

The Messenger

The monthly newsletter of First Congregational Church UCC of North Ridgeville

August 2022

Interim Minister

Rev. Tony Clark

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

Chair, Outreach

Nancy Franks

Chair, Trustees

Paul Wolanski

Treasurer, Secretary

Linda Matis

From the Interim Minister

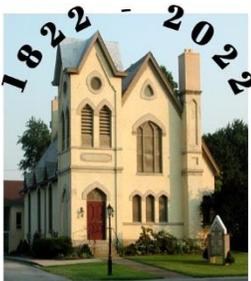
In the last month, the congregation has sent four youth and accompanying adults on a mission trip, received four new members (Alan Willcox, Karen Farmer, and Melissa and Mike Wysocky), ordained Matthew Hogue-Smith, held a moderately-well attended open house, and the youth gave witness to the ONA statement by holding posters in front of the church. These activities show a congregation willing to express our faith in public without shame. It is a blessing to celebrate these events with you.

These events also point to an abundance, rather than scarcity, of ministry and faith at FCC. Our story, though, is often about scarcity, especially when we talk about the budget, or people in the pews, or children in our congregation. In our scarcity mindset, it is easy to remember a nostalgic time when things were better or fuller or richer.

Even if that story of the past has a ring of truth to it, we don't have that time available to us anymore. We are in a time when the idea of having enough is stolen from us by consumerism and advertising that feed our desire for more, better, stronger, longer, faster, richer, more beautiful, and, of course, younger.

Consumerism is in direct opposition to the Ten Commandments, which decry our desire to be busy so that we can own what our neighbors do. To progress, to have more than our ancestors did, we believe we need to build, and drive, and move, and exhaust ourselves. As Congregationalists, we are direct inheritors of the American Protestant work ethic that the Pilgrims and Puritans brought with them to the Western hemisphere, and that mindset has both defined the Commandment for sabbath and rest and decreased our ability to be at sabbath and rest.

The respite from the hamster wheel of working to afford what we are lacking is to stop and give thanks for what is here now. What are we abundant in, and how might we enhance that in our ministry?



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The spiritual food that feeds our emptiness is a counterintuitive slowing down and taking time to listen to each other. What do you notice about abundance at First Congregational Church? How do we give thanks to God for this abundance? How do we tell one another about the abundances that God has brought into our lives and our congregation?

May you continue to live into God's abundance in this place and this time.

Peace,
Pastor Tony

Moderator's Moment – Roy Dreger

Time to put on your virtual hiking shoes and take a walk! "A walk where?" you ask. It could be to a good fishing hole, a meadow with wildflowers, an overlook onto an awe-inspiring view; since it's virtual you can pick where we are going. The important thing is that we are going to walk there together.

Okay, let's get going. First step, second step, and so on until we arrive at wherever. Now look back and tell me which step was the most important. The first step? The last step? How about the 23rd step or the 323rd step? It seems that each one is important. You remove any one step and you aren't going to arrive anywhere. You may not start, you may stop one step from the end, you may stop at that hill where you didn't know if you could go any further; but you don't get to your goal.

By now you may see where this is going. Our congregation are like those steps. Each one of us plays a part - provides a step forward - no matter how you participate, but you have to participate, somehow. It may be that you can't be on a board or committee, but maybe you can

pledge and keep your pledge current. Or it may be that you aren't in a position to pledge very much, but maybe you can volunteer to help out at an activity. Maybe you can lend your support and care to someone having a difficult time.

We are all "steps" toward the future of this church, just like all those before us were. You just need to take the steps you are able to take and keep going, because the goal is always the future of our church.



And, by the way, I hope to see you at the Corn Festival parade!

Christian Education Corner – Mary Karlovec

August is here and that means a new school year is just around the corner! The Board of Christian Education is ushering in the new school year with a special event called "Welcome to the Neighborhood!" on Sunday, August 21 from 1-3 pm. We are targeting the Hampton Place development (between Stoney Ridge and Route



83) as our invited guests. They will be receiving a postcard in the mail with all the information about the event. Weather permitting, it will be outside in the back parking lot and grassy area. We will have a bounce house, face painting, a bubble area, chalking, crafts, tours of the church, and an ice cream social. At 2 pm we will have the **Blessings of the Backpacks** and each person will receive a special luggage tag to put on their backpack, carryall, briefcase, or whatever they carry their school/work

supplies in! **EVERYONE** is invited to this event. **We will need extra help!** There is a sign-up sheet outside Mary's office. This is a great opportunity for our congregation to introduce ourselves to people in the community and show them our amazing hospitality!

September 11 is our "Round-up Sunday" to usher in the new Sunday School year! More information will be forthcoming in the September Messenger but we wanted you to be aware of the date! **We are also in need of Sunday School teachers (lots of them!)** We will have **four classes** this year and we need **four adults to rotate in pairs of two** (maximum of twice a month) through each of the classes! Materials will be provided! Please consider joining our teaching team as the Christian Education Board cannot do it alone! We are also going to resume providing **nursery care** and need **four adults to rotate once a month** in the nursery. There is a sign-up sheet outside my office. Please consider helping as a teacher or in the nursery!!

Sunday, September 18 is **Confirmation Sunday!** Please join us for worship that Sunday to celebrate this wonderful event. There will be a reception following worship to honor our confirmands. More information will be in the September Messenger.

Finally, I completely forgot to put in the July Messenger my huge THANKS to the congregation for the cards, phone calls, meals, gift cards - and yes, even the lectures - as I dealt with the kidney issues and then Covid. Your support made very trying times bearable!



Outreach Committee News – Nancy Franks

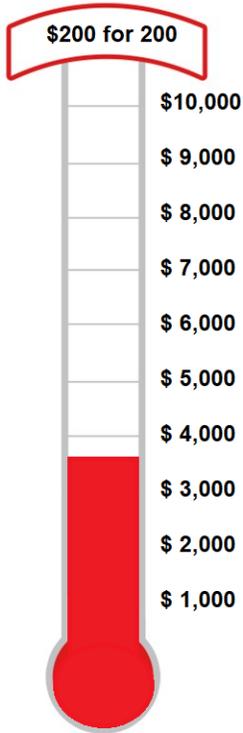
God heals, faith inspires, love triumphs, and hope endures.

Welcome to August. Outreach wishes to thank everyone who participated in the ordination service and reception for Matthew Hogue-Smith on July 10. What an extraordinary experience for everyone! The church was adorned with welcoming banners, pictures of our historical past, and rainbow accents. Congratulations, Pastor Matthew! We are genuinely happy and spiritually moved by your acceptance into the ministry of Jesus the Christ. May your life be one of continued ambition and fulfillment as your life of faith in service for the Lord continues.

ATTN: Church family! Please plan to give a gift of blood through the Vitalant blood bank in Elyria by calling 1-877-258-4825 or scheduling online at Vitalant.org. Take a photo ID and a list of any medications you are taking, and remember to eat and drink lots of water before donating. Thank you for saving someone's life!

The Board of Outreach will not be meeting in August. We are preparing for a dine and donate fundraiser in September at Fiesta Habanero in Avon. More details to come. We will be joining you at the 200th anniversary luncheon at Tom's Country Place in Avon on September 25. We will be helping with the chicken paprikash dinner fundraiser on October 8 and getting things ready for the annual giving tree program for Community Care in November. Look for more information on all of these events in upcoming newsletter.

Food for thought: I lift up my eyes to the mountains – my help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. Psalm 121:1-2



GOAL: \$10,000.00

50 donors each invest \$200 for 200 years

Let's raise as much as we can for the future of First Congregational United Church of Christ

Trustees' Turn – Paul Wolanski

Hello, my family in Christ! Just a reminder from the Board of Trustees: If you have not given to the \$200 for 200 fund, this would be a great time to do so. And what is the \$200 for 200 fund again? Great question! Last year First Congregational Church was awarded a \$20,000 grant from the Living Water Association of the UCC to supplement the current interim minister's pay for one year. There is no guarantee that we will receive that again when the year is up. The \$200 for 200 fund is a financial break wall. There are approximately 50 pledging units in our church. For our 200th anniversary year, if each pledging unit gave an additional \$200 over the course of the year over their original pledge amount, that would give our church an additional \$10,000 to help offset the potential deficit to pay a minister in 2023 should we not receive the grant again. The fund is earmarked only for this purpose and cannot be touched until then. If you cannot give the whole amount,

whatever you can give will help. If you can give more, that would also be appreciated since even 50 pledge units giving \$200 only gets us halfway to the grant total. Trustees and Church Council have been trying to plan ahead so that 2023 can also be a financially healthy and happy year for us. Thank you.

Trustees also have been working hard to update our non-member rental fee structure. We are being more aggressive in our signage and the information on our website. We want to let people know that our church and fellowship hall are a great place to have a wedding or a party. Hopefully this will pay dividends leading us into the year 2023.

Lastly, many of our families have made sacrifices to enable our members to dedicate so much of their time and talents to the church. There are too many examples to list. However, I would like to single out two. Linda Matis has decided to stay on as Treasurer. On behalf of the entire church, thank you and thanks to your family for the time they let you give to the church! And Jack Fitts, who came to the church grounds with his son-in-law, grandson, and his neighbor (who has done as much to help our church as anyone over the years) and removed several dead or dying pine trees from the front eastern side of the church. The trees were in close proximity to power lines and had we enlisted a tree service, the cost could have been several thousands of dollars. Thank you, Linda and Jack!



Deacons' Desk – Karen Dreger

A Tree: Did you ever sit under a tree and hear the wind go through her branches, leaves rustling like God is saying "hi"? Have

you felt relief from the hot rays of the sun, like a prayer answered? Maybe it's raining and the cool drops of rain roll off the leaves onto your face refreshing you like a blessing from above. You lean against her sturdy trunk secure in the knowledge that her trunk will support you, like faith that God will always be there for you. Trees literally give us our breath; however, trees are not forever but the breath of God is always on us.

Our church has recently lost some trees, including one especially large, old tree that served us well. Now we need to think about planting new trees – what kind and where. Trees make a good memorial. Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees. – Revelation 7:3

- 8/7 Sandy Chalkwater
 8/9 Mike Bier
 8/9 Ann Olesen
 8/13 Kelsey Styr
 8/14 Will Schupbach
 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 George & Jody Millar
 8/31 Brandon Green & Nema Saleem-Green

Women's Book Club: Upcoming books are as follows. All gatherings are at the church at 7 pm unless noted. (If it is hot, we will meet in the sanctuary.)

August 15: The Book Woman's Daughter: A Novel by Kim Michele Richardson

September 19: The Water Keeper by Charles Martin (on Krista's patio room at 6:30 pm BYOB and snack to share)

Good News: We've found someone to lend us a wagon for the Corn Festival parade float! All hands on deck to decorate the float and have a good showing in the parade.

Let the fun begin!
 Please sign up to help put the float together.



Decorating on Thursday, August 11 and Friday, August 12 beginning at 6 p.m. (come when you can) in Harry Berg's barn at 37953 Center Ridge, N. Ridgeville. Sign up on the sheet by Mary Karlovec's office.



Save the Date

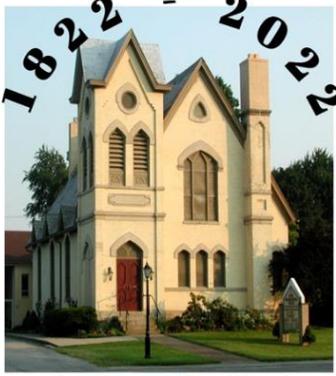
**Sunday, September 25, 2022
 1:00 p.m.**

Tom's Country Place, Avon OH

All are invited!! Come to our 200th anniversary celebration luncheon at Tom's Country Place. We will have a wonderful meal, some speakers, a little music, and maybe a previous pastor or two will be there. Tickets are \$25 for adults and \$12.50 for children ages 10 and under. See Linda Matis for tickets. The menu is: roasted boneless chicken breast, top round of beef au jus, parsley red potatoes, California blend vegetables, garden salad with house or ranch dressing, dinner rolls, beverage, and cake.

Sunday school teachers & nursery helpers needed!

See CE article for how to sign up!!!



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A Moment in History #11

The Rev. Samuel Montgomery who served from 1852-1855 started monthly concerts of prayer and collections for missions. The church was granted membership in the Cleveland Conference on November 3, 1855. Two years later the church sent delegates to the Conference of Presbyterian and Congregational Churches of Lorain and Medina Counties which was held in Elyria.

The decision to build a new church came in 1872 when Mr. McCarthy took over the pastorate. In 1873 the frame church building was moved across the street and to the west of Stoney Ridge Road where it was remodeled into a house. On the building committee were Turland T. Winckles, Wyllis Terrell, J. Shandon Terrell, and Edward Ames. The congregation voted to build the new church where the frame building had been. The building cost was divided into shares of \$10.00 each and work began on June 27, 1873, when ground was broken by Deacon Tomlinson and Ed Ames who plowed the first furrow. The pastor's crippled son, Earnest McCarthy, spent all day throwing dirt out of the furrow with a fire shovel.

The building was not completed until 1876. The long time it took was due, in part, to the congregation's unwillingness to go into debt and also because most of the labor was donated. Joshua Lickorish worked on the church hauling most of the stone for the foundation. Another member, James Sayers, who was a carpenter, building mover, and blacksmith, helped in the building of the church. When completed there remained \$600.00 in debt. This amount along with a previous debt of \$1,516.00 were quickly liquidated by two members and the church was completed debt free. The total cost to build the church came to \$10,800.00.

The new church was completed in 1876 but the first service was held on Christmas Day in 1875. The new church was dedicated on January 22, 1876 and renamed The First Congregational Church of North Ridgeville. Rev. J.M. Merrill who served from 1875-1878 was pastor at the time. The new church was lit by kerosene lamps which had to be raised and lowered making an attic necessary, and heating was by a pot-bellied stove. A coal furnace was eventually installed in the basement with a single grate in the middle of the center aisle.

As of January 1879, there were 47 members in the church and 150 scholars in the Sabbath School. Joshua Lickorish was Sabbath School Superintendent. There was no settled pastor at this time and the pulpit was filled every Sabbath with ministers from Oberlin.



Circa 1876

A Moment in History #11

On May 31, 1880, Charles Herrick and his wife conveyed to the church a parcel of land on the south side of Center Ridge Road. The ½ acre parcel was fronting on the highway and was 82 ½ feet wide by 264 feet deep and was located "near the Orr farm". (Found in Lorain County Records volume 48, pages 135 and 136)

Trustee minutes from the meeting of April 22, 1880 "instructed the trustees to sell the parsonage and authorized the building committee to go forward with arrangements for a new one". A new parsonage was built there for about \$1,600.00. On a map from 1886 this parcel appears to be

approximately seven lots to the west of the present church.

“The parsonage was built and paid for in 1880 when the Rev. J.B. Stocking, who remained until 1883, was pastor.” In 1888 LBS gave \$10.00 for the painting and papering of the parsonage. The parsonage had a “summer kitchen” and barn.

In the 1890’s the church experienced a period of prosperity and well-being. New members were taken in, collections were generous, and Sunday School and Sunday worship services were well attended. The membership rose to 106. The building was repaired and new carpet laid. On December 20, 1897, a two-day celebration marked the church’s 75th anniversary. A check for \$370 to clear the church of debt was received from H.L. Terrell of New York, a former member. In 1895 the Interurban “Green Line” electric trolley car tracks were built along the south side of Center Ridge Road. This trolley system ran from Cleveland to Berea, Wooster, Norwalk, and Bucyrus with stops at the towns along the way. It was called the Green Line due to the color of the trolley cars. Stop #59 on the Green Line was for the Congregational Church, Mooers chair factory, and the Four Chimneys Inn. The trolley system began to lose money in the 1920’s and went out of business in 1931. Some of the high-tension electric lines in North Ridgeville run along the abandoned right of way.



Pastor Matthew Hogue-Smith presiding over communion at his ordination

Question? Concern? Got a question or concern about the church or anything related to it?

Reach out:

	Rev. Clark	510-730-9335
Moderator (Council leader)	Roy Dreger	440-937-6522
Vice-Moderator (asst. Council leader)	Nancy Franks	440-327-9647
Christian Ed (youth & adult education)	Renee Dornan	330-473-2201
Christian Ed	Kelsey Styrt	440-387-3600
Deacons (worship)	Karen Dreger	440-937-6522
Outreach	Nancy Franks	440-327-9647
Trustees (building, grounds & finances)	Paul Wolanski	440-785-2346
Pastor Parish (liaison between congregation & pastor)	Krista O’Neill	440-327-8393
Treasurer	Linda Matis	440-821-4497

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 AA Women 7 pm	2 Confirmands to mosque 9:15 am CE 7 pm Trustees 7 pm AA 1 st Step 8:30 pm	3 Linda off– jury duty 4-H 7 pm	4 AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	5	6 AA Women 9 am AA Couples 6 pm
7 Worship 10:30 am Communion AA Men 7:30 pm	8 AA Women 7 pm	9 Council 7 pm AA 1 st Step 8:30 pm	10 Linda off – jury duty 4-H 7 pm	11 Decorate CF parade float 6 pm AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	12 Decorate CF parade float 6 pm (if needed) 	13 AA Women 9 am AA Couples 6 pm 
14 Worship 10:30 am Corn Festival parade 1:30 pm step off  AA Men 7:30 pm	15 Women’s book club 7 pm AA Women 7 pm	16 Newsletter articles due AA 1 st Step 8:30 pm	17 Linda off – jury duty 4-H 7 pm	18 AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	19	20 AA Women 9 am AA Couples 6 pm
21 Worship 10:30 am CE “Welcome to the Neighborhood” event 1-3 pm Blessing of the Backpacks AA Men 7:30 pm	22 AA Women 7 pm	23 AA 1 st Step 8:30 pm	24	25 AA Women 6 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm	26	27 AA Women 9 am AA Couples 6 pm
28 Worship 10:30 am Deacons 11:30 am AA Men 7:30 pm	29 AA Women 7 pm	30 AA 1 st Step 8:30 pm	31 Linda off – jury duty	Linda on vacation 8/22-8/26		

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