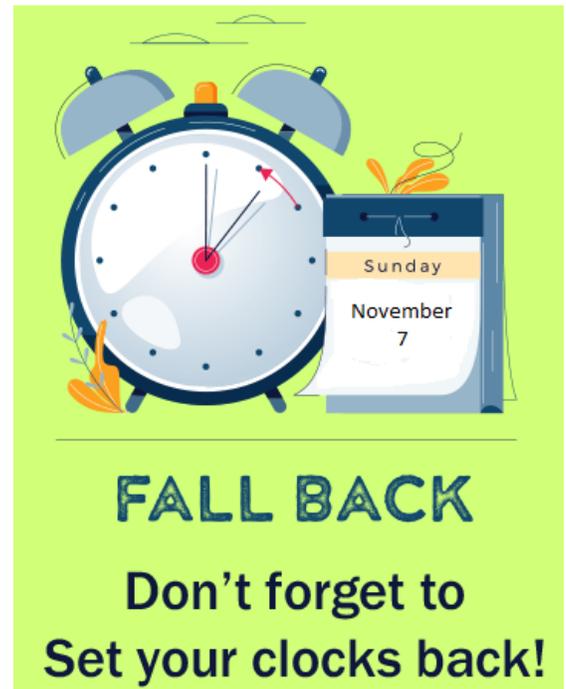
All members, friends, neighbors, and families are welcome to join us!

Bring a pillowcase with 10-15 random items from your home.

Snacks & drinks will be provided but you can bring your own snacks, too!



WATCH FOR INFORMATION REGARDING OUR FIRST (ANNUAL?) HOLIDAY MUSIC FESTIVAL COMING UP ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12 AT 7 P.M.



### Help Needed

- Serve your church by becoming a member of one of the church boards. Ask any board or council member for more information!
- Interested in serving on the settled pastor search committee? Contact a member of the church council.
- If you would like to light the candles one week during Advent this year, please contact the church office.
- Are you technologically savvy? Would you like to help with livestreaming/recording worship services and posting them online? If so, please contact the church office.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 AA Women 7 pm	2 CE 7 pm Trustees 7 pm AA 1 <sup>st</sup> Step 8:30 pm	3 Bell choir 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm	4 AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	5	6 AA Couples 6 pm
7 All Saints Sunday Outreach 9:30 am Worship service 10:30 AA Men 7:30 pm	8 Council 7 pm AA Women 7 pm	9 AA 1 <sup>st</sup> Step 8:30 pm	10 Bell choir 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm	11 AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	12	13 Family Game Night 6 pm AA Couples 6 pm
14 Worship service 10:30 Pastor Tony welcome reception 11:30 am Pledge cards due Girl Scouts 3 pm AA Men 7:30 pm	15 Women's Book Club 7 pm AA Women 7 pm	16 Newsletter articles due AA 1 <sup>st</sup> Step 8:30 pm	17 Bell choir 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm	18 AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	19 200 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary meeting 7 pm	20 AA Couples 6 pm
21 Worship service 10:30 Congregational Meeting AA Men 7:30 pm	22 AA Women 7 pm	23 AA 1 <sup>st</sup> Step 8:30 pm	24 Bell choir 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm	25 THANKSGIVING OFFICE CLOSED AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	26 OFFICE CLOSED	27 Decorate church 9 am AA Couples 6 pm
28 1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent Worship service 10:30 Deacons 11:30 am AA Men 7:30 pm	29 AA Women 7 pm	30 AA 1 <sup>st</sup> Step 8:30 pm				

