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FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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- Rev. Bill MeyerMinister
- Jeanine Girard..... Office Secretary
- Mary Ann Stone-..... Financial Secretary
- Stephanie Sikora Sr. & Bell Choir Director
- Jennifer Arbaugh..... Organist
- Jessica Hammond..... Organist
- Martha SeeKitchen Custodian

First United Church of Christ

248 Harding Way West
Galion, OH 44833
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*“United in Christ’s Joy we
welcome, love and serve all”*

JULY 2022

Volume 37 No. 7

July 2022

Rev. Bill Meyer
Intentional Interim
Pastor



SUNDAY SERVICES

Sunday School
9:00 a.m.
Worship Service
10:00 a.m.



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:

Gentleness and peace vs. polarization

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

We Christians live in an increasingly polarized age -- aided and abetted by our phone apps, our opinion-driven cable "news" channels and our social media. Add to that polarization the stresses of contested national elections and decades-long job losses in our region, and then real disunity becomes possible.

It would be nice to think that none of this affects the church.

But churches also reflect these divisions. Sadly, secular disunity can fracture the Body of Christ. However, a better understanding of how to live into the Gospel of Christ can really help re-unify the church and even show our non-churched neighbors the way out of polarization.

We Christians actually can become agents of healing.

We can become the influencers: for good and for unity.

I would like to suggest that Philippians 2: 1-15 can inform how we live into the Gospel of Christ. It can put a "Christ card" into our hands, and show us how to play it. This "Christ card" means consciously imitating Jesus -- and his approach -- in all we do. This also means imitating Jesus in how we relate to one another. And this can become a huge gift to our secular neighbors.

I also think imitating Jesus can also help overcome the predictable and normal group resistance of church systems (and all systems) to anything different. Even church growth often triggers resistance. We shouldn't be surprised if this happens. But the "Christ card" also leads to purposeful unity in the church. This will be important as we enter a season of discernment -- as we ask what kind of church God is calling us to become in the next five to ten years.

I would even go so far as to suggest that Philippians 2: 1-15 -- and the "Christ card" embedded in it -- is a major spiritual tool for healing church fractures. It moves Christians and church systems into becoming much more the cooperative, spiritual Body of Christ. Paul helpfully tells us in verses 3-5 (NRSV):

July

Encouragement For The Lonely

Day 1: Psalm 139:7-10

Day 2: Psalm 16:11

Day 3: Colossians 3:1-4

Day 4: James 4:8

Day 5: Isaiah 41:10

Day 6: Matthew 11:28

Day 7: Deuteronomy 31:8

Day 8: 1 Peter 5:6-7

Day 9: 2 Corinthians 4:17

Day 10: Psalm 17:15

Day 11: Philippians 4:19

Day 12: John 14:16

Day 13: Romans 15:13

Day 14: Matthew 6:33

Day 15: Psalm 38:9

Day 16: Isaiah 43:1-2

Day 17: Psalm 18:6

Day 18: Exodus 33:14

Day 19: Psalm 27:10

Day 20: Joshua 1:5-6

Day 21: 1 Samuel 12:22

Day 22: Isaiah 58:11

Day 23: Psalm 25:16

Day 24: John 14:18

Day 25: Psalm 23:4

Day 26: John 14:27

Day 27: Isaiah 49:15

Day 28: Psalm 34:18

Day 29: 1 John 4:13

Day 30: Psalm 147:3

Day 31: Matthew 28:20

New Testament Books

J	A	M	E	S	I	J	R	T	G	I	T	M	S
N	T	P	E	T	E	R	R	S	L	E	T	T	S
E	P	H	E	S	I	A	N	S	H	A	P	R	T
A	J	R	R	H	E	B	R	E	W	S	H	E	I
S	N	A	I	H	T	N	I	R	O	C	I	V	M
G	V	H	A	A	E	K	U	L	S	A	L	E	O
A	R	U	P	H	I	L	E	M	O	N	I	L	T
L	E	E	R	O	M	A	N	S	H	J	P	A	H
A	T	I	T	U	S	P	M	N	O	K	P	T	Y
T	A	E	S	I	A	J	A	O	J	M	I	I	S
I	N	J	U	D	E	I	R	I	S	P	A	O	T
A	A	P	J	K	P	T	K	A	N	A	N	N	C
N	N	G	E	P	T	N	H	O	J	O	S	S	A
S	A	L	A	I	N	M	A	T	T	H	E	W	A

- EPHESIANS
- JUDE
- PHILEMON
- TIMOTHY
- CORINTHIANS
- REVELATIONS
- PHILIPPIANS
- TITUS
- MARK
- JOHN
- ACTS
- GALATIANS
- ROMANS
- MATTHEW
- JAMES
- HEBREWS
- PETER
- LUKE

Play this puzzle online at : <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/2859/>

THE INTERIM PASTOR'S NOTEBOOK: (con't)

“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus.”

Polarization and stresses are really nothing new for churches. None of today’s church stresses were absent from the early church. There were conflicts and even fractures. And much of the New Testament deals with resolving differences of perspective and opinion.

Differences of opinion are normal. They are not a sign of pathology or sin within the church or any other group. What is important is not eliminating conflict – we can’t -- or pretending, against the evidence, that there is no conflict. There will always be differences and some conflict. What is important is how we deal constructively with differences of opinion and with normal, issue-oriented conflicts.

Philippians 4: 1-9 sets the stage for understanding the “Christ card” and how to play it constructively when we have differences. It might be worthwhile to re-read this whole passage to yourself before going any further. This passage is a plea for church unity even where there are differences of opinion. There were two female church leaders whose issues with one another were apparently spilling over into and hurting the larger church. Paul asks them “to be of the same mind in the Lord,” in verse 2. Then in verse 4, he urges all of us to adopt what is often missing when there are differences of opinion or issue-oriented conflicts.

Paul urges public gentleness -- and then frank prayer with thanksgiving.

I’m really fascinated by Paul’s appeal to gentleness. This is often what is missing from our polarized American public discourse. Often what seems to be prized is the opposite of gentleness. But Paul tells the Philippians, and us, in verse 5: “Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near.”

Public gentleness is often so unexpected that it is disarming. But whether it works tactically or not, Paul implies that gentleness is what the Lord – who is near – wants from us.

THE INTERIM PASTOR'S NOTEBOOK: (con't)

Another problem in a polarized society or a polarized church is that the opponent is demonized, or “otherized.” We only see what is bad in the person or group on the other side.

Instead, Paul urges us to put our focus on what is good – even in seasons of conflict and real danger. (And at the time he wrote this, Paul was on trial for his life in Rome, accused of being an enemy of the people and an enemy of Caesar.)

Remember that the context of all this is Paul's plea to constructively resolve serious disunity in the church. According to Paul, the outcome of all this is a peace that goes beyond our human understanding. This is stunning. This is not what we learned in the high school debate class. This is not what we expect to see during the current election cycle. But in Philippians 4: 8-9 (NRSV) we are told:

“Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.”

Of course, Paul is not telling us that we should tolerate bullies in the church. But as long as the disagreement in the church is really issue-oriented, the response really should be public gentleness. There should also be an attempt to identify what is good and honorable about the other person and the other person's point of view. “Think about these things.”

Wow! “And the God of peace will be with you.”

Don't be polarized. Don't angrily demonize and “otherize.”
Don't focus on what is bad.



A request from Jo Bosh.
Her aunt Dorothy
Rhinehart is in the hospital.
She is asking to please lift her up in prayer.
The phone number and address for Jo
is available on request.

Please continue to keep the family of
Carol Miller in your prayers.

The birth of Clara Grace born on
Saturday June 25 to
[Ellie Hocker and Steven Groves](#).
She arrived weighing in at
7 pounds, 11 ounces.

Proud parents are
Ellie Hocker and Steven Groves.
Proud grandparents are
Bradley and Stacey Hooker.
Proud paternal great grandmother



Congratulations to Brett & Jill Green!
Baby boy Henry Robert made his debut
on June 12 arriving at
7 lbs. 10oz. and 20” long.
Big sister Evelyn has a new brother!
Grandparents are Ken & Nancy Green.
Great Grandmother is Emma Heiser.



CONSISTORY MEETING JUNE 14, 2022

A 175th Anniversary Celebration for first United Church of Christ will be held in conjunction with the corn roast and planned by Brian Treisch.

Communion kits will be considered for outside communion.

To cut back on costs, all pilot lights in the church will be turned off for summer. Doug Court can be contacted to light pilots if ovens are needed.

Ice Cream Social, Wednesday, July 27, 2022 from 5:30 to 7:30 PM. Lisa Eichhorn and Mary Ann Stone chairing the event and need help from everyone.

The Sunday School Class will sponsor the Corn Roast, Wednesday, August 17, 2022. Submitted by Barb Koschnick

Finance Committee Report for the July "Visitor"

The Finance Committee is presenting this document as a summary of First United Church of Christ of Galion's "Half-Year" giving totals and a projection of our future budgetary considerations.

For the period ending June 26, 2022, our envelope and online giving has totaled \$62,876.52. This translates to 90% of our projected yearly budget on a monthly basis. In comparison, our giving for the previous year was running at \$73,856.82 as of the same date.

Members of the Finance Committee attended a meeting called for June 23, 2022 to address this issue. The Current Operating Fund of the budget has been placed under strain because of a combination of the gap in giving and an increase in expenses related to utilities and acquiring a new interim Minister and Church Secretary. After considerable discussion, the Committee decided that the most prudent course of action lay in revamping the 2022 budget to reflect the present realities. As a consequence, Consistory will be asked to approve a "new" recommended budget to carry us to the end of the year.

The Finance Committee recognizes that a number of these expenses will drop off as time progresses. In the meantime, it is our hope that the Congregation continues its support of our Church and its missions.

Respectfully submitted by,
Alan Mularski (Committee Chair)

THE INTERIM PASTOR'S NOTEBOOK: (con't)

Instead, "be of the same mind in the Lord." Instead, "let your gentleness be known to everyone." Instead, "if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."

There is also a major theological reason to turn to Christ himself whenever we face polarization in the church. According to the book of Ephesians, whenever there are two groups operating in good faith that have opposing interests, or opposing opinions, or even opposing identities, Christ wants to be a bridge and close the gap. Where there are barriers, Christ knocks them down, if we consent.

He takes the two—us and them—and creates one new us.

This is nothing short of theologically miraculous. This miraculous unification is the work of the cross of Christ. This is exactly the same unifying, depolarizing message as that of the Christ-hymn discussion found in Philippians 2. Yet, Christ and his cross unifies us without obliterating the uniqueness of either group. Only Christ can truly create unity within diversity. In Ephesians 2: 14-18 (NRSV), we learn:

"For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us ... that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body, through the cross ... for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father."

Remember, differences of opinion and issue-oriented conflicts are humanly normal. But resolving those conflicts in a Christ-centered and Christ-powered way that honors the best of the other person or the other group is divinely miraculous. So playing the "Christ card" leads to the peace of Christ among us. This is the internal Work of Christ in you, the hope of glory. May it be so among us. Amen.

Fraternally, Bill Meyer

**Fairhaven Community
Volunteer Service
Group Newsletter
June 20, 2022**



Due to pandemic this meeting was held at Emmanuel UCC, 13898 Township Rd. 127, Upper Sandusky, OH.

President Barb Nigh called the meeting to order and offered devotions.

Roll Call: Volunteers – 14, Staff – 1
Minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved.
Treasury Balance - \$3,1089.76
Gift Shop - \$1,106.04
Bingo Cup - \$14.00

VSG Business:

Nothing new to report concerning the packing of dolls.
The meeting was informed that there has been a re-emergence of Covid at Fairhaven infecting residents and staff. Therefore, the involvement of our volunteers at the bingo has been cancelled until further notice.

The volunteers will plan on furnishing pies and assisting with bingo following the July meeting with the hope that the Covid will be under control at that time and volunteers will be allowed in once again.

Concerning the Online Auction, it was agreed to hold it either the week of Nov. 7th through the 11th or November 14th through 18th; whichever is able to be scheduled through Castles Auction. The letter to be sent to the various churches concerning the auction was discussed with changes noted. The final dates for the auction and the revised letter will be presented at the meeting in July.

**happy
ANNIVERSARY**

JULY 2nd	Larry & Mary Shifley
6th	Kevin & Kelly Spore
7th	Adrian & Becky Sunday
9th	Chris & Melissa Stiffler
17th	Dake & Tracie Opperman
18th	Ryan & Deseree Neal
19th	Edward & Rose Crago-Roach
20th	Jack & Barb Koschnick
24th	Alycia & Jason Palmer
26th	Blaine & Susan Winegarden
28th	Dennis & Judy Garverick

Save the Date!!

Wed. Aug. 17



1st UCC's Annual Corn Roast!

(stay tuned!)

Happy Birthday

July

July

**3rd: Katelynn Claus
Mitchell McKibben
Gail Spore**

**22nd: Jim Nigh
23rd: Hannah Ruth
24th: David Christman**

**6th: Sherri Murray
7th: Connie Eichhorn
9th: Matt Jeffers
Amy Watts
Chloe Schreck**

**25th: Kathy Kruger
26th: Doug Court
27th: Bruce McKibben
Rose Crago-
Roach**

**13th: Betty Tucker
Kathy Weithman
14th: Erik Schreck
16th: Alec Kruger**

**28th: Jason Moore
29th: Beth Black
Michael Lovely
Heather Rohr**

**18th: Sandra Massie
Linnea Stone
21st: Jennifer Lugo**

**30th: Riley Worthington
31st: Brad Hocker
Heidi Repp**

(Fairhaven continued)

She shared the plans for the Memory Care Courtyards needing to be updated. It will be an extensive upgrade with benches, bird feeders, replacement of fences, raised flower beds, etc. Grants and other donations are being requested. More detailed information will be forth coming.

The meeting was closed with "The Way".

The next meeting will be held at Emmanuel UCC on July 18th at 10:30 am. Upper Trinity will have devotions and a sack lunch will be held following the meeting. Arlene, Mary Louise, and Jean will furnish pies and assistance for bingo at Fairhaven following the meeting if volunteers are allowed in the building.

Submitted by Jean Pratt



BORN Garage Sale

Friday July 15 (9:00am-5:00pm) and Saturday July 16 (9:00am-2:00pm). First Alliance Church. 1955 Hopley Ave. Bucyrus.

HUGE Garage Sale to benefits the Bucyrus Outreach & Restoration Network (BORN).

They are looking for donation of items (no clothing, please!!) for their sale and are in need of volunteers. Further questions can be directed to BORN at their office Mon. & Fri. mornings and Wed. afternoon at phone #419-562-2150.



July Fellowship and Outreach Meal

This month's Fellowship and Outreach Meal will be on Thursday, July 21 at 5:00pm. Last month we had 80 people stop and carry out our Picnic!

Thank you to all that help make these meals possible. In July we are looking for our bakers to make cookies for dessert. We also welcome any monetary donations that can be dropped in the offering plate on Sunday morning.

Ice Cream Social

Remember what a wonderful time we all had last year at the Ice Cream Social? It will return to our Pavilion again on Wed. July 27 5:30-7:30pm.



Mark's Homemade Ice Cream will be here with their big red truck serving up their delicious ice cream and we will be serving hot sandwiches, cold salads, desserts, and drinks. Bring your lawn chair(s) and enjoy live entertainment or just catch up with friends.

We will have a sign-up sheet for workers and salad and dessert donations outside the Church office and on the tables at the Pavilion on Sunday mornings. If you are unable to help but would still like to help, we are accepting monetary donations to defray food and paper product expenses.

We need everyone's help to make this event a success. If you have a question, call Lisa Eichhorn (419-569-1709) or Mary Ann Stone (419-631-6442). Come hungry and leave with a full belly and we guarantee you will have a fun time!



Third Friday

Again, this year we will have a booth at the 3rd Friday Celebration in uptown Galion. We will be setting up our popcorn machine and distributing a tasty treat to folks that stop. We can always use help with setting up and staffing our booth. If you would like to help with this event please call the office and let Jeanine know. 3rd Friday Celebration is part of the Chamber of Commerce and local merchants, vendors, and food trucks participate in this event. There is live entertainment on the square and a fun way to see your neighbors and friends. The fun starts at 5:00pm and goes until 8:00pm and will take place on Friday July 15 this month. The next Third Friday Celebration schedule for this year is Aug. 19 and Sept. 16.

Christmas in July

During the month of July, we celebrate the Christmas Fund (Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency fund) and all the faithful servants of our church who find themselves facing unforeseen financial needs. This mission helps to supplement monies for pension and health insurance premiums for clergy and lay employees and their families. Watch for the Christmas tree in the pavilion and drop a little extra in your envelopes for this worthy cause.



We are again a 5 for 5 church for the year 2021. Our certificate acknowledging this fact is posted in the back of the sanctuary in the hallway. Great job gang!