First Congregational Messenger

First Congregational United Church of Christ
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Serving God with love and faith

December 2022
Volume 5, Issue 98

December 11 Christmas program to be followed by Christmas potluck. Pulled pork will be provided by Ben and Stacie Uzzell.

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2022 CHRISTMAS GIVING TREES

Christmas is the time for giving to others and this year we will have two trees in the narthex to decorate with our gifts. If you prefer to give a monetary donation Santa's Elves will gladly shop for you!

Norfolk Little Panthers Preschool
Stocking caps
Gloves (kids prefer over mittens)
Boys & Girls socks
Girls undies
(please no scarves)

Norfolk Furbaby Rescue
Blue Buffalo & Purina ProPlan dry dogfood
Purina Cat Chow
Purina Kitten Chow Complete
Fresh Step clumping litter
Puppy pads
Paper Towels
13 & 30 gallon garbage bags
Toys
Collars, harnesses & leashes of all sizes

Monday-Thursday 10-4

Other times by appointment

May be out of the office for meetings or visits

Office Hours
Monday-Friday
8-12

Advent 2022

Advent is the four weeks before Christmas. The Latin word *adventus* means "coming", that is the coming of Christ. The mood is of joyful expectation and hope. Blue helps us separate the season from the more somber season of Lent. Blue is also associated with Mary.

During these weeks, we light the Advent candles. Candles, colors, and sanctuary decoration help define the season. But the most defining activity may be the choice of hymns. We will sing Christmas carols as part of the Christmas program December 11th and certainly on Christmas Eve; but we also want to add hymns that define Advent waiting. This is a challenge for many in our commercial culture. What is the value of teaching *waiting* and *hopeful expectation*, especially in our society? As in any season, we count on Scripture to guide worship.

May we be poised this Advent. May we learn to wait well. May we grow in anticipation of what the coming of Christ can mean for the world. May we seek and find our place in the unfolding story of Christ.

Worship Schedule

Nov 27	Advent One, Hanging of the Greens (Soup & Sandwiches after)
Dec 4	Advent Two
Dec 11	Advent Three, Christmas Program with carols & Christmas pot-luck
Dec 18	Advent Four Christmas Fund dedication
Dec 24	5:30 pm - Christmas Eve Service (Saturday) – 5:30 p.m.
Dec 25	10:15 am – Christmas Day worship service (Sunday) – 10:15 a.m. (No Sunday School)

Pastor's Time Away

Wednesday, December 28 through Friday, January 6. Returning to work Saturday, January 7. Emergency Pastoral Care coverage TBA. Check Pastor's voice mail for info.

Blessed Are Those Who Mourn

Each year before Remembrance Sunday, or All Saints' Day, I send an invitation to a family whom the church served during a time of grief. I want them to know that the church will be lighting a candle, ringing bells, and saying their loved one's name aloud in the worship service.

I sent an invitation to Jolynne because her mother, Sondra Herian, had died this past year. With Home for Funerals, I had served the family. Also, two church members who once worked with Sondra attended the graveside service. This was her daughter's reply to the congregation:

Rev Perry: this was such a special and kind surprise message. The consideration of you and your congregation meant the world to me. I shared this with a few of mom's closest friends and family. They were also grateful. Thank you for doing this for mom and the rest of us who love her. - Jo

All Saints' Day reminds us that we, and our loved ones who have died, are part of a huge parade of those who have loved and served God since the beginning of time. All Saints' Day also reminds us that in our sorrow, Jesus offers us "blessedness" by coming alongside us and wrapping his arms around us.

The first time I attended an All Saints' service was at the Episcopal Church across the street from Eden Seminary in Webster Groves, Missouri. The classmate who had invited me, shared a poem that she had written about her experience of hearing her brother's name read aloud at such a service. Five years earlier, the young man had died in a skiing accident. After years of silence, she described the experience of hearing Brian's name read aloud in church, as "the sound of breaking glass".

How often do we describe *grief* as "falling to pieces"? This in-breaking or interruption of grief can shock us, but it doesn't mean it's a bad thing. During chaplain training we learned that grief is not linear, it is more like a spiral. The pain of grief can come up again and again; but after some time has passed, we discover the pain of loss is not as acute.

It is surprising how suddenly a sound, a sight, or smell, can interrupt our experience of the moment, and we remember the loss and feel sad. The holidays can flood our senses and trigger grief. When someone we care about dies, it's sad. There will be tears, but tears can be good. We can talk to God when we feel sad; and know that God and people are here to help.

Peace, Pastor Jackie

OCTOBER OUTREACH –
FOOD PANTRY

We delivered to the Norfolk Community Food Pantry a large pallet of food collected by the congregation in the month of October. Thanks to Darlene and Grace for keeping the goal before us all month, and the congregation for all the food you contributed.

YOUTH NOVEMBER OUTREACH – Cookies for the Rescue Mission

The youth baked about 100 plus cookies and delivered them to our friends at the Rescue Mission on Sunday afternoon, November 20. Bakers were: Reese, Skylar, Micah, Grace, Darlene and Pastor Jackie.

Living Waters Association (LWA): Fall Gathering Report

Four from FCUCC attended the Fall Gathering at Pierce UCC on Saturday, November 12. The Pierce UCC woman provided coffee, rolls, and lunch. Attending were: Verletta Olson, Jane Uzzell, David Thompson, and Pastor Jackie. Rev. Sarah Renzel Jones brought the Message of being rooted in faith. After worship and the business meeting, the following were elected to LWA Council for 2023:

President – Joan Alexander, **Vice President** – Verletta Olson
Registrar – Adam Lassen, **Treasurer** – Judy Bouma
At large members include:
Gordon Braun, Cherie Ferber, Mary Avidano, Steve Jackson, Cathy Cole, Deb Kirwan.

It had been three years since LWA held an *in-person* fall gathering. It was great to gather as the wider church. The local church may covenant with whomever they wish. FCUCC is in covenant with these "settings" of the wider UCC: LWA Association, Nebraska Conference (with Iowa and South Dakota Conferences), and the national setting now headquartered in downtown Cleveland at 1300 E. 9th Street.

The Christmas Fund to be Dedicated December 18, 2022

The Advent season of waiting and watching is also a season of preparing. Our generosity prepares the way for hope, peace, justice, and community. UCC retired clergy, and other servants of the church, have spent lifetimes in service and empowering God's people. Now, through *the Christmas Fund* the church has a chance to serve and empower them. 2021 gifts provided:

-Monthly pension supplementation for 231 retired clergy and lay employees ($1,104,479)
-Health benefits supplementation for 87 retired clergy and lay employees ($177,600)
-Emergency grants for 53 individuals and families ($150,338)
-Christmas "Thank You" gift checks to 509 retired clergy and lay employees ($254,000)

Please give generously.

Book Club will meet December 14. *Red and Green and Blue and White* by Lee Wind. The books can be found in Fellowship Hall or you can contact Jane Uzzell.

Dear church family, Thank you for the prayers, cards, phone calls and food given to us as I was recovering from surgery. Your support for Susan is also appreciated. May God bless all of you. Karen Allyn

Overflowing With Thanks

Thank you to everyone who donated at the potluck for the scholarship fund. We have added $213 to the fund! That is almost one-half of a semester for a scholarship!

Do you go grocery shopping? At Lou's? At HyVee? **We have an easy way to bump up your donation to the church budget**--use a Lou's or HyVee gift card when you go shopping or get gas. You can buy them Sundays in Fellowship Hall. We currently get $25, $50 and $100 gift cards.

See you at the table in Fellowship Hall! Please help out. The gift cards fit right in your billfold by your dollar bills, so it's even easy to remember to use them when you go to pay for your groceries. Questions? Leave a message for Jane Uzzell at (402)640-6623.

DECEMBER
Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays

1st	Stacie Uzzell
7th	Susan Hansen
18th	Ben Uzzell
26th	Karen Allyn
31st	Virginia Barritt

Anniversaries

23rd	Jeff and Evonne Burkink

December

December 4
Communion: Scott and Lori Williams
Ushers: Bonnie Dewell and Reese Uzzell
Greeters: Gene and Darlene Korthals
Reader: Verletta Olson
Leader: Ben Uzzell
Flowers: Poinsettias

December 11
Ushers: Scott and Lori Williams
Greeters: Randy and Kay Neuharth
Reader: Ben Uzzell
Flowers: Poinsettias

December 18
Ushers: Gene and Bonnie Kroeger
Greeters: Verletta Olson and Jane Uzzell
Reader: Chuck Balsiger
Flowers: Poinsettias

December 24 Christmas Eve
Ushers: Gene and Darlene Korthals
Greeters: Gene and Bonnie Kroeger
Reader: Scott Williams
Flowers: Poinsettias

December 25
Ushers: Ben and Reese Uzzell
Greeters: Stacie and Grace Uzzell
Reader: Jane Uzzell
Flowers: Poinsettias

JANUARY

January 1
Communion: Sue Surber and Charlene Fosdick
Ushers: Ed Lindsay and Tom McConnell
Greeters: Sue Surber and Chuck Balsiger
Reader: Kay Neuharth
Leader: Scott Williams
Flowers:

January 8
Ushers: Randy and Kay Neuharth
Greeters: Ed Lindsay and Bonnie Dewell
Reader: Tom McConnell
Flowers: Karen Allyn

January 15
Ushers: Mike Synovec and Suzan Podliska
Greeters: Tom McConnell and Charlene Fosdick
Reader: Reese Uzzell
Flowers:

January 22
Ushers: Sue Surber and Grace Uzzell
Greeters: Evonne Burkink and Barb Koenig
Reader: Randy Neuharth
Flowers:

January 29
Ushers: Scott and Lori Williams
Greeters: Gene and Darlene Korthals
Reader: Verletta Olson
Flowers:

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

November

From 11/1/22 through 11/30/22

Checking account information

Beginning balance	$	318.05
Poinsettias	$	65.00
Scholarship fundraiser	$	213.00
Good Neighbors	$	244.00
Weekly deposits	$	15,107.45
Subtotal	$	15,947.50
Salary	--$	6,746.41
Church Maintenance	—$	1,616.23
Office Expenses	—$	514.73
Tri-Conference Gathering	—-$	248.18
Living Waters Luncheon	—-$	40.00
Edward Jones Scholarship	-—$	213.00
Worship Ministry	—--$	30.00
Good Neighbors, Pastor Disc.	——$	444.00
Renner's	—-$	500.00
Conference, Neighbors in Need	—$	1,249.00
Final Balance	$	4,345.95

December 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4 9 Sunday School 10:15 Worship Unity Council Renewed Hope 4-7 FH	5	6 5:30 PM Girl Scouts	7 10 Worship Ministry	8	9	10
11 9 Sunday School 10:15 Worship Potluck Dinner	12 6 PM Girl Scouts	13 OFFICE CLOSED Sue with Mom in Omaha, Jackie training 5:30 PM Girl Scouts	14 10 Book club	15 Questors FH 6-8 PM	16	17
18 9 Sunday School 10:15 Worship	19	20 5:30 PM Girl Scouts	21	22	23 Sue vacation	24 Christmas Eve service 5:30 PM
25 10:15 Worship	26 OFFICE CLOSED	27 Sue vacation	28 Sue vacation Jackie vacation	29 Sue vacation Jackie vacation	30 Sue vacation Jackie vacation	31 Jackie vacation

January 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 10:15 Worship Renewed Hope 4-7 FH Jackie vacation	2 OFFICE CLOSED Jackie vacation	3 5:30 PM Girl Scouts Jackie vacation	4 10 Worship Ministry Jackie vacation	5 Jackie vacation	6 Jackie vacation	7
8 9 Sunday School 10:15 Worship	9 6 PM Girl Scouts	10 5:30 PM Girl Scouts	11 10 Book club Confirmation 6-7 FH	12	13 Sue out for the day	14
15 9 Sunday School 10:15 Worship	16	17 5:30 PM Girl Scouts	18	19	20	21 9-1 Girl Scouts FH
22 9 Sunday School 10:15 Worship	23 6 PM Girl Scouts	24 5:30 PM Girl Scouts	25 Confirmation 6-7 FH	26	27	28
29 9 Sunday School 10:15 Worship Potluck	30	31				