



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

AN OPEN & AFFIRMING CONGREGATION

431 Columbus Avenue
Sandusky, Ohio 44870
firstconguccsandusky.com

March 2019 NEWSLETTER

Including Historical Highlights



From the MINISTER

When I was young, maybe 9 or 10 my mom's entry won a radio contest. She had to say why she liked the month of March. Her reason? Because that's when her only daughter was born. (I have five brothers!) She doesn't remember anymore what she won, but I think it was a record album.

I like March for the same reason. Unlike a lot of people who dread getting older, as the years go by I like celebrating my birthday more and more. For the past few years I've taken the week of my birthday as vacation time so I have a full seven days to celebrate. It's not that I go anywhere special or do something fabulous, I just like to relax, catch up with family and friends and take long walks down memory lane. It's a time to reflect on how blessed my life has been, and how thankful I am that God has always seen me through the tough times.

My birthday always comes during Lent, except for the one year it was actually on Easter Sunday. Lent is also a time for reflection, although it began in the 4th Century as a time of fasting and personal sacrificing. That's where the idea of sacrificing, or "giving something up for Lent" originated.

Without exception, every year someone asks my opinion of what they should give up for Lent. My answer usually surprises them. If you want to strengthen or deepen your relationship with God during this 40-day period leading up to Easter, instead of giving something up, I always suggest adding something meaningful to your daily routine. I'm talking about things like reading one of the gospels or perhaps a daily devotional, doing extra volunteer work, journaling, reaching out to the needy, and/or attending our Wednesday night services. If you do that, in a way you will be giving something up, a few hours of time. If your schedule is anything like mine, that's a significant sacrifice.

Our Lenten journey begins March 6th with our Ash Wednesday service held in the Boardman Room at 7:00 p.m.. If you haven't participated before, trust me when I tell you, it is unlike any other Ash Wednesday service you have attended. We incorporate ashes into the service, but not with the traditional imposition of ashes. I hope you will join us. Shalom, Rev. Lenore

BOOK CLUB

At the March 1st meeting of the Book Club the selection for April, *Before We Were Yours* will be distributed. Best selling author Lisa Wingate takes the reader on a heartbreaking, but mesmerizing journey depicting shocking truths about the real life Tennessee Children's Home Society that was active from the 1920's thru 1950.

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..



Supper Club will meet at The Better Half, located at 1115 W. Washington St., on Tuesday, March 5th at 6:00 p.m.. Sign up on the bulletin board in the sanctuary.

It's time for our annual One Great Hour of Sharing offering, the Lenten Offering of the UCC supporting disaster, refugee, and development activities. We will take this collection March 24th, but you can make a donation anytime during the month using an envelope from the back table in the sanctuary.



This year's OGHs theme is *More Than We Can Imagine*. When we use our imaginations in the way that God does, we can begin to envision – and work for! – a world where no child goes unfed, un-housed, or unloved; where no one ever fears abuse or violence; where clean water is not a dream but a reality for all; where small farmers do their work with dignity and are paid a fair wage for their labors; where agricultural practices enrich and renew the land rather than deplete it; where survivors of natural disasters have the resources they need, now and for years to come; where vulnerable immigrants are welcomed in Christ's name.

Can YOU imagine these things? Through your gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing what we can imagine becomes ever more a reality for more and more people. Please give generously! "More Than You Can Imagine..."



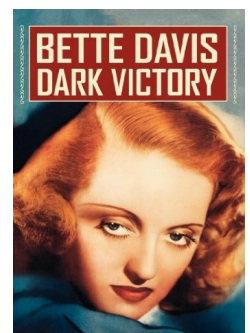
Our Lenten journey begins March 6th with our own unique Ash Wednesday service, including Holy Communion, but not the imposition of ashes. Please join us in the Boardman Room at 7:00 p.m..

Daylight Savings Time begins Sunday, March 10th.
Be sure to move your clocks ahead an hour
before you go to bed Saturday night.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

There will be a congregational meeting after worship on March 10th to discuss and vote on the approximately \$10,000 of repairs needed to our heating system.

Our March 26th **Movie Night** feature will be *Dark Victory*. Bette Davis plays a young socialite diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor. She is determined to find happiness in her few remaining months and die with dignity. This 1939 film was Davis's biggest box office hit to date and earned three Academy Award nominations. Showtime is 7:00 p.m.. Popcorn provided.





Community Breakfast

Our next Community Breakfast will be held Saturday, March 30th from 9 -11 a.m.. Please spread the word - anyone who needs a meal or would enjoy having someone to share breakfast with is welcome to come.

Volunteers and financial contributions are needed. There is a sign up sheet for workers on the back bulletin board in the sanctuary. Donations can be sent to the church or put in a pew envelope and marked "Community Breakfast." If you have any questions, please see Mark or Cathy Pifer.

Rev. Lenore will be enjoying vacation days March 18-24th. If you have a pastoral emergency during that time, please contact Rev. Bob at 419-271-0086. He will be preaching on the 24th.



Loose Change Sunday

The Leadership Team has designated 5th Sundays as Loose Change Sunday, a time to collect coins for the Parish Relief Fund. This fund enables Rev. Lenore to assist members in need. The first collection will be March 31st. Please bring your loose change.

THANK YOU!

In the past month we received thank you letters from the American Red Cross (Disaster Response) and Heifer International for our one-time donations and from United Church Homes (Parkvue) for our quarterly donation.

WELLNESS SYMPOSIUM

The Sandusky Artisans Recovery Community Center & OHIOMHAS is presenting a Wellness Symposium Thursday, April 25th at the State Theater from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.. It will be a day filled with helpful holistic healthy information, demonstrations and presentations. It is free and lunch will be provided. Register by calling 419-621-9377. For more information, see the flyer on the bulletin board by the elevator.



Harry Boguszewski, Heather Dilly, Jeanne Gilbert, Judy Harris, Rebecca Howell, Kim Nemeth, Petee, Evalyn Vroman, Bill Roche, Kaylie Reno, Kathie Simon, Mike Thomas, Big T Turner, the Olgesby, Parsons and Welshhons Families, and our homebound members and friends: Ruth Baker, Anne Johnstone, Dot Malinovsky, Dorothy Moore, Elmeda Schwartz, and Christine Vroman



Trudy Anderson	3/3
Marv Keller	3/4
Karen Michaels	3/8
Kassidy Nemeth, Kathy & David Hunscke	3/11
Kim Files	3/12
Randi Ketchum	3/13
Tammy Samson	3/17
Libby Boros	3/18
Robin Pratt	3/22
Lenore Kure, James Smith, Laurie Yates	3/23
Sam Waugaman	3/24
Sue Nottke	3/26
Noah Wilhelm	3/31



REPORTS FROM OUR BOARDS

Board of Deacons

Kim Nemeth-Chairperson

Our night to host the Mid-Week Lenten supper is March 13th. I will be making a big batch of chili and need others to supply a variety of breads. I will also need helpers that night. If you can help, please sign up on the bulletin board in the sanctuary.

Board of Elders

Chris Michaels-Chairperson

Hello friends and family of First Congregational United Church of Christ. As I sit here and write this, 2019 has started out both joyous and sad. The sad part of 2019 is I said good bye to my co-chair Joy Berquist. She said she would help every now and then when needed. I have been working with Joy off and on since before I joined the Elders last year.

The joyous part of the new year was welcoming Nette Simon to the Board of Elders. She is both very excited and nervous to be on the Board.

I want to thank everyone who signed up to read scripture in February. The volunteers who read were Gene Finnegan, Mereidith Holman, and Nette Simon. Please don't be afraid to sign up and read. This month is Ash Wednesday, then next month there is Palm Sunday when we welcome Jesus into Jerusalem and Maundy Thursday where Jesus dies for our sins, and then Easter Sunday where he raises from the dead. I will be looking for readers on those days. The next few weeks are a very busy time for the Board of Elders.

Board of Mission & Outreach

Barb Petersen-Chairperson

We will be receiving the One Great Hour of Sharing offering on March 24th. Please see the article at the beginning of this newsletter for details.

MIDWEEK LENTEN SERVICES



Once again, we will join other local congregations for supper and worship on the Wednesday evenings during Lent. We begin with a simple meal of soup and sandwiches at 6:00 p.m., followed by worship at 6:45. The first one will be March 13th at Frist Congregational. Rev. Cathy Lawrence, Parkvue Chaplain, will deliver the sermon that evening.

The theme this year is the Sermon on the Mount. Each service will focus on one of the familiar teachings found within that sermon. The offering will benefit the Faith Collaborative of Erie County. The director, Kristina Woods, will speak at the first service to explain how this organization helps the needy in our community.

The other participating congregations are: First Presbyterian Church, The Community at Parkvue, St. Stephen United Church of Christ and Trinity United Methodist. The schedule for the remaining services is:

March 20 - Trinity United Methodist (214 E. Jefferson St.) Preacher - Rev. Jerry Fenske

March 27 - First Presbyterian Church (265 Jackson St.) Preacher - Rev. Lenore Kure

April 3 - Parkvue (3800 Boardwalk Blvd.) Preacher - Dr. Dick Henderson

April 10 - St. Stephen UCC (905 E. Perkins Ave.) Preacher - Rev. Donald Kuntz

The next installment of Rev. Lenore's Historical Highlights begins on the next page. If you missed either or both of the first two, please ask her for a copy. If all goes well, by the end of the year you should have a 24-page booklet to supplement the book she wrote in 2004 about our then 185 year history.

GROUPS USING OUR BUILDING

Over the past 15 years

I've often said we don't have a lot of people or a lot of money at First Congregational UCC, but we do have a lot of building and we want it to be used as much as possible. To that end we welcomed the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of the Firelands to meet in our building back in 2006. An 11th Step Group, part of AA, began holding their weekly meetings in our Peace Room in 2016 and most recently a group called the Ministry of the Watchman began meeting monthly in the Boardman Room. We also continue to be the home of the Boys & Girls of Erie County, a relationship that began back in 1998.

We were sorry to lose St. Mary's Community Supper program. They had served the hungry in the neighborhood in our lower level for more than 20 years. But they left for a good reason, the program outgrew our space.

The Helpmates also met in our basement for more than 20 years. They disbanded at the end of 2015. Each year at Christmas time they made and distributed thousands of craft items to those in the community who were confined. While their program expanded over the years, their team of volunteers decreased due to aging and death. Sadly they finally had to call it quits.

Since 1819

Our policy of letting others use our facilities goes all the way back to our 1855 church. It was the largest building in town at the time it so quickly became the town meeting hall where many a hot debate occurred, especially in the slavery days.

As mentioned in the first Historical Highlights series, our present building, dedicated in 1896, was designed to be used by the community. In addition to hosting concerts, plays and lectures, the gym (the area now used by the Boys & Girls Cub) was used for neighborhood basketball teams as pictured here.



Years later another group who used that area was the Boy Scouts. I came to know the importance of our church's scout troop in the life of an individual when I met Jack Williams last year. He was in town for his 70th class reunion and stopped by the church. I was so touched by his gratitude for the church hosting the troop that I asked him to share his story. It follows.

My name is Henry J. Williams. (My Father bore the same name.) But since birth I have been called Jack. Now 88 years old, I was born in 1930, and currently live in Redding California. I was a member of First Congregational's Boy Scout Troop 6.

First a little background. John (Jack) Frost moved to Sandusky from Cleveland around 1938 and started the Aluminum-Magnesium Company. My father and several others moved to Sandusky with him and were his leading employees. John's family and mine became members of the church. What I will report here is a mixture of fact and guess work as the written record is almost nil.

I became involved in Cub Scouting probably when I was 10 years old. It is my guess that because of this interest my father felt I should become a Boy Scout when I reached age 12. The National Boy Scout organization had guidelines for establishing a Scout Troop. The troop had to be sponsored by an organization such as a church or school, and supported by a committee of 3-5 adult men. It is my memory that my father was the leader of this Committee and thus the principle creative force in creating the troop at the church as a means of benefitting his son.

During the life of the troop the Scoutmaster was Wilbert Ohlemacher, a prominent member of the church. He was no doubt also a member of the Committee. Mr. Ohlemacher was not skilled in the outdoor activities and other scouting interests. In this way he was not a good Scoutmaster. But he was there for every meeting, year after year. Without him there would have been no Troop 6. During his service to Troop 6 Mr Ohlemacher was awarded the coveted Silver Beaver award by the local scout Council. This is a high honor granted to adult Scouters because of their exceptional character and distinguished service to scouting.

We were a small group of boys, probably 10 or 12, and we met in the church basement. We had a flag and a few other items including a target for throwing darts, and of course a ping-pong table. The Church minister would often be our ping-pong opponent.

I believe I was the only boy who was also a church member. The only other boy I remember was Bill Ortman. Bill and I both obtained the rank of Eagle Scout. Toward the end I became Senior Patrol Leader and provided meeting leadership to compensate for Mr. Ohlemacher shortcomings.



I had a girlfriend, but scouting was my life as a young boy. It provided a format for self-teaching. I earned 30 merit badges, each providing me a skill used throughout my life. Because of my scouting background I graduated from the University of Michigan with a Master of Forestry degree. My working career was then spent with the U S Forest Service in California. I could relate several of my accomplishments of lasting benefit to the National Forest System. They are a direct result of my early training in Troop 6 and scouting.

Troop 6 was a part of the Firelands Area Council, BSA. The Council was led by a Scout Executive with an office and store in downtown Sandusky. Firelands is now a part of the Heart of Ohio Council located in Mansfield. During my time in Troop 6 the Firelands Council owned and operated a summer camp located on Gore Orphanage Road in Wakeman. It is now operated by the Heart of Ohio Council as the Firelands Scout Reservation. The boys from Troop 6 made considerable use of this camp and I served as a Junior Officer staff for two summers. A great learning experience.

Bill Ortman and I became involved in Sea Scouting when we reached age 15 and drifted from Troop 6. I do not know how the troop fared after we departed but I suspect it was dissolved shortly thereafter. Rev. Kure tells me it was reinstated in 1962 and later disbanded again.

Because of my scouting fascination with camping and the out doors, I took my wife and two daughters on many camping trips. As a result, my outdoor love affair trickled down. My older daughter Barbara studied botany in college which let to a Forest Service career like her father. Today she is in Molokai, Hawaii living off the land with gardening and other outdoor skills.

My younger daughter Susan had a son and daughter who frequently joined me camping. They in turn have brought their children to my door for more of the same. And because of my influence my grandson became a National Guard officer with service in Iraq. He often told me how valuable his camping experiences were in his training and service. So perhaps the most valuable offshoot of my Troop 6 scouting was the trickle down effect on my offspring.

When we multiply the impact of Jack's experience by the hundreds of young people and adults who have participated in groups meeting in our buildings, we can be proud of the indirect way we have made a difference in the world, in addition to our intentional Christian outreach.