

# Parish Visitor

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*First Congregational*  
**UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

An Ecumenical Congregation in the Congregational Tradition  
200 NORTH MAIN STREET • MOUNT VERNON, OHIO • 43050

INTERIM PASTOR Rev. Dr. Jay Marshall-Groat

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# NOVEMBER



# 2023

## SUNDAY SERVICE

9:30 am

740-393-1736

[office@mvucc.org](mailto: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 Pastor Jay



## Give It Away

Chapter One of Thomas Merton's 1955 book *No Man Is an Island* is entitled *Love Can Only Be Kept By Being Given Away*. He writes –

*"A happiness that is sought for ourselves alone can never be found: for a happiness that is diminished by being shared is not big enough to make us happy....true happiness is found in unselfish love, a love which increases in proportion as it is shared."*

Merton goes on to say that to give love with full effect is also to receive it. So love can only be kept by being given away and it can only be given perfectly when it is also received.

Life can be so paradoxical and contradictory. I love (pun here) the notion that our experience of love increases the more we give it away.

Like you, I hope, I am blessed with family and friends who love me. There is no doubt in my mind that many of them do – no doubt whatsoever. I am confident they have no doubts about my love for them. And I never tire in giving them love and receiving their love.

How does Merton's notion play out in a faith community? In over three decades of ministry I have experienced church members who have been utterly loveable. Giving love to them and receiving love from them has been a joy.

So how can Merton help us when we come up against someone who is not loveable? In these moments I try to remember that Jesus never said we had to like everyone – we are called as Christians to love some people even when we don't like them. Sometimes this is a difficult dance to do – but we try.

Give it away today – give that love away. Chances are you'll get more back





# Search Committee



The Search Committee held its initial meeting on October 15. Pastor Jay joined us to provide guidelines and information and reminded us that this was to be the extent of his involvement in the process and that he would not need to meet with us again. Cliff D., who chaired the previous search committee, joined us as well, offering his perspective of how the search process works. Both explanations were invaluable.

The search for a new pastor does not just involve posting a job and doing interviews. The term used is not “hiring” a pastor, but “calling” a pastor. The pastoral search process involves first creating a Church Profile that details who we are as a church. This is the first major task that we will take on. We also need to determine what you, the congregation, feel are the traits we most need in our next pastor. The surveys that many of you completed will be invaluable in this process. As you can see, searching for a new pastor will take time. We want to take as much time as necessary to find someone who will be a good match for our congregation.

We will try to keep you updated as to where we are in the process, but please understand that we cannot discuss details.

We will always be open to your input, however. Thank you for your trust in us and thank you to Pastor Jay for agreeing to shepherd First Congregational until we find a new settled pastor.

The members of the Search Committee are Marilyn C., Tom D., Brad K., Karen K., Darlene K., Ann L. (Chair), Larry R., Kathy S., and Elaine S. Please keep us in your prayers.

Ann L., Chair







## A Theology of Sufficiency

by Rev. John Dorhauer

Rich Biblical traditions shaped Jesus' vision, including Micah 4: 3-4:

*"God shall judge between many peoples and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away; they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war anymore; but they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."*

It is my personal belief that this concept, one that I call a theology of sufficiency, provides a strategic pathway to the just peace we seek. It is the unjust distribution of wealth that keeps the wheels of war turning.

Micah rightly discerns in the heart of God that the beating of swords in plowshares can only be possible when the conditions envisioned by God and described in that final verse come into play. When all on Earth have their own vine and their own fig, just enough to sustain themselves and free from the wanton greed of others who covet their neighbors' goods

At the heart of God's vision of all nations laying down their weapons and no longer learning the ways of war is the collective distribution of God's bounty to ensure that all are fed and sheltered. These are the underlying conditions that render the sword and the spear obsolete and that mandate their repurposing as implements of agriculture rather than of devastation.

I remember with great fondness and deep appreciation the first Sunday I walked into the church I served right out of seminary, Zion United Church of Christ in Mayview, Missouri. A town of 250 people ten miles from a gallon of gas and a loaf of bread, this farm rich community was deeply dedicated to the work of a just peace. On the wall inside the front door as you entered the sanctuary was a poster that hung for all the years I served there. It was a quote from UCC theologian and biblical scholar Luke T. Johnson and it read quite simply: "Whatever you possess that someone else needs already belongs to them." Generosity, as a spiritual practice, provides a way for us to think together as a Church about a theology of sufficiency so that there can be enough resources for all. Together, we can relate to each other so that "all sit under their own vines and their own fig trees, and not one shall make them afraid."



# Prayers and Homebound

**PRAY FOR OUR  
CHURCH FAMILY AND  
FRIENDS.**



**PRAY FOR OUR  
HOMEBOUND  
MEMBERS**

## Reign of Christ

On Reign of Christ Sunday, **November 26**, we will be remembering church members and others who have passed away in the preceding year. This is a lovely, moving service in which members or family and friends are invited to light a candle on the altar in memory of their loved one. If there is someone you would like to honor during this service, please contact the church office 740-393-1736 or Ann L.



# November

## What's Happening at Church

WHAT	WHEN	WHERE
Regular Worship Service	Sunday 9:30 am	Sanctuary
Social Time	Sunday 10:30 am	Social Hall
Sunday School Adult Forum	11:00 am	Social Hall Chapel
Health, Healing and Fitness Ministry	Saturday 11:00 am	Sanctuary
Health, Healing and Fitness	6:00 pm	Chapel
Cello Recital By Caleb Z	Saturday November 11 7:00 pm—9:00 pm	Sanctuary Reception in Social Hall



On **November 26**, there will not be either **Children's Sunday School** or **Adult Forum**. Instead, use that time together with family and friends after Fellowship Time to enjoy the downtown activities of the day. From downtown shopping to the parade to the lighting of Town Square and other activities between, enjoy the start of the holiday season. More information available at:

<https://www.experiencemv.org/winter-in-downtown>



# Recital and Thank You



You are cordially invited to a solo recital  
By Caleb Z

## *Soirée Française*

November 11th, 2023  
7:00pm

First Congregational Church  
200 North Main Street  
Mount Vernon, Ohio

Featuring cello music from France  
Reception to follow  
French desserts and conversation



**Pleasant Street  
Elementary**



First Congregational UCC,  
Thank you so much for spoiling  
our staff with your gift of  
service. They loved all of the  
snack items in the lounge to  
start the year. We are so  
thankful you thought of us  
and would also appreciate your  
prayers for our staff & students.  
Many thanks!

In Him,  
Jeresa W  
- Pleasant Street Elementary



# Templed Hills Camp



## 2024 Summer Camp Preview:

- M.M.A.D.D. (Music, Mindfulness, Art, Dance, Drama) age 8-18
  - June 16 - 22
- Camp "Out" (LGBTQIA+) age 8-18
  - June 16 - 22
- Sports camp age 7-18
  - June 23 - 29
- Pathfinder age 10-14
  - July 7- 10
- Family Camp all ages
  - July 7 - 10
- Grands and Family: age 4-13 with parent or grandparent
  - June 12 - 15
  - June 30 - July 3
  - July 14 - 17
- Seek and Sip – age 21+
  - July 10-13

### Templed Hills Summer 2024 Sneak Peek!

Mark your calendar for the Heartland Conference summer camps that spark your interest. FCUCC offers a partial tuition reimbursement for those within the congregation. More info to come as registration gets closer.



# Ministry and Service

The Lil' Pantry has closed. Debbie F. provided free food and household items to anyone in need. Three years ago, she opened the pantry on the street where she lives. Our church has



When Debbie announced the Lil'Pantry's closing on Facebook and the Next Door app, she mentioned our church by name. She said in a post:

*"I want to thank everyone who donated over the years... The First Congregational United Church of Christ was the only church that supported us regularly."*

*on the lighter side...*



"NO, I DON'T MEAN FACEBOOK OR TWITTER. I LITTERALLY WANT YOU TO FOLLOW ME!" - JESUS



# The Latest Scams

## Your Bank Account

### HOW IT WORKS

In this scam, you receive a call, out of the blue, from someone claiming to be from the Fraud Department of your bank. They advise you that a *“hacker from a foreign country”* has accessed your accounts. Then they instruct you to transfer or wire your money to a *“safe”* government account to protect it while they deal with the hacker.

The *“safe account”* is actually the hacker’s account... and if you

move your money there, **it’s gone for good.**

### WHAT TO DO

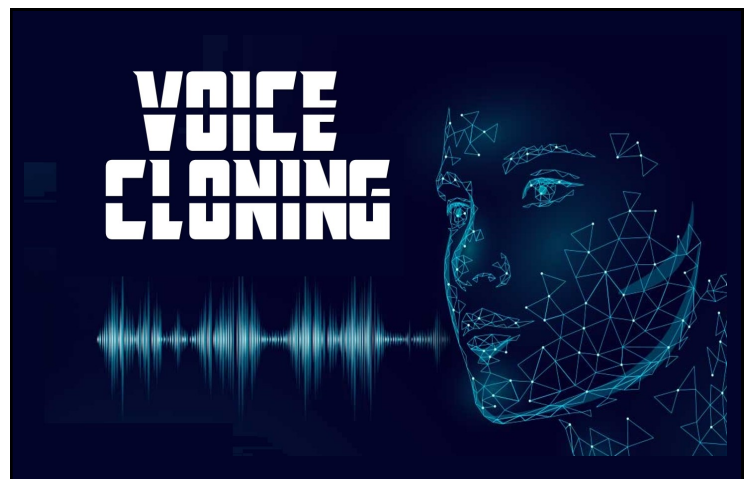
- First, don’t do ANYTHING the scammer has instructed you to do.
- Make a note of the number that called you.
- Call your bank, using their normal customer service phone number — not any number the scammer has given you. Let your bank help you from there.



## A Loved One in Distress

Who wouldn’t be concerned if a family member or friend called for help — panicked, crying, or even screaming, because of an accident, or being detained...

**Scammers can obtain anyone’s voice** by recording any phone call (telemarketing, wrong number, etc.), or social media video. **It costs them about \$4.00 to clone a human voice that sounds just like your person.**



### WHAT TO DO

- **If caller ID doesn’t show your person**, hang up, and call them on their cell phone: even if it sounds just like Mom, or your kids.
- **Use Video!** Many phones and apps offer video calls. Why not use them to confirm your person is the one who is calling?
- **Money is the issue?** If someone’s demanding a wire transfer, Bitcoin payment or payment in gift cards, your scam alert should be blaring. Authentic emergencies don’t come with specific, shady payment demands.
- **Call the police** and let them know about it.