

KENT



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

YOU ARE WELCOME HERE

An Open and Affirming, Accessible to All Congregation

A Message from Our Pastor, the Rev. Amy Gopp



Beloved of God,

This week's lectionary readings are all a variation on the question, "Is God with us?" While we focus on one text during worship each Sunday, there are always a set of readings presented—from the Hebrew scriptures, the Psalms, the New Testament and of course a Gospel reading. But they all lift up one theme that binds them together. While we often study the Gospel reading, during this season of the year called Ordinary Time—the end of our liturgical year before entering the new season of Advent—we have the opportunity to look more deeply in the Hebrew bible (the Old Testament). Jonah

reminded us, amid division and dissonance between Israel and Assyria that we, too, can offer God's extravagant love and mercy right here and now, in our country. We are called to offer that same love and mercy even to those on "the other side".

We will also soon join the wanderings of the Israelites, in the book of Exodus, as they made their way out of the wilderness, "journeying in stages" toward a better life. This image of making our way "in stages" is a comforting one as we find ourselves still entrenched in the wilderness of a global pandemic, tremendous social unrest, and the bitter battles and divisiveness of our upcoming elections. It has seemed as though we are wandering in a very foreign land just trying to make our way to a destination yet unseen and unknown. Layer onto that the injustice, violence, anger, oppression, confusion, and fear that we are feeling and witnessing, and it is easy to see how our mental, emotional, physical and spiritual health are suffering.

We may be the ones asking, "Is God with us?"

Friends, there is not much I know for sure. But I do have faith. If you are not feeling strong and confident in your faith, that is OK. It is completely understandable in these times. We can always pray for the gift of faith to be increased within us. God hears our prayers. Hebrews 11:1 explains, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." We cannot see what is ahead, but we can hope. Even though we may not be able to see what the future holds, God is accompanying us through this wilderness as we, too, journey in stages, to a future with promise.

My hope for you is that you know, deep in your heart, mind and into your very bones, that God is present, God is active, and God is loving. God is present, active, and loving. And that presence, action and love are ever-present in our lives through the power of the Holy Spirit. When in doubt, or as anxiety and fear rises up in you, I invite you to take a deep breath, breathing in the Spirit of Life, and then say the words, "God is present, active, and loving in my life, in this community, in our country, and in this world."

While we live *in* this world, we are not *of* this world. We are God's people, the body of Christ, and we know something about extravagant love, overflowing mercy, and the ubiquitous presence of the Divine to bring about new life. May your faith in all that you hope for but cannot yet see carry and sustain you through this wilderness time. And if you're having a hard time feeling that faith, please know that you can tap into mine, just as you can tap into the faith of this body of Christ we call the Kent United Church of Christ. You are not alone.

With all my pastoral love and care,

Pastor Amy

Moderator's Message – Jaime Baughman



In spite of COVID-19, Kent UCC continues to "Be the Church!"

Check out these photos of friendly eyes and hidden smiles!

One is of our Property Ministry which met recently on the church lawn. This wonderful group continues to care for our building, making updates and improvements where necessary. You can be sure our church is in good hands!



The other is of Dee Kemp and Sally Saltzman at the County Clothing Center. Our church continues to volunteer at the facility on the first and third Thursdays of each month, sorting and hanging clothing in preparation for the shoppers that come on Wednesdays and Fridays.

On the third Sunday of the month, a community meal continues to be served - although for now the meal is prepared "to-go."

Further in this newsletter are photos of members working on the Apostle Build Habitat house.

And I could go on with other examples, but the point is, our church CONTINUES. Our work is as important as it's ever been, if not more so.

Be safe, be well. And let's continue.

Time Capsule Project Begins – Jaime Baughman, Bicentennial Chairperson

You are invited to participate in our time capsule project!

What speaks to you about this unique and challenging time in our history? Maybe it's a newspaper article or a photo... or even a mask. Please save the items for our Kent UCC time capsule.

Stay tuned for more information on how and when we will collect these mementos. We will plan to bury a time capsule when we come back together!

Stewardship News - Karen Carmany

The Stewardship Ministry is planning for "*Faithful, Hopeful, Loving*," our fall 2020 Stewardship emphasis. Members of our committee along with other faithful volunteers from Kent UCC will be "on the road" delivering information packets to members' homes Friday, October 23 and Saturday, October 24. If you are not at home to receive your delivery, please make sure that you check for our bag on your front door.

Kick-off for "*Faithful, Hopeful, Loving*" begins on Sunday, October 25. Dedication of gifts will take place on Sunday, November 22.

A Reminder...this would be an opportune time to check/update your information on our church website. In addition, we encourage everyone to set up recurring online gifts to honor your pledges. It's safe and convenient!

Last, we're adding *Temperament* to Time, Talent, and Treasure as our definition of Stewardship. Generosity is a matter of the heart and attitude. A good steward has a faithful, hopeful and loving heart.

UPCOMING DATES (DETAILS WITHIN THIS MESSENGER)

October 4: Neighbors in Need Special Offering Received

October 4: Video discussion group continues through November 1 on *Allegiance to Empire*

October 4: Confirmation class begins

October 4: Winter clothing collection (coats, sweaters, etc.)—drop off at church 4-6 p.m.

October 4: Virtual Crop Walk

October 5: Mental Health and Addiction Ministry Meeting

October 15: Hope in a Handbag fundraiser for Safer Futures (virtual)

October 23-25: Stewardship packets delivered; Stewardship Kickoff Sunday

October 29: New book study begins on *How to Be an Anti-Racist*

November 6: "Sleep in Your Car" Fundraiser to benefit the Haven

November 11: All-church book discussion on *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*

Faith Formation News – Rev. Kim Nagy

First, I want to offer a gigantic THANK YOU to all of you at Kent United Church of Christ. I was ordained into Christian ministry on Saturday, August 29 on Zoom with many of you attending. Since then, I have received many cards, gifts, well-wishes, and emails from you, and I have appreciated each and every one of them. Thank you for your support on my journey of faith and for helping me discern this call of God. From the church Council I received a beautiful Advent stole and a gift to United Christian Ministries in my name (it's never too late to donate at www.myucm.org!). Thank you once again for all of the ways you made this celebration meaningful to me despite all the current circumstances.

I have been thinking a lot about the language of faith lately. No, I'm not talking about speaking in tongues or writing sermons but just the everyday, simple ways we can heighten our awareness of God ever-present in our lives. In my opinion, this is of particular importance when we are around our children and youth, as they learn from us the language of faith and what it means to make faith a priority in our world today.

Growing up, my parents were always pointing out ways that God was at work among us, often pointing to the sky and saying, "I know who was behind that today." I admit, as a child I nodded along and as a teenager I rolled my eyes, but as I grew into adulthood, I found myself reacting similarly to things that would happen to me or others. I don't really point to the sky (because I don't necessarily think God is high above us but rather, among us), but I do acknowledge something greater than me is at work. That was taught to me; it wasn't ingrained or came naturally. My parents taught me the language of faith.

The language of faith is not difficult to learn, but it certainly takes practice and constant mindfulness. So as you stand in awe of a sunset, act on something you feel particularly called to do, shed a tear during a sermon or hymn that speaks so directly to you, or merely sit down at the dinner table with your family and pray before eating, don't forget to openly express your acknowledgement of something greater at work. And as always, I encourage you to join us for any and all of the virtual faith formation opportunities happening this fall!

Children and Youth Grades PreK-7th Grade

This fall, our children have been learning the stories of our faith ancestors in their weekly Sunday school lessons. Lessons are sent home each week via email and are introduced in the weekly children's church video on our Video KUCC YouTube page. In September, we learned about Abraham, Sarah, Jacob, Rebekah, Esau, Jacob, and Joseph, and in October, we look forward to learning about the midwives who bravely saved Hebrew babies, and the story of Moses will unfold.

If your child has not received an "All of Us" Bible story book, please reach out to Kim Nagy to receive one.

Our October Bible Memory verse is: "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid, do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9 Maybe you will memorize it along with us this month!

J-Walkers (Middle School Youth Group)

J-Walkers meet every other Sunday from 11:15 a.m.-12:45 p.m.

Our J-Walkers met in September on Zoom to talk about what they'd like to do this coming School year. They came up with a variety of outdoor activities to do while the weather is still nice, and they can't wait until they can once again be inside so they can have a lock-in. In addition, they talked about the Psalms and made a J-Walker playlist of some of their favorite songs.

October Gatherings

(masks are required, social distancing practiced, and hand-sanitizer will be provided)

October 11 Meet in church parking lot for games and activities

October 25 All-family hike in Cuyahoga Valley National Park

Confirmation

We celebrated our 2019-2020 Confirmands on Sunday, September 13. What a joy! Congratulations to Ethan Wills, Grant Smith, Ryan Rickelman, and Kathryn Mudrak on their Confirmation. Welcome to Kent UCC as official members!

Our new Confirmation year begins Sunday, October 4. If you are still interested in participating in this year's class, please reach out to Kim Nagy ASAP. We welcome anyone 8th grade and up to participate in this enriching, FUN, and faith-filled year.

United Youth Force (High School Youth Group)

UYF meets every Sunday from 4-6 p.m.

United Youth Force members have been enjoying outside activities as much as possible these days. On Sunday, September 13 they gathered in the church parking lot for socially distanced games and activities. They continue to rotate helping with the monthly community meal that Gayle Wall has faithfully continued as a carry-out meal during the pandemic.

HEAD'S UP! United Youth Force wants to prepare early for their annual winter clothing drive. Instead of traveling to neighborhoods this year, we ask that people drop off their winter coats, hats, gloves, sweaters, etc. to the church parking lot on *Sunday, October 4 from 4-6 p.m.* As you switch out your summer wardrobe for fall and winter, lay aside anything you'd like to donate. The items collected will be given to our community meal guests in November. Thank you in advance for your generosity!

October Gatherings

(masks are required, social distancing practiced, and hand-sanitizer will be provided)

October 4 Winter Clothing Drive

October 11 Hike & Picnic

October 18 Community Meal

October 25 Outdoor Movie & Tie-Dye

Adult Education

We are pleased and excited to offer the following virtual opportunities for adult education. Please reach out to Kim Nagy to sign up and receive the Zoom information for any of these classes.

Sunday Morning Film Series: Pastor Amy and Kim will continue to lead a film series, *Allegiance to Empire*, on "Sunday mornings from 8:55-9:55 a.m., much like the summer Covenantal Restoration series.

Thursday Book Studies: Jen Case is leading a book study on *How to be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi, which will begin Thursday, October 29 at 7 p.m.

All-Church Read: Join the entire church as we read *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* by James Cone. We will have an all-church discussion on November 11 at 7 p.m. via Zoom.

Hospitality and Membership Update – Eileen West and Gayle Wall

Happy Fall to All!! Our H & M committee would like to thank everyone who participated in our first all-Church Social Zoom...Truth or Lie on September 18. It was a lot of fun! Also, if you are interested in joining a small Zoom Game group, contact Gayle Wall at gayle_wall@yahoo.com. The small groups will decide on the game and time. It will be fun way to stay connected and get to know each other!!

H & M met in person on church grounds in September to discuss upcoming membership activities. We enjoyed seeing each other even if we were masked and socially distanced!! Stay tuned because we have some ideas for the holidays to help us get in the spirit of the season.

H& M next Zoom meeting is October 7. If any church member knows of new people attending our services or events virtually, please let us know so we are able to welcome them to Kent UCC.

Mental Health and Addiction Ministry

It's been 6 months now of social distancing and isolation. Sometimes we think we're coping pretty well and keeping up with day to day tasks and events. Other times the least little disturbance pushes us over the top! Dr. Rachael Keefe of the UCC Mental Health Network (<https://www.mhn-ucc.org/2020/09/07/2281/>) says most of us are usually hovering at an 80% stress level. When the little disturbance occurs, we aren't going from 0-100; we're going from 80-100. And some are hovering at nearly 100% every day with anxiety about racial tension, health care, childcare, employment, housing, and food.

So what to do? And how can we, Kent UCC, help others and ourselves? The Mental Health and Addiction Ministry drew on Dr. Keefe's suggestions and offers here some healthy strategies, many of which (those in bold) can be accessed directly through Kent UCC!

Healthy Coping Strategies

- Create your own *Space for Grace* (<https://kentucc.org/spaceforgrace>) at home and participate using Pastor Amy's resources.
- Sign up with Rev. Kim (knagy@kentucc.org) to get her Faith Formation Resources and Sunday school Lesson emails (Resources are helpful for "kids" of all ages!)
- Participate in the Qigong sessions led by Harold Hight.
- Connect with a prayer partner and text each day.
- Exercise (walk, stretch, dance).
- Do something creative (painting, writing, playing an instrument or singing, doing needlework, woodworking, cooking, baking).
- Watch funny pet shows and spend time with a pet.
- Engage in Kent UCC periodic games (Who Knew? or Truth or Lie?)
- Do puzzles (jigsaw, sudoku, crosswords, word searches).
- Make a Gratitude List.
- Joyfully support the outreach ministry of Kent UCC.
- Do nice things for others (thank you notes, letters, texts, calls, random acts of kindness, like paying for the order behind you in a drive through!).
- Organize a drawer or closet or rearrange a room.
- Contact a therapist or helpline.
- Attend a virtual support group.
- Attend online church services!

If you would like to join the Mental Health and Addiction Ministry, our next zoom meeting is Monday, October 5 at 7 pm. Contact Jackie Peck (goldenpeck@icloud.com) to be put on the email list!

Outreach Update

On October 4 we receive one of our five-for-five special UCC offerings. Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a special mission offering that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the [Council for American Indian Ministry](#). Two-thirds of this offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects through grants. This year, special consideration will be given to projects focusing on serving our immigrant neighbors and communities. Please give to this special offering!

Area Crop Walk: Due to the pandemic, the Crop Walk for Hunger will be virtual this year. The Walk is virtual, but the need could not be more real! As you know, the need is even greater during the pandemic, due to illness, job loss and complications from natural disasters and war. You can still walk, or not. You can raise money online or for real. The official date for the walk is **October 4**, but you are free to walk as individuals, families, "teams" anywhere you want or just virtually at any time. The **most** important link you will need to register and/or to donate is www.crophungerwalk.org/kentoh

Once again, Outreach will be one of the sponsors of the **Safer Futures Hope in a Handbag** event on October 15. The event will be virtual only. For more information, email HopelnAHandbag@fcsserves.org.

Kent UCC members had two great days in September to work on the Habitat Apostle Build home in Atwater! Check out the pictures! Most of the work was indoors, hanging drywall. The Habitat project manager said the goal for home completion is February. Watch for updates about future work dates or check with Linnea Ray, (330) 931-2063, pray2@neo.rr.com.

We pray that each and every one of you is staying healthy and maintaining social distancing.





Social Justice and Advocacy Ministry News

Let's Vote!

Are you registered to vote? Have you sent for your absentee ballot if you plan to vote without going in person this year? We can help! A Ministry member can get you a voter registration application and/or an absentee ballot application. Just contact Frank Hairston at (330) 351-3980 or bigdaddy3887@hotmail.com or Josh Case at (330) 554-5440 or caseshua@yahoo.com.

Black-Owned Businesses

In the September *Messenger*, we included the names of several local black-owned businesses and encouraged you to consider supporting them. For information about businesses beyond Portage County, see below.

Cleveland:

This article contains a long list of businesses organized by different categories.

<https://clevelandmagazine.com/in-the-cle/articles/where-to-support-black-owned-businesses-in-cleveland?fbclid=IwAR1B84bcWvJLjZFien-oAaB5WEFqutffv5BHLMDPpsxGVfXd-UNcsTKVe5o>

This link takes you to Cleveland-area black-owned restaurants, cafes, and bakeries.

<https://photos.clevescene.com/23-black-owned-cleveland-restaurants-tried-now/?slide=1&zanzibar>

Akron

The Devil Strip has running list of black-owned businesses in Akron, organized by category.

<https://thedevilstrip.com/black-owned-businesses/?fbclid=IwAR3Lx6epgYzh14nqxI9jCiLcaerZLWULtTN-dszSGh1TsS5tV-tMmr14zm4>

Northeast Ohio

Yelp has black-owned businesses, mostly restaurants, identified in Cleveland and Akron area. See

https://www.yelp.com/collection/e9TSqISOspKU7kiCRuYd3A?utm_content=Collections&utm_source=ishare&fbclid=IwAR3LoxwRknG0t4BcYkIV4X8P-5-VjmUxPqWSVLUUFd2Zn_NK03BJvvc2aoA

And, did you know that you can also search Etsy for black-owned businesses?

Racial Injustice Calendar

We recently learned that the Equal Justice Initiative publishes an annual calendar featuring “A History of Racial Injustice.” It’s a great learning tool, and we plan to feature content in future *Messenger* issues. For example, on October 1, 1962, James Meredith became the first black student to enroll at University of Mississippi. Federal marshals had to intervene after the governor ordered state troopers to block the school entrance. On October 11, 1944, the U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments in *Korematsu v. United States* and later issued a decision upholding the executive order that led to the internment of Japanese Americans.

Open Dates Available for Chancel Flowers

Though we may not be able to gather for worship in our sanctuary during these times, there is still an opportunity to recognize a loved one or lift up a special occasion to celebrate with a small floral arrangement or, for that matter, any simple creative arrangement to adorn our chancel on Sunday mornings. There are still some **open dates** to do so in these fall months ahead: October 11 and November 29. Contact Nancy Bubenzer at (330) 678-3436 (h) or (330) 671-1014 (c).

Stephen Ministry – Sue Otterson



Become a Stephen Minister!



- teaches principles and skills that equip you to provide high-quality, Christ-centered emotional and spiritual care to others.
-
- gives you new insight into the thoughts, feelings, and actions of people who are hurting. ®
-
- equips you with relational and caring skills you can apply to all aspects of your life.
-
- helps deepen your faith as the Holy Spirit fashions you into a Christ-centered caregiver.
-
- builds a special bond of Christian community and camaraderie among all those in your class.
-
- is highly interactive, engaging, and a lot of fun!

Contact Sue Otterson: sueotterson@gmail.com

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 generally will not meet in person, although some are meeting via Zoom. Look for future meetings for our women’s fellowship groups, men’s breakfasts, Men Baking Bread, book group, Bagels and Books, Mahjong, yoga, and more. We will all be so glad when it’s safe to resume our gatherings!

ACME Community Cash Back Program 2020



The Kent UCC will once again participate in the Acme Cash Back Program this year. The church will receive 5% cash back on qualifying purchases made starting Thursday, August 6 through December 26, 2020.

Members and friends are asked to save the entire receipt in an envelope or a plastic sandwich bag and deposit them in the Blue Box by the Office entry on the

30th of each month until we are able to gather for worship in the Sanctuary. Last year we received \$376 to be used for various church programs. Thank you for your continued support.

Community News



SUPPORT THE HAVEN OF PORTAGE COUNTY
Sleep in your car annual fundraiser

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 6TH, 2020 | 9:30PM-7:00AM

PORTAGE COMMUNITY CHAPEL
6490 ST RT 14 RAVENNA, OHIO 44266

November is recognized nationally as homeless awareness month.

Your goal is to get pledges (paid ahead is best) to sleep in your car.

100% of the pledges benefits the Haven of Portage County.

At 9:30pm November 6th come to the church to turn in your pledge envelopes, make note of your attendance, you will be made aware of the restrooms, and get to know your fellow sleepers. Please make sure you are prepared for the elements **IT GETS COLD AT NIGHT.**

In the morning check out, you will need to cross your name off the check in sheet, no coffee no breakfast.

Love all around and its done!

For more information contact: Cathy 330- 297-5032 or Jan 330-931-8087

Hospice of the Western Reserve Virtual Volunteer Training

Are you looking for a way to help individuals in your community? Are you willing to engage with homebound patients and families by phone or by mail? Consider becoming a Hospice of the Western Reserve Volunteer. We are excited to announce virtual volunteer training for new volunteers. We also look forward to the day that in-person visits can resume safely. For more information, contact us at (216) 255-9090 or fill out an online application at: hospicewr.org/volunteers. Volunteers who complete virtual training will be able to provide in-person visits as soon as Ohio's Stay at Home order is lifted.

News from the UH Portage Medical Center Pastoral Care Department

The Pastoral Care Department now has a new service available to our congregation; they have made their Dial-A-Prayer line, which has been in service for patients and staff for many years, accessible from outside the hospital. Just call **(330) 297-2545**. The message is changed once a week.

Treasurer's Report - Kay Hansford

September:

Income: \$17,423.75
Expenditures: \$17,750.13
Difference: -\$326.38

October Birthdays

01 John Rusanowsky. 02 Muriel Breyley. 04 Kathy Myers, Kelli Myers, Amy Reeves
06 Stephen Boyles, Jerry Homer, John Kish 07 Rachel Barlett 08 Scott Bennington
11 Sarah Hoover, Adam Livengood. 12 Anne Myers 13 Kelle Arthur 14 Mary Palmer,
Eric Vaught. 15 Sandy Dettis, Janet Varner 18 Janet Rusanowsky. 20 Crystal Shanley
21 Al Barber, Abigail Roelle, Jim Wallace 23 John Hetrick 27 Patrick Mason

Sundays in October

October 4: Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon by Pastor Amy

10:00 Worship on Facebook and YouTube

October 11: Nineteenth Sunday After Pentecost/Accessible to All Sunday

Worship led by J-Walkers

10:00 Worship on Facebook and YouTube

October 18: Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost/Laity Sunday

10:00 Worship on Facebook and YouTube

October 25: Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon by Pastor Amy

10:00 Worship on Facebook and YouTube

How to Reach Us

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Office Hours: Staff are primarily working from home during Covid-19 crisis. Regular hours are 9am-4pm.

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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 Administrative Assistant by e-mail to: LDavis@kentucc.org. The deadline for the November issue is Friday, October 23 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)