



1158 Cleveland Rd.
Sandusky, Ohio 44870
firstconguccsandusky.com

FIRST
CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
AN OPEN & AFFIRMING CONGREGATION

DECEMBER 2021



From the MINISTER

As we prepare for the birth of the Prince of Peace, I am excited to announce an event that the Center for Peace Through Understanding will be hosting in January with the Center for Cultural Awareness. Titled *Where's Your Peace?*, it will be a great opportunity to start the new year off right by figuring out how to find inner peace by balancing 12 areas of your life, including such things as self-care, stress mastery, spirituality and relationships.

Over 20 years ago I took a course based on a similar concept. It helped me assess my strengths and weakness and make changes in order to bring balance into my life. It also enabled me in the years since then to sense when I need to focus on a particular area in my life to regain balance.

For many months now I have been acutely aware that my level of stress is overshadowing my sense of well-being. A big factor, of course, is the COVID crisis. Add to that all the other stressors I have experienced over the past two years, like the death of my brother and mother, selling the old building and settling into the new location, a knee injury that caused me to move to a more accessible apartment, and you will understand why I told the Church Life group that it's time for me to take a sabbatical.

The term sabbatical is derived from the biblical Sabbath which meets the human need for rest and rejuvenation. In addition to simply taking a break, people often use a sabbatical to pursue an interest, fulfill a goal, or do research. I hope to finally finish writing the church history I began during my last sabbatical in 2004, and had hoped to complete by our 200th anniversary.

My contract allows me a three-month sabbatical every five years. In my 25 years at the church, I've only taken one! I will begin my leave at the very end of January and return on Holy Humor Sunday (April 24th). Meanwhile, you will be in the capable hands of Rev. Bob, who has graciously agreed to fill in for me while I am gone. Fortunately, after my last sabbatical, we began saving for the next one, so we have the funds to pay him.

I know no one really likes the idea of me being gone for three months, but trust me, it is necessary. Hopefully, you will use the time we are apart to reflect on our future and how we can expand our mission and ministry. I promise to come back to you rested, refreshed and ready to hit the ground running with your ideas.

Shalom, Rev. Lenore

STAFF GIFTS

In this Christmas season, it's time to thank our Pastor and church staff for the fine job they do. You may give your contribution directly to our Treasurer, Scarlet Berry, or put it in the offering basket, but please be sure to mark it "staff gifts" and turn it in by Sunday, December 19th.



CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Following the worship service on December 19th there will be a congregational meeting to vote on the 2022 budget. Copies of the proposed budget will be available December 12th.

SUPPER CLUB

Because the Longest Night Service falls on the usual Supper Club night this year, Supper Club has been moved to Sunday, December 19th. It will be at the Brick Oven (1012 Cleveland Rd - near the church) at 6:00 p.m. So we can make reservations, please sign up on the sanctuary bulletin board if you plan to come.

LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE



Our annual Longest Night Service will be held Tuesday, December 21st at 6:45 p.m. Beginning with 15 minutes of harp music and including prayers, reflection and Charles and Robin's beautiful music, this service is designed to bring peace to those who are having trouble finding joy this holiday season. The title comes from the fact that it is held on what is literally the longest night of the year.

To help us spread the word about this service, please take a flyer (available on the table at the back of the sanctuary) and either give it to someone or post it where others will see it.

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

We will hold our traditional Christmas Eve Candlelight service at 5:30 p.m. with a reception to follow. We want to extend a welcome to everyone so please invite your friends and neighbors to join us.



Candlelight
Service

Rev. Lenore will be taking vacation days December 25- January 1. If you have a pastoral emergency during that time, please call Rev. Bob at 419-271-0086. Chaplain Don Clark, will be preaching on December 26.

MOVIE NIGHT

Looking for a good laugh? If so, come to Movie Night, Tuesday, December 28. The featured film is International House. This 1933 flick is a refreshingly bizarre musical-comedy that could only be made during the Depression era. The laughs come at a good clip with a once-in-a-lifetime cast: W.C. Fields, Burns and Allen, Stu Erwin, Bela Lugosi, Franklin Pangborn, Cab Calloway and Baby Rose Marie.

Showtime is 6:00 p.m. Popcorn provided. Please bring your own beverage.



BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Eric & Amber Warren	12/03
Jack & Rhonda Neese, Marlee & Gene Wobser	12/06
Ruth Baker	12/10
Denise Roberts	12/12
Bill Roche	12/14
Samson Greenman, Jr.	12/19
Alex Wilhelm	12/20
Jerry & Libby Boros	12/28
Mat Justice	12/30

WELCOME STEPHANIE!

Stephanie Conkey, soon to be Woods, is our new church secretary. She began her duties December 1st. With Associate Degrees in both art and science, she comes to us with lots of experience having been an administrative assistant at The Chapel. She will be in the office Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m. - noon.

Stephanie's hobbies include crocheting, gardening and cooking/baking. For awhile she ran her own cookie business! Rev. Lenore met Stephanie in pre-marriage counseling with her wife-to-be, Kristina Woods. Kristina is the former director of Faith Collaborative.



CHRISTMAS CONCERTS

"Memories of Christmas Past" will be presented by the Firelands Chorus, Inc. Friday, December 10th and Saturday, December 11th at Zion Lutheran Church (503 Columbus Ave.) The doors open at 7:00 p.m. with the program starting at 7:30 p.m. The concert is free, but a freewill offering will be collected. Masks are optional, but suggested, to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The North Coast Men's Chorus will perform *Holidays With You* Saturday, December 11th at 8:00 p.m. and Sunday, December 12th at 3:00 p.m. They will be held at The Maltz Performing Arts Center, 1855 Ansel Rd., Cleveland. For tickets or more information, visit ncmchorus.org or call 216-556-0590. Glenn Gast is a member of the Chorus.



Teddy Buss, Carrie Campbell, Emma, Sam Greenman Sr., Corvid Griggs, Debbi Keller, Jack Neese, Sheryl Sockman, Helen Wobser, and the Findley, Frische, Heys, Sisler, Sprouse, Tacet, Turner, Vaughn and Vroman Families
Homebound members & friends: Ruth Baker, Anne Johnstone, Marv Keller, Elemeda Schwartz, Christine Vroman, Jacki Warren

We offer our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of Harvey Heys. He passed away November 28th. At the time of this printing funeral arrangements had not yet been made.



Since our last newsletter we received letters of thanks for our quarterly donations from Ability Works, the LGBT Community Center, Erie County Senior Center and Volunteers of America (Crossroads Homeless Shelter).

EMERGENCY CANCELLATIONS



If the weather is unfavorable and you aren't sure about leaving the house for worship or any other church event, please check the "iAlert" on News Channel 3 WKYC. We have also registered with local radio stations WCPZ(102.7 FM), and WLKR (96.1 FM) who will be notified of any cancellation involving the church. Obviously, if a level 3 snow emergency has been declared, everything is cancelled!



At the November 9th Church Life meeting there was discussion about the following:

From the 22 letters sent to members we haven't seen since we moved, seven responses were received involving 10 people. Six asked to be removed from the roles, three have found new churches and one wants to continue as a member.

A Register ad to find a church secretary was approved. Rev. Lenore said she met someone who might be interested in the job.

Rev. Lenore is still working out the details for a sabbatical leave early next year. She is hoping Rev. Bob will fill in for her while she is gone. Once everything is worked out, it will be announced to the congregation.

Charles has now contacted three organ dealers to try and get the organ he wants. Because of supply issues, everyone is waiting for their next shipment and suggested pre-ordering. (He has done that.)

In discussing how to promote the church in the new year it was decided to advertise in three publications - the *Register's Living Sandusky Magazine*, *Serving Our Seniors Magazine* and *Leisure Living*.

Glenn will supervise the decorating as we transition from fall to the Christmas season. Kathy Hunscke will pick up the poinsettias to have them in place for the December 19th worship service.

A congregational meeting to approve the budget was scheduled for December 19th after worship. The Annual Meeting will be January 23rd after worship.

Before contacting others about our parking lot/curb/handicap accessibility issues, Robin will check with Sortinos.

Leaders lined up so far for next year: Leadership Team - Glenn Gast, Patsy Hicks, Robin Pratt and Marlee Wobser; Finance Board - Scarlet Berry and Marlee Wobser; Board of Christian Ed. - Phyllis Bottoms and Patsy Hicks. It was suggest that our custodian be on the Board of Trustees.

The next Church Life meeting is Tuesday, December 14th.

“Good news . . . Great joy . . . All The people!” (Luke 2:10)

The past eighteen months have had a profound impact on UCC clergy and congregations--physically, emotionally, spiritually, and financially.

But because of gifts to the Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross, the people who have been affected the most have known they are not alone.

Last year, donations to the Christmas Fund helped pay the rent for low-income retired ministers and bridged the gap for one active minister's family when her husband lost his restaurant due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Christmas Fund gifts took care of the unexpected expense of a major car repair, helped a retired minister attend his brother's funeral, and assisted in paying for daunting medical expenses, prescriptions, and groceries.

Gifts to the Christmas Fund bring relief and hope to those who have dedicated their lives to serving our churches. By supporting the Christmas Fund, you make a huge difference and bring great joy!

The Christmas Fund provides Supplementation of Small Annuities, Supplementation of Health Premiums, Emergency Grants, and Christmas “Thank You” Gift Checks for retirees and those facing unforeseen financial hardship.

Join with others in the United Church of Christ to bring good news and great joy to those who have given so much to our church by contributing to the fund on December 19th or any time during the month. Envelopes are available on the back table in the sanctuary.



