



431 Columbus Avenue
Sandusky, Ohio 44870
firstconguccsandusky.com

FIRST
CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
AN OPEN & AFFIRMING CONGREGATION

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

May 2017

SHORELINE WORSHIP IS JUST A FEW WEEKS AWAY



On May 28th (Memorial Day weekend) at 8:00 a.m. we will begin our 18th year of hosting Sunday morning community worship services in the pavilion at Shoreline Park. Our speaker that morning will be Randi Ketchum. She is now a kindergarten teacher for the Berlin-Milan Schools, but in 1991-1997 she served in the US Navy. "I found God in boot camp," she said. "Even though I had gone to the UCC church in Vermilion all my life, that's where I found God." Come and learn about that experience when Randi addresses the topic, "How the Awesome Love of God Has Impacted My Life."

Many speakers are already scheduled for the summer, but a few spots are still open. If you know someone who might be willing to share their faith story, please contact Rev. Lenore. You might encourage their participation by telling them that they get to choose the non-profit organization that will be our offering focus the day they speak. At the end of the season we divide the total contributions between the charities chosen by our speakers. Over the past 17 years of hosting these services we have given more than \$33,000 to a variety of charities, most of them local. Randi has chosen Stein Hospice as the offering focus for the Sunday she is speaking.



Until recently, in my 20+ years of ministry, no one ever asked me anything about Barabbas, the prisoner the crowd chose for Pilate to release during the Passover festival instead of Jesus. Then, during Holy Week, I was asked by two people why they did that. It was only then that I realized how the answer relates to our congregation's commitment to peace through the establishment of a Center for Peace & Understanding in our community.

Since there is no historical record of this kind of amnesty ever actually happening in Jerusalem, scholars today believe the gospel writers created this story of the Passover amnesty as a parable containing an important message for the people of their day. At the time the gospels were written (60-100 years after Jesus' death) violent rebellion against Rome had earlier ended with the Temple in ruins and their people decimated.

In the gospel story, Barabbas was a Zealot, a violent revolutionary in prison because he had taken part in a recent uprising. Jesus also wanted to bring change to the social order of the day, but his method was peaceful. According to him, "Those who live by the sword, die by the sword." So, the crowd was actually choosing between peace and violence when they determined who Pilate would release that day.

The crowd chose violence, and paid the consequences when the Romans sieged Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple years later. The gospel writers are warning the people of their own day not to make the same mistake. "Choose peace, not violence," they are saying through the story.

As we look at what is happening in our world today, we realize humanity is still constantly faced with the same kind of decisions. Whether it be on a national or international level, or even a personal one, we often decide between violence and peace, hate and love, vengeance and reconciliation.

Knowing where violence has gotten us in the past, it's up to us to help convince others to choose Jesus' vision for peace. Come to The Peace Gathering, held the third Thursday of the month (the 18th in May) at 6:30 p.m. in the Boardman Room, as we work towards that end.

Shalom, Rev. Lenore

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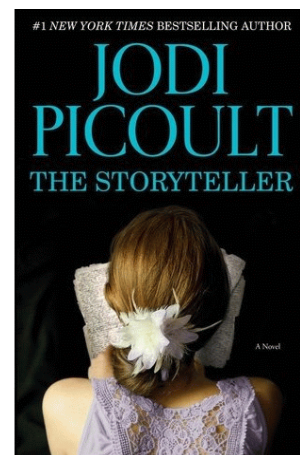
BOOK CLUB NEWS

The Book Club will meet on Friday, May 5th to discuss *Have a Little Faith*, by Mitch Albom. At that time the book for June, *The Storyteller* by Jodi Picoult, will be distributed.

Picoult writes about Sage Singer who becomes friends with an old man who is particularly beloved in her community after they strike up a conversation at the bakery where she works. Josef Weber is everyone's favorite retired teacher and Little League coach. One day he asks Sage for a favor, to kill him. Shocked, she refuses, but he then tells her he deserves to die. Once he reveals his secret, Sage wonders if he is right.

Can someone who has committed a truly heinous act ever redeem themselves with good behavior? Should you offer forgiveness to someone if you are not the party who was wronged? And most of all, if Sage even considers his request, is it murder, or justice? What do you do when evil lives next door?

All are welcome to the discussion. Copies of the book 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.



Supper Club will meet on Tuesday, May 2nd at Quaker Steak & Lube (2003 Cleveland Road West, Sandusky) at 6:00 p.m.. Reservations are required - please sign up on the sanctuary bulletin board.

Rev. Lenore will be out of the office May 14 - 27. In addition to enjoying vacation time with family, she will be completing the Clergy Clinic in Family Emotional Systems she's been taking in San Diego. If you should have a pastoral emergency while she is away, please call Rev Bob Bottoms at 419-271-0086. He will be preaching the two Sundays she is gone.



**CHURCH WORLD SERVICE
BLANKETS+**

BLANKETS+ OFFERING: COMFORT IN TIMES OF CRISIS

Contributions to CWS Blankets mean Church World Service will be ready to help families everywhere recover from disasters and displacement, and build viable, sustainable lives and communities.

CWS helps provide primary health care for families in need. In such far-flung places as Sudan, Pakistan and Nicaragua, CWS gives comfort and care to moms and babies, and helps children get the nutrition they need to grow up strong and healthy.

Here in the U.S., CWS Blankets provide comfort in many communities hit by disaster, and in shelters or agencies assisting those experiencing hard times.

We will be collecting the CWS Blankets offering on Mothers' Day, May 14th. An envelope and flyer are available from the church office.

MOVIE NIGHT

Movie night is Tuesday, May 16th at 7:00 p.m.. This month's classic movie will be *We're No Angels*, starring the inimitable Mae West and an impossibly young and gorgeous Cary Grant. The film contains some of Mae's most famous and outrageously funny one-liners! Don't miss this one!! Popcorn will be provided - bring your own beverage.



GAMES NIGHT

Games Night will continue Tuesday, May 23rd at 7:00 p.m.. Everyone is asked to bring a favorite game. Beverages will be provided - bring your own snacks and bring a friend! All are welcome. Please contact Tim Work with any questions or suggestions for favorite games at 419-271-2227.



SAVE THE DATE - JUNE 11th

Circle Sunday, June 11th, on your calendar so you don't miss the celebration of the ordination anniversaries of Rev. John Rainey and Rev. Dr. Robert Bottoms. John was ordained 60 years ago, Bob 45 years ago. Our Association Minister Rev. Dan Busch will be the guest preacher that day. Following the worship service there will be a reception in the Boardman Room and then everyone is invited downstairs to participate in our annual BBQ Rib fund raiser.

The meal will be provided by Bone Boys BBQ and Catering and feature half a rack of ribs, baked beans or mac & cheese, cole slaw, cornbread, dessert and beverage for \$14. Take out will be available and full racks of ribs (\$20) can be ordered in advance.

In order to make this fund raiser a success, all members will receive five tickets to sell by June 4th. They will be available May 7th. No tickets will be sold at the door.





BOWL FOR KIDS' SAKE

Our Bowl for Kids' Sake team collected \$370 this year for Big Brothers Big Sisters. Thanks to all the sponsors and to bowlers Marc Austin, Rev. Lenore, Chris Michaels, Kim Nemeth, Bill Roche, Steve Thomas, "Big T" Turner, Tim Work and Laurie Yates.

Ruth Baker, Madison Brenton, Jean Gardner, Harvey Heys, Evelyn, Marie Severance, Mark & Thompson Family, The Fairchild and Keller Families, Gays in Chechnya

Ongoing: Carol Antonelli, Bowyer Family, Brock Family, Izabella, Waddington Family

Homebound: Ruth Baker, Jane Brock, Anne Johnstone, Elmeda Schwartz



Rhonda Roberts	5/2
Rhonda Neese	5/5
Matthew Grimm	5/9
Anne Johnstone, Matt Kennedy	5/12
Punky Porto	5/13
Marty Anderson	5/16
Johnnie Lee Turner, Jr.	5/17
Glenn Gast	5/18
Leslie Conant	5/19
Evalyn Vroman	5/26
Diane Swartz	5/31

FRIENDSHIP FAMILY PROGRAM

Our Center for Peace & Understanding will soon be involved in a cultural exchange experience with international students coming to our area for employment this summer. As a church family, we will participate in Alliance Abroad's Friendship Family Program by befriending two foreign students who will soon be arriving in Sandusky. The matching process is not yet complete so we don't know who they are yet, but we do know this is a wonderful opportunity to promote diversity and cultural awareness.

You as individuals and families are also encouraged to join the program. The main purpose is to create a sense of community for the students while providing you with a chance to bring a diverse culture into your home. You are only required to maintain regular contact with the student and meet with them at least twice a month. If you are interested, please see Rev. Lenore for more information.

NEW WEBSITE

We will be launching our redesigned website the first week in May. It will still be found at firstconguccsandusky.com, but has a whole new look and lots more content. Keep an eye out for it!



Hello to the Congregation,

Put the snow shovels away - Springtime is here to stay. Easter turned out to be the perfect Sunday. And for baseball fans, the start of the season has been near picture perfect. It truly is the little things that make the world go 'round.

First Federal Savings and Loan of Lorain held an Easter egg coloring contest, with each branch giving out prizes. Majesty, a 3rd grader at Hancock Elementary and one of our best artists, won the \$15 cash prize from the Sandusky branch on Washington Row. I'm not sure we were able to retain the winning picture, but I do know that Majesty's middle name should be Crayola. She puts time and effort into her drawings.

The Fraternal Order of Police, Erie County Lodge, donated Easter baskets full of candy and some toys for the Club kids. They have done this every Easter for some years now and it is greatly appreciated. Some of our kids sincerely benefit from the extra treats and gifts that they receive from the Club. We had some volunteers from the Old Navy store on Milan Road who came in and helped Cassidy & Niann arrange and fill the Easter baskets. We had a small egg hunt and then handed out the baskets.

With the nice weather, we have been getting outside to play more. The kids like to play at Adams Junior High, which is great, especially since some of them will be there to finish their elementary schooling, beginning with the 2017-18 school year (and the demolition of Hancock and Ontario schools). Miss Wilson, the Board of Education Office Secretary, dropped off Sandusky School registration packets and told me that there are FAQ information sheets about the new school buildings at her office on Decatur St. However, she assured me that some new building final decisions are still ongoing.

Another of our favorite parks is Lions Park, which has seen its own significant upgrades in the last few years. One thing has me worried, though. The city removed the best-ever swing sets at that park, which overlooked the bay and many beautiful sunsets. I certainly hope they do the park some justice and replace those swings with something that preserves the basic nature of that spot.

David Icsman, Youth Center Unit Director



FOOD DRIVE

The Post Office's 24th annual Stamp Out Hunger food drive will take place on Saturday, May 13th. All food will be distributed to food banks and food pantries here in Sandusky. Please place your non-perishable donation in a bag by your mailbox.

SPRING CONCERT

Firelands Chorus will present *Great Hymns of Praise* on Friday May 12th and Saturday May 13th at 7:30 p.m. at Zion Lutheran Church, Sandusky. Glenn Gast is a member. See the bulletin boards for details.

CONGRATULATIONS KASSIDY!

On May 13th Kassidy Nemeth will graduate Cum Laude with a 3.52 GPA from Cleveland State University. Following in her mother's footsteps, she will receive her bachelor's degree in nursing. Hoping to work in pediatric oncology, Kassidy has applied to Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus and Rainbow Babies and Children's Hospital at University Hospital in Cleveland.



REPORTS FROM OUR LEADERSHIP TEAM AND BOARDS

Leadership Team

Copies of Leadership Team meeting minutes are available to members in the church office.

Christian Education

The Board met April 4th for a thorough review and assessment of our programs. We are so grateful to Patsy for making Children's Sunday School such a meaningful and successful program. Our children are enjoying their participation in our church family - how exciting to see! Sunday School will meet for the last time June 4th, Pentecost Sunday, and will resume in the Fall. Patsy is planning to include a worship service for the children in the Peace Room in addition to their classroom activities.

The Peace and Understanding Gathering has continued meeting on the third Thursday of each month at 6:30 to explore a wide variety of topics and ideas for our future. Please join us to find ways to promote peace and understanding within ourselves and with others. All are welcome.

Parkvue Book Club is reading Have a Little Faith by Mitch Albom for the May 5th meeting.

Suggestions for future programming or critiques are welcome.

Jacki Warren, Patsy Hicks, Phyllis Bottoms, Debbi Keller

Board of Mission & Outreach

Barb Petersen - Chairperson

The Board of Mission & Outreach met on April 9th. Present were Barb Petersen (Chairperson) and Robin Pratt (Secretary).

Old business/ongoing:

Thank you note was received from Experience Works for a Shoreline donation.

Chris is collecting/making disaster buckets to be delivered to the Association meeting.

New business:

Special collection on Mother's Day May 14, 2017. Envelopes should be inserted in newsletter & also Sunday bulletins for May 7th & 14th. The flyer should be posted on bulletin board for the month of May.

It was decided that Reverend Lenore does not need to attend any more meetings of the churches reprogramming for the poor called Faith Collaborative of Erie County.

4th of July booth will be handled by the Peace Group, where information about the church will be available along with the Peace Group's.

Next meeting May 14, 2017.

Robin Pratt, Secretary

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>May 2017</h1>					At Grace Episcopal: Tu & Th 10 am BonesandBalance	
	1 Staff Meeting 10:30 a.m.	2 Supper Club 6:00 p.m.	3	4 11 th Step Meeting 1:00 p.m. Study Group 7:00 p.m.	5 Book Club 2:00 p.m.	6
7 Communion Care & Share	8 Staff Meeting 10:30 a.m.	9	10	11 11 th Step 1 p.m. Joint Board & Leadership Team Meeting 6 p.m. Study Group 7:00 p.m.	12	13
14 Blankets + Offering Mission & Outreach 11 a.m. MOTHER'S DAY	15	16 Movie Night 7:00 p.m.	17	18 11 th Step Meeting 1:00 p.m. Peace Gathering 6:30 p.m.	19	20
21 Unitarians 2:00 p.m.	22	23 Games Night 7:00 p.m.	24	25 11 th Step Meeting 1:00 p.m. Study Group 7:00 p.m.	26	27
28 First Shoreline Worship 8:00 a.m.	29  Office Closed	30	31	Unless otherwise noted, our typical Sunday schedule is: 8:00 a.m. Shoreline Worship 10:00 a.m. Worship 11:00 a.m. Fellowship Office Hours: Monday - Friday 9 a.m. - Noon		

Boys & Girls Club Hours: 2:30 - 7:00 p.m., Monday - Friday
CLOSED Monday, April 29th