



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
AN OPEN & AFFIRMING CONGREGATION

431 Columbus Avenue  
Sandusky, Ohio 44870  
firstconguccsandusky.com

**April 2019**

*Including Historical Highlights*



*From the*  
**MINISTER**

At last, Spring is in the air and signs of the Earth's renewal abound! I'm excited to report that renewal is underway in the church as well. On Easter morning we will be receiving at least four new members into our church family with the possibility of that number increasing. *(If you have been thinking about officially joining the church, now is a good time. Just let me know.)*

With many new people in the congregation, I find myself once again needing to explain our celebration of Holy Humor Sunday at the end of the month.

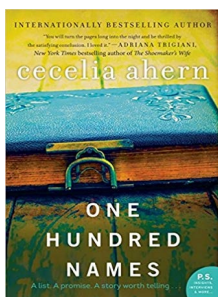
Maybe you don't think of Easter as being particularly funny, but the early Christians saw the humor in it. To them Easter was the celebration of the greatest practical joke of all time: God overturning death! God did indeed have the last laugh over Jesus' enemies and death itself. For that reason Easter was a week-long celebration for those early believers. After all the pain of Holy Week, with the crucifixion of Jesus and all the suffering that led up to that, they felt they should spend more time rallying around the good news of Jesus' resurrection by celebrating for more than just one day.

Easter week emerged then as a time of special festivities: games, picnics, pranks and even water fights! It was a full week of intense happiness and spiritual joy. Easter Week celebrations like that continued for centuries until fading away in increasingly secularized societies. Then Easter became a one day event.

In 1988 a group called the Fellowship of Merry Christians resurrected the idea of extending the celebration of Easter by introducing Holy Humor Sunday on the Sunday following Easter. Hundreds of churches around the country embraced the idea. Ten years later we joined them in hosting this fun event and have been doing it ever since. Some years we have had a theme, but this being our anniversary year, we're going to celebrate the way we did the very first year by just asking everyone to wear something silly and bring a joke to share during the offering time.

There will be a light lunch of hot dogs and all the fixings following the service. So come April 28<sup>th</sup> and join the on-going celebration of God's great Easter joke!

Shalom, Rev. Kure



At the April 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Book Club the selection for May, *One Hundred Names* will be distributed. This is best selling author Cecelia Ahern's biggest and most compelling book yet—a tale of secrets, second chances, and the hidden connections that unite our lives.

All are welcome to join the group. Copies of the book are available from the church office. The group meets the first Friday of the month at the Parkvue Health Care Center at 2:00 p.m..

Easter flower orders are due Sunday, April 7<sup>th</sup>. Forms are available at the back of the sanctuary.

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Our three teams for the Community Youth Mentoring's bowling fund raiser April 14<sup>th</sup> need your financial support. (Each bowler needs to raise at least \$35.) Please give your donation to Chris Michaels or put it in a pew envelope marked "bowling."

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The feature for **Movie Night**, April 23<sup>rd</sup>, will be Honolulu starring Eleanor Powell, Robert Young, George Burns & Gracie Allen. This 1939 musical is a hilarious tale of mistaken identities and true love with a witty masquerade, fabulous dancing and gorgeous tropical locale to give it exotic appeal.

Showtime is 7:00 p.m. Popcorn provided. Tell your friends and bring them!

### THE PEACE GATHERING

Michelle Murray, Center For Peace Through Understanding, will share reflections, "Celebrate the Earth Community: Intimate Relationships of Interdependence and Interconnectedness" at the Peace Gathering scheduled for Tuesday, April 30<sup>th</sup>.

After a social time beginning at 6:30 p.m. there will be a brief meeting at 7:00, followed by her presentation. All are welcome. Spread the word!

### SHORELINE SPEAKERS AND SPONSORS

At the end of next month we will begin our services down at Shoreline Park so it's time to find speakers and sponsors. If you know of anyone, including yourself, who would be willing to share how God's love has impacted their life, please let Rev. Lenore know and she will follow up.

To help defray expenses, we are again seeking sponsors. For \$100 their business card size ad will be placed on the back of the worship bulletin for all 15 of the Shoreline services. The ad copy needs to be submitted to the church office as soon as possible.



### THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU

A BIG thanks to everyone who has donated used ink and toner cartridges to the church. We were able to get a new printer with the Staple rebate money we earned so far this year. Please keep them coming. We earn \$2 in rebates for each one and we can turn in up to 20 each month.

In addition to receiving a note of thanks for our lane sponsorship this year, we recently received a plaque from Community Youth Mentoring for our support over the years

Several of our members will be performing in the **Sandusky Choral Society Spring Concert** Friday, April 5th, at St. Paul UCC in Bellevue (7:30 p.m.) and Sunday, April 6<sup>th</sup>, at Grace Episcopal Church in Sandusky (3:00 p.m.). Tickets may be purchased at the door for \$6.00. A reception will follow each concert.

Patsy Hicks	4/1
Paul Fries	4/3
Harry Boguszewski	4/5
Sam Greenman	4/15
Kyndra Yates	4/16
Debbi Keller	4/17
Eric Warren	4/20
Dot Malinovsky	4/27



Please pray for: Julie Becker, Steve Cooper & Mike, Anthony Frasier, Vicki Deissler & Tracy Ambrose, Rebecca Howell, Kathy Hunscke, Jim, Marlene & Christine, Michelle Murray, Tony Nappi, Kayli Reno, Donielle Shumate, Mike Thomas, Patty Rimbaugh & Family, Don Schlett, Dottie Wimberly, the Garrett, Greenman and Olgesby Families, Muslims all over the world, especially in New Zeland and and our homebound members and friends: Ruth Baker, Anne Johnstone, Dot Malinovsky, Dorothy Moore, Elmeda Schwartz, and Christine Vroman

**St. Stephen UCC Spring Rummage Sale**

**Friday, April 5<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, April 6<sup>th</sup>**

**8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.**

**905 East Perkins Ave.**

**Saturday Special: Bag Sale**

The Wightman Wieber Foundation invites you to an **All You Can Eat Pancake Breakfast** Sunday, April 14<sup>th</sup>, at the Elks Lodge (120 E. Adams St) from 8 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.. Tickets are \$7 and proceeds will benefit this year's Safety Fair and Kidfest.



**April 10 Mid-Week Supper & Service** @ St. Stephen UCC, 6 p.m. Sermon - Rev. Donald Kuntz

**April 14 Palm/Passion Sunday**

**April 18 Maundy Thursday Meal & Service**

*We begin with a simple meal downstairs at 6:00 p.m.. Please bring a salad or finger food to share. Chili will be provided. Following the meal, at 6:45, we will worship in the Boardman Room. This somber service ends in total silence and darkness. Even if you can't come to the meal, please join us for worship.*

**April 19 Good Friday**

*Although we don't hold a Good Friday service, you are welcome to worship at Zion Lutheran Church from noon - 3 p.m., or at St. Stephen UCC at 7:00 p.m..*

**April 21 Easter & Reception of New Members**

*Join us in the glorious celebration of the Resurrection along with welcoming several new members into our church family.*

**April 28 Holy Humor Sunday**

*Fun is the theme as we extend the joy of Easter with a light-hearted worship service. Wear a funny hat, silly tie, splashy outfit or very casual clothes and bring a joke or story to share. A hot dog lunch will follow the service.*

*The next installment of Rev. Lenore's Historical Highlights begins on the next page. If you missed any of the first three, 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.*

## FINANCES

Our recent unexpected boiler issues and the \$10,000 needed to fix them has finances on my mind this month.

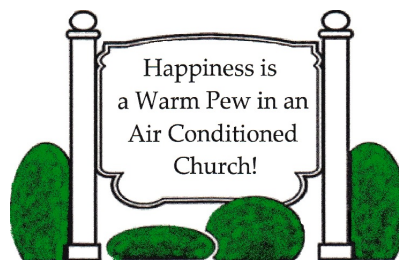
### Over the past 15 years

Financial matters seem to fall into three categories: stewardship campaigns (securing pledges for operating expenses), capital campaigns (seeking money for major building improvements) and fund raisers (generating money for special projects or the general budget.)

Our stewardship campaigns have remained the same throughout my pastorate. November is designated as Stewardship Month with pledges being due the Sunday before Thanksgiving. We purchase promotional material from UCC Resources and ask three people to speak on the theme for that year as it relates to their personal giving. Something new and more exciting would most likely generate more pledges.

As I was finishing my book in 2004 we were just beginning our three-year capital campaign, Moving Forward In Faith. With the help of a consultant we raised over \$200,000 for a multitude of building improvements.

Air conditioning was supposed to be part of that campaign but when boiler problems cropped up that had to be put on hold in order to use the money for the boiler. After an exceptionally hot summer in 2013, we decided we couldn't wait any longer for air conditioning. It was installed the next year and we began a capital campaign to repay the \$65,000 we borrowed from the Endowment Fund for the expense. Thanks to an anonymous donor, the final \$4,000 was received just as the campaign ended.



Our fund raisers have included spaghetti dinners, rib barbeques, chicken barbeques, bucket auctions, silent auctions, bake sales and most recently 50/50 raffles. I think the quickest fund raiser was the one in 2012 for the piano. Within just six months we raised the \$9000 needed for the beautiful 7' Baldwin semi-concert grand that now graces our sanctuary. Donation challenges, memorials and used book sales helped us meet our goal so quickly.

### Since 1819

In my research I've discovered that we have had money problems for most of our 200 years in existence, beginning with the construction of our first building in 1835 and continuing as we struggled to build and maintain the two buildings that followed.

Back in the early days money was generated by renting the pews in the sanctuary, and believe it or not, the ones in the front cost more than those in the back! There also were fund raiser dinners (oysters were the feature for a few years), pancake breakfasts by the men's group and weekly "markets" hosted by the women. The women generated enough money to cover a lot of church expenses. One they were particularly proud to pay for was the carpeting for the 1855 church. That brings me to one of my favorite stories about the women of the church and finances.

It was not uncommon back in the day for the church leaders to ask wealthy widows to loan the church money when facing a financial crisis. Such was the case in 1862 when a woman named Margaret Whitney was persuaded to advance the church the funds needed to meet a judgement against the church. Apparently money had been owed to A.H. and S.A. Moss General Store for over \$1000 worth of "furnishings and incidentals" to outfit the 1855 church. After waiting four years for payment, the company sued the church and won the case.



The bill hadn't been paid because the church had been struggling to make ends meet after having to pay for a previous lawsuit. Money had become so tight they simply stopped paying the pastor. Rev. Ducanson took them to court and, of course, won. The church's financial problems then escalated to the point of asking Mrs. Whitney for a loan four years later.

In exchange for the loan she was given title to the pew cushions, the carpeting, the bell and the organ. The ladies of the church became very upset when they learned the carpeting was part of the transaction. They had worked hard to purchase it. So they got busy and spent the next four years raising money to pay off the balance on Mrs. Whitney's loan so she wouldn't own the carpet.

When the money was presented to the church leaders the spokeswoman minced no words in letting every member, especially the men, know that in giving the money the women were actually paying for the church carpet twice. She also said the women didn't propose to make a habit of double paying for things any more, and had the men better planned the construction of the 1855 building, the financial crisis could have been avoided altogether.

Another widow who came to the church's rescue during a financial crisis was Samantha Farwell. She and her husband Moors, who was Sandusky's first mayor, were dedicated to the church. That's why she didn't hesitate to lend the church a large sum of money when financial problems threatened its survival after he died in December of 1850.

Eight years after Moors death she married Sam Hitchcock, another pillar member of the church. Unfortunately, they ended up leaving the church in 1861 because some church members were critical of their marriage so soon after the death of his wife. In spite of this, Samantha was kind enough to eventually write off the remainder of the debt the church owed her.

Finances were so bad in 1906 it was necessary to secure a loan from the Congregational Church Building Society. The certificate to the right acknowledges that there was "the quiet campaign of 1906" to raise the \$8200 to pay back the loan.

In the decades that followed there was almost always a financial concern of one kind or another. This is all detailed in the book I wrote in 2004. Check it out if that interests you, but I want to move on to something more positive.

Without a doubt, the most amazing financial endeavor in the history of our congregation has to be the 1996-2000 Rising Expectations campaign to secure the funds for our elevator. With a membership even smaller than we have today, we managed to raise \$250,000 for the elevator and remodeling of a restroom to make it handicap accessible. People outside of the church assumed our wealthy, and very generous, member Ruth Parker footed the bill for that. But that was not true. The Frost Parker Foundation donated \$10,000. The rest came from numerous fund raisers, memorial donations, the sale of property to the Library and the truly sacrificial giving of our members. The largest and most surprising donation came from a very humble man named Mike Kryeski. If I remember correctly, the stock he donated was worth close to \$50,000!

During those four years we did more than raise money for the elevator. We also raised our expectations of what our little congregation could accomplish. Charged with new life and a sense of hopefulness, we embraced the future convinced that with God's help we could accomplish anything. That's what we need to remember as we face today's challenges. If we work together and trust God, we can do just about anything!

