



1158 Cleveland Rd.
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FIRST
CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
AN OPEN & AFFIRMING CONGREGATION

July - August 2021



From the MINISTER

In two weeks it will 25 years since I started my pastorate at First Congregational. It's hard for me to believe that much time has passed since I first stepped into the pulpit. But then I think about how much has changed in the Church, the community and society as a whole during that time, and reality kicks in.

Unfortunately, the Church has lost its influence in the community. (I'm talking about the universal church and the country, not just our congregation and Sandusky, Ohio.) I was reminded of that when we received sign-up information for the downtown 4th of July celebration. I immediately called the organizer, sure a typo had been made in the paperwork - it was scheduled for Sunday, starting at 10:00 a.m.. I thought it was a rule that if the 4th fell on a Sunday, the celebration would be held on Saturday or Monday. (It has been in the past.)

I was told there was no such rule, the celebration committee had simply extended a courtesy to the churches in the past by scheduling around Sunday. They decided not to do that this year, apparently not concerned that some churches would not be able to participate. (We will miss it for the first time since I have been here.)

I guess I shouldn't be surprised, after all, the latest statistics indicate that only 47% of Americans say they belong to a church, synagogue or mosque. During the pandemic, 32% of these folks have stopped attending church altogether, virtually or in person.

So what should we do now that we are in the minority and apparently of little significance in society? I suppose we could throw up our hands and give up. However, I think a better idea is to try harder than ever to share with others the importance of the church in our lives and invite them to join us in worship. A couple of members have done that over the past few months, blessing us with visitors who attend regularly. What about the rest of you? Are you willing to do likewise?

What about those who have "ghosted" us the past year? We are now settled into our new location. Worship is safe and we are the same warm, welcoming congregation we always were. It's time to come back and join this small, but mighty congregation witnessing to the importance of Jesus Christ in our lives, the community and the world.

Shalom, Rev. Lenore

Shoreline Speaker

July 4	Bobbie Garrett
July 11	Michael Werner
July 18	Jim Bartus
July 25	Chaplain Don Clark

Offering Focus

The Lupus Foundation
Sandusky Artisans
AA Inter-Group
Parkvue

Supper Club will meet Monday, July 26th and August 23rd, at the newly named Talon Flohr Park just a couple blocks from the church on Cleveland Rd. (In case of rain we will meet at the church.) Rev. Lenore will bring a bucket of chicken in July, pizza in August. If you want something other than water to drink, please bring your own beverage. Also bring some food to share. Tableware provided.

CONFERENCE MINISTER NOMINATION

The Board of Directors of the Heartland Conference has announced the nomination of the Rev. David Long-Higgins to be called to the position of Conference Minister to the Heartland Conference, United Church of Christ. This will be voted on at the Conference Gathering in September.

Rev. Long-Higgins, currently serving as the Transitional Conference Minister, has distinguished himself during these last three years as an effective, engaging leader who is well suited to continue the Conference efforts to live into its emerging future.

The background of this proposal from the Board of Directors to make this nomination, a redefined job description, along with a biographical sketch of Rev. Long-Higgins is posted on the bulletin board in the entranceway by the water cooler.



Iretta Gast & the Gast Family, Carla & the Blodsoe Family, Carrie Greenman, Sam Greenman Sr., Debbi Keller, Pete & Joan Knep, John Rainey, the city of Rockford, Illinois, Onistee Spearman, Tim Sprouse, Steven Work, Dawn Yates, the Nemitz, Wright and Zubler Families. Our homebound members and friends: Ruth Baker, Anne Johnstone, Marv Keller, Elmeda Schwartz and Christine Vroman

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- 7/2 Kathy Hunscke
 - 7/5 John Judy
 - 7/10 Kathie Simon
 - 7/11 Marc Austin
 - 7/15 Fred Nottke
 - 7/16 David Shipley
 - 7/19 Madison Leffler
 - 7/20 Gracie Elliott
 - 7/22 Marv & Deb Keller, Diane & Bruce Wagner
 - 7/26 Judy Harris
 - 7/31 Elizabeth Elliott

- 8/1 Bill Mayo
- 8/2 Russell Petersen
- 8/11 Matthew Lickfelt
- 8/14 Karen Mork
- 8/15 Gene Finnegan, Russell & Sarah Petersen, Diane Wagner
- 8/17 Jud Brandes
- 8/19 Andrew Lickfelt
- 8/21 Scarlet Berry
- 8/24 Jeanne Gilbert



Congratulations to Daryl & Virginia Becker on the birth of Gunner William on June 14th. He was welcomed home by brothers Gavin and Maximus.

DIRECTORY CHANGE: Kim Nemeth has moved to 1621 Columbus Ave., Sandusky

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU

We received a letter of gratitude from United Church Homes for our quarterly donation to Parkvue Community. Crossroad Child & Family Services also sent a note of thanks for their quarterly donation.

August 29th is the fifth Sunday of the month and therefore **Loose Change Sunday**. We now keep the collection jar in the back of the sanctuary all the time so you can deposit your coins any time.



At the Church Life Meeting June 8th the following topics were discussed.

Fund raising: Several ideas were discussed. Rev. Lenore will check into the Kroger Community Rewards program. Once we know what is involved, the information will be shared in the newsletter and people will be helped to sign up after worship one Sunday.

Wedding Rentals: A wedding rental contract was written for our new location and the need for a wedding manager was discussed. It was also decided to buy blinds for the Conference Room windows to provide privacy for the bridal party as they get ready. This would also be good for movie night.

Open House & Anniversary Celebration: After much discussion it was decided to have Rev. Lenore's anniversary celebration and an open house on the same day with a meal fund raiser in-between the two events. A date will be selected based on the availability of the caterer, possibly Bones Boyz.

Becoming a W.I.S.E. congregation. Rev. Lenore talked about what this would involve. It is a 10-step process that could take up to three years. The first step is forming a committee made up of both church members and non-members (all people who have an interest in reaching out to those with mental health issues).

Pastor's office furniture: Rev. Lenore worked with Hilty Office Supply to furnish her office and to get a supply cabinet for the church office. Her mother's memorial money will partially cover the furniture expense and she will pay the rest herself.

Storage: We need to find a place to store the 10 boxes of historical information previously kept in the pastor's office. All three of our storage areas will need to be cleaned and organized to do this. We will begin with the custodian's closet, then the kitchen storage room and finally the main storage area. Volunteers will be needed.



There won't be another newsletter until September to tell you about these two important events, so please save the dates now so you don't miss out.

**Sunday, September 19th 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. Mylander Plaza at the Jackson Street Pier
Bodies, Bullets, Brotherhood**

The Center for Peace Through Understanding, in partnership with the NAACP, the Erie County Minority Task Force and the City of Sandusky Rec Department is hosting an anti-gun violence event. There will be speakers, informational booths, a silent auction, food and a T-shirt giveaway. More details will be provided in the September newsletter.

**Sunday, September 26th
Anniversary Celebration & Open House**

Now that we are allowed to gather again, we can finally promote our new location and invite the community to come and see how we are providing traditional worship in a contemporary setting. The open house will take place in the afternoon. That morning in worship we will celebrate Rev. Lenore's 25th anniversary of starting her pastorate with us in July 1996 and being ordained in October of that same year. Rev. Dr. Dan Busch, Association Minister of the Northwest Ohio Association of the United Church of Christ, will be the guest speaker. In-between these two events we will have a fund raiser meal.

Volunteers are needed, so please see Meredith Greenman or Marlee Wobser to find out how you can help make this a great day. You will also be asked to sell tickets for the fund raiser.