

The Messenger

The monthly newsletter of First Congregational Church UCC of North Ridgeville

January 2023

Bridge Ministers

Rev. Patty Humphress
Rev. Chris Nichols

Director, Christian Education

Mary Karlovec

Music Director

Barb Habecker

Moderator

Kris Dornan

Vice-Moderator

Diana Goode

Co-Chairs, Christian Education

Kelsey Styrt
Renee Dornan

Chair, Deacons

Chair, Outreach

Nancy Franks

Chair, Trustees

Paul Wolanski

Treasurer, Secretary

Linda Matis

From the Bridge Minister

The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. John 1:5

First Congregational United Church of Christ has been shining the Light of Christ in the community and the world for 200+ years now. Let me share how I have witnessed that in my time with you.

You genuinely care for each other. Before and after church I smile when I see how you all greet each other and are community together.

You have children and youth – what a beautiful gift you have in your younger families.

You have seniors – what great resources these gems are for the next generations.

Not to leave out those in-betweeners – who are connected in very real ways to ministry and to this church.

You have a great staff who ensure that First Congregation is the best it can be.

You have wonderful volunteers who help the committees run smoothly and do God's work, often without recognition.

You love God. You shine the Light of Christ in the building and beyond.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time here. You have a future filled with hope. Keep on keepin' on, and oh, the places you will go.

Be blessed. You will be in my prayers as you enter into this new year and new ministry together. May God continue to shine the Light through you, for the Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness WILL not overcome it

Peace and Light,
Pastor Patty

ANNUAL MEETING
to hear the annual reports of the boards & approve the final budget for 2023
SUNDAY, JANUARY 22
in the sanctuary immediately following the worship service



**ATTN: Board Chairpersons!
Annual reports for 2022 must be in
the church office by January 13.**

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**Moderator's Moment – Roy Dreger**

“Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all the others.”

This quote has been attributed to the Roman philosopher Cicero. As I leave the Moderator's position, it is only fitting that I show my gratitude to some who have made my job easier. In no particular order:

Nancy Franks for filling in when I couldn't attend and for tackling some really difficult and time-consuming issues during those times. Nancy always made herself available when I asked for her help.

Linda Matis, a true godsend to any board member as well as to any in the congregation with questions. While she may not have the answer to every question, she has the answer to most. She has helped me with too many things to list.

Mary Karlovec has kept Christian Education vibrant and involved, even during the pandemic. She has worked far beyond what she is paid to do. She has dealt with many things at any given time and has completed all of them; all done well and usually beyond expectations.

Jo Ann and Bruce Griswold have done a wonderful job of keeping the church clean and presentable, inside and out. They, also, have regularly gone beyond what is asked of them.

Barb Habecker stepped in when we were in need of a music director and has expanded the music beyond just the choir. She seems to have unlimited energy and enthusiasm and is a joy to have around.

I would be remiss to not include Pastor Patty. Although here for only a short period of time, she has breathed new life into the congregation with her vitality and obvious love of God.

The common thread that runs through the fabric of all of this is the fact that these people knew what to do, and they did it...and then some. Their contributions to this church made the moderator's position easier. They made me look as if I knew what I was doing, and I can't thank them enough.

But they aren't the only ones that have helped me through this period. I could not have made it through without the support of my wife Karen. She was always there when I needed to vent or just needed someone to talk with about church things.

And, finally, you, the congregation provided support, whether you knew it or not. You pledged your money and you volunteered your help and your time in seeing that programs succeeded. Yes, sometimes at the last minute, but you came through all the same. And I know I can count on all of you to support Kris Dornan as he takes over the moderator's job.

To everyone, thank you, thank you, thank you!

**Christian Education Corner – Mary Karlovec**

**Welcome to 2023!** A new year brings new adventures with Christian Education programming. During 2022, we tried a few new ideas including a neighborhood gathering, adult Advent bags, and a more involved confirmation program. This year we are focusing our efforts on more community outreach, providing more opportunities for our young adults (ages 25-45) to gather together, and exploring the possibility of doing a traditional or non-

traditional Vacation Bible School this summer. Also, we are currently exploring the options we have for a much-requested return of a Women's Retreat in early November! We definitely want to start our 201<sup>st</sup> year as a time to bring more vitality and growth to our congregation under the umbrella of Christian Education. Stay tuned for future announcements!

**One of our community outreach events is our trek to Lotts Creek** with many of our youth and adults. This year's event will not be until the middle of July due to scheduling conflicts of the lead adults with this event. However, we are starting our fundraising efforts NOW with two events. The first is our annual **Chili Cook-off** on Sunday, February 12



immediately following worship. We are in need of volunteers to make a pot of their favorite chili for the event. (Remember, the LADLE AWARD could be yours!) **There is a sign-up sheet for chili cooks outside of my office.** We will have a pot of chicken noodle soup for those non-chili lovers too! Tickets the day of the event are \$5.00 for adults and \$3.00 for kids ages 5-12 and under age 5 is free. Your ticket will get you up to three tastings of chili, crackers, drink and of course cupcakes for dessert! Please come and support this worthy cause.

**Our second fundraising event we are dubbing "ADOPT A YOUTH."** Do you have jobs you need help with around your house or yard? Let me know and we can arrange for our youth (with the help of our adults if needed) to come and help! We just ask that you make a donation to the Lotts Creek Trip Fund to help defray the cost of the trip for those participating this summer!

Look for two more fundraising events in the works for the Lenten season! More info in the February newsletter!

**Have you looked around your neighborhood lately?** Do you have families with kids or retired adults looking for new friends to engage with? If each of us invited one family or adult to come to church or a church activity in the next two months, we will spread the news of who we are as a congregation in the community! ***WE*** are our best assets to help us grow! I challenge you to find a neighbor or friend and invite them to church for one of our upcoming events! We are a very warm, loving community of faith! It is time to spread the good news!

Happy New Year!

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

The New Year 2023 arrives in all its glory, pomp, and circumstance, along with the mystery of what the New Year will ring in. Challenges for the year ahead? You bet! But we know whatever is in front of us, God is in charge, leading us forward in ways we can only imagine. Let us open ourselves to the revelation of God by being ready for something extraordinary!

Plan to attend the **Annual Meeting on January 22**; get to meet the Outreach team. We are here to serve the community at large and our local church membership.

Thank you to the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary committee who has provided ongoing information about our church's history. Along with the special programs for socialization, we presented a proposal to the congregation to prepare monetarily for the upcoming pastor who will hopefully be engaged sometime in 2023. The proposal was that each family give \$200 above and beyond their normal pledge amount in

preparation of a (possible) higher salary expectation by the new minister. Either we meet the asking salary for the year or find ourselves with a part-time minister or no minister at all; this is what we are faced with. Thank you for doing your part by donating to this program for the future of our church. This program will continue during 2023 or until we seat a new minister. Mark your donation "\$200 for 200". Thank you.

Happy New Year, everyone, from the Outreach Committee: Edie, Jane, Becky, Barb, Skip, Linda, Nancy, Pat and Karen

### **Search Committee – Kris Dornan**

Happy New Year to all! And what a season of promise as we start our 201<sup>st</sup> year!! Why promise you may ask? Well, after a LOT of hard work put in by our Seated Pastor Search Committee, we finally have our all-church survey ready to distribute to our congregants. This survey, we feel, was thoroughly reviewed and prayerfully considered so that we ensure a search that clearly defines the pastor that will meet us where we are at in our spiritual lives as a First Congregational Church family. When we have a need at FCC, God provides, as we have all seen time and time again!! Pastor Patty's leadership and wonderful sermons taking us through advent are a perfect reminder of that!!



This survey will go live on January 8, and those who have emails on file with our church will receive an invitation to fill out the survey through "SurveyMonkey". All surveys will need to be submitted/returned by January 22. For those that would be more comfortable filling out a paper copy, or would like help filling out the survey

electronically, we are making both January 8 and 15 "Survey days" where assistance, and electronic devices, will be made available at the church (after the service). Paper copies will also be made available for pick up at the church on January 8. Instructions for returning paper copies will be included (with details on how we will ensure confidentiality).

Please, *please* take some time to answer this critical survey on the future life of our church. Based on some trials, and the search committee taking the survey already, we estimate that it shouldn't take more than 30-60 minutes to complete the survey. I thank you in advance! God Bless!



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

Hello, my family in Christ! With your help, we had an extremely successful stewardship campaign. Thank you all who volunteered your stories. Thank you all for so much positive feedback! We are on course and headed in the right direction.

Not much to report from Trustees in December. We canceled our meeting due to illness...nothing serious. The origin of the roof leak over the choir loft has been detected and the slate shingles on the roof have been repaired by Westside Roofing. The riding lawn mower has gone out for preventative maintenance and is back and ready for spring. Thank you, Jack Fitts.

To Pastor Patty, in your short bridge with our congregation you have had an enormous influence on our church. Thank you!

Thank you, staff: Linda – Secretary, Mary - Christian Education Director, Barb - Music Director, and Bruce and Jo Ann - grounds and building upkeep. You are all

jewels, and maybe we do not tell you enough!

To the Congregation from the Trustees, have a happy and safe New Year!

**Women's Book Club:** All gatherings are at the church at 7 pm unless noted.

**January 16:** we will have a puzzle night, where we will work on a puzzle as a team in the senior high classroom. Bring a snack to share if you remember.

**February 20:** The Dark Hours by Michael Connelly

**March 20:** The Librarian of Crooked Lane by C.J Archer

### Christmas Music Festival

A huge THANK YOU to Barb Habecker, our music director, and to all the participants!!!



Lamb: Abby Anderson, Donkey: Ben Dornan, Shepherds: Charlotte Dornan & Lily Dornan



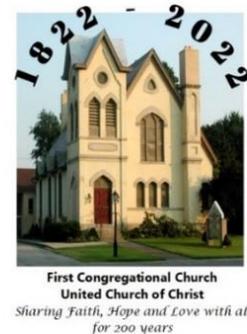
Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, aka Pat Kyle



- 1/3 Charis Meehan
- 1/5 Nancy Findlay
- 1/7 Dale Williams
- 1/8 Karen Dreger
- 1/12 Karen Veliconia
- 1/13 Joe Pesch
- 1/19 Marge Baker
- 1/25 Beth Dornan

*thank you*

From the staff of First Congregational Church: We would like to thank you all for the generous Christmas gifts that we received. You are all very kind and working here is a blessing!



### A Moment in History #22

In 1977 a sink hole developed in the parking lot on the east side of the church on the old Lasch property. It turned out it was due to an abandoned well located there that was approximately 10-12' deep. Bob Gilder arranged to have two tons of stone delivered to fill the well, but it required two more tons of stone to finish the job. bob said, "just send the bill to my house."

In 1978 the church received an early Christmas present in the form of 29-year-old Rev. Priscilla Shoup. We were her first congregation, and she was the first woman pastor in this area (women pastors were not very common at this time). Priscilla came to us from Massachusetts where she attended Andover Newton Theological School.

Priscilla first wanted to be a doctor or nurse but decided against this when she could not dissect a worm in biology class without considerable discomfort. The associate minister of her church advised her to enter the field of Christian education as that was another way to help people. After working at a small church in Connecticut during her first year of seminary she decided to become ordained.

Lexan covers were installed on the outside of the windows of the west side of the church as well as the large window on the front of the church. This was done to protect the windows after one was shot and damaged. The Mary and Martha window was repaired at this time as well as the window that had been damaged.

The congregation enjoyed the "Joyful Noise Quartet" with members Dave Houston, Jim Yost, Jack Fitts, and Percy Claycomb. The following year Sue Cowan was hired as choir director and organist.

In 1979 the minister's discretionary fund was set up with an initial amount of \$150.00. This fund can be used by the minister as they wish but is primarily used to assist people who come to the church looking for help.

### **▲ Moment in History #23**

In the early 1980s when Priscilla Shoup was pastor, there were about 280 members and the Sunday school averaged about 75 children. It was suggested that the Sunday school classes bring their chairs into church instead of using pews needed for adults. There was a children's choir for a period of time and the church participated in the CROP walk and had a booth at the Corn Festival. The Friday night suppers, which were for the unemployed and their families, were introduced by June Yost in 1983 with nothing more than a donation of \$100.00 and a plan.

The sanctuary and narthex were painted, a new sound system and three ceiling fans were installed. Concrete work was done on the east side of the church and mercury vapor security lights were installed. LES purchased a two-sided yard sign on wheels in 1983.

In regards to the Carey T. Winckles Fund, the UCC instituted full divestment of all resources doing business with South Africa because of apartheid. Some entities using the church during this period

(some on an intermittent basis) were a nursery school, Jazzercise, scouts, dance, PTA, 4-H, AA, Lions Club, and the arts council of North Ridgeville.

Also during this period, Joe and Dolores Pesch purchased a cassette recorder and tapes in order for the service to be recorded and the tapes made available to shut-ins. A piano was moved up to the choir balcony at this time.

Nancy Gilder, a member of the church, shared her Peace Corps experiences on the Marshall Islands. A clown ministry Sunday was held during the 1980s. The trustees were looking at a chair lift as the congregation worked towards a way to make the church handicapped accessible.

There was Christmas caroling one December and Sue Morgan and Sue Cowen directed the children's musical "Oh My Stars, It's Christmas".

Pastor Priscilla Shoup left on a sabbatical to India on December 30, 1985, and Rev. Bacso filled the pulpit during her absence.

The youth group was busy under the guidance of Marcia Stewart and Nancy Franks. They took a trip to the Carlisle Visitors Center and spent a weekend at Temple Hills. The youth also raised money through car washes and bake sales. There was even a Youth Group Gazette with news about their activities, such as bowling, swimming, Christmas caroling, and even a lock-in. In 1989 the youth group was split into junior high (grades 6-8) and senior high (grades 9-12).

North Ridgeville Community Care was started in 1989 as a food pantry in the basement of the church. June Yost was the driving force behind the organization of this worthwhile endeavor.

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Pastor Tony Clark received a call to be the Transitional Conference Minister for the Montana - Northern Wyoming conference of the UCC. He and Darrell will be moving to Billings, Montana by early February and he starts on March 1.
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| Sun                                                                                                                                                | Mon                                                                                                                   | Tue                                                                     | Wed                                                                                                    | Thu                                                   | Fri                                            | Sat                                                   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1</b><br><b>New Year's Day</b><br><b>Worship 10:30 am</b><br><b>Deacons 11:30 am</b><br><br>AA Men 7:30 pm                                      | <b>2</b><br><b>OFFICE CLOSED</b><br><br>AA Women 7 pm                                                                 | <b>3</b><br><b>Trustees 7 pm</b><br><br>AA 1 <sup>st</sup> Step 8:30 pm | <b>4</b><br><b>Bell choir 6:30 pm</b><br><b>Choir 7:30 pm</b><br><br>AA Women 6 pm<br>Al-Anon 7:30 pm  | <b>5</b><br><br><br>AA Women 6 pm<br>Al-Anon 7:30 pm  | <b>6</b><br><br><br>                           | <b>7</b><br><br><br>AA Women 9 am<br>AA Couples 6 pm  |
| <b>8</b><br><b>Epiphany</b><br><b>Outreach 9 am</b><br><b>Worship 10:30 am</b><br><b>Coffee hour</b><br><b>Survey Sunday</b><br><br>AA Men 7:30 pm | <b>9</b><br><b>Council 7 pm</b><br><br>AA Women 7 pm                                                                  | <b>10</b><br><b>CE 7 pm</b><br><br>AA 1 <sup>st</sup> Step 8:30 pm      | <b>11</b><br><b>Bell choir 6:30 pm</b><br><b>Choir 7:30 pm</b><br><br>AA Women 6 pm<br>Al-Anon 7:30 pm | <b>12</b><br><br><br>AA Women 6 pm<br>Al-Anon 7:30 pm | <b>13</b><br><b>Annual reports due</b><br><br> | <b>14</b><br><br><br>AA Women 9 am<br>AA Couples 6 pm |
| <b>15</b><br><b>Worship 10:30 am</b><br><b>Take down</b><br><b>decorations</b><br><b>Survey Sunday</b><br><br>AA Men 7:30 pm                       | <b>16</b><br><b>Newsletter articles</b><br><b>due</b><br><b>Women's book club</b><br><b>7 pm</b><br><br>AA Women 7 pm | <b>17</b><br><br><br>AA 1 <sup>st</sup> Step 8:30 pm                    | <b>18</b><br><b>Bell choir 6:30 pm</b><br><b>Choir 7:30 pm</b><br><br>AA Women 6 pm<br>Al-Anon 7:30 pm | <b>19</b><br><br><br>AA Women 6 pm<br>Al-Anon 7:30 pm | <b>20</b><br><br><br>                          | <b>21</b><br><br><br>AA Women 9 am<br>AA Couples 6 pm |
| <b>22</b><br><b>Search Comm. 9 am</b><br><b>Worship 10:30 am</b><br><b>Annual Meeting</b><br><b>after worship svc.</b><br><br>AA Men 7:30 pm       | <b>23</b><br><br><br>AA Women 7 pm                                                                                    | <b>24</b><br><br><br>AA 1 <sup>st</sup> Step 8:30 pm                    | <b>25</b><br><b>Bell choir 6:30 pm</b><br><b>Choir 7:30 pm</b><br><br>AA Women 6 pm<br>Al-Anon 7:30 pm | <b>26</b><br><br><br>AA Women 6 pm<br>Al-Anon 7:30 pm | <b>27</b><br><br><br>                          | <b>28</b><br><br><br>AA Women 9 am<br>AA Couples 6 pm |
| <b>29</b><br><b>Worship 10:30 am</b><br><br>AA Men 7:30 pm                                                                                         | <b>30</b><br><br><br>AA Women 7 pm                                                                                    | <b>31</b><br><br><br>AA 1 <sup>st</sup> Step 8:30 pm                    |                   |                                                       |                                                |                                                       |