



431 Columbus Avenue  
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FIRST  
CONGREGATIONAL  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
AN OPEN & AFFIRMING CONGREGATION

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

January 2017



## A NEW YEAR'S WISH

The sun is just rising on the morning of another day, the first day of the new year. What can I wish that this day, that this year, may bring to me?

A few friends who understand me and remain my friends;  
A work to do which has real value, without which the world would be the poorer;  
A mind unafraid to travel, even though the trail be not blazed;  
An understanding heart;  
A sense of humor;  
Time for quiet, silent meditation;  
A feeling of the presence of God;  
The patience to wait for the coming of these things,  
With the wisdom to recognize them when they come.

(From "A Morning Wish" by W. R. Hunt)



As I write this I am still experiencing the “afterglow” of the past few days. We had three wonderful services - Longest Night, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. The worship was Spirit-filled and the music incredible. Many friends and visitors attended, with most staying afterwards to visit and enjoy goodies.

Surprising to me, my favorite service was Christmas morning. I expected maybe a dozen tired worshipers to show up, not eager to share Christmas stories and hymns like I had planned. Instead, there were twice that many and most everyone had something to say. Everyone sat together near the front. In addition to this physical closeness, I think we all felt a loving family bond between us as Christmas stories were shared, both silly and heart-warming.

Now, of course, it's time to look to the new year and all the promise and possibility it holds for us. I personally look forward to the further development of our Center for Peace Building and to us becoming more organized with our monthly activities. By the way, we are adding two fun activities, Movie Night and Games Night. (See the article elsewhere in the newsletter.)

From now on when Tuesdays roll around hopefully you will think about church. The first Tuesday will be Supper Club. This month we will meet at the church for a traditional pot luck. Afterwards we will take down the Christmas decorations.

The second Tuesday is Leadership Team meeting night, except for this month when it had to be moved because of a scheduling conflict. The third Tuesday will be Movie Night. Robin is in charge and already has movies picked out for the entire year!

Games night will be held on the fourth Tuesday with Tim Work organizing the fun. I know he loves Bananagrams, but is open to whatever games others like to play, so bring your favorite one. When there is a fifth Tuesday the Steering Committee will meet, but not this month because the chairperson, Mark Pifer, will be out of the country on a mission trip.

So from now on when it comes to Tuesdays - think church. And when it comes to 2017, think about another great year here at First Congregational.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Shalom, Rev. Lenore

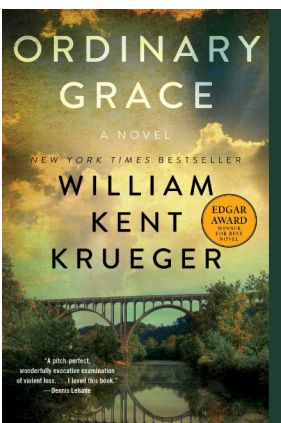
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Rev. Lenore will be out of the office until January 3<sup>rd</sup>. If you have a pastoral emergency during that time, please call Rev. Bob Bottoms at 419-271-0086. He will preach on January 1<sup>st</sup>.



## BOOK CLUB NEWS

The Book Club will meet on Friday, January 6th to discuss *Being Mortal* by Dr. Atul Gawande. At that time the book for February, *Ordinary Grace*, will be distributed.



*Ordinary Grace* is an extraordinary coming-of-age novel by William Kent Krueger. It documents the strength of a father, the depth of friendship and the horrors of misfortune while capturing small town life and the profound and enduring bonds of sibling love.

The story's narrator is Frank Drum, son of a Methodist minister. He is taking a retrospective look at a time in 1961 in the small Minnesota town when he and his brother Jake experienced the events that have defined the men they have become. It should have been a summer of innocence, like the era. But there were four deaths in the small town that summer and that changed everything for the two of them.

This is much more than just a coming of age story. It is a look into the lives of those struggling to understand what is happening to them. It is a story about the awful grace of God and the ordinary grace of God.

The author gives readers much to think about. How would we face the tragic

loss of a loved one at the hands of another? Could we exercise forgiveness? Would we seek revenge? Come to the February meeting of the Book Club and share your thoughts after reading the book. Books are available from the church office.

The Club meets at 2:00 p.m. on the first Friday of the month in Frosty's Activity Center at the Parkvue Health Care Center. Everyone is welcome.

### **SUPPER CLUB**

The first meeting of the Supper Club will be Tuesday January 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6:00 p.m. at the church. After enjoying the pot luck we will take down the Christmas decorations. Please bring a dish to share. Beverages and table service will be provided.



### **MOVIE NIGHT AND GAMES NIGHT RETURN**



Tuesdays in January will see the return of two fun church activities. Movie Night will come first, on January 17<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.. The movie will be *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* starring Dolly Parton and Burt Reynolds. This fun film documents in rousing song and dance the efforts of the local sheriff and the proprietress



of the Chicken Ranch to prevent the closure of this historic Texas institution. Popcorn will be provided - bring your own beverages. Please contact Robin Pratt at 419-626-1903 with any questions.

Games Night will be the next Tuesday, January 24<sup>th</sup> also beginning at 7:00 p.m. . Everyone is asked to bring a favorite game, either to leave at the church or to take home at the end of the evening. Jenga and Bananagrams will be provided, as will light refreshments. Faster-paced and inclusive games are recommended, as we hope to have players rotate and try out new games in the course of the evening, but all favorite games are welcome. Please contact Tim Work with any questions or suggestions for favorite games at 419-271-2227.

### **THE PEACE GATHERING**

Jan and Lou Young, members of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship that meets at the church and co-founders of Sandusky's Converging Paths Mediation Center, will discuss mindfulness meditation at the next Peace Gathering, Thursday, January 19<sup>th</sup>, and will guide the group through a brief meditation.

The group gathers in the Boardman Room at 6:30 p.m. for refreshments and conversation before the meeting gets underway at 7:00. Everyone who has an interest in working toward peace in our community, our nation and within ourselves is invited to come and bring others.



### **ANNUAL MEETING**

Following the worship service on January 29<sup>th</sup>, we will hold our Annual Meeting to elect and install members of The Leadership Team and Boards. Afterward there will be a pot luck. Please bring a dish to share.

### **SILENT AUCTION**

The next silent auction will be Sunday, January 29<sup>th</sup> and February 5<sup>th</sup>. You can bring items ahead of time and leave them in the office or bring them on the 29<sup>th</sup>. Please include a minimum bid. All proceeds will benefit the air conditioning fund. Call Joy Berquist at 419-656-1029 if you have questions.

## IN-KIND DONATIONS

We accept a variety of in-kind donations in addition to those for Care & Share: for VOSH (Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity - Mark Pifer's mission), prescription eyeglasses should be placed in the box on the table in the back of the sanctuary; for the AIDS Resource Center, see separate article. And don't forget that we are glad to have your used computer ink and toner cartridges. Simply place the securely-wrapped cartridges in the offering plate or leave them in the church office. We receive store credit for recycling them at Staples. Each cartridge is like \$2 in the offering plate!

## ELECTRONIC GIVING

If you already pay some of your bills through automatic withdrawals from your checking account or online, you can do likewise with your church contributions. If you haven't done so before, you might want to consider it so you don't have to write checks, carry cash or prepare envelopes. If you have questions, or are ready to begin giving electronically, please talk to our treasurer, Scarlet Berry, after worship or call her at 419-624-2385.



**The Prayernet**, our electronic prayer chain, offers anyone with e-mail a chance to be part of this special prayer ministry. A prayer list is sent out at the beginning of each week, and team members are asked to pray for those on the list. If you would like to join, please e-mail Paula at [FirstCongrUCC@aol.com](mailto:FirstCongrUCC@aol.com).



Hello to the Congregation,

Happy New Year to all! The Boys & Girls Club of Erie County is closed for the holiday week and we will reopen on Jan. 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Tuesday when the students return to school.

We recently finished our Castaway Bay Christmas and had a great time. If it were up to the kids, we'd be having a holiday each week. (If it could only be so.) Maybe one day we will have our own pool and gym. I'm keeping my fingers crossed.

Recently we've been dealing with privileges and the appropriate behavior that goes along with them. Our Club kids want and need so much that it's difficult to approach our programs evenhandedly, for the staff. The children's desires and emotions overwhelm their ability to be considerate and thoughtful, while engaging fun events and free gifts.

Unfortunately, for some of these kids who miss so much already, it takes the shock of missing out on certain other things to bring home the hard lessons of discipline and self-control. We all see poor behavior so often in our adult world, that the Club would be remiss to stand for it with children during our goings-on.

The effect of such Club discipline, however, is that sometimes the kids who need to be there, do not return or attend only infrequently. It is a shame of our great, modern communities that "we the people" often do not agree on the same priorities, when it comes to rearing the children who will inherit this place.

Yet still, the hope and potential of each child can never be discarded easily. Care and concern must come with patience and perseverance. It's anybody's call, to guess at what moment will spark a child on to better life.

*"Sometimes the people whom we've known for only a short amount of time have a bigger impact on us than those we've known forever."* —Maya Angelou

David Icsman, Youth Center Director



Marty & Trudy Anderson	1/06
Mark Pifer	1/09
Bertha (Bert) Meyer	1/10
Chuck Marinelli & Bill Roche	1/13
Jane Brock	1/16
Melanie Kennedy	1/18
Hope Petersen	1/22
Dyson Leffler	1/24
Gary Lickfelt	1/31

Since the last newsletter, we have received letters of thanks from Care & Share, Crossroad and Volunteers of America (Crossroads Shelter) for our mission donations.

We also received this special thanks:



*We were once again touched by the generosity of the members and friends of First Congregational. Thank you for your kind gifts this past Christmas, and we wish you a happy and prosperous 2017.*

*Sincerely,*

*Rev. Lenore, Marc, Jerry, Paula, Robin, and Charles.*



Donny Brooks, Mary Fenker, Heyley Ketchum, Jennifer McLees, Bill Michaels, Mark & Cathy Pifer, Marnay Schrock, Big T's Friends, Anwar Watson, Brent Williams, Mary Lou & Linda Wolf, Geraldine Work, Yates & Zugby Families, Everyone impacted by the heroin epidemic, Our nation and the president-elect

**Ongoing:** Carol Antonelli, Bowyer Family, Brock Family, Keagan Grames, Izabella, Waddington Family

**Homebound:** Ruth Baker, Jane Brock, Mary Fenker, Anne Johnstone, Elmeda Schwartz

## CHURCH DIRECTORY

The 2017 Directory is being prepared. If you have any changes or additions to your entry, please turn them in to the office. Remember to let us know if you would like your email or cell phone number included in your listing.



## DONATIONS NEEDED FOR THE AIDS RESOURCE CENTER

We are still collecting items for the AIDS Resource center in Mansfield. The list of hygiene items the Center needs is posted on the elevator bulletin board. Please place your donations in the hamper by the elevator.



## EMERGENCY CANCELLATIONS

If the weather is unfavorable and you aren't sure about leaving the house for worship, or any other church event, please check the "iAlert" on News Channel 3 WKYC. We have also registered with local radio stations WCPZ (102.7 FM), and WLKR(96.1 FM) who will also be notified of any cancellation involving the church. Obviously, if a level 3 snow emergency has been declared, everything is cancelled!



## ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER

If you have an email address, you can access this newsletter electronically instead of receiving a paper copy. Save the church a little money on the paper and postage budgets by contacting Paula in the church office by phone (419-625-8105) or email ([FirstCongrUCC@aol.com](mailto:FirstCongrUCC@aol.com)) and ask to be added to the electronic newsletter list.



## REPORTS FROM OUR LEADERSHIP TEAM AND BOARDS

### Leadership Team

*Halley Leffler- Chairman*

The Leadership Team met on December 13th.

1. Our carpets were professionally cleaned. Please try to avoid having food and beverages in the sanctuary if possible. If you do spill something, please clean it up immediately. Thank you.
2. We have two evaluation forms being sent out to all members to fill out and return to Halley Leffler by Dec. 31.
3. The budget was approved to be brought to the membership for final approval on December 18th.
4. We are working on a new website which will soon be functional.
5. We discussed where we are with our Center for Peace Building which is one of the goals of the Steering Committee (next meeting is January 4<sup>th</sup> at 7p.m.). New light fixtures are being looked at as well as carpet installation quotes.
6. We are raising the Boys and Girls Club lease to offset the rising prices of our trash service and water bill increases.

### Board of Mission & Outreach

*Barb Petersen - Chairperson*

The Board of Mission & Outreach extends a heartfelt thanks to all who contributed to the Christmas Fund special appeal. Your donations are greatly appreciated not only by us, but also by all those UCC clergy and church staff who depend on the fund for assistance.

## AIR CONDITIONING FUND UPDATE

Thanks to the silent auction, the spaghetti dinner 50/50, pledges and other contributions, the Air Conditioning Fund grew by \$550.50 in November. Our total as of December 1<sup>st</sup> was \$51,667.84, leaving \$10,025.16 yet to be collected. An additional \$3,326.00 is pledged through June, 2017.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>January 2017</h1>					<b>At Grace Episcopal:</b>  Tu & Th 10 am BonesandBalance	
1 New Year's Day Communion Care & Share	2 Office Closed	3 Staff Meeting 10:30 a.m. Supper Club 6:00 p.m.	4	5 11 <sup>th</sup> Step Meeting 1:00 p.m. Study Group 7:00 p.m.	6 Book Club 2:00 p.m.	7
8 Mission & Outreach 11:00 a.m. Unitarians 2 pm	9 Staff Meeting 10:30 a.m.	10	11	12 Christian Education 11 am 11 <sup>th</sup> Step Meeting 1:00 p.m. Study Group 7:00 p.m.	13	14
15	16 Staff Meeting 10:30 a.m.	17 Movie Night 7:00 p.m.	18 Leadership Team 6:30 p.m.	19 11 <sup>th</sup> Step Meeting 1:00 p.m. Study Group 7:00 p.m.	20	21
22	23 Staff Meeting 10:30 a.m.	24 Games Night 7:00 p.m.	25 Steering Committee 7:00 p.m.	26 11 <sup>th</sup> Step Meeting 1:00 p.m. Study Group 7:00 p.m.	27	28
29 Annual Meeting & Potluck 11:00 a.m. Silent Auction	30 Staff Meeting 10:30 a.m.	31		<b>Unless otherwise noted, our typical Sunday schedule is:</b> 10:00 a.m. Worship 11:00 a.m. Fellowship <b>Office Hours: Monday - Friday 9 a.m. - Noon</b>		

Boys & Girls Club Hours : 2:30 - 7:00 p.m. Monday - Friday  
 CLOSED January 2nd & January 16th