



Message from the Pastor:

OUR LIFE TOGETHER

It is that time of year when my focus includes the garden so that even as I write about the church and my office, the garden serves as a metaphor for both. I was “digging and weeding” in my office the other day. If you’ve seen my office, you know it is possible to dig in and weed it. Maurice Sendak’s book, Where The Wild Things Are, comes to mind. A forest grows in Max’s room “until the ceiling hung with vines and the walls became the world around” and scary but playful monsters lived there. That’s my office, and I love it! But even I can tire of the “wild rumpus” and it is time to weed so that the new planting can take place.

I found a nugget from a book by Carl Dudley entitled *Believing Without Belonging*. Dudley has been a pastor and teacher in a local church and in seminaries. At the end of his life, he was Professor Emeritus of Church and Community in Hartford Seminary’s Institute for Religion Research. He was one of the founders of the discipline of congregation studies and considered a national expert on small churches. Amazingly, his observations twenty years ago have continued to inform those who are writing today about what is happening in the church. He wrote, “As awkward and scandalous as it may seem...studies show that a great number of people find their religious faith apart from the organized church...belief is not synonymous with church membership...and many of the faith expressions of nonmembers were more articulate and often more steeped in Christian motifs than comparable statements from church members.”

The seeds of what Dudley observed and wrote about years ago have now taken root and grown. He wrote about a developing belief in a kind of individual spirituality that seeks mountaintop experiences outside of the church. There is the belief that one’s relationship with God is something one has to work out for oneself. Religious institutions are unnecessary except

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for social functions or when sacraments or rites are needed to acknowledge certain milestones in the life of an individual or family.

Our experience here at First Congregational Church would claim a different conclusion. The lifetime of worship and singing God's praise, of sharing our lives –the good and the difficult times, raising our children together, documenting our stories in history and the practicing of faith would move us to name different values.

It seems time for us at First Congregational to “dig and weed”. This is time for us to discover and name the **core values that are at the heart of ministry together**. We believe that **our faith is rooted in God's promise to a community of people**, as in the Old Testament- Genesis 12:1-3, where Abraham and Sarah along with their household of people, are sent out from the familiar or known (“Go from your country...”) to a new land that God would show them. This journey was not just for their own benefit, but so that they would be a blessing for all the families of the earth. Then in the New Testament- Matthew 28:18ff, Jesus said, “All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them...and teaching them...And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

These promises are not about individual salvation apart from community. The well-being of the person is connected with that of another and another and another. Beliefs and practices which promote only an individualistic moral absolutism and/or an intellectual elitism are not faithful to being who we are called to be in relationship with one another in Christ's community. The Vision Mission Task Force invites us to participate in rediscovering the core values that are at the heart of our mission together. In the weeks to come, you will have opportunity to identify such values beginning in and through the Sunday morning worship bulletin based on our group work that the gatherings with Charlene J. Smith produced.

Blessings

Kay Krejci

SUMMER SCHEDULE

Those attending worship the next two weeks will be asked to note their interest in the proposal for two Sunday morning services during the summer. The Deacons are considering a summer schedule with two services, one at 8:30 a.m. and another at 10:00 a.m. The 8:30 a.m. worship would be informal and 30 minutes in length in the lower level. The second service would begin at 10:00 a.m. in the sanctuary. The Deacons and I would consult on details of worship design for these new times. Please note your interest in the Friendship pads in the pews. You may indicate the time you would most likely attend next to your name.



Graduate Information Needed

The Christian Ed committee is in the process of compiling a list of people that will be graduating this spring or summer from high school, college or post-graduate school, so that we may honor their accomplishments on Christian Ed Sunday, June 6. If you or a family member will be graduating this spring / summer semester or this past fall / winter semester, please submit the name of the graduate, the diploma or degree that was earned, the area of study and future plans to Denice Sheehan or Lisa Mayer, or drop it in the folder to the office.

Save these dates on your calendar.

More details will be in the Tower in the upcoming months and also in the Sunday Bulletins:

Sunday, June 6 - Christian Ed Sunday And Church Picnic at Idlewood Park.

Sign up sheets for side dishes will be in Fellowship Hall. Drinks and hot dogs and hamburgers will be provided.

Vacation Bible School - July 26-30

Akron Aeros Church Outing - July 30

Tickets are \$7. A Sign up sheet is in Fellowship Hall if you would like to go.

Camp Christian -

Sr. High: June 27 - July 3

Jr. High: July 11 - July 17

Seekers



Recently the 450th prayer shawl has been prayed over and given away. The group meets on the second and fourth Mondays each month from 7-8 p.m. Yarn is furnished to be either knitted or crocheted--beginners are welcomed. Although the hour together is a special time of prayer and fellowship, anyone not able to attend on Monday evenings is welcomed to pick up yarn to work on at home.



Summer Music

Can you sing? Play an instrument? Play the piano? If so, your services are needed for the Summer Music. The summer schedule runs from June 13 through Labor Day, September 5. There will soon be up sheet on the bulletin board in the Choir Room. If you need help finding music, or have any questions, please see Chrissy Sterling.

SPREAD THE LOVE!

The New UCC video is available! Go to www.ucc.org and watch it, THEN share it on your Facebook, Twitter, email, etc! You can also watch it on WRA's site, but it is "shared" more easily from National's site.



Scrap Booking Friday
May 21, 2010

6:00 p.m.—midnight
in the Fellowship Hall

With the arrival of May, it is time to clean up and plant the church flower beds and trim the shrubs. Women's Fellowship, as in recent years, has generously approved money for the purchase of flowers and mulch in memory of past members. Any help that can be given will be greatly appreciated. *Please let the church office know if you are able to help in any way.* Weather permitting, the goal is to have the front planting done for Memorial Day. Thank you.



Bits from Benevolence

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING—

Thanks for your of the annual OGHS Sunday.

Final figures are not available at the time of this article but will be at least \$500! That is a great response considering the recent requests for donations to disaster relief. There are still a few banks available in Fellowship Hall if you would like one to use throughout the coming year for next year's OGHS Sunday.

FAIR TRADE COFFEE

Fair Trade coffee was recently served at the OGHS coffee hour and the April soup supper (thanks to the availability through Soltice Coffee/Rick Sheehan). **Fair Trade** certification is a market-based model of international trade that benefits over one million farmers and farm workers in 58 developing countries across Africa, Asia, and Latin America. **Fair Trade** certification enables consumers to vote for a better world with their dollars simply by looking for the **Fair Trade** Certified label on the products they buy.

Fair Trade empowers farmers and farm workers to lift themselves out of poverty by developing the business skills necessary to compete in the global marketplace. By guaranteeing minimum floor prices and social premiums, **Fair Trade** enables producers to invest in their farms and communities and protect the environment. More information in the June Tower about **Fair Trade** in the U.S.

Church Women United May Celebration

VOLUME 56
ISSUE 5
THE TOWER

Church Women United is celebrating May Friendship Day "Living the Vision" on Friday, May 7th at Western Reserve Christian Church, 516 W. Streetsboro St. in Hudson (44236) at 10:30 am.

The book of Nehemiah provides us with a model for rebuilding. The mornings' worship service participants will be given the opportunity to share ideas, thoughts and prayers that will be written on "Blocks" to build a wall. The "Blocks" represent all that make up Church Women United – prayer, outreach, sisterhood, sharing, worship, celebrations, etc. There will also be an entertaining and educational board game called "And So the Wall Was Built."

A salad luncheon will follow the program. Please bring a salad to share. For more information, contact Marge Roberts (330-425-4821) or Peggy Davis-Griffin (330-405-5030), our two Church Women United representatives. Perhaps we can gather a car pooling group at the church for those women interested in sharing May Friendship Day.

Women's Fellowship Luncheon and meeting

Thursday, May 6, 2010
12:00 Noon
Pot Luck Luncheon

Bring food to share and table service

The President this month is Dottie Lippitt. The program will be presented by Lucille Fiorelli on the history of Doans Corner.

This is the site where the Euclid church burned.

Weight Watchers is coming!

Starting on Tuesday, May 4, Weight Watchers will begin meeting at the church twice a week. Meeting times are as follows:

- Tuesdays at 9:30 am, weigh-in starts at 9:00 am
- Saturdays at 9:00 am, weigh-in starts at 8:30 am

There are fliers posted in Fellowship Hall for more information.

Wanted!

We are in need of someone to organize the Hospitality Booth for Twins Days on August 7 and organize a float representing the church in the parade. The booth will be open approximately 2 hours before the parade and close after the parade is over. The Hospitality Booth will serve coffee, bottled water, and possibly muffins. We will also be looking for volunteers to man the booth during the parade. Anyone interested in doing this should see Terri Bissell or leave word with the office (330-425-2181).

Evening Women's Fellowship

The Evening Women's Fellowship group will meet on Monday, May 3 at 6:00 p.m. at Mavis Winkles. Everyone is welcome to attend. If you have questions, please see Carol Zenisek.



Come worship with us
and bring a friend!
Sunday School 9:15 a.m.
Worship Service 10:30 a.m.

ATTENDANCE

Apr. 1 st	Maundy Thursday	58
Apr. 2 nd	Good Friday	54
Apr. 4 th	Sonrise Service	87
Apr. 4 th	Easter	127
Apr. 11 th		101
Apr. 18 th		107

Tower Submissions

Articles for the *Tower* may be e-mailed directly to the church at firstcongregational.church@windstream.net. Hard copies, CD's, or diskettes may be dropped off at the office.

Tower deadlines are posted on the monthly calendar and in the Sunday worship bulletin. For questions, or to be added to or taken off the mailing list, please send an e-mail or call the church office at 330-425-2181.

Happy Birthday to:

Jessie Prentice

05/02/10

Cassie Pietrantozzi

05/02/10

Amanda Murphy

05/08/10



Lauren Bissell 05/11/10

Katie Smeallie 05/12/10

Melissa Felixson 05/13/10

Jennifer Prentice 05/13/10

Marian Murphy 05/15/10

Claudia Lillibridge 05/18/10

Mark Miller 05/19/10

Katie Prentice 05/19/10

Joey Schultz 05/20/10

Ron Valentine 05/23/10

Ken E. Prentice 05/29/10

Kelly Piaser 05/31/10

In Remembrance

Mary Alice Stone (nee Munn) passed away in Boynton Beach, Fla., March 31, 2010. The funeral was held at the church on Tuesday April 6.

She is survived by daughters, Karen Kroeck of Boynton Beach, Fla. and Mary Messina of St. Robert, Mo.; brothers, Paul and David Munn; granddaughters, Marliza Osborn, Tamberlyn Kroeck and Letitia Rogers; seven great - grandchildren and 42 nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by husband, Ernest Stone and granddaughter Michaella Swaney.

Celebrating

An Anniversary This Month

Kevin, Sr. & Vera Murphy, 5/4/1996

Steve & Kathy Lessman, 05/10/1986

Tony & Veronica Roberson, 5/16/1981

Bob & Gayle Davet, 5/22/1982

Aaron & Lisa Mayer, 05/26/2002

**If we missed your birthday or anniversary,
please contact the church office
to update our records.**

Thank You!

To my church friends,

Thank you to Kay and Kathy for coordinating Mary's service with Matthew.

Thank you to Dan for the music, Bob for sound, Ken for the lift, and Women's Fellowship for the lunch.

Thank you to Knitwitters for the prayer shawl. Thanks for continued concern and prayers for me and your thoughtfulness and many acts of kindness for Mary and me. They all are sincerely appreciated.

Thanks and God Bless,
Paul Munn

Confirmation, Sunday May 23

Confirmation will be on Sunday, May 23. This year we will be confirming 5 young people, including Marissa Charlton, Anthony Pietrantozzi, Kevin Powell, Ashley Pratt, and Jared Verbic. They will present their personal faith statements during the service on May 16. Congratulations to the young people.

Servers—May 2010

Dave Schilling Aaron Mayer
Judy Turk Ken Prentice
Bonnie Williams
Judy Turk - Bread

Communion will be
Sunday, May 2nd this month

Acolyte Schedule - May 2010

May 2— **Kayla Bensie**
Bryan Bensie
May 9—**Gordon Weiss**
Peter Weiss
May 16—**Caitlin Sheehan**
Will Sheehan
May 23—**Bradley Verbic**
Jared Verbic
May 30—**Sophie Keith**
Jared Doe

Lay Reader's Schedule—May 2010

May 2— Dottie Oliver
May 9—Joel Pietrantozzi
May 16—Rick Sheehan
May 23—Kathy Lessman
May 30—Mark Holzwarth

The families of the names in **bold** have Acolyte Coordinator Duty and should light the sticks and assist the acolytes. Please see the instruction sheet posted on the wall next to the sticks.

Children's Sermon Schedule—May 2010

May 2— Gayle Davet
May 9—Change Sunday
May 16—Rick Herrilko
May 23—Will Adams
May 30—Gayle Davet

If you are unable to serve as Lay Reader, Children's Sermon, or Acolyte on your assigned week, please find a replacement and notify the church office of the change. Thank you!

Flower Schedule—May 2010

May 2— Paul Munn
May 9— Kathy Lessman
May 16—
May 23—
May 30—

Coffee Hour Schedule—May 2010

May 2—
May 9— Dolfi family
May 16—4th & 5th grade class
May 23—Seekers-Confirmation
May 30—

Welcomers Schedule - May 2010

May 2 - Joyce Harney & Bev Hegedish May 9 - Betty McKnight & Doris Turnbull
May 16 -Dave & Diane Powell May 23 - Bonnie Williams & Ken Prentice
May 30 - Steve & Carol Doe

Any fool can count the seeds in an apple. Only God can count all the apples in one seed. (Robert H. Schuller)

This is a saying that has been a favorite of mine for a long time. I think it fits this time of year as we head into May and get deeper into spring with all the promise of new growth. I think it also suits our church right now as we talk about the future and what we need to do proactively to be ready for it and as we think about directions we could go. I also like this saying because personally it reminds me that life may have potential beyond what I may initially see and that God may have plans for me beyond what I can comprehend.

I admit to treasuring many traditions in this church and in my life that have value and meaning to me. However, as a person and the moderator of this church, I try to think dynamically and continually re-evaluate how to keep the best of what is established, yet strive to make it better. Life and times change, so we need to make sure we both build and nurture strong roots and we look at ways we can grow from these roots.

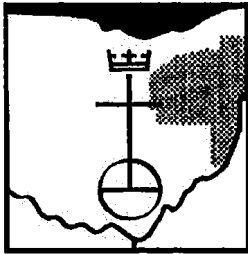
May will be a busy month full of both traditional and new activities. Summer activities wind up as the activities of the school year wear down. We will celebrate Mother's Day, Pentecost, Memorial Day and the confirmation of 5 new young people into membership in this church. We will have the opportunity to hear about how our church could become involved in outreach through Habitat through Humanity after the soup dinner/before council meeting May 19. May is a time for potential and growth. A good time to pray that God gives us the vision to think about looking past the seeds and to think about the apples we might grow.

Faithfully yours,
Terri

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

Nursery staff – Andrea Bennett has been faithfully serving as our regular staff in the nursery. It would be helpful to expand our staff so that we can maintain continuity, yet offer needed breaks to those serving in the nursery. Please speak with Rev Kay if you can help.

Habitat for Humanity is building in Twinsburg. Danielle Hupp is Program Manager and will be presenting to us at the next Church Council meeting, **May 19 at 7:00 p.m.** Come for supper and hear how we might be part of this form of outreach. "**Partners in Faith** is a Habitat for Humanity outreach initiative aimed at involving communities of all faiths, sizes, and means in the Habitat ministry. This initiative establishes five levels of involvement, so that each faith community can establish a productive partnership with Habitat for Humanity of Summit County to end substandard housing."



EOA - WRA Joint Spring Symposium May 15, 2010

First Congregational UCC
47 Aurora Street Hudson, OH



You all are invited to join the authorized ministers, church leaders and members of congregations on May 15, 2010 for the Spring symposium. Both Associations agreed to do something different this Spring, in place of the regular business meeting. We are pleased to inform you that the planning committee has planned a wonderful program for all of us.

Gathering and registration will take place at Hudson Congregational UCC at 8:45 AM. The 9:30 - 10:30 AM time is set aside for being refreshed, for reconnecting, and to renew ourselves spiritually. There will be music in the sanctuary, including drumming, choral and congregational singing, and more. There will be displays and opportunity to walk a labyrinth.



Rev. Otis Moss III

The highlight of the morning will be the worship service which will start at 10:45 AM with Rev. Otis Moss III as the preacher. Rev. Moss is the senior pastor of Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago, IL. He was the key note speaker at our General Synod last year. Rev. Moss has been named as one of the "Twenty to watch" ministers under forty who are positively affecting the future of the African American churches.

Please come and be renewed, refreshed and reconnected.

Jim Ludwig
EOA Moderator

Olivia Masih White
WRA Moderator

Registration fee is \$20.00. Registration blanks are available on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall. Registration after May 1 and at the door is \$25.00

From the Stewardship Committee . . .

For the Stewardship Month of May, our focus is on Walking Together In All God's Ways:

At its heart, covenant is about belonging. We belong to God. As the Body of Christ we also belong to each other. God commits to us and we, in turn, commit to be God's people. "Covenant knits us together. God initiates covenant and never betrays the call, gifts, and promises given to God's people."(UCC Manual on Church) The church exists because God's Holy Spirit has called us together and bound us in covenant for the purpose of a particular mission: "God calls us into the church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be servants in the service of the whole human family, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory."(UCC Statement of Faith, adapted by Robert Moss) Bound together in this covenant, as disciples, we form what many call the beloved community. We have insisted, always, on the importance of "walking together in all of God's ways."(UCC Manual on Church, UCC Constitution, Article III, paragraph 6) As centers of hope and transformation, local churches, Associations, Conferences and national ministries join in Our Church's Wider Mission. It's who we are together!

One of the things that is special about our Church is that there is a strong sense of family. We celebrate our joys and share our concerns. Our Church family seems to come together, whether it be through prayer on Sunday, singing Happy Birthday to our friends, meeting to talk about the bible, going to Sunday School or participating in other activities that involve our Church.

Sometime over the next months, think of ways that you can walk in God's ways, perhaps when you are taking a walk by yourself, or with your family. You can always try to walk with others for a purpose. Our Church has had a close relationship with the Relay for Life program. There are many events that take place for this group. Check out <http://www.relayforlife.org/relay/findevent> to locate an event that you and your family or friends may be interested in. We all can walk with God every day, walk for a good cause and walk together to recognize the covenant that we share with God.

**Lockup Trustee for the
month of May -
Bob Davet**

1st Quarter Giving Recap

2010 - \$30,949.37

2009 - \$30,698.01



Spring Fling
 Saturday, May 1 5pm
 The British American Club
 (8564 Ravenna Road)



Potluck
 Music
 Dancing
 Fellowship



Silent Auction:

- Weekend at Leesville lake house
- Choice of 5 perennial plants
- Baked Dessert a month for 3 months
- Breakfast Basket
- And much more



Admission:

Potluck item(s) and Silent Auction item(s)
 (\$3 per person if unable to bring
 Silent Auction Item)



Proceeds will go toward a wide screen

TV for the Church Library.

RSVP with Name and Auction Item on the Spring Fling
 sign up sheet in Fellowship Hall or contact Philip Weiss
 at jweiss@windstream.net

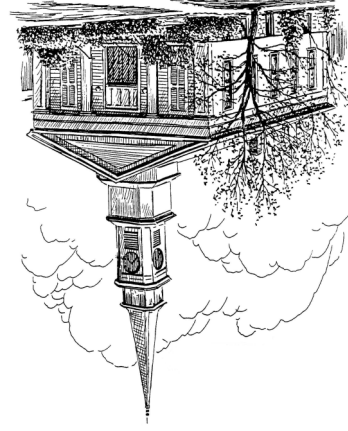
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*On the square in Twinsburg
 since 1848*