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FIRST
CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
AN OPEN & AFFIRMING CONGREGATION

September 2021



On September 2nd it will a year since we moved into our new facility. Since then we have been waiting patiently throughout the pandemic for an opportunity to invite the community to come and see what we have to offer. At long last the date has been set, September 26th. Please spread the word.

While I am surprised how quickly the past twelve months have gone by, I am even more amazed that 25 years, a quarter of a century, has passed since I first began my pastorate at First Congregational!

Sometimes I wonder how it is that we have managed to survive all the challenges we have faced as a congregation over the years - selling the old building and riding out the pandemic being the most recent ones. But then I remember our motto for our 2004 capital campaign, *Moving Forward in Faith*, and I know exactly how it is that we continue to thrive. Trusting that the Holy Spirit is not only leading us, but empowering us to be the church God wants us to be, is what keeps us going.

The best evidence of that to me is our creation of the Center for Peace Through Understanding back in 2016. Through this non political, non-religious, non-profit organization we have been able to reach out to the community in a multitude of peaceful ways.

I truly believe the CPTU helped many of us in the church, as well as many outside the church, weather the pandemic. Masked and maintaining social distance, we were able to meet together and enjoy the personal interaction we all were craving. Not only that, we were able to feel as if we were making a difference with our Pause for Peace events held outdoors around the community, and with our outreach to the isolated residents at one of our nursing homes. Over the past few months are spirits have remained high as we brought together several other organizations to help host the anti-gun violence event that will be held September 19th (see next page).

While First Congregational will not be getting any "credit" for this important event, we can all feel good that it, along with so many other activities over the past 6 years, came about because we trusted God and moved forward in faith. Let that be our inspiration to continue to do so. Shalom, Rev. Lenore

SUNDAY SCHOOL BEGINS SEPTEMBER 12TH

Patsy Hicks will welcome the children back to Sunday School on September 12th. If you know anyone with young children, encourage them to come. The kids will have fun while learning with the other children, and the parents will be free to worship in the sanctuary.



A COMMUNITY ANTI-GUN VIOLENCE EVENT

BODIES, BULLETS, BROTHERHOOD

Sunday, September 19, 2021

2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Mylander Pavilion at the Jackson Street Pier

Join the Center for Peace Through Understanding, The Erie County Minority Health Task Force, The NAACP and The City of Sandusky Recreation Department in a community event to help stop gun violence in our community.

Keynote Speakers

Vincent Peterson
Prodigal Son

Other Presenters

Chief Oliver
Dr. Tasha Ford
Blake Harris
Kodi & Keane of 2 Brothers, a Pearson Project

Music, Raffles, Free Food
Display Tables by Local Organizations

BEAT THE SILENCE, DISARM GUN VIOLENCE

Supper Club will meet Tuesday, September 21st at the Boeckling Club at 6:00 p.m.. This German pub and biergarten is located at 614 Columbus Ave., not far from our old church building. Please sign up on the bulletin board at the back of the sanctuary.



Pies, cakes and cookies and needed for our September 26th chicken dinner and open house. Please help by baking or buying something, or by providing funds for baked goods to be purchased. A sign up sheet is posted on the back bulletin board in the sanctuary. Please sign up so we know we can count on you.

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 later this month.

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.



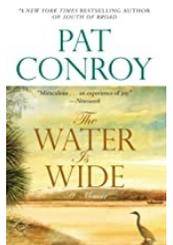
MOVIE NIGHT RETURNS WITH MUSIC...MYSTERY...MURDER!

The feature film for our September 28th Movie Night will be Lady of Burlesque, starring Barbara Stanwyck and Michael O'Shea. This 1943 musical comedy-mystery film is based on the novel The G String Murders by Gypsy Rose Lee

Since our monthly Book Club at Parkvue has not been able to meet since pre-COVID, and we still have no idea when we will be able to gather again, Patsy Hicks suggested we include a book report in our monthly newsletter for those who are looking for a good read. She wrote the one that follows.

Right now I am reading a book by Pat Conroy. This author was raised in South Carolina and leans on his life experiences to tell his stories. I first read a book written by him titled South of Broad which impressed me so much that I can still recall the title and the author! I read it in 2010. Pat Conroy died in 2016 at the age of 70.

The book I am reading now is titled "The Water is Wide" by the above author. It was first published in 1972. The story is based in the '60's. Pat admits to being a privileged white male, being brought up in the classic southern tradition, as was his friend Bernie.



Both graduated with teaching degrees and were fresh out of college at the ripe age of 22, ready to save the world. Both applied for the Peace Corps., and both weren't accepted. So they had to find another way to save mankind.

Bernie passed himself off as an elementary school principal, and was hired by Beaufort County schools. He received information about a teaching position on Yamacraw Island off the coast of South Carolina, which he passed on to Pat warning him this was an all black school. Pat was interviewed, hired and hailed as a "Savior" for these "fortunate black babies" or unfortunate babies, depending on your viewpoint.

The island is nearly deserted, beautifully wild, only water between the island and the modern world. The families are generational, live from the sea, but the modern world has moved in polluting the waters.

The school had two rooms. Pat was to teach children 5th grade thru 8th grade. Mrs. Brown was his companion teacher, teaching 1st thru 4th grades with a "leather strap". Between Mrs. Brown's corporal punishment, Conrad's naivete', kids' belief in witches, the devil and modern day TV, it is "Very Interesting!" TV does get to the island, but not much else. There is also a never to forget Halloween party and a trip to Washington D.C. This is an extraordinary, true story of a year in this man's life.



We recently received letters of gratitude from the LGBT Community Center in Cleveland and the Volunteers of America (Crosroads Homeless Shelter) for our quarterly donations.

September Birthdays & Anniversary

Daryl Becker, Phyllis Bottoms	9/1
Fred & Sue Nottke	9/7
Don Schlett	9/19
Bob Bottoms	9/21



The people of Afghanistan, Todd Baur, Dr. Beerman's family & staff, Meredith & Samson Greenman Sr., Judy Gabelle Grey, Linda Hanck, the people of Haiti, Molly Hicks, Debbi Keller, Eric & Tracey Kerston, Neal Lindsley, Bill MacKenzie, Jack Neese, Ed Noftz, Dan & Barb Reilly, Tim Sprouse, the Durning, Findley, Gast, Voltz and Witter Families. Homebound: Ruth Baker, Anne Johnstone, Marv Keller, Elmeda Schwartz, Christine Vroman



Since our last newsletter the Church Life group has met twice. The main topic of discussion at both meetings was the events planned for September 26th. The worship service that day will acknowledge Rev. Lenore's 25th anniversary of ordination and coming to our church. The Northwest Ohio Association Minister will be the guest preacher and will present Rev. Lenore with a certificate. Then there will be a fund raiser meal generously donated and catered by Tracey Kerston, Patsy Hicks's daughter-in-law. An open house for the community will follow. Many volunteers will be needed that day, as well as donated pies, cakes and cookies.

The Delta variant and unvaccinated individuals have caused a sharp increase in COVID cases in Erie County, as well as around the country. It was decided that all unvaccinated folks need to wear masks while in the church building, and it is recommended that everyone else do so as well. If we should go into the red zone for transmission, everyone will be required to do so.

Consideration was given as how to invest the money we made on the sale of the old building. In the end. It was decided to keep it in our present endowment fund, but separate from the money that was already in there so we can better keep track of it. The two accounts will now be known as the new and the old endowment funds.

Because of COVID we have been "flying by the seat of our pants" this year and definitely want to start the new year with a more solid leadership structure. Many ideas were discussed about how to go about this, including contacting members we haven't seen in the past year and a half.

Rev. Lenore would like us to hire a secretary so she can give up those duties. Given the worker shortage these days, it may be hard to find someone, especially for the few hours and small wage we are able to offer. She will check with other churches to see what they pay and how they found their secretaries. It was decided, based on past experience, that hiring a church member is not a good idea.

The next Church Life meeting is September 14th at 6 p.m.

September 26, 2021

A Really **BIG Day!**

10:00 a.m. Worship

We will celebrate Rev. Lenore's 25th anniversary of starting her pastorate with us in July 1996 and being ordained the next month. Rev. Dr. Dan Busch, Association Minister of the Northwest Ohio Association of the United Church of Christ, will be the guest speaker and present her with a certificate.

11:30 - 1:00 p.m. Chicken Dinner

This is our only fund raiser this year and a great opportunity for us to give our budget a boost since Tracey Kerston, Patsy Hicks's daughter-in-law, is generously donating the food and her time to cater the meal. You can dine in or carry out, but tickets must be purchased by September 19th. Tickets are available from all active members or by calling the church at 419-625-8105.

1:30 - 3: 30 p.m. Open House

At last we can show off our new location to the community so they can come and see how we offer traditional worship in a contemporary setting. There will be tours, refreshments, give-aways and a 50/50 raffle.