

First Congregational Messenger  
First Congregational United Church of Christ  
1102 W. Norfolk Ave.  
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firstcongoucc@fastmail.com  
*Serving God with love and faith*



Annual meeting is approaching, so that means it is time for annual reports. Please make sure that all reports from ministry teams are turned in by March 22 to allow time for printing the annual report. Thanks for your help!

March 2021

Volume 5, Issue 77

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Pastor's  
Office Hours

Monday-Thursday 10-4

Other times by appointment

May be out of the office for  
meetings or visits



Office  
Hours

**Office Hours**

Mon- Fri

8-12



## SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

discard

As a spiritual practice for Lent, many of us are doing the “Lenten Prayer/Reflection Sheet”

(available for free in the Narthex). Each day of Lent, I draw a word from 40 words that have been cut apart and placed in a mason jar. I wait for the Spirit to speak to me through that word, and a message usually comes that day (or later

that week).

Today as I write, my word is ‘discard’. It can mean throw out, get rid of, dump, ditch, scrap, adios! The word speaks to me about the practice of repentance and forgiveness. What baggage is God inviting me to ditch, so I can receive God’s gift of mercy and forgiveness?

As I go through physical therapy for ‘Runner’s Knee’ this month, I must say ‘adios’ to my over-rated, self-sufficient streak to accept the help I need from the highly skilled and kind physical therapists.

Since starting PT, I have drawn other cards such as ‘flesh’, and ‘pruning’ (twice I drew ‘pruning’. Enough with the pruning!)

‘Discard’ can also mean ‘to play a card’. I’m reminded that I am invited to play the cards I am dealt each day and play them as faithfully as I am able. We never know what joy or hardship cards life will deal us; but what is for certain, *God is with us* guiding us to play the next card toward healing and wholeness.

Be it the prayer card, waiting card, fight or flight card, acceptance card, or whatever card, God encourages me to keep moving forward one step at a time. –  
Peace, *Pastor Jackie*

## Invitation

What has been your experience of this (or another) spiritual practice during Lent? I’d love to hear it, or you are invited to share an experience in worship during the ‘Response’ time, or write it down for the April newsletter.



## Holy Week 2021

**April 1 Maundy Thursday, 5:30pm FCUCC**  
(not a joint service due to Covid-19)

**April 4 Easter Worship (no Sunday School)**



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February 24, 2021

*“Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.” 1 John 4:7*

Dear Church Members and Friends,

On Sunday, **March 21, we will celebrate Stewardship Sunday** at First Congregational Church. This is when we invite you to place into the offering basket your envelope containing your Pledge Card and Time & Talent Sheet for the coming church year.

Many churches hold their Stewardship Campaigns during the season of Pentecost coming out of the Jewish festival that began when the first fruits of the harvest were presented to God. We hold our campaign during the Lenten season. Originally a time to prepare candidates for baptism, today Lent is a time of spiritual discipline in preparation for celebration of Easter. The season invites us to examine our lives.

Bishop Hanns Lilje wrote, “Stewardship rightly understood is equivalent to a program for putting Christ into all aspects of daily life.” Everything we are and everything we have belongs to God, making us God’s stewards. What an exciting thought! We need not fear examining our spending, saving, and giving lives--these are gifts from a wise and compassionate God. You are the beloved!

At the heart of it, stewardship is about where we place our trust. In the coming weeks, I invite you to prayerfully consider your pledge of time, talent and money to the church. We can trust God to guide us in this process.

Peace and grace to you,

Rev. Jacqueline Perry, Pastor  
[jackieperry@cableone.net](mailto:jackieperry@cableone.net)

## Special Offering - March 14, 2021



*"Nobody hungry, nobody thirsty, shade from the sun, shelter from the wind, for the Compassionate One guides them, takes them to the best springs." Isaiah 49:10*

### OGHS – Let Love Flow

In a world of disaster, hunger, and oppression, millions of people lack access to sustainable food sources, clean water, sanitation, education, and opportunity. Typically dedicated in the season of

Lent, many denominations join together to assist in areas of disaster. This year, the United Church of Christ is promoting and assisting access to clean water.



## Stewardship Sunday - March 21, 2021

Watch for messages in the mail, 'Email Blasts' (and snail mail if you don't use email), newsletter, 'Stewardship Moments' and 'Faithful Stewardship Thoughts' from the congregation.

The theme this year reflects the deep purpose, mission, and vision of our Christian movement. Our purpose arises from Jesus' greatest commandment: will love the Lord our God with our whole heart, mind, soul and strength; and our neighbor as ourselves.



## An Invasion of locusts? Nope, Youth Outreach!

Thanks to youth and adults who helped make 60 ladybug magnets for the residents at St. Joseph's. I love your servant hearts, and we always have fun! Darlene delivered these for Valentine's Day.

Pastor Jackie



## COMING SOON - Blessing our High School Graduates 2021

In May, the church plans to celebrate high school graduations for Adam Gamerl and Taylor Rossman. This season of Covid-19 limits in-person gatherings, so the church is planning a month of gathering prayers and blessings in April.

Each family unit will be asked to pray for our graduates on a chosen day in April. Blessings boxes (one for Taylor and one for Adam) will be available, in which you are invited to drop a card, message, note of blessing until early May. [Watch for more instructions in April's newsletter.](#)



## MARK YOUR CALENDARS - June 25 & 26

### Joint Annual Meeting 2021

**All online. All are welcome.** Program to start Friday evening and run thru Saturday afternoon.

“Is there anything that I can do to make myself enlightened?”

*“As little as you can do to make the sun rise in the morning.”*

“Then of what good are the spiritual exercises you prescribe?”

*“To make sure you are not asleep when the sun begins to rise.”*

– Zen master to his disciple

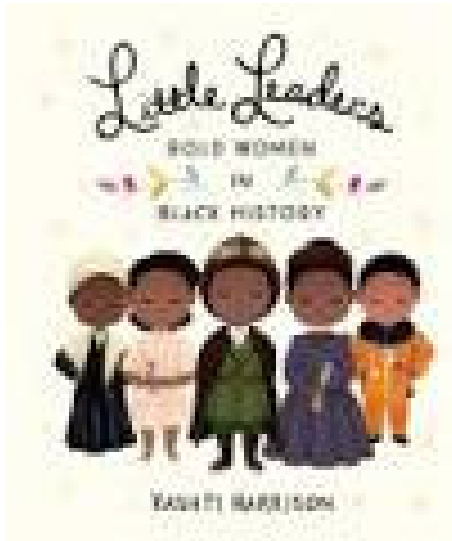


# OGHS Sharing Calendar—*Let Love Flow*

**God has blessed us in so many ways.** This calendar is designed to help us acknowledge our blessings but to also think about and pray for others. Each day highlights various situations and suggests a donation of coins or bills. Your household can decide what unit works best for you. It is easiest if you select one unit and use it throughout the days on the calendar. The sharing calendar works well with the OGHS coin box. To order additional coin boxes, visit our store at [www.uccresources.com](http://www.uccresources.com). Your gift will allow love to flow into the lives of those who need it most!

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
CHILDREN	<p>Children remain the poorest age group in America. Progress has been made, but too many children are still hungry</p> <p>Give two units for each child in your family.</p>	<p>Good nutrition is a critical part of ensuring that all human beings can use their bodies and minds to live an active life and reach their full potential</p> <p>Give one unit for each meal you've eaten today.</p>	<p>Substantial global progress has been made in reducing child deaths since 1990. The total number of under-5 deaths worldwide has dropped by 58%</p> <p>Give two units in thanksgiving for the progress being made.</p>	<p>Can you really imagine Jesus saying, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these"</p> <p>Jesus cares for children and so should we. Please give a generous donation today!</p>	<p>Children represent the future, and ensuring their healthy growth and development ought to be a prime concern of all societies</p> <p>Give three units in honor of the children in your congregation.</p>	<p>Malnourished children have a higher risk of death from common childhood illness such as diarrhea, pneumonia, and malaria</p> <p>Give one unit for each child under 5 in your extended family.</p>	<p>In the first 1,000 days, babies' brains form new connections at an astounding rate. With every nutritious meal, hug and kiss, you help build a baby's brain</p> <p>Share one unit for each baby you kissed this week or three units if you were unable to kiss a child.</p>
CREATION	<p>Over one billion people do not have access to safe water and 2.4 billion have no access to decent sanitation</p> <p>Give three units today.</p>	<p>Cars are harmful to the environment. Taking public transportation, walking, or riding a bike are good options that help the environment</p> <p>Give one unit for each time you rode in a car today.</p>	<p>Plastic pollution is one of the biggest threats to worldwide ocean health. Skyrocketing plastic production and limited recycling are factors</p> <p>Please give one unit, and commit to recycling and/or limiting use of plastic bottles.</p>	<p>Through wisdom, God founded the earth; by understanding God established the heavens</p> <p>Give one unit for every bottle you threw away this week that still had water trapped inside of it.</p>	<p>Approximately 3 billion people lack access to clean-cooking solutions and are exposed to dangerous levels of air pollution</p> <p>Give two units for every home-cooked meal you enjoyed today.</p>	<p>The proportion of people using drinking water from improved sources has been steadily improving</p> <p>Give one unit for each faucet in your home.</p>	<p>Many poor villages still lack reliable electricity. The U.S. uses 22% of all electricity consumed in the world</p> <p>Give one unit for each electrical appliance in your home.</p>
NEIGHBORS	<p>Immigration is an international hunger and poverty issue. Many undocumented immigrants are fleeing hunger, extreme poverty, and violence</p> <p>Give two units to support lawful pathways to citizenship in the US.</p>	<p>About 40% of the world's population, mostly people in the poorest countries, risk contracting Malaria, which causes 300 million illness and 1 million deaths annually</p> <p>Give one unit for every doctor you have.</p>	<p>\$10 can provide a thermal blanket for a refugee, or 1 mat to prevent them from sleeping on the cold ground</p> <p>Give two units for every blanket on your bed.</p>	<p>Feel God's presence and joy through helping others for God loves a cheerful giver</p> <p>Give the number of units you think would be pleasing to God.</p>	<p>The proportion of people living in extreme poverty is half of what it was in 1990. Yet 1.4 billion people still live on less than \$1.25 per day</p> <p>Share a unit for each meal you have eaten in a restaurant in the past week.</p>	<p>Worldwide, over 100 million elementary school-aged children do not attend school</p> <p>Give one unit for each year of formal education you have received.</p>	<p>The U.S. has significantly reduced the number of refugees it is admitting into our country</p> <p>Give one unit for each person you know who came from another country. If you know more than 5 people from another country give 3 units.</p>
LET LOVE FLOW	<p>"We cannot rest until every child who lives in: poverty, a refugee camp, an isolated village, a fragile setting, or who has a disability has a chance to go to school"</p> <p>Alice Albright</p> <p>Give two units today in thanks for your education.</p>	<p>Floods are the most widespread natural disaster aside from wildfires. 90% of all U.S. natural disasters declared involved flooding</p> <p>Give two units if you live in a comfortable home that has never flooded.</p>	<p>Providing an education to girls and young women is one of the strongest ways to end cyclical poverty</p> <p>Give one unit in thanksgiving as you name each girl and woman important in your life.</p>	<p>One plants, one waters, but only God gives the growth.</p> <p>Share two units in thanksgiving for the ways God has blessed you so that you can bless others.</p>	<p>In 2018, wildfires burned 8.6 million acres in the United States. Many of the homes that were impacted were completely destroyed.</p> <p>Give 1 unit for every smoke detector in your home.</p>	<p>For every \$1 invested in water and sanitation, an average of \$4 is returned in increased productivity</p> <p>Give one unit for each time you washed your hands today.</p>	<p>Support disaster survivors. Become a UCC Disaster Recovery Volunteer. Help communities rebuild, visit <a href="http://ucc.org/disaster">ucc.org/disaster</a> for info</p> <p>Share one unit if you have ever volunteered at a disaster site or two units if you have not.</p>

Sources: Church World Service, Bread for the World, Children's Defense Fund, UNICEF (United Nation's Children's Fund), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Oceanic Society, World Food Programme, World Health Organization, American Red Cross, the New York Times and the U.S. Census Bureau.



Book Club will continue on March 10th with *Little Leaders: Bold Women in black History* by V. Harrison. Jane Uzzell will have the book if you are interested.

Thank you for the money and Christmas card. I greatly appreciate it.  
Sincerely,  
Garrett Korthals



Overflowing With Thanks



## Time, Talents & Treasure

Please fill out the Time and Talent sheet with all of your data. Sometimes I lose addresses, phone numbers, you change an email address, or any number of other mistakes. The only way I can correct these is if you fill out the date section of the Time and Talent sheet. Thank you for your help.



## MARCH BIRTHDAYS

3rd	Charlene Fosdick
4th	Ron Barritt
5th	Glenn Williams
14th	Nina Bahm
18th	Rita Woodard
28th	Erik Gamerl



# March

## March 7

**Communion:** Scott and Lori Williams

**Ushers:** Randy and Kay Neuharth

**Greeters:** Bonnie Dewell and Suzan Podliska

**Reader:** Ben Uzzell

**Leader:** Susan Allyn

**Flowers:** Scott and Lori Williams

## March 14

**Ushers:** Gene and Bonnie Kroeger

**Greeters:** Verletta Olson and Terry Hamilton

**Reader:** Lori Williams

**Flowers:** Emily (Uzzell) Cropper

## March 21

**Ushers:** Mike Synovec and Cole Uzzell

**Greeters:** Scott and Lori Williams

**Reader:** Scott Williams

**Flowers:**

## March 28 Palm Sunday

**Ushers:** Susan Surber and Evonne Burkink

**Greeters:** Gene and Darlene Korthals

**Reader:** Karen Allyn

**Flowers:** Palms



## April 4

## Easter

**Communion:** Tom McConnell and Evonne Burkink

**Ushers:** Suzan Podliska and Barb Koenig

**Greeters:** Gene and Bonnie Kroeger

**3 Readers:** Scott and Lori Williams, Jane Uzzell

**Leader:** Chuck Balsiger

**Flowers:** Lilies

## April 11

**Ushers:** Terry Hamilton and Verletta Olson

**Greeters:** Karen Allyn and Barb Koenig

**Reader:** Kay Neuharth

**Flowers:**

## April 18 Annual Meeting

**Ushers:** Bonnie Dewell and Rita Woodard

**Greeters:** Tom McConnell and Mike Synovec

**Reader:** Randy Neuharth

**Flowers:** Erik and Katie Gamerl

## April 25

**Ushers:** Gene and Darlene Korthals

**Greeters:** Ed Lindsay and Chuck Balsiger

**Reader:** Tom McConnell

**Flowers:**

Please notify the office if you are not able to attend a service.



# February

From 2/1/21 through 2/28/21

This does not include the deposit for 2/28



## Checking account information

Beginning balance	\$ 1,407.21
<u>Weekly deposits</u>	<u>\$ 9,723.82</u>
Subtotal	\$ 11,131.03
Salary	--\$ 6,775.43
Church Maintenance	—\$ 1,644.29
Office Expenses	—\$ 628.11
Renner's	—\$ 755.00
Worship Ministry	—\$ 30.01
Pastor's Discretionary	—\$ 127.58
<u>OCWM</u>	<u>—\$ 750.00</u>
Final Balance	\$ 420.61

Linaje Escogido \$900.00 was deposited in Madison County Bank.

# ▶ March 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
		5:30 Girl Scouts	10 Worship Ministry			
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Lent Week 3 9 Sunday School 10:15 Worship	5:30 Support	5:30 Girl Scouts	10 Book Club		1-3 FH Delphians	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Lent Week 4 9 Sunday School 10:15 Worship OGHS offering 11:15 Faith Development Youth 2-3:30 at church		5:30 Girl Scouts 7 Unity Council				
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Lent Week 5 9 Sunday School 10:15 Worship Stewardship Dedication		5:30 Girl Scouts				
28	29	30	31			
Palm/Passion 9 Sunday School 10:15 Worship						

# ▶ April 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
				Maundy Thursday service 5:30 PM		
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Easter 10:15 Worship	5:30 Support 7 PM Fellowship Hall Girl Scouts	5:30 Girl Scouts	10 Worship Ministry		1-3 FH Delphians	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
9 Sunday School 10:15 Worship		5:30 Girl Scouts	10 Book Club			
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
9 Sunday School 10:15 Worship Annual Meeting		5:30 Girl Scouts 7 Unity Council				
25	26	27	28	29	30	
9 Sunday School 10:15 Worship Youth 2-3:30 at Northeast Animal Shelter		5:30 Girl Scouts				