

Parish Visitor

Web Edition

Volume LVIII Issue #7



First Congregational
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

An Ecumenical Congregation in the Congregational Tradition

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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

July
2026

From the Moderator

My daughter recently came home for a weekend. She has her own apartment and job in Columbus, but when she comes home, she still jumps in and helps with yard work, house work, or other things that need done. When she helps, it is impressive to see how much we can get done in a short amount of time. It reminds me of the old saying, "Many hands make light work." When we are working together, not only is the work done faster, but it also seems a little lighter. The conversation (or sometimes some rock music and our loud, terrible singing) also makes the work seem less like work and more like fun.

I think our church community is like this (except the singing is MUCH better). We come together to help each other in many ways. I'm extremely thankful that we have so many people with diverse skills and strengths. Some people are great musicians, some are planners and organizers, some are great cooks, and some are great at fixing things.

We may have to come together even more over the next few months. The Search Committee is working to find a settled pastor, which will still take some time. In the meantime, Diaconate has been seeking an interim pastor. Unfortunately, an interim pastor isn't available right now, so we will be having a variety of people filling in on Sundays at the pulpit throughout the summer.

Here's where we can use your help. Please think about what your strengths are, and jump in to help. If you aren't sure how you can help, please talk to anyone on church council. We can always use people to do special music, do hospitality, be ushers, be greeters, help in the nursery, help with Sunday School or Adult Forum in the fall, join the Hot Meals crew, do some behind the scenes work, plan events, etc. And if you've ever wanted to tell your story at the pulpit, we may have some openings. We have fun ideas for the summer, but we want your ideas too!

We also realize YOU may need some help and you may not know where to turn without a Pastor. Please reach out to your Shepherd if you need help. If they don't have the expertise you need, they are a great resource to find support.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 reminds us: "Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up the other; but woe to one who is alone and falls and does not have another to help. Again, if two lie together, they keep warm; but how can one keep warm alone? And though one might prevail against another, two will withstand one. A threefold cord is not quickly broken."

Before Pastor Jay retired, I asked him what he saw as our greatest strengths. He talked about the energy and comradery we have as a church community. When I watch people talking and laughing before and after church and during hospitality, I have to agree. We have a great church. Thank you for coming together so that as we search for a settled pastor, many hands can continue to make light work.

Becky C., Moderator

What's Happening

WHAT	WHEN	WHERE
Regular Worship Service	Sundays 9:30 am	Sanctuary
Social Time	Sundays Following the morning service	Social Hall
Adult Forum	Will resume in the fall.	Chapel
Youth Group	Will resume in the fall.	Youth Room
Youth Choir Rehearsal	Will resume in the fall.	Youth Choir Room
Chancel Choir Rehearsal	Will resume in the fall.	Choir Room
Council Meeting	No meeting this month.	

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

America!

250th!



Hope Now



SCOOP FOR A CAUSE

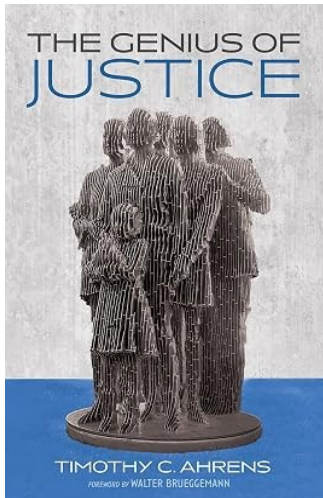
BENEFITING:



July 8th | 12pm-9pm
📍 Round Hill Dairy

Present this flyer at checkout or let the cashier know you'd like your ice cream to support HopeNow Furniture Bank of Knox County

Book Review



Timothy C. Ahrens, *The Genius of Justice*. Forward by Walter Brueggemann. Cascade Books, Eugene, Oregon. 2022.

How often do we find and read books recommended during a sermon? This is one, cited by Rev. Dr. Jay Marshal Groat, from our own pulpit, written by a prominent UCC pastor in Columbus. *The Genius of Justice* is a moving introduction to social justice and its leaders. Readers of the *Columbus Dispatch* are familiar with Rev. Ahrens in connection with numerous drives for building a more just society. His congregation at First Congregational Church of Columbus—UCC, is a large and influential one. Rev. Ahrens recently retired from full time work.

The Genius of Justice is a tribute to all who hear the still, small voice of conscience, some would call it God, and move themselves and others to do something. Ahrens recognizes that some of the most motivated and effective doers are not affiliated with a church, temple, or synagogue; I found his efforts to be so inclusive to be very attractive. In communities of faith we are prone to develop an exclusionary attitude, which is contrary to all that our faith tries to teach us. Faith communities cannot be exclusive social clubs; we are meant to share worship and inspiration and the work of bringing societies closer to just patterns.

Laying out his reasoning, Ahrens moves from grounding our assurance in Scripture study, and its roots in Jewish wisdom, to the inward journey of resolve. This requires anger at injustice, deep listening, serious prayer, and empathy with persons “outside the gates”—people we distance ourselves from. Often it is the rich within the gates, the poor outside; the haves defending their bounty from the have-nots. If we lived as God intended, with empathy and generosity, we would live without the need for gates and separations. Vivid examples help to make his points, specifically in areas of racism, homophobia, and systemic poverty, endorsing the work of many individuals against these human evils. His focus is on the *systems* of society, such as redlining and diversions of tax dollars away from intended uses.

“Justice doers” have differences, too. Some are sages; some organizers; some influencers; and some are amplifiers. Ahrens argues that math and faith are important allies: many issues of justice are identified and addressed with numbers. Consider how we define who is poor; what we expect of tax dollars in efficiency and effectiveness; how we apportion fair shares; how we spend on schools and prisons. Numbers help us to see what is fair and equitable. Each chapter is followed by discussion or meditation questions.

Ahrens calls us to see and feel the “others” for our own peace of soul. And finally, to be the justice we want to see.

Kris S.

on the lighter side...



Quotes for Christian Life

*"I asked God for patience—
now I've got three kids!" –*

Kathryn Bell

