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FIRST
CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
AN OPEN & AFFIRMING CONGREGATION

OCTOBER 2021



From the MINISTER

One of the many cards I received on my anniversary Sunday read, "There are special days, set apart from all the rest, when God's smile seems to circle the whole earth." That certainly is how it felt to me that day. It could not have been more joyful!

Actually, my joy began the day before when I saw the beautiful flowers on the altar given by Bob & Phyllis. Then there was an equally gorgeous arrangement from Charles & Robin and the choir. All this was complimented by the way Glenn Gast had decorated the sanctuary and arranged the multitude of mums donated by Josh Wobser.

That evening Dave Shipley and members of AA group helped Tracey (caterer) and crew set up for the chicken dinner. I was grateful for the extra help they provided and when they were done, totally amazed at the elegant setting. I knew then it was definitely not going to be an ordinary church fund raiser meal. That proved to be true many times over the next day when I tasted the meal - WOW! I agree with so many others that I have never tasted such delicious chicken. Of course, the desserts, provided by many of you, were also out of this world.

Sunday morning I was impressed with the large turnout for the worship service. Not only did many of my family members show up, but also many of the friends I have made through my work in the community. As usual, the music and choir anthem were beautiful, and Robin and Barb singing the Lord's Prayer nearly brought me to tears. Then there were many kind words shared about me by the Association Minister, who also gave me a plaque, and Marty Anderson, Chairman of the Search Committee when I was called to First Congregational.

Topping off the day was an open house and reception hosted by Kim Nemeth. She & Steve set a beautiful table, laden with dozens of your homemade cookies and a big basket of candy sent by Judy Gebelle Gray, now living in Arizona, but grew up in the church. I was proud to show off our new location and happy to chat with the visitors. Everyone was impressed with the way we have brought traditional worship into our large, contemporary setting.

God definitely was smiling on us that day!

For those who missed this joyful occasion, please see the next page.

Shalom,
Rev. Lenore

CELEBRATING



25 YEARS OF MINISTRY

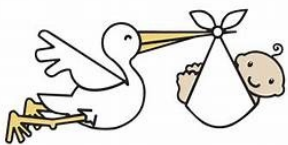


A VERY successful fund raiser!

While the final number is not in yet, it appears that, thanks to everyone's help and some generous donations, we made around \$2600 at the chicken dinner! This includes the mum sale and 50/50 drawing. Glenn Gast won \$184.50 in the drawing.

A BIG thanks to everyone who helped, and especially to Tracey Kerston for donating the meal. Compliments abounded about both the quality and quantity of the food.

BABIES, BABIES, BABIES!



We've had a mini baby boom in the congregation. Within five days three grandbabies were born! Laurie Yates welcomed Michael Ryan on September 24th and then Allyson Jo on the 27th. Debbi Keller's grandson, Robert Stephen, was born September 28th.

The babies and moms are all doing well. Congratulations everyone!

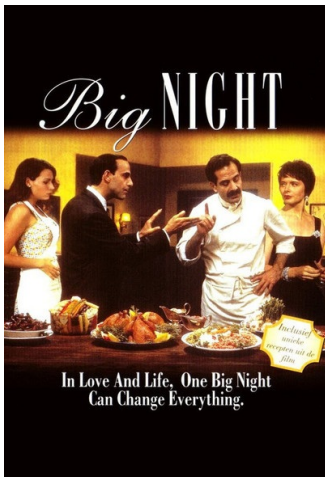
11TH Step Group Changes Meeting Day

Starting this month, the 11th Step Group (AA) will be meeting on Tuesdays at noon instead of Thursdays. This is an open meeting for anyone who values prayer and meditation. The 11th step of AA says, "Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understand Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out."

Supper Club will meet Tuesday, October 19th at the Samurai Japanese Steak House at 6:00 p.m.. It is located in the Park Place Shopping Center (5500 Milan Rd.). We need to make reservations, so if you plan to go, please sign up on the bulletin board at the back of the sanctuary.



Rev. Lenore is taking vacation days October 24th - 31st. If you should have a pastoral emergency during that time, call Rev. Jerry Fenske at 952-797-3590. Friend of the congregation and retired Lutheran pastor, Janine Dress will preach on October 31st, Reformation Sunday.



Movie Night will feature the film we cancelled back in March of 2020 because of the pandemic, *Big Night*. This 1996 film tells the story of two brothers, Primo (Tony Shalhoub) and Secondo (Stanley Tucci), whose Italian restaurant is on the brink of bankruptcy. Their only chance for success is to risk everything they own on an extravagant feast for bandleader Louis Prima. But their big night is complicated by a lovers' triangle, a sneaky restaurant rival, and the hilarious perfection of chef Primo.

Showtime is 6:30 p.m.. Popcorn provided. Bring your own beverage.

Our final **Loose Change Sunday** of the year will be October 31st. Please round up all the coins you have stashed away in your home and/or car and add them to the Parish Relief Fund by depositing them in the jar at the rear of the sanctuary. This fund enables Rev. Lenore to assist members in need.

St. Paul's UCC in Bellevue (428 Kilbourne St.) is hosting their **Annual Chicken BBQ** Sunday, October 31st. It is drive-thru only and will run from 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. or until sold out. The menu consists of BBQ chicken, potatoes, vegetable, dessert and a roll. Tickets are \$12. Call the church office (419-483-6490) to purchase/ pickup tickets.



Unfailing Love is this year's theme for the Neighbors in Need offering, which we will receive on October 17th. This special offering supports the UCC's ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. Envelopes for your donation that day, or anytime in October, are located on the table in the sanctuary where the hymnals are.

Two-thirds of the offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries to fund a wide array of local and national justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects.

Through ucc.org/justice, our national Justice and Witness Ministries office offers resources, news updates, and action alerts on a broad spectrum of justice issues. Working with members of the UCC Justice and Peace Action Network (a network of thousands of UCC justice and peace advocates), Justice and Witness continues its strong policy advocacy work on issues such as the federal budget, voting rights, immigration, health care, hate crimes, civil liberties, and environmental justice.

Neighbors in Need also supports our American Indian neighbors in the UCC. One-third of the offering supports the UCC's Council for American Indian Ministries (CAIM). Historically, forebears of the UCC established churches and worked with Lakota, Dakota, Nakota, Mandan, Hidatsa, Arickara, and Hocak in North and South Dakota, Wisconsin, and northern Nebraska. Today there are 20 UCC congregations on reservations and one urban, multi-tribal UCC congregation in Minneapolis, Minnesota. These churches and their pastors are supported by CAIM. CAIM is also an invaluable resource for more than 1,000 individuals from dozens of other tribes and nations who are members of other UCC congregations in the U.S.



Emily Yates	10/8
John Rainey	10/9
Gene Finnegan & John Rainey	10/10
Harvey Heys	10/14
Gavin Becker	10/17
Jim & Cheryl Negrey	10/24



Charlene Allen, Emily Buss, Jane Chime, Vicki Deissler, Meredith Greenman, Corvid & the Griggs Family, Linda Hanck, Health Care Workers, Cassie Jenkins, Chris Johnson, Debbi Keller, Bill MacKenzie, Michael, Alan Somers, Tim Sprouse, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Helen Wobser, the Davis and Miller Families Homebound: Ruth Baker, Anne Johnstone, Marv Keller, Elmeda Schwartz, Christine Vroman, Jacki Warren

We recently received a letter of appreciation from Doctors Without Borders for our \$250 donation and from Firelands Habitat for Humanity for our \$100 donation. Church World Service also sent a thank you for the \$424 we sent them for blankets.



Most of the discussion at the September 14th Church Life meeting involved the September 26th activities. Marlee's son Josh said he would donate 25 mum plants to decorate the church. It was decided to sell them after the service for donations. Everything else is falling into place and dinner ticket sales are going well.

The group started drafting a letter to go out to our members we haven't seen since we moved to inquire if they intend to continue their membership with the church.

Scarlet is beginning to prepare for the November Stewardship Campaign. She needs to recruit a speaker for each of the three weeks of the campaign. If you are interested, please call her at 419-624-2385.

Rev. Lenore gave a recap of the Shoreline services. Attendance was down, but considering COVID is still an issue, we were grateful for the 12-24 people who showed up each week. Everyone pitched in to get things set up and brought treats. All seemed happy to be together and many mingled after the services. Each of the missions chosen by the speakers will receive \$80. It was decided to hold the services again next year.

An organ committee has now been formed (Rev. Lenore, Robin and Charles.) The first meeting went well and hopefully it won't take long to come to a decision as to what type of organ to purchase. **Important note: since then Charles has come to a decision about what organ to purchase. He says the sound is outstanding! However, there is a parts issue so we are on a waiting list for delivery. Hopefully the new organ will be in place for the holidays.**

Because of on-going health issues and personal concerns, Meredith may need to give up her position as Recorder next year. This involves taking minutes at the monthly meeting and at least two congregational meetings throughout the year. If interested, please talk with her about the duties.

The next Church Life meeting will be Tuesday, October 12th at 6:00 p.m.. All members are welcome to attend and share their ideas on how we can enhance our church life.

