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FIRST
CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
AN OPEN & AFFIRMING CONGREGATION

January 2020



From the
MINISTER

How can it possibly be the year 2020 already? I'm sure I'm not the only one who feels like only yesterday we were facing the turn of the century and worrying about the Y2K bug. How silly that seems now!

For me this confusion over time passing quickly is intensified by the fact that I feel like I'm still waiting for Christmas. My brother's sudden illness over the past two weeks and his death the day after Christmas robbed me of the joy and wonder of the final days of the season. Thanks to an adrenalin rush I was enabled to at least go through the motions.

But as they say, "life goes on," whether we want it to or not. I learned long ago we can lament our losses and time passing and wallow in sorrow and self-pity, or we can embrace the future and the possibility it holds for amazing experiences that will help to sustain us in the dark times that surely will also come.

As a congregation, I hope you will share that attitude with me in the new year as we face the challenge of selling our building. While my heart breaks at the thought of possibly leaving our beautiful structure where we have made so many wonderful memories, it also soars with excitement when I think about the new opportunities that await us. I admit, it's a bit scary, but remember, so was the threat of the Y2K bug.

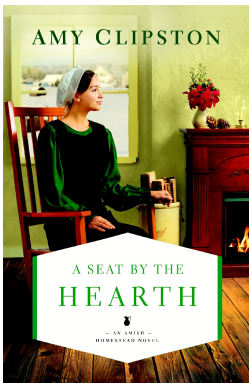
Please join me in looking to 2020 with eager anticipation of what God has in store for us!

Shalom,
Rev. Lenore

WELCOME TO THE FAMILY!



Neal Lindsley and Marlee Wobser
became official members of the
church on December 8th.



A Seat By the Hearth, the book selection for the February gathering of the **Book Club**, will be distributed at the January 3rd meeting. In this Amy Clipston novel Priscilla Allgyer, who left the community to escape the expectations of Amish life, is forced to return years later along with her six-year-old son. In this place she thought she'd left behind forever she learns the hard lessons of love and forgiveness from a surprising source.

All are welcome to participate. The group meets on the first Friday of the month at 2:00 p.m. in Frosty's Activity Center at the Parkvue Health Care Center. Copies of the book are available from the church office.

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED

PLEASE stay after worship on January 5th to take down the Christmas decorations.

Supper Club will meet Tuesday, January 7th at Olive Garden. Reservations need to be made so please sign up on the bulletin board at the back of the sanctuary if you plan to come.

ANNUAL MEETING & POT LUCK

Following the worship service on January 19th, 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.

MOVIE NIGHT

Becoming Jane is the featured film for this month's Movie Night. It is a 2007 story of the great, untold romance that inspired a young Jane Austen, played by Anne Hathaway. Willful and spirited, Jane is not ready to be tied down to anything but her writing. That is until she meets Tom Lefro, a charming rogue from London who spends more time drinking and socializing than on his law studies.

Showtime is 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, January 28th. Popcorn provided. Bring a beverage and a friend or two!



JANUARY Birthdays & Anniversaries

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

To Our Church Family,

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 2020.

Sincerely,

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

IN OUR PRAYERS: Deb Butler, Larry Goldstein, Kevin Guimbellot, Kathy Hunscke, Bonnie Karr, Debbi Keller, Barb Reilly, Big T Turner, Christine Vroman, Laurie Jo Webb, Jacki Warren, Cathy Work and the Cook, Conant, Dilly, Evans, Kevesdy, Kruse and Maier Families & the Parkvue Community. Homebound: Ruth Baker, Anne Johnstone, Elmeda Schwartz and Christine Vroman



We extend our deepest sympathy to Rev. Lenore and her family on the death of her brother Russell Maier. He passed away December 26th and will be put to rest in the Ohio Western Reserve National Cemetery in Rittman, Ohio.

We received a **memorial donation** from Anna Fantozzi for Dot Malinovsky.

WEATHER CANCELLATION

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.

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.



REPORTS FROM OUR LEADERSHIP TEAM AND BOARDS

Christian Education

Jacki Warren - Chairperson

The Board met December 3rd and will meet again January 7th. The Study Group begins a new series January 9th (see the below for details.) Several topics are under consideration for the rest of the year.

The Book Club Christmas Tea was well attended and everyone had fun. *Varina*, the book for January was distributed.

Rev. Lenore applied for, and received, a grant (\$200) for the Center for Peace Through Understanding from the UCC Heartland Conference to be used toward participation in the Sandusky Pride Parade next year.

Board of Mission & Outreach

Barb Petersen - Chairperson

The Board wishes to thank everyone who donated to the Christmas Fund in December. A total of \$192 was collected.

They approved a donation of \$300 to Heifer International for the purchase of chicks and two goats and decided to donate \$100 to the Parish Relief Fund.

The next meeting will be January 5th.

Research & Exploration Team

Meredith Holman - Chairperson

On December 11th several people from St. Paul Lutheran Church toured our building in consideration of it becoming a Community Worship Center. They have invited our leaders and the Team to come to their facility on January 15th for a similar visit.

The next scheduled meeting of the Team is January 8th.

Study Group Begins a New 6-Week Course

INTRODUCING THE NEW TESTAMENT

Have you always wanted to learn more about Jesus and the New Testament but never took advantage of the opportunity to do it? If so, now is the time to check that off your to-do list!

The Study Group will begin a 6-week course from the Massachusetts Bible Society titled *Introducing the New Testament* Thursday, January 9th at 6:30 p.m.. You will spend an hour and a half each week learning about Jesus as a man, as a Jewish rabbi, and as the Christ of Christian faith. Along with others who want to test the waters of biblical studies, you will also explore first-century Nazareth, what ancient letter-writing practices can tell us about Paul's letters, and the wild apocalypse of Revelation.

There is considerable reading involved with this course, so if you plan to participate, please see Rev. Lenore for a copy of the study book. You may also just take a look at the contents of the book to determine if you want to commit to the work involved in getting the most out of joining the group.

Other members of the group would be happy to give you insight into what they experienced in the two previous courses in this series *Exploring the Bible*. They are Bob & Phyllis Bottoms, Gene Finnegan & John Rainey, Glenn Gast, Patsy Hicks, Jim & Cheryl Negrey, Jacki Warren and Marlee Wobser. Our good friends from the Center for Peace Through Understanding, Susan Meyer and Maureen Wright, are also part of the group.

