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FIRST
CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
AN OPEN & AFFIRMING CONGREGATION

January 2021



From the
MINISTER

Like everyone else, I am VERY glad to see 2020 come to an end. It was more challenging than we ever could have imagined, especially for our congregation. Along with the pandemic, we had to deal with moving and the failed sale of our old building. But this is not a time to lament what was and all we lost, rather it's time to look forward to what is to come and all we have to gain.

I am reminded of a little book my friend Bonnie gave me years ago after I had gone through a difficult situation. It's a Mary Engelbreit creation called *Don't Look Back*. It's a few pages of inspiration and wonderful illustrations that ends with these words, "Don't look back - you're not going that way." Those are wise words for us today as we stand on the brink of a new year full of promise and possibility with months of heartache behind us. Thanks be to God, we did survive. Upcoming now is a time to thrive!

Nothing is for certain, but sometime in the next 12 months we should be able to hold an open house and show off our new location to the community. Until then we can busy ourselves planning that exciting event. I imagine it to be much like our wonderful 200th anniversary celebration, but instead of celebrating our past, we will be celebrating our future.

In the meantime, there is much to get ready for such an event. Rooms need to be painted and decorated. The auxiliary kitchen needs to be organized and readied for preparing an amazing reception. We need to plan how we will publicize the open house so all will feel welcome, not just that day, but every day in the life of our "traditional church in a contemporary setting." Your help, along with your suggestions, will be needed.

As we approach the near year, we are much like the wise men as they followed that brilliant star to find the Christ Child. They didn't know where they were going, or how long they would be traveling, but they trusted God to guide them to the one who would change the world forever.

Similar trust will guide us through the new year. So, don't look back - we aren't going that way!

Shalom,
Rev. Lenore

HOW WILL I KNOW IF CHURCH IS CANCELLED?

If the weather is questionable, please check the "iAlert" on News Channel 3 WKYC or go to wkyc.com to see if it's cancelled.

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.



The first meeting of the year of **The Center for Peace Through Understanding** will be Thursday, January 14th at 6:30 p.m.. There will be brainstorming of ideas for peaceful activities to carry out in the community throughout the year. Please come and share your ideas.

The annual **Martin Luther King Jr. program** will be live streamed from New Jerusalem Baptist Church Monday, January 18th at 6:00 p.m.. Rev. Lenore, Chaplain of our local NAACP, will deliver the Invocation. You can access the program through their facebook page, @NewJSandusky.

Following the worship service on January 31st, we will hold our Annual Meeting to elect and install members of The Leadership Team and board members. We are still looking for volunteers for several positions. In a small congregation like ours everyone has to do their part to keep us viable. Please let Rev. Lenore know how you are willing to help.



Loose Change Sunday

March 31st is the fifth Sunday of the month and therefore **Loose Change Sunday**. Please start rounding up all the coins around your house and in your car and bring them to church that day. All the money collected goes into the Parish Relief Fund. This fund enables Rev. Lenore to assist members in need.

LENTEN BIBLE STUDY

If enough people are interested, there will be a study group Sunday mornings after worship during Lent (February 21 - March 28). It would be held in the large entrance room so social distance can easily be maintained. If interested, please let Rev. Lenore know.

GEARING UP FOR SHORELINE WORSHIP

Rev. Lenore is optimistic that we will be able to host our summer worship services at Shoreline Park this year. So, it's time to start lining up speakers. Do you know someone who would be willing to share their faith story? In return, the offering will go to their favorite charity. If you are not comfortable asking them, give Rev. Lenore their contact information and she will do it.

The first service will be Memorial Day weekend (May 30th) and the last one Labor Day weekend (September 5th). We meet at 8:00 a.m., rain or shine, in the pavilion at Shoreline Park



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

Marc Austin, Colleen Baur, Cline Family, Vicki Deissler, Jimmy Fleeman, Andy & Sally Franzen, Sam Greenman Sr., Kathy Hunscke, Debbi Keller, Drew Kreimes, Ruth Maier, Mitchell Family, Jack Neese, John Rainey & Gene Finnegan, Kayli Reno, Mary Richards, Bill Ruter, Flossie Sanders & Family, Samantha Smith, Debby Neese-Voltz, Wobser Family, David Zeier Homebound: Ruth Baker, Anne Johnstone, Elmeda Schwartz, 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.

Congratulations to Kim Nemeth and Steve Thomas!
They became engaged on Christmas. They haven't set a wedding date yet.



According to Church tradition, the Magi (Wise Men) arrived to worship the Christ child 12 days after his birth. Actually, it may have taken them almost two years to get there, but we will celebrate their arrival on Sunday, January 3rd, although the official date is January 6th. That's when we'll hear their story, as recorded in Matthew 2:1-12. For us the celebration is called Epiphany, but in Hispanic and Latin culture, as well as some places in Europe, it is known as Three Kings' Day.

Epiphany marks the end of the Advent/Christmas Season and the Twelve Days of Christmas. The word "epiphany" is derived from the Greek word epiphaneia, meaning "an appearance," but over the centuries it has come to mean a shocking or surprising revelation of God in our lives.

The surprising revelation for the Magi was finding the newborn king in a lowly stable, not a royal palace. God had come to walk and talk among the people in the most unexpected way, as a baby born in a manger. The visit of the Magi itself was a surprising revelation for the first followers of Christ, who were Jewish. Because of this revelation of the Christ child to the Magi, who were Gentiles (non-Jews), it was clear that Jesus came for ALL people. That same revelation is the foundation of our church's mission, "embracing all God's children."

Following worship on January 3rd we will "undecorate" the church. "Many hands make the work light", so please stay and help.