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**FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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Galion, OH 44833

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Phone: 419-468-4380 [www.uccgalion.org](http://www.uccgalion.org)

Rev. Bill Meyer-----Minister

-----Office Secretary

Mary Ann Stone-----Financial Secretary

Stephanie Sikora-----Sr. & Bell Choir Director

Jennifer Arbaugh-----Organist

Jessica Hammond-----Organist

Martha See-----Kitchen Custodian



**First United Church of Christ**

248 Harding Way West  
Galion, OH 44833

*“United in Christ’s Joy we welcome, love and serve all”*

Rev. Bill Meyer  
Minister

Volume 33 No. 2

February 2022



**SUNDAY SERVICES**

**Sunday School**

9:00 a.m.

**Worship Service**

10:00 a.m

*The  
VISITOR*

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Monday ~ Thursday  
9:00 a.m. ~ 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. ~ 4:00 p.m.

Friday  
9:00 a.m. ~ 12:00 p.m.

THE INTERIM PASTOR'S NOTEBOOK:

## Living our faith as a Priesthood of All Believers

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

As we seek to do the Work of Christ and faithfully live our Christian lives in the 21st century, it is often helpful to remind ourselves of the self-understanding of the very first Christians in the first century.

For the first Christians in the first century, the New Testament was still being written and put together and the Scriptures in use were primarily from the Old Testament. The sayings of Jesus that later were written down in the Gospels were repeated orally by those who still remembered what he had said. And some of the letters written by Paul and Peter and others were being read in some of the churches.

The early church viewed Jesus not only as Messiah but also as the new Moses.

The early church believed Jesus was also leading this new people of God through wilderness times toward promises from God that had not been fully received or fully fulfilled by the people of Israel under the first covenant. For instance, God promised Abraham that through his descendant(s), all peoples of the earth would be blessed. (See Galatians 3: 27-29 and Acts 3: 18-26.) Jesus was also viewed by his first followers as the ultimate high priest, drawing all of those baptized into the new church into a priestly role as well.

Indeed, the Christian church itself was seen by the early Christians as a spiritual temple located everywhere God's people were, replacing the physical Temple in Jerusalem that would be destroyed by Roman armies in August of 70 A.D.

It is this priestly role for Christians that I want to focus on today.

In Exodus 19, even before the covenant at Mount Sinai was affirmed, even before the Ten Commandments were given, God told the people of Israel that his ultimate aim was to use them as a priestly nation. (Up until this point, only Aaron and his children were priests. And Aaron was from the tribe of Levi – just one among the 13 Israelite tribes.)

As all the people from all the Israelite tribes were standing in front of Mount Sinai, God told them that they were to be a particular blessed people, but with a universal orientation. They were to be a priestly nation.

They were to enjoy tribal blessings for themselves in order to do effective global outreach for others.

But this never happened, because the covenant that followed was never  
Exodus 19: 3-8 (NRSV) reports:

### FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST CONSISTORY MEETING

**JANUARY 11, 2022**

Sandy Powell was appointed to fill the last year of Brad Hocker's unexpired term as Elder.

Nominating Committee Report

- Brian Treisch nominated as candidate to replace outgoing Elder Bill Shifley.

- Sue Bloom nominated as candidate to replace outgoing Deacon Brian Treisch.

- Dan Eichhorn nominated as candidate to replace outgoing Trustee Larry Ness.

Mission Report-January: will be One Great of Sharing; February: Souper Bowl of Caring and Blankets.

The church's website and Facebook are being updated.

An up to date covid vaccination is a condition of employment at Galion First United Church.

### CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

**JANUARY 11, 2022**

Alan Mularski reviewed the 2021 financial reports and thanked the finance committee, especially Mary Ann Stone.

Douglas Court presented the Endowment Committee report and announced that due to a very high return on investment this past year an additional \$30,000 will be turned over to the consistory for use.

The budget was passed.

The motion to begin the remodel of the fellowship hall was passed.

Brian Treisch was elected Elder.

Sue Bloom was elected Deacon.

Dan Eichhorn was elected Trustee.

## Finance Committee

This congregation never ceases to amaze. The 2021 budget asked you for \$134,000 in envelope giving and you gave over \$141,000. You have done this while supporting an expanded broadcast and streaming ministry. For this reason we are able to start 2022 without having depleted our reserve funds.

The approved budget for 2022, while tight, allows for some needed building improvements and has enough flexibility and reserves available for unexpected expenses, such as energy costs and inflation.

The guiding principle of the Finance Committee is to use conservative money management with an eye to getting the most out of your giving dollars. We encourage you to remember First Church in your stewardship of giving the resources God has provided. As individuals, we are all a vital part of this church, and the fruits of our giving will be our reward for years to come.

## Memorial Endowment Committee

In 2011 the Memorial Endowment Fund was valued at \$555,000. The end value in 2021 is \$909,000. This \$354,000 growth is due to good advice from our Edward Jones Inc. advisors and the positive growth of the stock market. The 2021 growth was large enough to allow the Memorial Endowment Committee to transfer \$30,000 to Consistory funds to be used as reserves or programming. This will happen at the February Consistory meeting.

The purpose of the Memorial Endowment Committee is to invest and monitor the endowments of First Church to provide a stable source of income. To this end, \$22,900 of income was provided from this fund in 2021 and included in the 2021 budget.

Then Moses went up to God; the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the Israelites: You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the people. Indeed, the whole earth is mine, but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the Israelites."

So Moses came, summoned the elders of the people, and set before them all these words that the LORD had commanded him. The people all answered as one: "Everything that the LORD has spoken we will do." Moses reported the words of the people to the LORD.

Then in short order, God gave the Israelites the Ten Commandments and other laws and commands, and a covenant was entered into by the people and God. Nevertheless, the rest of the Old Testament is largely a chronicle of the failure of this people to faithfully keep that covenant. They lacked God's Holy Spirit, which was needed to keep the Old Covenant. Therefore, a New Covenant was required, through Jesus Christ, the new Moses. The new followers of Jesus now have God's Holy Spirit.

So they have the ability to obey and keep the New Covenant in ways the Old Covenant could not be kept under the first Moses.

Simon Peter, in I Peter 2: 4-10 (NRSV) writes:

Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in scripture:

"See, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."

To you then who believe, he is precious; but to those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the very head of the corner."

and

"A stone that makes them stumble, and a rock that makes them fall."

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

The book of Hebrews expands on this priesthood theme, presenting Jesus as the great high priest, inviting all of us who believe in Jesus to come boldly behind the curtain into the very Holy of Holies of the presence of God. This was forbidden in the physical Temple in Jerusalem for anyone other than high priest, who went only after rigorous washings and purification rituals.

In Hebrews 10: 19-22 (NRSV), we read:

Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh), and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Priests and pastors basically function to bring God to the people and to bring the people to God. In addition, priests and pastors encourage and lead people to behave in ways that please God and bless their neighbors.

Two verses further on, in this same chapter, we read how the Christians being addressed are encouraged to take a priestly, pastoral leadership role in encouraging – indeed “provoking” – love and good behavior and full participation in the life of the church, even as we approach the conclusion of the age. So please note what the priestly role of ordinary followers of Jesus the Great High Priest looks like in Hebrews 10: 24-25 (NRSV):

And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Revelation 1: 6 (NRSV) tells us that Jesus Christ has “made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father.” Revelation 5: 10 (NRSV) speaks of Christians who have given their lives for their Savior Jesus Christ, who has “made them to be a kingdom and priests serving our God, and they will reign on earth.”

This idea that all Christians are called to be priests is one of the major emphasis points of the Protestant revolution 500 years ago. This Protestant and also very biblical self-understanding has been called the “Priesthood of All Believers.” All the reformers believed this. Though to be fair, the Roman Catholic Church also teaches that all Christians have individual ministries, which largely boils down to the same thing.

So all of us Christians do have individual priestly, pastoral and ministerial callings from God, which must be focused externally on others.

This is not just some Christians. This is all Christians.

Then, logically, we have to conclude and believe that all congregations -- where all



# February

## The Love of God

Day 1 – John 3:16-17

Day 2 – Romans 5:8

Day 3 – 1 John 4:7-8

Day 4 – Romans 8:35-39

Day 5 – Zephaniah 3:17

Day 6 – Galatians 2:20

Day 7 – 1 John 4:16-19

Day 8 – 1 John 3:1

Day 9 – Jeremiah 31:3

Day 10 – Ephesians 2:4-5

Day 11 – 1 Peter 5:6-7

Day 12 – John 15:13

Day 13 – Ephesians 3:14-19

Day 14 – Psalm 86:15

Day 15 – Isaiah 54:10

Day 16 – Psalm 136

Day 17 – Romans 5:5

Day 18 – 1 John 4:9-11

Day 19 – John 13:34-35

Day 20 – 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Day 21 – Deuteronomy 7:9

Day 22 – Isaiah 49:15-16

Day 23 – John 15:9-11

Day 24 – Lamentations 3:22-23

Day 25 – Psalm 103:8-17

Day 26 – Titus 3:4-5

Day 27 – Luke 12:6-7

Day 28 – Ephesians 1:3-6



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- |                         |                            |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 3rd: Douglas Conklin    | 23rd: Frank Isaacs         |
| Scott Keller            | Doug Stone                 |
| 9th: Dan Eichhorn       | Maggie Sulser              |
| Ryan Neal               | 24th: Ellie McKibben       |
| 10th: Alycia Palmer     | Kerry Weithman             |
| Donald Harvey           | 25th: Twila Hiatt          |
| 13th: Travis Koschnick  | Brock Ritzhaupt            |
| 14th: Carole Schreck    | Robin Zier                 |
| Angela Young            | 26th: Zaine Furr           |
| 15th: Sue Kindell       | 28th: Mary Jeffers         |
| 16th: Megan Brown       | 29th: Matt Furr            |
| Marcheta Gibson         | Cheryl Ketterman           |
| Kerry Riggs             |                            |
| 18th: Blaine Winegarden |                            |
| Jodi Merry              |                            |
| 19th: Todd Rudolph      |                            |
| 20th: Chad Burdett      |                            |
| Dan Hayes               |                            |
| Jill Lusk               |                            |
| Chuck Swick             |                            |
| 21st: Carla Russell     |                            |
| 22nd: Marlene McDaniels | 11th: Bucky & Carol Walter |
| Annie Stone             | 25th: Tony & Anna Durtschi |
|                         | 27th: Todd & Amy Guinther  |



the members really are priests -- also have priestly, pastoral and ministerial callings from God, which must be focused externally on others.

As priests, we and our congregation must have an external focus. If we try to focus the job of bringing God to the people and the people to God just on ourselves, then none of this makes sense. We have failed even before we begin. But if the congregation truly becomes and is the church for others, then all of this makes perfect sense.

Just like his goal for ancient Israel, God wants to make us a priestly nation – externally focused, giving ourselves away in service of others. This is God’s will for us, according to the Bible. God wants priestly Christian congregations to be focused on bringing God to the people and the people to God. If the priest just focuses on bringing God to the priest himself and on bringing the priest to God, then the priest has failed.

Let us also adopt the self-understanding of the earliest Christians. We are collectively called to function with an external priestly focus. Nothing else makes sense. For priestly congregations, giving our lives away for others is life-giving. Orienting our priestly congregational lives inwardly – focused on our own survival, just for ourselves – leads to institutional death.

This is why Jesus repeatedly taught, as we see in Luke 17: 33 (NRSV):

“Those who try to make their life secure will lose it, but those who lose their life will find it.”

Let’s believe Jesus on this. Let’s also believe the self-understanding of the earliest Christians on this. Let’s lose ourselves somehow in priestly congregational service to others. Somehow.

And somehow, in so doing, we may find our congregation’s life renewed.  
Amen

Fraternally, Bill Meyer

## 2022 CONSISTORY MEMBERS

### ELDERS

Sandra Powell (22)  
Judy Eichhorn (23)  
Shelly Kurtzman (24)  
Brian Treisch (25)

### DEACONS

Mary Ann Stone (22)  
\*Barb Koschnick (22)  
Maggie Sulser (23)  
Sandy Kennedy (23)  
Sue Bloom (24)  
\*Secretary

### TRUSTEES

Doug Court (22)  
Todd Rudolph (23)  
Todd Knight (24)  
Dan Eichhorn (25)



**OUTREACH MISSIONS**



**BLANKET SUNDAY– HAVE A HEART!**

When difficult times happen, a kind and loving response can make all the difference. That’s why the Church World Service Blankets program was created to give a kind, loving and tangible response to someone facing a difficult time, reminding them they are not alone.

Through the generosity of CWS and support from churches like us, our most vulnerable neighbors around the world can feel safe, warm, and have fresh linen and clean sleeping quarters. When our neighbors are in need, even \$10 for a single blanket goes a long way. In February we honor or remember our loved ones with a donation to CWS program.

Please complete the insert within the Visitor and attach your check to donate to this needy cause. We will have one of these blankets displayed in our sanctuary. A complete list of honorees will be published in our March 6 Bulletin and March Visitor.



**THANK YOU!**

Thank you to everyone that supported our January mission of One Great Hour of Sharing. This is one of the United Church of Christ’s “Five for Five” missions that provides support to folks displaced by means of their own.



**SOUPER BOWL OF CARING**

Our Cincinnati Bengals will be playing in the Super Bowl on February 13<sup>th</sup> , and we will also be collecting cash and canned soup on Sunday, February 13<sup>th</sup> for our local food pantries. The Mission Committee will again match the cash donated so that both the Community Action Center and Cooperative Christian Services will score a “win” for the less fortunate in this community.

**ALTAR FLOWERS**

Please sign the “Flower Chart” on the bulletin board outside the church office.

**RADIO BROADCASTS**

The cost is \$70.00 per broadcast. Please sign the chart posted on the bulletin board outside the church office. Listen on WBCO FM 107.5 on Sunday from 9:00am-10:00am.

**PRAYER CHAIN**

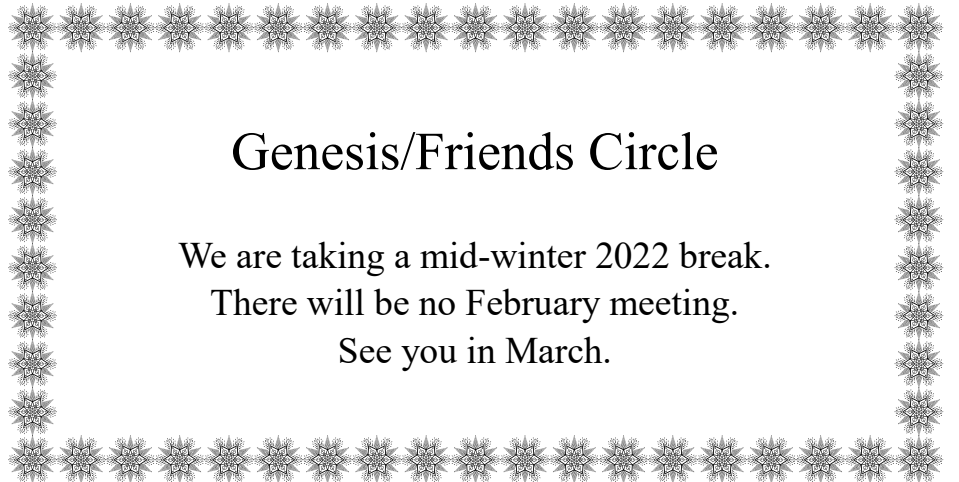
For prayer requests please call the office at 468-4380.

**CARING CORNER**

We continue to have cards to sign in the Caring Corner. If you know of any member, friend or relative who could benefit from visits or cards, please let the office know! Also, please continue to fill the pull tab jar. Little things mean a lot, so save those tabs for the Ronald McDonald House!

**FOOD PANTRY**

Canned meats, boxed potatoes, Jell-0, pudding, paper products, cleaning supplies and personal care products are needed. There are containers at both entrances to the sanctuary.



**Genesis/Friends Circle**

We are taking a mid-winter 2022 break.  
There will be no February meeting.  
See you in March.



**FELLOWSHIP & OUTREACH MEAL**

Thank you to our January cooks and to everyone that donated or picked up a delicious, scalloped potato and ham dinner. Our February Fellowship & Outreach Meal will be held on Thursday, February 17th at 5:00 p.m. It will be carry out and if you can help by baking cookies for dessert, we would greatly appreciate your help. Call the office and have the secretary put your name on our list of bakers. Thanks for all your help!



**HOSPITALIZATIONS**

If you are hospitalized, it is important that you (or a family member) inform the church office. Remember, hospitals can no longer provide us with this information. Please call 419-468-4380.

**CONDOLENCES**

1st UCC extends sympathy to the family of Miriam Shifley who passed away January 3rd and Wendy Fettherolf who passed on January 15/ Please keep their families in your thoughts and prayers.



**HEARTFELT THANKS**

Friends and Family at First Church,  
I want to thank each of you for signing my birthday card—December 28. I know most of you remember lots of our functions over the years.  
God's Blessings,  
Dorothy Rhinehart



**ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP**

Please join us for Ash Wednesday Worship. Service will begin at 7pm Wednesday, March 2 and will also be streamed on FaceBook and YouTube.



**CONGRATULATIONS**

Leighton McDaniel was born to Nick McDaniel and Kelsee Renee Welch.  
Eileen Mounts is Leighton's great grandmother.



## 11. Love Is

Love is patient,  
 Love is kind,  
 It does not envy,  
 It does not boast,  
 It is not proud.  
 It is not rude,  
 It is not self-seeking,  
 It is not easily angered,  
 It keeps no record of wrongs.  
 Love does not delight in evil  
 But rejoices with the truth.  
 It always protects,  
 Always trusts,  
 Always hopes,  
 Always perseveres.  
 Love never fails.  
 (1 Corinthians 13:4-8a NIV)

God Is Love. (1 John 4:8, 16)

Perfect Love Drives Out Fear. (1 John 4:18)



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## 11. Love Is

ANGERED	PROTECTS	PROUD
BOAST	HOPES	RECORD
DELIGHT	KEEPS	REJOICES
DRIVES	KIND	RUDE
EASILY	PATIENT	SELFSEEKING
ENVY	PERFECT	TRUSTS
EVIL	PERSEVERES	WRONGS
FAILS		