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**FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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- Rev. Bill Meyer .....Minister
- Jeanine Girard..... 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  
419-468-4380



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

Volume 35 No. 5

May 2022

Rev. Bill Meyer  
Minister



**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.

# Reading Ruth for Pentecost

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

As we look forward to Pentecost in about a month, I want to suggest that we might want to prepare by reading the very short Old Testament book of Ruth. This little book could stretch you in your walk with Jesus. There are some very important themes in Ruth that could enrich our understanding of the New Testament's church of Jesus Christ and our understanding of Pentecost.

In the book of Ruth's four chapters, a "forbidden" religious outsider becomes the ultimate religious insider.

Ruth becomes, in this short Scriptural book, a celebrated member of the covenant community of Israel. This is despite some other Scriptures that would seem to prohibit this.

She marries an Israelite. And she becomes the ancestor of both Israel's King David and of Jesus Christ, according to the genealogy of Matthew 1.

Pentecost, of course, is a Christian holiday. But we share it with the Jewish faith.

This is why in the Pentecost story in the Christian book of Acts, it says, "When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind ..." (Acts 2: 1-2a, NRSV)

They were all together because Pentecost was an established, major Jewish holiday, which the entire band of Jesus' disciples were already celebrating.

And so was everyone else in Jerusalem.

## Continuing the New Pastor Search Process

This year has been and will continue to be a transitory year for our church. Searching for a new First UCC Pastor is a process with defined steps that take months to complete. Many groups of church members will have a role in this search process. Thankfully we are making progress in those steps as outlined below.

**Calling an Interim Pastor** - Rev. William Meyer became our Interim Pastor in January after a dedicated search by our Transition Team.

**Holding Small Group Meetings** - (ours were called **Search/Cottage Meetings**) to enable sharing of individual church members' beliefs and needs of the present and future church. Over 50 parishioners participated in these April meetings.

**Leadership Retreat** - Church leaders and the interim pastor will discuss communication and goal setting strategies. Consistory will remain informed and involved in the outcomes of the ongoing work in the search process.

**Discernment Team** - This team will take the short-range goals from the Leadership Retreat and will meet monthly to continue the steps of congregational self-study and planning to create a Discernment Report. The report will be communicated with the Consistory and Congregation-at-large. The approved report becomes our church's *Search Profile*.

**Search Committee** - Using the information in the Discernment Team's *Search Profile*, the Search Committee members will call for pastors interested in serving our church. Their process will involve reviewing applications, interviewing selected applicants and moving to "Calling a Settled Pastor."

**Welcome the New Pastor** - Alleluia!

Prayer leads each step of this complex process. Please continue with intentional prayer for the work of our church in the pastoral search process.

Sincerely, Sandy Powell  
Senior Elder

*It's Graduation time! We would like to recognize this year's graduates at a special church service in June (date TBA).*

*Please have them stop by the Church office for a form to fill out and return.*



# May

## Friendship

Day 1 – Proverbs 18:24  
Day 2 – Ecclesiastes 4:9-12  
Day 3 – John 15:12-14  
Day 4 – Proverbs 27:17  
Day 5 – Proverbs 17:17  
Day 6 – 1 Thessalonians 5:11  
Day 7 – Romans 12:15-17  
Day 8 – Proverbs 27:9  
Day 9 – Job 6:14  
Day 10 – Proverbs 27:6  
Day 11 – 1 Peter 4:8-10  
Day 12 – Hebrews 10:24-25  
Day 13 – Proverbs 16:28  
Day 14 – Romans 12:18-21  
Day 15 – 1 Corinthians 1:1-8  
Day 16 – Proverbs 13:20  
Day 17 – Luke 6:27-31  
Day 18 – Proverbs 27:5-6  
Day 19 – 1 John 4:7-8

Day 20 – Romans 12:9-10  
Day 21 – Proverbs 22:24-25  
Day 22 – Colossians 3:12-14  
Day 23 – Philippians 2:1-4  
Day 24 – 2 Corinthians 13:11  
Day 25 – Romans 15:5-7  
Day 26 – John 17:20-23  
Day 27 – 1 Corinthians 1:10  
Day 28 – 1 John 4:11-12  
Day 29 – Romans 12:13-14  
Day 30 – 1 John 4:19-21  
Day 31 – Ephesians 4:1-6



In the Old Testament, Pentecost is called the “festival of weeks” in Deuteronomy 16: 9-12. It is seven weeks or so after the Passover celebrations – or about 50 days. This 50 days is where we get the Greek name “Pentecost” for the holiday.

Pentecost is associated with the early harvest of barley in ancient Palestine. It is originally an agricultural celebration. (It also often lines up neatly with the harvest of winter wheat in parts of west-central Ohio.)

In today’s modern Jewish synagogue liturgy, Pentecost is associated with the book of Ruth. This short book is set in “Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest” (Ruth 1: 22), during the time of the judges, before Israel had a king.

Today, when the day of Pentecost is fully come in the Jewish synagogue, the entire book of Ruth is read. If we assume that this was also true in the first century, this would mean that this story of Ruth the outsider – now become an insider – is ringing in the ears of not only the followers of Jesus on the day of Pentecost, but also of all the rest of the people in Jerusalem.

Ruth is a Moabite, not an Israelite.

As the story unfolds, Ruth the widow returns to Bethlehem with her widowed mother-in-law, Naomi. She ends up marrying a relative of her mother-in-law’s late husband. His name is Boaz. And Boaz’ mother was also a non-Israelite. According Matthew 1: 5-6, her name was Rahab. This was the inn-keeper and prostitute in Jericho who protected the Israelite spies. (See Joshua 2: 1-24.)

Sometimes we think that religious inclusion begins only in the New Testament, especially in the book of Acts, as the circles of inclusion in the church become wider and wider.

But Ruth pictures the same process beginning in the Old Testament, in the core stories of the ancient people of Israel. So radical inclusion -- extravagant hospitality -- would seem to have been God's intention all along.

So here is the problem: In ancient Israel, marriages with non-Israelites were strongly discouraged – and forbidden for Israel's priests.

(In the New Testament, the followers of Jesus clearly see him as the ultimate high priest. This is the message of the book of Hebrews. Jesus is the high priest of all high priests. Forever. Yet the birth genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1 includes several inconvenient, non-Israelite women among his ancestors. This list includes Ruth.)

But there is a more serious problem:

In Deuteronomy 23: 1-6, there are three groups described, who are seemingly not to become a part of Israel's covenant community.

The first seemingly prohibited group are eunuchs. Their status was strongly associated with a horrible act of worship for an ancient, pagan fertility goddess. (But shortly after Pentecost, Acts 8: 26-40 describes the deacon Philip responding to the Holy Spirit's prompting about this question. Philip both implicitly denies that there was any obstacle to baptizing the Ethiopian eunuch, and then he baptizes him into full membership in the New Covenant community of the Christian church.)

Second are "those born of an illicit union." (This was one of the cruel and bogus accusations hurled against Jesus. In John 8: 19, Jesus' opponents implied that he was illegitimate. "Then they said to him, 'Where is your Father?' " And in another pointed jab at Jesus, in John 8: 41, "They said to him, 'We are not illegitimate children.'" This accusation was aimed at disqualifying Jesus as a member, or at least as a leader, of the Israelite covenant community.)




## Birthdays

1st:	Kairi Sikora	26th:	Jerri Mularski
3rd:	Kenneth Ketterman		Loren Stone
	Jeffrey Kurtzman		Paul Sulser
	Mike Motter	27th:	Ethan Hocker
	Ella Pfeifer	29th:	Chris Coe
5th:	Jessica Kruger		Phillip Feik
6th:	Emma Heiser		Ellie Heiser
	Mitchell Young		Ian Lamontagne
7th:	Madison Kindell	30th:	Ellie Hocker
8th:	Linda Cahill	31st:	William Burgess
11th:	Nicole Claus		Anna Marie Durtschi
12th:	Joshua Kennedy		
15th:	Joseph Lugo		
17th:	Aiden Collins		
19th:	James Deppen		
	Nolan McKibben		
20th:	Krisanna Deppen		
	Stacey Hocker	6th:	Don & Sue Kindell
	Jessica Moore	16th:	Gary & Heidi Repp
21st:	Glenn DeWitt	20th:	Matt & Becky Harmon
	Carol Moran	21st:	Dan & Marci Brown
22nd:	Barb MacMichael		Richard & Trudy DeWitt
23rd:	Nathaniel Cahill	22nd:	Larry & Susan Ness
	John Gibson	24th:	Bradley & Stacey Hocker
24th:	Hollis Walter	31st:	Brad & Krista McKibben



## Anniversaries

# Volunteer Service Group Newsletter

## March 21, 2022

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

President Barb Nigh called the meeting to order.

Minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved. A letter was received from Gloria Hurwitz thanking the group for the Christmas stocking provided for the residents.

Treasury Balance - \$2,537.76

Gift Shop Balance - \$1,106.44

Bingo Cup - \$21.00

### VSG Business:

An additional \$250 was received for the Harvest Festival Donations, taking the total received to about \$1,000. All donations are appreciated, however, it needs to be noted that this leaves the donations over \$2,000 less than the prior year which severely limits what the VSG can do toward Fairhaven's annual "Wish List". Barb stated that new fund raising ideas are needed. The only two suggestions were "zoom grandparents" and "online auction". These will be discussed further at a later meeting.

Barb also shared that Fairhaven does not want large groups of twenty or more in the building at one time. It was suggested that we have groups of three or four persons at one time working on various projects. Project suggestions are as follows: 1 - doll room needs to be cleared and the dolls put in original boxes, 2 - door decorations, 3 - help with crafts in memory unit, 4 - help with bingo and refreshments, and 5 - help with gift shop. Marcy Miller, Marlene McDaniels, and Rhonda Harvey volunteered to do the door decorations.

**Staff:** Alyssa Clous reported for Jean Smith. She stated that Fairhaven is watching the county color of COVID-19 to determine when volunteers will again be permitted in the facility. Volunteers need to sanitize their hands and wear surgical masks. One person with COVID-19 is considered an outbreak. When the county shows low numbers we will be able to meet at Fairhaven.

There is a new guide for volunteers and employees which will be sent to all our members before our next meeting. Fairhaven is doing a staff give away raffle for excess furnishings such as TV's, refrigerators and small items.

Karen, the director of nursing for 37 years, is retiring. A replacement has been hired. The new chaplain is Rev. Darla Mezz.

Also, the residents are anxious for the gift shop to open. No date has been set yet. The next meeting will be April 18<sup>th</sup> with Marion First having devotions with a sack lunch following the meeting. The meeting will continue to be held at Emmanuel UCC unless notified differently.

The third seemingly prohibited group are Moabites -- because their ancestors sought to curse the Israelites on their exodus from Egypt and on their journey to the promised land. This seeming prohibition extends "even to the tenth generation," according to Deuteronomy 23: 3.

As we may have learned in confirmation class, Pentecost is the birthday of the church. Pentecost also marks the beginning of dramatic expansion of the church, the New Covenant community of God.

Pentecost is the beginning of God drawing wider and wider the circle of inclusion through Jesus Christ. Pentecost also invites us to interpret Scriptural passages of seeming exclusion in the light of Jesus Christ, who makes all things new. Who now brings salvation to both Jew and gentile, and all who are far off (See Acts 2: 39).

We are seemingly invited, post-Pentecost, to interpret Scripture in such a way as to see God affirming human needs -- even when the letter of the law, in our limited understanding, would seem to disaffirm.

I want to suggest that the book of Ruth also carries the wonderful life-affirming and extravagantly welcoming message of the Christian Pentecost and the whole book of Acts.

Ruth is the affirmed and celebrated ancestor of Jesus, in whose name all peoples are saved.

May we affirm and celebrate him as we prepare for Pentecost. May we also affirm and celebrate her, just as the Christmas story in the beginning of Matthew does.

May it be so. Amen.

Fraternally, Bill Meyer



### **Fellowship and Outreach Meal**

Thank you to all who helped with our April Fellowship and Outreach Meal, even if it was only to donate or pick up a meal. We served Florida steak, mashed potatoes, green beans, and peach cobbler for dessert. Our next Community Meal will be on Thursday, May 19 at 5:00pm.

Carry out only. Sandy Kennedy would like our volunteer bakers to make cupcakes for dessert. Watch for the sign-up sheet outside the office if you can bring cupcakes.

### **Strengthen the Church**

Our mission this month is 'Strengthen the Church.' This mission is one of the United Church of Christ '5 for 5' Missions. Its purpose is to help churches to grow and expand the love and mission of the United Church of Christ. You can drop your donation in the offering plate, or you can purchase a beautiful red geranium to brighten our sanctuary on Sunday, May 22. Enclosed in this month's Visitor is the sign-up sheet to honor or remember someone that has been an influence in your life.

### **United Church Homes/Easter Flowers**

Thank you to all who donated a beautiful lily, tulip or hyacinth that helped to make our Easter Service so special. Enclosed in this month's Visitor is the list of donors. We also made a generous donation to United Church Homes with the proceeds from the flowers! Thanks again!

### **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 107.5 FM on Sunday from 9:00am-10:00am.

### **FOOD PANTRY**

Cereal, canned meats, dry or canned milk, and canned fruits are requested for May. Paper products, cleaning supplies and personal care products are needed. There are containers at both entrances to the sanctuary.



### **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!

### **Genesis Friends Monday 23rd at 6:00 pm.**

Calling all members! It's that time again to plant flowers around the church. Bring your gardening tools for planting and have a great time fellowshiping while we work. Afterwards, we will be going to Wendy's for our supper and a brief meeting. See you at the church.

### **Dining Room Remodeling Update:**

The dining room is coming along. The ceiling and lights are down. The poles have been framed and dry walled.

The air conditioner work above the ceiling is ready for the ceiling to go up. We are waiting for the crew to come in and install the ceiling.

Then the new LED lights and the ceiling air conditioning will be installed. Hopefully, by the end of the month the first phase will be completed.

Sincerely, Chairperson Lisa Eichhorn



*We are sorry to report the death of Andrew Sikora on Monday April 18. He leaves behind his wife and young daughters. His parents are John and Stephanie Sikora.*



A memorial service for Miriam Voelm Berry will be held on Saturday June 18th at 11:30 in the Activity Center of Bristol Village in Waverly Ohio. 660 E. 5th St. Waverly.

Miriam was the wife of long time First Church Pastor Donald Voelm. Several years after Rev. Voelm's untimely passing, she married former First Church Elder John Berry.

Miriam will be remembered as a teacher, photographer, friend and mother to Greg, Polly and Amy. After talking happily to her family for hours, she died peacefully on March 18th. Friends and members of First Church are invited to attend the service.

*Shut-in list. We are in the process of updating our shut in list. If you know of someone to add or amend to the list, please leave a*

### **CONSISTORY MEETING SUMMARY MAY 12, 2022**

Over 50 attended Cottage Meetings. A summary will follow and a "Preparing for the Search" retreat is being planned for Saturday morning, May 21, 2022.

Construction in the dining room is progressing.

A leak in the east roof has been repaired and the east arch stained glass window will be mortared and tuck-pointed. Columbia Gas has reduced our monthly budget.

194 Church World Service Blankets were sent and 18 personal care kits and supplies for 24 buckets have been received.

A Pastoral Relations Committee will be formed.  
(Submitted by Barb Koschnick)

### **Flowers Are Given In Loving Memory of :**

*Herb & Carole Brown by Philip & Sundie Brown  
Bill & Marjorie Court by the Court family  
Mary Court by the Court family  
Shannon Court by the Court family  
Nancy S. Doyle by Maggie, Jim & Paul Sulser  
Howard & Anna Deppen by their family  
Betty and Fritz Durtschi by the Durtschi family*



*Kaylee Eichhorn by Keith & Judy Eichhorn  
Lavern & Nelda Eichhorn by Keith & Judy Eichhorn  
Lowell & Mabel Eichhorn by Dan & Lisa Eichhorn  
Larry Goldsmith by Lynne Goldsmith  
Our loved ones by Sandy Keller & Lynne Goldsmith  
Our Loved Ones Who Have Passed Away by Jim & Ellie Hesier  
R.A."Bud" Heiser by his family  
Robert & Hilda Heiser by their family*

*John F. Heitzman by Jim & Nancy Reid  
John Heitzman by Mary Ann & our children  
John Heitzman by Janet Ruth  
Theresa Heitzman by Janet Ruth  
Howard Hocker by Brad & Stacey Hocker  
Mrs. Lena (Tracht) Hocker by Sally A. (Tracht) Heximer*

*Chuck Hollingsworth by Philip & Sundie Brown  
Joyce Hollingsworth by Philip & Sundie Brown  
Roger Keller by Sandy Keller  
Arpad & Teresa Kiss by 1st U.C.C Mission Committee  
Rosemary McDaniel by Tim McDaniel*

**(Con't.) Flowers Are Given In**

**Loving Memory of :**

Harold & Jeanne Meyer by William D. Meyer  
Clarence & Leannah Miller by Dale Miller  
Rev. John Miller by Marcy Miller & Family  
Stan & Anna Mae Morris by Philip & Sundie Brown  
Kyle Morrissey by Philip & Sundie Brown  
Herbert Mountz by Tim McDaniel  
Our parents & grandparents by the Neal and Hayes Families



Cloyd & Mildred Rhinehart by Jo & Dave Bosh  
Cloyd & Mildred Rhinehart by Dorothy Rhinehart  
Don Rhinehart by Jo & Dave Bosh  
Don Rhinehart by Dorothy Rhinehart  
Susan Ritzhaupt by Dorothy Rhinehart  
Bob Ruth by Janet Ruth  
Our parents: Joel & Ethel Sames & Elmo & Genevieve Koschnick by Jack & Barb Koschnick

Emery Shaffer by Marjorie Shaffer & Mike Shaffer  
Mindy M. Sheriff by the Fritz Durtschi family  
My Sister Miriam Shifley by Christine Coe  
Miriam Shifley by Genesis/Friends  
James E. Smith by Gary & Brenda Neal & Family  
John & Helen Stuit by Keith & Judy Eichhorn

Flower donations are listed in alphabetical order by the last name of the person the donation is given for. If a name is not specified, the donation is listed by the donor's last name.

**Flowers Are Given In Honor of :**

Helen Bosh by Bill & Lynne Shifley  
Barb Hedges by Bill & Lynne Shifley  
Ruth Essex by Bill & Lynne Shifley  
Our children & grandchildren by Dan & Lisa Eichhorn  
Our children, grandchildren & great grandchildren by Jim & Ellie Heiser  
Our children & grandchildren: Travis, Kerri, Caleb, Caitlin, Tyler, Janelle, Marissa, Madisson & Mathis Koschnick by Jack & Barb Koschnick



Our grandson, Vance Palmer by Philip & Sundie Brown  
Dorothy Rhinehart by Jo & Dave Bosh  
Our siblings by the Neal and Hayes Families  
The See Family & Loved Ones by Gary & Martha See  
My children & grandchildren by Pat Winters  
Beverly Wittibschlager by Douglas & Mary Ann Stone

**Flowers Are Given To The Glory of God by :**

Bruce & Betty Angell  
Sue Bloom  
Genesis Friends  
Marlene McDaniels & family  
Marcy Miller  
Carol Moran  
Bill & Lynne Shifley

Thank you to all those who purchased flowers and to those who designated their Easter flower to be taken to a member on our Care List. Proceeds from the Easter flowers will be sent to the United Church Homes to help cover expenses for those persons in need.