



January 2022



**Pray Together With Live Stream
at 10:15 Sunday mornings.**

Go to www.RicfieldUCC.com

**on your smartphone,
computer or iPad.**

Click on the button that says:

Live Stream Sunday Service

That will take you to a page that says:

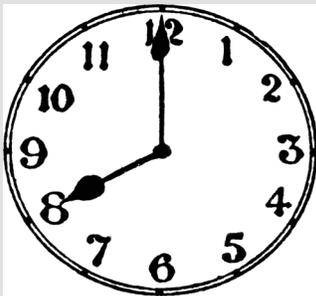
View Church Services Online

**Click on View LiveStream about 5 minutes
before the service is to begin.**

**The service bulletin is available to
download by clicking on the link
below the live stream button.**



Bulletins



Our 8:00 Sunday Morning Service

Church Council has decided
to suspend the 8:00 service for now.
The next 8:00 service will take place
on Easter Sunday.

At that time we will assess the feasibility of its return.

For now, all are invited to gather
as one at the 10:15 service.

Welcome!

**ALL church gatherings
are now back in the building and open to
ALL people.**

**Masks are recommended
but not required.**

Boxes of Love From Home

The Youth Group will be collecting items for our
annual Boxes of Love campaign in which we
send care packages to our college students and
military members.

Items to include are:

- Granola bars
- Candy (no chocolate)
- Lip balm
- Prepackaged cookies
- Hair ties
- Microwave popcorn
- Toiletries
- Hot chocolate packets
- Crackers / snacks
- Instant soup
- Small packs of tissues
- Wipes for electronics
- USB flash drives



You can also donate cash in the weekly offering
and designate it for "Boxes of Love", and the
Youth will do the shopping for you.

Thank you for all your support over the years in
this popular project. I remember receiving care
packages from the RUCC Youth when I was in
college, and it always was a pick-me-up on a
dreary February day.

-Scott Luther, Youth Director

From the Pastor



Happy New Year! What will 2022 bring? With a new year comes a feeling of a clean slate and renewed hope. We make, and sometimes even keep, resolutions to change for the better.

In church, “change” is something of a naughty word. Pastors are given clear instructions: “We want you to renew the church – just don’t change anything.”

Most churches around the world are experiencing declining participation. These are difficult days. In the words of Rev. Nayiri Karjian, “It is exhausting and debilitating to work so hard for an institution that is dying. Pastors and congregations are tired and drained. Surely, God does not want us exhausted, spending our energy and gifts on working for that which is dying. I believe God wants us to work for that which has life, breath, spirit and possibility. I believe God is doing a new thing, rebirthing the church, changing its form, creating something new, for that is who God is and what God does.”

Rev. Karjian shows us that it is not the church that is dying, but one old, institutional form that is dying off, while the church is reborn into a new form. This cocoon, this in-between time is scary and stressful. As if we weren’t already stressed enough! Like it or not, we are changing.

Such change inevitably causes conflict. Conflict has a bad reputation. Conflict itself is neither good nor bad; conflict indicates that change is needed. Conflict without healthy communication can lead to disastrous outcomes. But conflict with healthy communication can lead to transformational growth.

Through times of change, it is vitally important to communicate well. The worst thing we can do is to shut down communications. Did something at church inspire you or bother you? Communication is essential to building understanding. Not pleased with how the communication went? Communication is essential again, all with healthy boundaries, truth and kindness.

Our Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC) facilitates such communication. Members of the PRC are trained to follow a manual called A Sure Foundation. I would be happy to get you a copy; just call the church office.

Here are helpful quotes from A Sure Foundation:

- *Conflict in a congregation is inevitable. Often that conflict focuses on a concern or a complaint that someone has involving the pastor. Matthew 18:15-20 provides a healthy format for addressing such concerns, encouraging direct communication.*
- *Encourage the person to speak to the pastor directly. It may be appropriate for a committee member to join that conversation as a non-anxious facilitator.*
- *Avoid triangulation.*
- *If the person can’t or won’t speak to the pastor, and the issue seems important, have the person put their concerns in writing, date and sign it.*
- *Avoid anonymous communications. If they decline to put their name on it, tell them you cannot relay anonymous concerns.*
- *Legitimate concerns are discussed by the committee (always with the pastor present). Together, decide on a course of action and follow it.*

The worst thing we can do with conflict is to walk away angry that the other person could not read our thoughts if we decided to stonewall. Instead, in 2022, bring those difficult conversations to the table. Bring them with clarity, honesty, faith, hope and love. Bring them with Jesus. For whenever we gather in Christ’s name, we invite him to be part of the conversation too. With Jesus’ healing touch, difficult conversations are transformed into sacred conversations, and a gathering of people is transformed into the Body of Christ.

Rev. John D. King

Our Annual Congregational Meeting

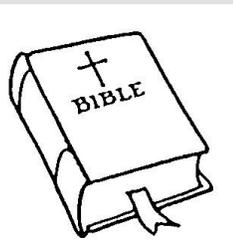
Sunday, January 30



following the 10:15 service

Board chairs should begin working on their annual reports.

Those reports are due in the office before January 12.



January Scriptures

January 2: Jeremiah 31:7-14 John 1:1-18
January 9: Isaiah 43:1-7 Luke 3:15-17, 21-22
January 16: 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 John 2:1-11
January 23: 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 Luke 4:14-21
January 30: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 Luke 4:21-30

Moderator's Moment

Dear Church Family,
Happy 2022!! It is hard to believe that this will be my last note to you as the RUCC moderator. Thank you for the kindness and encouragement that many have expressed in the past two years. It was an honor to be your moderator.

Despite some very difficult days, I walk away from this position knowing that **we are a church** filled with loving people. I am grateful for all that I have learned. Most importantly, I understand the significance of our church family members being truly heard, accepted and appreciated.

There are so many people I would like to thank for their contributions. Thank you to Rev. King and his family. Thank you to Becky Monegan!!!! Thank you to Cindy Braun, Jeff Braun, Sharon Muhlheim, Barbara Rosene, Greg Gerber, Abbey Sobieraj, Gary Obenauer, Newt Heston, Karen Butera and Kathy Hayes. Thank you to the Retirement Village Board, the Stewardship and Administration Board, the Christian Education Board, the Worship, Prayer and Ministry Board, our Sunday school teachers, our Communion servers and preparers, our donation collectors, ushers, collection counters, the Hobbits Board, the Just Peace Committee, the Pastoral Relations Committee, the Endowment Fund Committee, bakers, our Mission Group and the Soup Kitchen Group. A special thanks to my wonderful husband, Jim for his selfless love.

The 2021 Council are the folks I worked with the most closely. Thank you to our 2021 Council. Thank you: Jean Krankowski, Nagwa Ahlborg, Dave Hakos, Kat Miller, Alice Klagge, Marilyn Scarbrough, Diana Julien, Scott Luther, Amy Shepker and Darlene Cronin for serving so beautifully.

I'm sorry if I missed you, the RUCC is blessed with an incredible amount of volunteers, We certainly see that it does indeed, take an entire army to keep our church functioning.

My New Year wish to each you is from Psalm 20:4:
May He give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed.

I'll be with you in prayer at 10:15.

With love, Dawn Schilling



Book Club

Book Club will meet on Monday, January 24, at 6:00 pm in the Gathering Room. The reading selection for January is *Our Darkest Night* by Jennifer Robson.

Stewardship & Administration Board News

Thanks to all who pledged for 2022, as well to those who contribute generously without pledging. Everyone's continuing financial support gets the bills paid and helps RUCC participate in ministry outreach.

The final 2021 numbers are not quite all in yet, but thanks to \$14,000 received in *deficit reduction contributions* plus a one-time government payroll tax stimulus refund, it looks like we will end the year with a balanced budget. Look for final numbers in the annual report due out mid-January.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

-Dave Hakos, S&A chair

HELP WANTED Church Treasurer

Amy Shepker has announced her resignation as of 1/31/22 as our church treasurer. If you are comfortable paying bills and crunching numbers, contact Becky or Dave Hakos to find out more details about this paid position.

A Message from the Worship & Parish Ministry Board

2021 was another tough year for RUCC with the continuation of Covid concerns. The WPM board wants to thank all of you who stepped up and/or stepped out to share God's ministry of love, caring and concern for others.

Your support was felt in attendance as well as your donations of baked goods and food for the church picnic, Election Day bake sale, soup sale, concert & ice cream social, free lunch program, chili cookoff, Akron Pride march and memorial reception, to name a few.

Your monetary support was felt in the donation of 200+ bars of soap for Open M's Christmas baskets and the 28 children's Christmas gifts. It only took one Sunday and one Bell Choir practice for RUCC members to volunteer to purchase the gifts. All done in record speed and efficiency.

Through your efforts, RUCC continues to be a voice of hope and a symbol of love in our Church and Community at large.

Thank you, Thank you, Thank you!!!

WPM February Project Cocoa & Cookies

Volunteers will be needed to provide cookies & candy (homemade or purchased) for our Valentine's event "Cocoa & Cookies" for the Feed My Sheep ministries. Donations can be dropped off at church by Monday, February 7.

Many Hands Make the Work Go Fast

January 2

Taking down of the greens (undecorating and packing away the Christmas decorations) will occur after the 10:15 church service on January 2.

The Just Peace Committee

Collection for arriving refugees - Deadline January 9

The Just Peace Committee is collecting donations for newly arrived refugees served by the International Institute of Akron. If you have any of the following items available, please bring them to the church office by January 9th, or contact Diana Julien at 330-612-3996 if you need a pick up or have other questions. Items should be new or in lightly used condition. Thank you!

Toilet paper, cleaning supplies, cleaning buckets

Kitchen-size garbage cans, laundry baskets, light bulbs

Towels, wash cloths, bathroom mats, rugs

Shower curtains, liners and hooks

New pillows

Rice cookers, crock pots

Coats for men, women and children

Socks (new), winter boots, stocking hats, gloves and scarves

Grocery gift cards



Diana Julien (working with IIA) and Kat Miller (working with a Cleveland organization) have volunteered to represent Richfield United Church of Christ in the collection of donations for arriving refugees. Diana and Kat have made a trip to Akron three times with a car load of items collected on our back sanctuary pew.

Below is an excerpt from Kat on one of her delivery experiences.

"I have been working with Graham Ball from the US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, he has been so helpful and easy to work with. Because of his wonderful instructions, Richfield United Church of Christ has been able to deliver a 15-foot truck filled with furniture and winter jackets. The delightful young Afghan men helped unload the truck right into their apartment building and were in desperate need of the jackets.

My favorite moment was when I kicked a soccer ball someone had kindly donated to one of the guys. His face lit and he repeated "soccer ball!" He gave me the biggest smile. I know recreational things are not "needs," but for mental health I am wondering if playing cards, more balls, puzzles and such are a good idea. What do you think?

My son, Jack Miller, will also set up a funding site with the help from Graham and the US Committee as his "Junior" school project to have donations go directly to these efforts. Getting teens involved is a great way to reach their vast social media audience."

Virtual Talent Show

It's time to once again get out your cameras to record your talent for our **Virtual Talent Show!** If you can sing, dance, sew, bake, juggle, or balance a book on your head, we want to share your talent with the rest of the RUCC family! Please submit your entry to YouthDirectorRUCC@gmail.com by February 21.

We had so much fun doing this last year — you can still view the amazing performances on our Facebook page if you'd like to check it out. Please reach out to Scott Luther if you have any questions.

Thank you so very much and God bless!

Scott YouthDirectorRUCC@gmail.com

Christian Education Board Thanks You

Thanks to all who participated in our Christmas sweater contest and brunch. We tried something different this year on Advent Sunday and hope it was enjoyed, although modified last minute due to covid concerns.

The winners in our sweater contest were Brenda Lindsey, Donna Nelson and Greg Gerber. Advent log table centerpieces were raffled off to eight participants to take home and enjoy! Again, thanks to all who participated!

The Christian Education Board sent Advent craft packets home to 25 kids in our congregation who remain at home due to covid concerns.

Just a Reminder from the Christian Ed Board

Please remember all of our youth Sunday school classes are open and ready for students. All of our teachers have been vaccinated, including in the nursery. When you are comfortable coming back into church, and it is important that you do, we are here for you!

A special thank you to Patty Ellis who is doing double duty. She has been an elementary Sunday school teacher for many years and this year is also helping to teach the high school class along with Jessie Monegan and our youth leader Scott Luther! Thanks for mentoring our high schoolers, You are all very much appreciated!

The Adult Sunday School class has been temporarily paused. Time constraints, scheduling conflicts, health issues, family commitments and concerns about Covid 19 have made it difficult for many members of the group to attend. If there is enough interest at a later date, we will explore the possibility of starting a new class.

Meetings This Month

Christian Education Board: Tuesday, Jan 4 @ 7 pm via ZOOM

***S&A Board:** Wednesday, January 5 @ 7 pm

Just Peace Committee: January 19 @ 7 pm via ZOOM

Retirement Village Board: Thursday, January 13 @ 7 pm

***WPM Board:** Monday, January 10 @ 5:30 pm

***Church Council:** Monday, January 10 @ 7 pm

Men's Discussion Group: Wednesday mornings, 7-8 am

***Meetings available to join via ZOOM**

January Ushers

Gary Obenauer Keith Grabo Tom & Sherri Barker

Hobbits Registration

The registration draw for the Hobbits preschool 2022-2023 school year for current students and RUCC families will be on February 4, at 9:30 am. Your registration forms should be completed and turned in before that date.

Retirement Village Manager

Richfield United Church of Christ has a wonderful opportunity for an individual seeking part-time employment! We are looking to fill the position of **Retirement Village Manager**.

This position requires an individual with great communication, organization, and people skills.

Duties include but are not limited to:

Financial management— such as collecting rent payments, bill payments, maintaining financial reports and year end auditing. Maintaining the grounds and buildings — such as meeting with contractors and supervision of all contracted work.

Updating and maintaining all records— such as applications, current resident lists, and waiting list. Handling all residential issues and concerns. Contribute to scheduling and planning the agenda for monthly and special board meetings in consultation with Retirement Village Board Chairperson. Prepare monthly report and financial statement.

Qualifications include:

Management and proven leadership experience. Possess the ability to work with the RUCC Board and be an advocate for residents. High level of communication skills, including computer skills. Ability to be available to residents and flexible scheduling. Must be able to start February 1.

Applications are available by contacting the RUCC office at 330-659-3532. Applicants will be contacted to set up an interview.

January Birthdays

1/1 Victor Stanko

1/1 Sharon Mulhlein

1/2 Amber Kover

1/5 Sue Reineck

1/5 Dawn Schilling

1/11 Kathy Kiska

1/13 Lilly Miller

1/14 Stuart Myers

1/14 Rev. John King

1/14 Jody Shankland

1/16 Anna Gerber

1/17 Rebecca Wheeler Kacprzynski

1/18 Anne Taylor

1/20 Phyllis Sommer

1/20 Nikki Aquino

1/23 William Schreiner

1/27 Jessie Monegan

1/27 Brody Bard

1/28 Julie Hooper

1/30 Victor Hart

1/31 Pete Shepker



January Anniversaries

1/12 Meagan & Sam Haas

1/14 Sally and John Gill

Baptism

Kallan Timothy Albers, son of Alyse & Cory Albers was baptized on Sunday December 19th.



We send prayers to family and friends of the following congregation members or family members who have passed away recently.

Marylou Best passed away on

December 18. Marylou has been in a care facility recovering from a back injury. Her husband Shannon passed away November 22. Both were regular attendees at our 8:00 service.

Mel Pay passed away on December 23. Mel and his wife, Marilyn, attended our 10:15 service. A Memorial service was held on December 29.

Florence Wrocklage, mother of congregation members Jenifer Lostoski and Alison Schwaben passed away December 14.

The Retirement Village Board is compiling a list of "handy people" who can be called upon to perform odd jobs and/or maintenance for the Retirement Village that are beyond the capability of the Retirement Village Manager, but not large enough to bid out to a contractor. Rather than hire a single person, we know there are church members who are handy who could be called upon to help with certain jobs. Among you are those who have plumbing, electrical, carpentry, landscaping, mechanical, and/or other skills and competencies. We have the ability to pay a modest hourly wage (previously \$15 per hour, but we intend to raise that amount).

If you are willing to have your name added to our list of handy people, please fill in the information below and give it to Tom Kiska or Becky Monegan or place it in the donation plate as it is passed or drop it off at the church office. ALSO — Feel free to share this information with your friends and family who may be interested as well.

YOUR NAME: _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

YOUR HANDY SKILLS/ABILITIES _____

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**Richfield United Church
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January Activities

January 2: Worship service at 10:15 am in-building and online with guest pastor Rev. Charlene J. Smith

Pack the Christmas decorations away after the 10:15 service

January 3: Hobbitts preschool back to school

January 4: Christian Education Board meeting at 7 pm on ZOOM

January 5: S&A Board meets at 7 pm on ZOOM

January 9: Worship service at 10:15 am in-building and online with guest pastor Rev. Charlene J. Smith

January 10: WPM Board meeting at 5:30 pm, on ZOOM

Church Council meeting at 7 pm, in building and on ZOOM

January 12: Bell Choir practice at 7 pm

January 13: Retirement Village Board @ 7 pm

January 16: Worship service at 10:15 am in-building and online

January 19: Just Peace Committee meets @ 7 pm via ZOOM

January 23: Worship service at 10:15 am in-building and online

January 24: Book Club meets at 6 pm

January 30: Worship service at 10:15 am in-building and online / **Annual congregational meeting follows the service**

Men's Discussion Group Meetings
each Wednesday at 7-8 am at RUCC