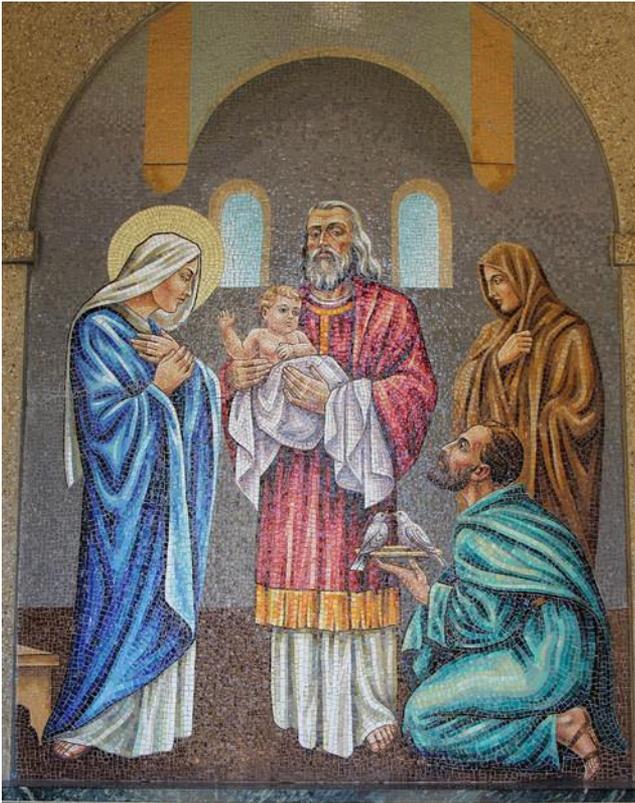


You have come down to...

The LAKESHORE



February 2021

PASTOR'S

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I would like to share with you the latest offering in *Streams of Connection* (our Association weekly free newsletter) from Nayiri Karjian, General Minister, Living Water Association, Ohio NorthEast, UCC . It is entitled *Revelation and Mystery*:

Although COVID has been a time of anxiety and panic, confusion and restlessness, and many other things, it has also been a time of epiphany, revelation and discovery. So, I have been reflecting about Epiphany and revelation wondering what is revealed to us as continue to live in a pandemic. Epiphany is a time of revelation and disclosure when God shows up in Jesus and tells the story of Love. The Armenian Church celebrates Christmas and Epiphany at the same time on the same day, for God is not just born among us, God is also revealed among us, within us, in the same bodily form as ours so the mystery that is God can be revealed. At Epiphany God comes to us in bodily form in Jesus, and that's a revelation. At Pentecost God comes to us in spirit form, in the Holy Spirit, and that's mystery. Body and spirit, both are manifestations, expressions of God. Yet, we often speak of revelation while we forget the mystery; we embrace Jesus while we forget the Spirit. We sometimes go so far as to think that we know God so very well that we even know what God thinks and wants, not only for us personally but for everyone else in the world as well. Some people hold deep conviction that they know what God wants and thinks. They appoint themselves as God's gatekeepers. Of course, Epiphany/revelation is a gift. God wants to be known, hence through revelation we get to know God, in bits and pieces. In Jesus we see God, and discover what God is like. Yet Epiphany/revelation has a partner and that's Mystery. Mystery reminds us that no matter how deeply we know God, how inti-

mately connected to God we feel, God is still mystery beyond human grasp. What I am suggesting is this – Epiphany and mystery belong together, just as body and spirit, heaven and earth, light and dark belong together. God comes to us in both forms, body and spirit, because they cannot be separated. They are not opposites. Heaven and earth in the biblical story always appear as twins, they cannot be separated. They are not enemies. Light and dark are also twins, as they complement one another. They are not contradictory. For, in every light there is some darkness, in every darkness some light. The sooner we grasp the connections, that body and spirit, revelation and mystery, good and bad, light and darkness, heaven and earth, and all that we humans separate, divide and polarize belong together, the more whole our perspective, the more holistic our worldview, perhaps even more Godlike. Especially in a world where we are so polarized, where we quickly take sides and divide, it is important to awaken to the dangers of a polarized, binary worldview. It would be prudent to claim the worldview of ancient peoples who did not see heaven and earth, body and spirit as divergent opposites but as convergent counterparts. They understood these things to be complimentary not contradictory. Epiphany awakens us not only to the truth that God is always revealed in and among us, but also that God is always revealing that heaven and earth are not so far apart, that body and spirit are not distant opposites, that God and humans are not divergent but are of the same image. God is always connecting and joining all things we humans have a tendency to separate. Epiphany calls us to join this path of Epiphany Light connecting and joining, bridging and healing all that is broken, divided and separated.



As in previous years we will celebrate the various feasts and biblical stories connected with Lent on Sundays. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday. We will have Ash 'Sunday' on February 21. Once Lent begins you'll notice things look a bit more simplified in the sanctuary and we're using a lot of purple. Lent is the season which spiritually prepares us for the Resurrection of Christ. There always is a time of preparation for the special events in our faith journey. It is not possible to understand the Resurrection, Easter, without everything that comes before. With the Transfiguration of Jesus on Mt Tabor we see the culmination of his teachings. As God, he took on human flesh, showing us unequivocally that we are saved body and soul. We are Resurrection People, spiritual beings having a human experience. Everything that is a part of our life, including our bodies can be transfigured, transformed, into the glorious light of God, for it is God who not only is the One in whom we live, and move, and have our being, but it is God who chooses to dwell within us making us a holy temple. What a wonderful understanding of God we have as Christians. You are, as Jesus said to his Jewish followers, the light of the world. Sometimes our light gets a bit dull or dusty. We need to make our light shine and Lent is the time to do that. Lent reminds us of the forty-day fast of Jesus in the wilderness. Lent prepares us for the joyous Feast of All Feasts, Easter, the Radiant Resurrection of Christ.

Lent originally was a short period of three days to fast from all food so we would realize our dependence on God. Lent grew to be a longer period to allow the formation of those who would enter the community of faith through Baptism on Easter. Lent starts off with Ash Wednesday reminding us that we are dust and to dust we will return. Here is the schedule that we'll be following this year:

Peace and joy on the journey!

Pastor David

MODERATOR'S

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Thank you for all who worked so hard over the last 4 years! The unanimous vote of our congregation to become Open and Affirming (ONA) was a wonderful testament to who we are and whom we hope to be, This is the nationwide announcement from the Open and Affirming Coalition-

Our ONA Family is Growing

IT'S TIME TO CELEBRATE



Please Welcome Our Newest
ONA Church in the Heartland
Conference!

**OPEN AND AFFIRMING
COALITION**
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



Friends,

Please join us in welcoming First United Church of Christ in Eastlake as a new Open and Affirming Congregation!

We recently sent their pastor, The Rev. David Herrin, and the church membership a message to confirm their certification.

Their ONA Covenant, adopted on January 17, 2021, reads: "You did not choose me but I chose you." John 15.16-17 We, the people of First United Church of Christ, gathering in Eastlake Ohio embrace these words of Jesus to his disciples. Jesus continues: "I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another." Our journey as God's people teaches us that we must value this as an expression of the sacred community of God's love. We journey to be a church embracing and welcoming all people. Believing that each of us is created in God's image we open our minds, hearts,

souls, and hands to God so we open our doors to all of our siblings. We celebrate everyone: people of all ages, races, cultures, sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, family configurations, economic circumstances, physical, cognitive or emotional abilities, education, or spiritual and religious traditions. We welcome all to participate fully in the life, leadership, ministry, and mission of this church as we seek to grow together towards a safe and nurturing community of faith. We take to heart: "no matter who you are or where you are on your life's journey, you are welcome and wanted here!" Therefore we commit ourselves to the ongoing work of being an Open and Affirming (ONA) congregation. Jesus turned no one away, neither do we. "

On behalf of the Open and Affirming Coalition of the United Church of Christ, we're proud to welcome them as ONA congregation #1694. First United Church of Christ is now part of the largest and fastest-growing LGBTQ-affirming church movement in the world!

We're grateful for the leadership and hard work that led to this day.

The church has been added to the ONA map at www.openandaffirming.org/find, and we're notifying the UCC's CARD Team who will assure their ONA status will also appear on the UCC website. In the coming months, we'll celebrate them as a new member of our ONA family on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and in our email newsletter, RIPPLES.

And to the church members, may we share our blessings again as you continue your journey of faith, now as an Open and Affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ!

Our best to all of you,

Andy Lang,
Executive Director
ed@openandaffirming.org
Pronouns: he, him, his

Kimi Floyd Reisch
Program Minister
ona@openandaffirming.org
Pronouns: they, them

ABOUT THE FEASTS

THE PRESENTATION



The feast of The Presentation of our Lord in the Temple on February 2 brings the celebration of the Great Feast of the Incarnation to an end. It is finished with the Gospel's prophecy that a sword will pierce the soul of the Mother of Jesus. This day looks ahead to the crucifixion. It is therefore a bridge between the Nativity and the Passion. In the Eastern churches, where the feast originated, the day is called the Meeting of the Lord in the Temple. It is the Lord meeting with Simeon, and, by ex-

extension, of God with God's people. The day was observed in Jerusalem by the end of the 300's and was introduced more broadly by Emperor Justinian in 542. In the West, the day seems first to appear in the Worship Books in the 600's where it was called the Purification of Mary as this was part of the fulfillment of the Law of Moses for women. In the Gospel, the Elder Simeon sings that the infant Christ is "a light to enlighten the Gentiles". From this we have the custom of processions with candles (in England this feast is known as Candlemas.) for we behold the entrance of the true light into the world and the gradual illumination of the world by Jesus. In the 600's, the leader of the church in Jerusalem, Patriarch Sophronius in a sermon for the Presentation exhorts his congregation:

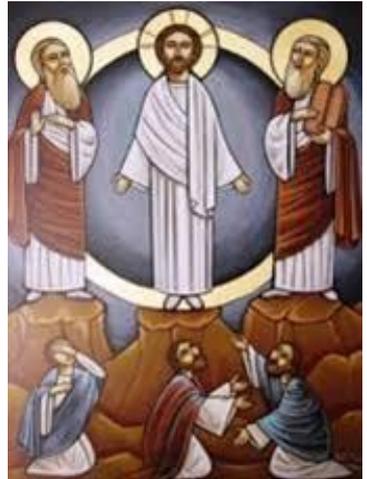
... Everyone should be eager to join the procession and to carry a light. Our lighted candles are a sign of the divine splendor of the one who comes to expel the dark shadows of evil and to make the whole universe radiant with the

brilliance of his eternal light. Our candles also show how bright our souls should be when we go to meet Christ. ... So let us all hasten together to meet our God.

Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.

THE TRANSFIGURATION

With the Transfiguration of Jesus on Mt Tabor we see the culmination of his teachings. As God, he took on human flesh, showing us unequivocally that we are saved body and soul. We are spiritual beings having a human experience. Everything that is a part of our life, including our bodies can be transfigured, transformed, into the glorious light of God, for it is God who not only is the One in whom we live, and move, and have our being, but it is God who chooses to dwell within us making us God's temple. What a wonderful understanding of God we have as Christians. You are, as Jesus said, the light of the world. Sometimes our light gets a bit dull or dusty. We need to make our light shine. Come to church and dust yourself off.





ASH WEDNESDAY

Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent. By the fourth century the Western church determined that the Lenten period of fasting and renewal should correspond to Christ's forty-day fast as found in Matthew 4:2, and, by counting forty days back from Easter

(excluding Sundays, which remain feast days), arrived at the Wednesday seven weeks before Easter. At one time Lent was primarily viewed as a period during which converts prepared for baptism on Easter Sunday, but later the season became a general time of renewal for all Christians. Thus Ash Wednesday became the day that marked the beginning of the Lenten renewal. The aim of Ash Wednesday worship is to meditate on our mortality, to renew our commitment to daily repentance (changing our ways of thinking and living) in the Lenten season and in all of life; and to remember with confidence and gratitude that Christ has conquered death and sin. By his death he has trampled down death. Ash Wednesday worship, then, is filled with gospel truth. It is a witness to the power and beauty of our union with Christ and to the daily dying and rising with Christ that this entails. The imposition of ashes is a central part of the worship service. Ashes have a long history in biblical and church traditions. In Scripture ashes or dust symbolize frailty or death in Genesis 18:27, sadness or mourning in Esther 4:3, judgment in Lamentations 3:16, and repentance in Jonah 3:6. Some traditions also consider ash a purifying or cleansing agent. All these images are caught up in the church's use of ashes as a symbol appropriate for Lent. In Christ's passion we see God's judgment on evil; (love trumps hate); in our rededication we proclaim that we are purified and renewed. The ashes often are the burnt residue of the previous year's palms from Palm Sunday.

OUR LENTEN WORSHIP FOR 2021

ASH WEDNESDAY—we'll mark the beginning of Lent on Sunday February 21 with a Service of Repentance, Imposition of Ashes, and Holy Communion by Intincture.

Sunday February 28 might be **Scout Sunday**

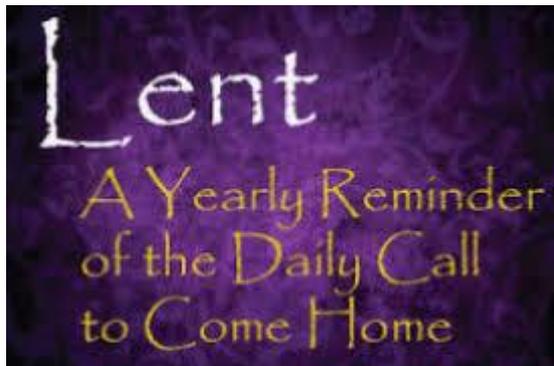
Sunday March 7 will be a special **SERVICE OF ANOINTING**. The Book of James in the Christian Scriptures tells us: "Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven." This is a good thing to do in the middle of Lent.

March 14 will be **MAUNDY THURSDAY**, or Holy Thursday. It is a service of the Lord's Supper, as Jesus instituted Communion on this day, and the Service of Shadows or Tenebrae. Communion will be by Intincture with a single loaf of bread.

March 21 will be our **GOOD FRIDAY** Service. Once again we'll worship using the Lakota Indian Way of the Cross.

March 8 is **PALM SUNDAY**

So, I think you'll all want to come to all of these worship services and walk with Jesus in his last days and to have **40 DAYS OF RENEWAL**. Let us nurture our souls and help to heal the world.



The church mouse

Well, we made it through 2020. Let's hope that 2021 will be kinder and safer. I got my Covid vaccine and it didn't hurt a bit. They had to use a tiny, tiny needle made just for us mice. I kept waiting for a lollipop but didn't get one.

What a wonderful job Bob Smith did on installing our new sink and Charles Rumbold for polyurethaning it!. It has made cleaning up much easier.

We should also thank Diana Kurzawa, Kelly McQuaid, Nancy Reeb and Rev. David for their hard work on our church becoming an ONA church. It has been a two year labor of love and we are just waiting on the final OK so we can be officially listed.

Our February birthday honorees are: Michael Lanham, Kimberly DePasquale, Carolyn Yanchar, Anita Smith, Kathleen Brown and Joanie Wright.

Not much else to write about but I hope everyone has a Happy Valentine's Day. Don't forget mice love chocolate.

Words of Wisdom: Got up this morning and ran around the block 5 times. Then I got tired so I picked up the block and put it back in the toy box.

Until next month,
The Church Mouse



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Youth Education

Our Theology Thursday will offer a program on spirituality designed specifically for our youth. It is entitled *Holy Living: A Youth Lenten Study*. It is a 6 week series and will begin on Thursday February 18. We'll meet from 6.30-8.00 at the latest. Adults are welcomed to attend. Let this be an inter-generational study!



2021 Directory

Please let Pastor David know asap if you have any changes or if you wish to be removed from the new directory.

Clothing Drive

Participating: our Church, Youth Group, BSA Troop 1919, and GSA Troop 71256. Please bring in clothing, bedding, drapery, shoes in black plastic bags. Please weigh them and fill out one of the pink forms that will be located on the back table. The collection will end on March 14. The donations will be given to Savers who will pay us .23¢ per pound. Each group will be responsible for their own collection and weighing.

A letter from our Conference Minister

Hello Rev. Herrin and the Members of First United Church of Christ,

I received word from the UCC Coalition that you, the First United Church of Christ in Eastlake, have recently been recognized as an Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ. On behalf of the entire Heartland Conference of the United Church of Christ of which you are a part, I want to express congratulations to you all for this vitally important declaration and embodiment of God's love for all people. Your pub-

lic proclamation and witness will offer a haven for those who may have given up on church or who may have never considered finding a Christian community of acceptance and love a possibility. May God's love continue to bless you all as you live into this important expression of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Many blessings to you!

Rev. Dave Long-Higgins
Transitional Conference Minister
Heartland Conference, United Church of Christ
Serving Ohio, West Virginia, and Northern Kentucky

PRAYER CHAIN

The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective

James 5.16

Do not hesitate to call any member on the prayer chain with any request you may have. We are grateful for the opportunity to pray with and for you. God's blessing to you each day.

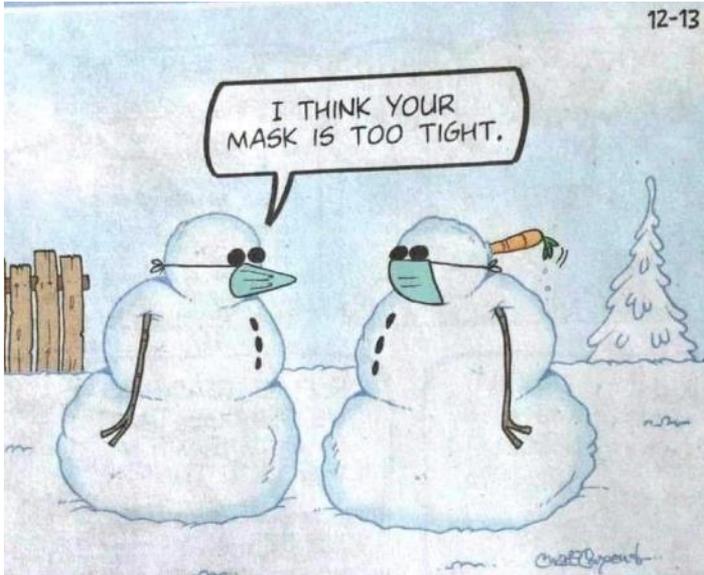
YOUR PRAYER PARTNERS

Betsy Taylor — 440.667.1533

Suellen Springer — 440.946.0915

Sandie Besett — 440.478.3349

It is both an honor and a privilege to minister in this way. We are here and always willing to add anyone or any need to our prayer list. Please know that all requests are confidential and are kept only within the chain unless the person requests otherwise. Never hesitate to call anyone on the chain with a request. It will always make the full circle. Your Praying People pray.



Transfiguration
is a complete
Metamorphosis

FEBRUARY WORSHIP & SCRIPTURE READINGS FROM THE LECTIONARY



²
February 7—*5th Sunday after Epiphany*

SOURCE OF STRENGTH

Isaiah 40.21-31

Psalm 147.1-11,20c

1 Corinthians 9.16-23

Mark 1.29-39

February 14—*Transfiguration*

COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITY

2 Kings 2.1-12

Psalm 50.1-6

2 Corinthians 4.3-6

Mark 9.2-9

February 21 —*1st Sunday in Lent*

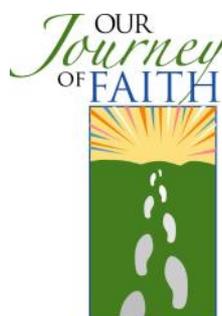
GOD'S LOVING PATHS

Genesis 9.8-17

Psalm 25.1-10

1 Peter 3.18-22

Mark 1.9-15



February 28 — *2nd Sunday in Lent*

ALWAYS CLOSE

Genesis 17.1-7,15-16

Psalm 22.23-31

Romans 4.13-25

Mark 8.31-38

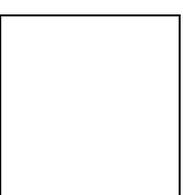
If you would like to have a pastoral visit in your home, or simply need to talk, please call Reverend David at the church office at 440.951.0291 or on his cell at 216.832.3453 or by email at pastorfirstucc@gmail.com. He will be pleased to meet with you.



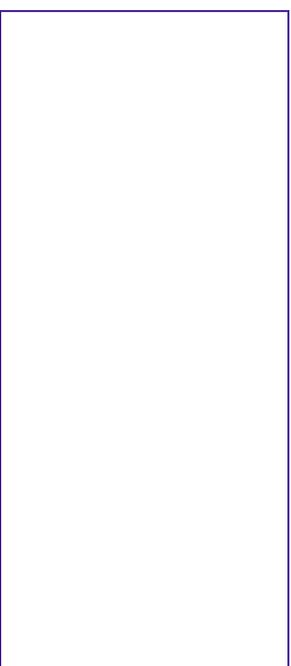
The Lakeshore

First United Church of Christ

36721 Lake Shore Blvd + Eastlake Ohio 44095



First Class Mail



No matter who you are or where you are
in life's journey,
you are welcome and wanted here!
And we mean it!

