

431 Columbus Avenue
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January 2019



As the new year was ushered in I wanted to shout for all the world to hear, "WE DID IT!" In spite of a few nay-sayers over the past 30 years or so, our "small, but mighty" congregation is now in our 200th year of existence! Not only are we still alive, but with our Center for Peace Through Understanding, we are making more of an impact on the community than ever before.

So, how shall we celebrate this momentous occasion? Some of us have been thinking about that for years already. In 2014 we reserved the garden on the town square by the big clock. In the spring city workers will plant a flower display acknowledging our 200th anniversary.

On Sunday, May 19th (our actual anniversary date is May 28th) we will have an Anniversary Service and luncheon at the Yacht Club. The guest preacher that day will be Dr. David Greenhaw, President of Eden Theological Seminary in St. Louis. Not only did I graduate from Eden, but Bob Bottoms and John Rainey did as well.

Hopefully you noticed our anniversary logo on the front cover of this newsletter. It was designed by Mark & Cathy Pifer's son, Kevin. We will use it throughout the year on our bulletins and letterhead.

Other anniversary activities are being planned as well. It is my hope that each of our Boards will create a historical display related to their area of responsibility.

I originally planned to update the church history book I wrote 15 years ago for our anniversary back then. Unfortunately, I've only had time to think about it, nothing has been written. Instead, starting with this newsletter, each month I will write a one-page historical reflection as an insert to the newsletter. At the end of the year they can be bound together as a supplement to the book I wrote. We'll have more copies of the book printed for those of you who don't have one.

If you have any celebration ideas, please tell me or one of the members of the Leadership Team. This only happens once in every 200 years - we want to be sure to do it up right!

Shalom,

Rev. Lenore

WELCOME!

Pictured here are our newest members: Sammy and Sam Greenman, Meredith Holman and Kathy Hunscke. They officially joined the church December 16th after Sam and Sammy were baptized.



BOOK CLUB NEWS

At the January 4th meeting of the Book Club the selection for February, *Dark Tide Rising*, will be distributed. When a ransom exchange turns deadly in this thrilling mystery from *New York Times* best selling author Anne Perry, Commander William Monk faces an unthinkable possibility: betrayal by his own men. All are welcome to join the group. Copies of the book are available from the church office. They meet the first Friday of the month at the Parkvue Health Care Center at 2:00 p.m..

EPIPHANY POT LUCK

Following the Shine on the Shore event, at approximately 6:15 p.m., there will be a pot luck back at the church. Chili will be the main dish. Following the meal we will take down any Christmas decorations that weren't taken down after worship that morning. Please bring a dish to share and a friend or two!

MEMBERS TO EXPERIENCE BORDER ISSUES FIRST-HAND

Rev. Lenore, along with Bob & Phyllis Bottoms and John Rainey & Gene Finnegan, will be attending the Border Issues Fair at Good Shepherd UCC in Sahuarita, Arizona. This is the church our friend Carrie Scheufler attends during the winter. Rev. Lenore will be gone January 15- 21. If you should have a pastoral emergency during that time, please call Rev. Jerry Fenske at 419-626-1612 or 952-797-3590. Rev. Rick Dorsch will be preaching on January 20th.

In February the group hopes to make a presentation about their experience.

MOVIE NIGHT

Isn't She Great will be the featured film for Movie Night, January 22nd. The hilarious Bette Midler stars in this outrageous comedy based on the life of Jacqueline Susann, an ambitious woman of dubious talent who writes *Valley of the Dolls*, the sexy best-selling novel that takes the world by storm. Jacqueline's irrepressible sense of humor, inimitable spirit and adoring husband Irving Mansfield (Nathan Lane) eventually rocket her from struggling starlet to international celebrity. Showtime is 7:00 p.m.. All are welcome! Popcorn provided.



UNITY SERVICE

Wednesday, January 23rd

We will observe the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity by joining our church neighbors in hosting a worship service Wednesday, January 23rd at Zion Lutheran Church at 7:00 p.m.. The theme is *Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue* (Deuteronomy 16:18-20). Michele Murray, president of The Center for Peace Through Understanding board, will deliver the message.

ANNUAL MEETING & POT LUCK

Following the worship service on January 27th, we will hold our Annual Meeting to elect and install members of the Boards and the Leadership Team. Afterward there will be a pot luck. Please bring a dish to share.



There will be a **Peace Gathering** Tuesday, January 29th, starting with a social time at 6:30 p.m.. The meeting will begin at 7. The Immigration Task Force will give an update on their activities and what help is needed. Then together we will plan our next peaceful steps in 2019 in the community, the world, and our own lives. Come and share your ideas.



We received letters of thanks from Care & Share of Erie County and Crossroad Child & Family Services for our quarterly donations.

To Our Church Family,

Thank you for all the kindness shown to us over the Christmas season through your gifts, cards and holiday wishes. It is truly a joy to serve such a generous and appreciative congregation. We wish all of you a happy, healthy and prosperous 2019.

In gratitude,

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

HOW WILL I KNOW IF CHURCH IS CANCELLED?

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 or go to [wkyc.com](http://www.wkyc.com). You can also sign up for free text alerts at <http://www.wkyc.com/news/mobile/text/>. If you do so, i-alert notifications will be sent directly to your mobile device.

Radio stations WCPZ(102.7 FM) and WLKR(96.1 FM) will also be notified of any cancellation involving the church. Obviously, if a level 3 snow emergency has been declared, everything is cancelled!

You can also call Rev. Lenore to find out what is, or isn't, going on (419-366-8729).

Please pray for Jud Brandes, Jeanne Gilbert, Rebecca Howell, Debbi Keller, Mary Ann Monday, Kathie Simon, Jack & Rhonda Neese, Evalyn Vroman, Usha Vyas and our homebound members and friends: Ruth Baker, Anne Johnstone, Dot Malinovsky, Dorothy Moore, Elmeda Schwartz, and Christine Vroman

JOIN OUR ELECTRONIC PRAYER CHAIN

Praying for others is an important ministry anyone can engage in. If you have e-mail and wish to do so on a regular basis, please join the Prayernet, our electronic prayer chain. A prayer list is sent out at the beginning of each week and participants are asked to pray for those on the list. If you would like to join, please e-mail the church at FirstCongrUCC@aol.com.



Directory Update

Ann Wyn Williams

6311 Granaby St. Apt. 431

Norfolk, VA 23505-4457



Marty & Trudy Anderson	1/06
Mark Pifer	1/09
Hope Petersen	1/22
Dyson Leffler	1/24
Gary Lickfelt	1/31



REPORTS FROM OUR BOARDS

Christian Education

Jacki Warren-Chairperson

At the December 4th meeting the following was discussed: *Book Club*: Plans were finalized for the Christmas Tea.

Sunday School: All is going well. The girls present December 2nd helped with the Advent Candle lighting. The class needs new chairs and a table which will be purchased with memorial money designated for Christian Education. The classroom will be divided into two areas, one for the older children and the other for younger. We may need another teacher if a younger group develops.

Study Group: The "Reclaiming Jesus" series will end on Dec. 13th. Rev. Lenore will lead a book review December 16th (Joy Sunday) and a discussion with the Study Group Thursday, Dec. 20th on The Book of Joy, Lasting Happiness in a Changing World. The Study Group will decide if they will meet on January 3rd or not, and what the next topic of study will be.

Board of Deacons

Kim Nemeth-Chairperson

There will be a pot luck after the Annual Meeting January 27th. Please bring a dish to share.

Fellowship sign up sheets for the new year are on the clip board on the serving table in the Boardman Room. If you enjoy this social time, please take a turn hosting.

Board of Mission & Outreach

Barb Petersen-Chairperson

The Board met on December 7, 2018. They reviewed the thank you notes received for mission donations in November and December and approved donations of \$300 to the Red Cross for disaster relief and \$100 to Erie County Habitat for Humanity. Following the December 23rd Congregational Meeting they plan to send the Association office the estimate of giving in 2019 for OCWM and CUE.

They wish to thank everyone for their donations to the Christmas Fund. The collection totaled \$390.



SHINE ON THE SHORE

January 6, 2019 5:45 p.m.

Shoreline Park

The City of Sandusky is wasting no time in making sure the positive energy generated in its Bicentennial year rolls into the new year to fuel efforts to put its Welcoming City Resolution into action. In partnership with the Welcoming City Task Force associated with our Center for Peace Through Understanding, a light festival, Shine On The Shore, will take place Sunday, January 6th at Shoreline Park at 5:45 p.m.. All the churches in the area have been asked to ring their bells at 6:00 p.m..

Knowing that light is a symbol of hope in most cultures and religions, the Task Force is inviting all members of the community to bring a light (any kind) to Shoreline Park for a brief welcome in the pavilion. We will shine on the shore, remembering all the ways that Sandusky has been a beacon of hope, celebrate what has been, and light your light for what is to come.

If you aren't able to come to the Park, but want to show support for this initiative, please stand on your porch or in your yard shining your light for the minute the bells will ring.

After the event (approximately 6:15) we will host our annual **Epiphany pot luck** (chili will be the main course.) After the meal we will "undecorate" the church. Even if you can't make it to the pavilion, come to the pot luck and join the fun.



HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS

By Rev. Lenore Kure

PLACES OF WORSHIP

Over the past 15 years

While our place of worship has remained the same, many changes and repairs have been made to our now 123 year-old building. When I ended my book in 2014 we were in the early stages of a three-year, \$200,000 capital campaign to raise funds for many needed building improvements that began even before we reached the goal. We had hoped to add air conditioning, but unexpected furnace problems ate up those funds. It wasn't until 2015, at a cost of \$65,000, that we were finally able to install it.

That capital campaign also provided funds to make the wall between the sanctuary and Boardman Room functional again (it had not been working for almost 50 years.) That project proved to be more difficult than anticipated, so it wasn't completed until 2009, just in time for our 190th anniversary.

We've had numerous repairs to our plumbing and heating systems and reoccurring roof problems. The leaking roof necessitated painting and repainting some areas of the sanctuary ceiling three times! In 2012, thanks to a damaging hail storm, we were able to get a whole new roof paid for by our insurance. Being the bold church we are, we decided on a red one!

We were also able to replace our sign in the front yard with insurance money when the old one was destroyed in a windstorm.



Working with Brady Electric we came up with a design that compliments the arches at the front of the building. The colorful sign also proudly displays our rainbow cross and proclaims that we are an Open & Affirming congregation.

Most recently (2016) we redecorated the old choir room that had turned into a very messy storage area. We made it into a beautiful Peace Room, housing a resource library for the Center for Peace Through Understanding and a meditation area.

Since 1819

In the early days the congregation met in members' homes, the school house and even in local taverns! Then in 1835 funds were finally secured to build our first building with the support of leading citizens from various denominations. It was located on the corner of Columbus Ave. & Washington (where the sunken garden is now.) It's referred to as the 1835 church.

Twenty years later when the Presbyterians split from our congregation and began constructing their building it was decided we needed a new building with a taller steeple than they had! So the 1855 church was constructed around the old building.

In 1894 the City decided to clear the Square of all buildings. They gave us money to move to a new location. Land was purchased soon after that and construction began on our present building. After renting temporary facilities for 18 months, this building was dedicated in May of 1896.

It was designed to be an institutional church to serve the needs of the community. In addition to worship services, the sanctuary was used for community events. The downstairs originally had a public library, employment agency, and a gym and showers. (The Sandusky High School basketball team first practiced here!)

The dome was originally a natural sky light. In 1975 the decision was made to enclose it in order to prevent leaks. Over 200 "sunlight" light bulbs now provide its natural look.

Originally the large room adjacent to the sanctuary was unnamed. It was used for the overflow crowd for community events and Sunday mornings when there was an especially large attendance. When the moveable wall between it and the sanctuary was opened, as well as the Sunday school classroom doors above the room, it is said that 2,000 people could be accommodated! Today it is called the Boardman Room, named after Rev. Robert Boardman who served the congregation from 1959 - 1968.

The most expensive modification to the building occurred in 2000. At the cost of \$250,000 we added the elevator and remodeled a downstairs restroom to make it handicap accessible. My only regret with that project is that I wasn't able to convince the elevator committee to spend another \$50,000 to have the elevator go to the top floor. Because the steps are so steep, all that space is mostly unuseable, even for storage.

Maintaining such a large building would be challenging for even a large congregation, but for our small membership it is becoming nearly impossible. Most of our time, energy and finances are swallowed up by building matters. Many of us long for the days long, long ago when the congregation met in homes or rented spaces, avoiding all the problems of owning a building. Realistically, if we are to survive financially, we may have to sell the building and let history repeat itself. While it would be hard to give up our gorgeous facility, we must keep in mind that a church is not a building, it's the people who worship and work together to live out the Gospel!

