CONGRATULATIONS, JANE! Our own Jane Huml is a published author! Her book, Summer in Jane’s Garden, was recently released. The children’s book is illustrated by Lois Huml Durda, and is available at several local outlets. You can also find a copy of this enchanting book online at Barnes and Noble (https://tinyurl.com/janebook18) and Amazon (https://tinyurl.com/janebook18a).

The book was inspired by a gift Jane received when she retired. Colleagues gave her a scarecrow, which she dressed, named Jane, and placed in her garden. She says she just started writing down what she saw, never dreaming at first that it would become a book.

Make sure you order a copy. You won’t be sorry!

COFFEE, TEA, AND PASTOR B NOVEMBER DATES: Dec. 11, from 10:30 a.m. to noon at Blackbird Baking Company (https://www.blackbirdbaking.com), 1391 Sloane Ave., Lakewood (Parking is just past the bakery, off Detroit); and TUESDAY, Dec. 18, 7 to 8:30 p.m., at Erie Island Coffee (http://erieislandcoffee.com), 19300 Detroit Rd. in Rocky River (parking in the lot to the left of the entrance).

THE MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR GORDON BELMONT will be Saturday, Dec. 8 at Church of the Redeemer. Calling hours will be in the Gathering Room from 10-11 a.m., and the service will begin at 11 a.m. Lunch will follow in the Fellowship Hall.

NOVEMBER’S FROG WINNER! Congratulations to Rudy Duscha, the winner of the November gift certificate for Blackbird Bakery in Lakewood! Let the office know where the frog is in this issue to be entered into the next gift certificate drawing! Can you find the December frog?

CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE Here is the holiday worship and special event schedule:

Dec. 14 and 15, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Journey to Bethlehem
Dec. 16, 10:30 a.m. worship service Jesus! The Advent of the Messiah A Christmas Cantata performed by our Chancel Choir
Dec. 20, 7 p.m. Blue Christmas Service
Dec. 24, 5:30 p.m. Christmas Eve Service, especially for children 7:30 p.m. Traditional Candlelight Christmas Eve Service
What are We Waiting For?

Happy advent! Merry Christmas! Happy New Year! Happy Epiphany! There is so much to celebrate in the next six weeks and yet Advent is all about a season of waiting. Waiting for the birth of our Savior.

As followers of Jesus, we are a waiting people. Our faith is built around waiting for the second coming of Jesus and we wait each year to celebrate the birth. While the decorations are already up, the waiting must still happen. Because we do not follow the commercial calendar, it means we wait to sing Christmas carols — at least a little bit. We instead sing Advent songs — equally as beautiful, but perhaps a bit less familiar. Each Sunday of Advent has a different theme — hope, peace, love, joy; one is no more or less important than the other. We wait each week to light another candle. They are all leading up to the lighting of the Christ candle on Christmas Eve, but we have to wait for that. Just like children waiting for Christmas morning, we are also called to wait. Wouldn’t it be nice if we had the same anticipation for the Christ child that a child has for Christmas morning?

And then Christmas arrives, the gifts are unwrapped, and for some just as quickly as the decorations went up, they all come back down. But again, our faith traditions remind us to wait. Epiphany is the celebration of the wise men arriving to see the baby. It is Christmas all the way until Epiphany on January 6. So just as Advent is a time of waiting, so too, we are called to wait for the end of Christmas and not rush to put everything away.

In addition to our weekly worship during Advent, we will also gather together to acknowledge the difficulty of this season at our Blue Christmas service on December 20. For some during this season, it is waiting for it to end so that the difficult emotions will pass.

So however, you celebrate during this season, know that we will be waiting for you in worship!

Blessings,
Pastor Brooke

December Offering

The Mission offering in December supports the UCC Christmas Fund, which cares for the active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ. Your gift will help supplement small annuities, health care premiums, emergency grants, and Christmas “thank you” checks to lower-income retirees.

December In-Gathering

Join us in our annual Christmas drive for those in need. This year, we will provide for a family of four and two single seniors-in-need through the city of Westlake Community Services program. The sign-up sheet for choosing from their gift requests is available on the table in the entry. Gifts are due Dec. 9. Please help make Christmas brighter for our local neighbors-in-need. Your efforts will be deeply appreciated.

— The Mission Outreach Committee

Journey is Almost Here!

Journey to Bethlehem takes place Dec. 14 and 15 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. There are still multiple ways you can help. Set-up will be Sunday (after worship), Dec. 9. See Megan Moran for more information.

Men’s Bible Study in January

December News in Faith Formation

GREETINGS! This month we celebrate the season of Christmas and we begin by welcoming THE SHARON SIGNERS with their presentation of “Frozen” on Saturday, December 1, at 6 p.m., under the direction of Cory Svette.

You won’t want to miss this amazing group of young people!

On Sunday, December 16, at 10:30 a.m., the Chancel Choir will be presenting “JESUS! THE ADVENT OF THE MESSIAH,” a Christmas Cantata by McDonald/Aspinall.

Please join us as we celebrate the gift of our Savior in song.

Thank you to all who participated in our November concert, Thanksgiving in Song. God has truly blessed our church with people of many talents.

Blessings to all,
Carol

Do not open your purse
The lamp that lights our spirits
Pass out the food of Spirit
― Zach B

Jesus sitting down
I recognize people
This fellowship is for me too
― Ryan W

Finally, they are fed
Eating bread and fish
Extra food; 12 baskets
Dining in the grass
In the baskets is lots of food
Naked babies, also
Gather around Jesus
― Nola F

The people brought their own
On their bicycle thrones
While making tea
Please feed me so I am not alone.
― Katie C

Many people were talking
The disciples helped feed them
They were satisfied
― Jacob M

Diverse people share
Children are welcome to eat
Thankful for God’s love
― Andrew H

We come hungry for more than food
Only 5 pieces of bread for all of us.
Jesus, our Messiah, fed us all.
No matter who we were
No matter, where we were on life’s journey
We were all fed.
And we were no longer hungry.
We were grateful
Grateful for the food we were given
And also for the knowledge we were given
About God’s love,
We are now fed.
― Elizabeth H

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Redeemer UCC December Birthdays and Anniversaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birthdays</th>
<th>Anniversaries</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 Aaron Barnes</td>
<td>16 Brent &amp; Katie Stone</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Kelly Patzwahl</td>
<td>19 Bill &amp; Elaine Freed</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Bill Sargent</td>
<td>22 Dave &amp; Sandy Evans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steve Earl</td>
<td>27 Chuck &amp; Barb Zaugg</td>
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<td>Dale Andrews</td>
<td>26 Tim Thomas</td>
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<td>6 Jean Noffke</td>
<td>28 Lori Lentz</td>
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<td>13 Susan Schlitter</td>
<td>29 Alex Tomoff</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 Holly MillerShank</td>
<td>Tony Branch</td>
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<td>17 Johanna Slygh</td>
<td>31 Jane Huml</td>
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<td>20 Alexis Widmer</td>
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Give the Gift of Laughter this Year

A Cheerful Heart is Good Medicine — Proverbs 17:22

Since the beginning of time, God has gifted us with humor and laughter. During this season of gifts and giving this is one gift that we must often accept for ourselves. Humankind has enjoyed this gift much longer than we have understood its benefits.

In 1979, Norman Cousins encouraged conversation with his story of 10 minutes of self-prescribed laughing provided pain relief for two hours of sleep. We still do not have definitive research on the health benefits of laughter — anyone looking for a project for 2019?

We do know that when we laugh our tissues receive more oxygen and muscles stretch. Often the ability to laugh at a situation will decrease stress and raise endorphin levels. Release of endorphins results in a cascade of positive body responses.

A small study of diabetics showed blood sugar levels lower after a meal and watching a comedy than when they had the same meal followed by a difficult lecture. And we cannot forget the social impact of good healthy laughter.

Research by R. Provine, professor of psychology and neuroscience at University of Maryland, found that we are “30 times more likely to laugh when we’re with other people than when we are alone.”

This Christmas season, give yourself and those you love the gift of a laugh and see how much better everyone feels.

Having trouble thinking of a good joke or funny story? Visit your library, try a class of laughter yoga or google Christmas humor …

What do snowmen eat for breakfast ... snowflakes!

If athletes get athletes foot, what do astronauts get? ... Missile-toe!

— accessed 10/31/2018 Humor Matters by S. Sultanoff Ph.D.

Merry Christmas!
Gayle

UCC DEVOTIONAL
Too Busy for That

By the Rev. Emily Heath

He said to them, “Go and tell [Herod] for me, Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work.”


As good excuses go, hearing that someone wants you dead ranks right up there at the top.

When Jesus gets tipped off to Herod’s plan for him, everyone expects him to take off running. But he doesn’t. Instead he tells them to tell that “fox” Herod that he’s got more important things to do.

“Listen, I’ve got demons and cures here . . . come back in three days.”

Jesus is good at reminding us not to let the things that want to, literally and figuratively, dictate how we use our time. And that’s a great reminder around Christmastime.

Every year, in every church I have served, at least one faithful church member comes to me to let me know they won’t be at Christmas Eve worship.

“If Jesus could make Herod wait, you can make your brother-in-law, and every other old fox you know, wait too. Stick a bow on the hard-to-wrap present. Take the elaborate Christmas Eve party down a few notches. Because you are way too busy welcoming Emmanuel, God-with-us.

Prayer: God-with-us, help us to never be too busy for you even if it means Christmas dinner is late.

Gayle

Christmas Blessings to All and Peace in the New Year

Merry Christmas!