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FIRST
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UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
AN OPEN & AFFIRMING CONGREGATION

June 2021



From the
MINISTER

Like so many others in the community, I was shocked when I first heard Talon Flohr was on the verge of death. I just couldn't believe his life would be snuffed out at the age of 28! Talon was a personal friend of mine, as well as a friend of the congregation and the Center for Peace Through Understanding. As we worked together on several projects over the past three years, I continued to be impressed with his enthusiasm, passion for Sandusky and the promising future ahead of him.

A few days later I received word of Talon's passing just as I was heading into a church for my nephew's wedding. My emotions were still raw when I heard the priest cheerfully say to the bride and groom, "You are young, in your twenties, with your whole future ahead of you..." I wanted to stand up and shout, "You don't know that!" No one's future is guaranteed, no matter what their age. Haven't we all learned that over the past year with COVID, if not before?

In dealing with such tragedy, I am reminded of the opening scene in the movie *Sleepless in Seattle*. A father is talking to his young son in a cemetery at the conclusion of his wife's funeral. He says to the boy, "Mommy got sick. And it happened just like that. There was nothing anybody could do. It isn't fair - there's no reason. But, if we start asking why, we'll go crazy." Instead of allowing ourselves to become overwhelmed in the search for an answer to why such things happen, we need to trust God to give us the strength to endure such loss and to help us find meaning and purpose within our struggle.

Hopefully, we eventually come to realize how precious life is, as well as the relationships we have with family and friends. There's no time to waste being annoyed or angry with others. We need to make the care and maintenance of relationships a priority. Also, without knowing how much time we have left, we can't wait to make a difference in the world.

Talon probably touched more lives in his short time on this earth than many of us ever will. As a memorial to him then, let's carry on his commitment to making Sandusky's future brighter by caring deeply for all who reside here.

Shalom, Rev. Lenore

The Center for Peace Through Understanding will meet at the church Thursday, June 11th at 6:00 p.m.. They will be working out the details of the anti-gun violence event they have scheduled for Sunday, September 19th from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. at the Mylander Pavilion at the Jackson Street Pier. Your input is always welcome!

CENTER FOR PEACE THROUGH UNDERSTANDING AWARDS SCHOLARSHIPS



Alyvia Gilchrist and Thien Vo, Perkins High School grads, each recently received a \$500 scholarship from the Center for Peace Through Understanding. The awards were given in recognition of their leadership in organizing the March for Our Lives event the CPTU sponsored in March of 2018 when they were both freshmen.

Alyvia will be going to Kent State University, majoring in psychology. Thien will be attending Ohio State University at Mansfield and is undecided as to his major.

Alyvia and Thien are pictured here at the March for Our Lives event in 2018 along with their teacher/advisor Jess Ven Ness and Rev. Lenore

From the Board of Mission & Outreach...

Thank you to everyone who contributed to last month's collection for Church World Service blankets. Donations totaled \$424.

This month we will have our Strengthen the Church collection on Father's Day, June 20th. Envelopes are on the back table in the sanctuary for your donation. This offering reflects the shared commitment of people across the United Church of Christ to cooperatively build up the UCC. The Heartland Conference and the National setting equally share the gifts given by members and friends through their local congregations.

Your generosity to Strengthen the Church (STC) provides the funds that allow The Heartland Conference to provide Seminary Scholarships for those who are seeking authorization for ministry in the United Church of Christ.

In the National setting funds raised support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and innovation in existing congregations. By your generosity to this offering, you build up the Body of Christ.

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU

The Volunteers of America thanked us for our quarterly donation for Crossroads, our local homeless shelter.

The Erie County Senior Center also thanked us for our quarterly donation saying, "Your donation helps our meals on wheels efforts. We appreciate you!"

Heifer International sent a letter of gratitude for our recent donation of \$250.



Flohr Family, Duane Gast & Lisa Jones-Gast, Iretta Gast & Ruth Asmus, Sam Greenman Sr., Karen Hand, Nadia Hamad, Debbi Keller, John Rainey, Tim Sprouse, Jenny Wobser and the students at Edison High School, Wright Family and our homebound members and friends: Ruth Baker, Anne Johnstone, Marv Keller, Elmeda Schwartz and Christine Vroman

St. Stephen UCC, 905 E. Perkins Ave., is having a rummage sale
Friday, June 25th from 8:20 a.m. to 3:00 p.m..

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Meredith Greenman	6/3
Jeff & Joy Berquist	6/5
Nette & Kathie Simon	6/16
Sari Kelley	6/18
Laura Elliott	6/20
Jack Neese	6/22
Christopher Ketchum	6/25
Heyley Ketchum	6/26
Mike & Halley Leffler	6/27
Daryl & Virginia Becker	6/30



At the Church Life Meeting May 11th the following topics were discussed:

Financial Matters: Our Bookkeeper, Jerry Boros, presented information about the balance sheet and church assets. It was decided to keep the money from the sale of the old building separate in the Endowment Fund from the money that was already in there.

Weddings: Our first wedding will be held at the church June 12th. We had not yet set cost guidelines for weddings when approached by the couple so will do so at the next meeting. The need for a wedding hostess was discussed.

Widening the Welcome: Those in attendance thought it was a good idea to follow up on the suggestion Rev. Lenore made in a recent sermon to be more intentional in welcoming those with mental health issues. She will bring material to the next meeting about becoming a WISE congregation.

Promoting our new location: It is hoped that we can hold an open house sometime in September, but it is too soon to set a date due to COVID restrictions.

Rev. Lenore's 25th Anniversary: Rev. Lenore was called to the church in July of 1996 and ordained in October that year. A celebration is in order and she would like to be part of the planning. Several ideas were discussed, including combining it with the open house, or having a program and fund raiser dinner like we did for her 10th anniversary.

Fund Raising: The need to raise funds was once again discussed. No new ideas were suggested. The comment was made that a 50/50 raffle in conjunction with another event would be the easiest way to raise money.



Our summer services at Shoreline Park got off to a chilly beginning with the temperature in the low 50's as a dozen brave souls (and one dog) gathered to worship in the pavilion on May 30th. Brenda Baum, Executive Director of Erie Shore Network, delivered an inspirational message about her faith journey and her work with individuals challenged with mental health issues. As the weather warms up and people become more comfortable with being out and about we hope to see an increase in attendance.

In the weeks ahead we will hear from the following:

- June 6 Community activist Darwitt Garrett who has chosen Precious Life as the offering focus.

- June 13 Susan Zeier will share an update on her advocacy for military personnel who have suffered from the effects of burn pits in Iraq and Afghanistan.

- June 20 Alyvia Gilchrist, 2021 Perkins High School grad and recipient of a scholarship from the Center for Peace Through Understanding, will share her faith story.

Our thanks to those who have supported this outreach with an ad on the back cover of the bulletin: Accurate Business Machines, Berardi's, Joy Berquist (Berkshire Hathaway Home Services), The Better Half, Firelands Regional Medical Center, Groff Funeral Home and 7 Eleven. We are also grateful to Evalyn Vroman and Sammy and Meredith Greenman for their help with the services.