

## Parish Visitor

Web Edition  
Volume LVII Issue #6



*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

OFFICE: 740-393-1736

[www.mvucc.org](http://www.mvucc.org)



*June 2025*



### Contact Us



740-393-1736



[office@mvucc.org](mailto:office@mvucc.org)



### Hours

Monday — Thursday  
9:00 am to 12:00 noon  
1:00 pm to 3:00 pm  
Friday  
9:00 am to 12:00 noon

# *From Pastor Jay*



## **Encouragement**

When I was in my twenties and thirties – a very, very long time ago – I would occasionally participate in 5 kilometer races.

I did this for two basic reasons. I did it because I still exercise in some way just about every day and training for a race, at least for me, made daily exercise leading up to the race more interesting. The other reason was that in most races you received a cool tee-shirt for running.

I can assure you that I did not participate in these races to compete and win. I am absolutely not a long-distance runner. I just wanted to enjoy a good workout with other people and finish the race.

I hold a vivid memory from the first 5K in which I ran. I can even tell you it was in West Chicago, IL, a town, well, about 35 miles west of the city of Chicago.

I was a 5K rookie runner so everything about the race was new to me. I checked in at registration, received my new cool t-shirt, and bang, we were off. I found a jogging pace that was good for me and settled into the race.

That's when it happened. We were into the race at about the first kilometer mark. The runners around me and I turned left onto a new street and I noticed a gathering of about 20 people or so up ahead on the right side of the street. As we approached I began to deduce what was happening.

This was a group of volunteers who had set up multiple tables just off the side of the road. The tabletops were filled with paper cups holding water. As runners approached the tables the volunteers would reach out and offer a cup of water to the runners. And that's not all they would do. They shouted encouraging words to us. While handing us cups full of water they yelled – "You can do this! You're doing great! We're with you! We're proud of you!"

It was just this little race, in this little town, a tiny speck in the grand cosmos decades ago and I will never forget it. Encouragement can be a powerful thing. Sometimes encouragement is the only thing.

As the years have passed I have decided that moment in my first 5K race is an apt symbol for the church as the body of Christ. Sometimes the holiest thing we can do as a faith community is offer to each other, and the world, Christ's words of encouragement.

Whatever you are facing today – you can do this – we're with you. The Christ is with you.

Blessings—Pastor Jay

# *Here's What's Happening*

<b>WHAT</b>	<b>WHEN</b>	<b>WHERE</b>
Regular Worship Service	Sundays 9:30 am	Sanctuary
Social Time	Sundays 10:30 am	Social Hall
Adult Forum	Will resume in the fall.	Chapel
Chancel Choir Rehearsal	Will resume in the fall.	Choir Room
Council Meeting	Sunday June 22 11:00 am	Front Parlor

## **Quotes for Christian Life**

*"We ourselves feel that what we are doing is  
just a drop in the ocean. But the ocean would  
be less because of that missing drop."*

**- Mother Teresa**

# *Sisters' Passing*



**Jean F.**

**January 9, 1927—May 27, 2025**

Betty Jean F., age 98, passed away on Tuesday, May 27, 2025, surrounded by her loving family. She was born on January 9, 1927 in Tupelo, Mississippi.

She graduated from Meridian Junior College and Transylvania College. Jean graduated from the Conservatory of Music. She would move on to earn her master's degree in music education and teach music in the Danville School System for over twenty years. Jean was a member of First Congregation United Church of Christ where she served as the choir director for 45 years.

A graveside service will be held on Thursday, June 5, 2025, beginning at 2 p.m. in Mount Vernon Memorial Gardens, followed by a reception in the Social Hall.

**Karen K.**

**May 5, 1947 - May 23, 2025**

Mary Karen K., age 78, of Mount Vernon, Ohio, passed away on Friday, May 23, 2025. She was born on May 5, 1947, in Mount Vernon, Ohio .



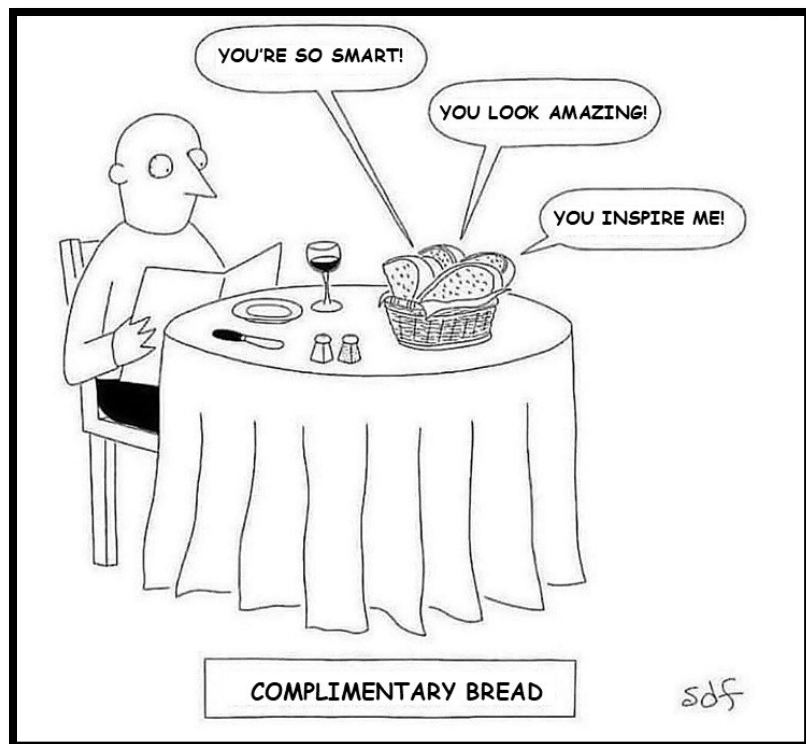
Mary retired as an auditor for the Kenyon Inn in Gambier and volunteered as a Hospice volunteer. She was a member of the First Congregational United Church of Christ and spent many years exploring the family genealogy.

A private service will be held by the family.

# Special MUSIC

Summer is on the horizon, and our chancel choir is taking a well-deserved break. This is where we need you! If you sing or play an instrument, and would like to share your talent with the congregation one or more Sundays, please contact our Director of Music, Christa B.

on  
the  
lighter  
side...

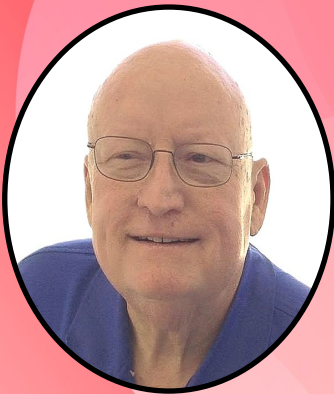


# *Book Review*

The book that Kris is reading is so interesting that it will take more time to read it and review it to do it justice!

So, sit tight and a blockbuster review of a great book will make its way to Parish Visitor next month!

# *Retirement Party*



**Sunday June 22  
2:00 pm to 4:00 pm**

For Rev. Dr. Mearle G. Sunday June 22 from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm in the Social Hall, hosted by Hope Now Furniture Bank. Refreshments will be provided. Guests from outside our church will be attending. Come and wish Mearle well in his retirement!



# Cyber Safety

## Ohio Turnpike Scam

The Ohio Turnpike and Infrastructure Commission has reported a text message scam that fraudulently claims to represent tolling agencies across the country. Scammers request payment for unpaid tolls through fake websites. These messages are sent to random phone numbers, not tied to any specific account or toll road usage. Some recipients also reported receiving phishing emails. The Ohio Turnpike does not request E-ZPass payments via text, nor does it handle unpaid tolls through text messages. The only legitimate websites for Ohio Turnpike's E-ZPass accounts are [ezpassoh.com](http://ezpassoh.com) and [ohioturnpike.org](http://ohioturnpike.org). For questions about the Ohio Turnpike's E-ZPass notifications, contact

[www.ezpassoh.com](http://www.ezpassoh.com) or [www.ohioturnpike.org](http://www.ohioturnpike.org).

The FBI, aware of these impostor scams in several states, recommends the following actions if you receive a fraudulent message:

Report the incident to the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) at [www.ic3.gov](http://www.ic3.gov), and be sure to include:

- The phone number from where the text originated.
- Contact the tolling agency's customer service center.
- Delete any texts received.

If you clicked any link or provided your information, make efforts to secure your personal information and financial accounts and dispute any unfamiliar charges.

