



An Open and Affirming, Accessible to All Congregation



A Message from Our Pastor, the Rev. Amy Gopp

Beloved of God,

The coronavirus pandemic is an unprecedented experience for all of us. We are swimming in a sea of uncertainty yet trying desperately to read the future, wondering what the days, weeks, months, and even years ahead will look like. But none of us has a crystal ball. We can only live into the future by planting the seeds now for the post-pandemic world we hope and pray for.

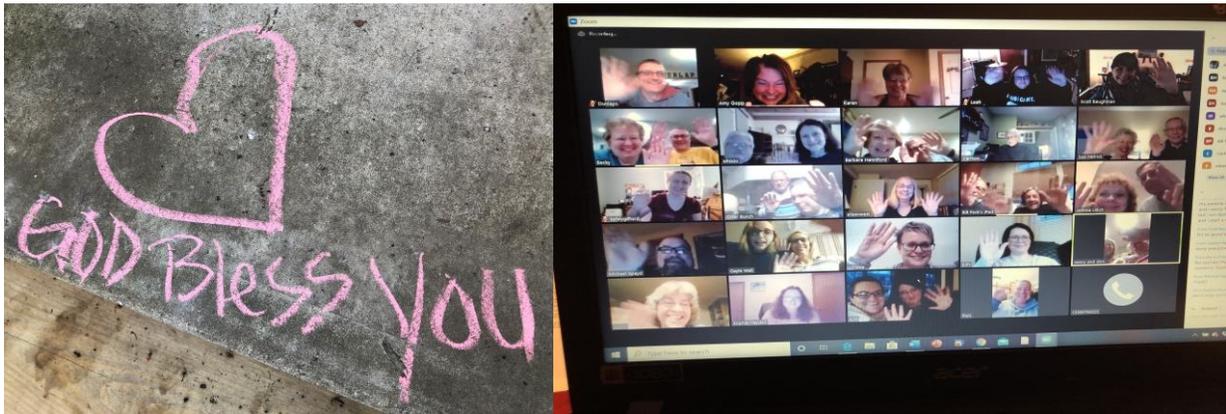
What is certain is that the way we had been living is not sustainable. Throughout this crisis, I have been deeply reflecting on what is trying to get my attention. What is trying to get *our* attention? What is COVID-19 asking of us? And what is the future we want to create as a result? How might we emerge from this Sabbath experience more aware, more enlightened, more evolved? Will we learn from this experience or will we simply allow ourselves to return to frenetic activity and business as usual, disregarding all the critical lessons of this time?

As we continue to experience both great challenges and unexpected gifts during this time, my prayer is that you are able to be present to all of it, not trying to fix it or change it but simply be present to it. Even in the midst of this crisis we can plant the seeds that will blossom later, co-creating with God the world we want to bring about after this pandemic is long over.

None of us know what the future will be, but we can envision it, for now we have experienced the invincible power of what it means to come together in spirit as one body, the body of Christ. While we may not be gathering in-person to worship together, or doing the work of our committees, or scheduling fellowship groups, we may never have been so intimately connected. We have spiritually located ourselves in new and profound ways even as we have been physically distanced. Just like our ancestors of faith, we are in exile. But we are not alone. We have one another and we have the Lord our God, our Sustainer, our Strength, our Song, and our Salvation.

The strength of our God has shown up on our sidewalks in chalk drawings that uplifted our spirits and brought smiles to our faces. The compassion of Jesus has shown up in impromptu, drive-by birthday parties for our children and seniors alike. The comfort of the Holy Spirit has shown up in virtual hymn sings and countless cards in our mailboxes, freshly baked bread and hot meals left on our front porch, and in seedlings delivered by our Green Team. Our connectedness as the body of Christ is felt when we pass the peace of the risen Christ on

Sunday mornings through text messages sending words of hope, joy, and love and on Tuesday evenings through a Zoom group prayer.



Some would say our faith has been tested. I say our faith has been proven. We have no reason to fear but to rejoice as Easter people, for God is with us, inviting us to envision a new world as the one human family we were created to be.

May the peace and triumph of our Resurrected Lord be with you today and always,
Pastor Amy

Moderator's Message – Jaime Baughman

I have always preferred face-to-face communication over a telephone chat, but I must admit I have a growing appreciation for all technology. Thank goodness we live in a day and age of Facebook, YouTube, Zoom and cell phones! I hope you have been able to access our worship services and social opportunities via some of this technology. It can be a little intimidating, I know! But we are so blessed to be able to worship together on Facebook on Sunday mornings, to catch-up over a zoom coffee hour or carry out church business in virtual meetings.

The bottom line is this: The work of the church continues!

We are so grateful for Pastor Amy and our Director of Faith Formation Kim who have offered tremendous leadership and have come up with so many innovative ways to reach out, engage, and care for our congregation. We are so appreciative of the ongoing work of our office staff members Leah and Cheri, and to Don, with his care for our building. And thank goodness for Corey who has kept us all singing!

We are beyond thankful to those of you who have elected to give electronically, or who have gone to the trouble to put a check in the mail.

We have so many blessings!

I'm not sure how many of your saw our bicentennial post on Facebook on April 15. The message was this:

As we continue to honor our Bicentennial birthday, we must remember that long before we heard of Covid-19, we endured measles and polio outbreaks, Diphtheria, TB and the Spanish Influenza - an outbreak that started in January 1918 and lasted until December 1920. There have been countless challenges over the course of our 200 years.

We are strong. We will continue to Be the Church. Be well!

Diaconate Update – Don Bubenzer

As those with a special mission of nurturing the Spirit of Christ among us, the members of Diaconate are working tirelessly to maintain contact with those who are on our prayer list, those in homes isolated from family and friends, and those experiencing isolation, pain, and worry during these unusual times. That really could be all of us. The mission seems overwhelming, and yet we are aware of members throughout the church who are sensitive to and a part of reaching those in need. We are grateful for your responding to the call. Especially remember those who have been touched with death in recent weeks. We have five members or friends of the church whose lives have not been lifted up and celebrated in a memorial service. Please keep in touch with those families. A few days back Dr. Acton invited us each to reach out daily to five folks; listen to their needs, offer words of encouragement, and keep them in our prayers. I invite all of you to do so. Also, if you know of people who are in a crisis for funds for basic needs, please call Pastor Amy or me (330-671-1015) to let us know of the need and encourage those in need to do likewise. Through the Congregational and Community Assistance Fund we can in limited ways help some folks. Finally, thank you, to all of you who respond in such caring ways to our church family and the larger community. We are grateful to be a part of you.

The Census: Please Respond!



Responses to the 2020 Census shape decisions about how billions of dollars in federal funds flow into communities each year for the next 10 years for critical services. Health care, emergency response, schools and education programs, and roads and bridges are all impacted by the 2020 Census. The COVID-19 pandemic underscores the importance of census data and census participation. Counting everyone living in a community helps community leaders plan for the future.

Census results inform planning and funding decisions for communities for critical public services. These services include:

- Hospitals, health clinics, and health care services
- Emergency and disaster response, fire, and public safety services
- Schools, education programs, grants, and more
- Roads, bridges, and other public transit and infrastructure projects
- Businesses and economic development
- Housing services and programs for special populations
- Family and social services
- Water and waste management

A Pastoral Letter from Our UCC Living Water Association General Minister



On Resurrection Sunday, I dropped in electronically into several Easter services taking place in our churches around the Association. It was a new experience, a little different, but I am grateful for it.

Each service was filled with words of hope and encouragement during this time of isolation and restriction. Each service retold the story of Jesus' resurrection and celebrated that the story of Jesus is about our own resurrections and new beginnings no matter how difficult the road.

A BIG Thank you to our Authorized Ministers and our churches for your faithful and creative ministry as you step up to be the Church during these challenging days.

Daily news is grim. Injustices and inequities in our world are notably revealed. The present is filled with grief, the future with unease. How can we keep the faith and not lose heart?

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian church – **"We do not lose heart!"** Because, "we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies." 2 Corinthians 4.

Paul's letter is our letter. No matter how deep the affliction, how profound the pain, the story continues. We are not destroyed. We are an Easter people.

Perhaps one way to *not lose heart* is by remembering the story. Remembering breathes life into our stories/memories. By remembering the story we remember Jesus. By remembering Jesus we resurrect him. By resurrecting Jesus we make Easter happen.

The Easter season in the church is 50 days. The number 50 in biblical times, represented liberation as opposed to 40 which symbolized suffering. 50 is a complete number, 7 times 7, with the 50th year being a year of Jubilee, a year of liberation and release.

During 50 days of Easter we have the opportunity to nurture Easter within us. We are anxious and afraid, we weep and mourn, but we *do not lose heart*. Through our tears we give birth to Easter, we begin to turn things around. We remember that Easter is in our hearts and Easter is our journey. We can nurture Easter within us. We can help it flourish. We can make it happen even in the midst of affliction.

When we don't give in to despair we make room for Easter. When we reach out to the other with encouragement and support, we make Easter happen. When we feed those who lack food, we resurrect Jesus and make Easter happen. When we are honest about the injustices around us, we resurrect Jesus within and among us.

During these 50 days of Easter remember the story and resurrect Jesus, bring him to life. Nurture Easter within you so despair does not take root or find space to grow. Christ is risen, indeed!

Earth Day 2020! – Julie Wallace

Earth Day 2020. April 22 should have been a large, worldwide celebration as it has been 50 years since the conception of Earth Day. The Kent UCC Green Team had big plans for a worship service that would celebrate our beautiful world, and we had many ideas and suggestions for taking action on climate change. Our plans changed with the pandemic, but thanks to Pastor Amy, Kim Nagy, and others, our virtual worship service still focused on our earth. We thank Pastor Amy for regularly speaking about the urgency of taking action so that we can continue to enjoy this place God gave us. We must become better stewards. Our very lives depend on it.

Because it is our Bicentennial year, we created a list of 200 things you can do to help our world. Please take the time to download it here:

<https://files.constantcontact.com/9453c9ac101/17b4d320-1ebd-410c-905c-fb3491837801.pdf> and open this list and perhaps

print it out. Circle the things you are currently doing. Then challenge yourself and your family to choose several more items to focus on to make improvements in your life and the life of the planet. Let's work to make our planet and ourselves healthier!

Finally, many thanks to Green Team members who delivered Norwegian Spruce seedlings locally to members of Kent UCC recently and to Brenda Schneider for her perfect Earth Day 2020 drawing that accompanies this article!

Your Kent UCC Green Team

Earth Day Worship Service

Our inspirational Earth Day worship service from April 19 can still be viewed via our YouTube channel. You can find the beautiful service at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iuS_z5OyVUA Below you'll find two poems and a prayer that were part of the service.

Thank You, Tree by Fatou M'Baye

Tree, you put the spark
back in my body.
And when I take a breath,
the lights behind my eyes
are turned on, and the fire
in my furnace crackles.
The whole world stops buzzing.

For once the Earth
will have a chance to think
and remember why we're here.



On that day, I'll look at your, tree,
through your leaves, your bark,
your sapwood, all the way to your heart—
your beating, beating heart—

and say, *Thank you.*

When I Am Among the Trees

by Mary Oliver

When I am among the trees,
especially the willows and the honey locust,
equally the beech, the oaks and the pines,
they give off such hints of gladness.
I would almost say that they save me, and daily.
I am so distant from the hope of myself,
in which I have goodness, and discernment,
and never hurry through the world
but walk slowly, and bow often.
Around me the trees stir in their leaves
and call out, "Stay awhile."
The light flows from their branches.
And they call again, "It's simple," they say,
"and you too have come
into the world to do this, to go easy, to be filled
with light, and to shine."

The Lord's Prayer *from The New Zealand Prayer Book*

Eternal Spirit,
Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be,
Father and Mother of us all,
Loving God, in whom is heaven:
The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom
sustain our hope and come on earth.
With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and testing, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,
now and forever. Amen.

Faith Formation News – Kim Nagy

During our stay-at-home order, I've committed myself to a consistent morning devotional time, and I'm thankful for some extra time in my day to be able to add it. I started at the beginning of Genesis, and, reading a few chapters a day, have made it to the Israelites' wilderness journey. Often, I forget what epic stories the beginning of the Bible has until I read it once again! Currently, I find myself identifying closely with those fickle Israelites. One day they're thankful to God for rescuing them from life in Egypt, and the next day they're blaming Moses and Aaron for the uncertainty they face. At least in Egypt they knew what to expect! In the wilderness, they had no idea how long it would take to get to the Promised Land (certainly they never imagined 40 years!), what they would face along the way, or how life would be different once they arrived.

Some days I enjoy this slower pace of life, despite the anxiety it often brings, while other days I find myself anxious to get back to a routine of driving to church, seeing all of your faces, and life as I once knew it. Not knowing how long this will last, or what to expect along the way, has reminded me that God is in control, and one thing I can do is offer my trust to God, knowing I'm not alone right now or in history. God's message in Exodus, and throughout the Bible, continually reminds us: "Do not fear. I am with you." It also has me wondering--how do I want life to look like in the Promised Land once this is all over? Will it be back to business as usual, or will I want to craft life a little differently?

I encourage you, if you have the time, to read the Bible from the beginning along with me. Perhaps you might take some time for yourself, or with your family, to discern how you'd like life to look a little differently once life resumes to its normal pace. As we navigate new ways of faith formation at home during this time, remember that God is with us wherever we are and in all the situations we face.

Looking forward to seeing you once again!

Ministry to Children

Each week, Kim Nagy continues to send an email to families with a Sunday school lesson attached and other faith formation activities that can be done at home during the week. If you are not part of this email list and would like to be, please reach out to her at knagy@kentucc.org. Children's worship is also available each Sunday morning on our YouTube page: Video KUCC.

Small Group Interest Survey Wants YOU!

Our Small Group Interest Survey is still open for just a short while longer! We're asking each member to complete the survey in order to help us form small groups in the future. Won't it be good to gather when that time comes?! If you haven't yet completed the survey, please do it now by clicking this link: [Small Group Interest Survey](#). It will take only a few minutes. Thank you from the Hospitality and Membership Committee! If you have any ideas about groups, feel free to get in touch with co-chairs Gayle Wall or Eileen West.

Community Outreach Meal Update – Gayle Wall

In April we had our second “Take-Out” community meal to be as safe as possible with the new COVID19 mandates. We packaged up a ham dinner and desserts and passed out the meals in our makeshift drive through! About 40 people picked up one or two meals to go. It worked well, and the people were extremely thankful that we were still providing food. Please look for the May Community Meal email/sign-up genius as we will probably be doing a similar “Take-Out” dinner and needing some help! We also can certainly use monetary contributions earmarked for the Community Meal.

Thank you for all you do to make the Community Meal one of the most awesome service ministries that we do. We will continue to serve those in the most need during this COVID19 crisis!



Outreach News – Terri Silver

Your Outreach Ministry remains faithful in our efforts to help those in need. At the beginning of the outbreak, we sent funds to four community agencies that we felt would experience a greater need in the weeks ahead. Since that time, we have sent additional funds to Kent Social Services for their efforts. While we continue to "be the church" and support our community, we encourage each of you to also support the community services in this crucial time.

Stewardship News - Karen Carmany

(Acts 2:42-47) Luke, the presumed author of the book of Acts, describes a community of believers who are learning how to live as followers of Jesus. They studied the teachings of the apostles. They held all things in common. They sold what they had and shared it. They spent time in the temple. They broke bread at home. They were glad and generous, and they praised God. Whether it is read after Easter or Pentecost, this passage challenges us to consider what the church looks like, how followers of Jesus are called to live, and what it means to live in community. It is a life of mutual commitment and dedication to the community marked by recognition that the needs of the whole are greater than the needs of the individual. Day by day, with glad and generous hearts, the church continues its work.

Is this idyllic picture of the early church one that we can apply seriously in 21st century America? Maybe this story is not so much what we should do but one in which God invites us into? Perhaps God is inviting us into a life lived in community, in which our individual needs are not as important as the needs of the group as a whole. Perhaps God is inviting us into a life of faith, in which we put our trust in the community to care for one another, rather than insisting we can do it ourselves. Perhaps God is inviting us into a life of love, in which we are asked to give of ourselves to make the community stronger.

When it comes to thinking about generosity and stewardship, are we to sell everything we have, pool our resources and share with those in need? Maybe so, but we won't be asking our members to be doing this anytime soon. But don't we already do this to some extent? Each of us gives some of what we have – time, talent, and treasure – to support the ministry and mission of the church. (Faithful, Hopeful, Loving: Ecumenical Stewardship Center)

In these challenging times of the COVID 19 virus we **THANK YOU!** for your tithes, offerings and



"We are the church!"

continued support for our community of faith, the gifts you give through your prayers, participating in online worship, and your support of families, friends, and community partners. We appreciate you.

We pray God's continuing love, encouragement and strength surround you and may you be filled with the love of Christ and with all the fullness of God.

Blessings from your Kent UCC Stewardship Committee.

Stephen Ministry – Sue Otterson



It's a stressful time for everyone. That's probably one of the more obvious statements for our time. If you are needing an ear to help you put your stress in perspective, at ease, or just need to blow off some steam, your Stephen Ministries team is here for you. Please reach out to Pastor Amy or me, and we will get you to the right set of ears. We are available in a variety of ways right now, including Face Time and one on one Zoom meetings. Please do not hesitate. No problem is too small!

"Church" Responders Needed

Are you certified for First Aid, CPR, AED, and/or using a fire extinguisher? Would you like to learn? Kent UCC is looking for anyone who is currently certified and/or willing to be certified in First Aid/First Responder, CPR, AED or fire extinguisher use in the unlikely case there is an emergency during a church event. If you're interested in participating, please contact Jim Dunlap @ beaches4me3@gmail.com.

PFLAG Meeting Suspended

Due to all church activities being cancelled, there will be no meeting in May.

Adult Small Groups

We have several small groups that are a great way to build meaningful relationships and have fun! Given the virus outbreak, our groups will not meet in April. Look for future meetings for our women's fellowship groups, men's breakfasts, Men Baking Bread, book group, Bagels and Books, mah jong, yoga, and more. We will all be so glad when it's safe to resume our gatherings. Meanwhile, don't forget to complete the [small group interest survey!](#)

Youth Group News

J-Walkers

Our J-Walkers gathered via Zoom on April 5 and April 19 from 12-12:45 p.m. On April 5 we participated in an at-home scavenger hunt together. The winner received a pizza with toppings of their choice delivered to their house via no-contact delivery! We gathered April 19 to play a game of Pictionary and talk about what it means to "be still and know that God is God." Kim emailed a devotional called, "Slowly" to each J-Walker to participate in during the month of May. It focuses on slowing down and listening for God. We share our "highs and lows" at the beginning of each gathering time, and it has been wonderful to "visit" everyone at home during these past few weeks! J-Walkers will meet May 3, 17, and 31. If your middle-schooler wishes to participate, please email Kim (knagy@kentucc.org) for the Zoom link.

United Youth Force

UYF has been gathering throughout April on Zoom to check-in with each other and play games. On April 5 we participated in an at-home scavenger hunt together, and the winner received a pizza with toppings of their choice delivered to their house via no-contact delivery. We gathered April 19 to play a game of Pictionary and talked about some of the creative things we've been doing or enjoying during quarantine, inspired by an Apple commercial that states, "Creativity goes on." Instead of meeting via Zoom on April 26, we surprised various members of the church with gifts at their doors, chalk in their driveway, or a poster from the road. UYF will meet May 3, 17, and 24. If your high-schooler wishes to participate, please email Kim (knagy@kentucc.org) for the Zoom link.

Mission Trip Cancelled

In lieu of current events, the United Youth Force mission trip to Washington, D.C., in early June has been cancelled. UYF will plan to make this trip next summer, and plans are forming to create a local mission trip if we are indeed able to gather safely sometime this summer. Stay tuned, and thank you for your understanding.

Hungerford Scholarship

It's that time of year again! If you are a college student who will be entering your junior or senior year during the 2020-21 school year, you can apply for the Hungerford Scholarship, awarded each year by the Christian Education Ministry of Kent UCC. We will award 2, \$500 scholarships

this year. If you are interested, please reach out to Kim Nagy (knagy@kentuucc.org), who will send the application materials to you via email.

Need Help Getting the WORD Out!

Would you like to help or learn more about how the KUCC communicates and markets itself to the congregation and broader community? Then the KUCC Marketing & Communications Committee would love to hear from you! If you're interested in participating or learning more, please contact Scott Baughman @ scbaughman1@gmail.com.

Treasurer's Report - Kay Hansford

Hopefully, you have received your 1st quarterly report. If you would like to change the manner in which you receive these reports--email or regular mail--please contact Cheri so she can make adjustments before the next statements are sent.

We are getting close to having a new website. This will enable us to use our current software program CDM+ for e-giving rather than Vanco. Information and instructions on this will be forthcoming. However, in order to utilize this new e-giving program, you must have a current email on file with the church. If you need to update your email please contact BOTH Leah: ldavis@kentuucc.org and Cheri: cmikula@kentuucc.org so the program will be ready for your use.

Income for April '20	\$20,094	YTD	\$144,399	(as of March 24)
Expenditures	\$27,220	YTD	\$126,268	(estimating end of month payroll)
Balance	-\$7,126		+\$18,131	

In comparing March and April of 2019 and this year, we are pretty close in numbers for both income and expenditures despite the pandemic. So far, so good! Thank you for your ongoing generosity!

May Birthdays

01 Pastor Amy 03 Amanda Haney 04 James Madden, Kent Traylor Gordon 05 Jan Rader
06 Sara Braden 07 Tom Myers 10 Justin Barker 11 Calvin Breyley, BJ Lackey 12 Michael
Sisson 13 John Bertsch, Allison Hight 16 Bill Arthur 17 Hannah Riddle 20 Heather Buckley
21 Christy Balan, Shirley Sellman, Sam Moody 23 Andrew Rickelman 24 Richard Werstler
26 Marilyn Sorrick, Kathy Robinson, Melvin Foreman 27 Emmet Broda 30 Jacob Rhinehart

Sundays in May

May 3: Fourth Sunday of Easter

Sermon by Pastor Amy

10:00 Worship on Facebook and YouTube

May 10: Fifth Sunday of Easter

Sermon by Pastor Amy

10:00 Worship on Facebook and YouTube

May 17: Sixth Sunday of Easter

Sermon by Pastor Amy
10:00 Worship on Facebook and YouTube

May 24: Seventh Sunday of Easter
Sermon by Pastor Amy
10:00 Worship on Facebook and YouTube

May 31: Pentecost Sunday
Sermon by Pastor Amy
10:00 Worship on Facebook and YouTube

How to Reach Us

Kent UCC | 1400 East Main Street | Kent, OH 44240
Phone: 330.673.9534 | Fax: 330.673.8828
office@KentUCC.org | [Facebook @ KentUnitedChurchOfChrist](#)

Office Hours: Staff is currently working from home during Covid-19 crisis

Staff Contacts

Rev. Amy C. Gopp
Senior Minister
PastorAmy@KentUCC.org

Corey Fowler
Director of Music
CFowler1@Kent.edu

Kimberly Nagy
Director of Faith Formation
KNagy@KentUCC.org

Cheri Mikula
Financial Administrator
CMikula@KentUCC.org

Leah Davis
Admin. Assistant
LDavis@KentUCC.org

Don Deibler
Custodian
via Office@KentUCC.org

The Messenger is published monthly and circulated online and in print. Articles and other items for publication in this newsletter should be submitted to the church office by e-mail: office@kentucc.org. The deadline for the June issue is Friday, May 22 at noon.

OUR MISSION:

Enlivened by the grace of Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit, Kent United Church of Christ does justice, embraces faithful love, and walks humbly with our God to serve and transform lives, our community and the world. (Micah 6:8)