

THE GOOD NEWS

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF WEST PARK UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Summer 2022



WEST PARK UNITED
CHURCH OF CHRIST

An Open and Affirming Congregation

3909 Rocky River Drive

Cleveland, Ohio 44111

216.671.7228 phone

WestParkUCCoffice@gmail.com

WestParkUCC.org

Following Christ, Caring for All, Growing Together

DEACONESS FOUNDATION

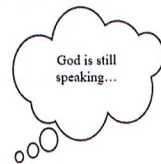
The Deaconess Foundation is a philanthropic grant making organization of the United Church of Christ. They have awarded our church \$15,000 in outreach funding since 2020. These grants have benefited Community Cupboard, our monthly community meal and our mitten line.

The Foundation hosted a dinner on Tuesday, May 3 to honor the work of recent grant recipients. The representatives from our church were Dan Moreland, Associate Pastor Jim Furry, Annie Karkoff, Mandi Salvino, Dan Karkoff and Pastor Jason Thompson (not pictured).

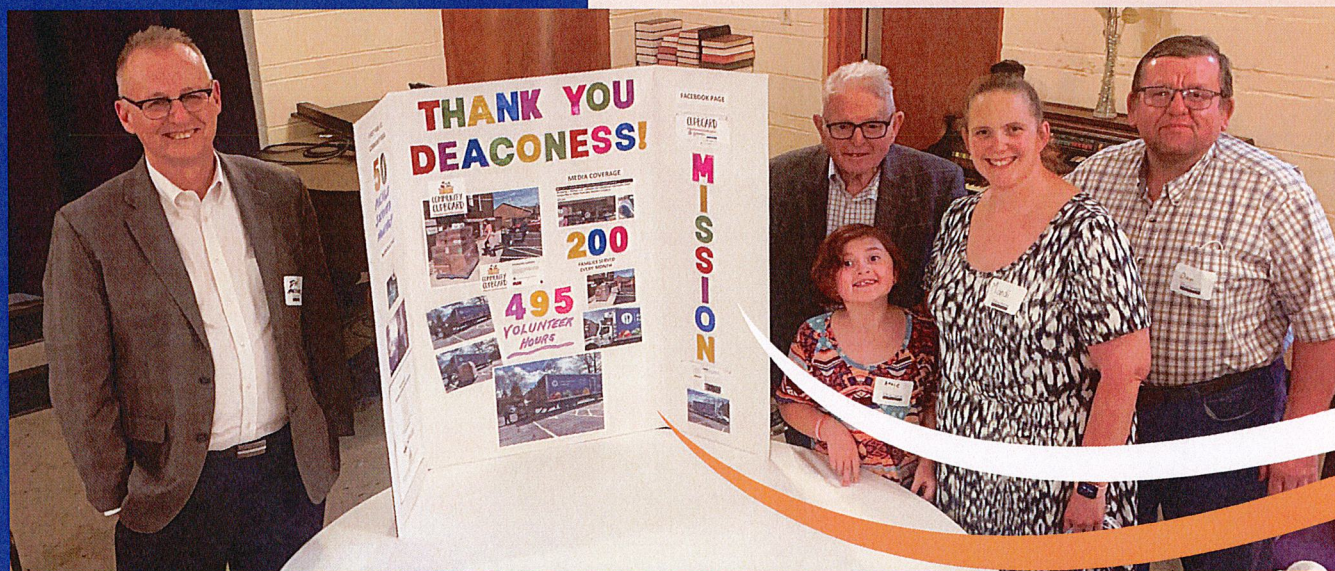
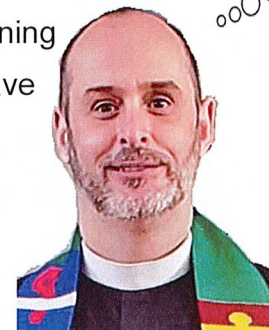
Thank you to all our volunteers who make these ministries possible!

IN MY HEAD

thoughts from Pastor Jason



It's hard to believe we are beginning our sixth year of ministry. We have accomplished so much together during the last five years. We began our time together in newness and excitement. We focused our attention on the grief and turmoil that had occurred since Pastor Larry retired in 2010. We praised God together during our first Christmas with gently falling snow. We have built a strong partnership with Christ United Methodist Church and reached out in love to our Muslim and Jewish neighbors. Our community meal continues to thrive, and we are combatting hunger with the launch of Community Cupboard. We celebrated an historic year in 2019 with a year's long celebration of our 160th anniversary. And we have even survived (dare I say thrived) two years of a global pandemic! We are blessed that our church is filled with good and faithful servants of our God.



We have also faced moments of grief and sadness: the death of loved ones, cancellation of services and events and declining in person attendance. Through the joys and the trials, we have travelled the road together. The Way that Jesus has set before us is filled with potholes and oases, but we are assured that God travels with us each and every day of our of lives.

What will the next year hold for our church? The next five years? The next ten? God is not done with us yet — of this I am absolutely sure! We have work yet to do, people yet to meet and relationships yet to nurture. I am convinced that if we follow the pattern we have established together as pastor and congregation, if we work for the glory of God in our neighborhood, that we will accomplish some amazing things. And to quote the Apostle Paul, *“I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Romans 8:38-39).

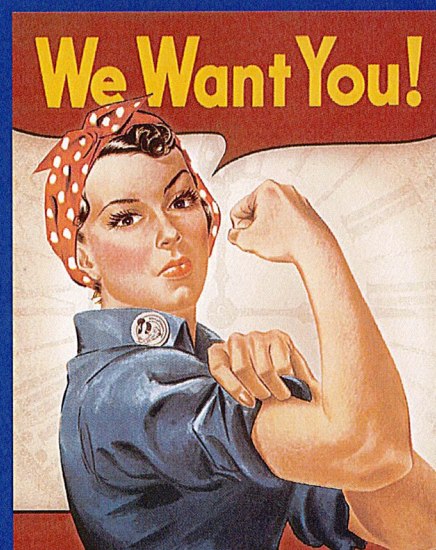
Yours in Christ,

Pastor Jason



SUMMER BREAK & SELF CARE

Unlike many other church communities, we have generally stayed active throughout the summer months. This year will be different. We are planning only a few events this summer in order to allow our volunteers to rest. It will take us years to fully recover from the stress of these last two years—a good summer break will help rejuvenate our spirits. And in July, West Park UCC will have a “volunteer sabbatical.” Detail to come!



WHO'S THAT IN THE PULPIT?

During late April and early May, did you pay close attention to the excellent preaching? We were blessed to have our own Peter Makari and Dan Moreland step into the pulpit while Pastor Jason was away. We are developing a lay preaching team and want to hear from you. If you are interested in joining this effort, contact Pastor Jason. Is God calling you to preach?

WEST PARK UCC HEROES

Last Summer, our church initiated a new program to honor the work of God taking place in our church and in our community. The West Park UCC Hero award celebrates members and friends of our church who have demonstrated outstanding dedication to service and outreach, both inside and outside the church community.

FAITH HEROES

ORDINARY PEOPLE THAT GOD USED IN EXTRAORDINARY WAYS

We are now accepting nominations for this year's West Park UCC Heroes! If you would like to nominate someone for outstanding commitment to God in our community, you can fill out the nomination form on the church website on the EVENTS page or you can call the church office and request a nomination form be mailed to your home. Nominations are due no later than June 30, 2022.

MODERATOR'S CORNER

Margaret Owens



As I reflect on my return from my vacation in Iceland, I cannot go without being thankful for all of you who are members of my church family. Your support and love is invaluable to me. I also reflected on my the events that occurred while I was gone, making me hope for the future. May we have peace and kindness in our future together.

LADS AND LASSIE'S BOWLING LEAGUE

Congratulations to the team of Margaret Owens, Bob Tischler, and Nora and Ted Litchney. They received the first place Janet Gorman Memorial Trophy this season!

The 2022-23 season will run Sept. 11th -- April 30th on every other Sunday. We bowl at 3:00 at The Roll House (Buckeye Lanes) in North Olmsted. It's a fun way to get through the colder months in Cleveland! Anyone wishing to join or knows someone looking for a fun league, please contact the church office.



UPCOMING EVENTS

PRIDE IN THE CLE: On Saturday June 4, our church will host a table at Cleveland Pride from 12pm-6pm. Make sure to stop by while attending the festival.

OPEN DOORS CHURCH: Our new LGBTQIA+ ministry will meet on Saturday, June 11 from 4PM-6PM in the church parlor. For more information, visit OpenDoorsChurch.org.

TEACHERS' BREAKFAST: Thank you so much to our Sunday School teachers Robin Jessen, Debbie Lamb, Debbie Miller and Dan Moreland. We will honor their work at the annual teachers' breakfast in June. Make sure to offer them a great big thank you for their dedication to our children!

FATHER'S DAY PICNIC: This year's festivities will take place on Sunday, June 19 at Cottonwood Reserved Shelter in the Cleveland Metroparks. We will gather for worship at 11AM (not our usual 10AM) and continue our celebration with a shared meal after worship. Church Council and the Board of Deacons will provide the food this year, though we are all invited to bring desserts to share.

Directions to Cottonwood Reserved Shelter from church:

1. Head south on Rocky River Drive for 1.1miles
2. Turn right on Puritas Avenue and drive 1.3 miles
3. Turn left onto Valley Parkway and drive .4 miles
4. Turn left into the picnic area

ALBER SCHOLARSHIP PRESENTATIONS: Plan to join in worship as we award this year's scholarships to two very bright students! If you want to know who they are, you'll need to be in church on Sunday, July 24!



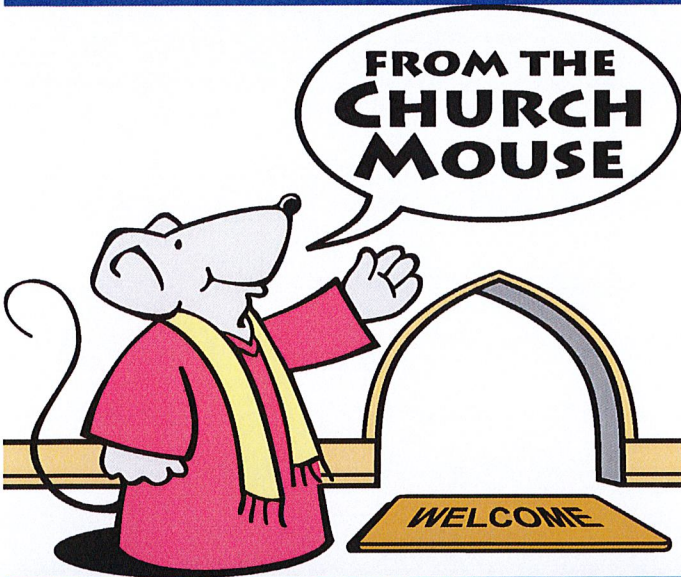
SUMMER MUSIC PROGRAM

This summer while our choir is on break, we will lift up various soloist and groups to offer music for morning worship. If you would like to raise your voice in song to praise God, please contact Minister of Music Sue Keserish or the church office. You may also sign up online by scanning this QR code with your mobile device:



PRAYGROUND

Each year, our children and youth look forward to their summer vacations. And so do our teachers! While there will be no Sunday School this summer, we will have a Prayground set up in the front of the sanctuary for our younger friends. Children are invited to visit the prayground during worship to color and play and pray. Wiggles and Giggles are welcome!



PINK ENVELOPE SPECIAL OFFERINGS

JUNE: Strengthen the Church (STC). STC is one of the 5 UCC offerings we support each year, making us a 5 for 5 church in our denomination. The funds raised support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry and innovation in existing congregations.

JULY: Providence House. Providence House is a privately funded Crisis Nursery with 85% of their funding coming from donations. Providence House believes that child abuse and neglect prevention is a community responsibility. Children can be protected, and families can be safely restored. This is accomplished by having the parents attend case management, parent education and after care services while their children are well cared for at Providence House. Your donation will help to educate parents, provide a safe haven for children and unite families. To learn more about Providence House, visit www.provhouse.org.

AUGUST: Members in Need. This annual offering of our church helps to assist church members during times of financial instability. The Bible teaches that God calls us to help our friends in need. Thanks to the contributions we have received in previous years, our church has assisted many members who have faced financial emergencies with rent payments, utility bills, food, etc.. One hundred percent of the donations collected go directly to our members in need.

A lot of things happen around our church that few ever notice. The Church Mouse sees all! Here are some recent excerpts from her diary.

March 19, 2022

Lots of folks in Bartter Hall today for a day of service. They collected so many books. Maybe I will leave them a note so they know I can read. I'd love a new book. The last thing I read was *Of Mice and Men*.

April 4, 2022

I was enjoying such a great nap but was very rudely awakened! Those folks from Leek Pipe Organ sure are loud when they tune the organ. But I guess missing a nap is worth some great organ tunes!

April 16, 2022

They left behind an Easter Egg! A really big bunny with floppy ears dropped a beautifully colored egg from a basket. None of the children noticed so I got to take it home. It was yummy. Next year, I'll ask for some chocolate too!



CHURCH NEWS

REDUCED OFFICE HOURS: Church Administrator Linda Ferro will be away from July 25-August 12. During these three weeks, the church office will be open from 10AM-1PM. Thank you to Marlene Arcuri, Louise Gamary and Renee Thayer for helping out in the office while Linda is on vacation.

CEDAR POINT: The Board of Christian Education, in partnership with Church of the Redeemer UCC, will host a trip to Cedar Point for our children and youth on Wednesday, July 13. If your children are interested, please contact the church office.

INDEPENDENCE DAY: Our church will walk as a group in the July 4th parade through Kamm's Corners. The Board of Growth and Outreach is working to get T-Shirts for the whole group. Plan to join us for this wonderful tradition.

TRANSITIONS

Carol Cates moved to Sarasota, Florida. We will miss you!

Margaret & Wayne Borrelli and Nancy Monaghan joined West Park UCC in membership on March 20, 2022.

Marleigh Louise McFadden was baptized on April 17, 2022.

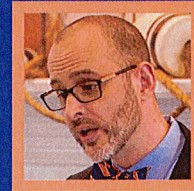
Olivia Armstrong was graduated summa cum laude from The Ohio State University on May 7, 2022.

Bill Armstrong, Sr. entered life eternal on May 3, 2022. A service of worship to celebrate his life will take place at the church on Saturday, June 11 at 12PM followed by a reception.

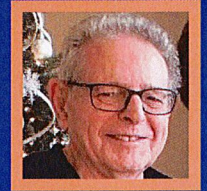
Elmer Rogers interment will take place on June 7, 2022 at the Ohio Western Reserve National Cemetery in Rittman, Ohio.

SAVE THE DATES

September 5, 2022 — Labor Day/Office Closed
September 14, 2022 — Weekly Bible Study Resumes
September 18, 2022 — Hymn Sing Sunday
September 24, 2022 — Annual Fundraiser



Jason Thompson
Senior Pastor



Jim Furry
Associate Pastor



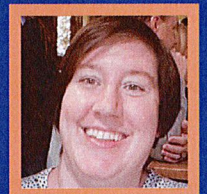
Sue Keserich
Minister of Music



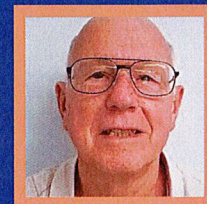
Linda Ferro
Church Administrator



Jennifer White
Director of Digital
Ministries

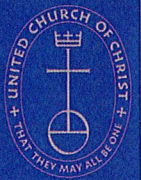


Sara Jovanovic
Food Pantry
Coordinator



Bob Arcuri
Director of Maintenance

God is still speaking,
**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**





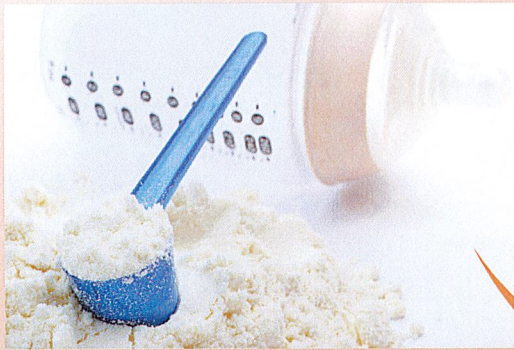
COMMUNITY CUPBOARD

@ West Park United Church of Christ

Since the start of our expanded food pantry in March 2020, we have served over 150,000 meals. We have made such an impact in the lives of so many people. This is what faith in action looks like.

COMMUNITY CUPBOARD BY THE NUMBERS

Annual Expenses: \$26,000 (donations and grants)
Volunteer Hours: 2021 = 495 (equal to \$7425)
2022 = 185 (equal to \$2775) (Jan-May)
In-Kind Donations: 2021 = \$6179.79
2022 = \$594 (Jan-May)
Number of Guests Served: 2021 ≈ 2500
2022 ≈ 1000 (Jan-May)



GROWING NEED

The nationwide shortage of baby formula is disproportionately affecting low-income families. Many are having trouble simply finding the food they need to feed their children. Our pantry is seeking donations of formula to help families in the neighborhood. You may place donations of powdered formula in the collection bins in the narthex or drop them off in the church office during the week.

MAKING HEADLINES:

WEST PARK UCC IN THE NEWS

Our church ministries are getting noticed and the word is spreading about all the good work we do! We were recently featured nationally in the United Church of Christ news for our interfaith work with our Muslim friends and hosting an iftar meal. Food Pantry Coordinator Sara Jovanovic was interviewed by Cleveland 19 News highlighting our pantry in series called "Building a Better Cleveland" and again talking about the shortage of baby formula. Keep up the good work!

