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# UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST CONGREGATIONAL

217 E. Liberty St. Medina, Ohio 44256 330-725-4559

www.uccmedina.org

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## “WELCOMING, LOVING, SERVING, WHERE GOD HAS NO LIMITS”

Please take a moment to sign the attendance pads, (located at the end of each pew) so that you know who is worshipping near you and you may greet them by name.

### RINGING OF THE CHURCH BELL

### GREETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### \*PASSING OF THE PEACE

PRELUDE “The Gift of Love” – setting, John Carter

Cathy Fafrak, Organist

### CHORAL INTROIT

Chancel Choir

### \*CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Come to worship!

People: **Come morning people and the night owls.**

Leader: The rich and poor.

People: **Those ready to worship and those on the verge of tears.**

Leader: Let us find unity within our diversity.

People: **May your people be my people, and your God, my God.**

Leader: Come. Let us worship.

### \*OPENING HYMN

### “How Like a Gentle Spirit” (vs. 1-4)

*The author of this hymn has been a professor at several universities and seminaries and has received thirteen honorary degrees. C. Eric Lincoln is also known for his scholarly books on the African-American church and for his poems and novels.*

Tune: SURSUM CORDA 10.10.10.10.  
Alfred M. Smith, 1941

May be sung in unison



1 How like a gen - tle spir - it deep with - in  
2 Let God be God wher - ev - er life may be;  
3 God like a moth - er ea - gle hov - ers near  
4 When in our vain pre - ten - sions we con - spire  
5 Through all our fret - ful claims of sex and race

God reins our fervent passions day by day,  
 let every tongue bear witness to the call;  
 on mighty wings of power manifest;  
 to shape God's image as we see our own,  
 the universal love of God shines through,  
 and gives us strength to challenge and to win  
 all human-kind is one by God's decree;  
 God like a gentle shepherd stills our fear,  
 hark to the voice above our base desire;  
 for God is love transcending style and place  
 despite the perils of our chosen way.  
 let God be God, let God be God for all.  
 and comforts us against a peaceful breast.  
 God is the sculptor, we the fashioned stone.  
 and all the idle options we pursue.

\***CONFESSION** (written by the Rev. Dr. Cari Jackson, founder and director of the Center for Spiritual Light, Phoenix, Arizona and posted on the UCC Worship Ways website.)

Leader: Again and again you call us  
 to care for widows and orphans,  
 to advocate for those in prison,  
 to welcome the strangers.

People: **God, we hear your call,  
 but all around us we hear the cry  
 that there is not enough for all, and that some are undeserving.**

Leader: Again and again you call us  
 to love you with our whole heart, understanding, and strength;  
 such love demands that we seek justice  
 for those who are oppressed, poor, and forgotten.

People: **God, we hear your call,  
 But all around us are competing calls  
 of worldly loyalties, political parties, and public acclaim.**

Leader: Again and again, you urge us to seek you first.

We long to trust the path of love for you and our neighbors as ourselves.

**People:** Yet we fear that our "land of milk and honey"  
has become a land of moral famine and economic hardship,  
and we wonder at times if you have abandoned us.

**Leader:** Again and again you urge us not to lean on our own understanding  
but in all our ways to acknowledge you, and yet

**People:** we are often distracted by the clamor of fear dressed up as reason.

**Leader:** As we prepare our hearts and minds in these days,  
at times we forget to observe  
your statutes of compassion and your ordinances of justice.

**People:** Again, you remind us to follow you  
so that it may go well for us, our neighbors, our nation, and our world.

#### \*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

**Leader:** Hear the word of God for this season and all seasons:

**People:** "Do not be afraid! I will never leave you or forsake you."

**Leader:** Know that our God who began a good work in us is able to complete it.

**People:** As we open ourselves to the Spirit of God, may we see more fully the wonder of God  
already at work in us.

**Leader:** And so it is.

**People:** Amen.

#### \*PRAISE RESPONSE

#### "How Like a Gentle Spirit" (vs. 5)

**ANTHEM** "Taste and See" – Michael Helman Chancel Choir, Alleluia Ringers & Congregation

#### Choir and Congregation:

*Refrain*

Taste and see, taste and see the good-ness of the  
Lord. Bread of life, cup of sal-va-tion,  
come to the ban-quet of love.

The image shows three staves of musical notation in 4/4 time. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody is written in a simple, accessible style. The lyrics are placed below the notes, with some words underlined to indicate phrasing. The music concludes with a double bar line.

From *Taste and See* (CGA1046 Choral Score; CGB408 Full Score)  
Text: Michael Helman.  
Music: Michael Helman.  
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**The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

Joys and Concerns, Silent Prayer, People's Prayer

**PRAYER RESPONSE****"Take My Life, God, Let It Be"**

1 Take my life, God, let it be con - se - crat - ed faith - ful - ly.

Take my mo - ments and my days, let them flow in cease-less praise.

*Frances R. Havergal wrote her hymn following a visit to Areley House in Worcestershire, England. Among the ten persons at the house were "some unconverted . . . some converted but not rejoicing." Before she left, "everyone had got a blessing."*

Tune: VIENNA 7.7.7.7.  
Justin H. Knecht, 1797  
Alternate tune: HENDON

**SCRIPTURE**

Ruth 1: 1-18

Pam Branscome, Liturgist

**SERMON**

"Concerning Moabites: The Story of Ruth, Part 1"

Rev. Luke Lindon

**OFFERING OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS****Offering Invitation**

**Leader:** Our tithes, pledges, and offerings—both monetary and other—enable us to give thanks to God for the resources we have been given and enable us to be resources for others.

**People:** **As we give to this ministry, we help others become what they can be and we become more of what we can be.**

**Leader:** Give generously and watch the miracles of God unfold in our lives and our ministry together.

**Offertory Music**

"Whither Thou Goest" – Guy Singer; Nick North, soloist

**\*Doxology** Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

**\*Prayer of Dedication**

Thank you, O God, for the gifts of your people. Help us that we rely not on our own understanding in the use of these gifts, but to seek your wisdom. Knowing that as we do, your will be revealed and your people near and far will be blessed. Amen.

**SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION**

*All are welcome at the Lord's Table. You do not need to be a member of the United Church of Christ to partake in the Holy Sacrament*

**Invitation to the Table**

**Words of Institution**

**Prayer of Blessing**

**Distribution of the Elements**

**Prayer of Thanksgiving**

**\*SENDING HYMN**

**"God of Grace and God of Glory"**

1 God of grace and God of glo - ry, on your peo - ple  
2 From the e - vils that sur - round us and as - sail the  
3 Cure your chil - dren's war - ring mad - ness; bend our pride to  
4 Set our feet on loft - y plac - es; gird our lives that  
5 Save us from weak res - ig - na - tion to the e - vils

pour your power; crown your an - cient church - 's sto - ry;  
Sav - ior's ways, from the fears that long have bound us—  
your con - trol. Shame our reck - less, self - ish glad - ness,  
they may be ar - mored with all Christ - like grac - es,  
we de - plore; let the search for your sal - va - tion



bring its bud to glo-rious flower. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,  
 free our hearts for faith and praise. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,  
 rich in things and poor in soul. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,  
 in the fight to set us free. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,  
 be our glo - ry ev - er - more. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,

for the fac - ing of this hour, for the fac - ing of this hour.  
 for the liv - ing of these days, for the liv - ing of these days.  
 make our bro - ken spir - its whole, make our bro - ken spir - its whole.  
 in the quest for lib - er - ty, in the quest for lib - er - ty.  
 serv - ing you whom we a - dore, serv - ing you whom we a - dore.

*Harry Emerson Fosdick, a prophetic preacher and writer, taught at Union Theological Seminary from 1915 to 1946. This hymn was written for the opening service and dedication of Riverside Church, New York City, which he served for twenty years.*

Tune: CWM RHONDDA 8.7.8.7.8.7.7.  
 John Hughes, c. 1907

**\*BENEDICTION**

Leader: Go forth, following as the Holy Spirit leads you, moving in love and compassion, pursuing justice and mercy, and trusting in the God of peace.  
 For the Source of all life and love is as close as your very breath.  
 Having been blessed, now go be a blessing for this service has ended,  
 People: **And our service now begins. Amen!**

**\*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE "God Be with You"**

God be with you 'til we meet again; By His counsels guide uphold you;  
 With His sheep securely fold you; God be with you 'til we meet again.

\* **POSTLUDE** "Finale" – Paul Fauchey/ed. Harry Rowe Shelley Cathy Fafrak, Organist

**"MORE THAN CHURCH ON SUNDAY"**

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\*All who are able please stand.

**Ushers:** Dick Christy, Darlene Bagley-Fazekas, Pete Benson, Ron Greinke

\*\*\*Please join us for Coffee Hour in Fellowship Hall following the service\*\*\*  
Today's coffee hour is hosted by **Bruce & Sally Bauer.**

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**PASTORAL STAFF**

Rev. Luke Lindon, Senior Minister – email: [luke@uccmedina.org](mailto:luke@uccmedina.org)

**OFFICE STAFF**

Cindy Korecky, Office Manager - email: [office@uccmedina.org](mailto:office@uccmedina.org)  
Kelly Charnley, Financial Manager - email: [financial@uccmedina.org](mailto:financial@uccmedina.org)

**PROGRAM STAFF**

Stacie Yates, Director of Christian Education  
Michelle Lisco, Co-Director of Youth  
Jim Kiser, Director of Music  
Cathy Fafrak, Organist  
Rebecca Rosen, Nursery Supervisor  
Xanthe Phillips, Director of Hobby Horse Preschool

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**IMPORTANT NOTICE REGARDING THE CHURCH DIRECTORY!!!**

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The office now has a new membership management system. This is what we use to print our church directories when we do not do a pictorial directory. Unfortunately, we no longer have the ability to tell the program what is not meant to print and all of the information as far as cell phones, children's cell phones, emails etc. are printing. If you have a cell phone or other information you do not want printed, **you must please contact the church office before Thursday, November 8<sup>th</sup>.** We can take the information out of the system. **Otherwise, it will be printed.**

**Call 330-725-4559 or email [office@uccmedina.org](mailto:office@uccmedina.org)**

The new church directories will be delayed for one week and will be available on Sunday November 11<sup>th</sup>. Thank you!

# THE PILGRIM MESSENGER

## NOVEMBER 4, 2018

**“WELCOMING, LOVING, SERVING, WHERE GOD HAS NO LIMITS.  
MORE THAN CHURCH ON SUNDAY!”**

Live streaming of the Sanctuary Service is available at [uccmedina.org](http://uccmedina.org)

November 4, 2018 thru November 11, 2018

### WEEK AT A GLANCE

#### Sun DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ENDS

8:15 am Chapel Worship  
9:00 am Gathering Worship  
9:15 am Choir practice  
10:30 am Traditional Worship  
1:30 pm JMM Meeting  
1:30 pm Rake-n-Run

#### Mon Cook for Cups

7:15 pm Evangelism Team

#### Tues

#### Wed

10:30 am Quilters  
6:15 pm Bell Choir Rehearsal  
7:00 pm Discipleship &  
Education Team  
7:15 pm Youth Bell Choir  
7:30 pm **Pastor's Bible Study for All**  
7:45 pm Youth Choir

#### Thu

**Garfield Deliveries**

#### Fri

#### Sat

9:00 am Choir Rehearsal  
1:00 pm **Paint for Costa Rica Fundraiser**

#### Sun

8:15 am Chapel Worship  
9:00 am Gathering Worship  
9:15 am Choir practice  
10:30 am Traditional Worship  
10:30 am JMM @ Brookdale South  
11:30 am Christmas Pageant Practice  
11:45 am **Red, White & Blue Spaghetti  
Meal Fundraiser**  
2:30 pm Confirmation Mentor Meeting  
3:00 pm Confirmation Class with  
Mentors

**Worship Highlights:** 8:15, 9:00 & 10:30 am

Scripture: Ruth 1:1-18

Sermon: "Concerning Moabites.  
The story of Ruth part 1"

Rev. Luke Lindon

**Altar Flowers:** The altar flowers are given by Jim Kiser in memory of his wife, Barb Kiser.

### SPAGHETTI DINNER\_FUNDRAISER

**Sunday, November 11<sup>th</sup>**

If you like to eat and would like to support our youth groups at the same time we have just the event for you! On Sunday, November 11<sup>th</sup>, immediately following the 10:30 service, the youth will be hosting a spaghetti dinner to help raise funds for future mission trips. We will be taking a free will offering and there will be spaghetti, salad, bread and a dessert. If you would like to come, please sign up outside of Fellowship Hall so we can plan accordingly. Thank you so much for your support and we hope to see you on November 11<sup>th</sup>!

### Upcoming Youth Events:

- \*November 4 – Rake-N-Run (1:30-5:00)
- \*November 11 – Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser
- \*November 11 – Confirmation Mentor Meeting 2:45
- \*November 11 – Confirmation Class 3:00-4:30
- \*November 18 – Christmas Pageant Practice 11:30
- \*November 18 – Youth Group 4:00-6:00
- \*November 25 – Christmas Pageant Practice 11:30
- \*December 2 – Christmas Pageant Practice 11:30
- \*December 2 – Advent Family Fun Night 4:30
- \*December 9 – Confirmation Class 3:00-4:30
- \*December 16 – Christmas Pageant 10:30 service  
Confirmants light the Advent Wreath
- \*December 23 – NO F.I.S.H. – MERRY  
CHRISTMAS!
- \*December 30 – NO F.I.S.H. –HAPPY NEW YEAR!

## **OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD**

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### **Boxes Due Sunday, November 18<sup>th</sup>**

Can you believe that it is already time to start thinking about Christmas? I know it seems early, but it will be here before we know it. The Discipleship and Education Leadership Team (DELTS) is once again sponsoring the Operation Christmas Child project. You take a shoe box and fill it with toys, school supplies, hygiene items and an assortment of other gifts. The boxes are then given to hurting children around the world. We recommend using plastic shoe boxes so that the children can use them for water, gathering berries or storage. All boxes are due by Sunday, November 18<sup>th</sup>. If we as a church collect 100 boxes the DELTS will host a special coffee hour at the beginning of December with a hot chocolate bar and other holiday treats. Please see the Operation Christmas Child table in the East Room for ideas to donate. If you have any questions, please contact Stacie Yates at 330-723-7344 or [yatesmsla@zoominternet.net](mailto:yatesmsla@zoominternet.net). Will you help us take God's love to hurting children around the world? We hope you will. Let's do this!

### **HEAR THE BELLS RINGING!**

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Members of our congregation will once again have the opportunity to be "Red Kettle Ringers" for the Medina Salvation Army. Volunteers are needed for **Saturday, December 8<sup>th</sup>**, in the vestibule at Buehler's River Styx. There are several short shifts available between 12:00 pm & 4:00 pm. It is a good idea (but not necessary) to bring a second person with you for your time slot, that way the kettle is never unattended if you need to take a break. Sign-up sheets are available near the kitchen. For any questions or concerns, contact Lynn Leckie. This is a popular event each year, so sign up soon!

### **JMM PLANNING MEETING**

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Members of the Joyous Message Ministry (JMM) will meet in the library on Sunday, November 4<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 pm to make plans for the future. We are also looking for new team members. If you are interested in attending this meeting and learning more about JMM, please join us that day, or see Nick North with any questions.

## **WOMEN'S BOOK CLUB**

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Our next selection is Lincoln in the Bardo; it is in the office ready for pick up NOW! Our next meeting is Tuesday, November 13<sup>th</sup>. Information on where we will meet will be forthcoming. A cute Tinkerbell tote bag has been floating around the group for some time. It is now in the office, as no one has claimed it. If it belongs to you, hurry on in and claim it before it "disappears". See you in November!

### **CE CANDLELIGHT WALK BAKE SALE**

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Calling all bakers! The CE Board will once again be hosting a bake sale during the Candlelight Walk. Funds collected will be used for supplies, equipment and help for mission for Christian Education and Youth programming. If you would like to donate a yummy baked good for the bake sale, please sign up outside of Fellowship Hall or fill out the insert in the bulletin. Thank you so much for your support.

### **NEW ONLINE GIVING UPDATE**

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Now you do NOT need to contact the office to get registered—you can do it yourself! Now when you go to <http://uccmedina.org/give> it points to all 3 of our giving options:

- Make a one-time contribution
- Register yourself for recurring giving
- Log in to your profile and update if needed

Current giving is shown and 2019 pledges can also be added. Feel free to contact Kelly 330-725-4559 if you have any questions.

### **ADVENT FAMILY FUN NIGHT**

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Does good food, fellowship, Christmas music and fun sound good to you? Then you will want to be sure to come to Advent Family Fun Night on **Sunday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> at 4:30**. The evening will consist of crafts and activities to help kick off the season of Advent. We will also enjoy a pizza dinner together. The cost of dinner will be \$3 per person. Help us celebrate the Advent season and get into the holiday spirit. If you would like to attend, please sign up outside of Fellowship Hall. We hope to see all of our church family there.

# PRAYER CONCERNS



## SUPPORT

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Jake Brent (USAF)	Strength and healing
Natoma Canfield	Strength and healing
Judy Dawson	Strength and healing from surgery
Ellen Daiber	Strength and healing
Stephen Domchick	Strength and healing
John Fleming	Strength and healing
Monica Geschke	Healing
Ralph Greinke	Strength and healing from Parkinson's
Kathleen	Strength and healing
Sam Langol	Strength and healing
Lenny, Cathy, Dawn & family	Prayers for recovery/Hurricane Michael
Judi Terrell Linden	Strength and healing
Cameron Marshall	Strength and healing
Jan Marshall	Strength and healing
Kathleen Murray	Strength and healing
John Root	Strength and healing from Parkinson's
Dave Sinclair	Strength and healing
Terry Yancer	Strength and healing

## MILITARY SUPPORT

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CDR Eric Bader	Coast Guard, Buzzard's Bay, MA (Nancy Bader's son)
PVT Joe DeSario	Army/National Guard, OH (Paul & Kelly DeSario's son)
LT Patrick Donnelly	Navy, Virginia Beach, VA. (Joe & Lori Donnelly)
RCT Travis Dunn	Marines, Parris Island, S.C. (Ruth Dunn's grandson)
SSG Edwin Kay	Army, Columbus (Suzi Kay's nephew)
CPL Vincent Lupica	Marines, Camp Pendelton, CA (Jim & Karen Repas)
CPL Greg Swayer	Army, Ft. Bliss, TX (Stacie Yates' cousin)
PVT Tyler Walschon	Army/National Guard, OH (John & Joan Walschon's Son)
Kyle Weekley	Army (Dan & Tammy Daubner)
Brendan Wolf	National Guard, Ft. Jackson, SC (Dale & Cindy Korecky)

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## **“NEW DAY” JAIL CHOIR CONCERT**

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**Saturday, November 10<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 – 11:00 am**

Join us for a very special Thanksgiving-season concert, given by our County Jail’s one-of-a-kind, 30 member women’s choir.

- You will be moved and inspired by the songs and hymns sung by this inmate choir.
- Sign-up is limited to an audience of only 30, so sign up as soon as you can.
- Held in the first-floor public room at Medina County Jail, 555 Independence Dr.

We hope to have a full turnout of 30 people to show our congregation’s support. Look for the sign-up sheet on the table by the kitchen so we can have an estimate of how many people will be attending. Contact the church office with questions.

## **ENDOWMENT FUND COMMITTEE**

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The Endowment Fund Committee is pleased to announce that the Endowment Fund will soon be able to award allocations for funding for various church projects that qualify. This distribution of funds for a worthy cause will be the third issue of dollars from the Fund and we are excited to report this news! There is a simple guideline of how an activity/project/item qualifies for a funding grant. If you are interested in applying for a grant, please contact the church office for the Endowment Grant Application and Information packet. For further questions, please contact Jane Langol at 330-725-5311.

## **IT’S A PAINTING PARTY**

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A Painting Party to benefit the Medina UCCC Mission Trip to Costa Rica will be Saturday, November 10<sup>th</sup> from 1:00-3:00 pm. Create your own masterpiece under the instruction of Connie Kramer from Art Break. All are welcome! Enjoy soft drinks & snacks while painting. The cost is \$50.00. For tickets, contact Judy at 330-722-5380 or [jdaugherty@zoominternet.net](mailto:jdaugherty@zoominternet.net), Tammie at 330-285-9599 or [tamohio1@aol.com](mailto:tamohio1@aol.com), or the Church Office at 330-725-4559.

## **SUPPORT OUR YOUTH**

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### **Buy Gift Cards for All Your Special Occasions!**

The possibilities are endless!!!  
Grocery shopping, gasoline, video rentals, home repairs, clothing and gift items.  
All the shopping you normally do can help.

Remember Christmas is just around the corner!

**The next order date is Monday,  
November 12<sup>th</sup> by 10:00 am.**

The last order date before Christmas will be

**Monday, December 10<sup>th</sup> by 10:00 am.**

## **BOOKS FOR MEDINA COUNTY JAIL**

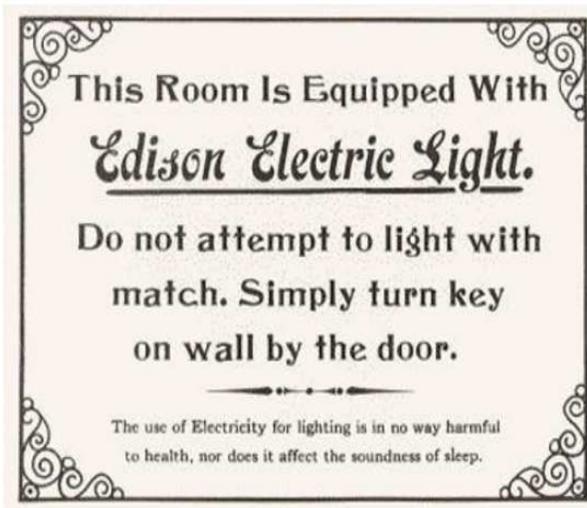
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Thank you to those who gave books last month to our collection for the Medina County Jail. About 4 dozen books were delivered to the jail, where Susan Jarvis, Chaplain at the jail, will add them to the library there. “Both Sides of Prison” will continue through the winter to collect your used inspirational or motivational **SOFT-COVERED (i.e. paperback) books**. You can drop them into the box outside of the kitchen by the water fountain. At the end of each month, a volunteer from “Both Sides of Prison” will take them to the jail. Thank you!

## **GARFIELD HYGIENE PROGRAM – NEW ITEMS NEEDED!**

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Thank you for the generous contribution of toiletries for the Hygiene Program to assist the children at Garfield School. We are now asking for your contributions of Winter Hats, Gloves and Scarves. Socks are always appreciated. Please place your contributions in the box at the bottom of the staircase.



## Bicentennial Tidbits

Electricity was added to our building in 1896, one year before the village. But this was for the wind pipes of the organ, not for illumination.

*In 1907, the kerosene lamps were taken down the for last time and new electric lights were installed. (Source: Carl Jessie's 1974 History)*

## **GOSPEL GALLEY**

by Mark Armstrong

The Lord's Prayer ends with an exultant and humble declaration that God is God alone. "For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever. Amen."

Andrew Murray wrote a wonderful book on humility. In it, he says the essence of humility is the acknowledgement of our relationship with God - our Creator. We are dependent on him. It is his genius and power that crafted the universe and gives us life, free will and all that we have.

Thus it is eminently reasonable for us to acknowledge him and recognize his primacy in all things. It makes sense to praise him as the ultimate sovereign, the powerful creator and object of our gratitude and praise. So next time we pray, let's remember to praise God!

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**The deadline for submission of articles for NEXT Sunday's *Messenger* is this Sunday at 11:30 am.**

**Please submit articles to the church office at [office@uccmedina.org](mailto:office@uccmedina.org)**

**\*\*\*\*\*CHURCH OFFICE HOURS: 9:00 am – 3:00 pm MONDAY THRU FRIDAY\*\*\*\*\***

Ruth 1:1-18

### **Wherever You Go**

Ruth and Naomi qualify as refugees, forced from their home by death and famine. Naomi is going back to the town where she was born but Ruth is a foreigner. These two women will forge a team that will overcome odds, deal with whatever comes up for them and survive against all comers. The result will be good for them and for their community. It's a story that has been told and retold throughout human history, and today, in the same part of the world, and in a similar geography, people who once had homes, and communities and families are displaced and wandering.

"Week of Compassion" is a network of church partners through Global Ministries and our partnership with the Disciples of Christ. It works to ensure our faithful and efficient response to humanitarian needs around the world. Recently they sent a team of people, including a UCC pastor from New Mexico, to a refugee camp in Iraq. The job of these three representatives was to document the work being nurtured to help the women in these camps find a way to support themselves and their families. Some statistics estimate that the number of refugees from Iraq in Kurdistan may be well over 2 million people. Many of those are women and children.

The UCC pastor on the team found herself in Iraq because, as she told the UCC news service, "I accepted the invitation to go to Iraq because I got tired of being numb, of reading about the latest atrocities and then turning the page. I think it's important for us, as people of faith, to see the human faces behind the headlines. Refugees are people just like the rest of us who once had homes, families, jobs, communities. We need to hear their stories." Sometimes loving your neighbor takes you on a journey.

The Pastor's name is Reverend Talitha Arnold, Senior Minister of the United Church of Christ in Santa Fe, a church that has a long history of working with immigrants – in the 1980s it was Salvadorans fleeing a brutal civil war, in the 90s Rwanda and Kosovo swept the headlines with its refugees. Today, the congregation works with its large immigrant population in Santa Fe.

The object of ministry, of reaching out to those in crisis from other cultures, is to recognize that we are all God's beloved creatures and share human needs for shelter and safety and nourishment and community. We have stories to tell each other. We have things to learn from each other. We have things we can give each other. Ruth clings to Naomi and will not leave her. She knows that her future belongs in following a woman from another culture, another language, another home. Ruth follows Naomi because she has no other way forward. Just like the women of Iraq and Syria and all the places that families flee to find a better life.