

FEBRUARY 2023



Groundhog Day AND Valentine's Day!
February is a GREAT month!

SUNDAY SERVICE
9:30 am
740-393-1736
office@mvucc.org



HOURS
Monday-Thursday
9:00 am — 12:00 pm
1:00 pm — 3:00 pm
Friday 9:00 am — 12:00 pm

From the Moderator

I was so happy to see Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 as the Invocation for our church service on January 22--Rev. Scott's last day. I love those verses partially because I start singing "Turn, Turn, Turn" by The Byrds in my head, but mostly because of their message. To me, their message is that God is sovereign over all seasons and all things, and will be there for us during all times. That is comforting during this time of change and transition.

I have read countless books and articles about change, and have watched many speakers and TED Talks try to help us get through change. The most memorable book is "Who Moved My Cheese," By Dr. Spencer Johnson. It is a parable about some mice in a maze. I hate to spoil the book for you, but their cheese gets moved and they have to deal with the change. To be honest, it's been years since I read the book, and I don't remember the details of it. But I do remember being really annoyed by the strange maze analogy, and frustrated by the message. One key message of the book was to find other cheese, and to figure out how to adjust to the change. The thing I find in common between most books and articles about change is that they are trying to make people adjust to change quickly. When I read Ecclesiastes, I think the books might be wrong.

Maybe we should pause when we face change. Maybe, instead of quickly adjusting to change, we should breathe. Look around. Recognize what season we are in.

That's what we as a church are doing now. We are pausing. We have Robin Knowles Wallace joining us in February and March to provide sermons on Sunday mornings. In the meantime, Diaconate is leading the effort to find an Interim Minister who will not only preach, but will also provide pastoral care and help us through the process of finding a full-time pastor. Thank you to Kathy Stover for her great leadership throughout this process.

While we pause, let's make sure we come together to support each other. It has been great to see some faces in church lately that I haven't seen for a while. I hope to see you again soon. I encourage you all to step in to help where you see gaps. We can always use volunteers, and this time of transition means we need even more help. You can serve as a greeter, usher, or liturgist. You can volunteer at hot meals. You can help with Sunday School or offer to serve on a committee. If you aren't ready to volunteer right now, that's ok too. We understand if you need to pause. Let's be there to support each other during this change. If there is one thing I know for sure, it is that this church is full of love. I know we will use that love to pause, reflect, and go through this change together, with God's help.

Many blessings to you all.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 (The Inclusive Bible) There is a time for everything, a season for every purpose under heaven: a season to be born and a season to die; a season to plant and a season to harvest; a season to hurt and a season to heal; a season to tear down and a season to build up; a season to cry and a season to laugh; a season to mourn and a season to dance; a season to scatter stones and a season gather them; a season for holding close and a season for holding back; a season to seek and a season to lose; a season to keep and a season to throw away; a season to tear and a season to mend; a season to be silent and a season to speak; a season to love and a season to hate; a season for hostilities and a season for peace.

From Rev. Dr. Robin Knowles Wallace



A Season of Liminality

Liminal times or places are those which acknowledge that we are in transition, in-between one thing and another thing, not yet what we will become. As you have said good-bye to Rev. Scott Elliott and as I come, not as your pastor, but as pulpit supply for Sundays and special events, First Congregational has entered a liminal season. This is a season of remembering and grieving what is over and gone, with perhaps some anxiety or fear, but also with dreams about what is ahead. It is a season with great potential.

My immediate task as pulpit supply is to help you as a congregation stay connected with God through worship and God's Word. I look forward to being with you on Sundays in February and on Ash Wednesday, February 22. I have been in your sanctuary, my records say, as early as January 2008 when I preached there and then as choir director for Cordelia Burpee's August 2010 ordination service. I have known of your good work nurturing Cordelia and Scott Casebeer into ministry. My prayers have included your congregation since I was contacted about this preaching piece in mid-December.

Before too long, I hope you will be able to have a trained interim pastor who will help you work through the five tasks for this liminal time:

1. coming to terms with the history of your congregation,
2. discovering a new/now identity,
3. allowing for any needed leadership change,
4. renewing denominational ties, and
5. committing to new directions in ministry.

While I will touch on some of these things in my preaching, it will be important for you as a congregation to be intentional about moving through these tasks and through this liminal time.

When my children were young, there was a series of helpful parenting books which displayed the lives of children as spirals of alternating equilibrium and disequilibrium. The times of disequilibrium were the times when children were growing into the next phase of development, often more chaotic than parents would like, but essential for the children. When I began teaching seminary, I watched students go through similar stages of equilibrium and disequilibrium as their spiritual lives were challenged, and then deepened and broadened and grew.

This is First Congregational's time of liminality and perhaps disequilibrium. May God grant you a good season of growth into what you will yet be.

Robin Knowles Wallace
Pulpit Supply

February Birthday Wishes for Members and Friends



**Remember our homebound members this month.
A visit, a phone call or a card would go a long way!**



In Our Prayers

Pray for our Church Family.

"To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing." - Martin Luther

Are You Missing Any of These Books?

In the course of packing up his office, Pastor Scott found the following books which were brought in by members. If any of them are yours, you can pick them up in the church office.

Title	Author		Title	Author
<i>Changed</i>	Tom Cantor		<i>A Different Drummer</i>	William Melvin Kelly
<i>The Help</i>	Kathryn Stockett		<i>Tuning the Rig</i>	Harvey Oxenhorn
<i>Dogs that Know When Their Owners Are Coming Home</i>	Rupert Sheldrake		<i>God Blessed Them for the Journey</i>	David R. Hamilton PhD

RESTOCK the CHURCH

Here are the custodial supply requests for this quarter.

- Lysol disinfectant Windex disinfectant multi cleaner
- Disinfectant wipes
- Rags or old clothes cut into rags
- Drop cloth for painting
- Toilet plunger for upstairs closet
- Household paper towels
- Toilet paper



TAKE A LOOK AT OUR NEW CHURCH WEBSITE

Some of you might have noticed that our church website has not been functioning as usual lately. Unfortunately, it was designed many, many years ago and has been serving us well for those many years, but, like many things in life, if it is not maintained well, eventually it might break and no longer work – or it might just become obsolete. That’s what happened with our website. We have been trying to maintain it with very willing (but not so tech-savvy) volunteers. The good news is that it is up and running. We’re still learning how to edit it and make it look even better. Here are some shots of what you might see if you go to mvucc.org and some things to expect to see on our new site.

Our Home Page

You will still be able to access sermon videos and transcripts as before. In addition, you will find links to our Facebook page and other resources.



Our Ministries Page

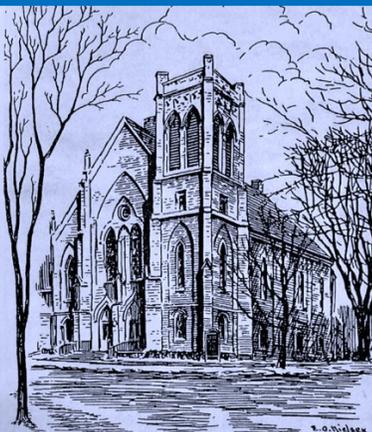




mark your calendars!

2023 KARE MEETINGS:
FEBRUARY 19TH @ 4PM
JULY 30TH @ 4PM
OCTOBER 15TH @ 4PM

NEW 2023 CHURCH DIRECTORY



2023 CHURCH DIRECTORY
First Congregational United Church of Christ
200 North Main Street
Mount Vernon OH 43050-2410
Office: 740-393-1736
Email: office@mvucc.org Website: www.mvucc.org

If you haven't already picked up your new directory, they are available in the church office during the week or on Sunday mornings at the fellowship time.

What's Happening at Church

WHAT	WHEN	WHERE
Sunday Service	Sunday 9:30 am	Sanctuary
Social Time	Sunday 10:30 am	Social Hall
Sunday School Adult Forum	Sunday 11:00 am	Social Hall Chapel
Health, Healing and Fitness Ministry	Saturday 11:00 am	Sanctuary

