

Dear Friends,

We give out Advent Devotionals every year. Maybe you already have one. They're meant to help open our eyes to the coming of God into the world and even more into our lives. In the devotion for December 6, Tony Robinson remembers the old story about a guy who every time the lottery results are announced, would complain loudly to God. "Is it too much to ask," he laments, "that just once I should win?" Once again, the results are announced and the guy says, "All this time, Lord, I have been so faithful, so righteous. Could I not win the lottery once?" Suddenly a voice booms from the clouds, "Give me a chance – at least buy a ticket."

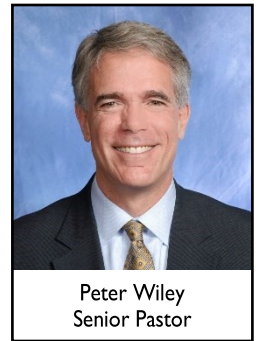
There's another story, much like that one that tells about a desperate town in Nebraska in the midst of a terrible drought. The crops are parched and wells are running dry. The town church decides to hold a prayer service. Everybody in town comes and prays for rain. The place is packed with everyone giving personal pleas to God for a dousing rain. The preacher gets in the pulpit and looks out at the people. She says, "Why did you even bother coming here? You say you came to ask God for rain. So why didn't you bring umbrellas?"

Advent asks us to do more than speak words of anticipation of the Babe of Bethlehem. Advent calls on us to open our hearts and *expect* the change that comes with God palpably present in our lives. It's easy to say, "maybe I'll experience something in these weeks that inspires me into a bit of the Christmas spirit." It's something all-together different to *expect* to see the face of God in each and every person we encounter in these busy days. Advent is about so much more than decking out a tree and putting up lights outside our homes. It includes those things that are visible reminders of that which we celebrate, and yet it is about something so much more. Advent is a time when we are called to intentionally remove some of the clutter that's been collected in our lives to make room for the tender baby of God to enter our lives. I know I'm tempted to call out asking why I'm not finding God present in these days, only to realize God didn't get much of a chance if I didn't expectantly make room for God's presence.

Yes, in these weeks leading up to Christmas, it helps to be more intentional about our faith. It is good to be in church every week. It's good to set aside more time for quiet reflection and prayer. And it's important to open our eyes to God present in the now. All those things matter a lot. And yet . . . it matters even more that we come to each moment *expectantly*. Come into this season, not just look, but knowing that God will be found in the now. Do that, and you will know Christmas in all its wonder.

May this season of Advent be a blessed time for you and yours.

As always,  
Peter



Peter Wiley  
Senior Pastor



Jeanette Brodersen  
Associate Pastor

**Home Communion** - Jesus liked to eat. Or perhaps more accurately, Jesus liked to eat with friends and even strangers. Time and time again throughout the Gospels, we hear of Jesus sitting down to meals with his disciples, with crowds of thousands, with sinners and outcasts, with religious officials, with friends and followers. Food, of course, is necessary for our bodies, providing us with physical nourishment. But sharing food with others—having a meal together—that can often provide nourishment for our souls, something we perhaps didn't even know we needed until we get up from the table to say goodbye and realize a satisfaction has settled deep within our being, beyond the contents of our stomachs.

It's not surprising that Jesus chose a meal, specifically bread and wine, as the way for his disciples to remember him. "Do this in remembrance of me," he told them as he broke the bread and passed the cup to them. "Share. Nourish your bodies and your souls. Remember my love, my life, our connection through this meal," he was telling them. A simple meal becomes holy, becomes sacramental, as we remember and experience the love and grace of God through it.

You know we do this remembrance every first Sunday of the month in worship when we partake of Holy Communion together. *But did you know we will also bring Communion to you, to your home?* Our three pastors (Peter, Steve, and myself), along with Kathy Yeakley, our parish nurse, or Peggy Hudson, former Deacon and Deaconess, would be glad to visit you and share in a brief service of Holy Communion, doing exactly what Jesus asked his disciples to do two thousand years ago—to remember him and his love through a simple meal of bread and cup.

Whether you've been away from worship for a long time, or not, Home Communion is for anyone wishing to share that sacred meal. It's a way to revive the soul and to connect to the worship life of the congregation from wherever you are. There's no limit on the number of times we can take Communion. Nor does it have to happen only in the sanctuary. It happens when we need or want it, whenever two or three are gathering in Jesus' name.

Peggy Hudson recently shared with me how she first became introduced to Home Communion several years ago when she served as a Deacon. She recalled that she and her husband, Tom, would visit with and serve Communion to long-time member Mary Lane. A few months ago, after finishing her term of service with the Deaconess Board, Peggy decided to continue serving the congregation by reinvigorating our Home Communion ministry. As she was going through the church's Home Communion kits, she noticed one was purchased in 2008 in Mary's memory. She now uses that kit as she goes to your homes with Communion, a fitting way to remember—to remember Jesus, to remember those church members and friends who have gone before us, to remember the care and worship our congregation shares, to remember God's great love for each one of us.

Please call Peggy (330-650-1199) or the church office (330-650-4048) to let us know when we can visit you and bring Home Communion.

Peace, *Jeanette*

## Longest Night Service \*

### Thursday, December 20, 2018 ~ 7:00 pm

*Childcare is available*

If Christmas doesn't quite feel like a happy time this year, join us for this quiet, meditative service. Together we'll pray, sing, read scripture, light candles, and remember that God's presence is with all of us, no matter where we are on life's journey during this holy season.

~ All are welcome ~

\* This service is held on or near the winter solstice, the longest night of darkness during the year, and acknowledges how we are sometimes living through the "longest nights" of our lives during the holiday season.



## Perfectly Imperfect

The first Christmas was perfect, just perfect!  
Jesus was born in a manger,  
with the animals all humming in unison,  
while the Angels were singing  
Glory to God in the Highest.  
Mary experienced no pain while giving childbirth  
and little baby Jesus never cried!

That is how I imagine that first Christmas.  
Yet it is probably a far cry from reality.  
Truth be told, it was probably  
much more like the Christmas we experience today!

We hope that it is going to be absolutely perfect...  
Kids patiently waiting to rise in the morning...  
Extended family getting along flawlessly...  
Every gift you purchased is exactly what that person had hoped for...  
And everyone, everyone, even Aunt Esther  
who is never happy, is happy!  
*Ahhhh... wouldn't that be just wonderful???*

But truth be told  
Christmas and the season leading up to it...  
is perfect,  
perfectly messy,  
perfectly imperfect,  
perfectly unique,  
perfectly yours!

May you, this Advent and Christmas,  
give yourself permission  
to reimagine, recreate,  
the perfect Christmas...  
One that is imperfect...  
One that is flawed...  
One that is YOURS!

And in doing so,  
may you sense the Freedom and Joy  
that are meant to come this time of year  
by releasing unrealistic expectations.

Blessings, *Steve*



Steve Hockstra  
Associate Pastor

# ADULT FAITH FORMATION



**Pathfinders** - Join us Sunday, **December 2**, 9:00-10:15 am or any week in the third floor Chapel. We are continuing discussion of Dr. Andrew Newberg's video series, *The Spiritual Brain: Science and Religious Experience*. We have recently explored speaking in tongues, mystical states, near-death experiences, and the "believing brain" manifested in placebos, illusions, emotions, and memories – quite interesting!! Contact Marie Libby: [mclibby64@aol.com](mailto:mclibby64@aol.com).

**Congregational Conversations** - This weekly Bible study led by Rev. Steve Hockstra meets on Tuesdays, **December 4 - 18**, 1:30 – 2:30 pm, at Laurel Lake Mixing Place #1. Contact Steve Hockstra: [Shockstra@hudsonucc.org](mailto:Shockstra@hudsonucc.org).

**JourneyMen Sunrise Breakfast** - All men are invited to join in fellowship for a Sunrise Breakfast meeting, 6:30 am on Friday, **December 7** at Yours Truly restaurant. Contact Trip Kern: [Trip.Kern@gmail.com](mailto:Trip.Kern@gmail.com).

**ROMEOS, "Retired Older Men Eating Out"** - will meet at 12:30 pm Tuesday, **December 11** at Lager and Vine for lunch and fellowship. Contact Henry Vigor: [hkvigor@windtream.net](mailto:hkvigor@windtream.net).

**Women's Short-Term Bible Study** - Women of FCCH, we've got the perfect New Year's resolution for you!! Resolve now to try an organized Bible Study for the first time, or to get back into regular Bible Study, or to participate in a new Bible Study in 2019! Join us as we dive into God's Word together using Kelly Minter's "No Other Gods: Confronting our Modern Day Idols / The Unrivaled Pursuit of Christ." Often, idols are obvious – money, power, or fame. Sometimes idols are subtler, in the form of sweet loved ones, Instagramable interiors, or busy seasons of ministry. This study will challenge women to evaluate modern-day idols and embrace a deeper, more meaningful relationship with Jesus. Through daily exercises and weekly videos we will explore God's Word and strengthen our faith together. Invite a friend and mark your calendars now. All are welcome!

- **Wednesdays, January 9 - February 27** (only eight weeks)
- Daytime: 12:30 – 2:00 pm OR Evening: 6:45 – 8:15 pm
- Workbooks provided for all participants
- Evening childcare available upon request
- Sign-ups throughout December

Questions? Contact Tracy Zappone: [pzappone@yahoo.com](mailto:pzappone@yahoo.com).

**He Changed the World! Jesus' life, death, resurrection and ministry changed the world!** - Join us this January for an eight-week study of the first book of the New Testament, Matthew, which covers the life, death, resurrection and ministry of the man who changed the world! Sign-up for this study by emailing the church office at [churchoffice@hudsonucc.org](mailto:churchoffice@hudsonucc.org). Childcare is available for the evening sessions upon request.

- **Thursdays, January 10 - February 28**
- Morning: 10:00 - 11:30 am
- Evening: 7:00 - 8:30 pm

Questions? Contact Steve Hockstra: [shockstra@hudsonucc.org](mailto:shockstra@hudsonucc.org).

# ADULT FAITH FORMATION

## **SoulCollage® EXPERIENCE** - Prayerfulness and Self-Discovery...

- Do you aspire to connect more closely to that which is holy within?
- Would you enjoy exploring your spirituality through the use of imagery, imagination and intuition?
- Are you open to experiencing your “self” and spirit in a playful way?

Kelly Berger will introduce us to the quiet, reflective, and illuminating process of SoulCollage® where participants prayerfully create unique, personal and meaningful collaged cards. No artistic ability is required! Two options:

- **Saturday, January 26**, 9:30 - 11:30 am
- **Sunday, January 27**, 12:45 - 2:45 pm (after 11:59 worship)

Light refreshments will be provided. Child care is available upon request. No fee. Please register via the church office or Connection Card. Questions? Kelly Berger: [KACBerger@aol.com](mailto:KACBerger@aol.com).

**Interfaith Group** - Watch! This group will resume meeting in January to further its mission to study other world religions and connect with those of other faiths. Contact Van Carter: [interfaithucc@gmail.com](mailto:interfaithucc@gmail.com).

**The Bridge Club:** Mothers of teens and young adults meet monthly for friendship and support as they transition to a new phase of life. We are planning another terrific Winter Retreat!! Contact Katie Morgan: [KMorgan@hudsonucc.org](mailto:KMorgan@hudsonucc.org).

## **SMALL HOME STUDY GROUPS:** Connecting ... Equipping ... Transforming

- Are you interested in joining or forming a small home study group?
- Do you want to explore the possibility of growing in your faith while connecting with others?
- Are you simply curious about what a small home group might be able to offer?

Small home study groups offer social connections, trust, faith, fun, and fellowship and are now forming. If you are interested in learning more or have questions, email Bob Carleton: [bobcarleton@adjob.com](mailto:bobcarleton@adjob.com).



## **Women's Ministry - LIFT Christmas Luncheon**

**Thursday, December 6 - 11:30 appetizers and 12 Noon, lunch is served, Cost - \$16.00**

Be sure to join us for the annual Christmas Luncheon at Laurel Lake. Mission project is to bring an unwrapped child's toy or gift to donate to OPEN M. RSVP is required and due by Monday, December 3.

We hope to see you on the 6<sup>th</sup>!

# YOUTH MINISTRIES



Callie Baylor  
Director of Youth Ministries



Amy Baldwin  
Youth Ministries Assistant

**Impact** - Last month we made placemats and rolled silverware for 100 people at Gennesaret. Thanks to everyone who helped spread some holiday cheer in this thoughtful way. December holds lots of fun as high schoolers wrap up first semester, look forward to a well-deserved break, and of course anticipate Christmas. Please join us for our annual Christmas Party on December 9, 6:00 - 7:30 pm. We will gather at Burke Villeneuve's house to show off our ugly sweaters and/or fun jammies and of course spread cheer with our white elephant gift exchange. Remember your gift (\$5 or less) and please bring a sweet treat to share with the group. We will also be hosting a study break at our regular Impact time, 6:00 - 7:30 pm on December 16. Stop by for a little brain break and some energy boosting snacks before you head in to your final exams.

**D&D** - Bring your friends for some high energy fun from 3:00 - 5:00 pm every Wednesday in the Youth Room. Our annual D&D Christmas party takes place during D&D on December 12. Wear your best Christmas jammies and/or ugly sweater for a fun, festive time! We will meet every Wednesday that Hudson Schools are in session so plan to be here on December 19 as well. We do not meet during Christmas break but will resume on January 9.

**Breakfast Club/The Nine** - Sunday mornings are for thoughtful and fun discussions here at church, always with a side of donuts. Please join us in the Youth Room during the 9:00 or 10:30 service.

**Confirmation** - Our next meeting is Sunday, December 2, right after the 10:30 service. Pick a place to meet with your mentor before heading into 10:30 worship together. Afterwards find us in the Activity Room for lunch and discussions. We will finish at 1:00 pm. The next meeting is January 6.

**Gennesaret** - Our group volunteers at our favorite soup kitchen on December 1, January 5 and the first Saturday of every month after that. Meet at church at 9:00 am, return about 1:30. Contact Jeff Wells ([jeffreylwells@gmail.com](mailto:jeffreylwells@gmail.com)) for more information. Join us in a morning of service.

**TPP** - Sign-ups for our third annual middle school mission trip to The Pittsburgh Project (TPP) just finished up. We hope you reserved your spot. Please contact Callie with questions or concerns (or if you missed the deadline and still want to go – we will do our best to make it happen!). This trip is open to all current 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders! Join us for a week of working on home repairs and building relationships that uphold the dignity of the amazing homeowners you will meet. This year's trip dates are July 8-12, 2019.

**ROCK Christmas Party** - Calling all college students. Mark your calendars for our ROCK Christmas Party. It takes place Friday, December 21 at the home of Grace Graham. We will be bringing back the ever popular Ugly Christmas Sweater contest - winner receives a Chick-Fil-A gift card! RSVP to Jennifer Rummell, 330-541-3557.

# CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES



Jen Barden  
Coordinator of  
Young Families

## Meet the Coordinator of Young Families ~ Jen Barden

Jen has been a member of First Congregational Church of Hudson since 2013. She began working on staff at the church in November as Coordinator of Young Families. Jen grew up in the Warren, Ohio area and has a Bachelor's Degree from Kent State University in Business Administration and Marketing. Jen and her husband Chris live in Hudson with their three elementary-school-aged children: Tyler, Alexis and Bryson, and their dogs. Most of Jen's extra time is filled with her children's activities, but she enjoys reading, hiking and playing games in the quiet moments.

## December Children's Mission Project 2018 Holiday Toy Room Drive

Children served by Summit County Children Services need your help! Please donate **NEW toys or gift cards** for a child this holiday season. Through the agency's Holiday Toy Room Program, parents, foster parents, grandparents, etc. are able to select gifts for the children in their care. This extra support makes a tremendous difference!

The greatest need this year is for toys and items for tween girls ages 10-13. Examples are hairspray, body lotion, nail polish, perfume, hair clips and ribbons.

Early donations will be collected downstairs under the Christmas tree in the Children's Center.

Donations must be made by **December 16** so the gifts will be available when the toy room opens.

### You're Invited ... to a Birthday Party for Jesus!

We will be celebrating Jesus' birthday with games, songs, crafts and of course birthday cake!

**Who:** All Preschoolers - Kindergarteners

**When:** December 16 during church (9 am & 10:30 am)

**Where:** Drop off and pick up in Activity Room (Not Classrooms)

**RSVP:** Just join the party

What can you bring? If you would like to bring an unwrapped toy to donate to Summit County Children's Services Toy Room, our Children's Ministries Christmas mission, we would greatly appreciate it.

*We can't wait to celebrate with you!*



# Welcome New Members!

Joined October 21, 2018



**Tim and Stephanie Dowling**

- 2628 Pickerington Way, Hudson 44236 -  
Tim is Chief Information Officer for  
Advanced Call Center Technologies.  
Stephanie is the Global Compensation  
Manager for Swagelok.  
They have three children: Kaylee, 13;  
Emma, 11; and Timmy, 10.



**Jeff and Adrienne Hester**

- 7969 Winterberry Drive, Hudson 44236 -  
Jeff is a product manager for Progressive  
Insurance. Adrienne is a physician with  
Fairlawn Family Practice.  
They have one child: Lewis, 2.



**Pete and Carolyn LeVan**

- 4742 Danforth Reserve, Stow 44224 -  
Pete is a retired president/owner of  
R. F. Cook, Mfg. and Carolyn is a retired  
exercise physiologist.



**Charlotte Beers Plank**

- 1722 West Idlewood Drive, Twinsburg 44087 -  
Charlotte is the organist here at First Congrega-  
tional Church. She and husband,  
Aidan, have one child: Charlie, 1.



**Marc and Laura Poritsky**

- 2096 East Streetsboro Road, Hudson 44236 -

Marc is on the adjunct faculty of Cuyahoga Community College. Laura is a sales representative for Tremblay Tool Steel.

They have one child: Vanessa, 16.



**Bill and Michele Schulte**

- 73 Brandywine Drive, Hudson 44236 -

Bill is a product director for Anthem BC/BS. Michele is in sales with Anthem BC/BS.

They have one child: Aubrey, 6.

**Matt Waters and Mahtab Tehrani**

- Matt: 2347 Graham Road, Stow 44224 -

- Mahtab: 1208 Norton Road, Stow 44224 -

Matt is an account manager with The Hartford. Mahtab is a post-doctoral research associate for NEOMED.



# HEALTH MINISTRIES



Kathy Yeakley  
Director of  
Health Ministries

*"Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while."  
For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. ~Mark 6:31*

**Rest, not stress.** Rest is defined as an instance of resting, where work or movement is ceased in order to sleep or recover strength. We rest when we are tired and when we go to sleep at night. Sleep and rest refresh your mind and repair your body. Most adults require between seven to eight hours of sleep each night. Without sufficient sleep, our bodies suffer a variety of physical and psychological impacts, including:

**Impaired memory.** While we are asleep, our brain sorts and stores information we have gathered during the day. Without sufficient sleep, this process can be cut short, resulting in a 'misfiling' of our thoughts and memories.

**Poor concentration and impaired judgement.** Sleep is crucial in thinking and learning. A lack of sleep negatively impacts our ability to concentrate, reason, and problem solve. We also become excessively sleepy during the day which further impacts our cognitive performance. Sleepiness can slow reaction times as much as alcohol can. With impaired concentration, judgement, and sleepiness, poor sleep can therefore also result in the increased likelihood of accidents occurring while driving or at work.

**Lowered stress threshold.** When we feel tired, routine activities can start to feel like overwhelming tasks. We are also more easily irritated or upset. Additionally, when we are tired, our pain sensitivity also increases!

**Reduced sociability and optimism.** Tired people find it harder to participate in certain activities that require sustained attention, like watching movies or a television show. Lack of sleep also leads to decreases in libido and makes us less sociable and less friendly. Reduced optimism and sociability increases our vulnerability to developing symptoms of depression.

**Changes in vital signs and tissue repair.** Sleep deprivation can result in changes in our vital signs, like body temperature, breathing and heart rate, and blood pressure. These changes can result in the increased risk for the development of high blood pressure or heart disease. A lack of sleep can also result in the premature aging of skin (dark circles, and fine lines) due to the release of excess levels of cortisol (stress hormone), which breaks down the protein that maintains the smoothness and elasticity of skin. Additionally, the lack of deep sleep impacts the secretion of growth hormones. Growth hormones are secreted during slow-wave sleep; when sleep is disrupted, the amount of growth hormones released is compromised and this can impact on children growing to their full potential and normal tissue repair.

**Weight gain.** Chronic sleep deprivation can also negatively impact our metabolism and undermine our immune system, resulting in weight gain and an increased risk for illnesses. Sleep loss stimulates appetite and cravings for high-fat and high-carbohydrate foods.

In today's fast paced world, we are constantly on the go, striving for continual improvement and greatness. We are not allowed to take things slowly, feel tired, or take a break. Despite such a lifestyle providing us with certain achievements at home or work, in the long term, this is not sustainable and can lead to burn out. Our mind and bodies are the only ones we've got, and they support us as much as they are able to, no matter what we subject them to. However, if we do not pay attention to our minds and bodies and deny ourselves of rest, we can find ourselves getting sick and deteriorating both physically and mentally.

In His Name, *Kathy*

**FYI (Feeling Young Inside)** on **Monday, December 17** at **noon** in Fellowship Hall will feature Detective **Kaija Jeantet**. The detective's topic will be "Scamming and Internet Safety." Do you know someone or have you been the victim of a phone or internet scam? Come and listen to tips on ways to prevent telephone and internet fraud. Sign up on the Connection Card on Sunday, call the church office (330-650-4048), or email Kathy at [kyeakley@hudsonucc.org](mailto:kyeakley@hudsonucc.org).

# MUSIC MINISTRIES

It's the most wonderful time of the year. At least that's what Andy Williams sang on his very first Christmas album. The song was written by his musical director, George Wyle (whose actual name is Bernard Weissman, and wrote the theme song to Gilligan's Island!) for the Andy Williams Christmas Special in 1963. The song is fantastic, and brilliantly personifies the joy of the Christmas Season. It was my opener when I sang the holiday shows with the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra in 2014.

But one thing is missing. Jesus.

I mean, Christmas even has "Christ" embedded in the word, which is where "Keep Christ in Christmas" originated. We've all seen the bumper sticker, "Jesus is the reason for the season." And many of us church folks (and many who rarely go to church anymore) go to church on Christmas Eve to celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. It is our largest one-day attendance of the year (that, and Easter Sunday).

It is for good reason that we sing *O Come, All Ye Faithful* and *Joy to the World, the Lord is Come* on Christmas Eve. We are acknowledging that the faithful (that's us) are coming with joy to adore the newborn king. We do it over and over every year, as if we never tire of it.

Now, lest you think these are the tired musings of a Scrooge, let me say that I really enjoy the traditions that surround Christmas. As the aforementioned Andy Williams song says, "There'll be parties for hosting, marshmallows for toasting and caroling out in the snow." Decorating our Christmas tree, with our daughter Kelly (*always* Kelly) putting the angel on top, is one of our family's favorite moments, that is, providing the tree doesn't fall down!

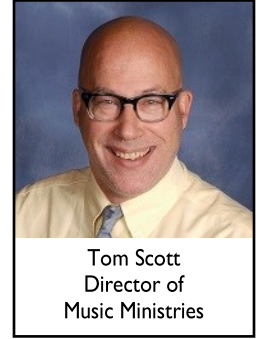
I like snow and caroling and buying Christmas gifts for loved ones. Ann and I enjoy sending out Christmas cards every year and hosting the entire family around the hearth on Christmas morning. The lights on the square and the gaiety of the crowd makes Christmas time very exciting. Even the traffic lights glow red and green.

But my contention is this: If we lose the reason for all the trappings and tradition of the season, we lose the very essence of Christmas. It is all flash and no substance, signifying nothing. My family has never struggled with this since we were raised in the church, and I have been a pastoral musician for my entire lifetime, focusing on the liturgical side of our celebrations. It is natural for me to celebrate Christ this time of year, since it has always been my "job" to do so.

But when we see Christmas decorations at Walmart in October, we know that the culture in which we live does not generally share the serenity of the Advent Season, or fully appreciate the true meaning of Christmas. When I used to play Christmas Masses on Christmas morning, I always marveled that when I was driving home from church in the early afternoon, there were already Christmas trees littering the lawns in our neighborhood.

I always end every music newsletter with the same phrase: See you in church! For me, that is where I find the newborn King – in the wondering eyes of the faithful as we seek to worship, then go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!

See you in church! *Tom*



Tom Scott  
Director of  
Music Ministries

**Women's Ensemble** - Our new pop-up Women's Ensemble will continue to have one more singing opportunity in 2018. Please join us for a short hour of Advent singing and fellowship on Thursday, November 29 and Thursday, December 13, 7:00 - 8:00 pm (Note: we will skip December 6), with a performance on Sunday, December 16 for both the 9:00 am and 10:30 am services. Please be in touch if you need childcare secured for these dates. If you're looking for a way to reconnect with your creative side, meet new people, or try something new, please join us! Can't make all rehearsals? No problem! Email Charlotte at [cplank@hudsonucc.org](mailto:cplank@hudsonucc.org) to get involved.



## 2019 Annual Giving Campaign – Have we heard from you?

If your answer is YES, we THANK YOU for making a personal financial commitment to the ministries of First Congregational Church!

If your answer is NOT YET, we encourage you to return the form mailed to you last month. The easiest way to financially support the church is to be a RECURRING GIVER. Become a RECURRING GIVER by setting up automatic deductions from your savings/checking account or as automatic payments on a credit card.

**How do you get started?** It's easy. Email the church finance office at [dfinkes@hudsonucc.org](mailto:dfinkes@hudsonucc.org). You will receive an email invitation to get started. You will never need to write another check to the church again! You will also be able to make financial gifts online for ASP payments, holiday flower orders, memorial donations, outreach collections and much more.

Visit **The REALM® Information Table** in Fellowship Hall on Sunday mornings. Members of church staff will be available to answer your questions or help you get started with Recurring Giving. You can also contact Sue Wimer at [swimer@hudsonucc.org](mailto:swimer@hudsonucc.org)

---

### Volunteer Opportunities - Helping Hands Needed for Friends' Class

Our church has supported Friends since 1976 and we need your help to keep it going.

A few fun facts:

- We follow the school calendar, with no classes on the major holidays.
- Music therapy is the first Sunday of each month, Oct. – May.
- Communion is provided by Rev. Hockstra, the third Sunday of each month.
- We have three teams of teachers/assistants who rotate during the school calendar year.
- We meet Sunday mornings from 9:45 – 10:45, each team only teaches a few weeks, twice a year.

We use children's Bible stories, a craft or art project, music and lots of smiles and hugs!

Please contact Sandy Miller at [sandyxd91@gmail.com](mailto:sandyxd91@gmail.com) or 216-310-1489 (leave message). Thank you!

**AmazonSmile** - Did you know your purchases can make a difference? AmazonSmile donates to First Congregational Church of Hudson when you do your holiday shopping at [smile.amazon.com/ch/34-0762813](https://smile.amazon.com/ch/34-0762813). Smile.amazon.com is a website operated by Amazon with the same products, prices, and shopping features as Amazon.com. The difference is that when you shop on smile.amazon.com, the Amazon Smile Foundation will donate a percentage of the purchase price of eligible products to the charitable organization of your choice.

# MISSIONS AND OUTREACH

**Christmas Angel Tree:** Once again this year, we will have the opportunity to help make Christmas a little brighter for the children at Findley Community Learning Center and SWAG in the Summit Lake neighborhood. Please visit the Christmas tree in Fellowship Hall where you can select a tag identifying the age of the student and a few gift suggestions. Unwrapped gifts can be dropped off at the church no later than Friday, December 14.



Sue Wimer  
Director of Stewardship  
and Outreach



*"At this Christmas when Christ comes, will He find a warm heart? Mark the season of Advent by loving and serving the others with God's own love and concern."*

—Mother Teresa, Love: A Fruit Always in Season

Family Promise is an inter-faith program that provides emergency shelter to families in crisis due to homelessness. Family Promise is the only program in Summit County that keeps families together; typically, males over the age of 12 are separated from their family and placed in a separate shelter.

The 12-week rotational schedule places three to four families at a congregation for a one-week period. This model relies on full support of volunteers. Please consider providing your time and talents to this mission. Volunteers are needed for van driving, evening hosts, overnight hosts, move-in/out, and grocery shopping. Check the Mission's Table after Sunday services for the latest on opportunities.

Hesitant to volunteer this upcoming host week? Consider shadowing a volunteer(s) in any of the opportunities during our Host Week, **December 9-16**. Questions? Contact Beth Sosinski at [bethsosinski@gmail.com](mailto:bethsosinski@gmail.com) or 330-283-6843.

---

## Trinity household/clothing mission accepting fall and winter items.

*Place your donations in the blue bin by the coat rack or the wooden cabinet in the stairwell. No food, please!*

### Greatest Needs (in good, re-usable condition, please):

- Flannel sheet sets, percale sheets sets, blankets, comforters – Twin, Full, Queen, King
- Fall/winter coats & jackets for all, adults and children
- Boots, gloves, hats, scarves for all ages & sizes
- Towels, washcloths, sleeping pillows (new or very good condition)
- Throw rugs
- Pots & pans, kitchen items (no knives)
- Preschool and Toddler clothing, sizes 2T – 5 (*We never have enough toddler clothing!*)
- Shoes: men, women, children
- Jeans for men (especially smaller waist sizes)
- Sweaters and sweatshirts for adults & children

**Thank you!** Questions? Please contact Sandy Miller at [sandyxd91@gmail.com](mailto:sandyxd91@gmail.com) or 216-310-1489

## **CALENDAR FOR ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS SEASON**

### **WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES**

***Sundays in Advent:*** December 2, 9 and 16 ~ Worship at 9:00, 10:30 and 11:59 am

December 23 ~ Worship at 10:00 am

***Longest Night Service:*** Thursday, December 20 at 7:00 pm

December 24: Worship at 3:00, 5:00, 7:00 and 11:00 pm

December 30: Worship at 9:00, 10:30, 11:59 am

***Advent Breakfast at Laurel Lake:*** Monday, December 10, 9:00 am

***Advent Worship at The Hudson Grande:*** Monday, December 10, 10:30 am

### **CANDLELIGHT CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES** - See back page for details

### **SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE**

- Live Nativity: **Sunday, December 2, Noon-5:00 pm** Clock Tower Green
- Women's Ministries Christmas Luncheon: **Thursday, December 6, 11:30 pm** at Laurel Lake
- Impact High School Christmas Party: **Sunday, December 9, 6:00 pm** at the Villeneuve's home
- D&D Middle School Christmas Party: **Wednesday, December 12, 3:00 pm** Youth Room
- FYI, *Feeling Young Inside*, Luncheon: **Monday, December 17, Noon** Fellowship Hall

### **OFFERING ENVELOPE PICK-UP**

**Offering envelopes** will be available for pick-up beginning **Sunday, December 9.**

Envelopes are assigned **ONLY** to those who have requested them from the Church Finance Office.

### **YEAR-END CONTRIBUTION GUIDELINES FOR TAX PURPOSES**

<b><u>Contribution</u></b>	<b><u>Report for 2018</u></b>	<b><u>Report for 2019</u></b>
Checks written in Dec., '18, placed in church offering in Jan., '19		X
Checks written and placed in church offering in Jan., '19, but "backdated" to Dec., '18		X
Checks written and placed in church offering in Dec., '18, "postdated" to Jan., '19		X
Checks written in Dec., '18, placed in the mail and <u>postmarked</u> in Dec., '18, but not received by the church until Jan., '19	X	
Checks written in Dec., '18, placed in the mail in Dec., '18, but <u>not postmarked</u> until Jan., '19, and <u>not received by the church</u> until Jan., '19		X

#### **Important Notice**

*To ensure the deductibility of your church contribution, please do not file your 2018 income tax return until you have received a written acknowledgement of your contributions from the church. This statement will be mailed out by January 31, 2019.*

*If you have any questions, please contact the Finance Office. Thank you!*

**DEATH ~ Our sympathies and prayers go out to:**

**Matt Waters** on the death of his father, Phil Waters on October 9.

**Kathleen Leigh** on the death of her father, Duane Leigh on October 19.

**Craig and Sallie Hons** on the death of Sallie's mother, Gwen Leannarda on October 25.

**Jeff and Julie Alexander** on the death of Jeff's mother, Janet Alexander on November 6.

**Dave and Virginia Longfellow** on the death of Dave's mother, Jane Longfellow on November 6.

**Visit our members in Crown Center and Greenwood Care Centers at LAUREL LAKE:**

Mike and Sue Baker, Ran and Ann Bucey, Ed Lutz, Lee Piersol, JoAnn Pope, Shirley Russell

**GARDENS OF THE WESTERN RESERVE:** Trudie Baughman

**GRANDE VILLAGE RETIREMENT:** Ruth Stilson

**THE HUDSON GRANDE:** Vicki and Bill Butler, Doris Hill, Barry and Mary Lynn Reynolds

**CARDINAL VILLAGE:** Dick Buhler

**MAPLEWOOD OF CUYAHOGA FALLS:** John Blassingame

**MAPLEWOOD OF TWINSBURG:** Barbara Venesy

**DANBURY OF TALLMADGE:** Marty Crichton

**ANNA MARIA OF AURORA:** Marlys Anderson



During the 1993 Christmas season the church celebrated a Madrigal Dinner. The Fellowship Activities Board sponsored the event with the cooperation of the Music Board. The organizers were Jane and Louis Penny and Bruce and Karen Davis. Bruce did the cooking and Karen was in charge of costume making. Nancy Stokes directed the singers and performed as well. *Frank Manak, Church Historian*

**WORSHIP SCHEULE**

**9:00, 10:30 and 11:59 am Worship**

*Live Stream of 10:30 and 11:59*

*Services at our website and Facebook Live*

**CHURCH OFFICE HOURS**

**Monday - Friday**

**8:00 am - 5:00 pm**

**Phone (330) 650-4048**

**Fax (330) 656-1760**

**[www.hudsonucc.org](http://www.hudsonucc.org)**



**LIKE US at**  
**"First Congregational Church of Hudson"**  
**Comment & SHARE!**

**CLERGY**

The Rev. Dr. Peter M. Wiley, Senior Pastor

The Rev. Jeanette Brodersen, Associate Pastor

The Rev. Steve Hockstra, Associate Pastor

**PROGRAM STAFF**

Dee Buchanan, Director of Children's Ministries  
*Children's Center and Education*

Katie Morgan, Associate Director of Children's Ministries  
*Children's Center and Education*

Jen Barden, Coordinator of Young Families  
*Children's Center and Education*

Callie Baylor, Director of Youth Ministries

Amy Baldwin, Youth Ministries Assistant

Dr. Thomas Scott, Director of Music Ministries

Charlotte Beers Plank, Organist

Sue Wimer, Director of Stewardship and Outreach

Kathy Yeakley, Director of Health Ministries

Emily Lopick, Director of First Connect

**ADJUNCT CLERGY**

*The Rev. Dr. Richard Clewell, Adjunct Minister*

*The Rev. Jonathan Dodson, Chaplain, Laurel Lake Retirement Community*

*The Rev. Janet Ross, Mission for Haiti/Amistad Chapel*

# CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

All with candlelight

Nursery care at 3/5/7PM

**3:00 PM**

Children's Pageant: "The Great Angel Mystery"

**5:00 PM**

A traditional service of hearing the story and singing carols.

*Special music.*

**7:00 PM**

A traditional service of hearing the story and singing carols.

*Men's Ensemble and members of the Men of Independence with brass quartet.*

**11:00 PM**

Communion Service ~ Bring in Christmas at a service concluding at midnight with the sacrament of Holy Communion.

*Chancel Choir with instrumental consort.*

NON-PROFIT  
ORG.  
U. S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
HUDSON, OHIO  
PERMIT #20

First Congregational Church of Hudson  
47 Aurora St. • Hudson • OH • 44236

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Wherever you are on your journey...  
*YOU are welcome here!*

Requested in Home Delivery Nov. 23-26