

The Grapevine

The e-newsletter of Church of the Redeemer UCC

December 2017

Staff Information

Staff Hours and Contact Information

Office Hours M-W 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Th 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

The Rev. Jim Cunningham 440-759-9062; j.h.cunningham@icloud.com

The Rev. Bob Richardson brich948@gmail.com

Margaret Borrelli margaret@corucc.org

Gayle Donahue donahuepn@gmail.com

Carol Peddie cpsongbird@aol.com

Jason Aquila jason.aquila@gmail.com

Barb Powell barb@corucc.org



Church of the Redeemer United Church of Christ
is an Open and Affirming and Just Peace Congregation.
All are Welcome!

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- * December Thur. Evening Gathering
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Coming Events and Information

Journey to Bethlehem
Friday, Dec. 15, and Saturday, Dec. 16
6:30-8:30 p.m.

We are so blessed to be able to offer this one-of-kind



Christmas event for our community! If you're not working it, please stop by.



Christmas Cantata: The First Light

You won't want to miss worship Dec. 17 for the annual Chancel Choir Christmas concert. This year's Christmas Cantata is "The First Light: Rejoice! A Child of Hope is Born."



Holiday Worship Schedule

- Dec. 17 Christmas Cantata, Chancel Choir, during worship at 10:30 a.m.
- Dec. 21 Blue Christmas Service, 7 p.m.
- Dec. 24 Regular 4th Sunday of Advent service, 10:30 a.m.
Children's Christmas Eve Service at 5:30 p.m.
Candlelight Christmas Eve Service at 7:30 p.m.
- Dec. 31 Informal Worship Service at 10:30 a.m.



Chair Yoga

Chair Yoga classes are on Mondays at 11:15 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. You know you want to join in!

Yoga will be on Christmas break after Dec. 4 and will resume Jan. 8.

Namaste!

December Thursday Evening Gathering

The December gathering will take place **Dec. 14 at 5 p.m. at Mahle's Restaurant** in Westlake, Ohio. Sign up in the Gathering Room!

AED Training

AED training and review takes place Dec. 10 following worship, from 11:45 a.m. until 12:15 p.m. Take this opportunity to talk with Westlake Fire department and EMS

staff. Learn how to use our AED and request emergency assistance from the experts! All are welcome.

Prayer List Information Update

The Sunday bulletin prayer list will be cleaned up after worship Dec. 4. If you wish to have someone remain on the current list, please notify Emma Kozar (440-899-6221).

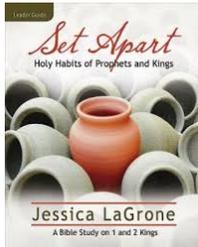
Opportunities to Grow

Favorite Bible Stories Bible Study

Each Wednesday afternoon, Jim Stone leads a Bible study on some of our favorite passages. Join Jim at 1:30 p.m.

Meeting God in Scripture

Third Sundays of the Month in the Youth Room (through the Green Door)



This devotional/study group is open to all. We meet once a month on the THIRD SUNDAY (a new week) at 9 a.m. We are using the resource ***Set Apart: Holy Habits of Prophets and Kings***.

Men's Spiritual Journey Discussion Group

This group meets the second Sunday of each month at 9 a.m. Next meeting: Dec. 10 in the Lounge.

Science and Religion Discussion Group

The Science and Religion Group, led by Jim Stone, meets the third Sunday of the month after worship in the lounge. This year's book is "Creation in Contemporary Experience," from Energion Publications, Gonzalez, FL, 2014, by the Rev. David Moffatt-Moore, a UCC pastor from Michigan. The book is available from [Barnes and Noble](#) and [amazon.com](#).

Opportunities to Serve

December In-Gathering: Adopt-A-Family

In December, Redeemer will be collecting gifts for our annual Adopt-A-Family campaign, plus other recipients.

Thank you for your generous donations that are helping to bring Christmas to some of our most vulnerable brothers and sisters.

December Offering: The Christmas Fund

The December offering is for the Christmas Fund. The Fund provides direct financial assistance to retired and active United Church of Christ authorized ministers and lay employees and their surviving spouses.

Sometimes called the Veterans of the Cross offering, the Christmas Fund is an expression of appreciation and caring to those who served as clergy (and certain lay employees) who are now retired or disabled and financially strained. During this holy time of year, the offering is a profound gift. It helps provide pension supplements, health premium subsidies, emergency assistance to active or retired clergy families, and Christmas gift checks to hundreds of retirees and to those who disabled.

Thank you for giving generously!

Children and Youth



Christmas Eve -- Especially for Children Worship at 5:30 p.m.

This service, lasting about 45 minutes, is a relaxed worship experience in which the music, images, and story are geared to all ages. Children (and adults) are invited to bring their favorite doll to hold and rock during the service. Everyone will get a glo-stick and each family attending with a child will receive a gift to take home.

From Our Church Staff

Greetings from Our Interim Minister for Worship and Pastoral Care



I am honored to be a part of your interim ministry team along with the Rev. Bob Richardson, who will serve you as Interim Minister for Administration and Transition.

This is still a pretty limited role. If you have any questions or things you want to share with me please call, text, or email me. 440-759-9062 or j.h.cunningham@icloud.com.

I want to say thank you to all the staff who are so helpful to me and faithful in their service to you: Barb Powell, Margaret Borrelli, Carol Peddie, Jason Aquila, and Gayle Donahue; and to Janet Kramer and all the lay leadership. They all contribute to making my limited role more manageable and a delight.

Blessed I am and you are by these dedicated people.

I invite you to complete your "estimate of giving" card you received if you have not done so and mail it to the church or put it in the offering plate on Sunday morning. Each of you play a vital role in this transitional time. We need "all hands on deck!"

I also invite you to participate in worship and all the special activities and special

giving opportunities of this holy season. Please consider inviting someone you know who is not currently committed to a congregation, to visit Church of the Redeemer with you.

I am looking forward to sharing this holy season with you. I suspect many of us, if not all of us, in these challenging days need to be upheld in the messages of the Advent Season: Hope, Peace, Joy, Love. It was not the "best of times" when Jesus was born and lived, but ... "God showed up!" God showed up in Jesus to show us "the way of God" in the "way of Jesus."

As followers of the "way of Jesus" we need to "show up" and be the light of Christ in all the places of our lives today. There are many speaking in the name of Jesus in whom I do not recognize the Jesus I know. I keep praying, "Will the real Jesus, please stand up!" And, I pray that may my words, my choices, my behaviors, reflect the real Jesus! Who is this Jesus whose birth we celebrate this month? Come, let's explore this question together.

In Christ,
Jim Cunningham

Greetings from Our Interim Minister for Administration and Transition



Greetings Everyone,

If you were in worship last Sunday you saw my video introducing myself and my work, you can probably stop reading right about here. If you were not there, or slept through the video, you may want to keep reading.

As has been noted, I am your Interim Minister for Administration and Transition. (I know, I said, "preparation" in the video but what do I know?) By whatever name I'm called, what does this mean?

It's means I will be around, working with various people, committees, groups, and gatherings, in a variety of ways, doing various things, all with an eye to getting as much ready and set in place for the arrival of your new pastor as possible. Sounds pretty vague, doesn't it? Because in many ways the specifics are still being discovered and exact plans are waiting to be formed. But some of the work has already been done! Remember last spring and early summer when the Transition Team set a series of dates for you to meet with them and answer some questions about the church? That was actually the start of the work that we'll be about together. I've already met with them (and the Consistory) and some ideas are beginning to take shape.

To make this even more nebulous, we're starting all this at one of the most hectic times of the year when there is much vying for our attention in other areas of life. But please know that God is here and at work in all of us, leading, guiding, and helping us move forward. My contact information should be readily available around the church. Please feel free to be in contact with me with questions, concerns, ideas, or just to chat. It's all good, and all part of working together this way.

BTW – I was at church last Sunday afternoon and saw the decorations being put in

place. You are in for quite a treat when you walk into worship this Sunday. Enjoy. Be inspired! (And say a much deserved word of thanks and appreciation to those who did the work with such obvious love.)

In Christ,
Bob Richardson

A Minute with Margaret



I've got babies on my mind. That's not too surprising since we are expecting a new grandbaby at the end of the year. And it is December and I am spending most of my time getting ready for the Advent and Christmas season, which is, after all, all about a baby, as well.

This year for each week of Advent as the Children's message during worship, I'm going to be reading a book called *That Baby in the Manger* by Anne Neuberger. It is a wonderful story which invites each of us to consider how we view baby Jesus.

Then on Christmas Eve for the Especially for Children worship service at 5:30 p.m., I am inviting each child to bring a doll with them to hold and rock during the service. An adult friend just asked me today, "Only the children?" to which I replied, "No, of course not. Please bring a doll if you wish." She said, "I could bring my Thumbelina Doll." Oh! I caught my breath. I had longed for a Thumbelina Doll when I was young. The one that had a dial in her back, which when turned, caused her to move slowly like a real live baby. I must confess that the thought crossed my mind that I might get a chance to hold it. Oh, the wonders of childhood.

But isn't that what babies are all about? WONDER. Any parent will tell you that. It leaves you in a state of wonder. For me, it was as if the world stood still – actually stopped spinning on its axis when our children entered the world. It was as if ours, each time, was the only baby ever born. I have heard it described by friends who are adoptive parents that it was as if the earth shook when their new baby was placed in their arms. So it is no surprise that Mary and Joseph would have experienced wonder at the birth of their child. After all, they had been both been visited by an angel to herald their baby's coming. But the fact that shepherds – hardworking, field-hardened tenders of sheep – left everything to come see a BABY! really is like "walking in a winter wonderland." And those wise men – men who were intellectuals and studiers of science – the fact that they would travel and endure the hardships of miles across road and desert to follow a star, even a star of WONDER, when it only promised to lead to a BABY! Now that's the stuff of wonder.

When I look at our babies – then and now – I can only do what Mary did those 2000 years ago. "She kept all these things to herself, holding them dear, deep within herself" Luke 2:19. For all of it, all of it, are WONDERS OF HIS LOVE!

May your days be filled with WONDER, too.

Blessings,
Margaret

A Musical Note from Carol



December is a very busy month, but we hope you will set aside some time to attend a couple of upcoming musical events.

Join us as we celebrate and kick off the Season on Saturday, Dec. 2, at 6:00 p.m. with a beautiful Sign Language Performance of "The Grinch," under the direction of our very own Cory Svette.

For many years, Sharon Svette, founder of The Sharon Signer's had always strived for inclusion of all ages and abilities, linking the hearts and minds of all that come together to create this magnificent choir.

The story of the Grinch focuses on one character who discovers the true meaning of love, friendship, and Christmas. It is a story that says no matter who you are or what you may look like, you can always find love around the corner.

There will be a variety of songs from the classic cartoon of "How The Grinch Stole Christmas" to artists such as Bing Crosby, Brenda Lee, and Enya. There will also be five Disney selections that will thrill and excite younger viewers as well as adults.

As Dr. Seuss so simply says: "What if Christmas doesn't come from a store. What if Christmas perhaps....means a little bit more."

On Sunday, Dec. 17, during the morning worship service, the Redeemer Chancel Choir will present "THE FIRST LIGHT Rejoice a Child is Born," a Christmas Cantata arranged by Tom Fettke. Song titles include: Gloria, For Unto Us a Child is Born, In the First Light, O Little Town of Bethlehem, Angels We Have Heard on High, and more. Please join us for this festive Christmas Service.

Wishing everyone a blessed Christmas season.

Carol Peddie
Director of Music

A Message from Nurse Gayle -- Family Health Tree



Greetings!

As you read this, we have entered into Advent, that special time of year of preparation with thoughts of hope, peace, joy and love. The gift list has been created, the parties scheduled and family celebration menu planned.

But are you like me and are still searching for that one thing that you could initiate this Christmas that would really make a difference? Have you considered the gift of presence and conversation during your celebrations? No, I am not going to

suggest banning the cell phone and face time. It could actually be helpful for the project I am going to suggest.

Consider launching your family health history tree. If you are fortunate you may need to simply add information to your genealogy chart. Minimally, a health history tree will go back three generations and extend to cousins. Because of the wealth of knowledge developing from the genome project, do not restrict your record to cause of death but do include onset of disease, environment and lifestyle. The clues found in a family history can lead a health care provider to a new diagnosis, limit diagnostic testing and even be that extra motivation to change a particular lifestyle behavior.

Sound interesting? For additional information go to familyhistory.hhs.gov; or search family medical history. Future generations will thank you for this very special gift!

Blessings,
Gayle

UCC News and Notes

Christmas Greetings from the United Church of Christ



Watch this simple greeting from the United Church of Christ, guaranteed to nurture your Spirit. This video was produced by the UCC's communication office in 2014. It was written and produced by Barb Powell and video editor Bob Lormor. Merry Christmas!

<https://youtu.be/oxdhOKjY6jo>

Deadlines and Reminders

Deadlines to remember

Annual Reports: Committee Chairs, your reports are due by Christmas Eve. Email Barb with questions.

Sunday bulletins and screens: If there is a church event you want listed in the Sunday bulletin, please turn in the information and contact name/number to the church office by Monday morning at 10 a.m., or it will not make it into that week's bulletin.

Grapevine: The deadline for getting information into the monthly Grapevine is the third Tuesday of the month. Anything received after that will not make it into that month's Grapevine.

Consistory: Members turning in reports must have them in to Janet Kramer seven days prior to the Consistory meeting.

We need YOU to Sign Up!

Sign-up sheets for flowers and the bulletins, are on the main bulletin board in the hallway. The community meal signup is posted there, too.

Please DO remember to sign up as you pass by!

Phone Guide

Trying to reach someone at the church? Here's a handy list of extensions:

Worship Times 1
Faith Formation Minister Margaret Borelli 3
Parish Nurse Gayle Donahue 4
Main Office 0

Monthly Devotional

Each issue of the Grapevine will feature a UCC devotional for meditation.

In Common

By Mary Luti

*O come, Desire of nations, bind in one the hearts of humankind ...
-- O Come, O Come Emmanuel*

On a visit to South India, the Archbishop of Canterbury was asked to bless the Hindu kitchen staff of a big hotel. The occasion was the annual mixing of the batter for their famous Christmas cake. So, as instructed, he poured honey into an enormous trough of fruit, said prayers, shook hands, and walked out into the searing heat, with "Joy to the World" blaring over the loudspeakers.

Christmas, it turns out, is one of the West's greatest exports. The story is known and loved even in places where other faiths predominate: Shanghai, Mumbai, Dar-es-Salaam. And why not? It features a clutching baby, and not many people on earth can resist offering a pinky to the clutch of an infant.

It may be the thing we long for most, the Archbishop noted – to let go of our aggression and fear and whatever else in us keeps us tied to violence, and bend together over a child in shared wonder and gratitude. Perhaps this common longing is what the old carol means by "the desire of nations."

You don't have to be a Christian to be profoundly gladdened by a story of open, defenseless love. Even when it comes draped in the gaudy tinsel and bows it's accumulated over the centuries, it touches something basic, something universal. And that should make us think twice about ever giving up on the human heart's capacity for goodness and faith, however deeply buried it may seem.

Prayer

"O come, Desire of nations, bind in one the hearts of humankind. Bid thou our sad divisions cease, and be thyself our Prince of Peace."

About the Author

Mary Luti is a long time seminary educator and pastor, author of *Teresa of Avila's Way* and numerous articles, and founding member of The Daughters of Abraham, a national network of interfaith women's book groups.

Birthdays, Anniversaries, Joys, & Concerns

December Birthdays

2 Aaron Barnes
4 Kelly Patzwahl
5 Bill Sargent
Steve Earl
Dale Andrews
6 Jean Noffke
10 Erna Woods
13 Susan Schlitter
16 Holly MillerShank
17 Johanna Slygh
20 Alexis Widmer
26 Tim Thomas
28 Lori Lentz
29 Alex Tomoff
Tony Branch
31 Jane Huml

December Anniversaries

16 Brent & Katie Stone
19 Bill & Elaine Freed
22 Dave & Sandy Evans
27 Chuck & Barb Zaugg

2017 Consistory Members

Elders:

Dorothy Earl (2016)
2676 West Asplin Drive
Rocky River, 44116
de116rr@ameritech.net
440-821-4515

Bonnie Hawver (2017)
3431 Wooster Road
Rocky River, 44116
bhwvr@aol.com
440-333-2661

Janet Kramer (2017)
18 South Hampton Circle
Rocky River, 44116
jan43051@aol.com
440-333-6816

Chuck Mealy (2015)
16 South Hampton Circle
Rocky River, 44116
ccmealy@sbcglobal.net
440-333-9658

Lisa Thomas (2015)
25866 Melibee Drive

Deacons:

Donna Greenwell (2015)
3174 West 142nd Street
Cleveland, 44111
216-671-9443

Jeanne Long (2016)
1842 Columbia Road
Westlake, 44145
jeannelong1965@gmail.com
440-892-3430

Megan Mealy (2017)
29100 Foote Road
Bay Village, 44140
megelizabeth0217@yahoo.com
440-263-3934

Leslie Patzwahl (2017)
24111 Lake Road
Bay Village, 44140
lscp630@gmail.com
440-835-5937

Joel Foote (2017)
21870 Cromwell Ave.
Fairview Park, 44126

Westlake, 44145
lisabt@sbcglobal.net
440-734-6784

Chuck Zaugg (2016)
29639 Schwartz Road
Westlake, 44145
ctzaugg@att.net
440-808-1816

joel.foote@gmail.com
440-779-0076

Emily Humphrey (2018)
5974 Gareau Dr.
North Olmsted, 44070
mle.in.cle@gmail.com
440-666-9789

Officers:

President: Janet Kramer jan43051@aol.com
Vice President: Chuck Mealy ccmealy@sbcglobal.net
Recording Secretary: Dorothy Earl de116rr@ameritech.net
Financial Secretary: Chuck Zaugg ctzaugg@att.net
Treasurer: Alex Tomoff alex@tomoff.com

Send Feedback

STAY CONNECTED:



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 UNITED CHURCH
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